THE IMMORTAL LIFE.

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BY

JOHN WEISS.

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PREFACE.

THE theme of this work is one upon which Mr. Weiss meditated as long and deeply, perhaps, and with as intense an interest, as any contemporary. It engaged him during his whole adult life, and was never far from his mind. The value of these meditations was not derived solely from his possession of a subtile and penetrating intellect, warmed by poetic sensibility, and winged with imagination. It proceeded yet more from his mental attitude and the point of view assumed.

On the one hand, he felt deeply the significance of personal being. To him, it seemed not contained wholly in the flux of outward phenomena, but to strike down, and take root in that which eternally is. This was healthy, and a condition to all just thinking upon such matters; for so it must ever seem to all who will allow the human spirit to speak for itself. The sense of right, for example, never did, and never can, report itself as an ephemeral product, grounded in nothing deeper than a temporary

concatenation of chemical elements forming blood and bone, muscle and nerve. On the other hand, he was not only acquainted with the established results of modern physical science, but regarded them with a certain predilection, and was disposed to allow them their entire weight. It could not escape him, however, as it can escape no attentive mind, that in view of these results, the question of personality, of its nature and the possibility of its persistence after death, is opened anew. The doctrine of evolution alone introduces wholly new elements into the problem. But Mr. Weiss, though he did not accept the Spencerian formulation of that doctrine, and perhaps did not strictly follow Mr. Darwin even, was nevertheless a decided evolutionist. Is this great fact of continuity in creation, together with all the other facts brought to light in various departments of physical science, reconcilable with a belief in personal immortality? That is the question, which incessantly proposed itself to his mind. His unconquerable candor compelled him to meet it fairly. He would not seek to impose his persuasion upon the facts, but to derive from them a clear intellectual conviction. In this spirit it was that he studied and wrote.

The facts, which might seem to make against his conclusion, and which have actually led so many sincere and

able men to reject it, were exhibited by him with a pitiless truthfulness, and a poignancy of expression, that to some readers may even seem shocking; but the more they are shocked, the more certain they may be that here is a thinker whose conclusions have been reached by a process absolutely brave and sincere. While some, however, may be startled by his daring method, others, especially men trained in science, will find in the poetic quality of his mind and the effulgence of his rhetoric, some occasion for a doubt concerning the strictness and soundness of his intellectual processes. A little attention will convince them that an iron thread of logic runs through his most shining pages, that his dazzling fire was not mere fireworks, and that the thinker was never lost in the rhetorician.

It will be seen that these chapters do not constitute a strictly connected treatise, and the bearing of some of them upon the general subject will be scarcely visible to those who never suspect the radiation, affiliation, and interdependence of all the greatest truths, but regard each as occupying a box by itself. There is, however, no such isolation. The fact of immortal life is to be touched everywhere, if anywhere. Whoever, therefore, lifts at any point the veil of nature, and reveals the spiritual, eternal significance it hides, enables us to believe that, when for

us the veil of mortality is lifted, our being itself will not of necessity be sublated. With this fact in mind, it will perhaps be seen that Mr. Weiss wanders only *with* his theme, and not away from it.

There is not uncommonly a satirical touch in this writer's allusion to objectionable beliefs. This gives, to many, an impression of malice. In truth, there was no drop of malignity in the man. He had no willingness, much less a desire, to wound. But as he saw, he wrote: he did but represent the beliefs and conceptions, as they presented themselves to him; and the sting of wit which appears in his account of such conceptions only reproduces a sting felt by his own mind in contemplating them. Again, he may to some seem irreverent, but he was not really so; on the contrary, his was emphatically an adoring nature. Only he did not adore the same objects with many others; their gods were to him none. But in saying this, I do not fully account for his attitude. He now and then seemed to play with conceptions which were to himself sacred. The truth is, the adorable Fact in this universe was to him above every name and every image, material or mental. But the name or the image may for a moment stand for it, and while it does so he will bow at that sign. At another time, the temporary coalescence is dissolved, and the sign becomes but a

figure of speech with which his fancy toys. It is not irreverence; rather it is a large adoration which thus escapes from even the subtler forms of idolatry.

One word may be permitted with regard to his style. It is the extreme opposite of that French classical style, which M. Taine has described so graphically, with its artificial dignity, its smooth generalities, its simplicity obtained by exclusion, and its sedulous avoidance of every thing near, modern, common, and therefore "vulgar." Mr. Weiss was among those who had broken most completely with that form of literary tradition. He had shared in Peter's vision, and learned that nothing is common or unclean, and would make the gamut of his rhetoric as wide as that of human experience. A native propensity led him far upon this road; for in him two opposite predilections met. He was an impassioned lover of beauty — beauty in its rarest, most ethereal shapes; and he embodied it in passages that bloom and breathe perfume upon his pages, like a bed of flowers. But he also loved homeliness — homely words and phrases warm from the mouth of the people, homely images and illustrations, that taste more of life than of literature. Sometimes the juxtaposition of the beautiful and the homely is startlingly close, but here the manner was of a piece with the man: both resembled the climate of New England,—

nowhere a clearer sky, a richer sunshine, a more bracing air, and nowhere more sudden changes of the mercury. Perhaps there appears less mediation of a tempering and chastening judgment than could be desired; but his style, whatever its merits or defects otherwise, has always two great excellencies: it is everywhere full of throbbing vitality, and it nowhere proceeds from feeling only or from the understanding only, but in every sentence represents the living, pulsating unity of intellect, heart, and imagination.

D. A. W.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN WEISS,

ON THE DAY OF HIS DECEASE.

In reference to no man of this generation could it seem more absurdly untrue than of John Weiss, to say *he is no more.* His spirit has been a flame which we can but conceive as asking for more fuel, and, in the mortal body or not, never going out. *The personal continuance*, to use his own frequent phrase, he was so curious about, could be more appropriate to the *quality* of no other person. From a centre of original force proceeded all his expression of look and tone. The style of no writer of the time we live in is more individually marked, and the moral was as deep in him as the imaginative stamp. His heroic fidelity to his convictions never flinched. Truth to what he thought, in his theology and in the hard days when the Moloch of slavery demanded and secured so many sacrifices for its shrine,—he maintained every grain and at whatsoever cost. His genius was alike rare in its critical and in its creative form, although it was for wide popular appreciation both too subtile and too deep. No shade of meaning in his own mind was beyond his power

to indicate, or in another's page too latent and lurking for his sentiment to detect. He will be mourned by the constituency of an intellectual and spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood as characteristic in its endowments as was the master who, with a man's and woman's temper, refined their fancies to the utmost purity and raised their ideas of God and Nature to the loftiest pitch. It is too soon either to estimate his abilities or utter the grief we feel that his so extraordinary traits now cease on earth to be shown. We can only, in this opportunity of the single moment allowed, note the passing, into that mystery of the Unseen none brooded over more wistfully than he, of an intelligence which was itself the lustre of a loving soul, as the flashes of day issue from the heat of the sun. For he too "was a burning and a shining light."

C. A. Bartol.

CONTENTS.

		Page.
I.	*The Work of Religion*	1
II.	*Modern Materialism*	23
III.	*Modern Spiritism*	51
IV.	*Survival of the Fittest*	75
V.	*The Idea of Hereafter*	97
VI.	*Tragedy in Nature*	122
VII.	*Comedy in Nature*	154
VIII.	*Pessimism*	177
IX.	*An Act of Faith*	197
X.	*Idealism*	219

THE IMMORTAL LIFE.

I.

THE WORK OF RELIGION.

THE conditions of modern intelligence are so changed from those of any previous period with which the sentiment of Religion has dealt, that it is obliged to take a new departure, to include and use the new conveniences. There never was such an extension of mental activity, and never so many objects furnished to keep it continually stimulated. Cheap publications of every kind spread the moods of the period far and wide. Their range passes through all the speculative forms and all the emotions of which the soul is capable. The very richness of material is a cause of distraction, for the mind grows embarrassed as so many departments throw wide their doors at once, and display their collections. And there is no statement too scientific to resist the inventions of popular treatment. It is macerated, dissected, canned, as it were, for the use of emigrants and travellers. Every condition of half-knowledge appropriates it.

People who are afflicted with imperfect nutrition snatch, at every railway station, a hasty bite of the latest ideas,—spectrum analysis, primeval man, the correlation of forces, spontaneous generation, social statics, materialism, Darwinian views, Huxley's protoplasm, and the last message which our spiritist friends receive from the summer-land. So indigestible a meal cannot be matched at any depot in America.

Westward the tide of empire runs and reads.

The scientific mind is making the whole world at once its laboratory and lecture-room; and among the hearers there is no distinction of person, sex, or previous preparation. It is not at all wonderful that Religion finds herself ill at ease in this promiscuous assembly, especially when a spirit rules to assign her to the pauper's gallery, as not quite presentable close to the stage of brilliant analysis! She sits and sees motion converted into heat, the lines of Orion's atmosphere described, chronology knocked away from under Adam's feet and fall, the cerebral and nervous system hunted down to within an inch of her life, and the final stroke only suspended out of regard to her feelings, and the experimenter in amazement that she is present there at all. She listens to the proof of her functional position as the effloresence of the polyp through a vast gradation of improving epochs.

The Perseus of science, behind his fossil shield, waits till she too petrifies.

We need not trouble ourselves with the confusion of tongues which has descended upon theology. That is no longer of consequence while human nature is laid waste by this incursion of all the facts and all the conjectures.

When the Gauls took Rome, and stormed into the Capitol, their clanging steps were arrested by the sight of the whole gray-beard Senate sitting motionless upon their chairs, holding the sceptres of their office. Were they images or breathing creatures? It was a solemn and venerable spectacle. A while it forbade every warlike gesture; till at length, one Gaul, more audacious than the rest, stretched forth and pulled one Senator by the beard. Down came the outraged sceptre on the invader's helmet. It broke the spell, and the barbarian swords set Rome's council flowing on the pavements. So all these new facts, and all the latest conjectures, penetrate into the solemn presence of our primitive beliefs, where that Senate sits in composed silence. And when one of the intruders, bolder than the rest, stretches forth his hand towards the Ancient of Days, the slaughter of its colleagues of the soul is easy. Thus materialism twitches the First Cause from its throne. It is the signal for a general massacre of governing ideas.

There are great numbers of honest men to whom the phrase "invisible world" has no meaning. They have learned to consider that the universe is occupied with the functions of an eternal matter, and that whatever these cannot account for must be superfluous and fantastical. There are more things in heaven and earth than we dream of; yes, but as fast as they are discovered we find they are only things. A great many men are disposed to derive the moral law from the combinations of birth and physical organization, and to reduce accountability to a table of statistics, which exhibits the recurrences of vice and virtue, independent of the human will, by physical laws of their own. A great many men cannot conceive of a personal continuance after the bodily functions are exhausted; they cannot even suppose that the elemental force in us may be transformed back into force again. They conclude, more or less reluctantly, that the emotions of the friend, the lover, the poet and musician, the gladness that rises from the heart's meadow and sings its path deep into the sky, the profound regret of self-dissatisfaction, the eager scent of the Imagination upon some trail, her music as the prey bursts cover,—that all moods are nothing but the plus or minus of red blood in the brain-cells; that the straining of the body's leash outward toward some depth, and down through some perspective, to overtake some fulfilment, is

nothing but surplus of health and good condition, or, as some say, the very opposite of this, being only bad health and morbific condition; that all our mental action results from molecular distribution and arrangement, as the nimble atoms of the organism cling or fly apart, muster in varying ratios to condense in various feelings. Whatever a man thinks that he feels is nothing but the gambolling of these microscopic spheres. His most sanguine aspirations have been only the lifting of his brain, as the increased action of the heart sends blood to make it fit closely to the skull. When it shrinks again the man desponds, regrets, is mortified, shirks for want of circulation. And when he is flush with well-assimilated food, it makes him manly; to be peptic is his only ethical ability, his patriotism, his impulse to sacrifice his stimulated atoms upon the bed of honor. All these gracious, stately words that we use, Beauty, Honor, Love, Duty, are only Cinderellas at the ball. When midnight strikes they slink away in rags to cower again in ashes. It may be; but these Cinderellas, as they escape, drop behind them the delicate shape that fits nothing else in the world, not one fleshly foot; and thus they are identified.

People who are profoundly materialistic may have a general health and cleanliness which preserves them in moral relations with society, and secures many a noble action from them. There are many whose

actions put to shame other men who pretend to be more spiritual. It seems to me that in critical moments men have no time to consult their theories of existence; they start with the innate force which belongs to them, so that a materialist can easily do something that is fully up to our ideal standard. We can easily fall below it.

But fine behavior does not pacify the heart when scientific facts encamp before our great natural reliances, besiege and undermine them. At the very moment when the materialist plunges the world into the Dead Sea of mere sequence, and holds it under, waiting till it drown, there is a native revulsion at the deed. He drags it forth again, to listen if the heart yet beats. We are hungry to regard ourselves as not pawns of fate, but entitled to consideration by virtue of some moral and spiritual freedom, which has a casting vote, or at least some influence in framing us. What are the phenomena which threaten this justifiable desire? Let their extremest tendency be stated! We see a man's soul entirely disappear under pressure upon the brain; and its qualities are modified by a removal of portions of the cerebral material. A youth, living in Chicago, who was very dull, and showed no aptness for anything, became a great lover of music, and a player upon the flute, after an accident to the head, by which he lost a portion of the brain. Can talent, then, be scooped in or out of

a person, or is the head a kaleidoscope which need only be shaken to vary its combinations? Professor Lourdat, of Montpelier, suffered from a typhoid fever, which destroyed the memory of five or six laborious years, so that he was obliged to recommence his medical studies from the beginning. What and where then was the substance of his person? If his knowledge lay minutely packed in brain-cells, was the soul merely a force to start and move them? He either had, or did not have, a soul that shared this knowledge. If he did, the total wreck of memory is inexplicable. Death might wipe him out in the same way. If he did not have an independent soul, that shared his knowledge, then there is no person; there's nothing but brain-function.

And there was George Nickern, of New Orleans, nearly killed by a fall from a platform, who lay unconscious several weeks. He recovered his health and powers of mind, excepting memory. His new memory only dated from his recovery. Everything previous to that had been obliterated, and he was forced to learn his English and German again like a child. What relation, then, has memory to personal identity? We read in a foreign periodical the well-attested case of a workingman, well advanced in years, who had a violent attack of cholera in 1865. Up to that time he was coarse-grained and stolid, and had manifested no spark of literary feeling or

ability; but he emerged from the crisis of his malady with a lively fancy, and a strong capacity for literary expression; and he has published a volume of poems.

But what is this arbitrament of change in the blood-corpuscles which mounts with new spiritual expressions to the brain? A man asks these questions with fear and wonder. He watches nourishment as it results in intellectual action, and narcotics as they exhale in fantasy. On a pill of opium Coleridge composes Kubla Khan in his sleep; with another pill of the same drug De Quincy stimulates his wonderful dreams and visions. Does the opium merely clarify the brain for the soul to see through, as we wipe our glasses when we desire to use them? The physician traces melancholy and self-distrust to scrofulous conditions of the blood, or to a clogged bile-duct; hysteria breeds temper and singularity; chronic dyspepsia suggests criminal ideas; the vices of forgotten ancestors decide the bias of their posterity. The children do not set their own teeth on edge. What, then, is the extent of moral responsibility? The question returns to us echoed with emphasis from every region of research. The animals are revenging themselves for our denial to them of the gift of language by the most speaking pantomime of acts which involve mental qualities. They no longer pace stolidly to and fro behind the bars of instinct. We used to keep the whole

menagerie in due subjection, occasionally stirring up the automatic occupants of the cages to go through their little round of tricks. But they seem to have resented our trick of superiority; confinement chafes them, and the wild eyes fill with glances that hunger for the freedom of intelligence. Books and newspapers are crowded with illustrations of animal foresight and adaptation, of a capacity to transcend routine, and to originate actions which correspond to exigencies. The cubic contents of a creature's brain do not appear to limit its independence of an average behavior; the bee proves to be as facile as the elephant in the invention of new stratagems; creeping, flying, even swimming things, can convert unexpected conditions into the occasions of fresh behavior. We admit the facts, from time to time, and say, "Here's the limit; it's only a question of building. a little larger cage; these creatures have no memory, nor the association of ideas upon which consciousness depends; they manifest neither conscience nor the sense of shame." Whereupon the brutes violate propriety and snatch their claim to qualities which we suppose we are holding out of reach. But they jump above our calculation. Sidney Smith, in his jaunty way, may declare, "I confess I feel much at ease about the superiority of mankind. I have such a marked contempt for the understanding of every baboon I have ever seen. I feel so sure

that the blue ape without a tail will never rival us in poetry, painting and music, that I see no reason whatever that justice may not be done to the few fragments of soul and tatters of understanding that monkeys may really possess." But it is no longer a question of simple understanding. Here is Mr. Darwin's dog who can afford to be as incapable of poetry as Audrey was; for he is not only flattered by his master's approval of a knack at catching flies, but he is so mortified to be laughed at when he fails that he pretends to catch the next fly, with such a contented wag and such a nervous fumbling of the paws as if the victim was trying to escape, that human nature could not improve upon it. And when the dog slinks away in shame because Mr. Darwin lets him know that he sees through it, it is high time for us to review our pretence of superiority; for the American citizen has not yet acquired the virtue of being dejected when his little game is exposed.

But we must concede, at least, that the animal kingdom is filled with anticipatory types of mental exercises. We transcend them by the degree of our development, but are not able to show where a distinction of quality begins. So that the facts support the statement of a dilemma which involves persons and immortality. Where can the line be drawn between animals and ourselves across that independent faculty of being adapted to circumstances? If in

their case it be purely automatic and physical, what proves it not to be so in ours? Are both animals and men endowed with spiritual substance, or are neither? What bulk of intellect indispensably results in personality?

Thus a mob of facts assails our instinct of independent and responsible existence. We see them springing out of all the graves upon the planet; the only things left, apparently, vital enough to rise there and to mark those pits of nothingness. But let a grave open near to us, and the old heart of mankind looks down through our eyes into a bottomless depth of personal continuance. Are we deceived? Do we mistake our shallow tears for unfathomable wells?

So facts conspire against us, and we long against, rage against the facts; we glory in science and yet accuse her. We give back her level and immutable look to-day, but to-morrow we cannot see it for the blinding mist in our eyes. What a country is this, that appears to smile from Atlantic to Pacific with strenuous satisfaction, as if all minds only cared to orient themselves through the Golden Gate, and overtake and out-time the light itself with their enlightenment! But there is not one commonwealth of the whole varied surface, over which the tracks of science are laid, that does not ache with the secret suspicion that we can only know what we perceive, and cannot touch higher than the arms can reach. Enterprise

and competition divert us, and blunt this instinctive dread; the thin film of manners obscures it. But we may count upon it as a prevailing quality of the age, that needs the disinfectant of Religion.

It is her work to sift the primitive instincts and expectations of mankind, and to see which of them can have a place in the critical intelligence; America is not waiting for clerical fervor, volubility, denominational activity. Her most dangerous and subtle intelligence, grown sick of that which seems to it but child's play, has left the pews to those for whom texts are still authorities. She is waiting to have her ears tingle with the retort of a faith that is as great as her intelligence; to hear proclaimed an atonement that washes the head in the blood of the heart, and effaces the whole discrepancy.

The pulpit has done its best to create an impression that science and religion occupy different domains, which are hostile to each other. Nature is said to be the source of one, revelation of the other. As soon as the attempt failed, as it always must, to harmonize the two by accommodation of old texts to novel facts, the ban was pronounced more distinctly than ever by removing religion into a class of emotions, a mystical inward condition that is supposed to be the source of ethical behavior. Science was an intellectual reconstruction of Nature. Religion was the Bible conspiring with intuitive feeling. The next

step taken by religionists has been the decisive one; it drove science into indifference or atheism, and religion into dread of the logical sequence of Nature. That step was to declare that the logical sequence could not confirm our sense of dependence and of a divine existence, and was at least neutral on the point of immortality.

Now Religion need not wait for Science to make the necessary advances toward a unity of all real tendencies. Let *her* take the next step. Let her appropriate the subsidies of Science. They are as religious as our finest emotion, because they show, by means of all animate and inanimate things, that there is a method and purpose, and a divine drift through all creation. If they show this, there appears a divine unity which is expressed by means of the whole of human nature; not by one part alone, whether called head or heart, and mind or body, but by the whole person directly interpreting a Cause for persons, and doing it in one expression which cannot be ravelled up. The whole seamless web of a man is the whole divine word, without syllables even — of which one might be Science, and one Religion — but one solid breath, flying through all atoms and functions at one moment, to animate and retain them.

There is an apparent discrepancy between Science and Religion because the scientific men find the facts

so absorbing. They tax the whole intellectual patience and integrity; they crowd upon the observer with a pertinacity which was never experienced before. A man of science is obliged to renounce all other problems, and to be willing to appear irreligious while he is really collecting the refutation of his own apparent materialism. When this devotion is graced by modesty, as it is so often, and the student of Nature sets to every other profession a rare example of diligence and zeal, which nothing seems minute enough to baffle, or grand enough to daunt, then we feel that his reticence upon religious questions is only a graceful surrender of the task of applying his own facts to Religion. And when theologians blame his neutrality, or absolute mental surrender to his analysis, they ought to be reminded that the apparent discrepancy between Science and Religion is almost made a real one by their own mystic and abject submission to notions of the supernatural.

But it cannot be a real one. The human mind is a unit because it contains all the laws which all the facts require. The head and the heart have been launched upon one flood. They are both floating abreast upon it, exchanging signals, communicating confidence. The capacity of the mind to classify and interpret all creation's facts is the finite side of their Creator. And its effort to do this classifies Re-

ligion also, strips her of many superstitious phrases, and makes her companionable with the humblest facts which in turn help to make her speech intelligent. This is the reason why the religious man must borrow from Science its mental method, in order that he may decide what religious ideas are genuine, and furnish them to Science. He will not care what previous conceptions he must modify, concerning providence, the nature of evil, the origin of man, the function of prayer, the validity of some internal moods. He will be amply recompensed for the loss of every superfluous notion, and every word of devout rhetoric, by the richness of the material which Science offers when he wishes to prove and illustrate an immutable First Cause.

For there is in man this necessity to observe, followed step by step, and watched, by this necessity to interpret. The earth started with it in the first man; with this two-fold unity of seeing the visible, and implying the invisible; of noting objects, and of inferring that something must have made them. Through all the gradations of intelligence, from the lowest barbarous condition, mankind has furnished a Cause to every phenomenon, a moral law to every conscience, a soul to every body. The phrasing of these primitive truths grows clearer with every accession of knowledge. Museums and explorations cannot make them obsolete. The more of God you col-

lect, in the facts which he causes, the more consistent and sublime becomes your faith. It would be very strange if the acquisition of created things should reach a point where the Creator might disappear, and with him the legitimate hopes and laws of the soul.

The fine-grained old truths of religion have been deposited by the world's best life. Its age is theirs; but although so many epochs and races went to make them, we use them now without a thought of their age, or of what a grave thing it must have been to get them well grown; like the beautiful ivory tusk of a mammoth, that sticks six or seven feet out of the frozen ground in Alaska, which the Indians have used for generations as a hitching-post. Tribes come and go, and generations succeed each other; but we all hitch up to the solid truths which, embedded in the past, offer their convenience.

This unity of Science and Religion gets a great emphasis from the anxiety which has been engendered in millions of minds when they discover that laws are invariable, and that Nature, instead of being exorable, is inexorable; she is simply consistent, always, through every part of a man. How do you account for this deep dissatisfaction and unrest, if men are merely adjusted to perform sets of automatic actions, which can be predicted like the weather, stolen from the freedom of the hill and

put into a schedule of probabilities? Would a machine be disturbed if it had sense enough to discover its own inevitable operations? Men are now troubled because the facts have gathered faster than the explanations; and when they turn to religion for relief, they are met by idle assumptions of doctrine, are referred to texts, and threatened with the retributions of unbelief. And yet the ideal world of the soul has got the true counter-spell. Why then, at the very moment when Religion's first opportunity has come to make the finite prove the infinite which she presumes, need she continue the old prescription of church-extension, Bible-worship, Miracles, and parish-life?

Men everywhere testify to the identity of Science and Religion by their dread lest a diversity be shown, and some irreconcilable contradiction between them. They are sick with the deferred hope of union. Our sickness is a proclamation of the health of all the facts that are pretending to unsettle us. To convince men of this, by boldly taking all genuine facts out of the hands of sciolism and newspaper itemizing, to put them to the service of ideal truth, is the Work of Religion.

How religious the whole creation becomes as Science passes to and fro, touching the swarms of facts with her wand of order, to make them fall into line and present their thoughts! A well-arranged series

of fossils will furnish "sermons in stones" upon the closeness of Cause to all things. We ought to take the facts out of the keeping of materialism, which uses them to reduce Deity to a continuity of force. They are all ready to declare that there is volition, a constant presence and perpetual thought. No matter whether you incline to the theory of Darwin, that all varieties develope out of each other, in a gradual and unbroken series that offers no point where a Creator might interfere to start new things; or whether, with Owen and Agassiz, you prefer to think that every epoch began with fresh creations, not derived from previous ones, but showing that the only development is in the underlying thought. You have to presume a divine presence before either of these theories can have a foot to stand on: a personal volition in the proceedings of creation is as necessary to make the world in Darwin's way as in that of Agassiz; none the less so, though Darwin does not trouble himself to show it. All the facts which support one or the other theory are God's distinct statements that he is on the spot. Science cannot be non-committal if she would. When she is the most reluctant to make confession of faith in a divine Person, her investigations anticipate her reserve. She cannot help repeating the old text that "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things

that are made." This act of making is independent of all theories. Force cannot make anything until that is made first. You cannot go back far enough to tumble over the edge of nothingness. A constant force could not constantly create unless it were constantly created. What a body of a Creator is Science unveiling to the touch of Religion! Prick it anywhere, and you draw the blood of his presence.

Religion has a direct commission to the moral and spiritual life of men; they must share the moral certainty of her aspiration. They want encouragement to be faithful to their finest ideas. Routine would have the heart of them if it could; they long to feel the sword of the spirit slitting commonplace life, to let God beat again in his human pulses.

What is the moral power which offers an opportunity to Religion?

We call it the ideal, the soul's natural turn to take after God. It was derived from that Being who never paused during all the million years which have gone to make an earth, never lingered in a fine reverie over any of the epochs, never regretted anything that was made, never recoiled from its imperfection, never despaired at its bestiality. The divine imagination not only justified all strange and barbarous things as fast as they were spawned, but was in rapture to perceive how they led on; else how can it so delight us to perceive that they did lead on, and to

what they led? How insignificant and apparently motiveless have been some of the stages of the great idea! A polypus that could propagate a family by sprouting, a worm that increased its household by snapping into pieces, a bug that died twice to let loose a butterfly, monstrous lizards, cold and grovelling, birds that could not fly, sloths that could hardly keep awake to eat, reptiles with hollow tooth and poison-bag, made for lurking, myriads of venomous insects, the whole point of whose life was to take another; these, and the noxiousness of all the periods before the elements learned balance and proportion, were the experiments of an ideal that mused and planned by what road, and through what shortest and cheapest processes, spiritual beauty might at length be gained. Look at all the strata which the pickaxe of Science uncovers! Our thought, kindred to the thought that deposited them, seizes the leading idea of each, and unfolds their order. They are all coasts where the divine Being arrived. All of them mark where he burnt his ships, and made fresh conquests an exigency.

We have a natural turn to imitate this action. When the present palls upon us, or hurts our sense of right, we say that we are dissatisfied: when the future offers to redress the present, we say that we aspire. But call it what you will. The ideal is not an impulse that merely developes us, as trees and

metals are made; the finest soul and body, vegetating together in the kitchen-garden style, could not run up to such a blossom. But when the body plays tricks upon the soul, and the soul demurs, protests, and rages, then the spark is struck out. Let the body take care for its old combustible lumber, the drift-wood of past epochs. When the soul frets at discovering something incompatible, a difference between reality and feeling, an end put to instinct and a beginning to resolution; or when an awkward reality comes lumbering sideways down the current, against our shells of dreams, and crushes them in; then the imagination wakes—the creative power, the same that converted the mist of a nebula into the planet: it wakes, to perform the same service for us; to take our temperament, no matter how crude, how thin, how feebly coherent, take it, and roll it into an orb whose shape invents its own path, and originates its own motion through the heavens. We have this good-will for the perfect; it is the human side of God's perfections. We should not have any ill-will for the imperfect if we had travelled farther away along the ideal road to a point upon it where prospect and retrospect lie on the same level, and the whole plan is viewed. But what point is that? It is God himself, the justifier of everything that he did not think it beneath him to create. At present we can only imagine that impartiality; but as often as we do it, we imagine Deity, and we adore.

But now the ideal is a prisoner, like those in mediæval times, who were condemned, by a refined sentiment of cruelty, to be wakened every fifteen minutes, day and night, till nature sank exhausted. Our temperament is the jailer that is detailed to perform that office. But when the prisoner is immortal, the oftener you wake him the wider open do you set his eyes, till in that width there is liberty, and Religion breaks out of the jail of all the sects, and escapes into the fellowship of mankind.

II.

MODERN MATERIALISM.

FOR a good many years new facts from the workshops of science have been crowding upon us much faster than they can be either interpreted or classified; and we are not willing to wait till Nature shows us how she absorbs and civilizes a strange fact. It aggravates and makes us unhappy, so that we deny it flatly, or else we try to cram it into the shallow drawer of a theory. A physical discovery seems to intoxicate the majority of people; they reel unsteadily into an interpretation that is more marvellous than the thing to be explained. This is the period of great surprises; discoveries come upon us thick and fast as calamities of the sea and land, and quite as unfriendly to presence of mind. Especially if the new fact relates to the human organization we may expect to hear it used to subvert not only established beliefs but its own real significance. Among these strange and costly facts people act like a mob which has broken into a cathedral, carrying the broad haste of revolution into things which reserve themselves for secluded moments. What a period of unbridled sincerity! Over their soiled attire the

people haul the holy vestments; they toss about the symbols; they drink coarse liquor out of consecrated cups; they take revenge upon the sacred splendors for having excited their surprise, and unconsciously stifle reverence in sport. They misappropriate things which have definite and salutary uses.

Those facts, for instance, that are connected with the human brain, that involve its past history, and present organization, have been seized upon and compelled to train in the cause of materialism; and that cause involves the independent power and sustained existence of the human soul. Its representative man is an animal with the highest type of brain, which throbs or ceases according as the blood's vitality is limpid or congealed. The soul has been waylaid and carried into captivity; it cannot run the gauntlet of the body's senses and escape from that savagery into its old house where the kindred of love and beauty live in mourning for it.

If we believe that this tendency is going to hurt and degrade man's life, we must not shrink from saying so. The children who were carried off by Indians seldom wanted to return; they acquired a taste for the precarious entertainments of the forest and started a race of half-breeds. The finest people cannot escape a narrowing of the horizon and a lowering of the spiritual tone in the wilderness of materialism.

It seems to me that it is as important to acknowledge the facts of the materialist as it is to deny that he makes a proper use of them. They fill many a chasm in our knowledge of ourselves, and promise, if legitimately used, to increase our welfare. Let us then go drifting with the current of the facts.

A famous painter possessed a rare knack of mixing his colors to produce the best and most permanent effects. A young painter asked him, "Pray tell us how you mix your colors," and he replied, "With brains, sir!" This might be the reply of Deity to an observer of Creation. Life, from its inception, has been driving at a development of brain-power, at least upon this planet. The human brain can be traced from its first rudiment in a speck, a thin line, a line with a speck to it, through the lowest animated forms, becoming more complicated as fresh and complex circumstances environed it. It seems clear that the human brain is a chronicle of the successive evolutions of animal life. Inside of the vertebral column, up successive stairs of nervous substance, it has climbed into its outlook from the head. Through the countless ages which pioneered the earth to its present state, there existed a nice conformity between physical conditions and nervous development: as the species of animals succeeded each other, each one was a faithful representation of the kind of earth and climate which surrounded it—for

inanimate and animate nature moved in two parallel lines. The additions made by Nature to the brain which she seemed to be engaged in constructing neither exceeded nor fell short of her private circumstances. The nervous cord, and afterwards the brain, under its different animal names, always found itself at home, through a progress so definite that it can still be traced through extinct and living forms of this tentative effort of Nature. And the whole past history is taken up by the human brain, and rehearsed from spine to forehead, with just so much of a supplement as man would need to unfold a new condition of Nature. This, in great brevity, is the story of the brain; and it furnishes the materialist with the first principle of his argument. If, he says, the present complex structure of the brain has gradually accumulated all along the line of nature, with vital adjustment to every step of the route, and a faculty correspondent to every exigency, at what point in the line does an independent soul appear? Provident Nature has endowed the animal kingdom with new faculties, one after another; and all these faculties are comprised in man. At the point where human life begins, why introduce the superfluity of a soul to animate the deeper cerebral convolutions which belong to man? The creative life, dispersed through the channels of nature, has been sufficient to evolve the refinements of animate

existence, till at last the human organization raises these natural faculties to their highest power. The same indwelling life is just as competent to take the last step as to take any or all of the preceding steps, without the expense of creating individual souls. At no point of the series have the facts of the case demanded such an interpolation. Life has slid so gradually and unbrokenly through its series as to leave not one crevice for the smuggling in of souls.

