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LIFTING THE VEIL.

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Ch.

“Which veil is done away in Christ.”

2 COR. iii. 14.

Wm. W. Loomis

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TO MY FRIENDS.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

LIFTING THE VEIL.

CHAPTER I.

"WE are often acquainted with our friends a long time—knowing them very well, so we think—before we know, or suspect their graves, the ones inside or the ones out. We are all very chary of taking even our most dearly-loved friends to that inner graveyard, where we cannot go ourselves, at all times ; a place deep down in our lives that we often have to ignore completely, if we want to keep calm and not startle people around—who fancy our lives are so quiet and happy—by wild shrieks and cries, while we wring our hands, and cry for help, when there is no help."

"No, the part of us where our roots are planted, and whence the growth of our real life comes, is not the place where we usually entertain company. And yet, the possession of those dark places gives a depth and force to a character which it otherwise would not have."

"Sometimes in the twilight, when we have been strongly moved, our whole inner life stirred up, taking our friend by the hand we go down into the deep places of our nature, and pointing to some mound, tell in a low still voice what

lies beneath it, and how the vacancy in our lives was filled up, and we would not have been what we are, but for that mound. And then—unless we trust that person very much—we are afraid of him, for he has seen into our hearts.”

“Poor child. But I think we hide our true lives too much, and often give a false impression of ourselves, and miss many opportunities of doing good, helping some one on.”

“But it seems so dreadful to turn our lives inside out, for the public gaze. It is a horrible idea—entirely repulsive.”

“We need not do it for the public gaze. That would be unnecessary and revolting. But when we see it might help another, suffering as we have suffered, to know how entirely we can sympathize with them, it seems to me false and cowardly not to help them.”

There was a silence in the room for some time, broken only by the striking of the clock in the church-steeple close by. They counted the strokes as they rang through the quiet evening air. As they ended the last speaker said,

“Seven; ‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’ There is something very suggestive in those verses associated with the striking of the different hours. I like to think of them.”

“Seven!” answered the other in a choking voice. “No! those words fall like water on a rock heated by the sun, and bring no refreshing coolness, only make a hissing

sound. It was seven when he died, and I did ask, I pleaded and besought that he might be spared to me; and as the clock struck seven he died in my arms, and every stroke seemed burned into my heart and brain, so that, turn where I will, I see that horrible hour seven, that robbed me of all that made life worth living. Much I received for my asking.”

“Poor child, it is a hard blow for you to bear; but is there nothing left for you in life?”

“There is nothing for me here, and only the hope of meeting him in some distant, strange hereafter. He was all I had, my one treasure that was taken away from me and my life left empty. What could be left for me? I have not the capacity for loving many people. My life has been such a lonely one, so shut up and shut off from all the associations in which young girls usually grow up, that my only connection with life has been through him. I have lost eyes, ears, understanding.”

“Ah me, how well I know every step of that road. How thoroughly and entirely I can sympathize with you in it all.”

“You? Why I thought you of all people had led a happy, peaceful life. I always think of you as the perfection of quiet serenity.”

“Truly the heart knoweth its own bitterness. That quiet serenity is only a very thin crust over a seething volcano. Yet that is rather a strong expression. It is not always so. The volcano is often so quiet that I only

know of its existence by the traces and memory of former eruptions."

"I wonder," Eleanor Southgate said, with a sigh, "if there is any one who is happy ; any one who has not something in his heart that makes him wretched. It has been a comfort to me to think of you as one."

"I am not wretched, Eleanor."

"Not wretched ! and yet you say you can sympathize with me from experience. I cannot understand how that can be."

"Fortunately for us, Eleanor, this violent grief cannot last forever ; we should lose our lives or our reason if it did. Time will soothe it, and may bring a comfort that may almost requite us for it."

"You talk in enigmas, Agatha. What can make up to us for losing our friends, missing daily, hourly, their faces, their voices, their presence—being left alone?"

"Not losing their presence, not being left alone."

"Can the dead come back to us before the resurrection?"

"Not in these days, but we can be aware of our friends' presence near us in the spirit even after they leave us in the body. They do not go very far away."

"Oh !" said Eleanor, with a long-drawn breath, "if I only could believe that, if I only could hope so, it would be easier to bear it, to be less rebellious. But I can't ! He is dead, and I am entirely cut off from him till I die."

There was a pause. Eleanor dropped her head in her

hands on the window-sill. Agatha sat and looked at the stars. Her face was very still, and her lips firmly closed. Gradually they loosened their pressure, a light came in her eyes, and turning to Eleanor, she laid her hand on her shoulder.

"I know it is so, dear," she said, "I know it. It is one of the greatest comforts of my life."

Eleanor quickly raised her head and looked at her.

"You?"

"Yes, I cannot understand why I have been so blessed, but I have."

Eleanor watched, wistfully, the still face with the deep true eyes that were solemn in their strange light ; she wanted to ask how it was, but hesitated. At last, remembering how Agatha had spoken a few moments before of helping others to bear suffering, and sorely feeling the need of help herself, she said,

"Would you mind telling me about it?"

It was a moment or two before Agatha spoke ; at last she said.

"I have been trying to tell you ever since your trouble came to you, poor child, trying harder this evening than ever. The time did not seem to have come before, for now I think I can tell you, though I never have spoken of it to any one."

Eleanor turned and kissed the hand that was resting on her shoulder, saying,

"Don't tell me if it will be painful to you."

"Not painful, only strange to be putting into words what has been the fullest part of my life for several years. It is speaking your deepest, tenderest thoughts. Wait a few moments, please, and then I'll tell you.

"Before I knew you," she presently began, "I lost a very dear friend, lost him for a year. I thought, as you do, that it was until my death would unite us; it seemed to me forever, then.

"I had known him ever since we were children; we used to go to school together. He always carried my books for me, and was my general protector, not letting any of the large children tease me, for I was a little thing. He used to bring me candies, saying 'Somebody gave me this and I wanted you to have it.' No matter how eagerly he was playing with the boys, he would instantly leave them if he saw me in trouble, and come and help me.

"That was when we were little children; he was four years older than I was. As we grew older, the same feeling continued, though shown in a different way. He was very intimate with my brother, and at our house continually. In winter evenings we would gather around the parlor-table, and play games, or have singing or dancing; my sisters had good voices, and we were all fond of music. On summer evenings we had rides and walks, boating-parties, and all the usual pleasant ways of spending summer nights that young people can find.

"Then he went to college; and I found out, by missing him, how much he was to me. It was the old story; con-

stant companionship and pleasant intercourse had done its work, and I woke up from girlhood to womanhood, to find that I loved a man who did not love me. My knowledge of such things was so childish—for we had never associated with girls who talked about them—that I looked upon it as a necessary evil, that was, of course, to be borne in silence and patience.

"Sarah and Esther used to complain greatly of how they missed him—how lonely it was, particularly as Harry, our only brother, had gone with him. They said I did not care for the boys' absence, because I said nothing. But they did not know. Then came the vacations, when they came back, and we had the good old times again. I was very happy, and enjoyed their being at home more than I can tell you, though I was very quiet about it. I grew so used to being quiet all the time he was away, that I rather outgrew the habit of being lively.

"He was growing very fast in the higher growth. We could all see that; and father and mother used often to say, how thankful they were that Harry had for a friend such a noble, high-toned man. Every word of praise they said about him made me happy, for I knew he was noble. The same spirit he showed to me when we were children, he showed to every body that was weak, or in need of help.

"Harry's letters were full of what the boys called his quixotic performances. He once wrote, 'All the month Graham has been playing hermit, refusing to join our parties when we went off for some fun, giving no reason

particularly. I might have thought he wanted to study, though that isn't much the habit of our men; but when I would come home he would be stretched out with his feet higher than his head, reading Shakespeare, or Milton, or deep in the Inferno, and be as animated in his talk about our fun as if he had been in it all, and I'd wonder what could be the row. At last I have found out what it is. The other night he was out, and a youngster of quite small size came to call on him with a bundle in his hand very carefully held. I inquired the gentleman's business, and found out that that jolly old Graham had been walking along by the infant's mother's house just as she was being turned out of it because she could not pay the rent. He had paid it for her up to the time, and a month in advance; then walked off, not even telling her his name. This small chap had been hunting him up, he said, ever since, and at last had found where he lived, and had come to bring him two white mice he had been saving for him, he being engaged in that lively trade.

"Graham came in while the babe was there, and when he saw him, looked as if he had been caught stealing sheep. He took the horrid little pink-eyed mice, as if they were a span of splendid horses, *and did not throw them into the water as soon as the boy was out of sight.* His giving all his money for the poor old widow's rent was just like him, and I might have known he would do it. But I *was* surprised at his keeping those little beasts, and he takes good care of them! I tell you I haven't got to the bottom of

him yet, dear old fellow. He is a jolly brick. I wish I was more like him.'

"Always noble and generous to old and young, high and low, I could not have helped loving him, even if I had not done so all my life.

"They left college, and came home to read law in the same office, and as usual he was always at our house, full of life and vigor. His merry laugh was the first to ring out at any fun or frolic, and yet his eyes would grow as tender as a woman's over any one's sorrow or trouble. In our long talks, he would speak of high, true things, in a way that made me thrill with joy. His intense love for every thing in the world of nature as well as the world of intellect, was very contagious, and he carried us all with him in whatever region he chose to go."

She paused, and leaning her head against the window, she looked upwards, and was silent for a few moments.

The moonbeams resting on her face showed such a look, so not of the earth earthy, that Eleanor moved closer to her on the window-lounge they sat upon, and slipped her hand in between the two lying clasped in her lap.

"Thank you, dear," Agatha said in the same wonderfully quiet, calm voice in which she had spoken all the evening.

"That summer," she continued, presently, "was one of the happiest times I ever passed in my life; a time that seemed a great deal too blessed to last. Mother, Sarah, and Esther, were away, and we three and papa had the

house to ourselves. He was always deeper and truer when only Harry and I were near ; seemed to go more into the heart of things. And that last week,—it was all just such moonlight nights as this is,—talking far into each glorious night, we went deeper and higher than we had ever gone before. It was beautiful ! The days, while the two were at their work, were merely to be gone through with, so as quickest to bring the evenings, when his whistle,—for they were still boys enough to have a signal-whistle,—would bring Harry from his room and me from mine. We would sing for papa until supper-time, then after supper go out under the trees and talk.

“That last night, Papa came out on the portico and called to us :

“‘Children !’ we were only children to him, and always would be,—‘children, it is late ! It is time you were all asleep.’

“‘Don’t send me home yet, Mr. Hamlin,’ he called, while Harry and I entered a protest against the dear old father sending us to bed as if we were children really.

“‘I am twenty-four next month, papa,’ Harry called out, with his bright laugh, ‘and in two or three years will be a practising lawyer ; do you suppose I will submit to being sent to bed ? Never ! I’ll fight for my altars and my fires.’

“Papa’s laugh, as silvery as his hair, came down to us as he said,

“‘Very well, children, do as you please, you are young.’

“We all scouted the imputation, and went back to our talk. Graham was telling us of a grand little book he had read that day, ‘The Stars and the Earth,’ and with it we were travelling back from one star to another star ‘differing in glory.’

“I remember every thing that happened that night. Harry, who when much moved invariably talked nonsense, said in a meditative manner, during a pause in our talk in which a pear, ripe before its time, fell from a tree close by,

“‘Christopher Columbus discovered the attraction of gravitation by seeing Sir Isaac Newton fall out of an apple-tree !’ and then suddenly said, and I knew there were tears in his eyes,

“‘When we think of the wonders of all those worlds which He holds in his hand, and of which He knows the number ‘and telleth them all by name,’ how can we think it worth while to grumble and complain, because our little affairs do not appear to go right ?’

“‘We ought not to !’ Graham answered, ‘Let us try to have more faith and patience. ‘Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him !’ we ought to make that our motto. What is the use of our having an appreciation of these high things, if we do not use them to raise ourselves and *others* ? Every time we help ourselves, let us doubly help each other.’

“We were walking around to the front gate on the street, and none of us spoke.

“He stood on the outside of the gate, and we stood

inside. He shook hands with Harry, and bending over—he was very tall—he kissed me on the forehead, a childish fashion of his, given up years before, and said, calling me as he used to,

“‘Little Agatha! Peace be upon you.’

“He turned and went down the street. I never saw him again.”

Eleanor patted softly and lovingly the hands she held in hers, but did not speak; she could not break in upon that still voice with hers, which she knew was husky with tears.

“The next day a friend, who lived some miles in the country, sent in her carriage for me to come and spend a few days with her, as I had been promising all summer to do. Have you ever been so happy that you felt that you must get away from it to take breath? That was the way I felt. I said I would go, packed my bag, and, bidding papa good-bye, started off. I did not want to see Harry, for I knew he would beg me not to go, and I felt that I must.

“The third evening I was up there, my friend gave a little party for my benefit. I was laughing and talking with a gentleman to whom I had been introduced, without either of us catching the other’s name, when I happened to mention my home.

“‘Do you live there?’ he asked. I nodded my head, for the mere mention of the place where Graham lived made me feel too happy to waste words on a stranger.

“‘I passed through there to-day,’ he said, ‘and stopped long enough at a hotel to hear the news. Your city is in a great state of excitement about a very sad death.’

“‘Whose? did you hear?’ I asked; feeling in my happiness, so sorry for any to whose loved ones death had come.

“‘A young man named Cushing,’ he answered, ‘a splendid fellow, I should think, from the way they spoke of him.’

“My heart seemed turned to stone. I grasped the back of the chair on which my hands were resting, to steady myself, wondering as I did it what I was going to do.

“‘How?’ I asked. The man looked at me and said,

“‘Did you know him?’

“‘Did?’ I thought, with a fearful shiver, and felt that I must shriek out before them all, at the meaning of that awful word. But this man knew about it, and I felt that I must be calm enough to know from him all.

“‘Graham Cushing?’ I asked, forcing myself to say the name.

“‘Yes, that was the name.’ I moved my head in assent—it was all I could do—and asked again, ‘How?’ He answered,

“‘He was out bathing with a friend, to-day, and the friend, going out into very deep water, was seized with the cramp. Young Cushing saw it, and swam out to his rescue, but it is supposed they had both been in the water too long, for after seizing his friend and getting him

half way in, he, too, was seized with the cramp, and, exhausted with the struggle, sank at once. Some men, gathered on the shore by this time, rushed in, and seizing the friend brought him in in time; but when they found Cushing he was quite dead.'

"I could have killed the man for speaking of him in that quiet way. I could not trust myself to speak, and just then, some one addressing him, I turned away and sat down in a chair on the balcony. It was quite dark, for the moon, at which his eyes would never again look, was old. I felt perfectly numb. I heard the same man speaking to some one of me.

"She's a cool hand. I told her of the heroic action of that young fellow who, she says, she knows, and she paid no more attention to it than if such things happened every day—for a man to throw away his life for a friend!'

"Cool! I wondered if I would ever be cool any more, if my brain would ever cease being a ball of fire and my heart a lump of ice that burnt like fire. I wondered if, instead of happening every day, such a thing had ever happened before, and if it had, what the people did afterwards. I thought the company would never go, and let me be alone. It seemed like an eternity before my friend found me and said,

"What have you been hiding for? every one is asking for you to bid you good-night.'

"I came out to get cool,' I answered, 'the heat has given me an intolerable headache.'

"Why, it is not hot. You must be tired.'

"Yes, I am very tired,' I said, wondering if I would ever be rested any more.

"I went in the room with her to bid good-bye to the guests, answering to the question, How long would I be there? that I should leave for home early the next morning.

"When every one was gone I went to my room, knowing that, after the usual fashion of girls, my friend would come to talk over the party. I could not stand it, and when she came I begged her to wait until the morning, saying I was too tired to talk.

"She went to her room, and I was alone with the thought that Graham was dead, and Harry, for I knew it was he, was alive. I never like to remember the horrible thoughts I had that night.

"Morning brought me more to my senses in that respect. The gray dawn was so awfully solemn, that it seemed to take me a little out of myself; for the long night, as I sat by the window, had been as black as my thoughts, and pressed around me, close and stifling.

"Before sunrise a carriage sent the day before came for me; but the driver said he had not known the road, and had gone miles out of his way, and had stopped at a farm-house for the night.

"He could tell me nothing except that he had been told to come for me in great haste, for my brother was sick; and that he had lost his road. My trunk was packed and

ready, and, leaving a note, saying my brother was ill, I entered the carriage and it crawled home.

"There I found all in grief and confusion—Harry ill with brain-fever from the shock of Graham's death and his own narrow escape; father looking ten years older; and the servants helpless from alarm and grief. Mamma and the girls had been telegraphed for, but would not be able to get home for two or three days.

"The only thing that quieted Harry at all in his ravings, was for me to sit by him, holding his hands and singing to him. He did not know me—called me Graham all the time, and talked to me about having saved him, in such a way that it almost broke my heart, and poor papa could not bear to hear it.

"When he was buried, I could not leave Harry for a moment; for, as if conscious what was going on, he was in a dreadfully wild state. So I sat by him even then, and sung the songs we had all sung together, and thought only that I never would hear his voice again, that was the dearest thing in the world to me; and it seemed to me that my heart was weeping tears of blood in pity for my dry eyes."

CHAPTER II.

"How I grieved for a year," Agatha went on, after they had both been silent for some time, "you can know only too well; how life seemed 'a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.'"

Eleanor's brow darkened as she was brought back to herself, and she said, in a low bitter voice,

"Yes, I know it, when 'In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even, and in the even thou shalt say, would God it were morning,' and there comes no answer to your prayer, and the slow days crawl on, followed by nights that are even more wretched, for in them you have the luxury of unalloyed misery."

A shadow came over Agatha's face at the bitter words, but she did not give any advice about being resigned, and patient. She knew too well that the only voice that could calm the wild tumult in that lonely, aching heart, was the same that said to the angry sea, "Peace, be still, and the wind and the waves obeyed him."

"Only you do not know, dear," she said, "what it was to have to stifle it all, and have to go about as if nothing dreadful had happened, not showing by word or action

that the light had gone out of my life and heart. When the first shock of his death was over, to have to gather with the rest around the piano, and sing all the old songs, missing his voice in every note, and yet having to sing on ; to hear a footstep on the walk and a hand on the latch of the gate, and with a joyful start, feeling that it was but a dream, expect to hear the dear old familiar whistle, only to remember that I never would hear it again, that the voice I loved was singing everlasting psalms far out of reach of my ears, that the feet whose step I listened for were treading the streets of gold, walking in white with Christ, while both were forgetting poor little me—way off down here, so lonely, so tired of smiling when my heart was crying, and of keeping all to myself the grief in my whole life. It was more difficult to live through, than when your sorrow and loss is known and respected. He saw how lonely I was ; companionship with our dear Saviour had not made him hard and forgetful of those that loved him, and he tried to comfort me. By degrees I began to understand that he had not gone away forever ; that he still was often near me, and helped me as of old. Then I knew that he loved me as I had always loved him, and it was an inexpressible comfort to me."

"But he was dead," Eleanor said, in a voice full of surprise and doubt. "Surely you are not a spiritualist?"

"There is no death ; what seems so is transition !' He had gone away—not very far—more away from the eyes

and outer, grosser senses, than from the heart, and inner, more spiritual part of me."

"Do you see him ? or does he show in any tangible way that he is near ?"

"No, nothing of that sort. It is not the body, the least part, that I have got back after I thought I had lost it ; it is the nobler part, the real life of the man. If one can have the substance, the real spiritual part, the loss of the other is of less consequence. That is the way I comfort myself. Having any one in your arms doesn't necessarily make them near to you ; and is not that absence worse than to miss the arms, but yet be sure the spirit is close by ?"

"I cannot understand. It seems so strange and new to me. I cannot grasp the idea, or see how it can be. The two worlds of the quick and the dead are so far apart, so hopelessly separated."

"Not necessarily. We can have it so if we want to. Our risen Christ is surrounded by those who are dead to us. He is not separated from us : why should they be, except by our own blindness and hardness of heart, our unworthiness to receive such guests ?"

"How can we know any thing about them ?"

"Don't we know a great deal about the Saviour's love and character, never having seen him ? This is surely less wonderful. If we believe that he controls us by his spirit, is it less credible that one of his children whom we loved here, should influence us in the same way ?"

"It is very beautiful," Eleanor said, with a longing sigh, "I wish I could believe it. I wish I could have any thing to prove to me that it is so."

"Often when I have been comforted in this way, I have said to myself, This must be all a fancy, and tried to reason it away, fearing I had cheated myself with what I wished for so much: but it was never without the consciousness that I was faithless, and did not deserve it, if I must first have tangible proof."

"How did you first become conscious that he was near you, and helped you?"

"It was so gradual, that I hardly know how I first knew it. My grief was softened; I seemed to realize that I had not lost him so entirely as I thought; that because he was away in the body, he was not necessarily away in the spirit; that while time and space confined the body, the spirit was unconfined. | Don't you know when you are separated from friends to whom you are very much attached, and of whom you think a good deal, how you often feel their presence near you, so strong that you can hardly believe they are not absolutely in the room, and you gain from them the same pleasure of nearness as if they were there? We all know that is so, have often felt it, yet we cannot say how it is. Some call it magnetism, some one thing, some another. Yet no one can define it. This is the same. A sense of his presence helps and comforts me. How it is, I do not know. We err greatly, I think, in putting or imagining such a thick veil between us and our dead. We

make it thick with our blindness and insensibility to spiritual things."

"David said, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me!'"

"Neither shall he. The body that is sown is not allowed to come back to us here, for then Death would lose his sting in a way very different from that spoken of by St. Paul. But we are not told directly that their spirits cannot return. Solomon says, 'Thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit.' St. Paul himself says, writing to the Colossians, 'For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, enjoying, and *beholding* your order.' If, while the flesh yet enfolded him, he could say that, I surely think, when the trammels of the flesh were gone, and the spirit free from its earthly tabernacle, he could say it much more surely. Our Saviour's body does not come back to us yet, but who doubts that his spirit does? We feel comfort from it, as from his actual presence. David speaks of God as 'a very present help in time of trouble,' and we have found his word true."

"But if it can be so, why are we not told, given some hint of it in the Bible?"

"I have often thought of that, and concluded that it was part of the great scheme by which we are now meant to 'see through a glass darkly.' The deep things are not now to be made too plain to us, or we would not search diligently for them. Perhaps it is not told plainly, because all of us could not take it; we are not ready for such heav-

only visitants, or do not need, or want them. I think the marvellous overshadowing love and power of God is shown in the difference between His promises and book, and those *we* make. We define and cut down, to a certainty; just so much money for so much merchandise, and Chinese money is of no avail in an American market. But it is not so with God. He leaves his promises open and free, so that all can take them, no matter what their need or want, and they fit each individual case as if written expressly for it. I sometimes feel inclined to complain that certain things in the Bible are not shown more plainly and unmistakably, and then, that very passage, perhaps, of which I was complaining, will, from its Divine broadness, be just what I want for two or three totally different times of need."

"Tell me something more about him," Eleanor said, returning to the subject that fascinated her, both for its strangeness and its promise of what she so much longed for. "It seems to me so beautiful that I want to know more about it. Are you conscious of his being with you all the time?"

"No, not always—sometimes not for a long time; but that is apt to be when I am worried and unsettled. I cannot bear to have my thoughts taken up so much with every-day cares, that I forget—no, not forget, but set aside—the friend who is waiting for me just beyond. I know he is, and that the only thing for me is to keep myself pure and unspotted from the world, to meet him."

"Is it only when you are quiet and alone that he comes to you?"

"No, not only then, though he comes oftenest at such times. Sometimes when I am very much harassed, like Martha, 'troubled about many things,' he comes to me, or I am conscious of his presence, and it quiets me as nothing else does."

"How?"

"Don't you know sometimes when a dear friend comes in the room where you are, his mere presence calms you and makes you happy? He need not speak to you or even look at you; it is enough to know that you have him."

"Yes," answered Eleanor, with a weary little sigh, "I know that. When we were first married, I was a perfect stranger to all my new relations, and dreaded them as I do all strangers. It was misery to me to visit among them as I had to, and I really suffered when in the room with a good many of them, they having their own interests, acquaintances, and understandings, of which I knew nothing. But when Brian came in, even though I was talking to some one, and, as you say, did not even look at him, I instantly felt happy and at ease, resting quietly in his love. And now that love is gone—"

"No, not gone, dear child," Agatha answered. "Don't add that unnecessary torture to your sorrow. Isn't it said of our Saviour, that 'having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end?' Would He teach

one of His redeemed spirits forgetfulness of *their* own? I can't believe that. The love you rested in is not gone, it is merely changed in form and its method of showing itself. It is higher, nobler; you can rest in it better than ever, if you only will believe it. I have that same feeling of rest in my friend's love. Next to God's help, the thought of that friend is my greatest comfort, trust, and rest—and safeguard. I am so thankful for it."

