

# UNITED AT LAST

MISS M E BRADDON



CHAPTER XVII.

GRIEF FILLS THE ROOM UP OF MY ABSENT CHILD.

Sir Cyprian had told himself that, in coming to Marchbrook, nothing was further from his thoughts than the desire to see Constance Sinclair; yet, now that he was so near her, now that he was assured of her unhappiness, the yearning for one brief meeting, one look into the sweet eyes, one pressure of the gentle hand that used to lie so trustfully in his own, grew upon him hourly, until he felt that he could not leave Marchbrook without seeing her. No motive, no thought that could have shadowed the purity of Gilbert Sinclair's wife, had his soul's desire been published to the world, blended with this yearning of Sir Cyprian's. Deep, such sorrow, such loneliness as Constance Sinclair's was unutterably sacred to the man who had loved and surrendered Constance Clanyard.

Sir Cyprian lingered at Marchbrook, and spent the greater part of his days in riding or walking over familiar grounds, and in the evening, he would sit up his mind to depart next morning, yet when morning came he still lingered.

One bright, bleak day, when there were flying snowstorms and intervals of sun and blue sky, Sir Cyprian—having actually packed his portmanteau and made arrangements for being driven to the station to catch an afternoon train—took a final ramble in Marchbrook park. He had not once put his foot on the soil that had been his, but he could get a peep at the old place across the railings. There was a melancholy pleasure in looking at those wintry glades, the young firs, the scudding rabbits, the screaming pheasants, the withered bracken.

The sun had been shining a few minutes ago. Down came the snow in a thick driving shower, almost blinding Sir Cyprian as he walked swiftly along the oak fence. Presently he found himself at the end of the Monks' avenue, and under the classic temple which was said to be built upon the very spot where the Benedictines once had their chapel.

Ten years ago that temple had been Cyprian Davenport's summer retreat. He had made it his smoking-room and study; had read Thucydides and the Greek dramatists there in the long vacation; had read those books of modern travel which had fired his mind with a longing for the adventures, perils and triumphs of the African explorer. Twenty years ago it had been his mother's chosen resort. He had spent many a summer morning, many a pensive twilight there by his mother's side, watching her sketch or hearing her play. The old-fashioned square piano was there still, perhaps, and the old engravings on the walls.

"Poor old place," he thought; "I wonder if any one ever goes there now, or if it is quite given up to bats and owls, and the spirits of the dead?" He stopped under the stone balcony which overhung Marchbrook, on a level with the eight-foot wall. In Gilbert Sinclair's—or his architect's—plan of improvements this classic summer-house, a relic of a departed taste, had been forgotten. Sir Cyprian was glad to find it unchanged, unchanged in any wise, save that it had a more forlorn and neglected air than of old. The stone-work of the balcony was green and gray with mosses and lichens. The frame-work of the window had not been painted for a quarter of a century. The ivy had wandered over the brick-work and stone, darting sharp-forked tongues of green into the crevices of the decaying mortar. Sir Cyprian looked up at the well-remembered window, all of thoughts of the past.

"Does she ever come here, I wonder?" he said to himself; "or do they use the old place for a tool-house or an apple shed?" Hardly, for there fell upon his ears a few bars of plaintive symphony, played on a piano of ancient tone—the pensive Broadwood dear to his childhood—and then a voice, the pure and sweet contralto he knew too well, began Lord Houghton's pathetic ballad, "Strangers Yet."

He listens as if he lives but to hear. Oh, what pathos, what profound melancholy in that voice, pouring out its sweetness to the silent walls! Regret, remorse, sorrow, too great for common language to express, are breathed in that flood of melody. And when the song is done the singer's hands fall on the keys in a crashing chord, and a wild cry—the sudden utterance of uncontrollable despair—goes up to heaven.

She is there—so near him—alone in her anguish. She, the only woman he has ever truly loved, the woman for whom he would give his life as freely as he would spill a cup of water upon the ground, and with a little thought of the sacrifice.

The lower edge of the balcony is within reach of his hand. The century-old ivy would afford easy footing for a less skillful athlete. To climb the ascent is as simple as to mount the rigging of his yacht.