I admit this magnificent and suggestive fact of gradual evolution, and shall deny the materialist's inference. But let us follow him when he takes up his second position, which is, that no difference, except in degree, can be discerned between man and the animals which rank next below him in mental capacity. Researches in the animal kingdom have been rewarded by facts whose tendency diminishes the traditionary distinction presumed by man between his own powers and those of the animals. Facts come to us, quite as well authenticated as any scientific facts which we are in the habit of receiving, to show that many animals are not limited by an inexorable instinct that makes them the galley-slaves of single oars, chains them to one spot and to a single motion, that they move about with something of man's independent capacity to adapt himself to circumstances. They seem to be able to meet emergencies, to have something which eks out their

instinct so marvellously like human reflection, that no man has yet been able to define the difference. We are told that serpents are wise and doves are only harmless; but it turns out that doves are wise enough to protect themselves from harm. Two pairs of doves living in the same dovecote had two squabs in each nest. One of the little ones fell out of a pigeon-hole and was killed. Pretty soon two doves were noticed picking up twigs of a size unusual for the making of a nest; and it was discovered that the pair of doves whose two squabs were safe in their nest had erected a barrier of the twigs across their pigeon-hole to prevent a domestic catastrophe. Here was not only a power of observing a danger but a faculty of inferring that a parapet would obviate it. When such a mental process is detected in a creature so simple and unobtrusive as a dove, with scarce an eighth of an ounce of brain, it is very surprising to human intelligence; as when a young dove dropped from its nest in the eaves of a barn, and being unable to fly back, was coaxed by the mother to follow her to the foot of a ladder which stood against the eaves, and to hop from round to round back to the nest. These are specimens of the kind of incidents which are profusely circulated among us respecting the adaptive and reflective power of animals. We need not encumber our text with them. We used to be satisfied to think that animals were like children's

playthings, regulated to a set performance, partaking the unconscious life of Nature. We expected a doll to show a tendency to accommodate itself to a child's caprices as soon as an animal to bring any help to its stereotyped instinct. But volumes are now filled with cases of clear experiment and combination among animals; in similar circumstances it would be said that a man reflected, for *the quality of the result* in either case would be the same. So we began to concede a little that animals possessed the ability to derive ideas from perceptions, an adaptation, a forethought, a forereaching; but they have no memory, we said. Memory depends upon a subtle power of association among the impressions which are laid up in the brain, by which an old idea is revived, a worn out feeling reëtched, a long vanished past rephotographed in the light of the present; but the perceptions of the brute must be like the fragrance of flowers, exhaled momently and never recollected.

It was absurd to suppose that a brute could recall his impressions and act upon them. Whereupon brutes indicated to their friendly observers that they too had a knack of remembering. Man might call association a subtle power; if so, then the brute so far was subtle, for he could bridge gulfs of time with these fine floating gossamers, and secure them upon piers of memory. The illustrations crowd too impetuously to the pen; let one suffice. A family

leaves Plymouth to live in Cambridge, carrying a favorite dog. After a lapse of years, one day a member says at the breakfast table that he must go to Plymouth. The dog says to himself, "I'll go too, and see the old place." He follows to the cars and is with difficulty repulsed. But he has made up his mind to go; so he takes to the road, and by some wonderful and unexplained exercise of intelligence he finds his way to the town whence he had been carried in a basket, with no opportunity to observe the route, even if such observation upon railroads could have served him. In two or three days he returns to Cambridge, half starved and footsore, but with spirit enough to execute an exulting wag. This incident involves the capacity of some animals to understand what is said; a word excites an association of ideas, a place is remembered, a way to and from it is extemporized, and henceforth to that extent the dog takes his human place with the other members of the family.

It startles us; we reflect that our power of continuous existence depends greatly on the power of memory: if so, a thread of continuity runs also through the lives of brutes. Of course; for associated ideas are imbedded in the cerebral convolutions, which bear the same general relation to each other in the higher animals as in man. We are puzzled upon what boundary-lines to fence in our dignity. Reflec-

tion, memory, sense of speech, continuity of ideas, are surrendered; there are clear cases also of the exercise of a sense of amusement in the animal; he can dream, too, and rehearse a waking hour. Then, to establish our superiority over the animal, we committed the satire of denying that it had passions. Whereupon the animals promptly claimed all our darling propensities, revenge, jealousy, even envy, curiosity, and ambition; and they have furnished reliable instances of the sense of shame. "Has then the brute a consciousness of a self?" we exclaim in despair.

It is possible that observers have sometimes translated the actions of brutes into the language of their own fancy, projecting what they wish to find upon what they really see. Animals are our elder Scripture; their obscure texts possibly suggest a superfluous ingenuity to the commentator. When the poet marks the "quick jerboa," planted above his hole like a note of admiration, scanning with immense surprise the intruders upon his solitude, he exclaims, "None such as he for a wonder!" From this fanciful burlesque there is but one step to the assertion of some enthusiastic observer that the capacity of marvellousness is anticipated by the jerboa-nature's rough draught of himself and his whole class of credulous seekers. Animal types may be isolated human inclinations; their higher forms may prophesy facul-

ties which we exercise in greater freedom only because we hold them in ampler combinations.

The materialist, however, has more than enough to sustain the argument which he meditates. It is sufficient if he can show that some intelligent results of the animal brain are the same in quality as some intelligent results of the human brain. If the *quality* is the same, why suppose that in one case it results merely from a brain, but in the other case from an independent soul? Either all brains which perform similar things are the instruments of independent minds, or none are. And the materialist permits us the alternative.

Now it need not trouble us at all that animals manifest the same mental quality with ourselves. Let the fact be accepted. It has been our fault that we shrank from saying that brain-matter is endowed with power to go of itself, to a certain extent, without soul-matter behind it. We have been afraid lest, in saying that, we should prove too much by including the brains of men. We *wish* to include them to a limited extent, while beyond a certain line we could not venture if we would.

All the phenomena of animal life result from the finite animal brain, and wherever they coincide with the quality of human action they indicate that the human brain might so far operate as a finite brain without soul-substance behind it. Look at the facts

in every sphere of Nature. You will find adaptation and experiment from the fern to the oak; you will see instincts reinforced by a faculty of accommodation from the polypus to the elephant.

The word instinct ought, in fact, to stand for a variable faculty in creatures, that is to say, stationary or progressive according to the stimulus which is applied. It makes no difference whether you say that a Creator personally dwells in all the forms of life, or dwells only in their continuous laws, or dwelt only once in original matter to set it moving. The point is this, that everything can go beyond its natural routine at a point where circumstances stimulate it. And what are circumstances but factors of the routine? In developing brain-matter there is no point in the whole line where you find it necessary to set off separate soul-substance for each brain. The brain itself, like the oak, the crystal, the rose, and the nebula, is fully posted up to meet surrounding conditions. A herd of animals is nothing but creativeness upon a number of legs. An animal's brain trots on two or four of them, stalks on half a dozen long ones, creeps on a hundred, paddles with a suit of them. A brain seeks food, and lays plans to procure it; if food is scarce or shy, the plans grow artful. A brain defends itself, and uses caution, secrecy, artifice; it remembers where it procured water, and knows the path to fresh springs if its old drinking-

places are shut up; in the process of migration it accommodates itself to unexpected states of the earth and air. What is any migration but creativeness driven to shift its habitat. In the vicinity of man the animal develops more cunning and facility than its wild life requires; it learns to adopt many human actions; the traits of the dog and the sagacity of the elephant show what a brain can do without distinct soul-substance. It simply belongs to this bit of a planet, and has a conformity with it, like the shooting crystal and the growing tree. And it even has a consciousness of its own operations, otherwise it could not accommodate itself; in this respect differing from automata which are constructed to play a game or blow a trumpet. To be conscious of what it is doing, the nerve of the polypus does not need a soul any more than the brain of the elephant; for animal consciousness is nothing but a state of activity resultant upon perception. Then let the animal do his best; the words we apply to it do not represent the distinguishing characteristics of a soul. Even the word reflection, though it enjoys an exaggerated value, is not inappropriate to express the cogitations of some observing animals. Take away from man his surplus of cerebral matter, and take away his soul, and the rest of his brain would perform its conscious functions as successfully as the highest animal's, since such is the brain's predestined quality.

Now give man back again his surplus in weight and quantity of cerebral matter, and his distinction of its convolution, have we not involved ourselves to the extent of admitting that this brain could operate, as before, without a soul? By no means; the nature of its added operations gives us the right to resist the inference. For they transcend the circumstances of this dot of an earth; their action did not originate in earthly circumstances. The whole power of the animal brain is consumed in adjusting itself to these. Give an elephant's brain all the complexity of man's; he would trumpet no lyric. Quadruple the quantity of the brain of the ape, and let his forehead bulge to bursting where we suppose causality is planted; he would still possess only an increased margin for imitation and experimental actions, for that is all earth craves of him. But this earth does not avail itself of enlarging brains to suggest the laws of logic and the causal relation to either man or brute. If a creator, like an eastern caliph, meant to preserve his incognito, and roam through the streets of this universe unrecognized, he did not well consider the thinness of his disguise. Muffled in the animal he escaped detection; but when the great life found the folds too scanty, began to chafe, to move its members, to loosen its garment into the amplitude of man, it went too far for secrecy. Something was startled at a glimpse of recognition; the common herd streamed

unheeding by the royal masker; but something finer whispered, "That is He—there He goes!" It was Himself unveiled in the substance that knew Him.

> "O, long ago
> The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids astir,
> The peaceful mouth disturbed; half-uttered speech
> Ruffled the lip:
> The glorious creature laughed out even in sleep."

Something came stepping upon the earth with an idea which the earth could not suggest; though it was taxed to the extremest strain of a million years, till animal life became like an ear erect, intent, expectant, there came no word of it by the forest or the sea.

The howl, the hiss, the whistle, the chatter, the convulsive gabble, monotonously proclaimed that earth was a deaf-mute: not one carol soared clearly far enough aloft to reach hearing distance of the coming tongue and drop with it into a nest. All the tribes of birds whose movable tongues permit to them a more flexible play of sounds, were nothing but mockers of the sylvan solitudes with its own rude gamut: when mankind began to settle those places with the notes of more complicated emotions, the mimicry went on, the brute vocabulary enlarged itself with human phrases, skulls with the brains picked out, ghastly grins of feeling and intelligence. For where was there any function upon this small round earth, one of the myriad buttons in the row upon the

hem of Life's vesture, that could play the spy on the wearer and blab of the great enterprise? It is only a glint on the fringe of it. Something beyond the forest and the sea brought the immutable forms and harmonies of its own life, and found no substance upon earth that could be their tongue, no creature that could be their comrade. But what of that? They came, and were their own substance, and began to propagate an independent line. At the point where the laws of unity, of causation, of immutable method, of invisible impulse, touched the line of life, there came soul-substance; where or when or how we care not; but it was creation's vein melted and flowing into earthen moulds. Earth had manipulated well its various clays, and slowly improved a 'prentice hand to things more manlike, but as distinct from the essence of man as clay is from love. Let us be more explicit. Behind the organs which man inherits from the animals, and which domesticate him on the earth, there exist the immutable forms in which man classifies his knowledge and reduces to order his perceptions; also the laws of logic, which are pure forms of thought, the idea of unity and of causality. There exists, too, the consciousness of right and wrong, not depending, as in the case of a dog, upon being detected in misdoing, but, as in the case of the noblest people, depending upon being not detected and glorying to justify itself by confession. That is an

intrusion into the animal line and not an evolution from it. It came from super-terrestrial suggestions; it was detached from an ideal substance which is engaged in the improvement of the universe; struck off in great creative heats, like Shakespeare's verse which is the despair of the property-man of theatres; like Beethoven's phrase that makes for a moment the catgut and the brass divine. When we do wrong—Do what? Wrong? Why call it so—an animal can do wrong to nothing. But when *we* do wrong, we develop a capacity for personal degradation, a sense of having violated something which should be served by better educated organs; something that mourns even when subjected to the brain's hereditary necessities. It is here that the soul-substance displays its special independence of the organs which it uses; it cannot on the earth transcend their limits, nor quite repair their deficiencies, but it continues to be conscious that it knows something about an ideal goodness that is worthy to have better proportioned and more obedient organs. The brain may limit the responsibility, but cannot falsely report the principles of a human soul. If the principles did not exceed the responsibility, a man would have no conscience subject to regret.

What pen can hold depth enough of ink to write the history of a single tear that falls when the Real ruins the Ideal! It is the cry of a disappointed soul—

"Rescue me, Thou, the only Real!" Is it nothing but a drop distilled from salts of earth through the long spiral of an animal limbec? Only the slopping over of our spoonful of an Atlantic? Nay, the expostulations, the threats, the rages, the entreaties, which grow bitter on the tongue while that tear lashes the coast of our heart, speak of its origin, betray the "depth of some divine despair," trace it to an ocean swell that starts beyond our seas. It seems to announce that the Creator has moments of dissatisfaction at the slowness of matter to realize his thought. But matter contributes only a lachrymal duct to convey the dew of a divine complaint.

Professor Tyndall exclaims: "What rounded the sun and planets? That which rounds a tear—molecular force;" meaning that the little molecules in a fluid mass have an invincible attraction for each other which is betrayed in the form of the sphere. Thus Nature provides for a tear the form that is most convenient when it is summoned forth to roll across the cheek. But the summons that watches at the sluice-gate is something more than a tendency of atoms to gather in a sphere. What gathers the summons? What formless occurrence of bliss or discontent? What discomfited ideas that cluster round drooping colors and retreat with eyes in a liquid blaze of anger? It is said that the wounded deer can weep; for the animal brain is susceptible of a

terrestrial sorrow, and the starving child will shed tears into the lap of its mother. "Why, how one weeps when one 's too weary!"

> "Tears—tears! *why* we weep,
> 'T is worth inquiry: that we 've shamed a life,
> Or lost a love, or missed a world, perhaps?
> By no means. Simply that we 've walked too far,
> Or talked too much, or felt the wind in the East."

We do not think so when the passion of unlikeness is upon us, when some far-travelled hint arrives and extols perfection to us, or the sound of music exhales into a mist that blurs and blots the landscape, and we cry with the great German—"Thou speakest to me of something that I have never seen, and never shall see!" What words of an ideal so possible to us that we passionately pronounce it impossible. Oh, the words of it! the tones of it that had to invent instruments in its despair and hand them over to Hope for tuning! Did we learn the words by listening to the dialects of animals? Were they spillings-over from the highest animal brain into the lowest human brain, accents of incoherent chagrins of the forest which we have civilized into the polished language of a vague regret? Is "Forever, never—Never, forever," an echo from some mountain-side where the cries of brutes muster to rebound against our tympanum in airy nothings? We can only besottedly think so after a surfeit of meat, a drench of wine, a swim in the sewer that leads off the drippings of our houses.

Indeed, we could not in our most beastly moments think so if they did not know better, and were not bribing better moments not to know it also, lest their animal sceptre should pass away,

> "Thence to be wrenched by an unlineal hand—
> No son of theirs succeeding."

But I am losing sight of an argument that is worth finishing. Where a boundless ocean stretches, it is unsafe for a child to untie the painter of a boat.

When the materialist discovers the progressive method of creation, and derives from it his argument that mind is the result of brain, that argument is no sooner uttered than it is defeated. Out of his own mouth it is judged. In other words, it is impossible for a man to discover the creative method of which he is a part, unless a substance that is not in the animal line brought him the idea of it. The machine might as soon explain to other machines the intelligent combinations of the mechanic who created it. Finite creatures cannot suggest to other finite members of creation the previous laws of the Creator. If man established his science upon such laws, it is a proof that he is not only a part of creation in the natural order, but also the member of a spiritual order, by virtue of which he has conceptions of the laws that made him. Otherwise we could find no more difference between an elephant and a Hottentot than between a Hottentot and a Newton; and we

should either have to deny that modern science does follow the lines of law, or else expect to overhear two acorns or two apes grow scientific about each other. But when we see daily how all created things hasten to fall in with the logic of the best thinkers and to crystallize along the lines which they draw, we know that such lines are drawn parallel with divine ideas, whose clear image in man is their duplicate: two creatures, "swan and shadow,"

Death will withdraw the human creature from his animal inheritance. The soul-substance will retire with its native thoughts and feelings. The principles of harmony and law, the distinctions of wit, the analogies of humor, and the creative combinations of ideality, have their root in the very structure and essence of the soul-substance. Whatever man shall leave behind, comfortable, convenient, and even brilliant, as it may now seem, will be precisely that which the second state will find superfluous. As well import into that state the earth itself as the knacks and talents of the brain which earth constructed.

There is a mystical notion, partly of Swedenborgian origin, that animals were created from pre-existent types in the divine mind, so that they correspond to spiritual forms and exist necessarily because their ideas existed first. From this to a belief in the immortality of animals there is but a single step. But

I have not yet heard from any spiritist quarter that any cat has communicated in purring sympathy with its disconsolate owner, nor a favorite canary chirped of new perches and hemp-seed; nor has any dog materialized his paw to give to his former master.

What are all the forms which crowded previous ages, whose fossils we observe, but fragmentary models made and broken, tentative efforts of the creative power?—

> "Dim fragments meant
> To be united in some wondrous whole?
> Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
> Suggesting some one creature yet to make—
> Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
> Convergent in the faculties of man?"

Not necessary forms with spiritual correspondencies, but experimental forms faintly prophesying, and with no reality in the mind of God to give them permanence, any more than the clumsy models have in the mind of the sculptor who makes and breaks them up, one after another, on the road to his first perfected group. They were the first tossings-up of the plastic material. What permanence could any essential thought or spiritual type confer upon the natures of those extinct monsters? They were Calibans doing dirty drudgery for the enchanter; abortive fragments, rough-casted, broken up, recast, again rejected, refined upon and humanized in the great inspiration of the universe.

As well concede continuous existence to the megatherium as to the faithful dog who, some half surmise, will bear them company. As well expect to find in a Creator the necessary type of chaos as of these chaotic fragments. Let them all crumble to the dust; let the bright animals enjoy their brief hours and isolated talents, and let the earth resume so much of ourselves as the animal bequeathed to us! Continuous life and spiritual forms belong only to immutable ideas. Follow the steps of the divine thought and permit its unfinished forms to sleep. Do not turn the second state into a museum of earth's monstrosities, her still-born freaks, nor expect to travel thitherward with your menagerie! Let the dead past bury its dead in successive strata, and yield all your animalities to the same unregretful oblivion! "They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up!"

There is a cultivated materialism, not without its moral features, which declares that the hope of a continuous existence is selfish. Man ought to be content to be a finite instrument for preparing some new epoch of humanity to be enacted upon a subdued and elaborated planet. He is the perishable agent for this civilization of Nature; and if, in this process, he secures a preponderance to his moralities and decencies, he will live in sumptuous tranquillity. Even

though man is finite he has every social and personal motive to obey his better impulses ; it is healthier and happier to do so ; let him die thus, like a musician's vacant preluding before the perfect strain is drawn ! Let man devote himself to humanity's future, though the dust of his brain drink up all his trembling emotions, and the costly shower sink into the still equilibrium of the grave ! It is noble in man to ignore his personality, and, like the dead limpet, leave his habitation for God's future uses. So speaks the materialist.

Now there is not a word of his disdain which does not reek with immortality. He could not call us selfish for believing in it unless he was divinely born out of ideal goodness. He cannot insist upon being devoid of soul-substance without being filled with it up to the brim of his generous morality. Such revenge the soul takes when it is denied ! Its spies are introduced upon the premises of the denier ; words and thoughts infest his argument to defeat it, divine emissaries with whom he lives in amusing unconsciousness ; they use his body for a mask, and it drops when the hour is ripe to mar his plot.

The baldest negation is not merely a verbal contradiction of an affirmation, but a contribution to its probability, for it testifies that there was something previously taken for granted which might be denied, and the denial is a partial explanation why something

could ever have been taken for granted. Just as immorality presumes morality, and hypocrisy is a tribute to virtue, so the denial of pre-existent cause and personal soul-substance implies their reality, because affirmation and denial are peculiar characteristics of beings who think themselves; that is, beings whose consciousness is not merely a state of activity resultant upon perception, but a state of reflecting upon the activity. The earth cannot think itself; its physical evolutions are unable to turn round in their own tracks and face themselves. But man's self detaches itself to look itself in the face. He is the wonderful unit who can duplicate himself so that the watched becomes the watcher. No simple creature can achieve this miracle. It can see the other which is not itself; but when the self which creates the other comes into the line of animate existence and makes a report of this ability of creativeness, the double creature has arrived, by ascent from the animal and descent from the spiritual. And when we hear the creature denying that the spiritual has descended we hear the spiritual affirming its independence of the animal.

For the denial of pre-existent cause involves the problem of accounting for the origin of the idea. How could animals have started it? The denial of continuous existence leaves unexplained how the brain-power that is deposited by animal evolution

could have framed the notion of it, called it, in the various dialects, by some phrase of immortality, and clad it in the tattered ignorance of earth.

We accept the statement that man is an agent to civilize this planet and himself. Out of that comes the moral argument to prove that man is not a finite instrument. For, let me ask, where can there be any improvement that will harmonize with the report which the mind makes of the eternal nature of morality, except the continuous improvement of souls? The future reduction of Nature's elements to scientific use and play, whether by Fourier's scheme or by some other, may fulfil all the earth's possible conditions, but will only thus furnish the landscape for the soul in its first state. Zones of the earth subdued and fertilized will be its embossed girdles put on for the ovations of the human soul. The cunning artificer will be merely adorned and accommodated by his work; the brightest moments of earth will be only its choice vintages yielded to man's days of festival. The soul will taste the elaborated drops, but its higher powers, refusing to be corrupted by the luxury, will find in themselves a never-sated hunger and thirst. What other species of improvement is worth the name? If human beings cease to exist, the whole object of successive generations is lost, unless we suppose it is not a God, but a Mephistopheles, who is amusing himself with grinding hearts to pigment for

the shifting canvases of life. To what end do generations of men develop and improve? Merely that a God may compose his epic of a universe, by cantos of planets, putting in the culture of earth and the hopes of man for metaphors? That would not be an epic, but a heartless parody of the sublimest sentences and scriptures of mankind. In planet-scenery and animal life we detect an infinite Being at his play; but in the refinement of principles in the souls of individuals we perceive how serious he is. Annihilate those souls and creation becomes a miserable comedy, with God for sole applauder; spiritual improvement without spiritual permanence would be the tragedy of a human race, endowed with feeling solely to enact it. There must be a final purpose mixed up with the fortunes of individual men, because principles are permanent; as soon sever the threads of universal gravitation as destroy these moral immutabilities which roll around the centre of a God.

Notice, too, what a surplus of activity is bestowed upon man. Human brains manifest an exuberance which earth does not exhaust. The animal and perceptive organs have no ambition to exceed the exigencies of any given moment; but the powers which express the laws of thought and heavenly harmony spurn the earth in fierce energy, chafe at its limits, upbraid its stinginess, outrun its tasks. They lay out more life than earth ever asks of us for its own

improvement. What does the surplus mean? Animals have it not; they simply correspond to the stress of the moment. Call them out by forcible impressions, and they can attempt to rise to the level of your teachings; alter their conditions, or interfere with that average behavior which is called their instinct, and they strive to meet the emergency. But they never rise above it, nor anticipate a wider life by an exuberance which overflows the present. What are these primitive tendencies of ours which delight us with their pain and longing, like that, for instance, which inspires an artist with a plan, but disgusts him with his handling of it! The surplus of idea above his production cries for satisfaction, but the brain reports to him that earth is a poverty-stricken place for aims like his; it has not colors tender enough nor marbles plastic enough to fix his thought. Fortunately-disappointed artist! If the sounds or colors of earth could contain his ideal, earth would be greater than himself, and the forms of his thought would be his grave. Weary with systematic failure, and fretted with the constant beat of this illimitable tide upon his brain, at last he turns his back upon the baffling material, and seeks new quarries of a more celestial flush. Earth never disappoints the brain of the animal; her care for the animal part of the human brain is motherly and genial; but when her child grows big, and begins to

let loose the riot of heaven amid the moderate economies of her mansion, and turns them into properties for his impossible dramas, her unsympathetic tolerance dismisses him to seek an ampler providence. It is as if the repulses of earth were intentioned to send the spirit out of her attraction that it may be caught in the drift beyond.

"Fear death? To feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place?
The power of the night, the press of the storm?

No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,
The heroes of old;
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best, to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,

And the elements' rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou Soul of soul!"

III.

MODERN SPIRITISM.

THE only way to arrive at any clear conceptions of our relations with a spiritual world is by first defining the words which we use in speaking of the subject. When we come to examine a good many of our opinions, we find that they are only marks of our want of precision in the use of words, and of our habit to be satisfied with phrases. The word "Spiritual," and the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," have lent, by their vagueness, peculiar temptation to our taste for sentiments which have not been clarified and severely defined by reflection. We often prefer an illusion to the mental effort that dissipates it; and it is safe to say that human opinions, on every subject, contain a great body of floating, ill-digested, half-grown thinking and feeling. Surely, in all matters which relate to the religious life, involving, as they do, some of our tenderest and most lofty emotions, we ought to try to shift our faith from words to facts, if it be possible for the mind, in its present condition, to furnish such facts to the consciousness. We ought to be sure, too, that the facts are universal in their charac-

ter,—not exceptional nor abnormal states either of the body or of the soul, but true for all people, at all times and in all places, like the facts of a science or the daily necessities of life.

What do we mean, then, by using the word "Spiritual?" Sometimes, as when we speak of a highly spiritual person, or poem, or piece of music, or work of art, we simply contrast a refined quality with an ordinary one, something subtle with something mechanical and material. We mean that it is the manifestation of a delicate, highly-cultivated, noble and pure mind. But when we use the phrase "Spiritual World," we mean, or ought to mean, two distinct things; and the first is, that inner condition of human ideas, emotions and aspirations, which makes the kind of person whom we call spiritual. It is the invisible state of the mind and heart which has the power to become visible in acts, audible in words, appreciable in character. It is shut up within the bodily limits of the individual; being at once a refined brain and a refining soul. Its existence may be suspected from the looks and gestures; but it never fairly leaps into visibility until there is some expressiveness of words and actions. Then it adds something to society, and passes, in the form of benefits, into history, sometimes through an exterior so unpromising as to lend credibility to the popular adage, "appearances are deceitful": when, for instance,

you observe a woman harshly and craggily built, over whose peculiarities everybody stumbles and votes her to be inaccessible, who nevertheless steals into all the ways of the house with an unexpected sweetness and flavor; somewhere, clear out of sight, and beyond the most venturesome climbing, she gathers pleasantness, like those bees in St. Domingo which swarm in the remotest regions of the mountains, where they have been unmeddled with for hundreds of years, and whence their accumulations of honey come running down the dry crusty beds of brooks into the lowlands.

We have a habit of saying that the wise and good man is in heaven now; meaning only that somewhere within his bodily limits the harmony is hidden that is created by just thoughts and pure desires. If we try to imagine, that, although he is still upon the earth and bound by his whole organization to a visible career, his soul can ever be somewhere else, not within the limits where thought exercises and applies itself to visible things, but in some distinct state or society, we imagine an impossibility. Our thoughts may attack the material universe in every direction, with the telescope to overcome distance and vastness, with the microscope to detect minuteness; but the man who thinks is still within the limits of the visible and material world. He simply makes a long arm, and brings the planet and the atom near; and, even

while he is discovering the laws which bind planets and atoms into one harmonious whole, he has not broken through the roof of his brain nor the roof of the material universe. For, as two bodies cannot be in the same place at once, so a man cannot be in two places or states at the same time; he may dream that he is, or it may be the illusion of a fever, or the unreality which sometimes springs out of an impaired condition of the nervous system. But every human being, though his soul is invisible until it begins to act, is confined to a visible world while he is the tenant of a visible body.

But, in the second place, when we use the phrase "Spiritual World," we mean to indicate a sphere into which our spiritual value passes when the body is stripped away from our invisibility as the husk from the ripe ear. We then lose the corporeal methods which have given expression to our inner thoughts and feelings. The flesh resists us, and suffers our resistance, no longer; time ceases to become the measure of our acts and sensations; the outer world can furnish no perceptions to the mind, because the avenues of the senses are choked with our bodies' dust. Now, if the soul is going to continue its personal existence, and not be merged into blind currents of forces, or states of motion, it must be furnished with another set of senses correspondent to another set of impressions which result from a new

relation between the universe and the soul. When language arrives at this point, it finds that it has come unfurnished with a pontoon to span the difference between the present world which we know about and some other condition of the world which we do not know about. And the whole stock of language may be ransacked by curious speculation, without yielding any help to waft, to float, to propel us across that gulf,—that difference between the estate of a soul in this body and of the same soul in another kind of body. If we are wise, when we pause at the brink we shall not waste time in flying paper kites across. If we talk about the matter at all, we shall be content with saying what the spiritual world is not and cannot be; knowing that if there is one thing in heaven or earth that we shall be sure of, one riddle that every person will certainly find out for himself if he will be patient enough to wait for dying, it is this very thing — the life after death. I shall be somewhere, or nowhere, to-morrow forenoon. Shall I spend the rest of to-day in fret and surmise about it, and distemper my preparatory sleep with dreams? In the meantime, we are reduced to talking about the future life by the artifice of negatives; that is, if we are not spiritists, we remand it into a place that cannot now be seen and touched, that cannot now be occupied, whose air cannot vibrate on the disks of our material ears, and to which no other ears in our

present place have yet been opened. We define it as a condition that cannot be recognized by visible senses, into which the bodily organs cannot pass, and for which another set of organs has not been yet developed. The new organs may be all correspondent in effect and intention to the present ones; that is, in the spiritual world, some contact, intercourse, perception, may be sustained by sight, hearing, touch, the smell, the taste. Perhaps these perceptions are sustained by the development of senses which we have not suspected and which cannot be imagined. But we say that they do not yet exist. They cannot exist; the ground is preoccupied. The soul can be related to but one body at a time, just as it can think but one thought and experience but one feeling at a time; for the most complex internal sensations have a unity, whose place cannot be occupied by another at the same time. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, but not both at once; and one cannot overlap and be entangled in the other. The soul must be entirely ignorant of the second body until it has ceased to use the first. And that use is never suspended while the heart propels the vital current; never, in sleep nor in dreams; never, in delirium nor disease; never, in catalepsy nor the magnetic trance,—because another body, with another set of uses, cannot pre-exist within our present limits, nor intrude within them to suspend

the uses of the live material body. There is either one body or the other—but not both at once—with one soul, or two, for tenants. No matter how curious the facts of somnambulism, of unconscious cerebration, of the magnetic condition, and of those which arise from a double hemispheric brain, may be: they are all referable to one material body, and to the soul, its ordinary tenant, who cannot quit without killing it —who cannot have another till that one is killed.

I shall try to make plain in the course of the argument why this is so important in its bearing upon the new phenomena of spiritism.

There cannot be such a thing as a soul without a body. You cannot conceive of a live finite person who has no form, no limits, no organs, no senses, no points of contact with other persons or things, — a mere expansion, an irredeemable inflation, a mere tenuity. It would be the same as being a mere nonentity. Even a gas has its limits and properties, atomic relations of its parts, diffusible by heat and contractible by cold, and solidified by pressure. Even the electric current will accumulate and leap on its sincere path from point to point,—a spark that can be measured and depicted. Nothing can save the soul from collapsing into the blind forces of the world but the preservation of its identity; and that cannot be preserved without a frame to hold it, a system of organs by which it can express spiritual

function. Where is our identity to-day? It is not independent of a body, not even in our sleep and dreams, nor during those clairvoyant communications, provided such things be true. As a person, you may look invisible within the body; but this body it is that prevents your invisibility from becoming nonentity. And so it must always be.

Now where are the organs which are to preserve your effective identity at the instant of the last heartbeat? You say, there is to be a new, more sublimated kind of brain and nervous system, to put forth new senses, to gather a new order of perceptions from some inside point of the universe; to lift the veils of color everywhere and see the substance that was colored; to penetrate into structures everywhere and see how they are constructed; to detect cohesion, to go deeper than gravitation, to notice vibrations, to flit with auroras, and ride with the twinkles of a star. Where are those new senses now? Imagine them according to what fashion you please, and attribute to them what functions you desire; but your answer to the question, Where are they now, is very important. Do you incline to the view of those who assume that those senses lie compressed and folded within the bodily frame, to expand with its dissolution, to be gradually born into action through the travail of a Death? Then you must also assume that, until the hour of death, there can never

be a moment when those senses stir, because the ground is preoccupied; there is another set of stirring senses. We dream towards morning, when the blood is getting up to set its factory in motion: it excites different portions of the brain or of the spinal cord. We walk in our sleep under the same automatic control by which we walk in waking hours. We utter sense or folly in the magnetic trance by virtue of the same cerebral conditions which regulate our conscious speech. There is self-forgetfulness in every phrase of extemporaneous speaking, when the brain blushes with the passion of the eager blood, and seems to be swayed by superior dictation; but every phrase is strictly subject to cerebral conditions. They may be stimulated or depressed, but they can never be displaced by a new set of conditions while the brain is alive; for the soul cannot live in two houses at once, any more than two souls can live in one house. The soul has spent a life in learning how to occupy one house; it fits most perfectly and accurately into one set of senses; there is neither seam nor crevice, nowhere a chance for thrusting in another set. Our civic efficiency, our mental and moral sanity, the trustworthiness of our information about the universe, depends upon this fact; and it always must depend upon it, wherever we may be, either before or after death; we must be one inviolate person, with one set of senses that yields a uni-

form experience, else our usefulness and happiness are gone. Can our spiritual condition maintain two sets of organs, one set relating to the visible, and the other to the invisible world? A man might as well take off the whole of his flesh, and expect to carry on his business, as a soul might divest itself of its closely-fitting organs, and expect to be assumed by those which relate to another sphere.