"How can you feel so? I would give all I possess if I could, but I cannot understand it. Death is only horrible to me. I do not see how any thing can make up to us for missing the arms and living heart that we leaned on and loved."

"It is a very great comfort that we can have such a friend, instead of a mortal, liable to err and to change—to whom sickness, suffering, and death must come, and whom we may lose by a worse loss than death; that our friend is a redeemed soul, is pure, spotless, forever ours, if we keep faithful; and that, free from all the sin and misery of earth, his life goes on forever with the Lord, in the glory and blessedness of the New Jerusalem. Why, the very thought is an inspiration, in which we can forget our own sorrow, that such an one is our friend, that he watches over us with the same loving care he gave us when on earth. It makes earthly cares seem slight, easy to be borne, when we think he is waiting for us just beyond, and that we must labor to be ready for him. It impresses me with the consciousness that it is only a little time until

we will be joined again in body as well as spirit. Let us be patient during that time, and get from our sorrow all the good we can. If we cannot have a pleasure, let us at least not miss the lesson."

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT troubles you to-day, Agatha?" Eleanor asked as they sat at their work the next day. "My fair prospect, that I love to look at in your face, is clouded. Don't look so sad, it makes me sadder than ever. It always pains me to see your calm broken; even now, when I know it is not all calm inside. Tell me, and let us help each other. 'Two are better than one, for if they fall, the one will lift up his brother.'"

"Is it any help ever to hear another person confess want of strength, or is it always best to give one's words no tongue?"

"I don't believe that is best; sometimes the very giving them tongue seems to strengthen you. A thunder-storm clears the atmosphere."

"I don't believe you know how much is suffered by quiet, demure people, outwardly calm—how they store up disquiet and passion, day, after day and think them suffocated, just to find a volcano, that burns all the fiercer for being hid down deep under the earth. Life isn't so safe in such places as where there is a little outlet all the time."

She was quiet a few moments, while Eleanor watched

her, and thought with surprise how unexpectedly her character was unfolding itself. The voice she spoke in was as new as if it had been a perfect stranger's, and as different as possible in its smothered heat from the way in which she had told her story the night before. Then her voice was calm and pure, with a ring in it, that gave Eleanor the strangest impression of its being *white*; and seemed so little of the earth, that she held closer to her friend, with an indefinite sort of fear that she might escape and suddenly disappear from her sight, and she would find that she truly had been entertaining an angel unawares.

Now it was the voice of a woman, and a suffering one, and the tears sprung to Eleanor's eyes as it met an answering chord in her own heart.

"This has been a wild day inside," Agatha went on presently. "I seemed to lose all control over myself. Such days I believe come after unnaturally serene, calm, and satisfied ones, when you rebel against every thing. Talking low and tender leaves such a hollow place in the heart when it is over."

"Such an ache that you wonder whether it is not best never to leave the commonplace; for stirring up the depths unsettles your life for such a time, that the only thing left you, the only way to be quiet, is to die."

"To be quiet is not the best thing this world offers us; there is something far beyond *that*, for us to seek."

"What I most care for is rest and quiet. It is all I have left to hope for."

"I think you will feel differently after a while. That is very apt, I think, to be the natural feeling after a great trial. As when you strike a violent blow with a hammer on a magnet, all the magnetism is taken out, so a great blow of sorrow on the soul for a moment takes out all the faith and hope; but they will return. I know well enough the dull ache, the despondent feeling, the aimlessness you fight against, but there is a way out of it: to live for others."

"But what crushes me to the earth seems to lift you from it."

"You say truly that the kind of love I have had is a help to keep above this earth; but even that is not enough alone. Once I was afraid I should think it was, but we are not left to ways of our own devising. One thing I always feel sure of, however I may doubt or go astray—that my friend is never unfaithful to me; that he is watching over and waiting for me, and ready to comfort me if I will listen. Don't you remember in 'In Memoriam' how they look

'With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all'?"

"Don't you ever feel impatient to go to him?" Eleanor asked.

"I think not—not to die, at least—because I feel as if I was only staying here long enough to be educated, studying in a convent till He is ready to take me. That

does not make me love life and other people less, but I think I should die without the rest and hope it gives me."

"It is wonderful to me how you can feel that nearness; but it may come to me. Our ignorance should never be made the boundary of our knowledge, as we are very apt to make it, and say a thing cannot be, because we do not understand how it can be."

"The law of attraction—whatever that is that draws matter together—is merely the law of love incarnate.' If that is—and I believe all the material world is so ordered as to explain to us through our senses the spiritual world—then it does not signify how far two are apart; they cannot be placed beyond reach of one another."

"I feel more rested now," she added, after a long pause, during which each had been thinking deeply, "and ready to wait for my love till he is given to me. 'The flesh warreth against the spirit,' but I know 'I shall be satisfied.'"

"Yes—at some future time, horribly indefinite."

"No, no! don't say that. Soon, as soon as this rebellious mood is gone, and I come back to my quieter self, I shall be willing to rest contented in my love. It is a great comfort to me, when these times of excitement come on, to know that I do, ordinarily, feel quite satisfied with what is given to me."

"Though it all seems so strange to me, Agatha, it is a comfort to know that it is real to you. I may gradually come to understand it, and, meanwhile, it brings me more

rest than any thing has done since his death, to know that there is a possibility of my not being entirely separated from him while this life lasts. I can feel more calm about it than ever before."

"It makes me very happy to think I should have the pleasure of giving even a little rest. Oh, how many there are who are dying of hunger for such a faith, 'who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage;' who still hold off from the fear that it is unscriptural and dangerous. To think that now we are just in the alphabet of life, and yet should fancy that we have compassed it all, when we cannot put two syllables together! The heavenly life! those are words ever to keep in mind when we are impatient with this life—eternal life for mind and heart and soul, and no lack of food for them, so soon as we will learn to take it."

"I do not feel fit to think of the eternal life. In fact, I sometimes wonder if I ever think of it, except as a place where I will meet Brian again."

"'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' We should be very careful, I think, not to limit our heavenly life by sowing sparingly for it; 'for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.'"

"My sorrow and trouble seem to have changed me completely, Agatha. I am not as I used to be. Sometimes I am rebellious and angry, then hopeless and depressed."

"If this life were all, it would be so sad to be separated from one you love, even for a little time. But remembering that both absence and companionship are necessary to teach us how to love, must make us patient and not neglectful of so many other blessings. It is only sad when frost blights and shrinks instead of sweetening us. A cutting wind or two doesn't signify after all, if they can be made to do a good work. And if for some wise reason we are kept away from our loved ones for the present, do not let us mourn over it as though there were not One who directs all our ways. Let us take hold with a good heart whenever there is any work."

"Your grief is older than mine, and you say yourself that time brings relief. I dread the cutting winds; I don't believe I will be made sweet by them, I fear their frosting me."

"I know my trouble being of longer standing makes it easier to bear. When it came, I too was rebellious, and dreaded it. But now, dear, I am thankful for whatever suffering I have had. Though I sometimes feel as I have done to-day, I usually feel quiet and trustful, with Graham's love here, and knowing that we have a Saviour who is redeeming us for himself—who gives pain that we may have the more joy by-and-by. Knowing that only by living in God's presence can we have life of the mind and soul, I don't ask what is beyond to-day."

"I cannot reach that state of peace yet. Perhaps I may, though I doubt it. Now—my life is one long misery."

"Does not the promise that the Autumn brings you, bring with it hope and comfort? I think it is the greatest comfort and blessing that could be given to you."

"Sometimes it does. But it seems so far off, and meanwhile every day is wretched because he is dead. Then when I do take comfort in the thought, for a little while, I remember, with a fresh sense of loss, that it will be a poor little fatherless baby."

"Better that than none at all," Agatha said under her breath. "But it will not be fatherless, dear, it will have two fathers in Heaven. Think what an inheritance that is for a child to come into. Remember those promises made for it: 'A Father of the fatherless is God in His holy habitation;' 'For one is your Father, which is in Heaven.' Then the promises for you, when you are lonely: 'The Father hath not left me alone,' 'and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' How often I have found rest in those words, and understood partly the meaning of 'these things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.' It is in overcoming the world, in imitation of Christ, that we will find rest."

CHAPTER IV.

MAY 27TH.

WHAT a strange sense of possible rest there is in what Agatha has been telling me about herself and her friend. I cannot understand it. But it evidently comforts her, and seems almost like a human companionship. It must be a delusion on her part; she must fancy it. Such a blessed thing cannot be possible. But then she is not a person likely to be carried away entirely by a fancy; there must be some truth in it, she has such good common sense. It is so hard to realize that such things can be, simply because we never have experienced them, thereby making our own ignorance a measure for all knowledge—"measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves," which is not wise.

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Why not? My loss is as great, my grief is as deep; why cannot I have the same great comfort?

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Why did that verse come to me so strongly that I was forced to write it down here? Is it an answer to my question? Agatha would say her friend suggested it to her, I suppose. I wonder if that is the way he comes to her.

Could that be a message from Brian? and if it is, what does he mean by it? Who are the pure in heart? Do they want to see God? I am afraid that I do not, for He seems so far off, and He took my husband from me.

Oh, Brian, Brian, you are the only one I want to see, you alone in all the broad universe of heaven and earth. What do I care for any one else, when my heart is hungry and thirsty for you? Can you come to me? Can you be happy way up in heaven, and see your poor lonely, heart-sick little wife down here longing for you, and not come to her if it is possible? Comfort me, for I need comfort sorely.

Are you here, my beloved, and has "darkness blinded my eyes" so that I cannot see you?

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

If they shall see God, surely they will also see His redeemed spirits. I am not pure in heart, I have nothing but hard wicked thoughts; so I suppose I am not fit to see them.

What is that Mrs. Browning says?

"Hold thy sobbing breath,
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong,
That so as life's appointment issueth,
Thy vision may be clear to watch—"

That is it, I suppose; "my soul cleaveth unto the dust," and is so dulled that it cannot perceive spiritual things. O God! I pray you, make me pure in heart, that I may be fit to have Brian come to me, and abide with me.

There is Agatha calling me: I must go.

JUNE 1ST.

What a pure, beautiful woman Agatha is! There is such a combination of strength and weakness in her—the strength and wisdom of age, and the purity and single-heartedness of a child.

"Wise as serpents and harmless as doves," I always think of her. I love her more, since she has told me of this sorrow of hers. It brings her nearer to me. Rich and surrounded by friends, I thought she could not understand, except from outside, my grief and loneliness; that, having lived the life of a petted child, it had all been smooth sailing for her, and that the course of my poor little bark, without rudder or compass, she could not understand.

I even quoted to her,

"Why, you have but fed on the roses,
And lain in the lilies of life."

And I thought it. How it must have hurt her, for she turned away her head quickly, and I thought I saw tears in her eyes. Dear, tender heart, how quickly it is moved. She would forgive me, I know, for the unintentional hurt, if she knew how sorry I was.

But I could not have guessed it. Her calm serenity seemed a part of her nature, and often baffled me, so that I did not know whether it arose from great shallowness or great depth.

Now I know the key-note, I can read her better, and

will not be so frequently chilled by her coldness coming in contact with my fire. The crater of a volcano, even if the fire has all died out, is better than the dead-level of a prairie.

This inward life she has led, has kept her singularly pure and child-like, free from the usual follies and affectations of young women. I feel that she is such a delicate nature, that I must handle her very tenderly. It would grieve me to think any harm came to such a beautiful organization through me. I have lived such an out-of-doors sort of life, in comparison to hers, that I fear some of the earth-soil may rub off on her. Another reason for seeking purity of heart.

JUNE 13TH.

Agatha has gone, and I am again alone—so lonely! I miss her very much. I did not think I would ever again be as fond of any one as I am of her—she helped me so much. It was a comfort to love her. Her stay only makes me more desolate, now she is gone.

My life is very empty. I have nothing—except a husband in heaven, not so far off as he once was (under her teaching I am slowly learning that I have not lost him entirely), and a little baby coming to me in a few months—my fatherless little child, Brian's legacy, left me to keep my heart from breaking.

Do hearts break, I wonder? If they do I should think it would be a blessed relief. Any violent emotion, any change from this constant aching, this dull monotonous

misery, that only changes for a still worse form—impotent rage and strugglings to escape from the hard and cruel fate that crushes me.

And yet—I was taught that God was good, kind, merciful. I know He is—with my brain, but the thought brings no rest, no comfort to my aching heart.

He said to the widow of Nain, "Weep not;" and He restored her son to her alive: did not command the young man to follow Him as He did others, for he was all she had. Why could He not have shown that compassion to me? he was my all.

Why need Brian have died?

That question I find myself asking all the time; why, when he was all I had, was he to be taken? And the hopeless silence answers me not a word.

JUNE 20TH.

The doctor has told me I must go away from the city, go to the country air. I said I did not want to go away from here; and when he said it was absolutely necessary for my health, that if I stayed in the city all the hot summer weather, I might not live, I told him, in a wild, reckless manner, that I did not want to live.

He was such a devoted friend of Brian's, and nursed him with me until the last, then taking all care off my hands, that he feels therefore a sort of guardianship in me. He looked very grave when I spoke so wildly, and said,

"Are you so good that you are ready to die? Are you

so certain of meeting Brian hereafter, that you are anxious to throw away the chance, in mercy given you, of preparing to meet him? Are your wild rebellious thoughts likely to insure your spending a glorious eternity with him? Be careful that in your anxiety to escape a few years of separation from him here, you do not entail on both of you everlasting separation. Any one who is ready to die, is willing to live, if God so decrees."

Certain of meeting Brian! What a horrible doubt the question raised. I had settled it in my thoughts that life was the only thing that separated us, and that my death would join us without doubt. But this question shows me that there are far greater obstacles to our being together. Not farther apart were Abraham and Dives. If he is a glorified, redeemed spirit, what can he have in common with such a wicked, rebellious heart as mine?

Brian, forgive me; I will try to be good—to prepare to meet you. You were always kind and patient with your impatient little wife; don't give her up now, in her sore trial. It is so hard to be good without you to help me, my beloved!

JUNE 22D.

I have written to the doctor, and told him that I was ready to go into the country, when and where he thought best. I have also written to Agatha, to beg that, if possible, she will come to me for some of the lonely time.

JUNE 23D.

A note from the doctor says that I must go at once

to the mountains. He has written to some friends of his, who have promised to take me to board with them, as long as I wish to stay.

I suppose it makes no difference how soon I go. It is as easy now as ever to leave my grave, if I must.

It is for your sake, Brian, that I go away from all there is left me of you; for your sake, that I may have more chance of meeting you.

My grave! where lies, with my brave, noble Brian, all that is best and real of his little wife. But the grave is cold, and does not need the poor empty husk that goes there to weep over what was once her own.

The birds will sing over it as sweetly, and the sunshine will be as bright, if I never see it again. Perhaps, after all, it is in safer keeping than mine.

My six feet of earth, my only possession, where lies buried all my life and hope.

He used to sing me a little song, with his full, deep voice. I can almost hear it now. The last lines were:

"The grave is cruel, the grave is cold,
But the other side is the city of gold,
My dearest, dear little heart."

The city of gold does not make you forget me, does it, Brian? In all the marvellous glory of that New Jerusalem, so dim to my tearful eyes, am I not still, as I was in those dear old days, your "dearest, dear little heart?"

JUNE 25TH.

I start to-morrow morning early. I went, this evening, for my farewell visit to my grave. Perhaps I shall never see it any more. But it isn't treason to say that I will not mind it so much. It is not as much to me as it used to be.

A new feeling seemed to come to me this afternoon about it. Perhaps the sorrow I felt at parting with it gave me the feeling. Perhaps it was something more beautiful and comforting. I hardly dare to hope so yet; it seems too strange and good; but as I was sitting by his grave, I went over, in my thoughts, all our life together since he first found me, a lonely governess in a house where he was visiting physician, and brought me through a severe illness, and married me, that I might have a change of air and scene, up to the time when I sat by him as he lay on the bed, very still. The true eyes, that had looked tenderly upon me from the first, closed; the lips, that never spoke but for some good, noble purpose, closed; the strong hands, that had led me so pleasantly along, ever since they first touched mine, closed,—all closed tightly, forever, leaving poor little me shut out.

As I looked on him then, and felt that was not my Brian (for when had he ever let my grief go unsoothed?), so this evening, sitting by my grave, I began to realize that he was not there either; that, if I wanted to find him, I must look elsewhere, for this was like going to the press where lay the clothes of a dear friend you wanted to see.

It was a comfort to see his clothes; but what was that, when, by searching diligently, you could find him?

It gave me new strength to seek for him, and such a wonderful sense of relief to know he was not lying under that mound. Ever since that day when I put him there, that mound of earth has lain heavy on my heart, and now the weight is gone.

They said, at his funeral, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." My Brian, the least hair of whose head I loved, is not lying there. What I laid there was not the real Brian, any more than this dress I shall lay away in my trunk to-night is the real me.

I have always known this, but my heart never realized it before.

Then I laid my head down on the grave, and tried to realize that spiritual body which Brian had. While I was thinking, I fixed my eyes unconsciously on a low branch of the elm-tree hanging over us, not seeing it until my attention was drawn by its vibrating strongly, though there was no wind. I looked closer, and saw a large cocoon hanging by a slender silken thread, and from it the butterfly was making its escape.

Slowly and with difficulty it emerged and stood on the branch, unfolding its wings. I watched it, till presently it flew off, at first only from one leaf to another, then in a wider circle, then quite out of sight, coming back, though, to the neighborhood of its old shell two or three times before it finally disappeared.

It was a wonderful lesson to me. I had seen the same thing before, but it never meant any thing but a butterfly coming from a chrysalis. But now I seemed to understand from it how impossible it is for us, while still in the earthly body, to understand or take in the glory that the spiritual body will possess.

Could that poor worm, before it shut itself up in its case, in the silent faith of which nature is so full, and which should shame us, immortal souls, into a better imitation of it,—could it have any idea, the most remote conception, of what a beautiful thing it would be when it came out?

"They shall be clothed in white," emblematic of the purity of heart that they must have to see God.

I began to realize to-night, for the first time, what Agatha meant by the presence of her friend. Brian seemed almost near to me. Having put out of my mind his being shut up in that awful coffin, down deep in the earth, it was easier to realize that he himself could be with me.

I can leave the grave to-morrow, I think, with a braver heart than I have known since I lost sight of him.

Brian, dear husband, "what God has joined together," surely He will not put asunder. And no man, place, or circumstances can part us without His consent.

CHAPTER V.

JULY 14TH.

AGATHA could not come to me now, and I am alone, still alone. Will that always be my cry? What do people who are left as I am, do to conquer this awful, suffocating feeling of loneliness? I wish I knew. I feel as if it would kill me.

Before Brian found me I was lonely, but then I was ignorant; I never had been any thing else. But since I have known what loving companionship was, to miss it is like missing the air we breathe.

Yet I am not quite as lonely as I was in that house in the city. There is something in these country sounds that gives a wonderful feeling of rest. The quiet sinks into my heart. There is no quiet in the city; you never lose the noises made by man. But here, the noises made by God's harmless creatures only make His silence deeper and clearer, and all good things seem nearer.

I love the quiet here, for in it Brian seems nearer to me than in the rush and bustle of ordinary life. Sometimes I remember him so distinctly that I even fancy I hear his voice.

Sorrow makes a silence in the heart through which God's voice can be heard. / I wonder if that is the mis-

sion of sorrow, if it is not merely a malicious exercise of power, as I have so often thought it. That must be a wicked thought; God cannot be malicious, or He would not be God. Isn't it Shakespeare who says,

"There is purpose in pain,
Otherwise it were devilish."

What is the purpose in all the pain of heart that I have suffered and am suffering? Agatha said to me once, "If we cannot have a pleasure, let us at least not miss the lesson."

Once, when I was a school-girl, I had a lesson that I hated and said I would not learn. As a punishment, I was sent to my room to stay alone until I learnt it. I stayed there very long, two or three days, and wouldn't learn it; at last I got so lonely and tired that I took the book and studied it until I knew it.

I am lonely now, and so tired I will try to find this lesson and learn it. Who will teach it to me?

"Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

How strange it is, that these verses of Scripture I have learned as mere words should keep coming back to me as answers to questions, almost as if another person had spoken them. Would Agatha say it was Brian made me remember them? That is a beautiful, comforting idea, but it seems more likely that it was He who said them who made me remember them.

JULY 26TH.

Mr. Sherrard must be a very good man; he looks like it. I am glad he is boarding here, though I dreaded the idea of having any one else in the house. His wife is a lovely little woman, and, with that pretty baby, I have taken quite a liking to her.

He is not like so many clergymen you meet, long-faced and doleful. He does not ask you, "How is your soul?" as a doctor would say, "How is your tongue?" and when you tell him, shake his head and say, "very bad, very bad. You must take a large dose of repentance, and turn from the evil of your ways, or I fear you'll be lost."

What little I have heard him say about being a Christian, none of which was to me personally, seemed to be about loving rather than fearing God; "rejoicing in the Lord" rather than looking as if you had lost your last friend whenever you mentioned His name or service. They talk about muscular Christianity: he must be a healthy Christian, without any mental or moral dyspepsia, and with a good sound Christian digestion.

I shall perhaps ask him some of the questions that trouble me so much. He may be able to answer them.

His wife is very pleasant to me. She doesn't try to make me talk, or amuse me—or comfort me. She just lets me sit still in her room, when I go in, and watch her moving about, or playing with the child, or singing it to sleep.

I love to watch the child, and think of my little one,

my baby. Will it bring to my heart the rest I see in her face? Will my heart be able to smile to it, or only my lips?

Those two people must be very happy in their hearts, for their happiness to shine out all over them, as it does.

JULY 27TH.

I took up a paper to-day, and my eyes fell on an article, regarding the recognition of friends in Heaven.

The idea of there being any doubt on that subject, struck me with horror, and I read the article through eagerly, to see what ground there could be for it.

It is horrible, and not to be tolerated for a moment! Not know Brian! Why, heaven would not be heaven without him. I could not believe in such a heaven. Why do people try to reason themselves out of what every instinct and feeling tells them must be so? I cannot believe it, and yet—the very idea of a doubt being raised makes me shudder with horror. I will speak to Mr. Sherrard about it.

JULY 29TH.

I have talked it over with him, and will put down as much of what he said as I can remember, so that if, forgetting how entirely he has silenced all doubt in my heart, I should be troubled by this idea again, I can just come back to my little book and regain the comfort I have received from his words.

I commenced by telling him what I had been reading, and how it had distressed me.

"Why add to your distress by such unnecessary discussions?" he asked.

"I do not intentionally," I answered, "but the doubt had never entered my mind before, and when it did, I was so shocked at it, that I could not resist seeing what argument they could bring to prove such a dreadful thing."

"What were some of these arguments?"

"One was, that death would change us so much that we could not recognize each other."

"Perhaps that reason might hold good if we ever expected to recognize the dead in our present state. But when we meet friends there, we shall be as much changed as they are. Then the change in us may not be to something so entirely new, as we seem to think necessary; it is much more likely to be only the purifying and perfecting of what we are now."

"Do you think that?" I asked, rather surprised.

"Yes, I do. We were made, we are told, in the image of God. How could we be made better? It is only sin that has changed and sullied that divine image. Take away the sin, and the effects of it, and again we are in His image."

"When He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!"

"Yes, that is it. If we were to see Him now, we would not recognize Him, for our eyes are darkened. But when we meet Him when He appears, we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. The transfiguration on the Mount was probably intended in part to give the disciples some idea

of what they might be when the mortal had put on immortality."

"How did they know Moses and Elias? They had never seen them."

"Most probably it was by intuition. They were in an elevated condition of mind, removed in a manner from the earthly influences that blinded them. The wonderful sight of the transfiguration had lifted for a moment the veil from before their eyes, and they were conscious of the spiritual influences that constantly surround human beings; their perceptions became clear and true as we suppose they shall be in Heaven, and in that state they knew Moses and Elias, who were only strangers to them in the flesh.

"But to return to the first question. Even if we do not recognize our friends by sight, we shall know them by an intuitive knowledge of their real selves. It is not the mere bodily presence of our friends that we love. If it was, truly we might sorrow as one without hope, when we lay that body in the grave.

"Much as we love the bodies, it is the true, spiritual part to which our hearts go out in loving recognition, and claim as our very own. Here, in the body, that inner self shows forth through the medium of the body, and we know that the true force of our friend is often lost through the imperfect nature of the medium.