In a minute, before he had time to think, he was in the balcony, he had opened the French window, he was standing in the room.

Constance Sinclair sat by the piano, her arms folded on the shabby old mahogany lid, her drooping head resting on her arm, her face hidden. She was too deeply lost in the agony of hopeless grief to hear the rattling of the frail casement, the footstep on the floor.

"Constance!" She started up and confronted him, pale as ashes, with a smothered scream.

"My dearest, I heard your grief. I could not keep away. Only a few minutes. Constance, only a few words, and I will leave you. Oh, my love, how changed, how changed!"

A flood of crimson rushed into the pale face, and as quickly faded. Then she gave him her hand, with an innocent frankness that went to his heart, so like the Constance of old—the pure and perfect type of girlhood that knows not sin.

"I do not mind your hearing me in my sorrow," she said, sadly. "I come here because I feel myself away from all the world. At this house servants come to my room with messages, and worry me. Would I like this? Will I do the other? What carriage will I drive in? At what time? A hundred questions that are so tiresome when one is tired of life. Here I can lock my door, and feel as much alone as in a desert."

"But, dear Mrs. Sinclair, it is not good for you to abandon yourself to such grief."

"How can I help it? 'Grief fills the room up of my absent child,' with a sad smile. 'You heard of my loss, did you not? The darling who made life so bright for me—snatched away in a moment—not an hour's warning. I woke that morning a proud and happy mother, and at night—No, no one can imagine such a grief as that.'

"But, dear Mrs. Sinclair, it is not good for you to abandon yourself to such grief. The sharp north wind had given a keen edge to somewhat faded appetites, and game pie, anchovy sandwiches, cold grouse, and tower's head had been duly appreciated, with an ad libitum accompaniment of dry champagne, bitter beer, and Copenhagen kirchenwasser.

The gentlemen's spirits had been improved by the morning's sport, and the ladies' by the evening's society. The more masculine spirits preferred to smoke their Tabacacos or Infantas by the hearth-room fire, with the chance of getting the "straight tip" out of somebody else's groom.

James Wyatt was the only member of the party who a spirit was not overcome by what was called, but then Mr. Wyatt was an outsider, only admitted on sufferance into that chosen band, as a fellow who might be useful on an emergency, and whom it was well to "square" by an occasional burst of civility. He was one of those dangerous men who are always sober, and find out everybody else's weak points without ever revealing his own. He was Sinclair's old friend, and he was a man who was always good—naughty sometimes—but always dearer than my life.

What could Sir Cyprian say to comfort this bereaved heart? He could only sit down quietly by Constance Sinclair's side, and win her to talk of her sorrow, far more freely and confidently than she had talked to her father; and this he felt was something gained. There was comfort in this free speech—comfort in pouring her sorrow into the ear of a friend who could verify sympathy.

"Dear Mrs. Sinclair," said Sir Cyprian, gravely, when he had allowed her to tell the story of her bereavement, "as a very old friend—one who has your welfare deep at heart—I must entreat you to struggle against this absorbing grief. I have seen your old friend Doctor Webb, and he has remarked that unless you make an effort to overcome this melancholy, your mind as well as your body will suffer. Yes, Constance, reason itself may give way under the burden you impose upon it. Perhaps no one else would have the courage to speak to you so plainly, but I venture to speak as a brother might to a fondly loved sister. This may be our last meeting, for I shall go back to Africa as soon as I can get my party together again. You will try, dear friend, will you not, for my sake, for the sake of your husband—"

"My husband!" she exclaimed, with a shudder. "He has billiards, and guns, and racehorses, and friends without number. What can it matter to him that I grieve for my child? Somebody had need be sorry. He does not care."

"Constance, it would matter very much to your father, to all who have ever loved you, to yourself most of all, if you should end your life in a lunatic asylum."

This startled her, and she looked up at him earnestly. "Unreasonable grief sometimes leads to madness. Despair is rebellion against God. If the Shunamite in that dark day could say 'It shall be well,' shall a Christian have less patience—a Christian who has been taught that those who mourn are blessed, and shall be comforted. Have faith in that divine promise, and all will be well."

