

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE "HALLELUJAH LASS"

THERE was one "Hallelujah Lass," in the front shop, at the "Headquarters." She was bonnetless, but the big, navy-blue head-dress laid on a glass show-case. She wore a finely-knitted crimson jersey and braided blue skirt. Her eyes were red with weeping. She was strangely distraught. There was no lilt of the song upon her lips:-

"Oh! the peace my Saviour gives,
Peace I never knew before.'

"Not all translated then?" began the leader of the Stock Exchange band, addressing her. There was nothing flippant, nothing sneering in his tone or manner.

The girl essayed a reply, but at first it ended in a sob only. Presently she recovered herself enough to say:-

"No, we're not all translated! You see, sir, the Army, as a body, never quite admitted the truth of this Second coming of our Lord. It has always preached that we, as an Army of Salvation, were raised up by GOD to get all the world converted. A lady in the train, as I came up to business, only yesterday -"

The girl sighed wearily, as she interpolated, "Yesterday seems as far off as Wesley's times. But, only yesterday, this lady, in the train talked to me about the 'Lord's near return' - that is how she put it - and said, 'GOD is undoubtedly using the Army in evangelizing the distant heathen, and thus allowing them to fulfil His purpose in calling out those who are to form the Bride of the Heavenly Bridegroom-but, believe me, my dear, the world will never be converted before CHRIST comes for His Church.'

"She talked to me very beautifully, and simply, only, as she said, one could only grasp these truths in proportion as one kept clear in their minds the things which belonged to the separate dispensations.

" 'If,' she said, 'The Lord came to-night' - how little she or I dreamed that He actually would - 'this dispensation would be closed, and a new one would begin to-morrow.' "

The girl looked around in a bewildered way, almost as though she was looking for something she had lost.

"I have never known anything about the dispensations, and their bearing on the Bible," she went on. "The Army has always taught us that we should all die, lie in our graves until "the last Day," then appear before the Great White Throne, and be judged according to our lives, and all that. The lady who spoke to me yesterday:- yesterday? oh, how far off it seems - explained to me, from the Bible, that true Christians would never appear before the Great White Throne.

"That when the Great White Throne shall be set, the real Christian will be seated in glory with JESUS, the Judge. And only the wicked, unsaved dead will be judged there. The sin of the true Christian, she said, is done with, settled, put away at the Cross.

" 'There is therefore now no condemnation (judgment) to them who are in Christ Jesus.' 'He that heareth, and believeth on Jesus, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into the judgment, but is passed from death unto life.'

"She told me that the true Christian, who might be living, when the Lord should Return, would be caught up into the air, with all the Christian dead, who will rise from their graves; and, that then the only judgment that can ever come to the Christian, will take place. That will be at CHRIST's judgment of Rewards. She said that eternal life did not enter into the question. That was settled once and for ever, but at CHRIST's Reward-judgment, the Christian's work would be tried."

Some of the silk-hatted listening men began to fidget.

All this talk was foreign and uninteresting to them.

"The lady," the girl went on, "promised to meet me this morning at the station, at the same time as we met yesterday, 'Should the Lord Tarry' she said. But I saw nothing of her this morning. She had been '**caught up**' of course, to meet her Lord in the air, and !-"

The girl's voice broke, her eyes streamed with tears.

One of the youngest of the stock-brokers asked:-

"But why, if Salvationists are Christians, are you here?"

Why were you not translated?"

"GOD help me!" she cried, "I know now, now that it is too late, that I was never converted. I was drawn into an Army meeting by reports I heard of the singing and music. The Army's methods fascinated me - the young officer who came to our town, was a very taking fellow. He talked to me in an after meeting, I wept with the many emotions that were at work within me; I went to the penitent form-and-and-afterwards joined the Salvation Army - but I know now, I was not really saved."

She caught her breath in a quick sob, then a little glow suddenly filled her face, as she added:-

"But I have settled the matter this morning. I have yielded, intelligently to CHRIST, and I know that

JESUS with me is united,
Doubting and fears they are gone;
With Him now my soul is delighted,
I and King JESUS are one."