"But if we regard glorified bodies—and we have every scriptural right so to regard them—as free from those obstructions that hinder them while in the flesh, is there not

every reason to suppose that we will more easily recognize that which was so dear to us in our friends when on earth?"

"It does seem so," I answered, a thrill of joy shooting through me to think that there I can show Brian the deep reverential love that fills my heart to him, which when we were together on earth was so overwhelming in its force, that words and actions faded away in a total inability to express it in the least. Then he will know the deep truth of his little wife's love. My eyes filled with tears, and a better possibility came to me.

"If the glorified spirit has that keener vision, that clearer perception," I asked, "it isn't confined alone to those he meets in the same state, is it? Surely he can be conscious of the better part of us who still walk in darkness, can know what is true in us, and see what we would be but for the hinderances of the flesh?"

He saw the hungry look in my eyes, and answered me with wise, tender words.

"Our Saviour knows us—our love, our trials, our failings. Look at Peter's answer to Him when asked the third time, 'Lovest thou me?' 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee;' yet he had denied Him in His hour of trial. But he was acknowledging, in that assertion, the divinity of Christ; 'thou knowest all things, thou knowest that though I denied thee three times, I mourned over it, repented of my faithlessness, and that I do love thee.' There is the promise you repeated just now,

we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Surely, a small part of that likeness, when we think of what it can mean, is the clear vision that will enable us to know the hearts of those we left behind us, and to appreciate their trials and efforts, as Christ, being tempted in all points like as we are, appreciated our temptations."

We were both silent for some time, then I said,

"Moses and Elias knew each other, for they were talking together with Christ of His decease. They must have known each other in heaven, for they had lived on earth hundreds of years apart."

"The rich man, when he was in torment, not only knew Lazarus whom he had known in life, but he knew Abraham whom he had never seen. He mentioned them both by name. He does not ask Abraham to send down that glorified spirit who was resting in his bosom, but says, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send down *Lazarus*, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue;' he not only knows him, but, it seems, knows that he has become a happy spirit and a forgiving one. We have no reason to suppose that in life Dives ever did any thing for Lazarus, yet he asked for him to come and moisten his tongue; he acknowledges their respective changes, and expresses no amazement that he should be craving a favor from the poor beggar that lay at his gate, for he is as conscious of their difference as he was in life.

"So he not only recognized Lazarus and Abraham in heaven, but, to answer your question just now, he was also

conscious of his friends on earth; for when Abraham told him of the great gulf which neither of them could pass, he prayed that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house, to testify unto his brothers, lest they should come into the place of torment where he was.

"'I have five brethren,' he says, not 'I had,' but 'I have,' acknowledging his connection with them still, and his continued interest in them, for he wants them to be saved. All of which shows that he had not by dying severed all connection with his former surroundings or changed into a completely different being. Indeed, Abraham reminds him that he in his lifetime had his good things, while Lazarus had his evil things, and that now because he had not made the proper use of his blessings, he was tormented, while Lazarus was comforted."

"But that is only a parable," I said; "it is not a recital of an actual occurrence."

"Parables were used to explain the truth more clearly than it could be done by mere precept. If He had known that the dead would not recognize each other in the Hereafter, would He have told them of such a scene, for which He knew there was no foundation in truth? Would that have been like His method of teaching, who called himself '*the Truth*?' A parable is, of course, full of imagery, that it will not do to interpret too literally; but leaving out all the imagery, there is the plain statement of recognition in heaven.

"Again, when He comforts Martha, when Lazarus is

dead, He says, 'Thy brother shall rise again.' What sorry comfort it would have been to the lonely bruised heart, if that had only meant, 'He will rise again, and be happy, but you won't know him; you are henceforth nothing to each other; he stopped being your brother when he died; that is all done away with in the future.' No! every feeling in us revolts against that idea. He told her, and with that same voice which soon after groaned and wept over his dead friend, He tells us for all ages, 'Thy brother shall rise again,' thy husband, thy father, all the dear ones, over whose going we have mourned, they shall all rise again, and be to us not only what they were when they fell asleep, but more, far more. As Christ's love is more to us now than any human love can be, so will our friends' love be as much more to us there than it is here, for we will learn from the great Teacher how to love, and 'be able to comprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ'—and, perhaps, to love like Him.

"Is the 'unity of the spirit,' St. Paul preaches, to be broken, simply because we have left behind us these discordant elements that so often make strife, and have gone to dwell 'forever with the Lord?' Is brotherly love to continue here, only to be lost there? Is it like God's plan to waste any of His good things? He has made these ties of love and kinship one of the strongest parts of our nature here: is it likely that He meant them to stop at the grave, and that the other life should be filled with entirely new ties? Would there be any reason in our having a circle of friends

near and dear here on earth, only to lose them entirely when we go to heaven, and have to make new friends?"

"They say the love and worship of Christ will occupy us entirely—that our recognizing our friends would make partialities." I said, giving the last argument and the one that gave me the greatest uneasiness. For I felt that I did not love Him better than I did Brian—that heaven, to me, was having Brian forever, without the fear of parting any more.

"As it is here, so it will be there," he answered me, "only in a purer, sinless state. Here Christ should be the first. 'He hath put all things under His feet;' we should do the same in our hearts. But is it likely that we will know *only* Christ? What kind of a place would it be where we would all know Christ, and none of us know each other? And, if we knew any one at all, why shouldn't we know those who were nearest and dearest to us on earth? It would be more in accordance with God's earthly dealings with us.

"Nothing should be allowed to be above or before God. We are so apt to put every thing before Him, that if we examined our hearts closely, we would find often that He was thrust away in a corner. We are ready to receive and entertain every thing but Christ. Our hearts, like the inn at Bethlehem, are too full for our Saviour. There is room for every worldly pride and pleasure, but 'there is no room' for the child Jesus to be born. Such houses will be left a perpetual desolation.

"He calls Himself the First and the Last. We are commanded to love Him beyond every thing ; if necessary, to forsake houses, or brethren, or sisters, or wife, or children, or lands for His name's sake. Yet that love does not in the least hinder our loving our other friends, if we do so in subjection to the higher love. Why, the whole of the New Testament is full of it. 'Who loveth God loveth his brother.' 'By love serve one another.' 'If we love one another God dwelleth in us.' 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.' It is love to one another as well as to God. 'If ye love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God whom ye have not seen?' So love to our brother is made in a manner the foundation of our love to God, the stepping-stone to it.

"We cannot love God too much, but our brother we can. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Let us be careful that we do not turn our blessings into curses, by inordinate and sinful affections, and make love, that He has given us to make earth happy, the means of making our future wretched."

"But that idea of partialities in heaven?" I asked. "No one would be so insipid as to love every one alike."

"I do not know that that is necessary. In the first place there will be no jealousies or emulations in heaven to be roused by partiality. We will love every one, with that all-embracing love that communion with God will in-

crease in us. But I decidedly incline to the idea that we will have there, as here, particular friends, those who are specially suited to us. Christ gave us His example. There were the family at Bethany who sent word to Him, 'He whom thou lovest is sick ;' of whom it is said, 'Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.' There is a particular friendship. Then there is that disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on his bosom. He loved them all ; that must have been a peculiarly deep, close affection. Indeed, we see it in all of the writings of that beloved disciple ; more than any of the others he dwells on love. His was truly 'a life hid with Christ in God,' and shows the spirit that close communion with our Saviour will give. So we love Him rightly, we may love any and all in Him. 'For love is the fulfilling of the law.'"

CHAPTER VI.

AUGUST 5TH.

I WAS talking to-day to the Sherrards. I was in one of my old hopeless moods, when every thing within is "blackness, and darkness, and tempest,"—when Brian is lying in his grave and is not in heaven, and I seem to have no hope here or hereafter.

I was in that desperate state when it is a relief to speak just as hopelessly as you think, and I did it.

I had just said there was nothing worth living for, and that I wanted to die.

"Don't you think you are rather morbid?" Mr. Sherrard asked.

"Morbid?" I asked, in surprise, stirred out of myself for a moment by what seemed to me such a queer name to give to my grief. "Why, I certainly thought I had every right to mourn for my husband."

"Yes, to mourn, certainly," he answered, "but not as one without hope. The Bible says, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' not because they mourn, but 'for they shall be comforted.' Those who have never mourned, can never know the joy of having the Comforter sent to them."

"Ah, but He is so long in coming."

"He comes *just* as soon as we are ready to receive

Him, as soon as we cease to hug our sorrow close to us, so that it hides every thing else. When we are ready to open the door to the Comforter, and trust to Him our dear sorrow, then He comes and dwells with us. He makes it His own, so that we do not bear the whole burden, for 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Then the longer He dwells with us, the more 'the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' The promises are not that He will comfort us some thousand of years hence, but He is 'a *very present* help in time of trouble.'"

I did not say any thing; my heart was too full for words. Presently he again spoke.

"St. Paul says, in the midst of all his troubles, 'The time is short, it remaineth therefore that they that weep be as though they wept not.'"

"How can we help weeping when our hearts are torn by the death of our dearest friends?"

"We are not told not to mourn when friends are taken from us; that would be unnatural, and heartless. But as the time is short, we must set bounds to our grief. It cannot be for very long that we will be troubled. He wishes us to have peace; He does not say that our troubles are nothing, but light compared to what is to be revealed to us. Can we weep now? 'These light afflictions endure but for a moment, and work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'"

"The time may be short," I answered, almost bitterly,

"but very often with the human heart, as with its Divine Maker, one day is as a thousand years. It doesn't comfort me much now, to know that I can't suffer much more than fifty years."

"Perhaps not now, but doesn't it comfort you to think of the wonderful sympathy that our Saviour has for you in your grief? He knew what it was. There is that great token of His human love, that on the way to the grave of Lazarus, He wept, so that even the Jews said, 'Behold how He loved him.'

"We are apt to err, I think, in not ascribing enough humanity to Christ—in thinking of Him too much as God and not enough as man. There, His humanity triumphed for a moment, perhaps that all who weep might feel certain of His companionship in their tears. As God, He knew that in a few moments Lazarus would be alive and among them as of old. As man, His dear friend was dead, he was going to his grave. Mary, the sister of the dead man, who seems to have been particularly devoted to our Lord, had just uttered that touching complaint, so full of trust, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' The human companionship He loved, gone, the friend who had sat at His feet with loving attention to His words, grieved by His apparent want of thoughtful care for her, all combining, made Him groan in the spirit, and the man Christ Jesus wept."

My heart was softened, and tears were in my eyes, unlike the burning ones I had wept alone in my room in

the morning. That thought of Jesus weeping over a dead friend was a great comfort to me. He did know what it was to have them leave us. The tenderness in the words, 'Behold how He loved him,' filled my heart with a sense of nearness to and companionship with our Saviour, that gave me a feeling of ecstasy. I was no longer alone in my grief. He mourned with me, and He had promised that my mourning should be turned into joy. I did not see, now, how it could be, but He had promised, and I knew it would be performed.

"'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father,'" Mr. Sherrard said, so softly that no sense of the speaker interfered with the force of the words. The Comforter himself must have put those words into his mind to say, for it was an answer to me. That was the way my weeping would be turned into joy. Those words seemed to belong so entirely to Christ, that I had never thought of their applying to Brian. But *he* had gone to the Father, gone with our elder brother. Was my love going to be such a selfish one that I would wish for him back, or mourn, "because he was not?" Did I love myself better than I loved him? Or was I willing to be lonely and sad for a few more years, that he might walk in the light of God's face, free from sorrow and pain? Oh, to think of him, whom I loved best on earth, being free from all the inevitable sorrows and pains of earth, being one of the redeemed, whose food was the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God!

O God! I thank thee that whatever befalls me, he is safe; that whatever clouds come before my eyes, he sees Thy face, for he *was* pure in heart.

I think to-night if one word of mine could bring him back I would not utter it. I thought of him as being kept away from me against his will, wanting to get back to me as much as I wanted him. But he sees God, and surely he can trust me in His hands.

I know that this happiness will not stay with me always, but I am thankful to have felt it; and having felt it once, it will be easier to feel again.

My Brian—safe in heaven—

"Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time is come for taking thee;"

and when the right time comes, my darling,

"I'll join thee all the fitter, for the pause,
'Neath the low door-way's lintel."

AUGUST 12TH.

Since Brian went away, but more particularly since that day when I first seemed to realize he was not in the grave, and have felt so differently about him, so much more hopefully, I have thought much more frequently of where he has gone. Heaven, when our friends are there, is another, a closer heaven than it ever was before.)

We are apt to think of it either not at all, or as a place to which we have got to go some time or other, without considering it an inestimable privilege; or we

think of it so very vaguely that some of our treasures have to be taken there, to draw our hearts and thoughts after them;

Truly "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." My treasure is above, and more and more my thoughts love to dwell there.

Doctor Hamlin sent me here for mental, spiritual, more than physical health, I believe. The Sherrards seem to know and love him very well.

AUGUST 18TH.

I received a letter from Agatha to-day, telling me she is coming very soon. I am glad, for I want her more and more every day. Her presence makes me more glad than any other earthly thing.

Mr. Sherrard was reading Comus to us yesterday as we sat under the trees with our work. I was particularly pleased with the manner in which the brother spoke of the sister, it applied so well to Agatha, in my mind; particularly those lines:

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And, in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants,
Begins to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,

And turns it by degree to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal."

That is very beautiful, and seemed to bring her before me in a strangely real manner. But it is not as beautiful or as real as,

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

That strikes me with fresh beauty and delight every time I see it or think of it; and I long for that purity of heart. I am very tired of the continual jar and discord, the murmuring and sighing that goes on within. I "cry peace, peace, and there is no peace."

AUGUST 19TH.

A lovely Sabbath morning this has been. There is that wonderful life in the air that gives joy, in and of itself.

I went to church to hear Mr. Sherrard. His text was, "He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

It was a sermon that affected me as no other ever did. Listening to it, I felt that I could bear any thing that God sent me. Speaking of our life, he said,

"There is no room in it all for impatience, for God is in it all."

I think I will never forget those words, they made such an impression on me. I thank him for them from the bottom of my heart, and for the whole sermon; it made me feel stronger than I ever was before to bear trouble.

Such words and thoughts teach us how "the sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings," and they make us feel that we can truly say, "What thou sendest me, I will bear."

CHAPTER VII.

AUGUST 22D.

TO-DAY is the anniversary of our wedding-day. A sad and weary one it rose to me; so different—ah, *so different* from what it was two years ago, when that great loving heart took me for its very own; when that tender voice promised to love and cherish me till death us did part.

And nobly you kept that promise, Brian; you gave your little wife all the love she could wish; so much, that when it was taken away, dear, her life was left very lonely, forevermore.

I think I could have stood it better, gone through the day more quietly, if it had not been for the lilies, but they broke down all my courage.

I was sitting out under the trees, for I seemed to find more rest and comfort with only natural things around me.

"My heart in its sorest ailing,
Can be glad in the gladness of bird and bee,
Can turn to look at a fern or flower,
Soothed in its darkest and saddest hour,
When a human touch would be agony."

I was quieted by the peace of nature, and the day was beginning to lose its pain, and taking the place of that in my

heart was the sense of Brian's nearness, which comes to me often now, bringing with it strange, wonderful rest and hope. Can the rest be caused by the knowledge that my love is free from the troubles and cares that sadden and weigh down my heart? The hope is made greater by each day that brings us nearer together.

Sitting there with my love very close to my heart, Mr. Sherrard came up without my hearing his step on the soft grass, and laid a bunch of the lovely white day-lilies in my lap, saying they were the first in bloom.

I looked at them a moment, trying to keep back the swift-coming tears. But the struggle was vain. They broke down the flood-gates of my heart, and I sobbed like a child.

They were Brian's favorite flowers, from the time he had been a child. They belonged to him, he said, for he came when they were in bloom.

The morning we were married he brought me a bunch with the same words, "They are the first in bloom," adding some loving words about their having always been to him the personification of purity and love, and that henceforth they would be doubly dear, because connected with me.

I wore some of them on my breast when we were married. They were almost hidden by my veil, but the perfume, intense and sweet, came up to me with every movement, and mingled with the words,—an incense of God's own making. I hoped to escape seeing them this

August, for I knew they would be too much for me, but I had not fancied possible anything as painful as this.

I bowed my head in the midst of them, now I had them, and drank in the whole of the misery they gave me, which was tinged with a vein of joy that only made it more miserable.

"My beautiful lilies," I moaned, "my bridal lilies, you make me more alone than ever on this day, when I first wore you. Oh, Brian, Brian."

Mr. Sherrard must have gone away when he saw what trouble the flowers had brought, for presently when I looked up from them, he was not in sight. I was touched by his tact in leaving me without attempting comfort; such storms are best wept out, there is no comfort for them. But after the storm comes a calm, in which the still small voice can be heard again.

After a while, when I was quiet, with my precious lilies held close in my hand (for after the first burst of grief I was very glad to have them, they meant so much to me), the Sherrards came out from the house, down the lawn to where I was. He had two camp-chairs and her work-basket, while she carried the baby.

"May we take up our abode here," he asked, "if it will not incommode you?"

"I am very glad to have you. Thank you," I added presently, glancing down at the lilies in my hand.

"Sounds and odors sorrowful, because they once were sweet," he said, half to himself. Strange, I had been repeat

ing the same line to myself, and I looked up at him hastily, with a bow of acknowledgment. I did not dare trust my voice to speak.

After he had arranged the chairs, Mrs. Sherrard turned to me and said:

"Will you hold the baby for me? I have some sewing I want to do this morning."

I put out my arms for the little one, who came to me with a soft coo. I wonder if he had told her how I received the lilies. She knew how to comfort me then, the best way it could have been done, and she did it intentionally, for I knew the baby was so quiet that she seemed to sew as well with her in her lap as without; I had seen her do it.

The little one was very good, and patted my cheeks and played with my fingers, every touch of the soft hand sending a wave of rest and hope over me. She cooed for my lilies, but I could not let her have those; I was fond of her, but Brian's lilies must only be touched by Brian's baby.

"Shall I read to you?" Mr. Sherrard presently asked us. We said yes, and he took from his pocket a little well-worn book. I wondered what it was.

"Have you ever read 'The Celestial Country?'" he asked me.

I said I had not, and he opened it and commenced reading. The rhythm struck me as very quaint, and the first four lines chained my attention.

"The world is very evil ;
 The times are waxing late ;
 Be sober and keep vigil ;
 The Judge is at the gate."

It held me till the end, when I seemed to wake up as from a happy dream, and come back from Brian and that country, to the earth again. But after each such rest with him I seem nearer ; I do not come back quite so low on the earth.

I will copy some few lines of the hymn that stay in my mind, for I will want to read them to Agatha when she comes.

"There nothing can be feeble,
 There none can ever mourn,
 There nothing is divided,
 There nothing can be torn :
 'Tis fury, ill, and scandal,
 'Tis peaceless peace below ;
 Peace, endless, strifeless, ageless,
 The halls of Zion know.

"There grief is turned to pleasure,
 Such pleasure as below
 No human voice can utter,
 No human heart can know."

But Brian knows it, and that is better than knowing it myself.

When the reading was over, the baby was asleep in my lap, and as it was time for our tea we went in.

I went to my room, and going to my trunk took from its

hiding-place a treasure I had not worn since Brian left me, —a day-lily, delicately constructed of fine gold wire and small pearls. It was a fancy of his. I believe he had to send to the Continent to have it made. He gave it to me on the anniversary of our wedding-day, in memory of the first, he said.

I put it on to-day, in memoriam.

It looked strangely on my black dress, fastening my crape collar. The Sherrards noticed it, I saw. After supper they asked me to spend the evening in their room, saying it would be so much pleasanter to have me with them, than to think of my being alone.

I went in, and they were so kind and thoughtful that it opened my heart to them, and I told them about my lilies, and, led on by their kindly interest, told them something of my dear husband.

After we had ceased talking for some time, and I was lying on the sofa, watching the shadows cast on the floor by the bright moonbeams shining through the vine that hung outside of the window, Mr. Sherrard rose, and sitting down in front of the open piano, with a few soft chords sang another version of the hymn he had read in the afternoon.

His wife, without moving from her seat, joined in the singing after the first line or two, and I shut my eyes and drank in the beautiful air and words.

"No seas again shall sever,
 No desert intervene ;

No deep sad flowing river
 Shall roll its tide between.
 Love and unsevered union
 Of soul with those we love,
 Nearness and glad communion,
 Shall be our joy above.

"No dread of wasting sickness,
 No thought of ache or pain,
 No failing hours of weakness,
 Shall mar our peace again.
 No death our homes o'erspreading,
 Shall e'er our harps unstring,
 For all is life unfading,
 In presence of our King."

"Which are a shadow of things to come. But the body is of Christ," he said softly ; as the singing ended, he rose.

CHAPTER VIII.

"DEAR little mother," Agatha said, as stooping down she kissed Eleanor. "I am so glad to see you once more, and so sorry not to have arrived before. But I will make up now, by devotion to you and the little one, for my tardy arrival. Where is she?"

Eleanor lifted the cover gently, and showed the delicate little thing that had brought her such happiness, lying in a mass of soft white drapery, folded in her arm.

"Agatha," she said, in a low tone, too full of feeling to be any thing but soft and sweet, "I do not know what I have done to have such a beautiful blessing given to me. There is nothing in life to be compared with it. All the fame in the world is not worth half an hour of this. Since she came I have felt that earth could never again have such joy for me, as this first happiness in holding close to my heart and lips Brian's baby, Brian's dear little girl."

Agatha smiled, and looked down at the baby, but her soul looked out far beyond. There was that rapt, far-away gaze in her eyes, that of old had so often perplexed Eleanor—eyes that looked as though over the soul had passed, long ago, some sorrow that had taken the smile out of

them, and left a memory there which, though it did not sadden, solemnized them forever.

"I believe it, dear," she said, "I am very thankful for you, more so than I can tell.

"The only drawback to my happiness is that it seems so selfish to have all this great joy alone. But Brian is happy in it also, I know; and to him it seems only a very little time before we will both come to him up there. He can wait, he is never impatient, and that helps us to be patient. But Agatha," Eleanor said hesitatingly, for the marvellous fulness of the mother's heart in her made her feel keenly what an emptiness the want of it left, "two human hearts on earth ought to be made glad by a baby's coming. Won't you, dear, as we two are somewhat alike in our loss of the earthly love, help me to give my baby her dues? Won't you be the other heart that is gladdened by her coming? It will be such a deep gratification to me to feel that she comforts you, even in a little bit, as she comforts me. Won't you take her in, dear child?"

She laid the little one on Agatha's lap, who taking it in her arms hid her face for a few moments in the soft drapery. No one saw the hot tears that fell there, and when she lifted it up, all was peace again outwardly.

"Thank you for trusting the baby to me; I take the place you give me, and we will love each other better for having her. She will be a help and a blessing. Have you thought of a name for her yet?"

"Theodora," Eleanor answered softly.

The tears again sprang to Agatha's eyes, and made them glisten as she answered, with a kiss, and the low-spoken words,

"Brian will like that, won't he?"

"Yes. I am naming her as he would have done. His life on earth taught me the value of gifts, and now his life in heaven is teaching me that they are all from God. Oh, Agatha, it is so blessed to have his baby to comfort me, and to feel that he is close beside us. At first it was very hard to feel that he was away, that he could not share with me the joy I had in her—that I was alone in it. The first day she was with me I missed him, and longed for him as much as when he had just left me. Then there came back to me with her little soft breaths, as she lay asleep by my side, the consciousness that he was not gone; not only that he was near me in spirit, but that even his bodily presence seemed to come back in her in a measure, and I was happy again, for I knew he was happy."

"Yes, darling, his joy for you is even greater than yours. He is as much happier about this little one there, than he would be here, as he is better and more capable of happiness."

"I believe that now, though at first, after she came, it was hard to realize it; her being here was such a real present joy, that the spiritual part seemed harder to understand.

"What a joy it will be to love and take care of her," she continued, "to make her fit to meet him; to talk to her of him, and keep her from feeling fatherless. Papa must

be as real to her as Mamma ; she will learn to love him even better than she does me, and loving him there, even from her babyhood, part of her life will be in heaven."

They were both silent for a little while, each carrying on her own train of thought. Presently Eleanor said,

"How good it is in Our Father to give me this great mercy, in spite of all my ingratitude towards Him and repining at His treatment of me. I have wondered at it. Truly He rewards good for evil. I begin to feel that I can never repine any more at what He does ; that this baby's life will teach me that He is loving, that He knows what is best for us and will give it to us.

"I hope my life will be better for hers, that it will be more given to Him, in thankfulness and trust. The quiet time that I have spent here has been full of thought, and of growing love and peace. His peace I truly believe. With this pure little soul in my keeping, I must needs be more His.