"I will try," she answered gently. "It is very good of you to reason with me. No one else has spoken so frankly. They have only talked platitudes and begged me to divert my mind. As if acted charades, or billiards, or bezique, could fill up the gap in my life. Are you really going to Africa very soon?"

"Early in the new year, perhaps; but I shall not go till I have heard from some reliable source that you are happy."

"You must not wait for that. I shall never know happiness again in this world. At most I can but try to bear my lot patiently and put on cheerful looks. I shall try to do that, believe me. Your lessons shall not be wasted. And now, I suppose, we must say good-by," looking at her watch; "it is time for me to go back to the house."

"I will not detain you; but before I go I must apologize for my burglarious entrance by that window. I hope I did not frighten you."

"I was only startled. It seemed almost a natural thing to see you here. I remember how fond you were of this summer-house when I was a child. I have so often seen you sitting in that window smoking and reading."

"Yes, I have spent many an hour here, puzzling over the choruses in 'Prometheus,' and I have looked up from my book to see you scamper by on your pony."

"Pepper, the gray one," cried Con-

stance, absolutely smiling; "such a dear pony! We used to feed him with bread and apples every morning. Ah, what happy days those were!" It touched him to the core of his heart to see the old girl look come back in all its brightness. But it was only a transient gleam of the old light which left a deeper sadness when it faded.

"Good-by, Constance," he said, taking both her hands. "I may call you that for the last time."

"Yes, and when you are in Africa—in another world, far from all the false pretenses and sham pleasures that make up life in this—think of me as Constance the Constance you knew in the days that are gone—not as Gilbert Sinclair's wife."

He bent his head over the unresisting hands and kissed them.

"God bless you and comfort you, my Constance, and give you as much happiness as I lost when I made up my mind to live without you!"

He opened the window, and swung himself lightly down from the balcony to the turf below.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A BALCONY SCENE.

Gilbert Sinclair and his chosen set—the half-dozen turf gentlemen with whom he was united by the closest bond of sympathy—had spent this December morning agreeably enough at a rustic steeple-chase nine miles from Davenport. The race was an event of the most insignificant order—unchronicled in Ruff—but there was pleasure in the drive to and from Mr. Sinclair's drag through the keen frosty air, with an occasional diversion in the shape of a flying snow storm, which whitened the men's rough overcoats and hung on their beards and whiskers.

Just at the hour in which Sir Cyprian and Constance were bidding each other a long good-by, Mr. Sinclair was driving his sorrel team back to Davenport at a slashing pace. He and his friends had enjoyed themselves very thoroughly at the homely farmers' meeting. The sharp north wind had given a keen edge to somewhat faded appetites, and game pie, anchovy sandwiches, cold grouse, and tower's head had been duly appreciated, with an ad libitum accompaniment of dry champagne, bitter beer, and Copenhagen kirchenwasser.

The gentlemen's spirits had been improved by the morning's sport, and the ladies' by the evening's society. The more masculine spirits preferred to smoke their Tabacacos or Infantas by the hearth-room fire, with the chance of getting the "straight tip" out of somebody else's groom.

James Wyatt was the only member of the party who a spirit was not overcome by what was called, but then Mr. Wyatt was an outsider, only admitted on sufferance into that chosen band, as a fellow who might be useful on an emergency, and whom it was well to "square" by an occasional burst of civility. He was one of those dangerous men who are always sober, and find out everybody else's weak points without ever revealing his own. He was Sinclair's old friend, and he was a man who was always good—naughty sometimes—but always dearer than my life.

Gilbert was driving, with Sir Thomas Houndslow, a gentleman of turf celebrity, and late captain of a cavalry regiment, next him, smoking furiously, while Mr. Wyatt sat behind the two, and joined freely in their conversation, which inclined to the boisterous. How calm that smooth, level voice of his sounded after the strident tones of his companions, thickened over so slightly by champagne and kirchenwasser. The chief talk was of horses—the horses Gilbert was now driving—the horses Gilbert had seen that morning with an inexhaustible series of anecdotes about horses that had been bought and sold and bred, and exchanged, including the story of a magnificent horse, which was a splendid gem in his intervals of good health, and was periodically sold by his owner, and taken back again at half price when the fit came on.