Now suppose your friend has died. Probably the new senses of his second state are born during the moments of his body's dissolution, as his spiritual condition wins them from the invisible elements of the universe, and slowly fits into them; somewhat as the composer draws to his own quality a kindred theme out of the nebulous sphere that seethes with bars and snatches of indefinite emotions as it circles tethered to the centre of his brain; or as the writer arrests his pen in the breeze of his thinking, just far enough from the paper, till the feather ensnares and lets drop the perfect word. All souls must set their own traps for the new felicity, as they do here, and we shall observe the same serious differences in the nature of the game they catch. The soul of your friend, then, passes from a frame of flesh into a frame more subtly woven, without a single corporeal characteristic in it, yet not without the character of matter. So to speak, blood will still tell; that is to say, the finer soul will attract and use the finer body, just as

it does now by the principle of heredity: whatever is symmetrical will flow into symmetry of form, what is piercing and intuitive will select its penetrating substance; what is lovely will have a better chance to attract the material that may more closely express its graciousness. But flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom. How then, I ask, can this kingdom communicate with flesh and blood? I mean, how can your friend's second body influence your spiritual condition which has the first body still in use? It is impossible to imagine where the point of contact could be, if your second body is not yet developed. Suppose it is like an immature seed which lies at the bottom of a full-blown flower; but another flower cannot bend over to shake its pollen upon pistils not yet unfolded. Each thing in the world can address only its own kind; intercourse depends upon predestined mutuality, and mutuality depends upon similar and equally-developed structures. What can my dearest departed friend be to me, if he has become preternaturally sharpened and enlarged, by assuming new organs? He cannot storm and sack my soul with his advantages. He is a magician, he has fairy gifts, he wears the invisible cap and the sandals of swiftness; his influence over me can never be restored till his exceptional advantage over me is gone.

Besides, it seems to me, that every man who loves his own privacy and respects the reserve in which his

virtue grows, ought to rejoice that no departed person has the key to the postern gate of his garden. If my dearest friend were now in all respects unchanged, still on the footing of my own perception and intelligence, not grown up into an enchanted personage, he should not pry around the sacred remoteness of the sources whence my life descends. No foot shall stir that spring; it must be limpid when I come to drink: no thought shall meddle with its flow, save Thine, Thou Being who art neither partial friend nor envenomed foe. If this air swarmed with spirits, and they jostled in the streets—yes, if all the universe were graded from earth to God, and on every grade its choice refinement stood, the haughty soul ought to refuse to treat with one of them, but spend its life in demanding passage to the sole Presence that can understand the conscience which he made.

Consider the inexorable limitations of our present life. If the bodily eye is framed to see corporeal objects, how can another species of object—say, your friend's second body—be perceived by it? And if you suppose, to get over this objection, that there is an eye within an eye, a retina of finer stuff that frames images of objects which the corporeal eye cannot perceive, you suppose two sets of visual senses, and, to that extent, an activity of your second body inside your first body, and one soul in both. By and by you may see your friend when your sesnes are on

his level and related to his own; but till then he must remain invisible; for there is a perfect adaptation throughout the universe. So, if the bodily ear is framed to receive vibrations from one atmosphere, it cannot receive them from another; and no fiction of an inner ear can give genuineness to voices and whispers of a spiritual tongue. Our friend who died may be in the same room with us, for aught we know, though it is my opinion he would find it somewhat tedious, as he often did before: it would be little interesting to watch all the insignificant details comprised in one's daily necessary attentions to himself and those about him.

I do not believe that death has made him a whit the less fastidious, or inaccessible to ennui. So that if my friend is ever in the same room with me, I rejoice, for his sake, that the difference in our perceptive function protects his feelings; I rejoice for my own sake, since God alone shall be a spy on me. Not a pulse, not a hint, not the obscurest sensation can weave one slender web across: for all purposes of communication, the friend might as well be on the solar system's farthest verge. All those thrills and vague misgivings, of which we read, and which we have undoubtedly experienced, all shudders and suspicions, all inexplicable horrors, are but nervous motions and unstrung conditions, still interpreted by the very superstitions which they originated long ago.

And what is that feeling of companionship that fills a lonely hour, that apparent renewal of our vanished confidence, but the sudden freshet of a tender memory?

This difference of perceptive ability between the living and the dead friend makes it highly improbable that the soul of the one should invisibly communicate with the soul of the other. Friends on earth can communicate without a word; a look may be enough; a flicker as of far summer lightning across the countenance, the raising of an eyelid, the faint deepening of a flush, may speak the volume that never will be written. Nay, more than this, sensation emanates from another's presence; the silent love or hatred flashes invisibly; but there must be two visible points of bodies between which the errand travels to and fro. Our whole corporeality is implicated in the most subtle and obscure of these sensations. Presence of bodies on the same level of condition is essential to production. But, when one of these bodies is annihilated, the soul that used it is just as much a prisoner within its new supernal senses as it was before in the corporeal, and just as incapable of acting beyond the limits that prescribe its new vitality.

Above my house runs a wire of the electric telegraph. I sometimes thrill to think what news is flashing over the ridge-pole, but I am not a partner

in it; my heart is not included in the circuit. In the early spring days the blue-bird, and in the yellowing autumn the martin, perch and rest a while upon that slender rope,—gay little funambulists who perform for me without price. And the mighty hopes and fears of a continent, and of countries which ache through mid-ocean to deliver their sorrows here, flit between those little claws. What messages they clasp unconsciously! Was any suspicion of them stirring when the wings made a flutter in the sun?—was there recognition in that twitter, sympathy in the startled circling and excited call? Not a throb of it. My balancers were merely meditating upon straws for the nest, or a worm for the fledglings. The slender feet grasp that extent, no more; as incompetent to detain the tidings of mankind as my senses are to interpret the thoughts of spirits.

You ought to consider this difference of sphere and of perceptive ability whenever you incline to believe that the soul of your departed friend is communicating with you through the mediumship of a third person. Here I will not urge that feeling which is natural to all of us, I think, that if a friend *could* communicate, he would do so directly with the soul that cherishes a love for him, and has endured hours of unavailing longing for the precious boon of a token, a hint of intercourse, a confirmation that life still continues, and that it is filled with peace. What

can re-weld that severed link of love, if not the heat that was kindled on love's forge? I know the answer which is made,—that, as all intercourse depends upon adequate conditions, upon some medium of communication, we must defer to the universal law. If Franklin wants to draw a spark from the sky he must put his knuckle to the end of his kite-string; if we want to have the flash of love electrify the heart, we must bring it into contact with the connecting fluid. So the lover is sent to a stranger's house to gather news of his beloved, under the idea that the stranger is an exceptional being, possessed of some obscure capacity to be influenced from another sphere, a person whose sensitive organization can be used by a departed soul. The medium's will is reported to be prostrate, his individuality has disappeared: where is he while the spirits are playing through his brain their various tunes? And what point of contact with his brain can the spirits have when they are enclosed by new senses that work upon a new level and gather a new set of preceptions? Is it at the point of that fine aura, that subtly-attenuated material, which the medium is supposed to condense and supply? And do spirits even use that aura in the process of materializing themselves into visibility? They already have a body of their own, and yet we are told they make another body out of some property of the medium. Here is extraordinary

confusion. The spirit could not exist for an instant without its body, and yet it slips into one which the medium exhales! Then which body is it that the friend imagines he is touching — the inside or the outside body? Where, underneath so many waistcoats, beats the heart of the vanished lover? If a medium's aura furnishes the only substance that is suitable for incorporating spirits, either they were not incorporated before, that is, they were nonentities, or else they were incorporated before by virtue of the same substance. If they were, what do they want of more aura? The aura which invests them already must be as competent to make them visible as that which any medium is supposed to be capable of supplying.

The whole tendency of the observations which science makes in dealing with the cerebral and nervous structure of mankind is toward the classification of all singular phenomena under the head of physical functions. It is thus discovered that the healthy brain has unexpected powers, and that the nervous system in some hysteric or abnormal state may perform singular exploits; but the physical horizon still encloses all its activities.

Age after age, one queer fact after another is run down into its burrow of the earth. It is hard to get the beagles started; the scent lies scattered at first, and they yelp around as if the game were really in

the sky. But when the strength of the trail is struck, mystery after mystery is beaten up, and your hounds have not lifted a paw above the underbrush. It is only a question of time. Nothing can be so exceptional, nothing so curious, and, we may add, nothing so cunningly imagined and performed, as to cast a doubt upon the great distinction on which our health and usefulness depend—that no soul can abdicate its senses, no soul in one sphere usurp the senses of a soul in another, and no two kinds of perceptive ability make an interchange of their respective experience.

If you owe your belief in immortality to the assumed facts of a spiritual intercourse, your belief is at the mercy of your assumption. It has not sprung from the vital necessity of your own soul, it is not a craving which justifies and demands its future satisfaction, but it is merely an opinion derived from a variety of phenomena; and when these which attracted your attention, or when the tricks which imposed upon your love of the marvelous, are explained away, your immortality is also explained away. You did not derive it from a spiritual fact of your own consciousness; you did not build it out of reasonable judgments: you are at the mercy of what may prove to be delusion. Can a delusion import a spiritual truth into the soul? Now, grant that eventually we shall discover that we are immortal, whether

we believe it now or not; grant that, in the meantime, it is human and proper to wish to believe it and to know it, to see the horizon of our life expand, lifting and ennobling all our thoughts, justifying our love, and putting before our deeds a boundless career. But we cannot derive a faith in personal immortality from occurrences which take place in darkened rooms and cabinets. Your opinion derived from them is worth no more than the ordinary opinion which is based on texts and dogmas. Withdraw the theology and the truth comes toppling down. Withdraw your phenomena, and, for all you know, annihilation may have been the fate of those you loved, and may be your own.

It is said that if a man accepts a truth, the grounds of its acceptance are of no consequence: they may be false and utterly unsubstantial, yet serve the purpose of conveying truth into the mind. What a confusion of ideas is this! Truth cannot have false grounds. Truth cannot be recommended or advocated by the pleas of human error. There is no spiritual truth that can be conveyed into the human mind by means of a delusive imitation. Nothing is conveyed but the delusion which has borrowed the name of the truth, without which it could not live an hour. A spiritual truth is something that is eternally alive. Immortality is simply the kingship of a spiritual person. Is your soul king by divine right?

Are you royal in your ways of living? On your palace wall is the family-tree distinctly blazoned to keep your descent from Deity before your face? Sit there in front of it upon your throne, and receive the homage of eternity. There is no doubt or flaw in this ancestral privilege: your soul is its seal. Did Saul wear his crown when he went off by night to see the Witch of Endor? No; he "disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him," dethroned, dismantled, defrauded of himself. It is always something less than immortality, far less, that runs upon such futile errands.

If you have broken away from the old creeds in pain at their want of human sympathy, repelled by the gross materiality of their opinions, do not weave the same fibre into your new opinions. Let the fullness of your spiritual life tend its own loom and fill it with the web of faith.

It is sometimes affirmed, that the spiritual world makes impressions upon the human soul which are translated into messages of comfort, hope, truth and admiration; that many visions and passages of internal experience have resulted from the liability of the heavenly sphere to touch the soul at some point, and with that touch to electrify, to lift to some new purpose, to stimulate with some neglected truth, though no voice may be heard, no light shine, no beauteous appearance fascinate the eye; and that

the human brain must needs interpret by its own objective language these invisible adventures.

This leads me to speak of a possible influence which may establish a relation with a supersensuous world. But it must flow from some being who is not limited by a set of senses, and whose infinite Presence supersedes the necessity for any kind of perceptive ability. If we hold any relation with an invisible world, it must be one that we hold with all-prevading Deity; and, in this respect, we stand on certain terms with a Creator, as being immersed in Nature, sharing the universal life with the planet and the tree, only more personal because the laws of life wake up into our consciousness. When morning comes to Nature's cradle, the morn that nestled there asleep lifts up its eyelids. All our senses and faculties lie undefended from the great search of the infinite Presence.

The difference between our perceptions and those of our departed friend is a wall of primeval darkness between us; but, as the mother feels her child in the night-time, there is an infinite touch that comes where no friend can follow. For no part of Nature can conclude to set up as a barrier against the continuous inspiration which feeds all roots, mount through every artery, and blossoms in the history of the infusoria and of the nations.

Shall I affirm, then, that Deity may have a law by

which he elects to touch a waiting heart, to send a waft of breath to freshen a wilting gift, to accumulate power above an earthly crisis, to emphasize each man's sincerity, to be so compassionate as to be imagined speaking to a bruised heart, to teem with such suggestions as to be described by genius as a lightning-bolt that cleaves a sullen brain? Alas, we know too well that here also superstition may set in, and impute the moods of our own structure to the irruptions of a God. Is it not better to trust that human nature has been divinely created to be adequate to its emergencies, and that the laws of our experience report the equable and changeless pressure of an Almighty Mind?

What, then, should we seek from dead friends, if the elements of a spiritual world are already in our souls—and what can spirits give to us, of knowledge or comfort, which the Great Presence does not give, as it anticipates all pettier advantages? Incessant sap arrives at every rootlet which our personality throws out; from our coarsest sense to our finest intuitive feeling for truths and laws, there is perfect adequacy, perfect adjustment, and there ought to be perfect self-possession. Those who have that, will find it superfluous to grope after an intercourse that would be useless if it were not impossible; for all that we love, whether it has vanished and shut the doors of new senses upon us, or whether it still lingers

in the house, is gleaned after by a Presence who gathers up fragments that nothing be lost. This trust holds back the tenderest human longing from despair: it is willing to wait, because it is so conscious of its own immortality; it can afford to wait, because it is content with the manifestations of the soul. Nothing is so wonderful to it, so startling; nothing lifts to so much awe; nothing is charged with so much rapture, as the soul's own share of God, its inextinguishable sense that it can never die, and that no dear and excellent things can die. Heaven wraps its reserve around the holiest things; they are yielded up only to hope and patience; they are unspeakably disgraced when delusion makes dice of them, and throws them for a living. Let us rise to a sense of the dignity of our own nature, which makes us perfectly at home wherever we are, fitted for our place, endowed with appropriate senses, incapable of usurping other senses or of being usurped by them. There is an Intelligence that ponders every step we take, as it conducts us from mansion to mansion, judiciously opening before us each door that stands along our great career.

Mr. Thackeray, writing about death, says, "I know one small philosopher"—meaning himself—"who is quite ready to give up these pleasures; quite content (after a pang or two of separation from dear friends here) to put his hand into that of the

summoning angel, and say, 'Lead on, O Messenger of God our Father, to the next place whither the divine goodness calls us!' We must be blindfolded before we can pass, I know; but I have no fear about what is to come any more than my children need fear that the love of *their* father should fail them." Even so, Mr. Thackeray. And among us has there been of late a friend who, because jaded with the life here,—because he found this earth a trifle crowded, was somewhat eager to go up the stairs of rest?—to make no noise, but say, Good Night?—

> "Good Night! Good Night! as we so oft have said
> Beneath this roof at midnight, in the days
> That are no more, and shall no more return.
> Thou hast but taken thy lamp and gone to bed;
> I stay a little longer, as one stays
> To cover up the embers that still burn."

IV.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, who was fond of metaphysical discussion, was once engaged in a talk about the immortality of the soul, and when asked for his final opinion, summed it up thus sententiously: "All or none."

That is good republican doctrine, and exhibits his modesty and goodness of heart. But so is universal suffrage good republican doctrine, yet we see great numbers of people who are too vicious or too incompetent to vote, and we cannot help wishing that their unnatural right were taken from them. But just as universal suffrage is an accomplished fact, a gift which cannot be recalled, is immortality also a gift outright? — bestowed upon mankind in the lump, without distinction of person, condition, character, or preparation? Is it only necessary to be born anywhere upon the planet, in an Australian thicket, Hindoo jungle, Irish bog, on the steppes of Tartary, the pampas of South America, in the slums of Hong-Kong, New York, London, in order to become inheritor of eternal life? Or is it a distinction which Nature develops by a process of natural selection like

that which has prolonged and improved the life upon this planet? Ever since that doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest took its firm hold of the modern mind, so that the probability is strong that some form of it will eventually prove suitable to the facts, I have been waiting to hear some one apply it one step farther; that step, namely, which the idea of personal continuance takes from this world to another. Is the efficiency of natural selection strictly limited to this sphere, stopped and summed up in the physical man, or does it continue to operate, by the death of the unfit and the survival of the fit, to establish another type of being, a fresh race higher in the scale, just as here we see the feeble, stunted, and deformed, the misbegotten of the lower creatures, drop out that the luckier ones may thrive and become the slow progenitors of the next in order? The question presses us more closely when we reflect that no line can be drawn to separate the races which were used up in the effort to attain to mankind, from the mankind which has been attained. It does not seem to me irrational to suppose that a million or two years' worth of imperfectly developed beings, straggling all along from the ape to the man, lived through their brief butterfly summer, and are known of no more in any part of the universe. As well concede continuance of life to the anthropoid ape, as to a creature which might have been only a shade or two improved on him in

the making; and if you begin conceding in that direction, there is nothing to prevent your letting all the lower creatures into another sphere of life, and all the better creatures whose impulses were consumed in the slow evolution of man.

The death of the lower finite beings is no reproach to their Creator. Their finiteness robs death of all its terrors. To the brute there is no sting of reflection that its existence has been a disappointment and a curse, or an arrested and unfulfilled condition. Nor was it an evidence of want of benignity, when thousands of generations of our manlike ancestors breathed out, with the last sigh, all the life they had. The earth prepared its latest formation to support our feet, by turning itself into a cemetery; we tread upon the dust of manlike creatures; in each race of them, some isolated attribute of ourselves was set to throbbing, like the rude blast which a savage extorts out of a conch-shell before either he or the conch can be harassed by a dim divining of a Beethoven. The little animal within the conch dried up and perished; so did the little wit in the first barbarian musician. But now the conch, the gourd-shell, the stag-bone whistle, the stretched sinew, the single-noted reed, and the sonorous wood, have been climbing by natural selection and Nature's civilizing power up to that mighty combination which Beethoven sweeps whenever he is in the mood to speak the word Immortality.

'T is plain he is immortal, and so do we fancy that we are, while we listen. But when did perishing stop, and surviving begin, in order that Deity might go along at length to strike a full chord in Beethoven's heart and ours, and to listen to Life falling over the planet's edge into the abyss of Life,—that thunder of a Niagara slipping through one breathless moment into the tumult and triumph of continuance? In what year of the world was a society of creatures collected in whom the premonition of harmony began to breed the heart-ache and put a new salt into the tear?

We have at length discovered that even the wood-fibre of each tree has its own private and inimitable note, and that where a forest stands there is an orchestra imprisoned beneath the bark, as if spelled in flight from some Apollo. There was a Polish Jew, named Guzikow, who learned the counterspell, and released these comrades of the gamut, to delight all hearers. He was a shepherd, and as he tended his flocks he wiled away the tedium by making flutes out of the different reeds and trees which surrounded him, and he soon discovered that the tones varied according to the wood. He afterwards constructed a harmonicon upon the basis of this knowledge, in which different woods not only formed the scale, but also contributed various qualities of tone. Upon this he used to play with two hammers of ebony, accom-

panied by an ordinary orchestra, which he is said to have outplayed, outsoared, and distanced, by the keen variety of his instrument.

So the sylvan man has at last acquired a voice; the tree becomes evolved into its Daphne. But even now there are vast tracts of such forest-men standing on the earth, *in* it really, both feet branching down into roots to arrest all motion save that which is made by the vague voices of Nature as the soulless head swings to and fro. When did our feet begin to disengage themselves?—are they all even now disengaged? We observe with fear and wonder the developments of animal propensities which seem to repeat before our eyes some past age of the world, when the mammoths wrestled and huge serpents sliddered through the rank grass after their prey. No crime seems too atrocious to be invented by a creature in the form of a man, and no ingenuity too great to lavish upon its commission.

Many people cultivate bestiality with such whole-bodied energy, that if they could be turned into their appropriate animals we should pity all the other beasts. Yet here they are wearing clothes of the same pattern with our own; and, in some great peril of the commonwealth, they are all ready, thoroughly primed and educated, reduced by the law of degradation to the level of some devilish moment on which, as on a hearth, the fires of an extinct ferocity are

relighted. While we are applauding the scientific opinion which turns upon the survival of the fittest, our thin hand-clapping is liable to be interrupted and broken up by the noise which *the unfittest* make in announcing their presence, and that they survive, too, by the side of the daintiest of our fittest. Can Deity do anything with these obsolete brutalities? Their bodies may serve to fertilize the soil; but, as the body rots, is anything spiritual disengaged but sulphuretted hydrogen? And when you wonder how the Deity can be justified in admitting such misbirths into his creation, does it not occur to you that may be they are not tolerated at all, and that Death, the sexton, is waiting with his spade to shovel them in? What economy can there be in saving them up, what object in saving only to punish them forever? Many of them inherit from ancestors the ineffaceable birth-mark of their slavery; they had no voice in the facts which determined that they are useless, nay, noxious while they live; therefore it would be the depth of meanness to punish them after they are dead, if anything punishable is left. Shall they not drop out, from the survival of the fittest?

You can trace in the New Testament, mixed up with the notion of the second coming, a feeling that there are sins unto death. Paul says that when Christ appears some "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;"

that, if a man sows to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption; that, "if any man defile the temple of God," his own body, "him shall God destroy": James says that whoever converts a man from sin "shall save a soul from death"; John says that "there is a sin unto death"; and when Paul says that "the wages of sin is death," he alludes to that sombre doctrine of the second death which we sometimes incline to connect with the first one.

There are some people so unhappily born and bred, that to them the doctrine of annihilation would be no more restraining than the threat of hell; for their ethical disability gnaws the roots of personality. To us, perhaps, no thought could be so dreadful, no surmise so harrowing, as that we might slip into nonentity. We impetuously repel the haunting doubt, we shut the eyes, and cower before the goblin in abject dread till it is gone. With the beauty-loving and full-blooded Claudio, we cry:

"Oh, but to die, and go we know not where:
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world;
'Tis too horrible.
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death."

So say I; so would we all sing in tune with Shakspeare's spirit of jocund and eternal youth. Put us anywhere, but only let us live, and we would feel with Lear when he says to Cordelia, "Come, let's away to prison"; for there must be some Cordelia in the most abject condition where thought and fancy also are:

> "We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage
> And take upon 's the mystery of things
> As if we were God's spies; and we 'll wear out,
> In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
> That ebb and flow by the moon."

A lucid, blazing interval in the old man's madness: we feel it is plain that death shall quite mend the shattered crown of royalty. But those ungrateful daughters, whose hearts pumped venom through their veins — does God want anything of their poisoned souls? Can they survive when the thanklessness by which they lived is dead?

I must confess that to do something, to *be* something, which selects us from the body, turns the brain into a filter to deposit a person within, to prevent annihilation, and make it *impossible* for Nature to drop us out — make it worth God's while to save us up, is a powerful motive; and it prevails in the lives of many men who would not be willing to talk about it. I confess to an all-pervading instinct of personal continuance, coupled with a latent, haunting feeling

that there is a point somewhere in human existence, as there has been in the past, where animality controls the fate of men. Where is that point? We recoil from every effort to draw the line; we shrink from the insufferable egotism; our own vicious taint threatens *us* with disinheritance in this survival of the fittest; we dare not arrogate the advantage, yet, loving to live so, dazzled so with ideal splendors, tingling so in every nerve at the bare taste of things, we are ready to cry "All rather than none," and to rush with all as bad as we are, with all the other sinners, straight through grave, tombstone, epitaph, and that "politic convocation of worms," into the society of our betters.

When I say that the brain may be a filter to deposit personality, I am strictly warranted by the physiological fact which occurs in the process of thinking and feeling. It is a process that cannot take place without combustion of the cerebral matter. The evolution of an idea consumes a certain equivalent of the brain; but it has been discovered that the cerebral material remains the same in quantity as it was before this combustion liberated the idea; it weighs neither more nor less. Then the idea must be pure surplus. Wherever it is, whatever may be the mode or place of its residence within the human structure, it is pure gain, and must belong to the essence of personality. In one sense it is invisible and intangible, in another

sense it is thrown into the clearest visibility when the physical correspondent fact is weighed and gauged. We touch and handle it lying in the scales of that delicate experiment. Upon our register, it is credited to something else besides brain-matter.

If there could be any ground for believing that a soul pre-existed, in some condition of spirit previous to the birth which connected it with a body, there would be some ground for expecting that it would exist subsequently to the body, and a great deal of surmising upon this point would be made superfluous. But the doctrine of the pre-existence of the spiritual monad, of separate individual soul-substances that are to be detailed to human bodies, is made incredible by the facts of heredity. Family character is transmitted; a soul could never break into the line from without; spiritual generation lies strictly within the line of birth. If a pre-existing soul-substance should try to get into the circle of a family, it would run against the bars which our peculiarities and characteristics set up. If it could succeed in getting through them, there would be two souls to each body, the native one and the foreigner.

Perhaps you will be disposed to ask: If a soul is originated in time, why may it not come to an end in time, like all the other temporary things which take their first start upon the earth? And this idea prevails with some so strongly that they suppose an

ocean of soul-germs to have existed from the beginning, out of which our spiritual life is sired; for it seems to them impossible that perishable bodies should originate immortal creatures. And there is no doubt that bodies lived and perished for a million years without blossoming into that amaranth. But you cannot account for the fact that human marriages have at length evolved this mighty instinct for continuance, have built up this brain that blushes through and through with hope, unless you concede that bodies have been its instruments. Moreover, a brain that could never originate the instinct could never originate the doubts which assail the instinct. Both testify that perishable bodies have propagated an imperishable feeling. It is plain that some intelligence has been conspiring with the evolution of animal structure to produce something that considers itself distinct from structure. No propagation that is merely physical could be competent to perform that feat. I should as soon expect that a good time-keeper could tick out for itself an assurance of its eternity. Even with divine power to wind it up, the lines of Jacques would express its state of absence of mind:

> "Thus may we see how the world wags:
> 'T is but an hour ago since it was nine,
> And after one hour more 't will be eleven;
> And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
> And then from hour to hour we rot and rot."

Nay, it could not aspire to that cynical reflection; for whatever can say "We," and is able to reflect upon itself so far as to say "We rot," does really speak with Eternity's own emphasis; when I hear a man say that all there is of him is destined to decay, I know that the speaker could not perish if he would. For doubt, as well as affirmation, confirms a spiritual personality, just as "even hate is but a mask of love." Your hesitation, your bewilderment, your scepticism, is the broadest finger-post; I see you cannot interpret your own language. No matter. In the East, those antique inscriptions which are found in ruins and forgotten cities, all clue to which has been lost, so that they can no longer be deciphered, are popularly supposed to be directions to a hidden treasure.

When I hear a man deny his personal continuance, I am freshly convinced of my own. Goethe said, "Man is the first dialogue that Nature held with God." I would add to that, and say, The pronoun *I* invented immortality. But you tell me how many people there are in the human form who can say *I* but very imperfectly, and a good many not at all: the feeble, foolish, whose brains seem eaten by bad humors as by acids; the various grades of mental deficiency that descend into the night of the idiot. Is there a personal *I* within these unfortunates?

What can Deity find for such as these to do?—why prolong them into a Hereafter? Is there enough in them to save them with?

But why is it, I ask you, that mankind has at length determined to resist this brutality of Nature, and to make all those who have been unfortunately born, the objects of a special care? When you say, Why save such specimens for a hereafter, I retort, Why then take the trouble of saving them for the present?—why exhaust the capacity of science to sap the obstinate restrictions, reach the interior, and put the personal pronoun there? To loose the tongue-tether of the mute, to teach the finger-tips to assume the privileges of the eye and ear; to put the idiot into training for speech, manners and decency, to grope clear through his twilight till you touch the nerve of self-respect; to break open the maniac's cage and storm his mind with systematic gentleness, till in his own face you see your smile; to lavish appropriations of money, method, long-breathed skill and costly life-times of the noblest and most heroic souls, upon creatures who make the home a place of melancholy and mortification, who were born to do the state ill service, and who die to relieve us of despair; surely there is something divine in this, some instinct that a spiritual quality is lurking everywhere in matter, some heaven-born suspicion that the lump of an idiot may be the matrix of a gem. And how do you account for this development by men of a fostering Providence which rallies to the help of Deity and repairs defects in nature;—how account for this

human admiration and sympathy which puts laurels on the brows that ache with thought for those who cannot think, but who at last can love? Don't say to me that Dr. Howe was worthy to be kept in perpetual continuance, but that without him Laura Bridgman would nowhere ever have picked a way out of the triple-bolted dungeon of her body where a personal *I* languished waiting for his miracle. Dr. Howe's achievement is to me a guaranty that the Creator will not let one of his little ones perish. Laura's liberator was an incarnate word of God. In him was that impulse of creation which is continually struggling to be set free into symmetry and sanity. To every country these apostles of redemption have been furnished, for each act of whom nothing but immortality can account, as nothing else could break into this life with such an impetuous solicitation from God to us to improve his imbeciles and make his future task the easier. So the poor degraded heirs of a tainted ancestry pawn everything else, but manage to preserve that household jewel which buys the precious service of philanthropy; it is kept hidden in their rags; they are jealous for it; it glimmers in their unsunned brain; it piques the dealers in immortality. They truck and traffic and scheme for the great Holder of souls.

Now notice that if such congenital defects of structure can be so modified by human art that a Person

begins to emerge from the very abyss of annihilation, why cannot the worst defects of vice also escape that doom, and even be the reason why they escape — be a motive to keep them in continuance for treatment, just as we save the unfortunates from Spartan ruthlessness, and burden ourselves with their salvation? Has man become more merciful and long-suffering than God? Then is it merciful in you to suppose that God is deprived of his chance to imitate your actions and do something for his depraved and stunted souls? You cannot invent faster than Deity, nor outrun his resources; if you could, you would be infinite. But it is in you that the Creator has at length developed his purpose to civilize.

To civilize, but not to emasculate by depriving mankind of its passions; to ameliorate conditions, to increase the number of opportunities, but not to abolish the antithesis of evil. The universe in its oscillation between two extremes defines that reality which we call Life, and absolute good and absolute evil are extremes unknown. The earth tries to get away from the sun, the sun draws at the earth as if to gulp it at one swallow: the incessant contest describes that grand and virile movement of the earth in its orbit, and, as we go round with it, the same antithesis is carried round in us, never to be got rid of while life endures; for it is the very essence of manhood in time and eternity.

And this movement of swinging to and fro results in betterment, but can never swing far enough to reach a state which we conventionally call perfection; if it could, in that moment all motion would cease. It would be as if the sun conquered and drew back its whole solar system into itself to re-establish the original characterless fire-mist from which all things have been evolved. The finite idea of perfection is not the ultimate aim of the Creator; but movement, vitality, contest, swing of gigantic forces and passions to and fro through a whole gamut of chords resolving discords, and discords returning to renew the delight of solution,— that is the profession to which infinite energy has been apprenticed.

If the universe could ever be perfect, in our petty private sense of perfection, it would cease to exist in its active and harmonious condition. Do you remind me that Paul, after describing the millennial resurrection, says, "then cometh the end . . . . when Christ hath put all enemies under his feet — destroyed death, subdued all things? That hope is derived from the most limited and partial notion, that it would be a good thing to have evil absolutely wiped out of the universe. It would not be so bad as to have evil absolutely triumphant, but it would be bad. If we could live long enough to find and interview a soul who should correspond to our finite idea of saintship, we should discover that he was a most imperfect soul.

Look at the world, stare all the facts in the face — all of them which God has not explained away, then answer, is he preparing to entertain a multitude of so-called saints in a perpetual confectionery-shop? Then his robust and daring Heaven would be converted into a hospital; planets would limp on crutches, the morning-hymn of the sun would die away in a sick wail. When Shelley says, in the minor key,—

> "We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not;
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught;
> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought,"

he is presuming the major key in every word; we taste it as strongly as when he cries to the sky-lark, "Hail to thee, blithe spirit;" and the poet strikes the key of Deity when he says,—

> "Yet if we could scorn
> Hate, and pride, and fear;
> If we were things born
> Not to shed a tear,
> I know not how thy joy we ever should come near."