"How could I ever meet Brian when I die, if I had let his child go the wrong path, and stray out of the true way. We must both be ready to go to him at the right time."

"Do not talk any more now, dear," Agatha said ; "they made me promise not to let you talk much. I will sit down here and we will see each other, since we must be quiet."

"It seems almost comfort enough to see each other once more, to do without speaking for a little while. Keep the baby," she added, as Agatha was going to lay her in bed

again. "I am jealous of any one else holding her, but I can spare her to you."

"Thank you, I shall value the dear little loan, and take care of it." And Agatha, holding the little one close to her heart, crooned a sweet old lullaby to it, until both mother and child were asleep.

And still she sat there, clasping the child in her arms. The song ceased, her eyes wandered from Eleanor's face, and she was

"Dreaming dreams of a life that was not,
Of a life that could never be ;
Yet living in trust that all was well,
Though the reason she would not see ;
Knowing His hand had guided her life,
And in heaven she'd satisfied be."

Under the tender nursing and attention she received, Eleanor gained strength every day, but the life of the little one faded away.

The mother did not appear to know it, but every one else saw it only too plainly, and merely refrained from speaking of it, from distress at disturbing the happy dream in which she had lived ever since the baby's birth.

She seemed so happy with the child in her arms, and talked so continually of how much brighter her life was, now that the baby had come, that they dreaded seeing the peaceful smile on her face give way again to the old sad, heart-broken look it had worn before.

But at last the physician, a kind-hearted old country

doctor, who had been very good and attentive, told Agatha that he could do no more for the child; she had better send for Mrs. Southgate's family physician, for he might save it.

Still wanting to spare Eleanor as long as possible, Agatha with a sad heart, wrote to her uncle, Dr. Hamlin, telling him all she could about the baby, and asking him to come down to them.

He came directly, and seeing the little Theodora, said he feared there was no hope for her, for she was not strong enough to live.

Mrs. Sherrard and Agatha in distress looked from one to the other, realizing for the first time how strong their hope had been that she would live, and how much they had expected from what Dr. Hamlin could do.

"How shall we tell Eleanor?" they both said.

"Has she no idea?" the doctor asked.

"None," Agatha answered, "and you cannot imagine how she is wrapped up in this innocent little lamb."

"Yes, I can," he answered, "I saw how she loved her husband; the same old worship. Poor child, I fear this sorrow will crush her entirely."

"She seems to have changed very much since the Spring," Agatha said, unconscious how much she had had to do with the change; "to be so much more patient and trustful, that it is a comfort to see it, and to be with her."

"Ah, my wise little niece," the doctor said, laying his

hand on Agatha's head, "you and the Sherrards may yet make her what she is capable of being, and what for my dear friend Brian's, as well as for her own sake, I want her to be. Her's has been a life of extremes, poor child! from the frigid zone of a fashionable boarding-school and governess-ship, to the torrid zone of his love and tender protection, which she just became thoroughly used to, only to lose. No wonder that her trust gave way at first; it was hard for all of us, but doubly hard for her. I am glad she is learning to walk in the ways of peace. May 'His rod and His staff' comfort her, when this little comforter is gone." And he took the child in his arms and looked at it with eyes which were as tender as a woman's.

"My dear old 'Brian's baby,'" he said to it, softly, "and you are going to leave us too. Was there no other way, less hard for us, of keeping you pure and unspotted from the world, but to take you from it? It is hard for us to understand.

"And she has to be told," he said, turning back to Agatha, and laying the baby in her arms again. "Tell her soon, then, for at the longest I think it will not be more than a few days. What does she call the child?"

"Theodora," Agatha answered.

"Just what he would have wished. I am very glad of that; 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light,' and if it goes back to Him, we must comfort ourselves that it is in safer keeping. I will tell her. Where is she?"

Agatha led the way to Eleanor's room, opened the door for her uncle, gave him the baby, and shutting it softly after him as he entered, went up to her own room to find comfort.

Dr. Hamlin entered softly, seeing that Eleanor was asleep, and telling the nurse that he would take charge, sent her out, and seated himself in the chair by the bedside.

He had not long to wait, for Eleanor soon opened her eyes, and at first greeted him with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure, which changed however in an instant, as, knowing how extremely occupied his time was, she asked him why he had come.

"I came to see you—and the baby," he said.

"Is any thing the matter with my baby?" she asked, with a low wail, partly gathering the truth from his manner; and she sat up and held out her arms eagerly for her. "It can't be much, certainly," she said, trying forlornly to comfort herself.

"I fear, my dear child, that it is the worst, deeply as it grieves me to think so."

"The worst?" she asked, as with anxious eyes she searched his face, as if trying to understand. Then as the meaning of the words came to her, she gave a little cry of pain. "Oh, you can't, can't mean that," and clasping the child close to her breast she bowed her head over it, moaning, "Oh, my baby, my little child, I cannot spare you too, you won't leave your poor mother, will you? You

are all she has on earth; stay with her a little longer, until she can go too. My child, my child."

"For Brian's sake, let her go," the doctor said, presently.

"He has all of heaven, and I have only my baby; surely I need her more than he does."

"Let her go, that you may both have her safe and pure forever. If she goes now, there is no doubt of her."

"But I would bring her up so that we would be together. Surely I can bring up my own child."

"If you are not willing to give her up to him now, dear child, when he sends for her, I am afraid you will hardly be able to bring her up for him. Our Father wants the tender little one under His immediate care."

"And I will again be left alone." Eleanor sobbed.

"Not alone, for the Father is with you," he said; "through every thing remember that, and you are safe."

"Leave her with me a little while now," she said, "and I will try and grow used to it. How long will it be?"

"Only a few days more. God comfort you, my child; no one else can."

And the doctor went out of the room, shutting the door, but keeping anxious watch outside until the low sobs ceased.

Then, after some time, he admitted Agatha, who with anxious, troubled eyes had joined him in his watch.

Eleanor was propped up in the bed with pillows, upon

which she lay back with her eyes shut, the little Thedie asleep on the pillow in her mother's lap.

"I am not asleep," she said, as Agatha stepped softly across the room.

"I wish you had been, darling," Agatha answered, as she stood by her and smoothed the soft wavy hair off her forehead, with tender touches. "It would have rested you."

"No, it is better as it is. I am more rested than I would have been by sleep. I have been trying to find out how I could give up my baby."

"And you have found out?"

"Yes; it almost seems that I have talked it over with Brian, and I can give her up now. He is so much better than I am, and as he is happier in heaven than on earth, so will she be. He can educate her better than I can, so I must not be so selfish as to want to keep her merely for my own pleasure when it will be so much for her profit. It is not easy to give her up, but they will help me to go through it. I am learning, slowly, to trust."

And Agatha, who knew through what deep wounds that lesson was often learned, could only comfort her friend with deep, true love and kindly sympathy.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN the family went into Eleanor's room the next morning, they found her sitting up in bed, Thedie lying in her arms.

When the doctor remonstrated, she said she could not waste any more of those precious days by being sick in bed; and when he looked down at the white face and patient, sad gray eyes, he could not say any more.

It was a very quiet time in the house while the little life was ebbing out. The chief thought in every body's mind was, "What could be done for Eleanor?"

All she seemed to want, however, was to sit with Thedie in her lap, hardly ever lifting her eyes from the dear little face she was so soon to lose.

Sometimes one and sometimes another would read to her as she felt inclined to listen; or, sitting around, they would talk in tender voices of where the little one was going, and each would speak of those whom they had there, whose presence made heaven a much longed for home.

So her thoughts were gradually taken more from the little fading life of the dear baby lying in her lap, up to that glorified life she would so soon wear.

A few days after the baby was two weeks old, Eleanor asked Mr. Sherrard to baptize it. She wanted to wait, for Brian's birthday was only three days off, but Doctor Hamlin told her that she had better not delay any longer, as the end might come any moment. So with a few earnest, tender words the little pure white soul that God was so soon going to take to Himself in heaven was given to Him on earth.

They thought how soon this little Theodora, over whom the three holy names were being said, would be wiser than the wisest of them, better than the best; and two sad hearts in that little company longed to depart with her, feeling that it was far better. But the heart still beat, the faint breaths still came, until sunset the third day, when, all of them watching, Dr. Hamlin said the end had come.

"She will go to Brian on his birthday," Eleanor whispered to Agatha.

She held the baby in her arms, holding one little hand, while Dr. Hamlin, tenderly holding the other, felt the faint pulse-throbs. With tearful eyes Agatha knelt by Eleanor's side with her arm around her, and the Sherrards were near by, asking in their hearts for help for her, feeling the powerlessness of human sympathy to comfort the mother's love and loss.

Suddenly the doctor looked up at Eleanor; she caught his look, stooped over her child, gave the little lips a long kiss, and, forgetting every one else, said in a low, clear voice,

"Here is our child, Brian."

The doctor felt one more faint throb of the pulse, and then all was still. Every one heard what she said, and after a moment's pause Mr. Sherrard spoke.

"And Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'"

Mrs. Sherrard took the dear dead baby from Eleanor's arms, and, motioning Agatha to stay with her, she went to prepare the little body for its last resting-place.

When she came back the two were just as she left them, sometimes whispering a few words to each other. She laid the little Thedie on the bed, and then brought Eleanor there.

She lay down by her child, and kissing the quiet pale lips, murmured to it as if it were alive,

"My baby, my dear little angel-baby, you are safe now and I could let you go. My two angels now, watching for me in heaven. Pray, Heavenly Father, do not let me be impatient to go to them; make me willing, now and hereafter, to wait Thy good time. Keep me trustful."

She was very quiet for the next few days while she still had her baby near her, very seldom speaking, as she sat close by its little body. When she did, it was in such a sweet, patient manner, that it brought the tears to every one's eyes. She would sometimes talk to Agatha of the hopes never to be fulfilled on earth that were given up with the little one, but usually only of the heaven where it was.

A few hours before the funeral, Mr. Sherrard came in where they were, and put in Eleanor's lap the last of the day-lilies. She looked up at him with almost a smile at his kind thoughtfulness.

"I can bear them now," she said, "I have been taught so much since that day by this little life. She came with the first and she went with the last," she added, as she placed the flowers around her darling; "she is as pure as one of them. Brian's baby and Brian's lilies, they belong together."

"For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Mr. Sherrard said.

"Yes, I think I will remember," Eleanor answered, "that her being with God is more than her being with Brian. I know I am apt to forget who is first in the kingdom of heaven."

CHAPTER X.

"WHEN our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, Agatha, how much we see, and how differently we see things. 'Eyes that have wept so much see clear.' I was walking in the garden this morning, and I saw a large pile of brush that had been cut, evidently some days. Twined in and out around it were three morning-glory vines, blue, pink, and white, cut off entirely from their supports and yet blooming."

"Without any roots at all?" Agatha asked.

"Yes; their leaves were all drooped and withered, their hold on life was gone, and yet day after day they burst forth into blossom, and in among the dead brush send forth their flowers. Down inside of the pile they were, as well as on top. Besides the withered ones of two or three days back, and the fair open flowers of to-day, there were the buds for to-morrow and next day, ready to bloom in their time."

"Why! how beautiful that is."

"And what a beautiful lesson it is to us. So our life should be, though affliction and sorrow cut us off from our usual roots, our hold upon the things of this world, and apparently we are thrown uselessly upon the brush, still we

can bloom. The earthly life which shows in leaves, may be withered and cut off, but still the spiritual life can flower—blue blossoms for the love we hold to our Father, though He slay us; red ones, in remembrance that He also was slain for us, and His precious blood shed; and pure white blossoms, that we may with His aid keep ourselves pure and unspotted from the world."

"I believe, dear," Agatha said presently, "that our Heavenly Father sends us pain and sorrow to deaden our love for this world, and to make us bethink ourselves of that above. If our lives were comfortable and happy, very few of us would ever think of, or care for, the life above."

"No, I do not suppose we would. I know I never thought much of it until trouble came. Then when my heart was sore pained within me, I cried, 'Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest!' I thought that was thinking of heaven and wanting to be there, but it was only thinking of myself, and being tired of suffering, wanting to get away from it. Since my baby went to God, and I prayed so earnestly that I might be taken with her, and notwithstanding all my prayers, I was left behind, every thing has seemed so very different to me. I have found that wanting to go to heaven does not necessarily imply a heavenly frame of mind; indeed, so far from it, it often implies an earthly one, that the real heavenly mind is 'doing the will of God from the heart.' So if He is not ready to take me now, I will try to do His will, and be satisfied to wait His good time, not only because

I cannot help it, and will have to wait, but 'from the heart,' until He is ready to make me happy and take me home."

"You remember where Saint Paul speaks of our having need of patience, that after we have done the will of God we might receive the promise. There is to be no haste to receive it, that promise of Eternal Life with the Father; but patience, that we may receive it when we have done the will. How full the Bible is of 'patience'—the 'patience of hope,' that is spoken of in connection with the 'work of faith and labor of love,' the 'patient waiting for Christ,' 'patient in tribulation,' 'be patient for the coming of the Lord;' we have such impatient hearts, so put out and vexed at the least-waiting, that the lesson of patience is much needed."

"And it is not only the patient waiting that is necessary, but doing also. Our Saviour tells us to 'bring forth fruit with patience,' and we are to run with patience the race set before us, 'the patient continuance in well doing,' that earns us eternal life. 'The perfect work of patience,' is the waiting and the doing."

"The promises in the Revelation are all made to him that 'overcometh,' not to him that hath overcome," Agatha said presently, after they had been thinking some time. "I hope we shall learn every day to understand a little more of what those promises mean; the tree of life of which we are to eat, and the crown of life we are to wear, the new name that is to be written upon us, and upon the white stone, and then the morning-star which He will give us.

I suppose that means Christ, for He is called the morning star. All these things, with their meanings of grand possibilities which our weak human minds cannot even conceive, are for him that overcometh."

"Oh, if we could only dwell more on the glorious life we will inherit, and less on the difficulty of gaining it, the struggle would be so very much easier, there would not be so many of us who

'By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life.'

"There is but one way for us: 'whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.' As the racer keeps his eye on the goal, and never turns to the right or left, but keeps straight on toward it, so must we do. Make the eternal life our goal, and the rough places in the way, the briars that tear us, and the sharp stones that make us bleed will hardly be noticed, or only noticed to make us haste the more to reach the end. What we most want will be shown by what we most seek for.

"We say we want heaven most, and yet spend all our time and strength seeking earth, and fool ourselves, and others, and, fearful as it sounds, expect to deceive God into thinking that we really do want heaven."

"Though we know those things are best, and even after our dearest ones are taken there, still, how we cling to the earth as if it was all we had, and are loth to give up the least of it. How many of us, who call ourselves Christians, and really think that we are, are practical infidels,—our

whole lives, that we think are very well spent, one long denial of God."

"What a horrible idea that is, and yet it must be so. Our Saviour says, 'He that is not for me, is against me.' There is no half-way recognized."

"And how can we really think we are for Him, when we so seldom think of Him, strive to do any thing for Him, or in any way do His will?"

"Then when He afflicts us, we think we have holy aspirations, because we are anxious to go to heaven, not to be with Him, but in the vain hope of being away from ourselves. Aspiration for better things is not wanting to change, because we are uncomfortable where we are, but is shown by Christian growth, as a transplanted plant shoots up and shows signs of life. The world cannot comfort a true Christian, God alone can. I am sometimes afraid that when we find ourselves comforted by other things, no matter how good they may be, that we are being led astray. In fact, the better the thing that comforts us, the more danger there is, for when we feel that it is a good thing that we are depending upon, the more apt we are to do it too much."

"How do you mean, Eleanor?"

"One thing is, I think, resting upon the idea of going to heaven, rejoicing in it, because it is a place of eternal delights, not because it is where God is, in fact is God. We are apt to make heaven in our hearts a very nice place, where we will have no trouble or pain, and have an indefi-

nite sort of good time forever and ever ; while in our theology we make it a place of everlasting psalm-singing, and staring pitiless sunshine, from which our weak human eyes shrink in pain at the very suggestion. I often and often have thought while reading or hearing that hymn that a midnight moon, or a clouded sun even, would be a great comfort after we had stood for a few hours that high noon. Both ideas are false, I think. It will not be, indeed when we dwell on the subject at all we must know it *cannot* be, a place of such frivolous pleasure as we imagine, or of such equally frivolous inanity.

"Why can't we think of it as a place of ceaseless aspiring, ceaseless content, constant progress, with none of the feverish haste and anxiety that progress entails here?"

"That must be the true secret of the heavenly state, I think," Agatha said. "It seems to be making more use of what we have gained here."

"Whatever it is, we are always to bear in mind that it is being with God ; *that* should be the first and greatest attraction to us. If we dwell upon the thought of heaven for any other reason, we are putting it before God, and, as I said, making it more dangerous, because it is a good thing to think of. If we will think whether it is God's heaven, or our heaven, we hope to go to, we will be less likely to err. The heaven, that the Bible gives us reason to hope for, is seeing God, walking with Him, sitting with Him on His throne, close communion with Him ; and though we will have our friends, and enjoy their society, still God should

be our first and greatest thought there, as He should be here."

"Yes, I know it," Agatha answered, with eyes that, looking straight before her, saw nothing.

"Oh, these moonlight nights," Agatha said, that night, as they were sitting together by the open window in their room. "How they do make me long for him ; they carry me back to the dear good old times so vividly, that I feel as if I could not endure it any longer, that I must have my love." and as she paused, she drew her breath in quickly in a half-sigh.

"Yes, I know just how miserable they can make us," Eleanor answered. "I have sometimes felt that the only safeguard was to keep entirely away from them, and have not looked out of doors from dusk to day. It is very strange how a sorrow that is so deep and constant can yet be made worse by little things, and yet we so often find it is so. Just when we think we are gaining control over our trouble there comes some little incident, that in happy days we would not have noticed, but that now breaks down all our calm : the floodgates are opened, and back rushes all the utter misery that we thought we had quieted."

"And it only seems the worse for the respite, as if it had just been gathering strength afresh to crush us."

"It is only life that can fear dying,
Possible loss means possible gain.
Those who still dread are not quite forsaken,
But not to fear, because all is taken,
Is the loneliest depth of human pain,"

said Eleanor, adding with a bitter cry, "Oh, Agatha, that is the worst, to not even have any thing to dread, every thing gone. It was just such a night as this that my baby was born; she would have been a month old. That evening I lay on the sofa in the Sherrards' room, talking to them, and all the time about my heart were buzzing happy thoughts of what was coming to me, of the unknown, dimly foreshadowed life that was possible for me to live. And it came, and stayed with me just long enough for me to know that as there was a fuller happiness for me than I had thought possible, so there was a fuller misery. Now all is gone, and I must take up my empty life. I used to fear living, but now I fear dying, for I cannot always feel as peaceful and happy as I did this morning, and when these wild tumults come over me, they make me so rebellious and wicked, that I am afraid of myself."

She bowed her head on her hands, and tears hot and heavy fell from her eyes.

"There, the worst of the storm is over," she said presently, lifting her face when the tears were all gone, "and I see how ungrateful I have just been. If we ever say 'all is taken,' it is because our eyes are looking inward and downward, instead of up. Whatever else is gone, we still have God."

"And the consciousness of our dear ones," Agatha said, "who are always waiting for us."

"Yes, I know my baby is 'grown a shining angel,' who

'watches me from heaven with tender, loving care!' but that seems strange—a reversing of the natural order. I have felt ever since she went such a wonderful sense of nearness to them, that the full loss never seemed to come to me until this afternoon. Around that bundle that came to me to-day from the village, was wrapped a piece of newspaper, and my eyes happened to fall on these little verses in one corner, the cry, probably, of just such another be-reaved heart as mine is :

'Ah, my darling little baby,
Have you left me quite alone?
Must I miss the pressure of your arms,
And never make a moan?

Will I never more behold you,
Are you ever lost to me?
Never feel your loving kisses,
As you sit upon my knee?

Come back, my precious baby,
Come and nestle in my arms.
Shield me from the great world's sadness,
Guard me from all earthly harms.

Perhaps in the great Hereafter,
I will find you once again,
And you'll be my angel-baby,
Free from every earthly stain.'

"Even the promise of the last verse did not comfort me for the earthly loss. My little arms, that would never give me a loving pressure; my little lips, that would never kiss

me, or call me the sweetest name on earth; the blue eyes, that would never brighten at my coming. Oh, Agatha! it hurts so."

"Eleanor," Agatha said, in a low voice, "you are better off than she was. Her baby was never born, or she would not have said perhaps she would find it hereafter. You are certain of yours; it is only a little separation, and then the stainless little soul your own forever. You are much more blessed than many; remember that, when you think of what you have lost. It is better to have lost a precious thing than to have to go through life without it."

"Yes, I know and try to remember it, but the flesh warreth against the spirit."

"Then think how much nearer we feel we are to our dear ones than so many who, so far as they know, lose them forever. That nearness is such a blessing."

"You truly say, Agatha, that it is a blessing to know they are near, helping us," Eleanor said, after they had been thinking for some time; "but we ought to be very careful to keep it a blessing."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Agatha, in surprise.

"That by making too much of it, we may take away all the good it does us, and make it do only evil."

"How?"

"The natural tendency we have, I think, is to put every thing before God, particularly those friends we love best. We love the gift so much that we forget the Giver; seeing that, He takes His gift for a little while to keep for

us, that we may learn to value Him as well. When we find that it is not entirely gone, that, though taken out of our immediate keeping and possession, still we can enjoy it in a great measure, we are so apt to go back to the old worship: to lean upon, and trust, in our dear one as we did of old."

"But they are meant to help us, I believe. We are told that He gives His angels charge over us, and it seems to me most likely that the charge would be given to the ones whom we have loved particularly on earth, and surely we cannot help trusting them, and resting in their love."

"We are told that he gives them charge over us, but nowhere are we told that we are to put trust or confidence in them; but throughout the whole Bible we are told, in some form or other, to 'rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.'"

"I do try to wait for Him, and rest in Him as patiently as I can," Agatha replied.

"But it is so easy, dear, to deceive ourselves, so hard to find out our true motives. I would not say these things to you, but that I have just been over the same ground unconsciously, until I was startled out of it by some things Mr. Sherrard said to me about it."

"Since you told me in the Spring how, though your friend was dead, you had not lost him entirely, I have been so much happier, even though I could not understand it; the mere fact that you felt it, comforted me. Then gradually it began to grow upon me how it was; very

slightly at first, then more and more, until sometimes I felt that I was not separated from Brian—that I could lean upon him for every thing even more than when he was on earth, for he was so much purer, better now; and again, as of old, I was making him my idol.

“Agatha, don’t you know that we can as easily make idols of dead friends as of living ones? and it seems to me more easily, for in our memory they lose all the faults they might have had, and we only remember what was best in them, with a reverent tenderness that we seldom give to living friends.

“The cry is as much needed now, as when beautiful old St. John wrote it from the Isle of Patmos: ‘Little children, keep yourselves from idols.’ The whole tendency of our lives is towards idolatry—the ‘inordinate affection’ St. Paul speaks of, the giving to the creature what we owe to the Creator. It is as difficult for us who have our treasures in heaven, to keep from it, as when we have them on earth. If we are not to seek aid from human creatures when they are with us on earth, but to rest upon God, and put Him first, why should we, because they have gone to heaven? That does not alter our relations with them or with God, in that respect. Still He should be first.”

“I have not thought, Eleanor, that I put Graham before God.”

“Forgive me, dear, if I do you injustice, and believe that I say this not without hesitation, but I have thought

of it so much lately, and felt that I must speak to you from my own experience about it, even at the risk of hurting you.

“It does seem to me that you are letting him fill up too much of your life, your feelings for him are getting far too strong a hold over you, winding their way down into your deepest life, so that I have sometimes felt a doubt, when you were speaking, whether you were talking of our Saviour, or of your friend; and several times you spoke of the one, when it seemed in the teaching of our faith that very decidedly you should have spoken of the other.”

Agatha turned her face towards Eleanor a moment inquiringly, then the tears filling her eyes, she turned away again.

“You don’t know, my darling,” Eleanor said, with tears in her own eyes, as she put her arm around Agatha, and drew her towards her, “how it grieves me to hurt you as this must do. I could not do it, if I did not feel it was such a dreadful mistake to make. I have struggled so much against it myself these last few weeks, since my eyes were open to it, have discovered what a hold it had taken upon me, until I found myself even on my knees putting Brian’s name where God’s should have been, that I cannot help warning you, even if you have not already fallen into the same sin, to keep from it.