James Wyatt admired the landscape, an enthusiasm which his companions looked down upon contemptuously from the serene height of stolid indifference. "There's a glade," cried the stolid, pointing to an opening in the undulating woodland, where the snow-covered trees were like a picture of fairyland.

"Pretty tidy timber," assented Sir Thomas Houndslow; "but for my part, I could never see anything in trees, go into raptures about them, except when you've sold 'em to a timor merchant. Shouldn't like to see cremation come into fashion, by the by. It would spoil the coffin trade and depreciate the value of my elms and oaks."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## Circumstances Alter Cases.

"As a general thing," said a man, "it is an annoyance to have anybody sitting alongside of you or back of you look over at the paper you are reading; still, it makes a difference who it is. I have seen a man who was reading a paper, or held it carefully so that another person could read it. I saw a case of this sort the other day in a railroad car. A lady had been sitting looking out of the window, and forward suddenly to look at something in the newspaper which the gentleman in the seat in front of her was reading. He had just turned a page, and something on the fresh page caught her eye. It appeared to interest her greatly. It was a long article, and she could not have read more than half of it if the gentleman had not moved the paper a little to one side, which he did apparently quite unconsciously, keeping on reading all the time himself and holding the paper very steady. At last the lady finished the article that she was reading. With a sigh she leaned back in her seat again and looked out of the window once more. All the time quite oblivious of the man. He didn't flip the paper over as though the end of an episode had come; he looked again at one or two articles on that page, and then turned to the next one, just as though nothing had happened."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

## How It Was Done.

The flute took its name from the fluta, an ear-shaped Italian water, which has seven spots like finger holes on its sides.

AURORA, Ill., was the first city in the world to illuminate its streets with electricity. The wires were placed in position in 1881.

## TALMAGE'S SERMON.

### THE DIVINE DISCUSSES ANOTHER UNIQUE SUBJECT.

He Says the Effect All Depends Upon When We Laugh and What We Laugh At—David's Smile and Sarah's Cackination—Five Prayerful Wishes and a Blessing.

#### Lessons of a Laugh.

Rev. Dr. Talmage, who is now in Australia on his round the world journey, has selected as the subject for his sermon through the press "Laughter," the text being taken from 1 Sam. xvi. 2, "Then was our mouth filled with laughter," and Psalm ii. 4, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

Thirty-eight times does the Bible make reference to this configuration of the features and quick expulsion of breath which we call laughter. Sometimes it is born of the sunshine and sometimes the midnight. Sometimes it stirs the sympathies of angels, and sometimes the cackination of devils. All healthy people laugh. Whether it pleases the Lord or displeases Him, that depends upon when we laugh and at what we laugh. My theme to-day is the laughter of the Bible—namely, Sarah's laugh, or that of skepticism; David's laugh, or that of spiritual exaltation; the fool's laugh, or that of sinful merriment; God's laugh, or that of infinite condemnation; heaven's laugh, or that of eternal triumph.

Sarah's Mistaken Laugh. Scene, an oriental tent; the occupants, old Abraham and Sarah, perhaps wrinkled and decrepit. Their three guests are three angels—the Lord Almighty one of them. In return for the hospitality shown by the old peop God promises Sarah that she shall become the ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sarah laughs in the face of God. She does not believe it. She is affrighted at what she has done. She denies it. She says, "I didn't laugh." Then God retorted with an emphasis that silenced all dispute. "But thou didst laugh!" My friends, the laugh of skepticism, in all ages, is only the echo of Sarah's laughter. God says He will accomplish a thing, and men say it cannot be done. A great multitude laugh at the miracle of the Lord's power.