So through all the spheres of heaven the immortal antithesis shall resound, prophesied to us here by music as it climbs toward a solution, dissolves in it only to shower away from it into more mistiness, more questioning, more doubt, more discontent, more prophecy again. Jean Paul cried out, "Oh, music,

thou speakest to me of things which I have never seen and never shall see!"

When Socrates, who believed in personal continuance, thought it well to consider that if annihilation were possible it might still be a blessing, he said: "Who does not remember that of all the nights in which one went to sleep, the best nights have been those without a dream, without a motion of consciousness?" Yes, but those nights are our best ones because we wake up to remember them; they would have been our worst if no morning came to pry open our eyelids with its golden bar. Not a decent word can be said for annihilation; it has our scorn forever.

Goethe said that the thought of endless life was sometimes oppressive to him because there must be a period when further progress was impossible.

But he was reassured on this point when he looked up to the stars. The poet felt that in revealing such depths of space to him they hinted at intellectual distances which no soul could out-travel. In the same spirit Kant said, "Two things fill me with perpetual awe, the moral law and the starry heavens."

All the sects regard virtue to be of such urgency, not because it sustains personal vitality, but considerably because it secures salvation and delivers from everlasting misery. But the motive to be virtuous does not lie in that direction. Virtue is simply one of the factors of life and personal continuance, and

not necessarily the indispensable one. It ought to be, and no doubt is, as impossible for death to obliterate intellectual achievement as to obliterate virtue. The universe is sustained by intellectual integrity as well as by moral soundness. Indeed, till very lately in its history, intellect has predominated in every process. The results of a painstaking, faithful, organizing intellect, in all the provinces which it cultivates, ought to be as much respected by the Creator as the results of ethical ability. It is needless to point out how interlaced and involved with each other thought and goodness have now become; but the quantity of goodness varies among intellectual men, many of whom procure great reverence and admiration, justly founded on their transcendent merit, without satisfying the standard of the moralist. But it ought to be as wasteful in a divine Providence to withdraw that mental bulk from the general life as to stint its own thought and intellectual method. Personal continuance must be achieved by any faithful exercise which picks out mind from matter; for mind cannot be killed.

Nor is it probable that Deity will consult any of our theological preferences either in preserving spiritual life or maintaining its reasonable content. If an intellectual man develops a preference for pantheism or atheism, theology consigns him to the primitive treatment of a Hereafter, and is rather desirous that

he should survive death in order to confirm the scheme which men have chalked out for the guidance of God. Christians are shocked when the superbly trained and fertile mind of a Humboldt passes into eternity without having distinctly professed and worshipped a personal Creator. Their minds are given up to surmises concerning his prospect for the future; no sense of the surpassing service which he rendered to mankind by that wonderful acquisition, or of the integrity which applied it to our enlightenment, can soften the sentence which is put into the mouth of God. But it is very likely that the Kosmos has welcomed its favorite son and is entertaining him upon the choicest chances for observation and reflection, without any jealousy on the part of God, but rather with cordial consent to the joy of a man whose life was one unbroken worship of His works.

But life at present contains so many ordinary moments, and pesters us with such cares and vulgar circumstances, that it does not seem worth while to have it continued. Then, too, the earth passes year after year through a tract of the universe that swarms with prosaic concerns; its very spinning suggests to us that if souls do really leave bodies they must be whirled, like wreaths of fog and smoke, in its wake; left behind, like steam from an engine, to be blown about and dissipated. There seems no holding ground, no gathering point, for souls. Our

bodies keep them substantially placed; but when they are all fumed forth, where do the poor whiffs go to? This whole establishment of earth is pledged to make spiritual continuance appear visionary and fantastic. Daylight itself is our worst foe in this respect. It is only by an effort of the imagination that we appreciate what an ocean of light we are tossing in. Daylight itself obscures that fact. You and I do not actually see God's world by day: we have to wait till the night comes, that is to say, the moment when the earth, shading its eyes, looks aloft and sees where the whole of space is occupied by light—its waves roll everywhere; every instant night is swamped. That word *darkness* is our provincial term to denote the hour when the earth gets out of the glare to see the glory, as the light strikes, kindles spaces, rubs its match against the stars. Between them a waste of light rolls with our night-surprise; and the soul which has been humiliated all day long, barked at by dogs, cheated, taunted for its inability to get away from the pettiest cares, assured that it will turn to gas if it does try to escape, now sees every star placarded with invitation, profuse with inducements to emigrants, solid blazes on which a soul can step from earth and not be blown out by the way.

Yes—in our nights our powers of vision are at their best. Oh, my friend whose house has been darkened, look up and see how your ceiling is

studded. And why is your spirit so drawn toward one particular star? It is the dear soul whom you did not half see by your gossipy daylight, did only slovenly calculate the beauty of her orbit, did only dully feel her tender radiance. Now your eye is shaded, you see her. When customary daylight comes bustling in again, do not allow it to bluff you out of your sweet and solemn assurance. The night's assurance was your dear, particular star. The earth hurled her off with such sudden disdain that she kindled, and she sparkles back to earth a gay defiance. You, too, shall the earth toss off in one swift, contemptuous moment, to make you beam with the hurry of overtaking her in the drift of souls.

V.

THE IDEA OF HEREAFTER.

WHAT are the elements, the fallacies and the probabilities, which belong to our idea of a Hereafter?

When this earth was without form and void, a mere whiff of the gaseous element that stretched as yet uncurdled into planets, there could have been neither a present nor a future. We derive our notion of Time from an experience that events succeed each other, and our notion of Space from observing that all objects are not together in one spot, but next each other. But an infinite mind knows no succession of events nor of objects. Everything exists all at once, in one eternal moment, to a spirit who did not begin and who does not end. If He has no reason to say, *Here*, He has no need to say, *Hereafter*. The mind of man could not have derived these ideas from an infinite intelligence; they are, like recurring hunger and all the sensations which succeed each other, results of an existence in a body. If a universe be the Creator's body, to Him all things are all at once: all the nights and mornings, the springs and winters of all the solar systems are merged in a con-

sciousness that is incapable of the sentiment of division or succession. Those notions are purely human, and they began far back in the animal's experience of dawn and twilight, heat and cold, repletion and hunger. The stomach was the first time-piece, and no chronometer yet beats it for accuracy. So man goeth forth to his work and labors until the evening. But eternity dispenses with that little word *until,* because it is always a *now.*

If, then, the ideas of Time and Space are thoroughly human, so the idea of Place must be; and it arises from the experience that the body is not as big as the whole world which is outside of it. We say it must be in one place at a time. There may be many places, then. This earth is one place where we slowly learn how many other places there are. The idea of Place becomes joined to our idea of Time; so that when we say, *Hereafter,* we surmise that it must have a place; and the scenery of it depends upon our culture. To one man it is a hunting-ground, to another, a meadow sprinkled with amaranths where bravery reclines to recollect and celebrate itself; to another, it is a celestial tract swarming with souls that adore a throne; to another, it is a landscape of spiritual forms that correspond to those of earth. These ideas could not have been derived from an infinite intelligence, because the idea of Place could not have been derived thence. The Deity whose mode of

existence is in a oneness of one eternity knows nothing about places, and never has provided any. *We* provide places; they are niches hollowed out of that quarry of omnipresence.

The places we provide correspond to the extent of our knowledge. The human race began with providing one little piece of a place; it was this earth, which was supposed to be flat as a plate and furnished with a dish-cover of a sky fitting closely to its edges. When that dish-cover appeared to have motion, the possibilities of Place became inexhaustible, till we have succeeded, stage by stage, in setting up places through a sky that begins to be called fathomless in depth and opportunities.

So the places which belong to our idea of a Hereafter gradually came into a correspondence with our moral state. There was no Heaven, and no Hell, till man began to have a sense of justice. The universe must have been positively empty of them, and the Creator quite unconscious of any necessity of providing them; the elements which we classify into a Heaven and Hell exist in the undivided unity of the mind from which all facts and conditions flow: it is one incessant and homogeneous spiritual state. The whole of it cannot be what we call Good, simply because there is something which we call Bad. Where did it come from? We were not capable of creating it, any more than we were of deriving motion and pro-

creation. All that we can do is to make distinctions and invent names for elements which existed in the one Creator before we came, and would have existed there if we had never come at all. Else, they would not have been distinguished by us when we came. Was God won over to set up a Heaven when some men began to be good, and was he constrained to extemporize a Hell when other men began to be bad? For I set aside all such notions as a world of angels and a pre-existence of souls, because no knowledge yet provides us reasonable inferences in their favor. On the contrary, they grow more mythological every day. They become supplanted by the ideas of oneness, omnipresence, homogeneous eternity. You cannot interpolate Time into God's life. Nor can you thrust Place into it. He is all the room there is. There is not a spot left over for that Elsewhere which you call your Heaven or your Hell; there could have been no anticipation that such spots would be required. They are the conditions of your moral state, for which you invent the convenience of words, and pretend that the words are Places.

But it is plain that these moral conditions have crystallized into very distinct ideas: they may be found embedded in the human mind on every meridian of the globe; and wherever that mind travels those ideas accompany it, so that if we presume a Hereafter and a spiritual continuance of the human

person, it becomes a grave matter to reflect that such ideas may accomplish something that was not essential to the original plan of creation; they may, in fact, organize the world into spheres of life that correspond to their quality. For ideas not only rule but originate all worlds. They have the property of action. They instinctively decline to remain abstract and fruitless conceptions, and are chiefly recognized by the shapes and institutions which they frame; for they share the eagerness of the first creative word to gain expression. So far as the idea of a Hell is involved, it certainly is alarming to reflect how many generations of mankind, and myriads of individuals, all thoroughly impregnated with the theory or the practice that belongs to that idea, may have passed into a Hereafter to set up within it their favorite institution, and make a present of it to a reluctant eternity. We know to our cost that they can set it up here on this earth. Once there was no such condition, and no state corresponding to it was ever thought of. But mankind soon began to deposit the notion out of their struggle with their own primitive barbarism, so that by this time the Hereafter is colonized with a vast number of believers who have enjoyed a start of several thousand years over the disciples of scientific thinking, and the latter are scarcely yet beginning to die in sufficient numbers to check this mighty preconception. For although

barbarism has yielded to culture, that old barbaric notion has become automatic; so radically personal that death itself cannot be trusted to expunge it from the mind. Nay, death may be the fatal opportunity, the one incentive too strong for the old savagism which has been parading here veneered with culture, but hiding a scalping knife behind it, and ready to appal heaven with its war-whoop. These believers are in such a considerable majority that they have only to conspire in order to make a hell of heaven. Perhaps this occurrence has already taken place, if the Hereafter is organized by universal suffrage. There is a faint hope that as every believer in this savage doctrine has one or more persons dear to him by blood and earthly affection, this tendency to recur to a primitive ferocity may be constantly held in check by relationships too fine for that fierce sport. But if all that is wanted to make a thing is an idea, the heretics of science and religion who are to-day under the ban of the majority, may expect to taste its bane. But since heresy is continually changing as time evolves its everlasting truths, these sad believers will find it difficult to keep up with modern discriminations, and adapt their penalties to the thronging crowds of witnesses for God. Perhaps the tables will eventually be turned, and the disbelievers in a Hereafter for the purposes of a Hell may become the majority. Let us anticipate the exquisite revenge

of establishing a Heaven, to consign those old believers to it.

Seriously, we cannot refuse to notice how thoroughly this idea of Hereafter has taken possession of the human consciousness. We may pretend that it is nothing but a word, one which expresses the drift of human characters towards their own bliss or woe, and that it implies a future merely as all our present acts and thoughts imply their rational consequences. We may show to the satisfaction of the intellect that there can be neither Time, Space nor Place in the infinite existence. But we are finite, and have had our beginnings, and one of our earliest feelings is that we ought to distinguish ourselves from the Infinite by those ideas of Time and Place which rule our life. Our present spiritual conditions correspond to these local ideas, and are so interwoven with our mental structure that they must go with us to the grave; and they ought to create a Hereafter at the very edge of it, we think, if there be not one that will be discovered joining to that edge and stretching from it. We cannot underrate nor deny the elements which have nourished the ruling ideas of our personal consciousness. Let us see what have been the feelings which culminate into this idea of a personal continuance that may occupy a Hereafter.

At the root of them all lies a human sense of justice. Conscience combines with an intellectual

feeling for propriety and rational arrangement, to provide the world with justice. The long immunity of great offenders is painful to the moral sense. As a colony of monkeys will grimace and chatter at us from the top of a cocoanut tree, and pelt us with the nuts in their malice, so great criminals toss us disdainfully the ripened juice and meat of our hope that somewhere, at some time, justice will not put up with their outrages. When the jury disagrees in the great cases of murder and embezzlement, we instinctively regret it, though we might be glad if a jury disagreed in our own case; and if a deliberate villain finally breaks through the meshes of public opinion and the law, we deem it no cruelty, but an honor to the moral sense, to let loose upon his track some greater Power. We do not take time to trace, as that Power will, the remote and subtle causes of the villain nature, its fateful dependence upon inheritance and circumstances; our sense of justice has not yet admitted a cool and impartial observation into partnership with it. But we are pained to see crime prosper, goodness and simplicity fleeced and outraged, and the safeguards of society set at naught by this bland, triumphing offender; and we cannot account for possessing a sense of justice without indulging a desire to have injustice ruined. If not here, then elsewhere; but it must be done.

The long, unmerited misfortunes of some men and

women fill history with its most pathetic spectacles, and as we observe them our resentment struggles with our pity to occupy the heart. In fact, our intellectual integrity is violated quite as much as the fidelity of our conscience. Our own vices are always within the call of memory; so that we are ashamed to be more contented and prosperous than these noble victims of guilt or of misfortune. How gladly we would compensate them, if we could. It is the first generous emotion of the heart to imagine the succor which we would have rushed to carry, or the after-balm that we would have mingled with our tears. But shall mortal man be more just than God? The thought is heavenly to us, even if there be no heaven to correspond, because it is a belief in justice.

The unjustifiable advantages which the bad take over the good, the long and prosperous secrecy of many vile courses and actions, and the permanent concealment of some of them in a grave which cannot blab, while others no worse are dragged out of their burrow and set loose to run the gauntlet of popular contempt; that contempt itself, which may be a hateful mimicry of virtue's aspect, and an offence to God instead of a scourge in his hand,—these things find conscience enough alive in man to detest them and to demand some executioner; not because we love to punish, but because we cannot bear to have our ideals trampled in the dust and a

gag applied to our sincere cry for impartial justice. But just as we are feeling so, a voice rebukes us: "Who art thou that judgest?" "Very true," we answer, "let God be judge. But for the present he seems to decline the function. What! Is there to be an eternal skulking in this universe? We will wait and see." Thus the idea of Hereafter draws the sap of human justice, and blossoms with its schemes of retribution.

What is the origin of our sense of justice? Shall we suppose for a moment the modern theory that the moral sense was not an original endowment of the mind, but has been slowly constructed, through many thousands of years, by human experiences of the actions which are useful or hurtful to individuals and society? Suppose, then, that we have no moral sense to-day except this result that is transmitted by procreation, a consciousness that some things are useful and prudent and secure approval, and other things do not. If such a consciousness as this ever began to appear in mankind it must have been content with the moment; it could not have forereached and anticipated, until men began to experience that their actions had results of good or ill to their well-being. Then they could have merely welcomed or dreaded what a terrestrial future would bring forth. When a dog has transgressed, his master can observe that he dreads discovery because he is conscious of its results.

He dreads the near future of his dog life, but we cannot imagine that he constructs out of this dread a notion of a disembodied future of dogdom, when all canine offences must be expiated. He has merely learned what actions help and hurt him in the present. Now if our moral sense is only an evolution of such experiences of utility and social approbation, how does it happen that mankind has dreaded a future life? It has drawn no experiences from having lived in that "undiscovered country." A sense which has been derived from experimental observation must preserve its experimental quality; if it happens not to suffer for any transgression of its average sense of right, it will consider, as the dog does, that it has escaped, and will not expect to suffer for it in a Hereafter. Its present life furnishes it with no materials for constructing such a dread. Yet the conscience that makes cowards of us all has instinctively presupposed a future, in all ages, among the most advanced and cultivated men no less than among the rank and file of unreflecting people. What is the origin of this expectation of some future adjustment of our behaviour by some absolute law of right? At what point in the whole process of evolution could experimental observation of the results of certain acts have begun to display this forereaching sense? Was it merely in the observation that the guilty rarely escaped; that every epoch protected itself by

detecting wrong-doers; so that if they went scot-free for many years they might expect to be hauled up at last, to discover then that this anxious expectation of judgment involved their personal continuance? This could hardly be; because if society at every period be the rule and arbiter of the moral sense, if its consciousness be only the silt deposited by previous societies, nothing but society could be imagined as capable of judging and punishing. The parent of the moral sense would be its own bugbear: the dread would be local and finite, incapable of making drafts upon a futurity. Thus it seems to me that experiences of the useful and the agreeable could never have conceived the idea of future retribution.

Moreover, it was always noticed that the good frequently die unrecompensed, and shamefully treated. It naturally occurred to the mind that there was something wrong in this. At any epoch, people wish to be as well treated as their moral sense deserves, whatever may have been its origin. We are by nature keen to discern the social inequalities of treatment. Do you say that this furnishes material to build a Hereafter for the business of rectification? I reply that experimental society can build only itself. The society which recompenses, whether justly or unjustly, even if it could conceive of a Hereafter, could only conceive of it as containing another society like itself. The most miserably imposed upon

people, if they went into a Hereafter, would expect to be imposed upon again, because their minds would carry over nothing but conceptions drawn from a society that had learned to live from hand to mouth, ruled by the ideal of the moment's exigency. Injustices would forever be accepted as the incidents, however disagreeable, of a society thus formed; just as they are now accepted in the forest, the water, and the air, from the natural tyrants of those elements. They would be resented, no doubt, for they involve every kind of perceptive pain and deficiency; so any part of the body resents a prick. But there could not have been developed at any epoch, and inherited by another, an abstract sense of overruling justice, to be superior to phenomena by its own subjectivity, to demand a better distribution of rewards and punishments, and, if this could not be had here, then demand a place where it could be had.

How, for instance, could the eastern doctrine of metempsychosis have sprung up? That transferring of human beings, after death, through successive animal forms was an ideal construction of a limbo for the vicious, whether they had been punished in their first state or not. Why should they be disposed of by such a contrivance if their demerits were simply endemic to their first state, simply the results of a disagreement with the average order, simply objects for discipline by a society which had nothing but a physical and experimental origin?

The idea of metempsychosis may have been generated to account for the existence of different animals, and of their traits which correspond so remarkably to human animalities. But this does not explain whence the first surmise or mental hint came to make stages of Hereafter necessary, that a human soul might thus travel towards its purification. Nothing that is evolved altogether from animalism could have conceived the duration that is essential for a return to it.

Is the dread of a Hereafter which makes a coward of conscience an illusion, a groundless efflorescence from an observation of the retributions of the present? If it be the result of a moral sense which transcends a physical origin, what is that transcending, whence is it, when did it set in, what is its competency to justify this dread of punishment and this expectation of readjustment?

We want a conscience, but we want it without this craven check that is attached to it, this dread of being eventually overhauled. Dread inspires no virtue. It cannot, then, be an essential constituent of a conscience that came down into us by some other route than animalism. The dread got into us from the cowering habit of animals. If the Absolute Right gets into our structure by the door of a spiritual quality, it cannot bring with it an appeal to a motive which is different from its own essence. If God be

righteous on a system of bribery and threat, then conscience may be. But such a conscience is nothing but society organizing a constable. It will "fear each bush an officer," and if it be capable of conceiving a Hereafter, it will do it on purpose to keep itself infested with this fear, or to put in its claim for damages, hoping to have them paid in bliss.

Such a Hereafter is only metempsychosis floated off and saved upon the raft of a Beyond; the animal shapes become personal consequences, but quite as logical. For what is the consequence of our moral state but the condition of it?

If conscience have a purely physical and social origin, it is illogical when it conceives of a Hereafter. But if it have a spiritual origin, it is self-contradictory if it appeals to physical and selfish motives.

We freely confess that a very large per cent. of the average moral sense has been made up empirically, and consists only in sensations of safety and utility. In essence it is little more than absence of evil opportunity. A great fire, an eruption, an earthquake, any confusion which temporarily distracts the eyes of society, will disclose that the only conscience in many people is merely a state of being repressed. In fact, we cannot calculate in any case what will be the results of favoring conjunctures, presence of opportunity, reasonable chances for concealment. No doubt, the empiricists show fairly how a great deal

of so-called conscience has been generated. But their method, if it will account for the average, and for those disclosures which at times sink men below it, does not yet account for the heroic facts which raise men above it.

What a reversion to the animal is the thievery that breaks out during and after a great fire, or calamitous earthquake. Vesuvius compels the inhabitants of Torre del Greco and the other villages to abandon their houses and fly for their lives to the open country, where they are shelterless and foodless. While a government that is made more responsible by feeling that the eyes of the world are upon it, is hastening to aid the sufferers, bands of pillagers, who are decent men in ordinary times, take possession of the houses and sack them. There is an eruption of something worse than lava. To say that it is a reversion to the animal insults the animal; for even the dog watches over the pile of deserted goods, and is found starving after it has licked dry the wounds of its master. No animal is intelligent enough to contrive and conceal a system of maurauding in times of confusion. It takes a man to be a beast.

Now suppose that the fear of a Hell should repress such people, and keep them unsuspected during a lifetime, so that they die as decent as the average of men. What will be the result if the act of dying leads to the discovery by them that there is no Hell?

Remove the fear and the decency would vanish. Of what value, then, is the fear, either as a constructing element of conscience, or as a developing element of virtue? The other life would be forced to reorganize the repressive system of a society that is founded upon nothing higher than utility and pleasure. How could it do so if it could not appeal to some still prospective Hell?

What will be the moral effect upon a villainous nature if the act of dying should lead to the discovery that there is a Hell? Every attempt to answer that question betrays the weakness of the popular idea that a sense of justice ought to be content with retribution. The theological Hell is nothing but a system of detection and punishment of the criminal whom this life could not reach; he must be made to smart enough to satisfy the divine honor. But the highest feeling of justice requires that a defective person should be repaired as well as punished. When our ideal of integrity is outraged, the mind clamors for arrest and judgment; but some secret advocacy astonishes the court with the demand that the criminal has a right to our own ideal, and must be treated with a view to its ultimate attainment. There is no place in any theological scheme of retribution for this faith of virtue in itself, this noble discontent with a superiority that is not shared by all. If this

be perfect justice, no man need dread to commit himself to a Hereafter.

But there is, beneath all the schemes which pretend to organize future conditions for mankind, an instinct of forereaching towards a Hereafter of some fashion, which we cannot explain away. It is much easier to explain what defect it is in some of the noblest minds that makes them weak in this anticipation, and what disgust, bred of false religion, it is in some of the acutest minds that influences them to deny it altogether. Moral greatness cannot depend upon it for a motive, since good morals have the finer stimulus of an innate superiority which is its own law, self-contained and self-sufficient. Fine behavior derives no more impulsion from surmises about some future than fine imagination does. When you say, one man is good, one man is a poet, all is said of those two. Their structure is the only motive they are conscious of obeying. You need not depend upon the conception of a future, or claim one at the call of any instinct, when your excellence makes great futures for you out of every to-morrow, and offers to God the highest motive he can have to make the series perpetual.

Let us reject all the human interpretations of this tendency to suppose a future life. Do not try to organize it for pain or bliss. Do not fresco our ceilings with its imagined scenery; it only draws upward

our eyes to discover gaudy colors on a surface of flatness. The closeness of such particulars is stifling to the soul who prefers the impossibility of grasping one of the midnight stars, who shuns even their far-travelled hints, and plunges from their silvery coasts into those wells of blackness where not one planet roves to measure the depth of Eternity. When you bring me reports from a Hereafter I begin to lose my faith in it. It is like a great man whom I dread to know too intimately. But let the genius be for me an impalpable, pervasive atmosphere, which it is the instinct of my lungs to breathe.

The colors of the solar spectrum are not the only ones in existence. Beyond one end of it the vibrations of light deepen, and beyond the other end they rise, into shades which baffle the present capacity of vision. So beyond the lowest bass note, and the sharpest treble, which can make the ear attentive, vibrations sink to unfathomable tones and rise to inappreciable swiftness. I cannot see and hear these extensions of the law of vibrations. Why should I care to, when I know that they exist? You cannot make that one whit more palpable to me by assuming to furnish evidence of it, by whatsoever diagrams or artifice. Nay, I suspect that all our eyes and ears are constructed on the same limits to visibility and audibility. But when the orchestra fills to its mortal capacity of harmony, the pith of it to me is that it

prophecies depths beyond the beat of its most solemn string, and heights above the note that soars to the top of my ear's firmament. My soul's tide rolls upon both coasts with this property of the music's meaning. My delight is edged with a penumbra of dissatisfaction because I cannot yet flood the unknown continent. The pang is sometimes so sharp when the rapture falls short for me that I am admonished to subside, and wait till my structure can widen that prophetic pain into content. But do not poultice me with the pretence of ready relief to my ear. I prefer to have it ache for the sounds which cannot enter.

Is it audacious in any man to assume that he shares so strong a sentiment of continuous personality, of an indivisible totality of gifts, or a unifying volition, that he cannot easily tolerate the idea of extinction? The crowning moments of intellect and emotion impart a taste of permanence. As soon might the earth vanish beneath our feet as the sense of our solidarity and unity of power exhale, which we possess when the soul helps Deity to develop truth, and Humanity to thrill with love. These moments subside, but they deposit something indestructible. Are they not the freshets from some remote table-land of fountains which no Livingstone can reach?

I dread to have a doctrine about this yearning, and to harness it into my selfish hopes to make it draw my egotism; but am I the victim of an illusion when

the earth's horizon is too petty, the sky too stifling near, the stars too crowding?—when nothing short of a life-share in a universe, and a life commensurate with the feeling of a universe, will satisfy deliberate contemplation? It seems to be a mode of motion, inextricably implicated with the other modes of the universe, consciously to share its perpetuity.

How can you explain to me that we are capable of pondering thus about this theme? What is the genesis of all these phrases that wrestle with our instinct? How have we acquired the surmise itself of a Hereafter, and become so acutely perplexed with the physical difficulties which surround this problem? It must be the nature of an animal to have no such long-winded forereaching which sharpens curiosity, and baffles it;—favors personal contempt for death, but makes us detest the notion of extinction.

This piece of furniture cannot dread extinction; that animal's brain-cells cannot invent these suspicions and then obliterate them with the passing thrills of thought and love. This earth rolls without ambition on the path staked out for it, but as our little bodies roll with it, kneaded together out of its phosphates and juices, something inside of them escapes from gravitation and refuses the most comfortable grave. When it comes to covering this Something up, the whole of the earth is a poor shovelful, because our diameter is all we think and feel.

Explain to me this something which overcomes my poverty of speech, as I attempt to cope with the immeasureable greatness of being all alive.

Then, too, there come to us the tender and overpowering moments when we can no longer put up with being separated from beloved objects, who tore at the grain of our life when they went away elsewhere with portions of it clinging to them. We must have them again. Shall life be stabbed, and no justice compensate these sickening drippings of the soul in her secret faintness? The old, familiar faces have registered in our hearts a contempt for graves and burials. Not so cheaply can we be taken in, when the lost life lies quick in memory still, and cries against the insults which mortality wreaks on love.

What is this intrusion of the earth's routine which comes between our yearning and those faces which we can all but see outlined upon the Infinite? The sky stares down blank and unrecognizing. It is a shallow sky, not deep enough for hearts to swim in. Some relic long ago put away in sacred effusion of tears, some reminiscence of an old life-interest in one who clung to us, heaves the chest with a longing which breaks this paltry shell of a firmament all to pieces, and we rush through into our fresh demand upon the Divine order to justify itself to us in this respect. So audaciously can we use language to be

a mask for perfect reverence, as we blush with the recognition of Heaven's eventual justice.

How individual life does convince us of its permanence! It restores the tone of the spirit after it has caught an indigestion with banqueting upon the pomp of epochs. History keeps using up so many men in the same old fashion; to-day's emotion has broken and complained upon so many shores. There is not a tenderness now credited to the human heart which did not tire the world's ear before the pyramids were built, before ever a pile-driver lost his celt in the lake, before a single race had dug caves against the sun. And the more splendid any period makes itself with great truths and interests, the more ruthlessly it seems to devour its offspring.

Then how dear becomes the reality and egotism of a private life. I cling to the breast of Everlasting Law, and when I drop off to balmy, sated sleep, I know that I have drunk what fills my veins with a necessity for living.

This reassures us; so that the next time when History's awful consumption of human nature overwhelms our sense of individuality, it rises again in the very epoch which has humbled us, and makes us say what poor David Gray, the Scotch poet, dying of consumption in a London garret, his whole life expended in nourishing his hopelessness, said: "God has Love, and I have faith."

Yes, that faith must be accounted for to me. Life and Feeling may be lavished to build an epoch, gone like cement to its cells: great impulses may harden into crust. But my instinct that I am a sharer of the permanence of law is an element of that permanence. It is an instinct that drops clear through while we are digging the graves of our kindred. Thinking that we strike the "hard pan," suddenly it falls clear through. The spot we selected is bottomless. Hold on to the edge, clutch it quick, or we shall follow that dear soul down the well of light. There it goes—but see—it falls softly,—what warm bosom was that which broke the fall?

It is exactly as if life had become a dire stress for us, so that we swallow our pride, stifle fond associations, and put our jewels in pawn. The rest of life is a struggle for the ability to redeem them. Are there no effects? Is the universe gone into insolvency? Are these old beauties of our love really extinct? Then let us become so too, and let the Annihilation begin, the sooner the better, at the blood-fount and the tear-spring.

But our horrible suspecting refutes its own terror. For man is the animal who is competent to suspect a dire and fatal thing. Notice the point that if the suspicion were well founded it could not have been entertained. It owes itself to our ability to surmise the transcending fact that is going to contradict it.

This suspicion that we may be all extinguished is irony: it means to be taken in the sense that is most opposite. When the truths we have worshipped and the beauties we have loved become involved, suspicion is their rescuer. As when a secret friend, whose lover is made captive to some threat of being slain, comes pretending, with fierce mien and bluster, to be in the slayer's interest, and eager to advance it; so gets the lover delivered up to his ferocious feigning, then bids him flee and live.

VI.

TRAGEDY IN NATURE.

THE passions which supply the elements of tragic life were involved in the physical and moral evils of the world's earliest ages, and came down directly into the lineage of mankind. Their roots are deeply imbedded in the earth and spread through all its strata. They grew up into the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of which if a man eat he shall nourish smiles and tears. Nature never valued life in itself, but only the best life, and her measures to save and propagate that have been of the sternest kind. With this object in view she invented the process called death. As her creatures increased in sensitiveness, so did hardship, privation and suffering correspond. No curious structure, no useful function, no innocent life has been respected by her and favored with immunity. The strongest, and not the weakest, have been petted by her relentless forces. Her motto, over the entrance to every period, might be, "In the midst of Death I am in Life."

Let us observe this natural anticipation of the tragic element, in the far distant past, and gather a few of the omens.

Nature manifested no sympathy towards animals in pre-historic times ; and she still preserves the same indifferent temper of her old devices. An animal that has become decrepit is left without help or sympathy to die slowly by starvation. A sick animal is set upon by the sturdier members of the pack and converted into a meal. Sustenance is dependent upon incessant stratagem, which is not confined to animated creatures, but was curiously prefigured in the habits of some plants. This will be best shown by instances.

The wiliness of plants is particularly hostile to the insect world, yet no little people in the world are more deserving of consideration. If the insects could hold an industrial exhibition, what astonishing products might they contribute. The little rose-leaf cutter pursues her work with the nicest mathematical art. One species of bee is an upholsterer, and lines his nest with the splendid scarlet poppy petals ; and it is noticeable that insects always work with more neatness and finish than is absolutely necessary for comfort. Wasps were the earliest paper-makers. There is a fly that uses a saw, and a species of American ant that puts together a raft for the crossing of streams, and a caterpillar that is a tent-maker. In Texas there is an agricultural ant, that clears a space in front of its nest, keeps it weeded, allowing only one kind of grass with small grains to grow ; these

it harvests, and lays up, preserving enough to sow in its little patch the next spring. This wonderful instinct has actually been watched and confirmed. In short, insects bore, do mason work, dig mines, cut, saw, make traps, raise crops, spin, make paper, silk, honey, and wax, and perform carpenter's work. Such endowment of talent and patience ought to be favored with immunity from bad designs. But Nature contrives plants on purpose to circumvent these working-people.

There are several species of the pitcher-plant which feed upon insects. For this purpose they are constructed with a diabolical ability which man poorly competes with in the making of traps to catch vermin. A general description of the pitcher-plant includes an elongated, conical, erect leaf which serves the purpose of a tube. At the base of this tube a watery fluid is secreted, which kills every insect falling into it; and the whole inner surface is covered with minute prickles, perfectly smooth and pointing downward, so that an insect cannot possibly reascend. Now the insect must be toled along and persuaded to go down the tube. For this purpose the tube has "a band a half inch in width, dotted with a sweet secretion for which insects have a pugging tooth." It also extends downward over the edge to the very ground, thus alluring many creeping insects, and especially ants, to the more dangerous feeding-ground above.