“Such nearness as we feel to our dead darlings, and their living constantly in our hearts, is so apt to take from God, our Saviour, many thoughts, feelings, hopes, and,

dreadful as it may seem, even prayers, that belong to Him, and to Him alone. When times of great quiet and rest come to us, we feel that it is the presence of our best beloved that is making us happy. I fear that we are wrong in ascribing it to any thing but the loving companionship of our Saviour."

"But if it can be His companionship, why can it not also be the other?"

"We are told so often in the Bible that we shall have His companionship and comfort in just that way, but we are not told to expect the same from our friends who have left us."

"We are not told, perhaps, but still it may be so."

"I do not imagine it is so very often, for I feel that it is such a temptation to put others before God, to carry on the old earth-worship, in which we erred, for we do seem to think when friends are dead, we can no longer make idols of them. Don't you think that we feel because they are in heaven that it is not wrong to give them that intense all-absorbing love?"

Agatha thought for a few moments before answering, then said,

"Yes, I think we are more apt to feel that their being there makes it right to love them so much; we *can* love them more with safety than we could when they were upon the earth."

"We can, I think, love them with a purer, better love, free, from earthly dross, love that would have more of

heaven than of earth in it. And that perhaps, would not be loving them, but God more. In heaven, I believe, every thing will have its relative place and value so nicely adjusted, that we will not make the mistakes that life is so full of. We will find that the life *is* more than meat, and the body than raiment. When we see His face, and His name is written in our forehead, we will suddenly find that we have spent our whole lives in total disregard (so it will seem to us then), of a love so overwhelming in its power, so infinitely tender in its goodness, that every thing else will sink into comparative unimportance. The love we bear our very dearest will sink into insignificance before that greater love. Not that we will love them less—but we will love Him so much more.

"If we had never seen the sun, we would think the moon and stars were the brightest, most wonderful things that could ever be, and that nothing could equal their glory. But let the sun once shine upon us, and instantly all other glories fade into their proper places; we see the moon and stars but reflect the sun's splendor, so we love him not only for his own radiance, but also that through it we have the others.

"God is love; all love is of Him and from Him, and without Him there is none. The atheist who loves his child, proves the existence of the God he denies; if God had not loved him, he could not love his child. It would be a fearful thing to keep ourselves from loving our friends through eternity, by loving them too much now; and we

can hardly hope to be received into the kingdom of God, if we have persistently put other gods before Him. It is so easy to err in this respect, that we ought to be particularly careful to guard against it.

"Let us try the spirits, dear, and see whether they be of God. When Jacob wrestled with the angel, he did not give up because he thought He was from God; he tried Him in every way he could, and when he found the spirit was good, he would not give up struggling with Him till He blessed him. We must not believe any spirits till we try them and find they are of God, and even then struggle with them till they bless us.

"Can we thoughtfully pray,

'The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.'

"Let us try it, and see whether we can give up our darlings (much as they are to us), entirely and forever for Jesus, and let Him fill the place now filled by them.

"He does not demand such a great sacrifice of us, but unless we can do that, it is very dangerous for us, more so than any mere earthly idolatry, for there seems to be about it more of the heavenly safety and surety than we can ever feel in an earthly friend, for heavenly friends can never fail us.

"It seems a severe test of ourselves, I know," she added

as her own feelings showed her how Agatha felt. "And perhaps we think that we could not give up our darlings. I have felt it, God knows how often—felt that nothing could make up for their love—that it was beyond all the most precious thing that could be given; and it was impossible that even God's love could compensate. But I knew that was wrong, and shivered as I thought of the lessons that would be given to make me turn from my idols, and I feared their coming upon me. When the first came, it seemed to make me only more set in my way, more determined; and I hated the hand that could deal me such heavy blows, against which I could not even struggle. It took another lesson, before I could learn 'thou shalt have no other gods before me;' my precious baby, my little pure lamb had to be taken from my foolish keeping before I could be patient and even begin to keep myself from idols.

"Unless we can give up our dearest for Christ, we are putting them before Him; therefore the need of our testing our love."

Agatha, leaning her head against the side of the window, and gazing steadily away, made no answer, and presently Eleanor, feeling she had said all she could, and knowing from Agatha's peculiar temperament that, though she made no answer, she was thinking deeply about it, rose up from the window-seat and quietly went to bed.

It seemed to her that she had slept some hours, when she suddenly waked with a sense of something unusual.

Looking around to see what it was, she saw Agatha still at the window, as she left her, the moon lighting up her face.

"Agatha, come to bed now, won't you, dear?" she said. And silently as a ghost, Agatha left the window, and crept into bed, Eleanor taking her close in her arms, with the tenderness and love she would have felt to her own child.

"My poor darling," she said, as she felt the tears on her cheek pressed to Agatha's.

"I was wondering whether every one was not sad at the bottom of her heart," Agatha said; "if cheerfulness and enjoyment ever reached more than half way down. Certainly, whatever happiness does exist deep down, does not come from surroundings: 'Rejoice in the Lord;' that I suppose is the secret of it."

"You remember the Psalmist says, 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'

"I used to think in reading of Ananias and Sapphira, that there was no danger of my committing their crime. But I think now that when we keep back a portion of our hearts from God, we are acting their part."

CHAPTER XI.

"How beautiful these trees are!" Agatha said, as, like two children, they lay out on the grass one morning, their books and work lying idle beside them, while they enjoyed the 'sweet influences' of the day.

God was teaching them from His great lesson-book of nature, and for some time they had been lying under the old oak trees, so still that the squirrels and birds never noticed them.

"I have learned to love these oaks so much that I am sorry to think of leaving them," she went on. "I love to lie here looking through the leaves—they keep up such a fresh motion, like the little waves under a breeze. Just now it gives me that rare October feeling, as if all life was just beginning to open, and there was so much in store. Then other days it will seem as if it all lay behind. Now, every thing seems to be waiting in the cool and light beyond the mountain, and as if one could never be tired any more.

'And o'er the hills, and far away,
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Through all the world she followed him.'

"Every thing we endure patiently is a key to something

beautiful we could never enter otherwise. 'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise. Let us be thankful for whatever hurts now, and cherish it, knowing it will 'work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' "

"I was just thinking," Eleanor said, "how wrong it is in us not to stop in the rush of life, long enough to reap the purifying influences of such natural scenes when we find them affecting us for good. We are happier and better for them; they tend to keep what Matthew Arnold calls 'the thousand nothings of the hour,' from having such a 'stupefying power' over us; and I believe they are one of God's great means of elevating and purifying us. He must enjoy such beautiful things as much, indeed far more than we do. This beautiful world that He made and called very good, must be such an unceasing delight to Him. How close it brings us to Him to think that He takes pleasure in it as we do; that He makes these glorious autumn days, when the very air sparkles like liquid diamonds, and means them to draw our thoughts up to Him in loving gratitude.

"These glorious sunshiny days seem to be a foretaste of, a preparation for the more glorious sunlight of our dear Lord's presence.

"That eternal life with Him, is the only thing to be dwelt on, clung to. Living for that, with that before us as our one aim, earthly cares and losses sink into insignificance, are lost in the flood of light that comes to us from even contemplating His reign from afar.

"How much more, when we are received into His kingdom, will we feel, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none I desire on the earth besides thee.' "

"Even our graves, that so often sadden the earth to us, do not make it less beautiful to Him. He sees that it is only sown a natural body to be raised a spiritual body, and He knows that the mound of earth raised over the body of one of His children only marks his entrance into a higher life."

"Mr. Sherrard was speaking to me the other day, Agatha, of life, as the direct power of God—in every thing that had life, from the lowest order of vegetation up to the highest order of angelic beings. If that be so,—and it satisfies our questionings as to what life is better than any thing else could do, for it explains all the marvellous mysteries of life, by merging them in the grander mystery of God,—why, there is no death except the second death spoken of in the last of the Revelation, which is the entire separation from God. The thing we call death is only the means of entrance into the everlasting life, which is the eternal presence of God.

"When the Spring comes, and flowers are moved out from under the glass, where artificial heat was necessary for that stage of their growth, we do not grieve and say they are dead because they are transplanted into the broad, open garden where they have the direct rays of the sun. Neither should we grieve and call it death, when our friends are taken from where His life can only reach them

through the close, dense atmosphere of earthly surroundings, into the broad, open sunlight of His countenance. Let us joy rather that they are free, that they are not only the sons of God, but that they are happy in their dear Father's house. And if our loneliness sometimes becomes greater than we can bear, we will comfort our hearts with their joy."

"And we'll remember," Agatha said, "that all things are made to work together for our good, if only we keep close to the one great elder Brother. It is only a little while longer; let us wait patiently and do with all our heart whatever work is nearest at hand, and not wait for something great before we take hold. I don't think conversion can be done once for all; I find it has to come very, very often."

"Yes, I suppose it has. We think we stand, and then we fall; and humbled by our failure, we believe the dear old words, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I am very thankful, too, that I am beginning to recall a little the sense of the Bible, not merely the words. Lately I have been meditating very often on those expressions, 'The bread of life,' 'Thy words were bread, and I did eat them,' that kind of nourishment by God's truth that all those who have truly lived have found necessary. It takes a long, long time to learn to read; but it is worth all, and more suffering than we can ever have, to learn it."

"I never thought of it before, but a book that it took so much suffering to write, or rather to furnish the materials for, must need suffering to enable us truly to read it. Sorrow is the key-note to the whole of it. His life was one of suffering so much greater than any we can have, that none of us, no matter how deep our anguish, can go to it truly seeking comfort and not find it,—given to us from a depth of sorrow we cannot fathom. He was lonely that we might have eternal companionship. He wept tears of blood that our tears might be wiped away in Him."

"Our dear Lord," Agatha said, tenderly, as if speaking of a friend near by in body, as He was in spirit, "how can we be troubled by any thing, remembering His love? I do not think," she added, presently, "we ought to be discouraged because we cannot feel this all the time; when there are cloudy days, remembering how constantly He says about His kingdom that it is the least of all seeds at first, knowing His patience in waiting for our growth."

"Yes, and that even there He has been before us, and tested the way. When we are in doubt of God's love, and in despair at the loss of His face, we should remember that our elder Brother can sympathize with us, for in that awful hour on Golgotha, he also cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Surely 'we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' 'In all points!' only think of that;

and the more we dwell upon his life as a man on earth, the more we feel that it must have been 'in all points.'

"Only think how, when we are passing through any temptation, He, having been through the same, looks on with sympathizing pity, and wants so much to help us if we will only turn to Him for help."

"These wonderful promises overwhelm me," Agatha said; "this brooding love that folds us all safe and forever. I feel as if some one had operated on me for cataract; it seems almost too delightful to last, only I feel sure that it is in this way our eyes are to be opened at last when we see our Lord face to face."

"We ought to think more of that time, and make our lives a preparation for it. You spoke just now of feeling as if your eyes had been operated on for a cataract. If they had been, you would have been kept in darkness for a time, then a little light would have been let in on you, then a little more, then more. Each day would have been so graduated as to prepare you for meeting the full rays of the sun, till finally, when you were fully prepared for it, all blinds and bandages would be removed, and you would be in the full light."

"In the same way we ought to prepare ourselves. The cataract is taken from our moral eyes, when we realize that we are to see God. Then comes the preparation. Each day some bandage that separates us from that Light should be removed, a little more light should be let in, until finally the great Physician thinks the time has come, and re

moving the last bandage from our eyes, and 'anointing them with eye-salve that we may see,' says to us, Come up here; and thenceforth we will always live in the glorious light of His face."

"What seems to me most comforting, Eleanor, is that we need not wait till then to live in that light.' St. Paul tells us to 'walk as children of light.' St. John speaks of our walking in the light, as a proof that we have fellowship with Christ and one another. Because the darkness was past, and the true light shining, there was no longer any excuse for our walking in darkness. If we call ourselves by His name we must walk as He did: and He is light. Knowing that that light is shining, there is no longer any excuse for deeds of darkness."

"Not only is 'that life the light of men,' but it is also true that the light is the life. Our Saviour promises those that follow Him that they shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

"Have you not always been in the habit of thinking," Eleanor asked, after they had been quiet for some time, "that 'thy kingdom come' meant the final kingdom? I have. Of course it must mean that too. But this morning, as I said the words, it came over me with a thrill of happiness, that it also meant thy kingdom come to us to-day, and let that kingdom bring us 'our daily bread,' which if a man eat not, he shall surely die."

"What a marvellous prayer that is, when we go into the heart of it. It truly asks for all we need. I used to think,

when I heard that said, that there were a great many other things we could pray for. But that does cover all. The deeper we go into it, the more it embraces. No one but a God-Man could have written it, one who knew from personal experience the depth and lovingness of a God, and His power of granting whatever was asked of Him; and the weakness and wants of a man, and his inability to ask for what he truly needed."

"Oh, Eleanor! to think that that dear kingdom can come to us for our asking; that we will not have to wait the long weary years till our death, to be in the kingdom of our Father, but can have it come to us to-day; that perhaps it is even now with us, if longing for it can bring it, and the peace and rest we feel to-day, is a foretaste of what we will have when we are taken into full possession of sonship with Christ."

"I believe we may hope it is with us," Eleanor answered; and taking up her Bible, she turned from one passage to another.

"See how constantly the Apostles speak of it in that way. 'But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.' 'Wherefore we receive a kingdom which cannot be moved.' 'Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him; and he with me.' 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.' 'And if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus.' 'If a man love me, he will keep

my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Why, the whole Bible gives us the promise of it. Here comes Mr. Sherrard; let us ask him about it. His heaven is a more beautiful one than that of any one else I ever heard talk of it. And he carries conviction with his words because he so evidently believes and lives up to them. I can trust him about such things as I could very few other people. He unmistakably 'speaks that he knows.'

"Mr. Sherrard," she said, as he came near them, "we want you to help us. We have been wondering if the kingdom of God could not come to us while we are still on earth?"

"I think most undoubtedly it can," he answered, as he took his seat upon one of the shawls on which they had been lying; "to have Christ, is heaven; and we do not doubt that we can have Him now on earth."

"What is that heavenly state?"

"For we which have believed do enter into rest; 'there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God; not the rest of idleness, but that of progression in God, the striving after the prize of the high calling of God."

"Will it be the same in heaven that it is on earth, do you think?"

"The same in kind, probably, though not in degree; it will be far greater than any thing we can imagine now."

"Where do you imagine heaven will be?"

"It may be in this world, which is rendered sacred to

God and man as Christ's cradle and birthplace. It may be the whole universe. Even Christianity does not make it clear. Although we cannot help thinking of it, and trying to conjecture where heaven will be, and what it will be like, we should always hold our thoughts in subjection to the fact that 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' All of our thoughts and conclusions must be tempered by that, or they will be dangerous."

"Why was it left so very indefinite, Mr. Sherrard?" Agatha asked. "It seems that it would have been so easy to give us some definite idea."

"So it would, but there was a wise purpose in leaving it so vague, partly that our finite minds could not comprehend the infinite plan, or probably He put this dark background, that it might show more plainly the one central figure and thought, Christ. What difference do other things make if we only have Him? His goodness and love is the pledge of all we want."

"But we want our friends, too," Eleanor said, half for Agatha's sake, and half in answer to the choking feeling in her heart when she thought of not having them.

"We believe that we will see them shine as the stars in the firmament, only obscured by the full brightness of the Sun.

"But it is only in the darkness of the night or the eclipse of the sun that we can see our friends now, or ever, in this world or the next, want them more than we want Him. We ought to be satisfied to leave ourselves and our friends in

His hands. To see Christ is to see all we desire. The soul that finds Christ finds heaven and friends. We are near to each other because near to Him.

"We must not think that our risen friends will meet us when we die and lead us to Christ; I have heard that idea so often expressed, but there is no warrant in the Bible for it. Christ is the only door through which we can enter, and He will lead us once more to our friends. We need not fear that He will stifle our hearts' desires and affections, when He has given them to us and knows that they are good. But nothing must be substituted for Christ. Darkness is left that He alone may stand clear; we may not try to illuminate that darkness with our earth-lights. We must not depend upon other influences and communications to clear it.

"'I am the way, no man *whatsoever* cometh to the Father but by me.' Surely, if we cannot come to the Father but through Christ, neither can we to our friends. It is through Christ that we find our dear ones. The Christian must not have a single thought about heaven in which He is not present."

Mr. Sherrard paused a few moments and watched the two, to see what effect that would have upon them. As he expected, both of them raised their eyes to his, and asked:

"Not one?"

"No, not one. How can we think of heaven as it is, without thinking of Him? What is the true heaven? The presence of God. The fall and the curse consisted in

being removed from God, and shut out from His presence. When the time comes that 'there shall be no more curse,' we will be restored to His presence ; and of course He will be our first and constant thought. Whatever else heaven may be, it will be the everlasting life in the glory of God.

"I do not believe we will want to see our friends until we have seen Christ. For when the veil of the flesh is removed, and we see as we are seen, there will come over us such a realizing sense of what Christ has done for us, and is to us, that 'our hearts will burn within us,' to see face to face that tender, overshadowing love.

"The nature of Christ satisfies our nature, more and more the better we know it."

"Is that what is meant by our being made in the image of God?" Agatha asked.

"Yes, partly that. We were made in His image. If we have lost that likeness apparently, it is because we have defaced it.

"It will be restored, we hope, when we see Him, for we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is. Whether in a body like this or not, a point so many make much ado about, seems to me a matter of very little importance. That we shall be like Him is sufficient to satisfy all but idle curiosity, and to fill our hearts with joy.

"When He became man, He divested Himself of His divinity as much as possible, that He might take on Him our nature in all points. Now, since He has again taken on His divine nature, we see Him obscurely. But meeting

Him in the hereafter, we shall see Him as He is. That implies a necessary change in us, for St. John the beloved disciple, who had leaned on His breast, and knew Him well on earth, when he saw Him in His full glory, fell at His feet as dead.

"When He gives us a sight of Himself, we can see why it is we are not allowed to have it all the time. The soul's sight must first be adapted ; we can only see what we are fit to see. The soul must be changed as well as the body ; it must be free from sin, from partiality, hatred, wrath, strife, heresies, all the works of the flesh, and must put on the works of the Spirit, before it can be fit to see Him face to face. Now or never our souls must be fitted by culture for true happiness. In this way we must work out our own salvation."

"'With fear and trembling' lest we should fail in doing our part?"

"Yes, for if we spend our lives in works of darkness, how will we be prepared to enjoy and understand the works of light?"

"You think, don't you, Mr. Sherrard, that it will be the real Christ, the one that walked on this earth, that we will see ; not merely a divine essence that we call God?" Eleanor asked.

"Particularly is it Christ's person we shall see, I think," he answered ; "not merely His works, His love, but His person. The same arms that took little children into them on earth, now carry our little ones. There I

will find my child who went a few years ago; there will your little one be; when, having waited patiently for His good time, He will again put her into your empty arms. Yes, He is our Saviour in the body, glorified, but still a body.

"Not only shall we see Him, but He will be open to our approach. We shall see Him as our best friend, the one we longed for, whom not having seen we love. And while meeting our friends and having our doubts solved can be put off, our great thought and feeling will be, 'whom have I in heaven but thee?'"

"All our plans and loves will be merged into His grand harmony."

"Oh, you do not mean that we will lose our individuality in heaven, do you?" they both asked, in horror.

"No, I have no idea we will. I merely mean that we will be more complete parts of the whole. We are in Christ now, then we will be in Him more completely, with none of the jarring chords of earth to disturb the harmony.

"He will rule over our whole life. If we love Him, long for, cling to Him here, there we will do it more. His divine life working in us, will restore us to His image. As we open windows to the light, so shall we open our hearts to Him. The inner life is ever struggling to assimilate the outer to itself. In Him it will be done. Though we each will have our individuality, we will all be conformed to Him. The principal change will be spiritual. On the one side we will open wide the windows and doors of our

soul, on the other He will enter in and take possession. He came from the infinite to the finite, not only to save us, but to lead us through the finite to the infinite. Through His humanity He shines upon ours, and raises it until we 'wake in His likeness.'

"As a preparation for that awakening, in proportion as we see Christ rightly we shall be like Him here. If we live near to Him we will already have that perfect love that casteth out fear.

"Our best friend who has won our hearts, we have known but in part. Him we shall first desire to see, and the perfect view of Him will give us His perfect likeness.

"He, when we see Him, is that better nature that is able to mould ours. Our consciousness is cast in the mould of His consciousness. Christ unveiled, is that which shall change us from glory to glory. We require no change in our nature to live with Him, only the expansion that His presence will give.

"Need the inference be drawn, that if we love Christ He will be all we will need?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.²

"That is the grand key-note to our glorious Christian faith, that opens to us the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free."

Convinced by his entire conviction of the truth of what he was saying, the two listened with growing love for that Saviour whose visible love and presence would make heaven; as His spiritual presence gave them a foretaste of what it would be.

CHAPTER XII.

OCTOBER 3D.

"THE harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Taking up my Bible just now, I opened it at random, and my eyes fell upon that verse. It struck me as forcibly as if I had never before seen it. All the surroundings made it more striking. The empty harvest-fields lying spread out brown and idle in the sun, the cool air blowing in my window, making me gather my shawl around me, all showed that the harvest was past, and the summer ended.

"And we are not saved."

How the words ring in my ears! I cannot forget them. I do not know whether I am saved or not. I do not feel as wickedly as I used to. I do not hate God as I am afraid I did when He first took Brian from me. I sometimes feel that I love Him and can trust Him with Brian, because He took him away in His wisdom. I love to think of His heaven where my two darlings are, in the light of His love. But all that is not being saved: the cry still comes,

"And we are not saved."

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," the Bible says. I do believe, I have believed all my life; but I should not think that could save me, and I want to know certainly whether I am or not.

I will talk to Mr. Sherrard about it. Perhaps he can help me to settle my doubts. I cannot stand that mournful dirge ringing in my ears.

OCTOBER 5TH.

I talked to Mr. Sherrard, and he said a great many things to help and comfort me,—that the believing on Christ that was necessary for salvation, was not believing with the intellect but with the heart.

One thing however he said, that seemed to let a sudden rush of light and joy into my life.

I was asking him how I could be certain that I loved Christ and truly believed in Him, for I never doubted that He loved me and was willing to save me; I only doubted my anxiety to have His love and my willingness to return it in kind. For, having always accepted Him as a certainty, I did not seem able to be sure that I love Him.

"Put this test to yourself," he said, "to see whether you love Him or not. Suppose that door was to open and our Saviour was to come in; what would you do? How would you feel?"

The question took such a hold on me that I did not answer; I was trying to grasp the idea of how I would feel. Only to think of it! the possibility of such a thing as

our dear Saviour really coming into the room where I was! I seemed to see Him enter with His quiet, dignified mien, His flowing hair, and His tender, loving eyes.

How would I feel? A happiness I never imagined, filled me as I tried to fancy it. Like Mary, I would sit at His feet and hear His word, or, far more blessed still, if I could only like the beloved disciple lean on His bosom, and there talk with Him, heart to heart, learning love from Him. I have never read of that beloved disciple's leaning on His breast, but it seemed to me one of the things I most wanted to do.

To feel that wonderful presence of God and man combined; to be in close associations with all that we associate with our Saviour! I read some time ago a description of Him merely as a human man, written by some one who had seen Him.

It spoke of the wonderful beauty and dignity of His whole air and face, that was withal so mild and gentle that when He went into the streets, He was always surrounded and followed by little children. How pleasant it is to imagine Him in His walks and talks with His disciples and the multitudes, followed by little ones; carrying them in His arms, stopping in His path that the little feet might rest, tenderer than a mother to them, as tender as a Saviour.

The Bible does not speak of their being with Him often, but they must have been; when He wanted to reprove the disciples' disputing, 'He took a child;' 'and when

He had taken him in His arms,' that sounds as if they were near. How dear He is to us with the love of the little ones always around him.

"If the door were to open, and He were to come in."

I do not think I should be afraid of Him. That gentle, loving heart and face would cast out all fear. It seems to me that only joy would fill my heart; such love to Him, that I would wonder how it could ever have been less, and what it was that had filled my heart before I knew Him.

Question after question would rise to my lips to ask Him, about His life here, about the life before He came on earth; and then to listen to that voice that calmed the troubled waters, that comforted the mourning hearts of all who came to Him; that voice that when He was so wickedly and unjustly accused answered not a word; that said of the most heinous crime that the world could ever bring forth, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That, it seems to me, would be joy enough for a long time. The voice of our best beloved would be nothing to compare to it in its sweetness and preciousness to our ears.

I would take my dear little Bible, that has been so much to me these last months, and turning from one verse to another, would ask Him, as He did to His disciples on that walk to Emmaus, to expound to me in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. Not only the verses that perplex me, would I get Him to open to me, but those

that make me thrill with joy and hope even with their veiled significance; he would give to them a deeper depth, a higher height, till what they had meant to me would be as nothing compared to what they could mean.