Laughing at Bible Truths. That was Sarah's trick. God thunders from the heavens. "But thou didst laugh!" The garden of Eden was only a fable. There never was any ark built or if it was built it was too small to have two of every kind. The pillar of fire by night was only the northern lights, the plagues of Egypt only a brilliant specimen of jugglery. The parted because the wind blew violently a great while from one direction. The sun and moon did not put themselves out of the way for Joshua. Jacob's ladder was only horizontal and picturesue clouds. The destroying angel smiting the firstborn in Egypt was only cholera infantum become epidemic. The gullet of the whale, by positive measurement, was too small to swallow a prophet, the story of the immaculate conception a shock to all decency. The lame, the dumb, the blind, the halt, cured by mere human surgery. The resurrection of Christ's friend only a beautiful tableau, Christ and Lazarus and Mary and Martha acting their part well.

My friends, there is not a doctrine or statement of God's holy word that has not been derided by the skepticism of the day. I take up this book of King James' translation. I consider it a perfect Bible, but here are skeptics who want it torn to pieces. And now with this Bible in my hand, let me tear out all those portions which the skepticism of this day demands shall be torn out. What shall go first? "Well," says some one in the audience, "take out all that about the creation and about the first settlement of the world." Away goes Genesis. "Now," says some one, "take out all that about the miraculous guidance of the children of Israel in the wilderness." Away goes Exodus. "Now," says some one else in the audience, "there are things in Deuteronomy and Kings that are not fit to be read." Away go Deuteronomy and the Kings. "Now," says some one, "the book of Job is a fable that ought to come out." Away goes the book of Job. "Now," says some one, "those passages in the New Testament which imply the divinity of Jesus Christ ought to come out." Away go the Evangelists. "Now," says some one, "the book of Revelation—how preposterous! It represents a man with the moon under his feet and a sharp sword in his hand." Away goes the book of Revelation. Now there are a few pieces left. What shall we do with them? "Oh," says some man in the audience, "I don't believe a word in the Bible, from one end to the other." Well, it is all gone. Now you have put out the last light for the nations. Now it is the pitch darkness of eternal midnight. How do you like it?

#### The Merriest Laugh of All.

But I think, my friends, we had better keep the Bible a little longer intact. It has done pretty well for a good many years. Then there are old people who find it a comfort to have it on their laps, and children like the stories in it. Let us keep it for a curiosity. If the Bible is to be thrown out of the school and out of the court room, so that men no more swear by it, and it is to be put in a dark corridor of the city library, the Koran on one side and the writings of Confucius on the other, then let us each keep a

copy for himself, for we might have trouble, and we would want to be under the delusions of its consolations, and we might die, and we would want the delusion of the exalted residence of God's right hand, which it mentions. Oh, what an awful thing it is to laugh in God's face and hurl his Revelation back at him. After awhile the day will come when they will say they did not laugh. Then all the hypocritisms, all the caricatures and all the learned sneers in the quarterly reviews will be brought to judgment, and amid the rocking of everything beneath, and amid the flaming of everything above, God will thunder, "But thou didst laugh." I think the most fascinating laughter at Christianity I ever remember was a man in New England. He made the world of God seem ridiculous, and he laughed on at our holy religion until he came to die, and then he said, "My life has been a failure—a failure domestically—I have no children; a failure socially, for I am treated in the streets like a pirate; a failure professionally because I know but one minister that has adopted my sentiments." For a quarter of a century he laughed at Christianity, and ever since Christianity has been laughing at him. Now, it is a mean thing to go into a man's house and steal his goods, but I tell you the most gigantic burglary ever invented is the proposition to steal these treasures of our holy religion. The meanest laughter ever uttered is the laugh of the skeptic.

A Mean Laugh. The next laughter mentioned in the Bible that I shall speak of is the fool's laughter, or the expression of sinful merriment. Solomon was very quick at a smile. When he makes a comparison, we all catch it. What is the laughter of a fool like? He says, "It is the cracking of thorns under a pot." The kettle is swung a bunch of brambles is put under it, and the torch is applied to it, and there is a great noise, and a big blaze, and a sputter, and a quick extinguishment. It is darker than it was before. Fool's laughter.

The most miserable thing on earth is a bad man's fun. There they are—ten men in a barroom; they have at home wives, mothers, daughters. The impure jests start at one corner of the barroom, and crackle, crackle, crackle, it goes all around in 500 such guffaws there is not one item of humor in the whole lot.

