

« Perhaps she does see me, » whispered Oliver, folding his hands together ; « perhaps she has sat by me. I almost feel as if she had. »

« That was the fever, my dear, » said the old lady mildly.

« I suppose it was, » replied Oliver, « because Heaven is a long way off, and they are too happy there to come down to the bedside of a poor boy. » \*

It is evident that, in the mind of Charles Dickens, Oliver's thought was not given as a feverish dream, but as the surmise of an innocent soul ; and that the novelist wished his readers to believe that *Heaven is in reality very near, and a suffering child well worthy the attention and care of the saints in bliss.*

In Mr. W. Clark Russell's well-known novel, *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*, the hero, Edward Royle, thus addresses a Miss Robertson whose father has died at sea (the daughter cannot bear the thought of being separated from his dead body, which the crew are anxious to consign to the deep) : « ' You will not be separated from him, ' I answered, ' even though you should never see him more with your eyes, There is only one separation, and that is when the heart turns and the memory forgets. He will always be with you in your thoughts, a dear friend, a dear companion, a father as in life ; not absent because he is dead, since I think that death makes those we love doubly our own, for they become spirits to watch over us, to dwell near us, let us journey where we please, and their affection is not to be chilled by any worldly selfishness. Try to think thus of the dead. ' » \*

After the shipwreck and rescues, Miss Robertson thus addresses her lover : « Since God has heard our prayers, dearest, and mercifully preserved us from death, shall we thank Him now that we are together, and say one prayer for my dear father, who, I firmly believe, looks down upon us, and has still the power to bless us. » †

It need scarcely be said that the author of this work is not

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\* *Oliver Twist*, CH. XIII.

\* *Wreck of the Grosvenor*, CH. 23.

† *Ib.* CH. 31.