The tragedies of toil begin early in the history of the world.

The Darlingtonia of Northern California has a leaf which is sometimes two feet long. Says Professor Gunning, "It folds in, and its edges coalesce so that the lower part is a funnel; but the upper portion is metamorphosed into a dome, with a small circular opening below, from the margin of which spread two flaring, purple-colored leaves. Just within the margin of the aperture is secreted a sweetish fluid, and the membrane of the leaf above, at the very top of the dome, is thin, diaphanous and bright. Here is your patent fly-trap. The flaring, colored leaves are a lure. The fly is attracted, comes, lights, and finds a sweet repast. Looking up from the repast he sees skylight above. He ascends, dashes against the leaf-membrane," and soon finds himself below in a liquid which chloroforms and kills him.

The bladderwort, which grows in shallow ponds and swamps, receives its name from little bladders which are scattered numerously along the stems; and their use has hitherto been supposed to be to keep the plants afloat. But we are indebted to a lady for a series of minute and patient observations of this plant under the microscope, by which we learn that the bladder is a trap for catching and digesting larvæ, animalcules and entomostraca. She has traced the macerated food into the channels of the

plant, and describes the fright of the little creatures when they find themselves imprisoned by the tunnel-like trap, and the desperate efforts which they vainly make to escape, continuing sometimes for thirty hours before they are dead. The interior of the bladder appears to have the property of slowly paralyzing its prisoner; but what attracts it to the trap has not yet been ascertained. Probably it is a little whirlpool made by the antennæ which fringe the mouth of the net; a carnivorous device analogous to that of the *formica leo*, which scoops a tunnel in the loose sand and lies in wait at the bottom of it for insects that trip over the edge and are carried down by little avalanches.

The milk-weed family causes death to some insects by mechanical action. The proboscis is caught and held until the insect dies. This is sheer wantonness in the plant that is so kindly named, for the insects thus killed are of no benefit to it.

Poison serpents have a narrow canal in the two long teeth of the upper jaw, and a poison-gland at their root, which the teeth compress like a sponge at the moment of biting. This arrangement was anticipated in certain plants whose milky sap is poisonous; they emit it in the same way, from the bristles of their leaves, as, for instance, the nettle. In the temperate zone the nettle is not dangerous, but on the equator it is deadly, just where the ser-

pents become so in a striking way. The latent connection here is very plain.

The spider spins a web and calls it a parlor, into which he invites the rustic fly. The lines of his work are so symmetrical, and the way he puts up with the exigencies of the corner which he chooses is so nice, that we admiringly forget his carnivorous motive, and have been known to toss flies into the net in order to watch the alacrity of the concealed murderer, who drags the victim into his den with the air of a panther. Fancy the shock to the nervous system of the sportive fly, unless he is benumbed and mesmerized, as Livingstone declares that he was, and quite ready to be eaten, when the lion leaped upon him. The spider has the merit of an architect, and actually spins himself into a structure that is objective—outside of himself. Here is a process that, in its anticipation of human ingenuity, might charge the blame to consciousness and exonerate Nature. But in the unconscious plant we see that Nature does not care to be exonerated. The flesh-eating plant is one of her long-headed contrivances; the deliberation resides in the creative power which takes the responsibility of destroying innocent life.

In all the species of animated life, the condition of existence is that a regular proportion of individuals shall be destroyed. Strength and capacity decide

which shall go under and which shall survive. Nature has the temper which she lent to the Spartans who killed off all the deformed and weakly children in order to secure symmetry and national superiority.

Think of the countless slow deaths which the numberless tribes of parasites extort from the bodies on which they feed. Think of the thousand forms of creeping, walking, springing and flying life that are blotted out when lightning sets a dry forest or a prairie in a blaze.

A West Indian lady told a famous naturalist that she was sitting once at the window of her house, and noticed in a neighboring grove a crowd of little black birds which had never been there before. She asked her maid what they were. The maid looked, set up a cry of joy, ran out of the room, and put all the other servants into a state of rapture. The lady was informed at length that the birds were the heralds of the travelling ants which would arrive in a few hours to clear the house of vermin. In fact they came; so the ants ate vermin and the birds ate ants.

Nature's plan is on a greater scale, but founded on a similar want of principle. Existence is maintained by the digestibility of all her creatures. The spider sups upon his fly, the toad snaps up the spider, the snake is swallowing the toad when the hawk descends upon him, and man is lying in wait for the hawk, other men lie in wait for the man, and death devours the whole. It is a continuity of destruction.

It is by no means in a spirit of paradox, or by way of metaphor, that we attribute to Nature a want of principle. This want may be found as well where moral consciousness exists as where it does not exist to create moral responsibility. Many stages of natural development have been equally destitute of principle and of responsibility. The animate world of creatures does not manifest either of these until an advanced state of human consciousness is reached. The insect, the bird, the brute, the primeval man, the contemporary barbarian, was, and still is, devoid of principle. For average moral principles are the fruits of an exceedingly protracted evolution of social consciousness. They are resultants of antagonistic forces and interests; compromises they are, which make possible the existence of a tribe and a nation, hold a family together, act upon selfishness to arrest its retrograde tendency toward the original confusion out of which the social system has emerged. Some men exist to-day whose personal responsibility for their want of principle is so low that we perceive the two deficiencies to be strictly correlated, and to represent a human condition that was once well nigh universal. Bitter experiences of personal inconvenience and injury led to some mutual rules for the protection of life and comfort. These have at length furnished to Nature some principles which none of her original procedures manifested. How valuable,

then, was the contribution of physical ills, collisions, bestialities, to the dawning consciousness of man!

An attempt is sometimes made to break the force of the eternal facts which charge Nature with the invention of pain and the suggestion of cruelty, by supposing that the lower animals have blunter nerves and suffer little or nothing in these catastrophes of their career. There is doubtless a rising scale of physical sensibility along the creatures which develop the rudiments of our own complex nervous system; but there still exists a nerve at every point of the scale, and a sensitiveness exactly proportioned to the amount of being which that nerve resides in. Obscure movements of disquiet may be observed even among some plants. Shakspeare was strictly scientific when he said,

> "The poor beetle that we tread upon,
> In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
> As when a giant dies."

That is, not a gigantic pang, but one as great to the beetle's consciousness as the giant's is to his own. Of course, the tragedy of pain and death has been long in climbing upward into the soul of man by those slender rope-ladders of the nerves. Nature began to weave them long ago, intending to reach mankind at last: she used no fiber so slight that it would not shrink from a rude touch; for her object was to fund and accumulate a capacity for pain. All her crea-

tures have simply transmitted it to man. He alone can utilize this pain and turn it to immortal profit. No murderer is this, who has climbed to our casement and interrupts repose: let us say rather, a divine lover keeping his appointment.

Many animals can manifest a touching quality of patience under the infliction of pain. The self-control of a dog that has been injured, while his hurt is slowly repairing, reminds us of the uncomplaining expression which we find in hospitals and private rooms of sickness. It reaches into the composure of wounded men who insist that a comrade shall have the surgeon first, and decline the only cup of water in his favor. The cries of the wounded sound well in the highly wrought descriptions of a fight, but we are told that no stillness in the world is so impressive as that of a field over which the battle-thunder has rolled away, leaving blasted forms of men in every conceivable attitude of suffering; as if the infliction, so terrible and sudden, made even Nature hold her breath.

The high estimate which mankind puts upon its capacity for turning its griefs into noble advantages of the soul is shown in the fact that it has invented tragedy to tell and set them forth; the human race is invited to see it through refining and refreshing tears. We sorrow, not as men without hope. We know that Hamlet has reached "something after

death — the undiscovered country" where virtue serves him better in the future conflicts of the soul. He will not decline the conflict. We, at least, seeing him enmeshed by the fatality of his own disposition and slowly put to death, feel, as we go home, as if we followed him, lifted up, better nerved to bear

> "the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despis'd love."

And when Cordelia's voice, that was ever soft, gentle and low, lies still in the arms of a breaking heart, we improve the tragedy, not as the playwright did who kept Cordelia living and restored Lear to his throne, but by preferring that he should die to remount the throne of reason and she to minister around it again in the unobtrusiveness of her love. We, at least, if we do not thus order up the curtain of death to contemplate another scene beyond, return to a home, as a princely heir reaches his accession after exile and misfortune, ennobled against blindness of temper and disdain of love; for "that way madness lies."

So heaven help us, that is powerless to prevent fate from rushing with bloody sword into our seat of life; that prefers, indeed, to let fate drive the problems of our dispositions to their piteous conclusions; heaven, that would not lift a finger to abate the wild weather of that night of Lear.

"O heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down and take my part."

No answer; blank, pitiless silence, save when

"Such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain,"

gave to this prayer the only echo that the vault above would throw. But the thunder clears our atmosphere, the blinding tear becomes a lens that magnifies love to the soul; it is good to be out upon the heath with Lear; we enjoy such nights as these. "Here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools."

"Yet poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain."

Nature's plan does not drift principally toward pity; all her accumulated circumstances would defeat such an intention as that, while they furnish to man something superior to pity. Her weather is the bath that tempers steel, her gale the ventilation of a tainted mansion, her strokes the parents of the immortal spark, enforced from the anvil of a soul.

If the sentiment of pity had been involved among the forces which elaborate a world, it would have thwarted history's most instructive periods. How frequently the pages which dissolve the soul in tender regretfulness are those which recast it in a firmer and more lucid shape, by the use of this occasion of our melting mood. When, for example, innocence is

overtaken by the fatality of politics, having heard too late the call of furious galloping to clear the way, it is overtaken and sacrificed; but in that moment it imparts a new quality to the politics as they drift through human minds, and insensibly modifies them into a better epoch. To secure this desirable result, Nature anticipated the need of Cromwells, Robespierres, Napoleons, who select their agents with a special eye to absence of sentiment, and whose awful lessons bite instructive features with their acid on the mind. Apparently the outlines become worn, and have to be from time to time renewed; to which end a supply of unfortunate innocence, of bungling honesty, of premature honesty, is always kept on hand. Nature contributes innocence to human life without particular respect. Raphael could compose a picture of St. Marguerite, to show how she stepped safely, with no weapon but a lily, through the serrated jaws of a dragon. But the pure souls who attempt to cross the place where hatred lies in wait for their blood, have no such lucky transit.

The heart has always taken a great fancy to the text, "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame—he remembereth that we are dust." Is there any encouragement or solace in attributing an abstract quality of pity to overruling powers which do not grant to man concrete and impartial applications

of it? Man has learned by bitter experience that when the pinch comes and he is not practically pitied, the tender text belies its pretension. It is only a human desire that is considerate enough to impute itself to an immutable Being. The mutilated corpses of all the ancient periods that were overtaken by flood, fire and earthquake, when uncovered by us, tell the same unvarnished tale of love of life and surety of death, of functions invented to suffer and be extinguished. So the explorers of Pompeii read the horrors of a single night in the distorted and agonized expression of the man who had crumbled away leaving a cast of his latest moment in the lava. No process, accident, circumstance, is ever held at bay by any consideration of tenderness, or deference for the wishes of the individuals who are personally interested and have to bear the brunt. If large provinces of Persia and India have been overlooked in the distribution of rain to the growing crop, or if a potato-bug evades providence and eats away a nation's esculent before it can reach the mouths which need it, there is no interference with the natural result; men and women are held as cheap for rotting as the food is which might have kept them sound. Is there in any region of this dumb universe some invisible pity at these spectacles of human woe? If there be, it is confined to the bosom of an immutable Power, and does not inspire there any inter-

ference to reverse the processes of Nature. Sympathy is man's own discovery. It was made after countless savage experiences of the advantages of mutual aid in bearing the ills of life. But Nature is older than mankind, and yet so well preserved that she retains the advantage that was gained during the lapse of enormous epochs of time. So that man's feeling as a victim is larger than his ability to neutralize the tragic effects of famine, earthquake, plague and storm.

Moral evil was sure to be the result of creativeness that admitted physical evil into its drift. An intelligent Creator must have foreseen that if the survival of the fittest depended upon the demise of the unfit, the farther the method developed the more numerous would the circumstances of misery become, till at last they would pass into the structure of mankind, and operate within the limits of a more complicated life. There they would occasion the earliest impulses toward treachery, cunning, violence, and oppression, that emerged upon this planet. The exigencies would correspond to the wants of the human organization, and so would the crimes and tragedies. There would be a struggle for food as there had always been before, the stronger men would employ strength, and the wilier men would exercise art, to obtain the means of subsistence. And how many other interests have turned upon this question of subsistence. The suc-

cessful procreation of the race depended upon it; the chary comfort and the bleak smile of the first days of the human family passed into the blood and mounted to the cheek from satisfied stomachs. Leave the stomach empty too long, even in this advanced state of Christian civilization, and virtue hand in hand with amusement vanishes, not like Astræa, returning to the skies, but sinking deeper earthward, in its descent toward barbarism, retracing rapidly for our inspection the paths by which it came here. These possibilities of modern times are instructive by showing in the retrograde order the method of advance. It was not the Fall of Man but the Rise of Man that brought Sin into the world.

Many other things depended upon a supply of food. If a man were certain to starve, shelter and warmth were of no importance to him; but the well-fed people must contrive some immunity against the weather. There must have been skirmishing for places of safety, lively tactics to secure the most eligible caves and the leafy lodgments in the forks of branches.

Then the relation of the sexes had to be slowly adjusted, through various forms of connection, attended with bloodshed, capture, fraud, and every kind of oppressiveness, all made necessary by Nature's preference for coupling the fittest, in order to engineer the race along through the first rude circumstances.

The strong must survive the facts which did not favor the weak, to propagate their superiority and kill out, if possible, the weakness; if not, to keep it under and reduce its per cent. By and by, when social life started with the purpose of mutual protection, and the tribe was held together by the strongest or cunningest man, and people began to have their personal preferences and antipathies, and ruling qualities set up to be ambitious, and foment jealousy, such as animals long before knew how to manifest, what seeds of tragedy were sown in the human heart. So the past began to compose an intricate narrative of passions and motives; they wrangled, came to blows, and spattered blood and tears upon history's page. All of it originated in primeval fights for food, shifts to secure shelter and sleep, projects of primitive matrimony, adjustments of communal relationships. It is easier to trace the course of the moral evil which fell into Æschylus and Shakspeare with the passions and motives of tragedy than to derive from such an origin the immortal sense to which such tragedies appeal. But the latter is a fine deduction from the former, and man began to try it when he began to be conscious of himself.

What moral or what practical deduction can be made from all this presentation? It is this, that tragedy co-operates in the development of immortal personality. To this end, a Creator has tolerated an

evolution from dark elements whose various combinations and collisions render tragedy their only possible solution. And more than this I venture to affirm; or rather, I ought to say, to suggest. If tragedy be endowed with elemental power to create immortal personality, it must be as immortal as the person, and its tendency to enhance our gifts, to require our noblest attitude, to build the pith of great achievements, cannot be exhausted in the few years which a mortal body spends outside of a soul. Let this be considered.

A famous German materialist avows that he is distressed at the idea of the possibility of another life. The Buddhistic theology is virtually pervaded with the same sentiment; for Buddha was so distressed at the existence of moral evil that he taught his followers to long for personal extinction. The word "*Nirvana*" plays a great part in the Buddhistic philosophy. The scholars are divided on the meaning of it; some having the opinion that it expresses nonexistence, others that it is a word for loss of personality by absorption in the divine nature. The interpretation either way is of little consequence, since practically *Nirvana* is annihilation of the person; he refines himself away from every sense that belongs to the act of living. Buddha aspired "to enter into the world that is not," because no world that is could be free from his bugbear of evil. He saw no way to

extinguish evil save by extinction of the personality. And certainly the amount of elemental life that might be left over in a man who ceases to be a separate person would not be worth having, and is as inappreciable as the difference between Nirvana and annihilation.

Buddha's alternative was a bad world or no world at all. Our alternative is, a development of an immortal personality by collision with bad worlds, or a sneaking into the suicide of nonentity. He thought that if the universe could not exist without comprehending the element of evil, an individual ought to have the option of going out of it. We prefer to stay in it and take the chances. Consider that Deity has been taking the chances eternally; shall mortal man ever be more exempt than God? The act of creating anything involves the antithesis of good and evil. The universe is perfect because it contains this antithesis. You cannot conceive of a universe that might be absolutely good: the very epithet is discharged into language by the current which unceasingly flows between two poles. A universe absolutely good or absolutely bad is inconceivable. If the Deity had shrunk from the act of creation, anticipating that it would involve the development of evil, he would have declined the glory of goodness. Theology has invented desperate schemes to relieve a Deity from the opprobrium of evil, even to making provision

for a Devil, forgetting that he too must be created. Nor does it relieve Deity to suppose that man brought sin and death into the world, because he must have been created with a liability to do it. Turn the subject as you will, evil still appears to be an eternal consequence of the act of creating. How can we avoid seeing, that, if in matter there were the promise and potency of physical and moral evil, they must have been in the Deity from which the matter was evolved. We may doubt if a Creator would accept the language we are obliged to use in think ing of this subject; for to us evil is distressing and awakes a sense of contrariety. But there can be no dualism or elemental strife in a Creator, whose unity must justify and hallow its own essence. For instance, how many organic actions there are with a beneficent design, which, under some change of conditions, become disastrous. But the creative mind does not recognize the word *disaster*, and could make no use of it. That word is invented by people who, being in search of the greatest happiness, come across the greatest woes. Poison, for instance, was not an accident. Curare and strychnine were put up in the divine laboratory. The alternative is to pretend that they were accidentally developed during the fabrication of other elements. But mankind asks, Can an Infinite Father deal in poisons? That is a theological embarrassment which need not disturb

any one who perceives the fact of poison. We are not responsible for the fact. And our disasters do the universe no harm. On the contrary, the great scheme utilizes and fattens upon them, being poison-proof.

But does not a man who has swallowed poison by accident become conscious of something quite incompatible with his idea of perfection in creation? Yes: his idea and creation do not agree, but the latter does not keep running to a man's private feelings for justification. The coats of his stomach may be honeycombed by an acid without impairing the divine digestion. For, like the ostrich, Nature picks up a tenpenny nail or a grain of corn with entire impartiality.

But that kind of impartiality is the lowest and most physical expression of a pre-existing repose, infinite in character and eternal in duration, in which all the broods of nature and spirit were conceived.

Human nature is the comprehensive issue of the ecstatic moment of divine conception — a birth or incarnation that is expressly commissioned to announce to Optimism that it is full of all uncleanness, and to Pessimism that it is full of grace and truth. "Joys impregnate, sorrows bring forth."

Our soul can never become the Infinite One who includes and reconciles the antithesis of good and evil. We must be finite forever, and partake forever,

then, of the condition on which finiteness is created and sustained; that is, by the interaction of good and evil. That can never be abolished because the finite can never become the infinite. If for sixty years we maintain a soul on the strength of this limitation, and cannot have a soul upon any other terms, how can it ever be otherwise save on the supposition that souls can commit that *hari kari* of Nirvana? What an insignificant gasp is sixty years of mortal living, a breadth of time unmentionable; under no microscope can you measure this atom of eternity. And this reflection makes all the theological methods of disposing of men's souls so ridiculous. A man cannot in this infinitesimal moment of his life organize a heaven or a hell; and to do either would baffle finite capacity forever. And those two words are nothing but awkward and imbecile attempts to express elements which exist, in some mode inconceivable to us, in the divine unity: reconciled there and held in solution at the source whence all finite phenomena must flow. Either nothing on no terms at all, or the universe on *these* terms,—that is the unalterable fact; and it must continue to be the fact wherever finiteness shall dwell, and must furnish to it the occasions of that collision by which a person escapes from nonentity. Annihilate the possibility of that collision, and the motive for continuing alive would cease; and with the motive the reality. Theologians may wish

it otherwise, or imagine it otherwise, and invent verbal puzzles to escape the necessity of attributing all the elements in a creation to its own Creator. There is no respectfulness, no real adoration, in these human attempts to whitewash the Great First Cause. They lead to mental bewilderment and will forever have the weakness of being controverted by the facts.

It was Swedenborg's theory that vicious men kept on after death in their old ways, creating their appropriate environments, without any consciousness that they had died. In this their hell consisted; but to the saint it must have the slight drawback that they enjoy it, and would be distressed at any change. Swedenborg extended this provision to include those who disturbed his theological preferences. Atheists, for instance, and materialists, went on as before, and never realized that God and themselves ought to be stone-dead. The theory contains some rational features. What varieties of subversive human action must, by this time, have recruited the tough problem of life in other spheres. Of this action a great deal originated in ignorance and the laws of heredity, but it is none the less ingrained and obstinate. There, too, in another world, will be the regnant souls of wickedness, who have graduated with distinction, the Messalinas, Caligulas, Borgias; more victimized, perhaps, by facts of their inheritance than their

victims were by them, but none the less the enemies of society. Perhaps they are extinct, killed out by crime; but if they survive they are by no means whimpering in a corner; for one of the most remarkable traits of providence is that faculty of vindication and self-excuse lent to villains, which keeps them rampant. Death cannot rend that veil, for its power is strictly limited to dissolving the material atoms of the body. If there be a hell outside of the limits of their character, the strength of better souls will be taxed to confine to it the dangerous classes which have been accumulating since death came into the world. The indifference of society has always silently connived at rascals; the habits of society have approached theirs so closely as to countenance them. This is palpable in America to-day. The gambler is a legitimate offspring of the love of show and social exaggeration, and therefore deserves consideration in the final estimate. And our own retribution will consist in waking up to this more broadly than we do at present, to wrestle then "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." A limbo of confinement and torture, to sequester the criminals of mankind from any farther complicity with their own race, is a cheap expedient of fancy. So is the sharp distinction of the sheep and the goats,

of the good and bad, of spirits in bliss and spirits in bale, without foundation in experience. If no line can be drawn across the evident gradation of moral condition which prevails here, it cannot be drawn elsewhere; and if any man has enough in him to survive death he must come into contact with his fellows as before.

So the raw material to stimulate future enterprises of a virtue not yet attained on earth will not be wanting. It will draw its contingent from every inhabited planet; for I conceive that not till after death shall we see anything that deserves to be entitled the solidarity of mankind.

Visions of a New Jerusalem have been chiefly quarried out of the Book of Revelations. The Spiritualists claim to have a later dispensation that supersedes the jewelled city with meadows and landscapes, a summer-land of purling streams, embowered porticos, country villas, serenades and picnics, general lounging and visiting, and didactic correspondence with men upon earth.

But the heaven of the regular theology is equally destitute in the matter of mighty enterprises suited to the powers and ambitions of immortal souls: —

> "I 'll sit and sing my soul away
> In everlasting bliss."

If a soul could be content with that, it would sing itself away in a very brief space of eternity.

What — no resource but this! Will the conflict of ethics have swooned dead away; will there be no more great questions to generate great parties, no gordian knots to unpick or sever, no daring and adventuring, no scaling-ladder of attack, no tools of the pioneer, no theories to combat or espouse, no new worlds to settle, new declarations of independence to sign and seal with fortunes and sacred honor, no battle-ardor to ventilate the stagnant spheres! A Hell would be a more inspiriting domain, because more trying to the disposition.

Far be it from us to undervalue the solace there is to many dispirited and defeated souls in the thought of escape from this rude world into a more placid sphere: —

> "Vex not his ghost: O! let him pass; he hates him,
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer."

They do escape from persecutions and the grinding care. Myriads of slaves have felt their fetters drop into death's oblivion; despised and rejected spirits have thrilled at the salutes of a more kindly air; sour and crabbed with misfortune, how many have sweetened themselves in the unwonted appreciation of a juster crowd. Tempers distorted by care, patience unrewarded save by contempt, delicate and helpless ones longing for death to undo the clutch of some tyranny, myriads of women emaciated by

routine, will revive in that summer of release. We shall all escape into larger and more equable conditions. The thought is inexpressibly sweet to the unfortunate, the betrayed, the repressed and the distorted children of this first life. But if escape be all that they achieve, and if cessation of hostilities, a truce of care, be the only experience of eternity, all the despondent souls would find several hundred thousand centuries of this characterless repose somewhat monotonous, and would be the first to clamor against the door of their satiety. Such a heaven is a land of the Lotos-eaters, who cry,—

> "Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
> To war with evil? Is there any peace
> In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
> All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave;
> In silence ripen,—ripen, fall and cease:
> Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease."

Will all the saints and martyrs be content with that?—to reach a place where the crown shall be a passport to let the virtue that won it into perpetual peace, and promote it to immunity from action,—

> "In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind?"

They will not so easily be cajoled out of their old opinion, which Milton shared, who said, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her

adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

True reverence for a Creator will not consign either him or his creatures to a state of beatific repose. "My Father worketh hitherto," is a good text; and we need not set ourselves up to despise the instruments employed by him, which include many that are repulsive to the spirit of the dictionary, and draw the fire of odious words. The work of creation was projected before Adam named all the creatures and Cain was branded for murder. Adam did not invent his animals nor Cain his crime. The creatures who could not speak a word had been expressively slaughtering each other for an incalculable period. And the thought that a Creator never declines the infinite patience which constructs, moulds and remoulds, passes from the coarse product to the fine, incessantly to elaborate and sustain, seeing no end to this eternity of employment and resistance, desiring none, and thanking no man for imagining either him or his human beings ever withdrawn from this injunction of labor, seems to me more sublime, and appropriate to the best surmises of our imagination, than any substitute of theology. In the interest of the divine dignity, let us offer, instead of the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of man, the eternal work of saving him.

I conceive, then, that after the death of the body, if there is enough in us to last over at all, we shall be substantially, in the drift of our character, the same that we were before, and shall be dependent upon the same elements for the continuance of our being. The organs of our senses die; but, if we live, the senses must remain inherent parts of us and expect some corresponding objects, in a finer style, after throwing off this "muddy vesture of decay." So we can imagine more refined methods of dealing with all the facts and combinations of the universe than are contrived here, but they must be dealt with. Matter and spirit will be coupled still, and the tendencies which have been transmitted through eternity will not cease to inhere in the structure of the person. The idea of escaping from them involves the idea of nonentity. But they transmit the condition of limitation and collision, with the object of sustaining life; and the tragedy of a person who is travailing with his own immortality will be transferred to a larger stage. Would we escape it if we could? Could we escape it, there would not be enough sense in us to start a preference for nonentity. Nonentity would have preferred us, and the grave would close over its own.

Into those scenes, to imagine which, or to pretend to describe, is a waste of time, the "innumerable caravan" of souls has passed across this strip of earth. For ages before man acquired the faculty of

writing history, souls were migrating to colonize those places, and fresh arrivals ever pushed them on. They were born upon very different zones, in periods far distant from each other, and reared in very different and antagonistic styles of culture; and every spot started its own antagonism to impart to its inhabitants. And during the ages since mankind set up a memory and learned how to record it, this colonizing movement has been going on by souls with every conceivable kind of outfit and preparation. Have they settled in places which exempt them from the laws of life? Has labor been abolished, has the sense of antagonism expired? Nay, it must be quickened at the experience of more numerous and profounder differences of social, mental, moral habits.

A greater facility of travel, foreshadowed now by every new triumph over distance, will bring a greater number of past epochs into collision, whose members will come to terms through tragic consequences if at all, learn to know each other better, but ever find more to learn. What a motley horde of souls, circulating through space, like atoms that are centres of attractive and repulsive forces. What unexpected combinations and aversions will arise in that drift of spirits across each other's habitat; for death could not destroy their individuality. Indeed, we may suppose it intensified by the subtler conditions of existence, not obliterated, not let down into general

infantile good nature and eternal simper. Souls will continue to value their virility too much for that, to hold in more honor their capacity of earning bread with the sweat of their brow, to remember with dread those flabby fortunate classes upon earth whose blood was pap and whose tears devoid of brine, who, perhaps, are not to be met with any more, people who were practisers of Nirvana under embodied pretences. What star-showers of souls racing across the firmament in the brilliant exercises of intelligence and passion, of wars for the sake of new diplomacies of truth, of struggles to disarm the allies of spiritual mischief, to subdue strange races of an older world and bring them into the service of ideas, to modernize the aborigines of this and other planets, to be modernized in turn by the spiritual superiorities of beings whose existence we do not suspect; to clash, resist, combine, fraternize; to wrestle for the highest prizes, to encounter or embrace in the noblest pursuits, to keep alive that old word for the games of Greece, ἀγών, whence Englishmen derived *agony*, and saw it in the tragedies of Shakspeare. Have Lear, Hamlet, Constance, Cordelia, been sponged out of Shakspeare's mighty heart? Not while he meets, on his wanderings through paths of galaxies, the cravings of other unextinguished hearts: not while "enterprises of great pith and moment" can still enlist the sentiments and inflame the passions which make

achievement possible. No baby-cherub he, clean bereft of tragedy and comedy, exchanging fatuous smiles with a crowd of immortal imbeciles, detecting no differences, rallying no conceits, contemplating no royal reverses, inspired by no more grandeurs of the human will. What a heaven it would be if the elements which stimulated a Shakspeare to make his great appeal to souls, a Beethoven to agonize with the travail of harmony and reduce to expression the crude music of the spheres, were all left behind,—if man had forgotten to carry with him his sublimest emotions, or if Deity had neglected to provide the circumstances which force them from us as at the point of a celestial sword. A heaven not worth dying for, and only not a place of torture because the nerves which can be wrung, and the sinews that can be stretched, have been drawn out of the frame of the soul. Let us hail a better, more heavenly hope,—that the elements will continue to challenge our maturest powers, preserve them in the pains and exercises of a lusty manhood, furnish imposing situations, tragic moments of collision, romances of love—thus triumphing forever over death and the grave.

VII.

COMEDY IN NATURE.

THE Divine Comedy is the title of Dante's immortal poem, whose paths he treads upward from the pains of Hell, through the expiating penalties of Purgatory, into the bliss of being with Beatrice in Paradise. His career is that of Nature herself, who starts from the lowest deep of evil, where physical forces wreak their crude vengeances, and seeks a way upward through the successive refinements which mankind discovers and practices, till she is released into the freedom and repose of the Beatitudes. Every stage of this development has been a strict sequence of a preceding one, and could not have been omitted without putting the whole result in peril. The summing up must include all the figures which hold their places in the column, because they represented an equivalent of so much wage for so much work.

It was not in any trifling spirit that Dante called his poem a Comedy. The only personages in it who may be supposed to derive any amusement from its transactions are the imps and devils who exhaust ingenuity in contriving a perpetual variety of torture.

No doubt there is in such an exercise of intelligence a kind of hilarity, because every function derives a pleasure from its own success; as the savages used to subtly prolong the carnival they held around a captive, so as not to lose the fine gusto there was in slitting by slow inches toward his life. Pure unsophisticated ferocity liberates itself into a kind of gayety, as we see already prefigured in the chattering delight of a monkey who gets off some spiteful act upon another. Revolutionary periods abound in sanguinary glee, which the sex that has been the most framed for tenderness seems the most to relish. It is because the bumpers of blood do not affect men's heads so readily.

The lower circles of Nature's Inferno thrill with smiles of exultation. Nero is in his seat, and his subjects turn their thumbs down with terrible alacrity to order the despatching of a victim. When the lions used to crawl toward the martyrs, and the feline tail softly signalled to the Roman love of blood, how the crowded benches watched, expected, calculated, suspended the breath, quivered with the lion's pleasurable instinct. These cruelties are no longer concentrated in an amphitheatre, but are widely diffused by the course of civilization, and can be at any time extemporized. The circles of this Inferno are kept tolerably well closed by united respectability sitting on the covers; but they can lift upon

harsh hinges to let the bestiality from time to time transpire.

Dante's animosities were too uncompromising to be the house-fellows of ordinary comedy. His Divine Comedy is no laughing matter. It was the title of a drama of the retributive justice which seems to admit reluctantly the idea of pardon. Dante himself aspires toward Love, and finally deserves it; but he leaves the evil-doers in their appropriate hells, and turns his back upon them. They might be pardoned for not taking the point of such a comedy. It is not easy to see why Dante should have explained that he called the poem a comedy because it ended happily. Can a man be happy who leaves his bitterest foes in unavailing pain, and makes their sins his stepping-stones toward the stars?

To us the poem expresses rather a scenic transaction of the Divine Being, in a grim mood of irony like that of Nature herself when she invites us to a tragedy, and then apprizes the spectators that they are the players of her piece.

Dante said that the first battle in which he bore arms shook his nerves with fear; but the ardor of the fighting, and the intellectual charm of witnessing the manœuvres, soon overcame it, and he was conscious of a high degree of pleasure. So Nature's toughest contests, when transferred to the domain of human life, find that they have moved into a cheerful quar-

ter, next door to a neighbor whose name is Comedy. And, to be sure, as the same muscles are involved in the acts of laughing and weeping, so that we laugh till we cry, why may we not cry till we laugh? And we shall find the most religious races doing so.