"And," she cried, her eyes flashing with a holy light, "If witnessing for JESUS means martyrdom, then, by GOD's grace, I'll show by my death that -"

"Are there many Salvationists left?" interrupted one of her listeners.

A quick flush dyed her cheek; as she replied:-

"I can't say! There are some here at head-quarters, whom I should not have thought would have been left behind, but who are. Though I don't believe there will be more, if so many Salvationists, as other sects, in proportion, be found to be left behind, or -"

The sound of thousands of tramping feet broke into the girl's speech. The little crowd of Stock-brokers rushed to the door.

A dense mass of men and women were marching up the street. Every face was set and serious. There were many clergymen and ministers in the crowd, if the clerical collar and ministerial garb gave true indication of their calling.

"To St. Paul's! To St. Paul's!" a stentorian voice was shouting.

The stockbrokers joined the mighty crowd, which, grim, resolute, silent, swept on.

* * * *

By midnight, or soon after, a few hours only after the great Translation, the hordes of the vicious that festered in the slums - women, as well as men, aliens and British alike - had heard something of what had happened, and creeping from their filthy lairs, began, at once to become a menace to public life and property.

Many of the police beats were unprotected, the men who had been patrolling them sharing in the sudden glorious Rapture of their Lord's return. By midnight, the whole police service had become temporarily disorganized, if not actually demoralized.

Scotland Yard heads of departments were missing, as well as local Superintendents, Sergeants, etc. In many cases there was no one to give orders, or to maintain control. And where leaders were left, they were often too scared and unnerved to exercise a healthful authority.

Under these circumstances the hordes of vicious, and out of work grew bolder every hour. They had no fear of the Spiritual character of the strange situation, for GOD, to them, was a name only to blaspheme. Hell was a merry jest to them, a synonym for warmth and rest, a combination which had been all too rare with them on earth. Besides, Hell had no shadow of terror to people who, for years, had suffered the torments of a life in a literal hell in London.

Shops, and private houses, and some of the larger business houses had been openly burgled. A rumor got abroad, that the Banks were to be raided.

Ralph Bastin, passing the Bank of England, found that the guard of Soldiers had been quadrupled, and this too for the day-time. Curious to know how the Translation of the night before had affected the army, he asked one of the privates if any of the London soldiers were missing?

"All the 'blue-lights,' (as we calls the Christians, sir), is missin'. Yer see, sir, if a feller perfesses to be a Chrishun in the Army, an, aint real, 'e soon gits the perfession knocked outer 'im. On the other han' if 'e's real, why all the persekushun on'y drives 'is 'ligion deeper inter 'im. Yes, all the 'blue-lights' is gone, sir, an' any amount o' officers.

"These, as is gone, is mos'ly the middle-age an' ole ones, an' those wot's been in India, Malta, an' other furrin stations. I've knowed lots o' that sort o' officer, as oosed to hev Bible-Readin's at their Bungalows. Ah, they wur right, they wur, the other wur wrong, an' the wrong 'uns knows to-day as they's out o' luck!"

"If yer arks my erpinun, sir, I sez, that London's full o' fools, to-day, fur if we'd all been doin' an' thinkin' as we'd oughter, why we'd be now up in Glory wi' JESUS. I've heard the truth at So'dger Homes, an' sich places, an' I've sung wi' lots o' others:-

"Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching;
In his glory they shall share:
If He shall come at the dawn or midnight,
Will He find us watching there?"

"O, can we say we are ready, brother?
Ready for the soul's bright home?
Say, will He find you and me still watching,
Waiting, waiting, when the Lord shall come?"

The man suddenly straightened himself, and glanced away from Bastin. An officer was approaching.

Ralph Bastin walked away, the thought that filled his mind, was of the strange mood that had suddenly come over everyone, since to-day, everybody seemed ready to talk freely' of religious things.

He moved on up Cheapside, his destination being St. Paul's Cathedral.

~ end of chapter 29 ~

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