Twenty years ago I knew a man who was particularly skillful in imitating the lameness of a neighbor. Not long ago a son of the skillful mimic had his leg amputated for the very defect which his father had mimicked years before. I do not say it was a judgment of God. I leave you to make your own inference.

So all merriment born of dissipation, that which starts at the counter of the drinking restaurant or from the wineglass in the home circle, the mauldin simper, the meaningless joke, the saturnalian gibberish, the paroxysm of mirth about nothing which you sometimes see in the fashionable clubroom or the exquisite parlor at 12 o'clock at night, are the cracking of thorns under a pot. Such laughter and such sin end in death.

A Momentous Laugh. The next laughter that I shall mention as being in the Bible is the laugh of God's condemnation. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Again, "The Lord will laugh at him." Again, "I will laugh at his calamity." With such demonstration will God greet every kind of great sin and wickedness. But men build up villanous higher and higher. Good men almost pity God, because he is so chafed against by men. Suddenly a pin drops out of the machinery of wickedness, or a secret is revealed, and the foundation begins to rock. Finally the whole thing begins to rock. What is the matter? I will tell you what the matter is. The crash of ruin is only the reverberation of God's laughter.

In the money market there are a great many good men and a great many fraudulent men. A fraudulent man there says: "I mean to have my million." He goes to work reckless of honesty, and he gets his first \$100,000. He gets after awhile his \$200,000. After awhile he gets his \$500,000. Now, he says, "I have only one more move to make, and I shall have my million." He gathers up all his resources, he makes that one last grand move, he fails and loses all, and he has not enough money of his own left to pay the cost of the car to his home. People cannot understand this spasmodic revulsion. Some said it was a sudden turn in Erie Railway stock, or in Western Union, or in Illinois Central. Some said one thing and some another. They all guessed wrong. I will tell you what it was, "He that sitteth in the heavens laughed."

A man in New York said he would be the richest man in the city. He left his honest work as a mechanic and got into the City Councils some way, and in ten years stole a \$15,000,000 from the City Government. Fifteen million dollars! He had the Legislature of the State of New York in the grip of his right hand. Suspicious were aroused. The Grand Jury presented indictments. The whole land stood aghast. The man who expected to put half the city in his vest pocket goes to Blackwell's Island, goes to Ludlow Street jail, breaks prison and goes across the sea, is rearrested and brought back and again remanded to jail. Why? "He that sitteth in the heavens laughed."

Rome was a great empire; she had Horace and Virgil among her poets; she had Augustus and Constantine among her emperors. But what mean the defaced Pantheon, and the Forum turned into a cattle market, and the broken walled Coliseum, and the architectural skeleton of her great aqueducts? What was that thunder? "Oh," you say, "that was the roar of her battering rams against her walls." No. What was that quiver? "Oh," you say, "that was the tramp of hostile legions." No. The quiver and the roar were the burst of omnipotent laughter from the defaced and insulted heavens. Rome defied God, and He laughed her down. Thebes defied God, and He laughed her down. Nineveh defied God, and He laughed her down. Babylon defied God, and He laughed her down.

#### A Laugh and a Smile.

There is a great difference between

God's laugh and His smile. His smile is eternal beatitude. He smiled when David sang, and Miriam clapped the cymbals, and Hannah made garments for her son, and Paul preached, and John kindled with apocalyptic vision, and when any man has anything to do and does it well. His smile! Why, it is the 15th of May, the apple orchards in full bloom; it is morning breaking on a rippling sea; it is Heaven at high noon, all the bells beating the marriage peal. But his laughter—may it never fall on us! It is a condemnation for our sin; it is a wasting away. We may let the satirist laugh at us, and all our companions may laugh at us, and we may be made the target for the merriment of earth and hell, but God forbid that we should ever come to the fulfillment of the prophesy against the rejectors of the truth, "I will laugh at your calamity!"