As in a previous discourse I sought to develop the elements of tragedy in Nature, to note their salutary effects in the formation of human character, and to surmise that they must be as immortal as the person is, both to tax and to sustain his power, so now let the same course be pursued to trace the elements of Comedy and Humor in Nature, to observe what influence they have in human life, what relation to our religious feeling, and whether the smile may also claim to be immortal. We saw that physical evils were the rude pioneers of moral evil; upon every place they cleared, sorrow settled and found her homestead there. But as the current that springs at the eye turns many a wheel for us, to grind the flinty grain of immortality, so the smile has an intimate consistency with life, and holds kinship to our purest emotions.

The ocean is supplied with its constant bitterness by the salts that are in the soil, the minerals, and the vegetation; and there is a tax imposed upon every fresh-water stream to carry them down into that mighty mirror of a tear. So slight is the quantity which every rill is charged with, that the sweetness

which starts from the mountains does not suspect its private comrade. The mouths of an Amazon alone can taste this after-flavor of all the rains which trickle down the world. Up those broad coasts the brine runs to discompose the sweetness with such news of what it had unconsciously conveyed. But the mingling of these two tempers becomes less discordant the deeper in the land their parley is held, till the point is reached where the tide can just hint the ocean to the river: the running water is not embittered to a tear. So is each human life a stream that runs with an unheeded solution of caprice and vice, the washings of old strata, rinsings of an old morass, the contribution of primeval temperaments that went to decay by the banks of long past time. As each life broadens, this element becomes perceptible; but before it can reach the deep of tragedy, there is a point where it can be apprized in time. It is just where our imperfection that threatens to become serious and to convey our life into some deep disaster is arrested by the raillery of smiles. Our vice is exposed; the general mirth becomes a check to mischief; the weakness which cannot maintain itself against a hearty laugh is protected from becoming a crime. Goethe's mother said that he who laughs commits no deadly sin. The sins of a man who emits full-chested and contagious laughter have no treachery and venom in them. A man can smile in a way to show he is a

villain, as Hamlet noticed. If he smiled louder, he would become our confidant. Comedy is a detective who shadows all our little stratagems, but shows his badge before they become grave enough to warrant an arrest. We expose each other so charmingly that the chagrin of it cannot become pathetic. When Comedy begins, the social state is provided with a salutary ally of morals and religion. It has never yet enjoyed the respect which it deserves, because morality has been misunderstood to mean mortification and austerity, and religion has been restricted to belief in mental doctrines, or to the exercise of a class of emotions. But when it is clearly understood that a man is religious when he liberates every one of his functions into their uses, which he does when he recurs to the law of each function, and ceases to put an imaginary doctrine in the place of it, vainly expecting to force Nature to live up to that, then the place of Comedy and Humor in the great evolution will be found by the side of Religion; and if we indulge in retrospect, we shall discover that it has always claimed that place, though the religion which it has sought to serve has always been less natural and sincere than it. The smiles of the human family have been perpetually honest, and of a sterling sincerity. Ignorance has passed off numberless counterfeits of religion, compelled men and women to take its phrases for change in all transactions, and

has thus made bankruptcy a spiritual institution. Notwithstanding the periods of gloom and suspicion which have in consequence passed in history, when people doubted if Heaven approved of gladness, and did not rather regret every native impulse of its own contriving, mankind's laughter would be coming in, always at the right place and in the nick of time. It has been as genuine as it was irrepressible, and spectres have scuttled back into their shrouds at its challenge: they scented the morning air. So that we might venture to claim it as the only true religion, which has saved the race from the catastrophes of theology. When a man mutilated himself and his affections in the name of Deity, he was either cheated or a cheat; but his smiles have been as honest as his tears, and both of them have prevented Nature from turning this planet into a grave for the human family.

Nothing in the history of mankind is more striking than the universal instinct which has sought to relieve the oppressive weight of religious ideas by breaking into the contrasts of mirth. The Eleusinian Mysteries had their root in the old Nature-worship, when the Eastern people celebrated the decay of the year with sadness and the return of the sun with joy. So death and life oscillated, like the annual seasons, in the soul of man. This idea became more spiritual when the Greeks undertook to incorporate it in

religious form, so that the mysteries presented one side which was sombre and tragic; it included rites of atonement for sin, and taught by means of very impressive dramatic spectacles how the soul, which was liable to sin and death, might revive and renew the gladness of a Spring. At the close of the annual Eleusinian Festival there was a day set apart for the maddest outbreaks of jesting and gayety, when the people let the heart, which was strained almost to cracking to send the shaft of death to its mark, fly back into its elastic rest.

This merriment, which relieved the solemnities of the mysteries, was indulged ages before upon the plains of India. An ancient Hindoo festival turns upon the delight of man to welcome a reviving year. It is a Carnival; and when we discover that a favorite amusement of all classes during its observance is the pelting each other with differently colored powders—thin glass balls filled with them—and the squirting of colored water through enormous syringes, we skip a few thousand years without difficulty and land upon the Corso in Rome; but if we needed any resting-places on the route, we might find them wherever popular festivals in Greece and Sicily, accompanied with wild sports and the broadest comedy, prolonged the ancient joy when Nature bade her worshippers revive. When Ceres refused to be comforted while her Proserpine was in the under-

world, the jokes of her servant-maid Iambe first restored her to cheerfulness. Iambe is the irrepressible buoyancy of the popular mind: it broke forth in the mysteries because a dying god would revive again. Iambe has migrated from the earliest home of mankind, where she lived at service, and has cheered the desponding humor of every race that has dreaded the under-world into which the life of Nature and of spirits must descend. It is true that in Rome the Carnival precedes the Passion of a dying God,—the ancients did not so misplace it,—still it is the relic of the Saturnalia which took place about Christmas to celebrate birth and revival, and it is a legitimate heir of the old belief that every act of dying is the preface to a resurrection. And in Venice there is a supplementary Carnival which begins upon Ascension Day. Neither Man nor Nature can lie "in cold obstruction" and be left to rot. Our sense of humor flings our superiority of life into the face of Pluto, as we make his sepulchral echoes ring with the jollity of our demand to have Osiris, Proserpine, Eurydice, Christ — our spring-time, by whatsoever name — restored to us.

Mr. Buckle says that "the 25th of March, which is now called *Lady-Day*, in honor of the Virgin Mary, was, in Pagan times, called *Hilaria*, and was dedicated to Cybele, the Mother of the Gods." So that hilarity has reigned all along the great route wherever a Holy Mother has interceded for a dying God.

The *Hilaria* were celebrated at the vernal equinox, on the first day that was longer than the night. Masquerading was a favorite feature of them, and anybody might imitate anybody else, the gravest magistrates not being exempt. It is singular to find the same practice among the Indians of Ecuador. The descendants of the aboriginal Indians still practice their dances in honor of the Sun; only the festival is not called Christian, and is celebrated on the day of San Juan. Its principal features are masquerading and mimicry. A traveller says: "I once heard of a poor, stupid Indian who, having been struck by a soldier, threatened him with his revenge. 'Just wait,' he remarked, 'on San Juan I shall mimic you.'" So, no doubt, they wiped out old scores in ancient Rome. It suggests to Christians a more refined and amusing method of fighting a duel.

We are surprised to find that our way into some religious ideas lies through an observation of modern playthings; just as sports and games refer us back to a gravity of origin which they have been too merry to remember.

When a boy whips his top for amusement, he plays with a symbol which was used, if not invented, to dramatize the revolution of the seasons and of the planets of the Zodiac, amid whose constellations the sun rose and declined. Eastern dervishes play at top-spinning in their rotary dances which are kept

up till each of the dancers sinks exhausted to the ground. The Druids celebrated the same dances within the circular stone monuments which they raised to express the old idea. When a boy's top grows sick, totters, and at length falls exhausted, he re-enacts the whirling, rapturous life of every year, and of every soul, that spins into a maturity so steady as to seem to intend being forever motionless, but just then visibly hesitates, and sinks wavering into the torpor of the under-world.

But the senses sicken and decay only that life may enjoy its resurrection, and the individual be rescued safe and sound from the power of mutability. There is a moment when every boy feels regret as his top begins to reel and topples to one side. That moment is the old grief of the Nature-worshippers: full of deadly earnestness to them, as their resumption of their own undying hopes was full of glee. So the boy whips up his top again, and rehearses the smiles and tears of ancient centuries. The modern playground mimics the alternations of religious feeling among the races whom the death of all things overwhelmed with the minor key of sadness, which always seems played only to introduce, and be merged in, the key of natural joy. What a top is the spinning world! It carries round forever the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God!

But why should the modern spirit declare a divorce between this natural gladness and the spiritual sentiment? Has the Puritan any ground for the assumption that gayety of not pertinent to the tremendous problem of the redemption of the human race; not directly interested, along with our choicest emotions, to pacify the feud between the Real and the Ideal which we have inherited; not competent to help the soul keep itself sweet and its morals harmless; not gifted to tone down our dread of the invisible into a childlike reverence? On the contrary, there is no fact in human history more commanding than this one, that our distrust of Nature's blind elements, and our ignorance of invisible powers, is continually breaking down before sallies of that indomitable cheerfulness which Nature inoculates the race with to counteract the virus of superstition and terror. We laugh, and the vibration, like a sun-burst, sets the battlements of joy to drifting; our horizon is no longer a cup of peril held to the lips, but the hollow of an infinite palm streaked with the wind-paths of safety, and we steer promptly toward the unknown. These foul suspicions of our Creator which barbarians planted in theology and bequeathed to their posterity, are inhuman, repugnant to the trust of the heart, which takes God's hand as a child does ours, and trips in jocund mood by the side of Eternity. The father cannot scare his child; only

the hireling nurses of false doctrine tell stories bred of their own darkness, shuddering opiates to quell our spirits into baseless and dishonorable dreams. The morning gladness streams into the house that Heaven has builded for us, and this litter of goblins is swept out of every corner by the tidy light. Smiles are possible to man because confidence is native to him. His prayers, and expiatory rites, and shocking mutilations of the tenderest feelings, and outcries toward the firmament, and scaffoldings of doctrines, have never lifted his head into serener air. But one day of his primest joviality has undone a year's work of his religious ignorance, and put him again on prosperous terms with Nature.

The Roman Catholic church, though it harbors so much ignorance, has in one sense been more human than any other, so far as it has recognized man's dramatic element and his craving for the reconciliation of mirth. In the Middle Ages, the plays which were based upon Scriptural subjects, though including broad elements of the popular humor, and often parodying sacred characters with zest, belonged to the regular administration of the Cathedrals, not only among the Latin nations, but even in damp and saturnine England, where they held the church till Shakspeare built a stage and invited humanity out of the drowsy steam of incense into his house without a roof. There the passions of vice and virtue, which

are Nature's eternal dogmas, side by side with the comic humors which she never will repeal, preached that divine humanity which is our reconciler. The smiles which he trenched upon the face were river-beds that confined many a freshet suddenly rising at the eyes, to prevent their desolating overflow and deliver them in safety.

Now the church no longer tolerates the dramatic instincts of the people. Its broad aisle has grown too narrow to admit humanity when all its moods come crowding there. And as the genius of Protestantism uses the pulpit simply for instruction, it has grown jealous of the places where mankind is instructed by being first amused. So far as this jealousy has sprung from the occasional license which the stage permits, it can be maintained in the court of morals. For the license of the old festival days which allowed humor to trench so closely upon sorrow was of a broader and more honest, therefore of a safer, kind. The modern innuendo that sometimes thinly gauzes itself in the speech and costume of vivacious actresses, sullies the good repute of an institution that ought to be as dear to the people, and as watchfully sustained, as their universities and churches. Religious people have some authority for the customary epidemic of complaint which is breaking out against the stage; but their over-zealous feeling denies to the actor his legitimate place and

influence in the social life of the republic. Ministers who draw and hold a crowd by facial expression, and such jocularities that would damn a farce, are incensed against those ministers of our delight whose play-bills announce no pretence of divine worship. If Shakspeare could again play for us the Ghost in Hamlet, and old Adam in As You Like It, the Puritan disgust would again inspire those lamenting lines of his:

> "My name be buried where my body is,
> And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
> For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth."

Those very plays which have at length brought his immortality to light were so offensive to a wide English opinion that he chided fortune,

> "That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means, which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in like the dyer's hand.
> Pity me then."

That appeal, it seems, has come to the hearing of mankind; vast majorities of every generation have reversed the shabby verdict of his times; so that he might speak to the human race as to a friend for life:

> "Your love and pity doth the impression fill
> Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow."

And we owe a tribute of respect and admiration to

every honest man and woman who promulgates the evangel of smiles upon the stage, and shows the people how near to tears the fountain rises to blend in one redemption of our manners and our life.

The right administration of amusement has become a very serious matter, and it ranks with all the American problems which our intelligence is propounding to the judgment of the future; because the theatre is a mighty rival of the church, whereas it should be a comrade. There are thousands of meeting-houses where somnolence prevails; but there is not one stupid theatre in the country. "How is it," said a bishop to an actor, "that you manage to affect your audiences so profoundly, while mine are cold?" "Perhaps," he replied, "it is because you preach as if you were acting, and I act as if I preached." Pulpits thunder to exorcise the scarecrow of original sin: over the heads of the people they exhale in vaporous blame of distant and imaginary foes; of the Jews for slaying their Lord; of the godless heathen; of Gehazi who embezzled what Naaman gave him in trust for Elisha, while defaulters sit in every aisle; of Judas, who disgorged and then went and did what never happens to a single plundering church-member. In the meantime the theatre possesses that immense power of direct appeal, and unflinching sincerity to make use of it, to bless or to corrupt the most tender and susceptible years of

every generation. Youthful imaginations throng upon the benches before the curtain which divides them from mysterious delights, every well brimful to the edge of every eye, and all the lungs expanded with the air that is expecting laughter. All the arts of music, scenic perspective and effect, costume, dance and song, are ministrants in this temple where hearts beat with love, joy, pity, and every passion tunes its string ready to be touched by some mastery. There's not a single hypocritic motive in the house, not a man there who has come, as he meanly goes to church, for example's sake: not a ticket has been sold to one reluctant soul. The feigning on the stage is but the reflection of the sincerity that beams on every face before it; seriously intended, and delivered with the precision of fate itself, to hush the breath until the cheek grows wet, or to convulse it with the salutes of joy. How the contagious pathos streams to coasts of hearts through the deep of our brine, like an electric message. Wherever Shakspeare is, the distance does not hinder; he puts a girdle round about the earth in much less than forty minutes, and fetters our holiest emotions. And how the cobwebs of housekeeping and the sophistries of society and trading which we so solemnly weave between Sundays, are shaken by the peals from lungs that for once lend no breath to lies. Where else, in what assembly convened for sacred or secular purposes,

among what congress of our finest wits, in what caucus, revival meeting, or vestry conference, does the nature of man escape so far from pretexts and evasion, and abandon its whole soul so magnificently, as in the only place where reality is the purpose of feigning, and truth the product of illusion? We might apply to the theatre the verse in which Coleridge has celebrated Love:

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of Love,
> And feed the sacred flame."

And as love cannot bear to be suspected, and extorts homage because suspicion cannot be even dreamed of it, so the theatre ought to disinfect itself of every tendency that weakens its mission, which is that of being the manifold and gorgeous helpmeet of Religion.

A Protestant nation ought to consider it to be just as important to purge the stage as the church. But this service cannot be performed by religious persons who intrench themselves in pulpits to deliver an indiscriminate invective. It remains to be accomplished by the direct countenance of that class of people who feel the most affronted at the modern allusions and indelicacies which sometimes address the eye and ear. It is because they hold it wicked to attend a blameless play that the blameworthy ones

attract their congenial spectators. Moreover, there are some fastidious persons, of high respectability, who can bear to see what they would not bear to practice.

On the other hand, a good many coarse people indulge the affectation of avoiding places where coarseness is exhibited. They stay away, as they go to meeting, for example's sake, being apparently solicitous on the point of public morality. They, however, defraud nobody but themselves. But the real conspiracy with all the prurieney, which loves to see itself sparkle over a trickle of music that is just deep enough to reflect a leer, is made by the immaculate people. It is a conspiracy of absence from all plays.

Managers now complain that the public is incapable of sustaining a perpetual run of plays which contain nothing to make the judicious grieve. It is because the judicious take their amusement in grieving. There ought to be a great, persistent assembling of our best men and women at every place whose tide-mark rises or falls upon the public patronage, till it shall pay as well to have a decent stage as to have decent worship. Then the questionable sentiments which plead that their equivoque may be excused because it is gay, and their plots tolerated because they reflect the irony of vice, could not find their advertising lucrative. By all means,

let us have a Revival: may it be a revival of the natural religion whose gospel is Drama, the setting forth of the soul's nobility and gladness, the atoning sacrifice of smiles and tears. Bountiful Nature would like to join together what the theologic creature strives to put asunder, for she would recover her old advantage of having sanctity and gladness as close in art as they are in reality. So David danced before the ark; and when Saul's daughter told him that it was a shameless spectacle, he replied, "I will play before the Lord."

When the ancient Greek sat in the theatre, he was in the people's sole church, before a schismatic had been born. There he went, with twenty thousand others, to help that concentration of hearts before the appeal which involved all that they knew about salvation; to see crime attain to its awful Nemesis, with gods interposing to hasten or to mitigate, to keep a sword for Clytemnestra, a scourge for Orestes, to hobble Œdipus with the fatality of ignorance, or to put divine providence into the dear Antigone, that she might support the old father toward a soft oblivion, and drop for those sightless eyes the proxy of her tears. All the best feelings that the ancient world possessed, the central principles of morality, the aspirations of souls emulating virtue, were grouped upon the stage, and invited all the comic humors of life to meet them unabashed, and claim a

share in the perfect influence. And there stood in the great area an altar for the sacrifices which preceded the mighty preachment, whence the "crooked smokes" climbed as if to apprize heaven of the deep serious heart of the enjoying people. Terror, reverence, and mirth met there in natural congruity. Can we not restore the original sentiment which mediated between the soul's mysteries and jovialities, and made the sanctity of both very dear in the eyes of the people?

If we can, there will be a theatre which the Commonwealth might consider in its appropriations for purposes of education, and dying men might mention in their bequests. For it is intolerable to reflect that all our churches, not being taxable, are endowed to perpetuate the flimsy freaks of sectarianism, to keep a tank filled for the Baptist, tapers and pots of incense lighted for the Catholic, chasubles, copes, albs, stoles, billows of lawn, for bishops, red stockings for a cardinal, chapels for inculcating the damnation of mankind. In the theatre there is no distinction of sects. It is the one place where souls adhere to nature's universal creed, and subscribe to the brotherhood of their own sincerity.

The instinct for dramatic presentation is one of the human passions, as elemental as love itself, and ineradicable. No casualty that can befall our life

will be strong enough to change our minds in that respect. If on the earth we demand the spectacle of plots that unravel our perpetual intrigues, that banter our foibles, set us in the delightful embarrassment of our own vices and conceits, and show, in short, that finiteness itself is comedy, we shall crave it as long as we are finite. Only the Infinite Perfection can be imagined to be destitute of this delight. There is, then, one source of charming exhilaration in being imperfect; and I surmise that it will outlast the body's functions, still to temper the tragic threat of great antagonisms, to criticise and correct our mutual relations, lightly to chastise folly. A smile is not a feat which muscles of the cheek devise and execute; but it is a creature that swims in the deep of imagination, and rises to bask on the face in the sunshine of mutuality. The cheeks must crumble, and refuse their sweetest offices to the smile and the kiss, but the imagination is the most incorruptible element of the universe; its framer, in fact, and its continual sustenance.

It is a favorite notion of religious people that death will disperse those elements which breed our laughters, or, at least, transfer the mind into places where no collision of comedy can occur, so that smiles would become rudimentary like the shrunken and useless organs of some animals, appendages which the saint would do his best to shed. This is a

poor conception of the inbred virtue of those mental traits for which we have invented such names as Wit, Satire, Irony, and Humor. Those traits are in our essence, and the godliest man who can be born is not without some share of them; a soul is not entire on any other terms, and they are incapable of elimination if there really be a continuance of life. So that Beethoven's symphonies must have their *scherzo* still.

It is worth waiting sixty years, even in the chill air of alienation, to have death let out the secret motive of the cross-purposes of life, of the thwarted feelings, the embittered variance, the fencing temperaments whose blades are thrown up by Death when he commands peace and mutuality, and the cold faces melt into a smile. Heaven grant it to all pining and defeated souls!

So one who travels perilously along the glacier's surface, leaping crevices and dreading to be mired in snow, finds at the very line where its threat against the valley becomes the greatest, and its chill the deathliest, clusters of poppies gayly defying as they nod in the corn toward the sheeted winter,—symbols of forgetfulness, opiates of former pain.

VIII.

PESSIMISM.

IT is noteworthy that two distinct theories concerning the good and evil in this world have prevailed ever since human observation resulted in reflection: one, that everything is as bad as it can be; the other, that all is for the best. Pessimism expects that the world is constantly growing worse; Optimism, that it is continually on the point of becoming better. Each theory derives a great number of adherents from those whose temperament corresponds to its color: there is the temper of twilight when a vague depression reigns, morbid fancies become more influential, the owls hoot, and the crickets sadly chirp regrets. It is in the twilight that all the dubious and uncanny stories are told which in the twilight of mankind were invented. We expect to despond as we listen, or to creep and feel the hair rising as if some goblin had lost his way and was on the point of inquiring at the door. It is a great relief when the lights are brought in, because they diffuse a little mimicry of morning. For the morning light belongs to the opposite temper of gladness and expectation, when the body, which fell faded into yesterday's

twilight, rises reproduced, elastic; the countenance smiles at the ill stories which brought in a train of haunting dreams: every object stands in clear and unequivocal relations with the others, and the owls blink away unheeded in the thicket. The most melancholy vein flows more briskly in the morning; the most jocund and care-defying temper may be subject to sinister reflections in the twilight. An individual during twenty-four hours can be both Pessimist and Optimist.

And so has mankind been during the brief day of its history. Every epoch has been the mingling of the two shades, or rather, the sunlight of Optimism has been attended by the penumbra of Pessimism; as when a person takes too frank and straight a look at the sun he can see nothing for awhile but black blotches in which all outlines are blurred. These contrasts seem to be peculiar to the earth on which we live. To be sure, we know not how the people in other planets adjust their senses and feelings to the phenomena around them; but there is no doubt that their mutual expressions would vary from ours according to their distance from the sun. Our orbit seems to be pitched at the distance where the year is too short to allow us to come to good terms with evil, and too long to preserve complete ascendency to the good. Our view of the universe must correspond to the point from which we look. And just as the

solar system looks differently to the inhabitants of Uranus, and teaches in their schools a modified astronomy, so must their theology correspond to this kosmic relation. In a year of such a vast circumference, how much more deliberate must be the experience, and dispassionate the judgments, of the people who follow the majestic round of such a planet. I am confident that a great many of our own crotchets are repudiated upon the successive planets which are beyond our own, as their revolutions secure the time for developing a more judicial and impartial temper. Here we spin like a whirligig round a boy's finger; if the boy himself were seated on his own toy to do his sums he would cast up his figures as indifferently bad as we do when we give the problem of good and evil one turn through the heavens.

When you reflect that the greatest and most magnificent planets are the farthest from the sun, attended by satellites correspondent to their luxury and state, and employing superb sweeps of time equal to a whole generation of ourselves, it must occur to you, as it did to Goethe, that the projectile power of the sun has notably diminished since it began to condense and throw off rings, and that the original potency and fervor of matter has been better preserved by those orbs whose birthdays celebrate the dawn of creation. And their inhabitants must partake of this

primeval energy, and their movements must sweep into a broadness and balance of opinion which has been gradually shrinking, growing more constrained, more hurried, less comprehensive, more heated.

Jupiter's annual revolution occupies about twelve years; Saturn cannot get round with all his appendages in less than twenty-nine and one half; and Uranus consumes eighty-four years in his circuit; so that he has been only once round the sun, and his inhabitants have consequently had only one year's life, since his discovery in 1781. Neptune, still more deliberate, occupies one hundred and sixty-four years in getting round. Imagine how differently worded all the phenomena of the heavens and of their own vast earth must come to their inhabitants: for there must be people wherever the original potency of matter passes into evolution; and this process began upon these distant planets ages before our Earth was thrown off as a ring.

If the long-lived and deep-lunged men of these planets, whose drawing in and out of the breath, and whose heart-movement, must be set to hours instead of to seconds, could only overhear our theological table-talk it would sound to them like the buzzing of a wasp, and of one, too, whose nest has been maliciously stirred up. The earth itself would appear like the fly in the fable, pretending to raise a furious dust in the great revolution which carries

along more important passengers. At any rate, Nature does not tell everything here: we are little pitchers, and, alas, we know what animal has ears to correspond. Perhaps when we wake out of our exposition of sleep, as Bottom did, our first bewildered statement will be, "I have had a dream — past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was—and methought I had, but man is but a patched fool, if he offer to say what methought I had." So that when we review our own impressions about problems like that of good and evil, we must remember, and thank the stars that we have the wit to remember, that Nature is "a book of the vastest, strangest contents, from which, however, we may gather that many of its leaves lie scattered around in Jupiter, Uranus, and other planets. To come at the whole would be difficult, if not utterly impossible. On this difficulty, therefore, must all systems suffer shipwreck."

Just as we see upon this earth that persons without the good fortune that attends upon times and opportunity are untrained to form opinions, undertake affairs, pass judgment upon actions, appreciate a scientific observation, so the earth itself has a pinched history, and has grown up deprived of the advantages of a liberal education; and, like many a self-made

man, it has a considerable conceit of its qualifications. If it could be brought into competition or contrast with more cultivated planets, it would speak of them as "those literary fellows." This is the depreciation of the politician and the place-hunter.

Therefore it has come to pass that men have been very deeply influenced by puerile opinions, to such an extent that the saints and prophets have most strongly represented them; and we find that they set forth many of our partial and local notions with such emphasis that we exclaim, just as we do when some felicity of speech attracts us,—"That is just what I have felt, and often wanted to say, but could not." So Pessimism and Optimism have been propagated round the world.

We need not go too far back to trace this liking of mankind for extremes. Sometimes Pessimism is the sombre leaf of an epoch when great disorders and misery prevail, when the proud and rich oppress the humble, when a people is divided into slaves and masters. Sometimes it is the announcement of the decay of a nation from its own corruption, or of its gradual extinction before the advance of a stronger impulse. In all these cases Pessimism is the prophet of improvement. Its own disgust and despair proclaim a general hope and expectation; but, as usual with mankind, these feelings grow extravagant at such crises, and look to be fulfilled in some fantastic and

extreme method. It is thus the doctrine of the millennium arose and has been propagated, with all its absurd opinions and machinery. The popular mind is Earth's local mind; therefore it delights in extremes, not with such rapid and petulant moodiness as occurs upon Mercury and Venus, where the pulse is so short and fevered, but quite hostile enough to impartiality. Buddha emerged from the oppressiveness of the Brahminical system of caste, and abolished that system for several hundred millions of his fellow men. But his faith seemed to become so exhausted in the process, and his sensitiveness to the popular miseries of mankind so increased in proportion, that he longed to abolish the world also in order to get rid of evil. That is the system of burning a barn to get at a rat. To Buddha the world was a scene of unmitigated wretchedness, partly because his own purity and nobility of soul were shocked by its notorious vices, and he only prayed to get away from their contamination. So he exhorted his disciples to retreat from themselves by obliterating self and the scenes in which it sinned and suffered. The highest aspiration of men was to be toward a complete mustering out of the universe, as a system of things too bad to have ever been thought of. By various ascetic practices, profound absorption in characterless contemplation, and colorless chastity of life and diet, he expected to macerate himself away and to disappear.

Now the millennial notion lurks in this doctrine, only that the goodness to be saved is not connected with persons and personal continuance, but rather consists in the idea of not being saved, as that seemed to be the only way of circumventing evil.

The old Persians of the time of Zoroaster had a more definite system based upon the two extremes of Good and Evil, each of which was the quintessence of two Beings, Ormuzd and Ahriman, who kept up a dualistic game, with the poor shuttlecock of mankind sometimes touching the ground and anon flying nimbly through the air. Zoroaster's two Powers represented the natural dualism of the human mind; but he did not attempt any solution which should bring them to terms. He kept the question open, but bequeathed to mankind that theory of an embodied evil principle from which the Satans and demons of every mythology have been recruited. But after him came the system which was called *Zarvanism*, which worked a radical alteration in the old Persian belief by subordinating the Good and Evil principles to another superior and indivisible, called *Zarvana Akarana*,—a word which is equivalent to our Eternity, only that it implies endowment with supreme control: it played the part of umpire and final settler of the great dispute. Out of this there came later the distinct millennial idea, when a belief arose that the final triumph of Good over Evil would

take place in nine thousand years, when the Final Deliverance would be wrought by a Messiah, born of a Virgin, waging a great conclusive battle. You perceive that here is the origin of many of the ideas belonging to the Christian mythology: the miraculous conception, the Messiahship, and the Second Coming. The New Testament is saturated with these oriental notions. The Jews desired a political deliverer, but Jesus, in whom they expected a Messiah, declared that his kingdom was not of this world; that the world, in fact, was about to pass away, and that some of his people would not taste of death before they should behold his Coming to establish the true kingdom. This expectation was not confined to the apostles; they derived it from Jesus; it pervades and colors all his ideas, and the most spiritual of his conversations. It led to his depreciation of industry and honest accumulation. Nothing was of any particular consequence, because the world was coming to an end. It *ought* to come to an end, being unfit to continue. And so far as this idea of a Second Coming is concerned, Jesus was radically a Pessimist; and while he shared the gloom and depression of his nation's temperament under the Roman rule, he did not expect to lift it up by his pure morals and piety, but rather to establish a new, anti-terrestrial kingdom in which righteousness could reign. He at length anticipated his fate, but clung to his idea, and there-

fore promised his resurrection to the disciples. Out of the expectation which was thus excited, their ardent fancies, or rather, the tender fancy of a woman, created a fact to correspond.

Thus the notion of a Second Coming survived, and has been propagated to the latest time. It is a thoroughly pessimistic idea:—"Sell all that you have; take no thought for the morrow as the Gentiles do; expect the kingdom of God; and then you will have all you want added unto you. In the meantime live if you can like the birds and the flowers. And when the time approaches, then look out for disasters—famine, pestilence, earthquake; if you are on the housetop, stay there, don't try to save anything; if in the field, don't return to the house to dress; but go up as you are: nothing is of any consequence, for a trumpet shall sound to gather the elect: of two men in the field, one only shall be taken; of two women grinding, only one: alas for them that are with child: of two men sleeping together, only one will be fit to be roused. If any man sues thee and gets thy coat, make him a present of thy cloak." How preposterous would the world's social transactions become if they were graduated to the scale of such advice, unless the world was really going to stop in the course of a week and wind up its concerns. The manly gospel is "Resist evil," and whosoever compels you to go a mile, compel him to

go the next one; and turn away from all borrowers with forged collateral, else the financial and commercial world at least is near its end.

Perhaps Jesus would have preached ethics as vigorously as he wielded that scourge in the temple, if his doctrine had not been somewhat influenced by this notion of his Second Coming. And when the disciples asked him when all those things should be, he answered, All this will happen just after the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by the hated Romans; that will be the sign of it; "then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." No language can be plainer than this which the theologians, in their attempt to spiritualize, to make it seem to refer to a last judgment, to rub off its millennial gloss, only make more impracticable than it is; for it is quite natural that a noble soul who is so pure and exalted as to be thoroughly pessimistic, should indulge in such language.

So this hopeless philosophy has found its way into modern Europe, particularly into the Teutonic mind, which has preserved the oriental element in a remarkable degree. Its mystics, like Jacob Behmen, its philosophers, like Schopenhauer and Hartmann, talk exactly like mortified and disgusted Persians. Too enlightened to entertain the millennial notion, they go far beyond that and apply the power of meta-

physics to convince Deity that he made a radical mistake in creating anything. Schopenhauer says it is a thoroughly bad world, but the best world possible under the circumstances, and considering the material. Hartmann says: It is the best world possible, but no world at all would have been vastly better; for what possible comfort and advantage could a Creator reap from making a system out of which mankind derives nothing but misery? Hartmann attempts to show, by a skillful and brilliant manner of undervaluing, that sorrow is the prevalent sensation, joy an illusion, pleasure only the negative absence of pain. Of course, in such a system there is no place for immortality, because nobody could continue on such terms, and he would be a great fool for expecting to find anything better: so Hartmann cogently advocates the comfort of a grave, and is a brilliant pleader for the worm; only amplifying Hamlet's cynicism in the graveyard. Picking up a skull, Hartmann might say: "This might be my lord such a one; that praised my lord such a one's horse when he meant to beg it: e'en so, and now my lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, and we feel the trick to see it."