Even the Bible, precious as it is, the best gift earth gives us, would soon drop out of my hand; for would it not be better than the Bible? It would be the living word itself.

Could the loving words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you," with their hopeful assurance, in any way equal the actual presence and tender regard of our Saviour?

Could St. Paul's glorious words, full of confidence and satisfied faith, in the midst of untold troubles and persecutions, "if God be for us, who can be against us," compare with having our Saviour answer to our awe-struck questionings about His agony in the garden? "Our Father is in us, and we in Him;" that is enough to help us to bear all that can come.

Would not His telling us of the everlasting life with Him, carry more convincing proof than the words, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us?"

The Bible is but the shadow, He is the substance.

Then I would ask Him of Brian and my baby; I would tell Him how it was the first faint beginning to understand this overwhelming love for Him that made me call her

Theodora, which a little farther on made me able to give her up. He would talk to me about them; perhaps if it was best, tell me how Brian was engaged; though I think, feeling His presence, that it would seem a very unimportant matter, what he was doing; it would really seem so trivial, in comparison with the atmosphere of light in which he was living, that I would hardly think to ask it except as the least item about our beloved interests us.

I think I could thank Him that He had been so loving to the two dear ones as to give them such a short probation, to take them so soon to the joy of His countenance.

I would tell Him how grieved I was that I had been so wicked when He first took Brian, and thought He was so cruel and hard; and I would beg Him to forgive me, and to pardon all my life of thoughtless disregard of His precious love and companionship so freely offered to me, and so heedlessly rejected.

I think He would forgive me for His love's sake, for it grieves me to remember it all. I am so sorry, that it seems that a whole eternity of love could not make up for it. I begin to understand now, how He will be our first and fullest thought when we enter His kingdom, and yet we will not love our friends any the less.

Love you less? Why, Brian, I love you now, under these new thoughts, as I never did before. I love you not only as my dear, dear husband, but as the younger brother of our dear Christ, as joint heir with him in that glorious inheritance of eternal life.

And my Thedie is not only our child, but His; one of the little ones that in heaven do always behold His face. You are both more mine because you are also His.

No wonder that Saint John, after the Revelation of the Heavenly Kingdom, cried, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." I want to cry it myself; my eyes are "waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus," that they may see Him clearly.

Truly, He is "as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

OCTOBER 12TH

It is not a feeling of joy that we need to bring us to Christ, it is a feeling of our need of Him—letting the joys of nature sink into our hearts and make us feel the greatness of God is worthless, unless it turns into works. We are apt to be carried away by ecstatic states of feeling and think we have made great progress in our higher lives. Those happy states do help us, but we should be so careful not to rest upon them.

It is hard to find the medium point between faith and works. They are like a pair of horses, neither of which alone can take us anywhere, but yoked together they will draw us to the beautiful city which hath no need of the sun, for God is the light thereof.

Agatha was talking to me of sin the other day, and gave as her idea of it, that while she had always regarded it as forbidden, what it was, or why it was forbidden except that it was contrary to God's will, did not appear; but now it seemed to her that sin meant the service of

whatever things were transitory and perishable, and that it is forbidden us, not arbitrarily, but in the greatest mercy.

I like that idea, it is so broad and comprehensive, and makes a good deal sin that we are not apt to call so.

Some of us seem to think we were put here on earth only for enjoyment; others, only for work; never seeming to think we were put here to prepare for the higher life. Work or play are of little value unless they lead us up.

The more we regard this life only as a preparation for the true life, the less we will be troubled and weighed down by its cares and losses. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost, I believe.

OCTOBER 13TH.

We shall leave here in a few days. Agatha is going with me for a little visit in my lonely home, until I decide what to do for the future.

It looks blank to me; very blank, in the every-day details that go to make up life. A lonely woman in a lonely house, without kith or kin, to eat her bread and sit by her fireside; a house that was once a very palace of delight, with the music ringing through it of the manly step of the master, and the promise of the patter of little feet. Both are gone, and my house is left unto me desolate.

If our Saviour, in that awful agony in Gethsemane, could say in the face of what was before Him, the disgrace, the suffering of the cross, the pain of death, the descent into hell,—if He could pray, "Thy will be done," ought not

we to be able to do it about our cares and troubles? Surely they are less than His were. With that example before us, such a prayer at such a time, how can we feel otherwise than *Thy* will, not ours.

OCTOBER 18TH.

To-day I commenced packing my trunks. Agatha insisted on helping me, for they say I am not very strong or well. When they told me so, a strange thrill of joy came over me, at the thought that perhaps my release was coming, and the vexed question, "what was to become of me?" would be answered in a most joyous manner. I could hardly keep my smile of joy quiet, it was such a pleasant thought.

Then I remembered that I was not fit to go to them unless I was willing to stay away, and wait patiently the right time.

Living is quite as solemn as dying, and if we are ready to die, we can do a great deal more good while we live. So I put away the glad possibility of going, and felt willing to wait His good time to take me. It was not without a struggle, but still I felt it.

I let Agatha help me pack. But when we came to one drawer, I told her I must do that alone. She kissed me very tenderly and went out of the room.

Since my baby died I had not opened that drawer. There are some things we know we cannot do, some things the sight of which we cannot bear; and it is wiser, if possible, to spare ourselves such things. But it was no

use to put it off any longer, so I sat down on the floor in front of the drawer and opened it. There were all the delicate little garments as I had placed them before she came.

I looked at them a few moments, then burying my face in the soft white baby-clothes, I cried like a child. They brought back before me all the disappointed hopes, so clearly, that they crushed me. I seemed to stand beside myself, and looked with sorrowing pity on the poor lonely mother, who had nothing left her of all those hopes but a drawer full of empty clothes.

Each little garment seemed to be sewed full of different joys and hopes. What a comfort each stitch was to me; it seemed to be doing something for Brian, as well as for myself and the baby. One little slip I picked up and looked at; it had been worn. I remembered when I made it, having made a mistake and cut it smaller than I meant to. I thought, "she will soon outgrow this." I did not think how soon she would outgrow them all.

Ah, my baby, my baby! Nothing but the empty little clothes. You have received celestial garments in exchange for them. It is well with you, but the arms you left behind are very empty, the heart very hungry. All the unfulfilled hopes lie heavy on the heart in place of the caresses of your little arms. The poor lips that miss your soft kisses, will try to utter no word of complaint that may unfit them for your heavenly kiss, when the time comes. The ears that will never on earth hear your voice, will

keep themselves clear and free from the earth-noises, that never having heard you say "Mother," they may be fit perhaps to hear you say "our Father," and rest contented with the joy of those words.

As, one by one, I put the little garments away in the trunk, it struck me that it would be wrong and selfish to keep all those comfortable clothes shut away in the dark, when there were so many little ones almost naked, who could be made cleaner and sweeter for them.

I would give them away, all but those she had worn. I could not part with those; and the idea pleased me, for it seemed to be making her little life useful to others who had never heard of her. So with a lighter heart I emptied the drawer. I told Agatha of my thought about it. The quick tears sprang to her eyes, but she smiled that old, sweet, far-away smile that I love so much on her face, for it is the rainbow after the storm.

OCTOBER 22D.

It troubles me very much, that when Agatha told me last Spring of her friend, and her comfort in him and dependence on him, I should have done all in my power to strengthen her in it. She would say, I suppose, that I had not strengthened her, that any thing of such long standing did not need aid. But I know that the way I took it and spoke to her afterwards as being the recipient of such a blessing, must have had some effect.

I am sorry. I was so carried away by the newness of it, by the way it affected her, by the key-note it gave me to

her character, and—I might as well say it—by the inexpressible beauty and comfort the hope of such a thing gave my lonely aching heart, that I did not see the danger in it. I did not see how easy the transition would be from putting a man, even a redeemed glorified one, so nearly on a level with Christ, to putting him first.

I did not see then, or until I fell into the snare myself, how it was trying to serve God and mammon; mammon being not necessarily the world, but any thing that is not God. Two cannot be first; the inevitable consequence is “to love the one and hate the other; to cleave to the one and despise the other.” And the one that is loved, will be the one that it is the easiest to cling to.

It is even easier for a person of her temperament to drift off from the true mooring, than it would be for a commoner nature. Her thoughts of God, and all good and beautiful things, are so elevated and spiritual, that they of themselves are apt to lead her astray. Resting in and on these feelings, she is apt to depend too much on them, and standing still there, the other Master will be making steady headway, gaining inch after inch of ground, undermining the fortress that should be impenetrable, until there will be nothing left but the mere shell where the flowers grow so thick and bright that she will not know how little support their roots have, until a storm comes and sweeps them all away, and nothing is left but the bare earth, which, receiving no heavenly dew, will soon crumble away, leaving perhaps, what is horrible to think of, that skeleton of spiritualism.

Being body as well as spirit, we cannot live entirely on spiritual things, except purely of God. Letting down the barriers that are necessary to safe walking as we wander in these mazes of life, delusions of all sorts are likely to come in. In spiritualism we are apt to lose our moorings in other respects; one gradually comes to regard all things as equally good. Monday is as good as Sunday—why do we keep Sunday holy? We ought to be always praying; there is no use praying at any one time. Spiritualizing every thing will finally lead to losing all.

There is wisdom in the old saying, “It is dangerous meddling with sharp-edged tools.”

In our horror of narrow-mindedness, we should be careful not to go to the other extreme of laxity. She talks so much of Christian liberty. We are very apt to err in standing in that liberty of Christ, so called. We should be very careful that it is “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

She may not be wrong or in danger of wrong. God grant she is not. She is more to me now than any other living creature, and I dread seeing flaws in any thing as beautiful as her character. And daily do I pray for her more fervently even than I do for myself, that she may be “kept from the evil;” not that I need it less, but that I love her more.

“I have learnt that a friend who is worth the having,
Is a friend who will hurt you now and then:
Will turn to ice at your sickly craving,

For sympathy uttered by word or pen ;
Will pull you with brave rough hands away
From the idols you built to your gods of clay,
And break them down, lest you kneel again."

CHAPTER XIII.

"WHAT a delicious west wind that was last night, Eleanor ; did you notice it ?"

"Yes, I was enjoying it ; it seemed to come laden with new life ; strange stories were in it. I had most remarkable feelings of getting from it a half-knowledge of wild Arabian night-like stories ; it seemed to bear full in its breast the wonders of the world, and I felt that I only needed to have my eyes and understanding opened to be able to read it all, like an open book."

"It was a wonderful sunset ; I was alone upon the hill, watching it—not wholly alone. I was so happy that I thought it would last me all the week. But this dull gray rainy weather to-day ! It is very foolish not to have sunshine enough inside to make the weather of no account. I have not yet reached that happy state. Sometimes I grow very much disgusted with myself for being played upon so by outward influences, people, weather, and such things. There ought to be something within to resist pressure, if a person is to be worth any thing to herself or others."

"Yes, I think there ought to be, and the reason that there isn't, is, I suspect, that we try to furnish the motive-

power from ourselves. The 'something' should act from within, but it ought to come from without; that is, from without our own natural powers. 'Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.' 'Our help is in the name of the Lord;' when we convince ourselves of that, until it becomes the foundation of our character, then, and not till then, we will be able to resist all outward pressure."

"And to cease complaining. What an invention of the Devil complaining is, imagining that our lot is so hard, when it is really so much better than we deserve. Complaining of want of sunshine, inside; of low spirits, instead of setting to work at once to improve them."

"I have sometimes thought, Agatha, that we are not always meant to conquer these moods that weigh us down so heavily. They may be a means of discipline, and when we think we are faithless, because we cannot overcome them, and be bright inside, it is only that the shadow is the discipline, and when it has done its work it will pass off. When we beg as earnestly as did the two blind men sitting by the road side, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened,' they will be, and these slight clouds will not disturb us so much, for we will see the loving Father through them, and it will only be casting a shadow over one thing that the sun may shine brighter on another."

"Does that clause in the creed, 'the Communion of Saints,' delight and stir you up as it does me, I wonder?" Agatha asked presently. "It puts me into a happy dream whenever I hear or think of it."

"Yes, it does give me a great deal of pleasure whenever I think of it."

"The idea that we may all come one day to really see each other, all who have lived on the earth. Meanwhile, what can we do, but wait patiently, and believe that there is at least as much worth knowing that we do not see in others as in ourselves, which is enough to occupy us some time."

"And to make us more charitable in our measurements of people. Probably one of the greatest surprises of eternity will be finding how wrong many, indeed most, of our judgments of people have been. Heaven will unread many of earth's readings, 'and many that are first shall be last, and the last first.' We have our Master's word, that whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"Only think of its being the privilege of every one to have the Bridegroom say to him, 'Friend, come up higher.'"

"If we thought more of that view of it, Agatha, how much more careful we would be not to exalt ourselves."

"In thinking of the Communion of Saints," she said, going back to the same subject, "do you think of it as the communion on earth, or in heaven?"

"Principally that in heaven," Agatha replied.

"As far as I have studied it," Eleanor said, "the Bible seems rather to refer to the earthly communion, though I imagine they are so closely united that they are not to

be separated even in thought ; so that verse in Hebrews, 'seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,' would seem to indicate.'

"I came across a quotation from some of the Fathers, I believe, that pleased me very much. It was to the effect that the graveyards were placed around the churches, to signify that the congregation of the dead, and the congregation of the living, were not so far separated as it seemed, but were still, in reality, one."

"Yes, that is good ; any thing almost is comforting, that helps to bridge over that awful gulf that we are so liable to place between 'the quick and the dead.' When our friends go away to another country, we do not put them out of our lives and cease to talk of them, but rather talk the more of them because they are away. Why should we do differently when they have gone away to heaven? It seems to me horrible, the way so many do when they lose friends, cease mentioning their names, never speaking of them any more than if they had not existed, making their loss so much greater in that way, instead of keeping their friends still among them by their conversation. What do you understand more particularly, Agatha, by the Communion of Saints?"

"I think it means the fellowship of all who live, have lived, and are to live upon earth."

"Every one?"

"Perhaps—yes—all souls in the universe ; that they form one body so intimately connected, that sin and its conse-

quent suffering in any one, affects all the rest. That we are 'members one of another' covers the ground better than any thing I can say."

"Without any regard to the lives they have led, the efforts they have made to belong to the Saints?"

"My own belief is that all living creatures belong to this body of which Christ is the head."

"But how can that be? He says He is the vine and we are the branches, but unless the branch abide in Him it cannot bear fruit ; and if a man abide not in Him he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and no longer belongs to the fellowship of the vine. We have communion with Christ by kindred in His humanity, and by a participation in His spirit. Unless they have His spirit, how can they have any interests in common? 'What communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial?' 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with Christ Jesus His Son.' How can all living creatures meet in that communion unless they have before met in Christ? It will be a place where God 'is feared,' where 'His name is good.' They will be 'the excellent in whom is His delight,' 'the beloved of God' and 'them that are sanctified.' '*The faithful in Christ.*' St. Paul, I believe it is, says, 'Do ye not know the saints shall judge the world?' How could they judge it if they had led wicked lives?"

"The higher ones will judge it, I suppose. There will be many orders, of course different in degree, in attainment, in perfection. No one could be so crazy as to say that the

Hottentot and the man who leads a sensual life, belong to that communion in as high a degree as the Christian."

"But how can the man who leads a sensual life belong to it at all? Jude speaks of the sensual as separating themselves, having not the spirit. How can they be saints unless they partake of the spirit; how can they join that communion which is loving fellowship in the spirit? How can they join in the prayer, patience, and faith of the saints, when their whole lives have been passed in preparing themselves for fellowship with devils; in doing their deeds of darkness? God says He is angry with the wicked every day. Could they join the communion in the face of His anger? or even suppose that they could, what would they do there? would the employment of the saints be at all to their taste? even if they were in no worse frame of mind, would they not be dreadfully bored?

"St. John speaks of the bride of the Lamb as arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. David says, 'Salvation is far from the wicked, for they seek not thy statutes,' and that their name is *put out* forever and ever. Hannah in singing her song of thankfulness said, 'He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness.'"

"But I believe, Eleanor, that they are working up all the time even when we cannot see their progress. Where I am wrong, I pray I may be taught better, but that is my creed now."

"It is a very easy, comforting one, dear," Eleanor an-

swered, "if we could only believe it. But I have never found the slightest confirmation of it in the Bible; every thing is just to the contrary. 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' Does it mean nothing—that our Lord says, 'So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire;' was that an idle jest, or empty words? Or that He gives that description of the last judgment in the twenty-fifth of Matthew, where He speaks of setting the sheep on His right hand to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, but the goats He places on the left hand, where they shall go into everlasting punishment. Why was Dives begging for Lazarus to moisten his tongue with water, if he was enjoying fellowship with the saints? They have drank of a water after which they shall never thirst again, so our Saviour tells us.

"If it was only a probation he was going through, and as you say he was working up all the time, why did our Lord, who of course knew how it was, and was explaining it to His disciples, put such words into the mouth of Abraham, who also knew, as, 'between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. *Neither can they pass to us which would come from thence.*'?"

"Our Saviour did not say that accidentally. He meant to show that on the side of the gulf that your life put you, you would remain forever. Our death is the deciding; there can be no change after that; as we make our bed, so we must

lie in it. Our lives are given us to choose our lot, and prepare for it. This little life is over to-morrow, and then where are we? In the surprises of Eternity, no bread of life is offered. The manna fell only in the wilderness. In the hereafter there is no cross to cling to. The cry comes, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.' If God, then prepare for His service, that we may be fit to enter His kingdom. Do not think we can spend this schooling-time in studying the profession of darkness, and then suddenly, when all our school-life has been spent, drop that old profession and take up ever so humbly the one of light. We cannot! we will not be fitted for it, or have any desire for it.

"What is there in death that will so change the whole tenor of a man's inner life? If here his course has been steadily downward, what is there in his dying that will make him turn abruptly and begin to go upward? Nothing that I can see, nothing, I believe, that the Bible promises. But it does promise that 'as we sow, so shall we reap.'"

"But, Eleanor," Agatha said, after a long pause, "there may be many members, yet still one body, though some may not be as honorable as others; all can't be eyes, or ears, or hands."

"They can all be members of one body as long as they acknowledge Christ as the head," Eleanor answered, "but unless they do that, they cannot belong to the body. It is not, dear, that I 'want to cut you down to my own pattern' that I say all this, for I believe in a diversity of patterns. But I want each pattern to be after Christ; that

only is safe. This belief that all will be saved without regard to the lives they have led, is so dangerous, so deadening to all struggles for a good life. Forgive me for saying it, but it seems to come from laziness and ignorance. Whenever I have been tempted to think so, even before the days when I cared much about it, I used to know in my heart that it was pleasant to me, because I was too listless and lazy to strive to enter in at the strait gate. We naturally want to be carried to the skies

'On flowery beds of ease.'"

"Isn't eternal life promised to all?" Agatha asked.

"'To all them,'" Eleanor answered, "'who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality—eternal life.' What is the use of that promise, and particularization, if those mentioned directly after, 'contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,' inherit the same life? What was the object in separating them? Where is the benefit of 'resisting unto blood, striving against sin,' if the reward is only postponed a few years by an utterly sinful, godless life?"

"The struggling and conquering will give a higher, grander life there."

"There are very many who would care nothing for that fuller heaven, so they received heaven at all. The fear of hell, and the desire to reach even their low heaven, are the only things that make them strive for a better life.

Under your belief they would make no effort whatever, but like the spirit of the beast would go downward to the earth."

"But St. Paul says, 'not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us;' surely His mercy can save all. 'The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.'"

"Yes—but not to save those who won't be saved. We are not told that His mercy extends that far; we have no reason to hope it. All we have to do is to come to Christ; but that we *must do*, no one can do it for us. He complains, 'and ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' He is able to save 'to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him,' but nowhere do we read that he is able to save any that don't come. The only thing He asks of us is to come.

"He could not be a just God, and reward the good and evil alike. What would you think, to use a homely illustration, of a teacher who told his pupils that if they studied well through the year and did what he required of them, that when their schooling was over he would send them to college, where they would take different grades according to the amount of preparation they had made; then, when the time came, sent them all to college, without any reference to his promised word or to their efforts? Would you not say at least that he was untruthful? God has promised that all such as come unto Him shall be saved. If He saved every body, without any regard to

their meeting the conditions of the promise, what does it look like? Not our idea of a just, truthful God!

"I don't believe you can find in the Bible any assurance that any to whom Christ has been preached, and who have rejected Him, actively or passively, can hope for salvation and eternal life. 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

"Imagine a communion of saints, two members of which were the beloved disciple and Nero. 'What communion hath light with darkness?'

"You say that the material life is emblematic of the spiritual. Where do you find any such dealings as that? A master builder says to the laborers under him, Work for me and I will pay you. Does he pay them if they do not work? Business transactions are not allowed to run on in that irregular manner. Is it likely that God would arrange in His code of moral laws for a more lax way of doing business than a man?

"But what is the use of taking the question away from the Bible? that settles it entirely, is full of arguments against it, and has nothing that will really support that theory of 'universal salvation.'"

"I had thought," Agatha said, "that it did support it, but I believe I am wrong. There does at any rate seem more against it than for it."

"Then listen to these verses," Eleanor said, taking up her Bible from the table, and turning from verse to verse, "and see if they do not fully settle it.

“‘For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.’

“‘For which things’ sake’ (‘covetousness which is idolatry, inordinate affections,’ etc.), the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.’ Who are they ? and farther on in the same chapter,

“‘For ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done : and there is no respect of persons.’

“Why does our Lord speak here in Luke of ‘they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead,’ if all are worthy, and all receive it ?

“Then listen to the loving St. John’s version of our Saviour’s words ; what can be more dreaded ?

“‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life : but the wrath of God abideth on him.’

“‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.’

“‘For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

“‘And shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.’

“‘The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is Eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

“‘Ye know that no murderer hath Eternal life abiding in him.’

“What were the commandments written for, except as a warning to avoid what would lead from heaven and a guide to it ?

“Why is the Bible so full of such marked differences as, ‘He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life ?’

“Why does our Saviour mention the pure in heart as blessed, because ‘they shall see God,’ if the impure shall also see him ?

“I could go on indefinitely multiplying proofs that the ungodly shall perish.”

“You need not, dear,” Agatha said presently, “I am at length convinced that the Bible countenances no such belief, and that it must be one of the Devil’s most subtle means of winning mankind to himself. For it appears to have so much right and mercy on the side of it, that when it once gets lodged in our hearts, it is hard to dislodge it.

“You and I seem to have changed places in the last few months,” she added presently, laying her hand tenderly on Eleanor’s.

“My heart was so hard and wicked,” Eleanor answered in a low tone, “that only a great change could affect it. I have gone through sorrow that does not leave a person where it finds her. It either hardens or softens them for

life. I thank our good Father, that he let it soften me, and bring me closer to Him, and, you dear, have had very much to do with it.

"It had to be the darkness of night to the children of Israel before the Divine presence went before them as a pillar of fire, guiding their steps and giving them light. When day shone bright around them, it was a cloud.

"When the night of trouble gathers around us, let us remember that it will show us more clearly the pillar of fire, and be contented."

CHAPTER XIV.

"I HAVE lived so much since I was here last," Eleanor said to Agatha, as a few evenings after their return home, they were on their way to the graveyard. "Here I will be able to feel the change more. It was a very wicked rebellious heart that bowed in agony over that grave. It was full of hard thoughts of the loving Father whose hand had been stretched out in mercy. There was no hope or faith in it.

"The little grave," she went on, "was necessary to teach the lesson of submission. When that lesson is fully learned, there arises from it the incense of thankfulness. Then we truly trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. I constantly feel that I cannot be thankful enough to God for the restful faith He has given me. Even when it leaves me for a time, I am more able to trust than I used to be, for it is easier to remember that we are not to trust in moods, or feelings, which change, but in the Lord who is ever the same, always our refuge, the rock of our defence."

"'He makes the storm a calm,' " Agatha said in a soft voice, "'so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are at rest, and so He bringeth them

unto the haven where they would be.' Oh, Eleanor," she continued, "how full the Bible is of just such promises, if we only keep our eyes and heart open to see and receive them. How can we ever doubt or be distressed when we have our God, and His heaven to come down to us now, and eternal life to look forward to."

"And yet when a loss overtakes us, Agatha, we still seek every human aid and comfort, turn over plan after plan for relief, forgetting that we are God's dear children, and could go to Him and find certain relief. How overwhelming His loving kindness is, that after we have tried everything else, and found it fail us, we at last come to Him and He receives us as tenderly as if we had come at first. Does not reject us because we bring Him our hearts like sieves through which all of earth's pleasures have run, and left them dry."