But, my friends, all of us who reject Christ and the pardon of the gospel must come under that tremendous bombardment. God wants us all to repent. He counsels, He coaxes, He importunes, and He dies for us. He comes down out of Heaven. He puts all the world's sin on one shoulder. He puts all the world's sorrow on the other shoulder, and then with that Alp on one side and that Himalaya on the other He starts up the hill back of Jerusalem to achieve our salvation. He puts the palm of His right foot on one onspike, and He puts the palm of His left foot on another long spike, and then with His hands spotted with His own blood He gesticulates, saying: "Look, look and live! With the crimson veil of my sacrifice I will cover up all your sins. With my dying groan I will swallow up all your groans. Look! Live!" But a thousand of you turn your back on that, and then this voice of invitation turns to a tone divinely ominous that sobs like a simoon through the first chapter of Proverbs: "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my right hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity." Oh, what a laugh that is—a deep laugh, a long, reverberating laugh; an overwhelming laugh. God grant that we may never hear it. But in this day of merciful visitation yield your heart to Christ that you may spend all your life on earth under His smile and escape forever from the weep now, for ye shall laugh. That makes me know positively that we are not to spend our days in Heaven singing long meter psalms. The formalistic and stiff notions of heaven that some people have would make me miserable. I am glad to know that the Heaven of the Bible is not only a place of holy worship, but of magnificent sociality.

"What," say you, "will the ringing laugh go round the circle of the saved?" I say yes; pure laughter, cheering laughter, holy laughter. It will be a laugh of congratulation. When we meet a friend who has suddenly come to a fortune, or who has got over some dire sickness, do we not shake hands, do we not laugh with him? And when we get to Heaven and see our friends there, some of them having come up out of great tribulation, why, we will say to one of them, "the last time I saw you you had been suffering for six weeks under low intermittent fever," or to another will say: "You for ten years were limping with rheumatism, and you were full of complaints when we saw you last. I congratulate you on this eternal recovery."

We shall laugh. Yes, we shall congratulate all those who have come out of great financial embarrassments in this world because they have become millionaires in Heaven. Ye shall laugh. It shall be a laugh of reassurance. It is just as natural for us to laugh when we meet a friend we have not seen for ten years as anything is possible to be natural. When we meet our friends from whom we have been parted ten or twenty or thirty years, will it not be with infinite congratulation? Our perception quickened, our knowledge improved, we will know each other at a flash. We will have to talk over all that has happened since we have been separated, the one that has been ten years in Heaven telling us all that has happened in the ten years of his heavenly residence, and we tell him in return all that has happened during the ten years of his absence from earth. Ye shall laugh.

I think George Whitefield and John Wesley will have a laugh of contempt for their earthly collisions, and Top-lady and Charles Wesley will have a laugh of contempt for their earthly misunderstandings, and the two farmers, who were in the lawsuit all their days, will have a laugh of contempt over their earthly disturbance about a line fence. Exemption from all annoyance. Immersion in all gladness. Ye shall laugh. Yes, it will be a laugh of triumph. Oh, what a pleasant thing it will be to stand on the wall of Heaven, and look down at Satan, and hurl at him defiance, and see him caged and chained, and we forever free from his clutches. Alas! Yes, it will be a laugh of royal greeting.

#### A Laugh of Spiritual Exaltation.

I pray God that when we get through with this world and are going out of it we may have some such vision as the dying Christian had when he saw "written all over the clouds in the sky the letter 'W,'" and they asked him, standing by his side, what he thought that letter "W" meant. "Oh," he said, "that stands for welcome." And so it may be when we quit this world. "W" on the gate, "W" on the door of the mansion, "W" on the throne. Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! I have preached this sermon with five prayerful wishes that you might see what a mean thing is the laugh of skepticism, what a bright thing is the laugh of spiritual exaltation, what a hollow thing is the laugh of sinful merriment, what an awful thing is the laugh of condemnation, what a radiant, rubicund thing is the laugh of eternal triumph. Avoid the ill. Choose the right. Be comforted. "Blessed are ye that weep now—ye shall laugh, ye shall laugh."

SOME young men who would not carry in wood, pack around a sawlog in the shape of a cane.

A MAN usually throws away too much time making unnecessary explanations.