These systems of Pessimism have too many points to interest and claim our attention. Let us notice only one or two of them. When Hartmann says that no world at all would be better, is it not strange that

he overlooks one little word in that sentence which refutes his whole system? It is amusing that a man should begin brilliant volumes with an absolute contradiction of every word in them. That comparative degree *better* would be impossible if this were the worst of worlds; no man could have invented it: he would be part and parcel of the worst: and if he were, he would not be aware that it was the worst. That word *better* clearly detects a Man, and is a witness to his capacity of preference. Now if a man organically belonged to the worst he would not be able to prefer no world at all, because he could not conceive of a world that might be better. When Hartmann says that no world would be better, he distinctly says that something within him does not belong to this bad world, has no sympathy with it, repudiates its evil with disgust; something in him that stands outside of organic evil, is able to contemplate and sum it up; something that indulges a preference. Can atoms of matter flowing together into the form of a creature be capable of preferring anything? It must be something that is not matter that can prefer that matter should not be evil, gross, degrading, destructive to a finer sense. In short, nothing but spirit can prefer. If, then, only spirit prefers, the notion of no world at all becomes a fantastic absurdity, because if there were nothing at all there would of course be no preferring spirit. But

there is one: it therefore justifies the world that is; for you cannot conceive of any state so fine, so noble, so stamped with the certainty of immortality, as a state in which something is capable of indulging preferences. All the bitter cries of all the cynics are wrung out of the heart by the terrible grip of an immortal preference. The blackest libel of the world that man ever penned, the sharpest jibes, the most insulting mockery, thrust into the face of goodness like that sponge filled with vinegar, is all extorted from the rage of a godlike creature who loads his stupid slave with opprobrium:

> "Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness will not take,
> Being capable of all ill."
>
> "Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
> Upon thy wicked dam."
>
> "Most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness."

Nobody but a Prospero, just expecting to resume a princely life, can indulge this pessimistic style.

So when Timon says,

> "All is oblique;
> There 's nothing level in our cursed natures
> But direct villainy,"—

he is immensely reassuring; I recognize the glorious creature that curdles into the bold disparagement. All the pessimistic moments of history, from Buddha

to Jesus, have loved to couch their preferences in the language of Timon :

> "I am sick of this false world, and will love naught
> But even the mere necessities upon it.
> Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave ;
> Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat
> Thy gravestone daily ; make thine epitaph,
> That death in me at others' lives may laugh."

It is precisely when such men write this world's epitaph that the laugh is turned against Death, who thinks he is called, and hurries to find that Life understood the message better, and is there before him. When Timon pretends that he has made his everlasting mansion by the salt sea, where its bitterness can conveniently mingle with his own, he buries only the bitterness ; the word, *everlasting* stands by in his speech, and shovels it in. How full the world is of these grand, reassuring words, which the haters love to taste upon the tongue ! Who invented them ? What father and mother had those angels of the planet, whose dress is always shining, whose feet leave white footprints in filth, in whose kisses our tears drown, whose lips suck poison-bites ?

Now turn from these to the swarthy-complexioned words used by the Pessimist. There is that word *Misery*, which has gone about in so many languages, like the hired professional mourners of the East, imputing a general desolation. It holds a

perpetual wake, as if over a dead world, and rocks to and fro in a perfect luxury of recounting the bad things which are the only legacy of the deceased. But there is not a word that carries a heavier spiritual import—not one so determined to make clear to us our divine difference from matter; not a word that so exonerates every one of us for being capable of surviving the body. Misery was not fully developed on this earth until human beings began to take lodgings here; pain was felt, but there was no tongue at liberty to mention it, until the beings were generated here who could hire the nervous system to inflict exquisite inventions of suffering. We discovered sorrow, and have cultivated it with all the arts of our superiority; and we deserve the credit of making the most of it. And in doing that, we have shown what an appreciation of all ideal delights we have; not only of the cheerfulness which physical balance and repose secure, but of the far more subtle satisfaction which the soul derives from every thing that harmonizes with its own nature, through the whole range of our life, from that little poem of a child who crows and claps his hands by our fireside, or whom we follow as he competes with the summer waves in glee upon the beach—from that charming chuckle of the soul's little early life, up to the anthems, more solemn than the sound of all the oceans, more uplifting than their tides, more tonic and cleansing—anthems

which that soul composes in the hours of its spiritual manhood, when a great silence falls on the fretful, fevered world, and he is startled by voices that have sounded forever while patiently waiting to be heard, that come across to us like the faint halloo of a comrade in the solitude. So we invented grief on purpose to make bliss more positive and self-asserting, to pique it into making a declaration; cunning coquetry of ours it is, that never fails to bring the lover to terms.

Misery? Why, what noble and wonderful creature is it that dares to utter such a momentous word?—that had the wit to think of it, the generosity to enrich with it the vocabulary of God? We did it, we, the paupers, the people on the perpetual rack of the Pessimist; we, who fall into debt and the hands of the sheriff, who sometimes starve till we eat our pride and ask for bread; we, the clodhopping sextons, digging graves at the rate of twenty a second till the planet bristles with tombstones as the barrel of an organ stands scattered all over with the points of sweetness; we, who have to stand by and wipe out the tears that we may see the last sunset in other eyes before we pull the lids of twilight over them; we, who are ill-treated, insulted, undervalued, neglected, whose life is one long struggle with a vindictive Nature for existence, and to put the ideals of the soul in a high place beyond her reach, where

not even the spray of her brine, though she spatter ever so furiously at us, can touch them; we coined that word *Misery* out of the solid ingots of those ideals to express how inexhaustible in hidden wealth we are.

We are quite sensitive to misery; it hurts us. Does not the Pessimist see the refutation that lurks in all these phases? We say, there is something that feels hurt. It is something, then, which is held tight in the vice of matter, as Ariel was in the cloven pine. Matter cannot cry out that it is hurt—matter cannot indulge a preference for release from itself. There are moments when cravings for joy and beauty run like globules through our blood; other moments when disappointment runs like lead and fills the brain; moments when care gathers up the heart-strings like reins, and drives us in malice along the edge of an abyss. We are not draught-horses, our brain is not a mould for some dull metal; we say so in every bitter word. Some moments slowly gather round us like a corroding fog, and we declare that we are devoured by *ennui*. What a word of splendid audacity, one of the last felicities of a spiritual nature that knows when it is bored and that it has done nothing to deserve it. It is the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And when we say that a thing is a miserable sham, it is because we have been brought up from our cradle with the genuine

thing: it was rocked with us and drew veracity from the same breast; in after life we thank all the unveracities for hinting to us a word which designates by implication our comrade of the cradle.

We know what we want, and sometimes we get it. And our innate merit is never so clear as when we fail to get it.

We have not time to describe and analyze all the pessimistic words which put a noose around the breath of the world. Life is too short for that: we turn them loose into the literatures of whole epochs: the cynic snarls them, Jacques voices their scorn when he says, "all the world 's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." We perceive that he himself is acting a part to say so, and we admire the fine person who takes this trouble at once to amuse and to reassure us. And when Pòsthumus, suspecting Imogen, rants against all womankind thus:

> "Could I find out
> The woman's part in me! For there 's no motion
> That tends to vice in man, but I affirm
> It is the woman's part,"—

we all remember the face, so transfigured with the tender solicitude of a mother, which used to bend over to smile us a good-night, and whisper to us a simple prayer.

And thus it is, in fine, that perpetual motherhood breeds generation after generation of creatures for

whom the world is not worthy, who have therefore fits of crying it down from a sense of honor and the innateness of a gentleman. If Pessimists grow scarce, and the breed threatens to run out, every resource should be lavished to revive and prolong it; and no ideal community should be without one; for they are unconscious evangelists of Beauty and the Immortal Life. Each one of us, however, has one in his own private pay, and to your pessimistic Self I commend you for encouragement and reassurance.

IX.

AN ACT OF FAITH.

WHAT a great part has been played by the word Faith upon the world's stage, since the old Aryans in Northern India separated into two tendencies, one of them to develop the religions of Brahma and of Buddha, the other to carry the empire of ideas westward through so many forms! Human feeling has put the word into italics in every European language. Kings may be as profligate as they please, only they must be Defenders of the Faith; and the subjects of each one may love each other, as Christians ought, but they are bound to hate and fight, as only Christians can, the opposite believers. Moral and industrial development has been postponed to the exigency of this word, which flowed out of a conviction that a man's heart may be pure, but his soul cannot be saved unless his mind shares the orthodoxy of one or the other party. Whenever a sincere conviction reigns that eternal welfare depends upon a holding of certain opinions upon invisible objects, it becomes a very grave matter to force the right opinion,—graver than to insist upon good conduct; and any means may be resorted to, whether the souls

to be saved relish the proceeding or not. If a man is just sinking for the third time, pluck him by the hair, grapple him anywhere with a boat-hook, at the peril of maiming, to keep life in him. And this instruction has been strictly heeded, with a fellness of purpose such as only some passion for security can raise in the human breast. Shall people be tolerated who take the communion only in one kind? No—force both kinds down, and keep the soul consecrated. Sharpen scythes, invent flying artillery, execute a bloody transfiguration upon the Mt. Tabor that is near, beat drums stretched with human skins to summon all who care not for their own if only souls may be sent direct to heaven. It is a long and mighty story, filled with groups summoned and arranged by every passion of mankind; picturesque, imposing, pitiful, but never contemptible so long as we view them remembering that Faith was a matter of life and death, the only true concern, the one reason for bearing children, the sole justification of a distracted world.

All these groups that came out with startling emphasis upon the great screen, as History passed her successive slides before the blaze of this idea, are laid away, and anyone who is curious to look them over will find only motionless figures and colorless outlines. History has painted new slides, covered with figures as majestic as the old ones, and costumed

no less richly with generous feelings, but she cannot throw the thrilling groups which struggled for salvation, those scenes of fierce attempts at rescue, for the blaze grows pale ; daylight has penetrated within the narrow conception, where it was pent up to throw that vivid focus ; disenchantment has rolled up that screen. Was Faith involved with it, and has that too disappeared?

That question interests us none the less because the old misguided sincerity has been so honeycombed by the climate of moral and industrial progress ; but all the more, because Faith is man's great enterprise : if he cannot acquire objects in which he may have entire confidence, and trust his life to them implicitly, life becomes a squabble of children, or a poor parody of the earnestness of which our ancestors were capable.

Does Faith save souls any longer? Does it ruin bodies for the sake of that benefit? What kind of Faith is it which prevents our modern life from growing contemptible, and our horizon less than sublime?

The old text, written by a man who implicitly believed that Christ would reappear during his lifetime and begin a millennial reign, declares that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." But we still wait for that celestial truant to return with his beatitudes. Substance and evidence are solid words, but the faith

which furnishes them must be built of the same material. There is a moment when a card-house is sure to topple, however adroitly you lay the bits of pasteboard up. How many hypotheses of religion have rattled down, which were nursed with the tenderest touch, and the ardent interest of whole epochs, with hushed breath! As we explore these ruins, there is but one part of them which we desire to find and carry home to build its strong beauty into our walls, and that is the moral earnestness which was expended on tasks that can never more occupy the attention of mankind.

It ought to be the motive of religious science to apply this temper of sincerity to objects as deserving as itself, that will not engross it on frivolous pretexts, to leave it at last to mortification of a just pride wounded, and to distrust. The only dangerous scepticism has been engendered by the disappointment of conscience when it knew that it had loved and lavished itself upon a thing of doubtful reputation. What tragedies have swept through silent hearts on the traces of a vanishing illusion! They slip the leash of men's convictions, hounds in a fury to run down and tear; the sound of the hunt still faintly reaches our ears. When the saints died one after another before Christ could arrive, and John, in Patmos, the last of them, laid his head upon a rockier bosom; when the kingdom of God is expected in second-

advent tents, and in spite of the Bible, has to be dubiously postponed; when great periods of revival set one man's soul catching like a prairie fire over a country, and he comes walking after it upon singed stubble, scorched flowers, through the dull reaction of over-stimulated minds—he, who believed that he travelled on fire with the Holy Ghost, and thought he remembered when the first coal dropped into him, as he expected to leave perpetual flames all over a land—nothing but a conviction that ignores the evidence of candid observation can prevent such a man from scorning and denouncing his lack of a judicious impulse. Yet he was at worst an accidental burning, which the soil must repair with latent seeds. But rotation of crops is managed in a way more skilful and patient. It is not possible that the greatest enthusiasm springs from a misguided direction. Let us observe, rather, the devotion of men who concentrate all life upon a problem of Nature, of Society, of Humanity, with a faith that is really substance and evidence, and import that into our religious methods, and cease to waste sincerity upon a sentiment for saving souls, for filling pews, for converting the heathen, for pasting phrases over the invisible, confident that salvation depends upon giving moral earnestness a right method and a palpable object. Imagine all the best minds and the warmest hearts charmed by such directness, and called away from

their fantastic striving that drips with so much life-blood; bind up those mischievous vents, let the heart claim the whole of its red current to work with, and nourish the definite ideas of Nature and Humanity.

What a morning flush of emotion and ardor would rise again to the cheeks of the world, as men sought battle-fields to fraternize for saving life!

If this anticipation would not be also entirely millennial, we must take that word Faith, where it lies all silted up with sentiment, and move it upon its undersills of facts. For mankind will never consent to abjure that word. It is the old family mansion, too decayed to be comfortable, perhaps, but too dear to quit. Men will stick in it to the last, stuff the windows with the old clothes and defunct title-deeds, and patch the roof. No gifts nor cultivation, no advantage of manner and talent, nor achievement of comfort, can compensate for absence of Faith. It separates us from matter and animality. But Faith in what? Not in anything which you merely anticipate or expect with vigor. You expect to go to heaven, you expect to rejoin departed friends, you expect a general system of beneficence to rule the other world, you expect some compensation for the ills of this. But what you have no evidential reason for expecting, you have no right to call an object of Faith. Instinct is a great matter. It has credited witchcraft and astrology. Whole races and epochs

of mankind instinctively supposed that people were souls which had lapsed out of a state of pre-existence, and that after death they would pass through the forms of different animals to expiate their sins and be purified. Human anticipations are the patterns of the earth's kaleidoscope as she turns round.

The early Christians instinctively felt that Christ would return to gather his elect. My instincts which tend towards a Hereafter may not be so disappointed, but I can afford to wait and see. What I am certain of knowing, or certain of not knowing, I am in no hurry to call up. It may wait in the porch while I transact the immediate business. Faith is not any form of probability, or instinctive likelihood, or a mental method built on texts. You either surmise that the Creator is a person, because you feel your own distinct volition and mental purpose, and perceive Nature's tendency to unity; or you surmise that God is impersonal, because your feeling of distinct personality is faint, and you seem to be a phenomenon of the correlating forces which rule Nature and give her an appearance of design.

You surmise that the finest attributes of your own soul must have pre-existed in an Infinite soul, and perhaps you are bold enough to surmise that your worst attributes must be derived from the same source; or, on the other hand, your surmise is that the conflux of forces into your line of inheritance

has developed you from the animal world, and that you are a case of Nature's unconscious selection. Which of all these surmises is so perfectly derived from evidence as to constitute an act of Faith? Not one of them.

Some one of them may turn out to be true, but in the meantime we possess only the strong presumptions of our minds towards one or the other, and these depend upon birth and temper; mankind cannot even be a unit in one act of presuming. We cannot help letting our own presumption rise into the most convinced expression, for it is the totality of ourselves, and as valuable as we are. So we affirm, insist upon it, squander upon it thought and fancy, send it along others' heart-strings in thrills of emotion. We have faith in something like this, which is the proclamation of our lives. But it is not the act of Faith we are seeking.

And in general we may say that no presumptions that tend toward the invisible and undertake to make riches in it for definite objects, can correctly be called achievements of Faith. God himself is known to us only to the extent of our contents. Each man of us makes an outline on the Infinite, but no man can cover more ground than the place where he stands; and the vastest human comprehension cannot name, perceive, posit, and interpret Deity. We can only draw presumptions from what we know, and

that, I repeat, provides us no equivalence to the fact; and, if not, then it leaves the fact continually open. When I say that a man cannot cover more ground than the place where he stands, I do not apply to the shoemaker for the measure of the last shoe he ordered from him. A man stands wherever his intelligence can have sure footing, on the earth or in the untrampled deeps of the sky; nothing is so remote that cannot yield to his analysis, and when it does, his person is to that extent enlarged. With a spectroscope he can wade through the metallic atmosphere of the sun, pick up specimens of the common metals along the track of Sirius, and explain to the stars their family relationships. The calculus draws the lines which their orbits must observe as they interlace each other, weaving the firmament into a network of symmetry, and hitching the little earth into the traces of the great movement. As fast as we invent the tools of research, more space surrenders to us; the atom is not too deep nor the nebula too remote. Thus we learn to follow preconcerted lines and pitch our camp in fresh places every day. But what is this camp in which we live? It is the intelligent method which our brains have learned from an observation of nature which has continued for thousands of years; it has convinced us at last that remote things are not invisible, but that the causes of remote things are. And as we become aware of this, an act of Faith

appears to be the expectation which arises from observing, not the surmising which comes from instinct. We have a right to expect that whenever, in any direction, the world responds to the course which our minds have taken up, with a sincere hope of discovery, it will continue to respond, and like a magnet bristle with congenial facts. As our method goes prying and burrowing through a confused heap of notions, all the iron-filings will rush to it, and leave the feathers to fill beds for those who would fain lie easier than Deity itself.

To be more explicit: The only ground for an act of Faith is furnished gradually by discovering how this world is constructed, for it is the stem on which our souls blossom; the whole order is destined to feed us and keep us in health. We only need to know what food to take, what elements to reject, what measures to pursue, what errors of the past to overcome by walking more closely with Nature, what conduct will make people more profitable to each other, and reduce the hostile feelings and opinionated judgments which made the past one long campaign or civil war of mankind. If we begin by teaching men the whole structure of *this* world, we can afford to leave the next world and the whole region of the invisible to each man, a free pasture where he may wander at will, and crop what theories best suit his disposition. For a well-instructed man has such excellent material

deposited in his person for the formation of opinions about all inaccessible objects, that he may safely be let alone. Neither the State nor the pulpit, nor the rancor of sectarian zeal, need touch his perfect liberty to form his own conception of God, and to put all his expectations into his own statements. Only one absolute condition should be uniformly enforced—that all men and women must take care to become intelligent; for the world needs inhabitants who spend their life in conforming to its laws, not in cherishing animosities about points which used to belong to the domain of Faith.

Teach laws and structures, point out the tendencies of facts, bring the farthest space and the minutest atom into the horizon of thought, banish from schools everything that warps the mind into the old direction, though it be called a Holy Bible; for one day in the week is quite enough for teaching superstition.

See to it that the other six days are so spent in the society of the world's great laws, that Sunday itself will let the Bible loose to speak its natural language of piety and righteousness, and forbid it to lisp a word to contradict the immutable consistency of the universe. For the well-instructed man will gladly claim the Beatitudes as his own flesh and blood, and welcome from all times and quarters of history the family tokens of his spiritual life.

Then our earnest expectations which set forth to

take possession of the future, will be all colored and sweetened with this wholesome earth-sap which knowledge draws into our veins. Knowledge is the most subtle of all chemists. It serves this earth as though it were a drop submitted to its analysis, and it precipitates that black juice which used to set men's blood on fire, and make them mad with each other because this man's God was not a Trinity, that man's Christ not supernatural, these people's bread and wine not his body, their heaven not judiciously balanced by a hell. That bitter drop of gall distilled from all the earth's poisons, and poured into the porches of man's ear while his intellect was in a drowse,—

> "Whose effect
> Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
> That, swift as quicksilver, it courses through
> The natural gates and alleys of the body."—

knowledge will be a continual prohibition of its manufacture.

What is knowledge but one great act of Faith? And the expectations which are bred by it are worthy to be covered by that name.

If I know laws, I can confide in their direction. The farther I push my scrutiny in the right direction, which every guide-post of the universe points out for me, the deeper I plunge by sacred, star-lit paths into wonder and veneration; through every opening I descry the shapes of health and beauty: they seem to have been waiting patiently for me, to make a

confidant of me; and they draw me into their proud and high companionship, where all the talk is about the truths and facts of my soul, and I thrill when thus actually touched and embraced by these angels of the infinite; they kiss my finite lips to make them utter only wholesome and invigorating speech, to recommend the natural religion which keeps a universe all the time obedient. When you start upon the simplest road of information, expecting perhaps to gather only the prosaic facts which build the city, sweep its streets, and drain its moisture, this road that so boldly bridges morasses and puts aside the jungle not only lets you travel securely, but furnishes far-sweeping views to widen forth your glances, and takes you into recesses where you feel an awe such as no conventional act of religion ever gave you.

Not a single great sentiment of the soul is extinguished by developing intelligence. No; sentiments were never so great before, because never so true: all the golden lamps are fed and burnished. The imagination itself becomes a sacred candlestick lighted by that one true priest, the wonderful world, that bids us delight in harmony and beauty, relieves our sorrows with the voices of poets and of instruments, permits every rapture that her vastness, her proportion, her intelligent method, her hints of a still more sumptuous outlay as time goes on, can excite in us, till we mount into something that deserves to be

called adoration, as a sense of the unity of all created things grants us a perfect act of Faith.

What a world to be our instructor in religion! Even if we live hereafter in another, we begin in this. And what object can there be in beginning anywhere, unless to get our bearings and take a direction? And the closer we keep to this, lashed to it by all its essential facts and laws, the more domesticated we shall be everywhere and always, for we are sure by the drift which all things take that we cannot reach a time or place that contradicts the primary lessons. And that too is such an act of Faith, that it sometimes seems to me that, if there be no other world, this would construct one; for every future is an eventual acknowledgment that we were absolutely devoted to each present moment. Do you think that deprives the soul of its generous yearning which keeps it sane amid so many contradictions, and cheerful through such cloudy days and downright drudging? The soul becomes more animated as the inmates ply their tools upon it, and it perceives the form of an ideal of attainment gradually emerging from its substance —

> "As when, with chiselled touch,
> The stone unhewn and cold
> Becomes a living mould,—
> The more the marble wastes the more the statue grows;
> So, if the working in my soul be such
> That good is but evolved by Time's dread blows,
> The vile shall day by day
> Fall like superfluous flesh away."

But it is lost time to argue against any suspicion that the human soul is going to be put out because the stream of knowledge is turned into it. Its accumulated rubbish, which once passed for religion, will be swept away, but those who are interested in these antiquities, and collect them to convert to-day into a junk-shop for them, do ill conceive how manly is knowledge, and how majestic it can make a soul that surrenders itself without prejudice to its keeping.

I think we need not whimper much about the soul. I should as soon grow melancholy with a doubt that music, if transferred from the old four-stringed lyre of the Greeks to the manifold complexity of the modern orchestra, was going to fall into decay. I anticipate an expansion like that which will call out of the soul new combinations, and sweep her variety with harmonies of truth and emotion compared with which the old music of religious faith is a twanging on one string. Surely the universe is a mighty sound raised by according light, heat, motion; the elements tune themselves by each other, as one string, though it be untouched, gives out its note when another string sings near it: facts the remotest from each other's apparent proximity do really build a chord; objects come swarming from every quarter into the movement which keeps hurrying knowledge to furnish it with instruments. Shall the listening soul, as the concord sweeps through it to adopt that

also, and make it sing with the morning stars, shrivel up, grow hunchback and decrepit, forget love, hope, and veneration, cease to worship beauty, and lead a blackguard's life? We are threatened with this by the old theological door-keepers, if we let knowledge seduce the soul to leave the denominations and belong to Faith. Oh soul, open the pew door, pass the sexton, escape into the sweet air of an open country whose landscapes stretch into bewitching distances, and let the great organ with its diapason of solemn laws play you into the Church of the Future.

This Republic needs religion above all things, to teach it how to consummate acts of Faith; but it will not be secured by a Preamble to the Constitution, to attach the word God to it,—no, not even if every sect have liberty to append a statement of its own peculiar doctrinal belief.

The country must foster and contrive institutions and churches devoted absolutely to answering this question, "How is this world constructed?" Here we are, not elsewhere—and no amount of ecstasy can transport us elsewhere. Here gravitation keeps us glued to one spot as we spin round through a vastness that doles out to us the elements by which we live. What are they—how are they to be taken, how discriminated, how turned into realities, how applied to the health of the person and the State, how made

to reconcile the contradictions which are so painful to the moral sense? The material has by this time accumulated so richly, as contributions from every quarter, come to spots where knowledge would fain build, that it is time to begin. We cannot keep the natural soul of mankind fasting for its religion. We want to teach society how to be more humane, and to make its inevitable distinctions opportunities for harmonic combinations, picked from the bottom to the top of the scale; we want, for instance, to engage the wisest brains to contrive, upon the basis of the law of co-operation, an adjustment of labor and capital. The law might have been suspected if it were not already discovered. Like other laws, it dwells with men, and waits to be put to service. It will be a sublime day for religion, that shall dawn over a whole republic, farmed, mined, forged, riveted, bridged and aqueducted, shoed, clothed, and tinkered by co-operation.

Here is a great passage from Isaiah: "They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails that it should not be moved."

Who is the statesman, ambitious to put a late posterity into his fame, to outlast with it his country's

monuments of stone and brass? Let him descend not lower in politics than some device to persuade the forces of the world to work in amity, so that tyranny shall be a mutual blunder, and concert a mutual success. Let moral earnestness leave the poor business of printing tracts and distributing polyglot bibles, and building up great evangelizing establishments whose concerns have to be overhauled from time to time, and their money accounts re-audited; for the country is not crying for a tract. It wants abatement of moral nuisances, protection for the unprotected, a compulsory spelling-book for every child. We want some system that shall press monopolies to find themselves unprofitable at the same time that it checks unscrupulous competition. We want the greatest number of people introduced into as large a number of opportunities as possible; not church extension, nor running into debt to outdo each other in parades of brick and mortar piety, but extension of rights and of respect, and of municipal usages over the whole world: we want liberty and safety put into an equation.

The things most wanted by this Practical Religion can be secured by discovering the laws of the things. Our *Expectation* is for improvement, but we can only have Faith in facts. *They* are the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.

A soul that has pledged itself to support these

purposes of a republic, need not be solicitous about its own salvation. Nor need it think that Sunday is set apart to teach it an act of Faith, and to keep the possibilities of another world in view.

How paltry it is to remove our human expedients of promises and threats into a Hereafter, to play with them from that distance upon our souls. What is a promise of heaven to a man who desires to see righteousness prevail? Why, such a man might promise heaven something. He does; for he labors to make to heaven a present of a world full of men who are so healthy in body and sane in mind that their souls are redeemed with his ransoming efforts.

No fictitious and inaccessible Saviour is he, but a warm-blooded man upon the spot, with a scheme of improvement and not of atonement. Let us have as little other-worldliness as possible.

This world is a stepping-stone in time's current, to carry us across to all worlds or to none; but it is not yet the hour for us to make that step. This is the day, and made for work and gladness. Only concentrate the mind upon a few of the most immediate exigencies. For instance, think of the physical conditions out of which the souls of men and women spring; upon what heaps of feculence and refuse many of them languidly nod, and pain us with a noisome odor.

Will you waft to them a jaunty promise of heaven

as you pass by, or pull them by the roots out of their hell, and plant them in your own rose-garden? If we spend life in proffering our gifts and opportunities to others, or even only in charming their faces to reflect the smiles of love and of sweet dispositions, there is nothing that we can fear, and no hypothesis of theology can make our trust in a supreme Plan more solid than it is. Life itself is our soul's guaranty, so enriched with everything for which we have invented gracious names. A beautiful and not a ghastly world, crowded with delights that besiege the portal of every sense, a bounty which no season can exhaust, nor length of years impoverish—age cannot wither nor custom stale our feeling that we live in a great Hand, whose warmth penetrates us with confidence, and wins our blossoms forth. There is nothing that we dread: Safe and sound as our souls are to-day, adopted by this universe and sharer of its primeval substance, they shall ever be;—not afraid of their Creator, or mistrusting that our gladness is but a mask to His pitfall. Life is so noble that we decline to suspect. Thank heaven, that the act of living is an act of Faith.

When the darkness lies piled up in the deepest fleeces on the summer seas, you take a boat and cut through the water below, and the gloom that broods upon it, and you quite discomfit any obscurity that is trying to clap a night-cap on your heads. Every

time that your boat leans to the wind, goes down a trough and slides up a wave, while the rudder gets restless from the human nerves which telegraph to it through the hand-ropes, there arises all around you a perfect clamor of light to peach upon the darkness and brand it as a sham, and, indeed, a perjury.

The countless swarms of infusoria are irritated into taking sides with light. How they swarm up to stem, prow, and washboard, as if mad to climb into the boat and overpower the crew.

They do: you cannot fight them off, they are privateers of the sea of Eternity. Each one of those microscopic atoms is a Theist; and some other atom, with the advantage of speech, might thus sing its hymn:—

In Thy mighty ocean we
Are the specks no one can see
Till the earth's impassion'd keel
Rubs the light that we conceal.

Then we kindle to a star,
Merest nothings that we are;
Leaning o'er to see our wake,
Thirst for splendor Thou dost slake.

It is then a dear surprise
To Thy heaven-wonted eyes
When my speck of spirit glows,
Clinging as Thy rudder goes.

Like the planets, so do I
Glimmer when Thou passest by;
Little soul, in letters white,
Spells Thy sailing through the night.

And Thou lovest so to trace
Motion by each twinkling face,
Thou wilt never cease to sail;
So Thy sparkles shall not fail.

'Neath Thy keel, the pitchest night
Will be mustered into light;
And a little speck like me
Beautifies the surly sea.

Summon wind and plough it deep!
Rouse our souls whene'er they sleep!
In the sail there moves Thy breath;
I shall burn, and burn up death.

X.

IDEALISM.

THE later scientific method undertakes to derive the conscience from selected experiences of the useful and agreeable. That is to say, in the finest minds the moral sense is only the clarified residue of the experiences which people have had in learning to live safely and comfortably with each other. The conscience is only a faculty that does a sum in addition, but cannot add a single figure to the sum. It becomes like a family resemblance, a permanent trait acquired by inheritance. A fresh experience may compel a fresh adjustment, and the moral sense can be modified from without by a social exigency, but can not consequently attain to any independent power to force its own adjustment upon experience. It is never conscious of an exigency of its own, that may transcend experience and dictate to it; such a faculty is as inconceivable as that a fountain should rise higher than its source. Acts of moral heroism are suggestions of an ultimate utility which persuade the individual to sacrifice himself. But what is the origin of such suggestions which contradict the average sense derived from human experience? The

scientific method insists upon its derivation of conscience from empirical observation, yet proceeds to explain the transcendent morals which reform the race and abolish any wrong that average experience has incorporated in its social system, by supposing that certain individuals are endowed with the capacity to conceive of a more beneficent system, to anticipate the future, to sacrifice peace, and the feeling of approbation, the immediate security of society, life itself, for the sake of a finer idea of Right. These individuals are moved thereto, perhaps, by seeing outrages or by suffering from them. But what impels a man who is pained at sight of a wrong which is upheld by society, to increase his suffering by protesting against it in behalf of other men? Every feeling of the useful and the agreeable would counsel him to keep his suffering and that of his fellows at a minimum. Experience has gradually founded the system which surrounds him; it can no more furnish him with the seeds of his revolt than the nut of a beech can provide the acorn for an oak. When the empirical method is held strictly to its own logic, this inconsequence is perceived, of something that has resulted from objective experience and is yet different in kind from all the objects which constituted that experience. Say that a state of morals at any epoch is only the state of comfort, happiness, usefulness, and mutual approbation of the majority:

then it is an average attained by the exigencies of people who are forced to live together. Logically that average is insurmountable; but practically it is constantly surmounted, and society is compelled to assume a higher average by men of a forlorn hope who propose a conception of religion, of worship, of human rights and happiness, which nowhere exists, and which could not therefore be suggested by empirical sensations. Such men are frequently those who conceive these things from afar; without the stimulus of personal suffering, quite removed from that into calm regions of meditation. They emerge from the solitudes of thought to proclaim the advent of a fresher and more just society; and the ordinary sense of justice, the vulgar instinct of order, taking alarm devastates the things that men hold dearest, and, if the reformers are obstinate, demands their life as a sacrifice to existing order. One thing is "said by them of olden time"—but these men, the products of no time at all, step out of a purer conception, and are heard, "but *I* say unto you." What an unaccountable phrase that is, that affirmation of a fresh Person who makes a point of saying *I*, if morals are nothing but the silt which time brings down and deposits. There must be somewhere existing an Absolute Righteousness, the inspirer of every more righteous future, as there must exist an Absolute Intelligence, the continuous cause of every develop-

ing epoch of creation. The hero of Right and of absolute religion is not maddened by suffering into forgetfulness of self, but he is possessed by a higher Self which invites itself to make a fortunate structure, into which it enters and waits there for his response. Or shall we suppose that his structure develops an exceptional Self? At any rate, the empirical method does not account for him, because he is essentially different from all the materials and sensations which it has to work with to produce notions of utility and social approbation. We may concede that these results can be derived from such materials; but the burden of showing the genesis of prophets and reformers rests with those who would restrict us to these materials alone. . . . . .

. . . . . What delicacy of sentiment or imagination can be desecrated because barbarian ancestors felt like brutes, or fancied like lunatics? Can the mind's majestic conception of a divine plan of orderly and intelligent development be unsphered and brutalized because the first men felt the cravings of causality more faintly than the pangs of hunger? Causality has reached its coronation-day: its garment of a universe is powdered with galaxies and nebulæ, suns glitter on its brow, the earth is its footstool, its sceptre God's right hand. You cannot mortify or attaint this king by reminding him of days spent in hovels and squalor, hiding from the treason of

circumstances, sheltered and fed precariously by savages. Would you unseat him? Then annihilate a universe.