"But we are not to fold our arms and wait for Him to comfort us ; but pray to Him first, and then work our way up."

"Work ! that I believe is the banner under which we will be saved, with faith. Mrs. Browning says in *Aurora Leigh*, 'I count that heaven itself is only work to a surer issue !' I like that. The idea of an idle listless heaven, always grates upon my feelings. To be sure, I talk a great deal about the rest of heaven, and long for it. But probably that rest will be best given in successful work for noble purposes. I think we have some inkling of that given us here, now and then, by the intense, per-

fect joy and rest we feel in some work that our heart is in."

"What kind of employment do you suppose we will have there ; a continuation of our life work here? That seems rather likely it strikes me."

"Perhaps so. Though a great deal of our work here is necessitated by the fall and its consequences."

"Lawyers, judges, jailors, policemen ! There will be no more need of them in heaven. They were the necessary consequence of the curse. When that is done away with so will their occupations be useless."

"So you see, on the face of it, it doesn't seem likely that all can continue their labors."

"Perhaps the higher, nobler works will be continued ; some of them are almost good enough for heavenly employment ; and purified, they would be perfect."

"That does seem more likely, and yet we have not any right to say decidedly. It is all left indefinite that we may trust it to God. That is the end of the whole matter. If we can trust to Him our life here, when so much in us is warring against His influence, we surely, I think, ought to be able to trust to Him our life there, where we will be in perfect unison with Him, where our work will be even more decidedly a part of His grand work, and will be done through His influence, acting directly upon us. The least we can do is to trust it to Him."

"When I was married," she went on, presently, "and came to live in my husband's house, I knew nothing at all

of the kind of duties that were going to meet me there. Ever since I could remember I had been in a boarding-school, as pupil or teacher, until I went to a private house as a governess. I knew nothing of home duties, I never had had a home; books and teaching had been my life. I used to wonder often what would be my work in my new home and life, and try to form some idea of it. I felt quite uncertain of the nature of it, and wondered whether I would like it as well or better than I did my old occupations.

"I did not like to tell Brian what I thought of, for fear he might think I dreaded it. So usually my cogitations ended with this conclusion,

"It is Brian's house, and Brian's work, so whatever it is, it will be pleasant, profitable, and my particular work because it is his, and for him. I will find out very soon what it is, meanwhile, I can do my present duties better if I do not waste my time in useless conjectures, but labor, as a preparation for the next work, whatever it is.

"We can feel the same way. It is our Father's house, and our Father's work, and as such it cannot help being sufficient for us in every way."

"Yes, I think that too; but then we cannot help feeling a desire to know some particulars of what it will be. The heart and mind crave knowledge."

"But the Spirit, I think, can trust it all to God. If we just consider the case, I think we will see how impossible it is to come to any just true conclusion. It must necessarily be all conjecture. Take an ignorant heathen,

who has spent all his life in the wild woods, living like a beast. He cannot form any true idea of the life and work of a highly intellectual gifted Christian. Having lived in the rudest manner, he cannot imagine the comfort and elegant luxury of modern civilization, nor can he conceive of our art and literature. The pure joy of a sculptor standing before the clay, which under his eager touches is beginning to take the form that has dwelt so long with him, cannot appeal to the heart of that savage. And the glorious discoveries we have made in astronomy and geology do not move him to loving recognition of the greatness of that God who formed the heavens and earth with His hand.

"Could he in any way, do you think, form any idea of, or comprehend our works and occupations?"

"No, hardly—unless he was changed completely, or educated up to appreciation."

"Well, as that savage ranks with us, so we rank with what we will be when 'this mortal has put on immortality;' indeed, we will be far greater in proportion. As his greatest idea of comfort would fall far short of the comfort of a luxurious house, so our largest, most probable views of heaven will be nothing in comparison with the glories that will be revealed to us.

"Now 'we see through a glass darkly,' how can we conceive anything justly of that place of which 'the Lamb is the light! That light is too much for mortal eyes, death must remove the veil before we can comprehend it. 'The

light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not ; ' that is the whole story.

"Milton says :

' Though what if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein.
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought.'

I always like to think that. Swedenborg's *correspondences* between things, is a favorite subject of contemplation with me ; that these things we see, are but the shadows, the symbols of what is to come ; and as shadows, bear a certain resemblance, though often distorted, to the real things."

"I, too," Eleanor replied, "have always liked to dwell on that idea, but have felt that I must not think so much of it as to make it seem to be fact instead of being merely fancy. We must remember in all of our thoughts on the subject, that 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' What glories shall be revealed in us we know not ; but we do know that 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'

"It is enough for us to know that now we are His sons, not at some distant time will be, but are *now* ; and knowing that, we can wait for Him, and not be impatient, even though we are in ignorance and He delay His coming. 'Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure ;' that is of more importance than trying to imagine what we will be. Isn't it worth any effort we can make to prepare ourselves to be like Him ?"

"Yes," Agatha said, as they entered the gate of the grave-

yard, "that is after all the only thing of any importance ; to strive to be like God. Life is so short, it can only be a few years before we will know certainly all these vexed questions. We can wait, if we have faith, until He who hid them from us, in his inscrutable wisdom, is ready to reveal them, and not try to find out what we are not yet prepared to appreciate or comprehend."

"If we only trust Him truly and entirely, nothing will be too indefinite for us. It is because we do not trust Him that it is so ; our want of faith makes us seek a sign."

" ' Oh lonely tomb in Moab's land,
Oh dark Beth-peor's hill,
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still
God hath his mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell ;
And hides them deep, like the secret sleep,
Of him He loved so well.' "

Agatha repeated.

They walked on in silence until they reached the graves. Eleanor stopped there, and Agatha, feeling that she would rather be alone at first, walked on down the path. When after a little while she returned, Eleanor was sitting by her husband's grave, leaning against the stone, but looking far away into the blue sky with calm, peaceful eyes. Her hand was lying on his grave, but her heart was resting with his in Christ, who is heaven.

"Oh, Agatha !" she said, as Agatha took her seat on

the grass close by. "Not to be weighed down by the thought of their being here," touching the two graves, "that they are not 'sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption, but are sowing to the spirit and reaping life everlasting.' Not to be tortured with 'the body of this death,' to know that they are not dead, that though 'absent from the body they are present with the Lord.' It is worth all I have suffered, to realize that, and to have it the comfort it is to me. Our dear Saviour, how He rewards us good for evil.

"We are so busy blowing our bubbles, and attending to our playthings," she continued, "that we do not want to stop a moment to hear about God and our souls, and we are angry when by breaking bubble after bubble He places the subject more strongly before us. Even when at last we do look at it, think of it, how ungraciously we do it, just as if we were doing God the greatest favor. And he does not strike us dead for our impious conduct, but as gently as the dews fall on the parched earth, he enters our hearts, softening them, and dwelling there until he has made them a fit dwelling place for Him. What right have we to expect such loving kindness and mercy? He literally *wins* us to himself, when we have every right to expect that 'certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.' Truly 'the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.'"

"Look," Eleanor said, presently, pointing to the pure white stone raised over her baby's little grave. "A few months ago I would have thought that a sad, pitiful record," and she passed her fingers lovingly over the words:

Theodora,

Only child of Brian and Eleanor Southgate.

Three weeks old.

"In among the Lilies."

"But now, with this glorious afternoon sun flooding it in its light, the prototype of the true light,—it seems to me almost blessed. To gain, after only three weeks probation, the life above, for which so many have to toil through the full three score years and ten! It seems to me that even in heaven, children will be purer than we who have sinned so often. They will share in their sinlessness the purity of the angels and yet have had the crowning blessing of a Redeemer, and share sonship with Him. They cannot be what the saint is who has fought and overcome, and yet they shall share the same joys. 'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Their sinless little lives gain for them what we have to struggle for."

"What do you suppose is meant, when Isaiah, speaking of the New Jerusalem, says, 'There shall be no more thence, an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days?'"

"I have thought that it meant that as both extreme age and youth are deficient, one having passed perfection and the other not having reached it, they would not be there as old and young. The aged, losing all that weakened, would be in the perfect state, and the young, gaining what earth had not given them would also approach it, so that they would cease to be distinguishable as an infant of days or an old

man of years. The elixir of life that will preserve everlasting youth, is what we call death."

" 'Whoso drinketh my blood, hath eternal life,' " Agatha said. "Here where the tokens of death are thick all around us, we appreciate more fully, which is the real life, the one that is worth living for, the life that has no graveyard."

"A man who is saved from shipwreck, does not cry over his wet and ruined clothing, so all who have been saved by Christ from everlasting death, have something else to do than to be troubled and weighed down by the cares of the body, or the thought of leaving it here. We are nearer the true life the more we learn to

* * * to dread

The grave as little as our bed.

"I suppose only most profound ignorance, or true clinging to Christ, and trust in Him, can keep us from dreading death. Our bodies seem so entirely a part of us, that we dread losing them, not understanding how we can possibly *be* without them. The heavenly body is very indistinct to the earthly eyes. It is hard to imagine what it will be.

"We get such careless ideas of things from not really thinking of their true meaning. I used to trouble myself a good deal by thinking of heaven as the space in which the stars are, and trying to fancy what wonderfully ephemeral bodies we would be obliged to have to be able to walk about on the clouds and not break through. I used to

wonder how such light gauzy bodies could carry our heavy hearts. How remarkably children do torment themselves with such ideas, and never tell any one, so that they can be set right. Not only children alone; even now, when I am only thinking skin deep, that flimsy body with its difficulty in walking on the air and clouds, and carrying its heavy heart worries me, and I have to remember 'we shall be like him;' and He is a strange God if He can have done for us all He has done, and then not be able to provide for us spiritual bodies in every way suitable. I think we need not trouble ourselves about it in the least.

"As He ascended into heaven with His earthly body, we may suppose that the spiritual bodies are something like the natural. Though as His disciples did not know Him till He revealed Himself to them, there must have been some change. Yet He called Thomas to put his finger in the mark of the nails that he might believe, and with that same body He ascended.

"His Divinity may have made change in His body unnecessary, but we feel there must be change in ours. Don't you remember St. Paul speaks of our 'looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body?' As when we look at the bare trees in winter we cannot understand the mysterious process by which they are changed into their glorious summer appearance, so we cannot comprehend the change that will take place in our bodies. It is a comfort to think we are not meant to un-

derstand it, that we are intended to remain in ignorance that we may have faith.

"And the body is after all, the least part of us; and it does not make any real difference, what we will be there in that respect. If we have more thought for higher matters, think more of heaven as God, we will think less of it as ourselves.

"When you sit by the grave of a dearly loved friend, you can feel how small a part of him the body was, how insignificant compared to the soul and spirit that you really loved. If after they had left the body, we could still keep it with us, how little satisfaction we would gain from it. Though it almost kills us to part with it, we would soon find it did not fill our empty hearts.

"For that very reason, I suppose it is a blessing, though seemingly a sorrow, that we so soon have to put our dead away from us, before we find what a mockery they are, compared to what they were.

"I suppose the great trouble with us all now is, a rabid desire to materialize every thing, to bring things down to our level, not to lift ourselves to theirs.

"What we want, is not to materialize heaven, which 'it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive,' but to spiritualize ourselves.

"Sitting by these graves, and looking forward to the time when in our Father's kingdom we shall again meet, face to face, what difference does it make to me, whether we have bodies and houses like these earthly ones? The

many mansions of my Father's house, and the assurance that we shall be like Him are quite definite enough for me. Surely, in that house there will be room for our little family to have a heavenly home, without in the least troubling our minds as to whether the house of many mansions is made of brick, or is only an Eastern figure of speech.

"Of far more importance is it that we should fear 'lest a promise being left us of entering in, any of us should seem to come short of it.' Not what the mansion is, but how to gain entrance there, should be the subject of our thought. Not to vex ourselves as to what the spiritual body is, but to fit the spirit to inhabit it."

CHAPTER XV.

"I DO not understand what makes me feel so wonderfully happy this morning," Agatha said, as having finished their morning occupations, they sat down for a quiet talk. "It is partly the exquisite weather, I suppose; then I feel so much happier, because our long talks on the subject, make my thoughts dwell so much more in heaven.

"St. Paul says, 'Our conversation is in heaven,' and so ours ought to be, much more than it is."

"I never exactly agreed with the saying that our words were to conceal thoughts, only it never occurred to me until lately, that conversation ought to strike its roots deep down in the core where the elements melt with fervent heat. Doesn't that burn up words?"

"I think no conversation is worth anything, that is not at least tinged with the inner life. The deeper it goes into the core, the better. While there is a God and a heaven, and we are made in the Divine image and have not wholly defaced it, we can never reach the bottom, so we need not fear to. In digging a well, the deeper we dig the more water we find, and the purer it is. Any other subject of conversation will finally weary us and we'll talk it out. But while God is our Father, and we are His chil-

dren at heart, we can never grow weary of talking of Him, or cease to find something new and beautiful to dwell on, in His work and ways."

"I have been thinking a good deal lately how soon the purest kind of human love degenerates when not kept constantly in the sun-light of our Lord's face. Nothing is safe out of His presence."

"And no love or friendship is a safe one that is not based on a love of Him, and a desire to help each other up to Him. So many earthly loves and friendships fail because they are founded on love of self, instead of Him. I am more and more struck with the fact that 'love is the fulfilling of the law,' that it is only by love that we can ever know our Father or live in His light, and that eternal life with Him is the only thing to be dwelt on; particularly 'when clouds are dark and friends are few.' We have to know trouble to cling to that promise of Heavenly life."

"Do you know," Agatha asked, "that strange feeling we have about thoughts that come just as we wake in the morning, seeming to come partly from this world, and partly from the next? More like the thoughts of children."

"Yes, I know it. I woke the other morning, and my first consciousness was of the words,

" 'Why should the children of a King,
Go mourning all their days?'

saying themselves over and over in my mind, and while, I lay still thinking of them, there came the other words,

'For I will turn their mourning into joy, and comfort them;' and it gave me such a thrill of joy and comfort, to think that my Father remembered me, and put His message into my heart."

"This morning just as I was returning to consciousness this came; 'Let us who are of the day be sober.' I believe it was a message, and mainly the cause of my content, the sense that one was watching over me in sleep, and keeping guard from unholy thoughts. It is wonderful, not to be doubted on that account however."

Eleanor did not speak for a few moments, but with her eyes bent on the floor, seemed to be thinking deeply. At last she took up her Bible, and finding a few places in it kept them with her fingers, while she said in the tenderest, most loving voice:

"I do not want to hurt you, dear, and would not say this unless I felt very strongly that I ought to. Don't you think it more likely that it was God who was watching over you to guard you from unholy thoughts, and who put those words of His book into your mind, than your friend?"

"I believe God sent them through Graham," Agatha answered, after a moment's pause.

"Why should He, the Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, need to send His messages through any medium? Wouldn't it be better coming straight from Him? Isn't there danger in thinking it came from any other? That, gaining such comfort from it, that other would be apt in your thoughts to be put before God? He should be our

first thought. Listen to what David says: 'I have remembered thy name, oh Lord, in the night.' 'When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.' 'Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.' 'And in the night His song shall be with me.' Then see what Isaiah says: 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.' Then the whole of that glorious Psalm beginning, 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help,' is full of God's protecting us. He that keepeth thee, will not slumber.' 'The moon shall not smite thee by night' for 'the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, *He* shall preserve thy soul."

"Do you know," she continued presently, as Agatha did not speak, "that the idea has come to me very strongly lately that it must grieve and distress our darlings in heaven, to have us so often put them before God in our hearts and thoughts. They cannot wish us to feel so toward them. They are in the Presence of God, seeing Him as He is, and must see how He alone is worthy of worship, how He alone can help us, and they must sorrow deeply that we will turn from Him, so constantly, and cling to them. Could they speak to us, they would no doubt say as the angel did to St. John in Patmos, when he fell down at his feet to worship him: 'See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant. Worship God.' Do not let us give them more cause to want to say that.

"If, as we believe, they are often near us, do not let us

grieve them and drive them away, by giving them what they know is due to God."

There was a long silence in the room, broken finally by Agatha's saying in a low voice, full of emotion :

"Since you spoke to me of this before, I have thought a good deal of it. Have tried to take Graham out of God's place. I tried to see if I could put him entirely out of my thoughts, for God; for I felt with you that unless I could it was dangerous. But it was hard to pray to have that idol torn from his throne. When I put him out of my thoughts, I missed so fearfully the love and companionship that had made my life, for these years, I could not get along without it. You don't know the emptiness of everything, the utter loneliness of being without Graham to rest upon. You can't tell what a struggle it is."

"Not know it, my darling," Eleanor said, as taking Agatha's bowed head into her arms she laid it on her shoulder, pressing her own cheek against it, "not know it? Isn't my whole life one long struggle to keep from loving man better than God? A struggle in which, just when I think I am gaining some ground, and learning to give our God His right place in my heart, I find I am way back at the beginning, and have to commence all over. Would I have put a test to you that I had not tried myself and found how it pierced through and through and let the daylight of truth into our secret thoughts? Isn't it the great lesson of my life to learn to 'keep myself from idols'?"

"It is because I know it so well, that I keep urging

you to it; because, left alone, I know we are apt to faint in the struggle and give it up. That if it were not for outside influences we might go on forever in the old mad idolatry, and never come to a sense of the awful meaning of the words '*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*' I know God *must* be enough to satisfy our every want. If we feel He is not, then we must look to it, for something is wrong with us. I feel that most when I am farthest from Him. When I do feel near to Him, I know He satisfies me as no one else can, and I wonder how I can ever wish for any thing else; we must believe Him, when He declares again and again, '*My grace is sufficient for thee.*'"

"But we hear all through the Bible of His angels communicating with men and ministering to them. If they did it then, why not now? Isn't it more likely that God sent me those thoughts this morning through Graham than any one else?"

"Yes, we do hear of that angelic intercourse, before Christ came on earth, for before that, angels seem to have been the medium of communication between God and man. But when Christ came, He was the visible presence of God. He was to be the mediator. Taking the form of man, He brought God among us, so that through Him we could reach the inscrutable Father. He communicates with us ever since through the life of that son, that life that has been a shining light reaching down to us to guide our footsteps, and that will reach on with unfailing brilliancy, through all time, until his second coming.

"There is no warrant in the Bible for the belief we have held, and it is the entering wedge of spiritualism, that carried to any excess saps out all the life from Christianity, taking the bread of life out of our mouths, and leaving us the veriest chaff to feed upon.

"Spiritualism is, I firmly believe, merely a temptation of the Devil, who under that guise, strives to draw us hopelessly away from the rock of our salvation—Christ.

"As he tempted Him, so he tempts us. He offered Him the kingdoms of the earthly world if He would worship him. He tempts us by opening to us the spiritual world at the same price, that we will worship him. It is a fearful price to pay for what will be ours sooner or later."

"You have changed very much in your ideas, Eleanor. You once thought much more with me. Why is it?"

"Mr. Sherrard saw the snare into which I was falling and warned me of it, showing me where lay the fallacies in the belief. After he pointed out the dangers, I tested it by the Bible, and have gradually come to hold these different opinions. Taking that for our test, we have reason to believe that the Holy Ghost is the only good spirit which acts upon the hearts of men, though the devil and his agents are permitted to tempt us.

"There is one strong proof against it that we have overlooked, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Abraham *refuses* to let a blest spirit return to earth to warn the living. When Dives begs that Lazarus may go to warn his broth-

ers, lest they follow him into torment, Abraham says, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

"Dives answers, 'Nay, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent.'

"To which Moses answers, not only to Dives, but to all of us:

"'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

"Even if our friends do not come back, dear, they need not forget us, any more than we forget them. Mr. Sherrard said in regard to the likelihood of their being able to give us any knowledge of their presence, that if they could, it was a fearful risk to run. That the same entrance through which good spirits gained access to our hearts, would be doubly open to bad spirits, for if they had the power they would hesitate at nothing to gain entrance, and once in, would leave no means untried to ruin our faith and happiness.

"Indeed, Agatha, I know it would be safer to feel that there was no one, not even my beloved husband, dear as he is to me, between God and my heart. That He communicates with me right from His own Divinity. That is the way I feel. But even admitting that our friends are used as mediums of communication between God and ourselves, ought we to regard the carrier of good news as the sender of it? If we were prisoners of war, and a private soldier brought us news of our immediate release, we would thank him, and love him for it; but wouldn't we speak of our freedom as being given by the person who had us set free?

Wouldn't we be likely to speak of the release as coming from him instead of the soldier?"

"Yes, I suppose we would."

"Let me tell you, dear, a dream I had some time ago. It made so deep an impression on me that I have never lost its vividness.

"I was going to heaven; I suppose I was dying, though I do not know. My only thought was 'now I shall meet Brian and be with him forever; my long waiting is over. No more of this heart-breaking separation, but eternal and blessed companionship. My heaven is coming to me.'

"My joy was so great that it seemed to hasten the wished for happiness. I was suddenly in heaven, and saw nothing but Brian. Heaven was Brian. With the eager haste of a child returning to a home and love from which it had long strayed, I held out my arms and cried:

"'Brian! oh Brian.'

"But instead of meeting me, as was his wont after an earthly separation, with loving kisses and arms gathering me close to his great, tender heart, he stood still and looked at me so sadly that it grieved me to the heart.

"'What have I done, Brian? I love you so dearly.' I cried.

"'It is not to me that your first thoughts and love are due,' he said; 'have you forgotten that other, our comfort and hope?'

"Following the direction of his eyes, I saw our Saviour standing near, with outstretched arms to receive me, as

mine had been to greet Brian, and in His face as He looked on me, mingled love and grief.

"I gazed from one to the other. My heart yearned after Brian, it was to him I wanted to fly, but he stood very still: every minute I delayed, looking more grieved, and not only not moving a step to greet me, but absolutely keeping me away from him.

"It was a moment of profound agony and shame to me. All the brightness seemed to have died out of heaven, and deep darkness was gathering around me, and I had that faint sick feeling we know so well on earth.

"They were fading out of sight, growing dimmer and dimmer, and I felt that in a moment they would be lost to me. That broke the evil charm that held me. I looked at our Saviour's eyes, I had not dared to meet them before. As I gazed, they drew me step by step toward Him. Forgetting all else, I eagerly read there the story of His sacrifices for us, of His brothership, His earnest pleading that we 'might be with Him where He was,' and as I watched them I was conscious of the growing light around me, coming from Him, and as I drew near to Him I knew that that light was love, and that only as we were in that, were we in heaven.

"Then I threw myself in wondering adoration at His feet, lost in His light. But He gathered me in His arms, with words of comfort and love, and I felt that He was mine, as I was His.

"Then gradually Brian grew into the light, or I began to

be conscious of his being there. Then my body. And I felt that they were mine, truly and forever, because His.

"I believe dreams are often sent for the purpose of guiding us ; look at the visions of the Bible. Why may we not have the same kind, if we only watch for them to work themselves out, and think what they mean? Keep the eyes of our spirit, pure and free, that they may discern good and evil.

CHAPTER XVI.

"LISTEN, Eleanor, to this," Agatha said, one afternoon turning from a book she was reading, to speak to Eleanor, who lay on a sofa near the window. "Thomas à Kempis says," and she took up the book again, "'Jesus hath now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of His cross.' I am afraid we would come under that head."

"I fear we would," Eleanor answered. "How can we ask to be made like Christ, and yet dread suffering as He did. Ask with our lips to be Christlike, and pray with our hearts to be spared His agony ; expect to be purified without fire."

"We must be prepared not only to suffer,—but to suffer patiently, to take what comes, not in the spirit of a martyr, but of a follower of Christ, who can imitate His patience, the more that He suffered without having sinned, and that our worst suffering cannot be equal to our deserts."

"After all, how small our worst suffering is, compared to what He bore for us, His whole life on earth one long agony."

"I wonder if any of the things that please us, pleased Him ; or if the intenser joys of heaven were so entirely a part of His consciousness that our pleasures were too poor

to gratify Him. If that is so, and I have sometimes imagined it, think of the hourly pain of that life ; the Son of God, buffeted, persecuted, driven from place to place, scorned by all men except a few, and not understood or appreciated by those ; hungry, weary, heart-sick, and finally crucified. At which crowning act of sublime sacrifice, when the whole universe should have been worshipping Him in wondering humility, they jeered at Him, taunted Him with the cry, 'He saved others, himself He cannot save ; and He answered with the sublimest words ever uttered, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.' I don't believe the human mind can possibly appreciate those words. The marvellous restraint, when nothing that could have been said would at all have met the occasion, those words of loving mercy,—they seem to me the crowning act of His human life."