This latent tendency to discover cause, rescues the first beginnings of the human soul from any materialism that would deny its independent existence. It provides the human structure with a tenant who improves it as his circumstances become more flattering, until both together frame one complete convenience. We do not require a theory of innate ideas to establish this soul upon earth and set it going. All we require is the theory of innate tendency, of latent directions, of inchoate ideas that pervade this germinal soul-substance just as the divine ideas pervaded primitive matter.

People do not like to have their conscience derived from gradual discoveries of acts that turned out to be the most useful or the most sympathetic, nor to feel that they have no inner guide but this inherited succession of selfish experiences. And, indeed, the theory does not account for all the facts. It is unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the moral condition of such men as Woolman and John Brown; of any brakeman or engineer who coolly puts himself to death to save a train; of Arnold of Winkelried, who "gathered in his breast a sheaf of Austrian spears" and felt Swiss liberty trample over him and through the gap.

This theory that the moral sense was slowly deposited by innumerable successions of selfish experiences, could make nothing of the story told of the way a little girl was rescued, who had "wandered on to the track of the Delaware Railroad as a freight train of nineteen cars was approaching. As it turned the sharp top of the grade, opposite St. George's, the engineer saw the child for the first time, blew 'down brakes,' and reversed the engine. But it was too late to slacken its speed in time, and the poor baby got up, and, laughing, ran to meet it. 'I told the conductor,' says the engineer, 'if he could jump off the engine and, running ahead, pick the child up before the engine reached her, he might save her life, though it would risk his own, which he did. The engine was within one foot of the child when he secured it, and they were both saved. I would not run the same risk of saving a child again, by way of experiment, for all Newcastle County, for nine out of ten might not escape. He took the child to the lane, and she walked to the house, and a little girl was coming after it when we left.' The honest engineer, having finished his day's run, sits down the next morning and writes this homely letter to the father of the child, 'in order that it may be more carefully watched in future,' and thanking God 'that himself and the baby's mother slept tranquilly last night, and were spared the life-long pangs of remorse.' It does

not occur to him to even mention the conductor's name, who, he seems to think, did no uncommon thing in risking his own life, unseen and unnoticed, on the solitary road, for a child whom he would never probably see again."

The feeling of utility would confine men strictly within the limits of the average utility of any age. Each generation would come to a mutual understanding of the things that would be safe to perform. The instinct of self-preservation would be a continual check to the heroism that dies framing its indictment against tyrannies and wrongs. The great men who fling themselves against the scorn and menace of their age could never be born out of general considerations of utility or sympathy; for each man would say that a wrong, though not salutary to its victim, would not be salutary to one who should try to redress it. Sympathy that was spawned by the physical circumstances of remote ages could never reach the temper of consideration for the few against the custom of the many. You could no more extract heroism from such a beginning of the moral sense than sunbeams from cucumbers. We owe a debt to the scientific man who can show how many moral customs result from local and ethnic experiences, and how the conscience is everywhere capable of inheritance and education. He cannot bring us too many facts of this description, because we have one fact

too much for him, namely, a latent tendency of conscience to repudiate inheritance and every experience of utility, to fly in its face with a forecast of a transcendental utility that supplies the world with its redeemers, and continually drags it out of the snug and accurate adjustment of selfishness at which it arrives. The first act of such devoted self-surrender might have been imitated, no doubt, and a few men in every age, having learned by this means that a higher utility resulted from doing an apparently useless thing, might be developed by a mixture of reason and sympathy into resisting their fellows. But how are you going to account for the first act? How for a sentiment of violated justice, if justice be only the precipitate of average utility? How for a tender love for remote and invisible suffering, for wrongs that are a nuisance at too great a distance to be felt or observed, — how account for all this, if sympathy is nothing but an understanding arrived at among people who are forced to live together? I should as soon pretend that my nostrils were afflicted by a bad smell that was transpiring in Siam.

The moral sense to which we have attained by stages of evolution must have started from an original tendency to become sensitive to moral acts. We cannot say that the results have established the tendency, any more than we can say that marks of design have originated a designer: that an eye, for

instance, developed light, or that light created a light-maker. We can only say that the light developed the eye, as righteousness of Deity develops conscience.

The phrases, *I ought, I ought not,* do not represent anything merely functional, as when a blood-hound tracks, a pointer points, a watch-dog listens through the house. We detect even in the animals a sense of duty in carrying out their instincts, and a deferring to man, as if to a source of the instincts, or at least to a power that holds them responsible for good behavior. So we instinctively refer our moral attitude to a source of Moral Law.

It is possible we have reached a moral sense from the anticipatory types of conscience in some animals, by drifting along with them through Mr. Spencer's experiences of utility and Mr. Darwin's social instincts. But a latent mental tendency must have fallen in with that structural drift at some point, else man would never agonize to say, *I ought, I ought not.* Is it any the less divine because it has fallen in with animals and savages and found their company no hindrance to this elaborating of a sense of Right and Wrong? It is all the more divine, because it betrays conformity with the great order of development, at the same time that it has been forereaching through it to perfect moral actions.

What was the nature of John Woolman's secret

satisfaction when he insisted upon non-compliance with the habits and allowances of his time? If conscience be the result of discovering what turns out badly for a person who is living on the scale of other persons, why should he, a tailor, have discouraged the making and wearing of fine clothes, have refused to touch, to his own serious privation, one of the products of slave-labor, have protested, to the loss of sympathy and the gain of contempt, against ownership in men? Was he an abnormal variety, a deteriorated specimen, a man whom advantage hurt? Where do Mr. Darwin's social instincts come in? Woolman withstood all these far distant and abstract incentives, and originated without social and intellectual material a fresh epoch of moral feeling. The latent tendency attained to liberation from all its previous experiences.

The latest scientific method derives the imagination, as it does the conscience, from accumulated sensations. But its language here struggles painfully to bring its phrases up to the level of the whole function of Imagination. It is quite inadequate to say that a brain well compacted with images derived from natural objects spontaneously creates the associations between them and human moods, passions and emotions; that a sense of symmetry and beauty, a feeling for landscapes, a power to evolve them out of the crude assemblage of natural features, a gift for

reconstructing all the sensations derived from life and nature into the sublimity of poetry and song, results from the number and variety of these sensations taken into a temperament of sensibility, where they are moulded, fused by personal passion, until they express cerebral felicity of structure. When the materialist talks in this way he has to use phrases which mix up the raw material in which the poet, artist, and composer work, with other phrases, which are assumptions that the raw material also generates their working faculty. That is the very point involved. No doubt the poet has received a multiplicity and variety of sensations. The difference between him and other men is, first, a capacity to receive them; second, a capacity to transform them into his own personality; third, a capacity to express them, thus transmuted, with a rhythmical flow that involves the whole of nature and man in its course, and converts nature into a metaphor of his private vitality. No number of empirical sensations derived from nature, no experience of mankind, no recollection of its history, can account for this result. A brain of rare structure incorporates a world, but gives it back to us another world; or, rather, the world's secret is fathomed and betrayed: we see it not as it always seemed to us, but lifted into a passionate and symmetrical vitality, which transcends every empirical sensation, and is, in fact, its reason for being: and

that is something which mere sensation cannot supply. Held to strict logic, the materialist has no right even to the phrases he employs in speaking of this subject.

H. Taine says that there is a fixed rule "for converting into one another the ideas of a positivist, a pantheist, a spiritualist, a mystic, a poet, a head given to images, and a head given to formulas. We may mark all the steps which lead simple philosophical conception to its extreme or violent state," as in the passage which he quotes from Sartor Resartus, beginning, "Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of the Body, and, forth issuing, from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission appears." "Take the world as science shows it," continues Taine, "it is a regular group, or, if you will, a series which has a law; according to science, it is nothing more. As from the law we deduce the series, you may say that the law engenders it, and consider this law as a force. If you are an artist, you will seize in the aggregate the force, the series of effects, and the fine regular manner in which the force produces the series." In this connection Taine evidently recalls the novels of Balzac, who develops the character of various human passions as primitive forces, which appear in objective facts of men and women, who are to be observed without praise or dispraise, as beings who develop organically their whole moral

disposition; and whose joy or grief may be merely inferred, according to the judicious rule laid down by Hegel that every work of art depends for its moral upon the person who is studying it. Elsewhere Taine shows how Thackeray, for instance, violates this rule. "To my mind," continues Taine, "this sympathetic representation is of all the most exact and complete: knowledge is limited, as long as it does not arrive at this, and it is complete when it has arrived there. But beyond, there commence the phantoms which the mind creates, and by which it dupes itself. If you have a little imagination, you will make of this force a distinct existence, situated beyond the reach of experience, spiritual, the principle and the substance of concrete things." By the simple intensification of this quality, the metaphysician and the mystic are evolved. It occurs to us to inquire, at the lowest, if imagination may not be a mode of force; if so, it must be taken into the account of mental development, where it appears to be something quite as positive as any passion that Balzac describes. It is then a legitimate object, whose products cannot be rejected merely because they deposit in the mind a sense of spirit. They push out a horizon filled with images and correspondencies which are different from visible things, and which those things, left to themselves, could not procreate, any more than a garden of flowers could

impregnate itself without the wafting of pollen. A viewless wind must stir the celibate stalks; a ranging bee must make its geometric cell an excuse for these promiscuous marriages. Here is the point where the scientific method, which is complemented by Taine's artistic method, fails to account for all the facts that a universe provides. As soon as the word *spirit* appears, or phrases hinting at the Invisible put in their claim, or a capacity that transcends inherited effects is supposed, the empirical method disclaims it all, or explains it all, as conscience is explained to be the cumulative result of experiences of utility. Yet the scientific method itself is indebted to the faculty of imagination. It is a twofold faculty: it performs two functions. First, it anticipates subsequent epochs of scientific interpretation by incessant proclamations of the essential unity of all things. Its instinct is for similarities; it floats at so great a height that objects appear blended, but the horizon from that height is so enlarged that a hemisphere of objects is spread out. It selects on one meridian the counterpart of an object upon another, though the object may skulk, and imitate the color of its neighborhood, hoping not to be swooped upon and assimilated. The wild game of imagination — its prey — runs in forests and multiplies in all seas. The ocean is a saucer, and its bottom scarce skin deep. And the distances which lie within the galaxy are sanded with

the gold dust of our imagery. The firmament is a solid floor on which this sense of unity can walk.

This instinct appears first in poetry, where Nature is rifled of all the features that can correspond to our emotions, or can serve as symbols of our thought:

> "The forest is my loyal friend;
> Like God it useth me."

And like God we use the forest. Its million leaves dance in the anticipation which our mind has, that this "sense sublime of something interfused" will turn out to be the identity of law and object, of the creature and the Creator, of the scenery and the seer.

How irrational and fantastic seems at first this conclusion to which the imagination leaps with the faith of a child in his "make believe." How futile this hysteric passion which mounts to the eyelid and inundates the cheek at the happy rashness of some image that abolishes time and space, and makes the dirty earth a lens. We put our eye to it. Thou Deity, our eyes have met!

There is no sense in this transubstantiation of poetry, except to the senseless communicant, until the epoch of scientific Synthesis arrives, and the imagination is justified in ransacking the universe for symbols. Synthesis is imagination secularized. I mean, that every one of the old symbols, the old confidences with Nature, the old obscure sympathies,

the artless pretences that objects are personal and vital, and all of them related through the observer, are now proved to be the mind's expectation that there is but one kind of intellect, but one object, and but one law or mode of divine manifestation. Synthesis builds a hive for imagination to dwell in: the structures planned by the original Geometer are filled with myriad meadows of sweets distilled to sweetness.

This leads me to say that, secondly, the imagination sometimes anticipates, at any existing epoch of information, a subsequent epoch when all the facts collected up to the latter date justify the anticipation. They are interpreted by a law, or by a mode of Force which put them forth. They arrive at length in sufficient number, and in relations obvious enough, to vindicate the previous divining of the imagination. Hardly a great man, from Pythagoras downward, can be mentioned, who did not have fore-feelings of the genuine scientific direction, in Number and mathematical relation, in the qualities of Motion and their application to planetary phenomena, in the sphericity of the earth and stars, in the law of musical intervals, in the applications of the arc and conic sections, in the position of the earth in the solar system. Before the facts were in, the method was surmised; sometimes the law itself was hinted at, and imperfectly formulated. Now, no unconscious cerebration, nor

automatic sorting of impressions derived from the number and similarity of facts, can promulgate or anticipate a law, because that is something essentially distinct from object. There may be simultaneousness in the appearance of law and object; we may admit that the two are really one, a moment in which identity appears, a focus of correlation. But there is no feature of this intimacy that can proclaim itself. That is not done for a long time, nor until an independent mental faculty appears, of such a divining nature that it is not at any epoch a common human faculty. It is the result of rare structural qualifications, which recur to Creation with the gift that made creation possible; with a power to repeat by a sense of cause the logic that caused; to create a mental synthesis that sweeps all observation into the unity of a law; to show that all the sciences are Protean moods of one eternal moment of correlation; to speak at length in human language the Plan which, without speaking, planned. That ineffable Creative Word becomes flesh in the divinings of imagination. These precede any collection or arrangement of objects, just as infinite Will must have preceded its own going into objects. Or, if Will and object be continually identical, it is not in consequence of object. We cannot eradicate or explain away that aboriginal habit of the scientific imagination to ask, Why?—as the child does—and to answer, Because!

—as the child does: of such is the kingdom of heaven. Object cannot ask nor answer, because it cannot originate. But the intellect does not wait till all the facts are in, any more than the divine mind did in order that the facts might be created.

Before botany was dreamed of, or the principle of vegetable life was divined, Luther said, "The principle of marriage runs through all creation, and flowers as well as animals are male and female." This was an anticipation as remarkable as that of Swedenborg, who clearly posited the nebular hypothesis before he or any other man had an inch of standing ground to show for it.

Now, if at any epoch the finest brains, those, namely, whose synthetic method is rarefied by imagination, are only deposited by empirical contact with the world, so that their state of intelligence is nothing but juxtaposition of facts, and their structure nothing but a result of microscopic packing of sensations, such brains could not discharge the functions of which they are conscious. The problem is to build a brain. Let us build it after the fashion of the materialist. The animal kingdom slowly elaborated the cerebral matter, and roughly mapped out the relation of its parts. Nature, cautiously feeling its way from species to species, from simple to complex forms, from a dot of plasma to the complicated lobes which respond to external circumstances and then

record them, contributes the whole of the process to the progenitors of mankind. What had their brain become by that time? It was an agglutination of sensations. What must have been the result of the first sensible impression that was made upon the earliest rudimental nerve-matter? That question is answered by the statement that the nerve-matter was a part of the objective world which produced the impression. It did not lose or modify its character by being eliminated from that world; it was still one of its discrete forms, and identical in substance. Then the object which impressed it, and the impression, were identical: the object was the sensation. There is no infinitesimal rift into which you can thrust your surmise of a difference, and pry apart a sameness into duality; that is, into the supposition of an object to impress and an object to be impressed, —an object to become by means of that impression something different in kind from the object that impresses. Brood upon that primitive relation of plasma to all the rest of elemental matter. You cannot hatch it into a different kind of vitality by merely saying that plasma was a more highly organized matter. You cannot establish a schism in matter by determining grades of organization. Every grade preserves, prolongs, embodies the original identity in which it was contained; just as oxygen by aërating the blood impressed it with the character

of oxygen, but does not liberate it from the materiality which they both share. A nerve-sensation is not a leap from Object into Subject.

If it is not, as the materialist alleges, then it makes no difference how many sensations the accumulating brain receives and registers; their number cannot change their quality. On the long route of developing mankind there is no station where independent mentality may step on board. The train stops for refreshment, wood and water. But the food and the fuel still correspond to their own motive power and digestive ability. Stomach and food, brain and object, are convertible expressions. All objective circumstances remain unaltered; nerve-matter accumulates because sensations do. The first word of human speech, the first musical cadence, the first smatter of the natural language of human emotions on the face, the first prattling of social intercourse, the first fumbling for a tool of bone or flint, the first sparkle kindled in the dry pith of the fennel, all these rudiments of society were only the sensations of Sensation, the objectivity of objects. The brain was but another object set up by the concurrence of objects, a self-registering world in the compass of a skull. Even if the cerebral capacity should cease to expand, while the perceptions continue to accumulate it never can be filled; for the method of packing them is economical of room. If a drop of water is

capable of containing 500,000,000 animalcules endowed with locomotive limbs, there must be room enough in any brain for any number of objective residues. But so long as the world does not swerve from its own objectivity, and change its climate, so long does the human brain continue to be its odometer, or automatic tally.

I think this is a correct presentation of the latest materialism, which derives all mental functions from an automatic system of storage of objective impressions. But its advocates have not yet looked in the glass of their own theory. I have tried to reduce it to the inconsequence which lies latent in it. It is this: — It has nothing but objects to start from, nothing but them to accumulate, and yet it assumes to arrive at something which is not object—for instance, its own capacity to make any assumption at all—and to deny that the capacity demonstrates independent mentality. It will deduce and presume; something which a skull commensurate with the sky, and crammed with objectivity, could never do. It will refuse to a human being an independent personality; something which nothing but such a personality could do. It started with speechlessness, and had, of course, nothing but agglutinated dumbness to end with: yet it invents words and commits to them its affirmations and denials; lends them to the poet, who makes whole landscapes share the breath of their life; turns

them over to the prophet, who puts them in his thwarts, casts loose from actual states, and pulls into the possible and the desirable; yields them to the synthetic imagination, and hears its own best guesses before it has proclaimed them, and its own experimental method suggested before objects could muster in number strong enough to raise a whimper; consigns them to the moral sense, and is refuted by a style of speech which transcends the latest moment of utility and social advantage, pronounces in divine men their own death-warrant, and sighs out selfishness upon a million crosses. Was that bit of plasma, then, nothing but one object more in a worldful?—or was it an anvil upon which objective impact flew into a spark? Now a myriad hammers of the many-handed Kosmos crash through our skulls, and we see stars—abysses full of them. Is it an optical illusion? They appear to attain orbits, they move in definite and harmonious relations, they create distance, deepen it with perspective; flat objectivity is broken up, as a thinkable universe comes pondering through. Let me have recourse to an illustration. A planetary motion is the result of two causes: first, a force that acts in the direction of a tangent; second, a force that attracts. What happens when the mind has observed that there are these two forces? Something that discovers their laws. This may be an inductive process, derived from prolonged and numer-

ous calculations, adjustments, and corrections, based upon as many planetary directions as can be observed. Then suppose we wish to ascertain the motion of a planet which is submitted to the influence of these laws. That is a deduction based upon calculation. There is an astronomical duplication of the planetary facts, a mental rehearsing of orbital motions. The facts recur to their Cause through our intellect. Their mere objectivity is not competent to achieve this result, which is something causative, and therefore essentially different from themselves which are caused. They are occasions for addressing, stimulating, and developing in us a quality which is not themselves—not their counterpart—but which is identical with the quality which caused them. They stand between, and could as soon have originated Cause behind them as our causality beyond them. What is the mental fact that takes place when this mediate Object recurs to Subject? Something besides cerebral registering of the succession of sensations produced by the phenomena. That only succeeds in confirming succession or simultaneousness. We call the mental fact Deduction. But that is only a word, and not an explanation. It does not put us into possession of the actual occurrence when objects are mentally fitted with the laws of their causes. It does not explain the nature of that mental moment. To say that it is the result of cerebral movement and

waste, of changes in the grey matter of the brain, does not explain it. That is only a dynamical accessory.

In like manner, what happens when an imaginative person, seeing some features of a landscape, or some combinations of light, sky, sea, color, at morn or sunset, invests the scene with his own personality? In fact, the combination called a landscape exists nowhere; it is a pure ideal construction of his own. The scene without is only a paletic or a pot of paint. A poetic symbol, a simile which encloses a trait of nature in the amber of thought or emotion, is a mental process unaccountable on any theory of empirical accumulation of sensations.

But we seldom find a materialist who is willing to accept such a statement of his method which shows that it really starts with a term that is incapable of starting! Bald matter is impotent to proceed except into fresh forms of matter; and even that process requires that Force should be assumed. And something has to make that assumption. That assuming faculty cannot be merely a form of matter, for nothing can step outside of itself and become what is nothing. No number of things can do that, though the sensations produced by them accumulate for centuries. They may be irritants, as a drop of acid is when it is put upon a frog's bare muscle after his head is cut off; but they cannot conceive that they

irritate, any more than the frog can conceive that he is irritated. They cannot formulate their unconscious function of exciting our senses.

What does the materialist say when his empirical method is boned in this way, and sinks on the floor of Creation, a helpless huddle of object, every articulation and vertebra of his own mentality withdrawn from it? He disclaims the result, cannot tolerate being defrauded of his own analytic and classifying skill; so he declares against materialism in that sense. But it has no other sense. The moment he declares against it, he declares in favor of an intellectual perception of an objective sensation; that is, in favor of something which object cannot generate. His own idealism rises against its gaoler, and breaks out of prison in this declaration.

This ought to startle him into making a more distinct definition of the word *matter* than he has yet undertaken. He uses that, and the word *object*, in the ordinary sense, but will not recognize all that it connotes when it is pressed to ultimates. And it is astonishing that he can invent such words as Vitality, Force, Correlation, to account for phases of objects, elemental modes, conditions of existence, without feeling compromised. He is obliged to assume something which is anterior to objects and their phenomena, anterior to the sensations produced by them: he speaks of correlation, but says nothing about some-

thing previous which does the correlating. If that something be another objective condition, a more tenuous tenuity, it involves the necessity of something still beyond, since mere condition cannot conditionate itself, and nothing can do itself. So that, sooner or later, the words employed by the empirical observer justify an ultimate Ground of being, an absolute Cause; and that too justifies cause in the observer, for Being goes into Object, and not Object into Being.

Perhaps the materialist will take refuge in the Hegelian phrase, Matter is Being outside of Itself, in order to endow matter with a causative capacity, and to secure perpetual vitality to its plastic germs. Then he may suppose that objective phenomena, in their gradual achievement of the human brain, lent to it their primitive endowment as Being outside of Itself, and made of it another animate object. But what becomes of Being outside of Itself when this object disappears, is disintegrated, ceases to be a focus of Being. It either must recur to Being in Itself, or must be correlated in some mode of Force. Both suppositions make the human intellect only a phenomenal phase of Absolute Being; it is only caused matter, it is on the footing of every other object, its root imbibes the identity of Object and Being, its self-consciousness is only an increase of animateness, but not a differentiation of it into Person. It invents

the phrase, to be sure, claims to have or be a Self, and that the unconscious animal, reaching man's estate, comes to the line where consciousness begins; man separates to that extent from the world of Object, because Object has been Being all the time. But if it has been Being all the time, one of two things must be true: either that self-consciousness resided all along the route in organic objects, or at no point of it at all; the reputed consciousness of Self is only a phenomenon of Object.

Perhaps the materialist will thank us for such a reduction of the Hegelian phrase to another form of matter, because it makes soul and person impossible on any terms; and perhaps the idealist, discontented with any style of the doctrine of evolution, will be driven to the notion that there is outside of us an ocean of germinal soul-monads, which become allied with human structures.

There are insuperable objections, lying mainly in the direction of the facts of inheritance, to this attempt at spiritualism. In the meantime, the doctrine of evolution cannot be dispensed with. The burden does not rest upon us to indicate the point in time, and the method of appearing, of independent mentality. But we can show that Object can propagate only Object; and not even that, without an assumption which Object cannot propagate.

Let us take, however, a word which the materialist

is competent to invent and is obliged to use—Vitality. He must assume it, spite of the objectivity of every point of his empirical method. Then, in the interest of Idealism, we suggest, taking a statement used by us in another place, "whether there can be any germinal soul-substance except the mysterious force which we call Vitality, wherever we see it in the human state. It went into creation allied with all the germs that have subsequently taken form. It carried everywhere a latent sensibility for the creative law out of which it came. It swept along with a dim drift of the Personality that first conceived and then put it on the way to self-expression. It mounted thus by the ascending scale of animals, and its improvements in structure were preparations to reach and respect Personality, to report the original consciousness of the Creator that he was independent of structure. At length it became detached from the walls of the womb of creation, held only for nourishment by the cord of structure, till it could have a birth into individuality. Then the interplay of mind and organism began, with an inherited advantage in favor of Vitality. Now Vitality, thus developed and crystallized into Personality, tends constantly back towards its origin. The centrifugal movement through all the animals is rectified by the centripetal movement in man. The whole series of effects musters in him to recur to an effecting Cause."

Prof. Haeckel, of Jena, in his Biological Studies,* makes the following statement: "Protoplasm, or germinal-matter, also called cell-substance or primitive slime, is the single material basis to which, without exception and absolutely, all so-called 'vital phenomena' are radically bound. If the latter are regarded as the result of a peculiar vital force independent of the protoplasm, then necessarily also must the physical and chemical properties of every inorganic natural body be regarded as the result of a peculiar force not bound up with its substance."

Very well, why not? Even the vague motions, like the incoherent simmer of a crowd of people on a great square, which take place in the molecules of the densest substance, are dumb gropings of some Force, arrested for the present in the substance, and not to be detected transgressing its limits. But something is there which shares and testifies to a universal tendency towards evolution into other substances and into organic forms. Physical and chemical forces attest the presence of Vitality, as well as the mental functions which use the structural results of those forces. Something independent of the material basis must have endowed it with its movements and qualities. It certainly could not have originated itself or its forces. Something anterior to the material basis must include and transmit a tend-

* See Toledo *Index:* April 29, 1871.

ency of Vitality toward mental and moral functions, which are at once independent of the basis and yet closely allied to it.

Let us observe, now, if any contribution may be made to Idealism from another quarter. The empirical method has not busied itself much with the phenomena of musical sensibility, though, to be consistent after including the imagination in its genesis of mind from external sensations, it ought to construct the sense of Harmony and the inventive genius of the composer in the same way, since imagination plays so large a part therein. Some physical facts which at first threaten to support a pure empiric origin for mental functions, turn out upon cross-questioning to belong to the other side of the case, and to contribute toward some more ideal statement.

The German Helmholtz, who has made some profound studies of the law of Harmony, in his examination of the structure of the human ear found that the cochlea, or snail-formed cavity, contained a fluid, across which three membranes were thrown — an upper, a middle, and an under. In the middle compartment he discovered innumerable microscopic disks, lying next each other like the keys of a piano: one end of each of them is attached to the vessels of the auditory nerve, the other end to the outstretched membrane. These disks are the sensitive points which receive the vibrations of musical instruments,

and transmit them to the brain in the form of notes and tones. A single string is known to give off different vibrations from its upper and its middle section, yet the ear apprehends only one simple tone. Does the ear solve the sound of a complex vibration made by these waves of different length, or does it receive the sound as a whole? Answering this, Helmholtz says that the physical ear funds the wave-forms into a sum of simple waves, which is the result of their concurrence; since any wave-form you please can be constructed out of a combination of simple waves of different lengths: and, as in the instruments, so in the ear, the ground tone wakes the corresponding upper tone.

When vibrations play upon the disks in the ear, it is as if they played upon banks of keys; and the first physical impressions are produced, sorted, combined, and then transmitted as so much seasoned material to be used in manufacturing music. Then occurs the wonderful moment when Something beyond these microscopic feelers digests the prey they catch, into human moods and emotions. What leaps the genius takes, through and across what an unbridged abyss, upon these stepping-stones of disks, to gather the waifs and strays that float upon the manifold sea of Harmony! There is no such startling proof that Nature has at length developed a transcending Person in mankind, though perhaps whole races died for it,

dissonances and partial chords, or constructed upon vicious intervals, before Harmony could respond to its own laws. At length an essential differentiation seems to have taken place, an abstraction which compels sensations to subserve its subtlest emotions. For at one end of this process is nothing but the disks vibrating in their fluid: at the other end is something rarely and radically different,—the gamut of the human heart, the symphony upreared by intellect and feeling, the song exhaling into the mist that sheathes the eye, the lyric whose silvery trumpets summon bravery and nobleness from every drop of blood.

Now, atmospheric vibrations make one fact, and the structure of the ear enclosing the microscopic disks makes another. Both of these facts when they come together, provide empirical sensations. The temperament, culture, and inherited susceptibility of the musical composer's brain, collect and organize these sensations into the modes of harmony, and reject all dissonance. But when, and by which of the two parties in this transaction, was the earliest step taken towards such a complicated result? There was a time when there was nothing but an atmosphere capable of vibrating, and nothing but an ear capable of receiving the accidental throng of natural noises. There was a time when the first fibre of a plant, the

first tense string of some creeping vine, twanged to some chance touch, when the wood of the forest revealed its resonant capacity, when the dried reeds first sighed and whistled in the wind. This was all the appeal that Nature had to make. Did it originate the sequence of melodies and construct the theory of Harmony? What is a dissonance? Merely a physical repugnance of the disks for interfering and contrarious vibrations? Whence, then, the repugnance of the disks? There are tribes of men whose ears have not been furnished with it. There are civilized, Indo-germanic people, who cannot tell a chord from a discord. It is not credible that the crude objectivity of natural vibrations gradually selected out of Nature an harmonious ear. Nature has no harmony which could effect such a selection. She has never sorted and combined and weeded out her noises. She is unisonous, monotonous, or full of jar and clash; she has no art to reconcile the voices of the sea, the air, the birds of the forest; each creature has its note and its key, and the air itself is a Babel of cross-purposes. The empirical sensations produced by modern music are drawn from things which vibrate by a law that the things do not possess, and never could have suggested. Harmony has been imposed from within upon their isolated qualities; and an orchestra, so far from being an induction, is

an intuition. The composer listens to its combinations before they are played. The spiritual developments of successive periods has imparted to every instrument its peculiar quality by gradual selection among the woods, reeds, and metals of Nature, and by discovery of the isolated shapes which correspond best to atmospheric conditions. These inductive experiments have been presided over by a sense which no induction could have furnished. What, for instance, is the temperament of a piano but a metaphysical compromise between the imperfections of the material and the law of intervals? Harmony, in short, is a refutation which the materialist himself might welcome; but it kills his theory as effectually as the poison, poured into the auditory tube, which made a ghost of Hamlet's father.

It is much easier to tolerate the doctrine that a slice of meat, well assimilated, becomes the poet's happy thought, than to understand how wafts of common air could be transformed into the mighty uplifting of the soul when the orb of music passes over our flat life, and draws emotion into every barren creek, and dashes its tonic against the heart. Physics must allow an essential difference between a mere vibration and a well cooked mutton chop, and it is in favor of the stimulating and edifying quality of the chop. Music has been called the image of motion.

But where the ear is struck, something else than a wave is propagated. It would be more just to say that music is imagination set in motion.

The sea tide writes its diary accurately enough in the sand-ripples. But here is another ocean—of air—that comes rolling in upon our little beaches, that did not imprint these footsteps, so massive and deep that our own are lost as we try to follow. Yet there is no dismay; for in the bosom of each trace lies the direction of our home: by which we know that a Beethoven has just passed by.

I claim, then, against a strictly logical empirical method, three classes of facts. First, the authentic facts of the Moral Sense whenever it appears as the transcender of the ripest average utility. Second, the facts of the Imagination as the anticipator of mental methods by pervading everything with personality, by imputing Life to Object, or by occasional direct suggestion. Third, the facts of the Harmonic Sense as the reconciler of discrete and apparently sundered objects, as the prophet and artist of number and mathematical ratio, as the unifier of all the contents of the soul into the acclaim which rises when the law of Unity fills the scene.

Upon these facts I chiefly sustain myself against the theory which, when it is consistently explained, derives all possible mental functions from the impacts of Objectivity.

It does not trouble me that I cannot put my finger on the period of human development when man began to have independent personality. Who can tell when a child begins to have a consciousness of Self? — to say *I*, with a distinct feeling of what his speech involves? Yet at length he is found to be saying it, and to be converting the identity of consciousness into personal character. Ages of semi-human conditions may have preceded, as years of characterless infancy precede, the assertion of personal identity. The men of those developing ages may have perished like ants that swarm in the pathway of feet. What of that, if a day comes that speaks at length an imperishable word?

That word is, I know Unity, I have Unity, I pass into consciousness of Creative Laws, I touch the Mind from whom my mental method started, and I thus become that Circle's infrangibility. My law of perceiving is so complete an expression of the law of creating, that I perceive, as the Creator once perceived, that matter alone could not start with it nor end in it. I know the laws which matter did not make. Then matter did not make my knowledge.

Science does me this inestimable benefit of providing a universe to support my personal identity, my moral sense, and my feeling that these two functions of mind cannot be killed. Its denials, no less than

its affirmations, set free all the facts I need to make my body an expression of mental independence. Hand in hand with science I go, by the steps of development, back to the dawn of Creation, and, when there, we review all the forces, and their combinations, that have helped us to arrive, and both of us together break into a confession of a Force of forces.

THE END.