"Agatha, how can we ever be unforgiving with that example before us ?"

"We couldn't, if we kept it before us, but we do not. We do not make His life the guide for ours, we let His example slip from before us, exactly as if it was not our duty to follow it. How little effort we make, compared to what we should make, to live 'in His likeness.'"

"I was thinking the other day in reading the twentieth chapter of St. John, how seldom we feel Mary's grief, and cry, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.' Let any thing else be taken from us, and our cry goes up in exceeding bitterness, 'they

have taken away my friend,' 'my money,' 'my health,' and we strive, that by any means we may recover the lost.

"But—they take away our Lord, and we fold our hands and sit calmly, perhaps do not even know that He is gone, or knowing it, fill our hands with flowers and weeds, and think—

"Oh well, He will come back sometime or other. It is natural that we should lose Him sometimes, we cannot always expect to keep Him near us, so we will try and be contented, and wait patiently for His return !

"And we think we are having faith, no doubt, because we *wait* for His light to shine upon us again, instead of seeking for Him early and late, till we find Him. No one has occasion to say to us, 'Woman, why weepest thou ?'

"But if we felt in every fibre of our being, that our Lord was taken away, that our life was an empty sepulchre, because we looked in it and found Him not, and sent forth our cry, 'Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away ? then we might turn ourselves back, and see Jesus standing ; and His tender voice, full of love, and pity, would say to us, 'Mary,' and our hearts would be filled with joy."

"St. Paul says, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' What ought our lives to be having 'put on Christ,' to make ourselves worthy of such garments ; what cleanliness and care is necessary, what purity of mind and heart ?"

"Perhaps this is 'to be clothed upon with our house

which is from heaven, the building of God not made with hands.' How anxious we should be to keep ourselves pure and unspotted from the world, that the 'white raiment' given us should not be defiled.

"To walk with the three in white. Is not that enough to give us joy for all our sorrow here? And the thought that we can begin that walk here, should stimulate us to great efforts. Whenever we are tempted to sin in thought, word, or deed, let us remember that we have put on Christ, and it will help to keep us pure."

"Have you ever wondered, Agatha," Eleanor asked presently, "if before Christ came on earth, He had a dread of coming?"

"No, I don't think I ever did. I never thought of it."

"I have wondered whether, as the time grew near, when that blessed Christmas was to dawn upon us, if, knowing what was coming upon Him, He did not shrink from it. I don't know whether the idea is quite consistent with Divinity."

"I don't quite think that it is. But if He did dread it, the sacrifice is all the greater. When we think of His life on earth, with its many sorrows and neglects, isn't it blessed to think that it was only thirty-three years, and that ever since, while His Christian era has been growing with us, and we have been born, lived, struggled, and died, that He has been in all the joys of heaven, 'out of sight, yet blessing well.'"

"And yet I do not suppose all the joy of heaven gives

Him one-half the happiness, that it does when one sinful soul straying from Him, turns back and clings in earnest child-like confidence to His love. If there is joy among the angels of heaven, think what it must be with the Son of heaven. There is an old tradition somewhere, that every redeemed soul restores a drop of the blood that was shed for us!"

"I suppose, don't you, Eleanor, that when we reach heaven, all these queries that trouble us now will be answered?"

"Yes, I suppose they will either be answered, or we will find they were so trivial, so of the earth, earthy, that they need no answer. I hardly imagine that as soon as we get there we will rush for a settlement of all these doubts; we will gradually remember them, perhaps wondering how we could have been so ignorant, so blind, as to let ourselves be troubled and separated from friends by questions of so little moment."

"You don't think, then, that we will know all in a moment, when we get there?"

"No; I used to think that; that it would be one grand burst of knowledge, as powerful and breath-taking as a strong puff of hartshorn; but I do not see any use in that now; it seems more likely that point after point will come up, and as we need it, be answered, and perhaps talked over as we do questions here, not merely answered with a yes or no.

"Perhaps we, who go before the end of the world, will

have many of our questions of the whys and wherefores of earthly life answered, by being allowed to watch in some life on earth the working out of those same queries that perplexed us. If we had wondered why it was that riches and power were denied us, feeling we could have made a good use of them, we may be placed to guard a life like ours, with the additions we longed for, and find out why we were in mercy spared the trial of prosperity. To hear our Father say to us of such an one, 'Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone,' would be an answer more convincing than any other."

"If, as we suppose, part of our duty there is to guard and keep those here, what will we do when the end of the world comes? Be sent to other worlds not so far advanced as we are?"

"Perhaps so, but that is further than it is at all necessary for us to go; and I think those who insist upon settling all that exactly, prove the truth of the adage that 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' 'I want to know,' may be strictly Bostonian as an *expression*, but as a sentiment, it pervades all humanity. Let us be careful, dear, that we do not, like our Mother Eve, lose our Paradise, by an unwise desire and straining after knowledge. We must not forget in our thirst after knowledge, that though by the 'Spirit' we are to search all things, 'yea the deep things of God,' that yet there are some things too deep for us. I liked so much that verse you quoted the other day:

"God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
And hides them deep, like the secret sleep
Of Him He loved so well."

"His ways are past finding out," said Agatha.

"Yet they are 'ways of pleasantness,'" Eleanor said, "and the more we trust Him the more we can trust them. When we find them out, *trusting* ceases.

"Do you know, since I have been thinking so much of heaven as an actual place that we are likely to go to any day, and looking at it in the combined light of the Bible and reasoning faith, I have settled so many points that have troubled me. One thing I have only come to a realizing sense of lately. In thinking of very learned and talented people, it has distressed me whenever I heard that one was dead. I have thought time and time again, 'How sad that so much learning should be wasted, that such talent should be thrown away,' never thinking that I was impugning God's ways.

"It seems to me now that naught is lost or wasted. That God having created such beautiful things as noble talents, will find work for them hereafter as well as here. He would not make them such a powerful means of ennobling the race for them to die with the death of the body. They are not of the body, but of the soul. The mere mechanical part that the hands and body do is nothing. The true poet, sculptor, author, is the spirit that cannot die. I think that first came to me when, some

years ago, an artist friend of mine had his right hand shattered by the bursting of a pistol. Some days after, I was regretting his loss, saying he would miss his art so much, when I was told that three days after he had lost his hand he was painting with the other. It was very juvenile in me, but that gave me a realizing sense that an artist was not merely a skilful hand, but an intelligent spirit. I had absolutely thought he would have to learn to draw again.

"If it is the soul it cannot die; it must go with us where we go, unless our whole soul is made over."

"Do you mean that in heaven artists will paint, poets write, sculptors carve?"

"Well, I hardly feel inclined to venture on such a broad assertion as that, for it is merely as I have thought it out for myself that I can speak. But it seems to me that there will be a use found in heaven for the learning and talent of earth. 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,' and if He has given them to us, and we have not ill used His gifts, I believe we will keep them. If we do not make use of them in the same way that we do now, we will yet, I think, have them satisfied far more completely than we can here have them.

"In thinking of the actual act of painting, writing, and all such works done as they are done on earth, and of our having houses, trees, anything we individually happen to want (and if an organist would have his grand organ, a negro minstrel would want his banjo and bones, and a

small boy his jews-harp; a geologist want his hammer and pre-Adamite formations, an astronomer his telescope, a carpenter his tools and wood to work on), we lose the Christian heaven and go back to the old Pagan ideas—the Indian's happy hunting grounds, the Moslem heaven of soft beds, downy pillows, and sweet sleep.

"However I may speculate about these things, one thing I know, that I am more certain of than I am of any thing else: it is that the more we think of God and care for Him, the less we will think and care for these things. We dwell so much on them, because we are conscious that we do not love God enough to make His presence happiness, so we try to fill our hearts with chaff. It is our heaven, not God's, that we are seeking; a selfish heaven, of enjoyment our own way, rather than His."

"The question we should ask would be, I suppose, not how can heaven be made most pleasant to us, but how will it be most in accordance with God's plans; knowing that when we reach there that will be more pleasant to us than any heaven of our own devising."

"Yes, when we see the face of God, all the redeeming grace and love in it, we will forget all else, will commence a new life in Him. That may account for our not being made wretched by the absence of friends. Let us comfort ourselves with these words, 'for we shall see God.'"

"What an idea of the grandeur and vastness of heaven that line in the hymn gives you.

"'In his own place where he reigns in *uncreated* day.'"

That carries to my mind a great force. That idea of all the days yet to come being there, and His sending out one after another as its time comes, to do its work on earth ; or as it may mean, He reigns in a day, that unlike our days was not created, but is, like that awful mystery of God himself, without beginning or ending. How that one fact throws every thing else into insignificance, that utterly incomprehensible idea of a Being who never began and can never end."

"It is easier to imagine His never ending, than His never beginning, don't you think so?"

"Yes," Agatha answered, "it is easier. There is a consciousness of unendingness in us, I suppose. One of the most suggestive things of the joys of heaven is, I think, that we will never weary, but will rejoice in an eternity of it."

"I like those lines of Owen Merideth's so much :

" 'Waye and wind,
What are their storms and strife to me and you?
No strife can mar the pure hearts inmost calm,
This life of ours, what is it? A very few
Soon ended years, and then the ceaseless psalm,
And the eternal sabbath of the soul.'

"It will be a sabbath of feeling, and is not our life at its best, an unceasing psalm? Are not our best, truest moments a psalm of praise to our God who gave us all we have, who formed us to praise Him. The triumphant songs of David sing themselves over in my heart.

" 'Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me,

bless His holy name ; bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Who forgiveth all thy sins and healeth all thine infirmities. Who saveth thy life from destruction and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness.' "

"I like those psalms best in which he dwells on the grandness and goodness of God, rather than on His enemies. He usually carries out his own command, 'serve the Lord with gladness.' "

"I suppose *we* would serve Him with more gladness if we relied more upon His help, trusted more in Him."

"Perhaps the reason we do not, is that we are living too far from God to use His help. He may be near to us, but we are not near to Him. We do so many things we know He will not approve of, that we are often afraid to go to Him with any thing but lip service."

"The root of the whole matter is, that we do not love enough, yet there are always our Saviour's words before us, 'If any man love me, he *will* keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

"Without that love, no one, however good he may be, can ever see the kingdom of God ; with that love in our hearts, no matter what our trials and sufferings, that kingdom has already come to us. 'The blessed rest of God, not to reach heaven after a time, but to have it ever with us.' "

"How do you think of the Judgment day, Eleanor?" Agatha asked, after a pause.

"I feel that we need hardly look for one great judgment

day, like a day of twenty-four hours ; a thousand years are with the Lord as one day. The judgment day may much more likely be an extent of time from the death of Abel, or as each body dies his spirit is judged. It's day of judgment has come, and the final day when the sheep shall be placed on one side, and the goats on the other, is only the final awarding, the public notice, so to speak, of the result."

"Then you do not believe in any time of probation, before entering heaven?"

"No I don't ; I don't pretend to be any authority on the subject, but it always has seemed to me an entirely unnecessary idea, and one that, like universalism, was raised for indifferent or lazy people, a kind of make-shift to put off a little longer the decision of their fate. We are told that we have this life in which to settle what we will be ; we are not given the least hint of any other chance of even ameliorating our condition, not the least, and it is a most fatal belief that we are given such a chance. When, having chosen whom we will serve, God or the devil, our time is up, and death comes, why should we not enter at once into our reward, or punishment, what reason is there for further delay? If that we may all enter heaven at once, would that not be very unfair to Adam and Eve, Noah and Moses, to have to wait all these years till every body is dead, so that the last people by a mere accident of birth, without any regard to their lives, receive at once, what other noble godly souls have to wait thousands of years for? That does not seem to me likely.

"If, on the other hand, it is only a short time, in propor-

tion to their lives as good or bad, what is gained by that? What is the object in saying 'now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,' if it is stretched out to such a limitless extent?

"I believe it is an idea destructive to earnest effort to make our calling and election sure ; putting things off apparently being the chief employment of humanity, this is one of the first things to be put off."

"Do you think that is always the effect of that belief?"

"I believe it is at heart, whatever form it may take outwardly. The principal idea of it is,—in entire contradiction of the whole Bible,—settling the point *now*, is of no importance. We have as authority Christ's words to the thief on the cross: 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' If, as some urge, Paradise is the intermediate state, why should Christ be there ; what would there be to hinder His going at once to the highest heaven? I believe, and see no reason why I should not, that He meant the heaven where was the throne of God, and the river of the water of life proceeding out of it, and the tree of life.

"Dear, let us pray that we may not stumble over these things, because they are so simple, so easy to understand."

"Yes, they are if we only look at them simply," Agatha answered ; "there, I think, is where we make the great mistake in looking at our higher lives, at all points of Christianity. We seem to be seeking always for some grand principles that are only to be worked out and under-

stood by deep reason and logic, that are to be stormed and taken by the brain, instead of the heart. Forgetting entirely the words of our Lord Jesus,

“‘Verily, I say unto you,’ whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’

“The simple belief of a child should be made our mode of meeting such matters, rather than the questioning skepticism of infidelity; demanding to see the print of the nails, before believing, demanding a sign, where we are plainly told to have faith.”

“How clearly stray words sometimes bring things up before you. Those words of our Saviour’s brought so vividly before me the picture of His disciples rebuking those who brought the little children to Him, and His displeasure as He told them that of such was the kingdom of heaven. And then he took them up in His arms and laying His hands on them, blessed them. The beautiful simplicity of that story strikes me afresh every time I read or hear it.

“In my lazy, careless days, I used to think that in spite of every thing that was said of the joys and delights of heaven, annihilation was really much more desirable. I believe many more people think that in their hearts than would dare to own it. I believe when I thought it, I would not have acknowledged it, except perhaps to some one as foolish and wicked as I was.

“The reason that such an opinion is so prevalent, is

that the heaven people usually look for, is one of their own almost earthly enjoyment and pleasure; and few natures I hope are so utterly selfish that the continual thought of that would not make them crave rather annihilation, anything that implies getting away from themselves.

“The soul looking to Christ and dwelling on Him, loses itself—in Him, and gains His heaven. Keeping before us those ‘sinless years that breathed beneath the Syrian blue,’ not merely through the written record of them, but through a personal adoption, and appreciation of their power and sufficiency by our weakness and need, makes heaven such a different place, that my old fancy for annihilation does not trouble me, except when I find I am slipping away from God, and need a violent wrench to plant my feet again in the right way.

“Heaven, not merely as a place of green-fields, still waters, pleasant pastures, and a general gratifying of every wish and having all we want, but Heaven as God’s presence and companionship, is enough to fill the faintest heart with a longing to ‘depart and be with Christ.’

“Not only shall they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor shall there be any more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, nor shall there be any more curse, but that not being enough for our Father to do for us, there are the wonderful crowning promises, more than we could ever have imagined.

“‘For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains

of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.'

"Can we comprehend in the least those words, grasp only in the faintest manner the meaning they can carry even to our dull earthly senses, and not be filled with adoring love and thankfulness, not feel that all of earth's sorrows will be more than repaid by one moment of heaven's joys, not cry with the deepest, heartiest truth, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee,' and know that the chief work of our lives, indeed the only one of importance, is in its fullest sense to 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' knowing that all these things whatsoever we want will be added to us?"

"We forget that 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

"We are also apt to forget what it can be, not to reach the kingdom. Even if we leave out the positive anger of God, and grant that there be no absolute infliction of misery and pain, as the penalty of rejecting Christ's promised grace, and only grant that man cannot die as a brute does, but as a conscious soul will live on in eternity, then why should we necessarily need any theory of absolute fire, or any visitation of God's wrath, upon us, to make us miserable?"

"Take away from the contemplation of the eternal state

of such a soul, every other means of unhappiness, leave out the passions and memories, the conscience that must remain with it, the lusts that continue, with all supply cut off; leave out every thing but the acknowledgment of bare conscious existence—and what can that existence be? Hopeless! horrible! No God, no heaven, no possible amelioration to look forward to, nothing but a frightful and unending consciousness of self; that in and of itself is destructive of peace, and utterly maddening."

CHAPTER XVII.

DECEMBER 10TH.

AGATHA has left me again. She staid as long as she could, but home duties at length called her back.

Home duties! What a dreary, hollow echo my heart gives at those words! A lonely, childless widow, without any home duties, my life lies out blank and gray before me, empty of life's dearest attractions, "a place where nothing happens."

AFTERNOON.

With a heavy heart I went to church this morning, after writing those words, hoping that I might hear something that would bring back to me inward peace and quiet. But the moment the minister rose and spoke, I knew I would not get it, and felt strongly inclined to leave the church.

But I found myself mistaken. I was in wiser hands than I imagined, when, because a minister in the pulpit seemed unpromising, I thought the Lord's arm was shortened, that He could not help. I was in His presence, who will not leave us comfortless but will come unto us, and He only gave me another proof that His ways were as varied as our needs.

After the minister had droned through the hymns and prayers, to which with thoughtless irreverence I had not listened, thinking he could tell me nothing I did not already know, he opened the Bible, and had been reading for some moments, when the words came to my ears,

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

The words seemed to come straight from God himself, I had read them before, but had never felt them. Now they came with a most comforting sense of their being meant for me.

I did not hear any more of the service or sermon, my heart was filled by that, and could hold no more. The words kept saying themselves over to me all the time, growing deeper, broader and more comprehensive. I was in a happy dream of what they could mean. Those 'everlasting arms' were as positive a support to me as any living arms could be; I rested on them, and was no longer lonely and hopeless.

Church over, I came home in the same happy mood; the house was no longer lonely, for "the eternal God was my refuge," I was safe there.

After dinner I went out to the graveyard; I was too wretched to dare to go there in the morning, but now I carried my joy, and on Brian's grave, wept out the happy tears that had been in my eyes since morning. The everlasting arms, with that wondrous sense of protection, were underneath us all, and in them I was not lonely, for I had

all I wanted ; they were the arms of my heavenly Father, and my husband and child were with me in them.

Doubly blessed be our Father, for His goods words that come to us in our sorest need, with all the force of His overshadowing Divinity, and on which we can lean in perfect confidence, because they are of Him and from Him.

The future will only be dark and dreary to me, if His light is removed. Our God is a very present help in time of trouble and we have His promise that He will "draw out His soul to the hungry."

If, while the bread of life is freely offered to us, we feed our souls on chaff, it is our own fault if we perish with hunger.

"He that cometh to me," said our Saviour, "shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall nevermore thirst."

"Oh eyes that are weary and hearts that are sore,
Look off unto Jesus, now sorrow no more ;
The light of His countenance shineth so bright,
That here, as in heaven, there need be no night."

No night of sorrow and trouble, when hungry and thirsty our soul faints in us, but by keeping our eyes on Him as I did at last in my dream, the light of His love will brighten even the darkest scenes of earthly distress.

DECEMBER 12TH.

We believe that even in heaven there will be higher grades of happiness, purer joys, keener delights, as we are

educated and capable of appreciation. We must look on trials here as a means of purification that will enable us to have the more perfect joy in His presence. Can we not then bear them patiently and trustfully? If we want any earthly joy or pleasure very much, we do not mind how much trouble we go through to get it. Why can we not apply the same every day rule of action to higher things?

The trouble must be that we do not keep before our minds a realizing sense of what heaven will be to gain, and value a few days of pleasure here, more than an eternity of perfect joy in the presence of our Father.

Teach us we pray thee, oh Father, the full value and beauty of the eternal life, that we may be willing to give up every thing for it.

DECEMBER 13TH.

I must not stay in this empty house, no one but the servants belonging to it. It is too great a strain upon me in every way ; my work in it is so slight as to be almost nothing.

My life is too idle, and will necessarily become unhappy. Brian I know does not like it. Work for God and man was the great end of his life ; he considered work the greatest blessing given us, and if I would please him I must go work in the vineyard.

An idle life is as demoralizing to a woman as to a man ; the dreary vacuity of an aimless, workless life is dreadful. None know how much mental and physical health is destroyed by it. It would very soon destroy mine I feel, and

dare not risk many more weeks of it. There is sober truth in the old saw, that,

"Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do."

We have no right to live at random, just as it comes to us ; we must have some definite purpose in our lives, if we would make them worthy offerings to God.

"Each in his lifetime carves his own soul's statue ;" we must see to it that we do not "rough hew" it into a shapeless mass, by carvings untempered by godly patience and temperance ; or make them meaningless, indistinct statues of sand, having no form nor comeliness, and blown about whither it will by every breeze from the four quarters of heaven.

I do not know what there is for me to do, but since God saw best to take from me those dear ones for whom it was my joy to labor, He will not leave me desolate, without some place and work in the world. I do not know what it is, but until I *do*, I can try to find out, and I will.

DECEMBER 20TH.

A long letter from Agatha has settled the much vexed question, apparently most satisfactorily.

An aunt of hers, quite an invalid, with a family of children, wants a governess for them who can fill in a measure, the place her constant sufferings cause her to leave unfilled.

Agatha, knowing my wish for some engrossing work,

recommended Mrs. Freeland to propose to me to take the care of them, which she did, through her.

I have accepted it. My dear thoughtful friend represents the work to me, as one which she would be thoroughly willing for me to take, knowing that I will be as comfortable and happy there as I can be any where.

Dear little woman, she is wise, that good old-fashioned word, and I can trust myself to her judgment. Not the least inducement this place offers, is close neighborhood to her, and the promise and prospect of much companionship in its highest sense, with the one who on earth, is dearest to me.

She represents the children, of whom I am to have almost entire care and responsibility, as quiet, shy little ones, bright and intelligent, and very lovable ; all great favorites with her. Frank, Minnie, Aggie,—named after her—and Dora.

Mr. Freeland is dead, his wife, she fears, dying ; and she tells me to think well before I accept what may be a long and arduous task.

Think? I have thought with an aching heart of the empty life, arms, and home, that often weigh me down, do what I will to rise above it, and the thought of this home, which I can enter as a privileged inmate, holds out strong attractions to me. My heart yearns to these little fatherless children, so soon, perhaps, to be motherless ; if possible, I would like to keep them from having such a lonely, desolate, orphaned childhood as I had myself.

When Martha came to Mary and said, "The Master is come and calleth for thee," she rose up hastily and went out.

Perhaps this is the Master's call to me. It seems so. I will arise quickly and go out.

To feel the pressure of children's arms around my neck, their kisses touching my cheeks, and lips, and hair, and feel that they in a measure belong to me, is a joy that I had not counted on the future bringing.

Not, my own blessed baby, that they can ever take your place, no, not in a thousand years. Your mother's heart will be purely and entirely yours, blessed little one; her arms will be free to clasp you when the time comes. Neither arms nor heart will be less truly yours, that in this interim, when they can only clasp you close in dreams, that make waking worse than death, they strive to make the path smoother and straighter for other little feet, not blessed as yours are with the heavenly streets to walk in.

And my life here is, after all, to be filled by the patter of tiny feet, the music of children's voices.

I thank Thee, my Father, that Thou hast cast my lot among Thy dear little ones; and if at times my heart rises in tempestuous emotion and repinings that they are not my very own, flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, I pray that Thou wilt still the tempest, calm the rebellious words by a clearer view of the little one whose angel doth always behold Thy face, and whose tender feet, unbruised

by earth, walk the streets of Thy New Jerusalem with Thy dear Son, clothed in His pure, spotless robes of white.

I know that if Brian, my dear husband, can watch over me, he will rejoice to see his little wife go forth to her work, and to think her life will be filled as much as this will fill it. It pleases me to think how this plan will please you, my darling, you are so fond of the little ones; you know how their touches keep our hearts pure, and true, and simple, with the child-like faith that wins entrance into heaven.

And I am glad to teach again. Some years ago, few perhaps in number, but long in my life, making it, you found me teaching, and your great heart gathered me to itself from the first, though I did not know it then. It pleases me to think, when the second time I come to you, it will be from the same work, carried on now more for the knowledge of God than the wisdom of man, more to fit my charge to "see God" than to know man.

And in my old work, working for God, and you, and right, it will seem more as if I was waiting for you to come and take me again.

"Sometimes watching, I am sure
That I see an angel stand,
With a lily in his hand,
In the shadow of the door.
Saying, 'Not till thou be as pure
As these stainless blossoms be,
Shalt thou reach the heavenly shore,
Where the ships come home from sea.'

Ah, I know it! I am glad
That my watch is nearly past,
That the shadow cometh fast,
Treading on with noiseless steps;
And I cannot feel it sad,
For it brings me near my ships!
Near that haven fair and free,
Where the ships come home from sea.

Eyes long dimmed with bitter tears,
There shall softly shine again;
Hearts weighed down by anxious pain;
Lightened through eternal years!
There our errors are forgiven;
There our sunken treasures be—
For it only is in Heaven
That our ships come home from sea."