



THE SUNNY SIDE
OF
SHADOW



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No 373

Thomas Stilleborn

From Mother

July 1890.



THE SUNNY SIDE OF SHADOW

“I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am He who partaketh of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshippers.”

(Supposed to come from the mouth of Brahma.)

“We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry; . . . but in the night . . . Hope sees a star, and *listening Love* can *hear the rustle of a wing!*”

THE SUNNY SIDE OF SHADOW

REVERIES OF A CONVALESCENT

BY

FANNIE NICHOLS BENJAMIN



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TO MY HUSBAND



PREFACE.



DURING the lingering hours of a long convalescence, I have sometimes noted down the dreams of the day, with scarcely a thought beyond the writing. If I bind these loose leaves into a book, it is with no plea in its defence. To understand not books or things, but *life*, has been my perpetual aspiration; and if in this region of calms, my revery has at any time mirrored back that which shall touch another soul with refreshment, it has, however insignificant, its right to live.

One need not always bring fresh flowers! In wandering through bright gardens, some

delicate and lasting fragrance may impregnate the garments and the hair ; and it is this clinging bit of perfume I have hoped might make these pages welcome.

F. N. B.

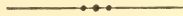
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THE SUNNY SIDE OF SHADOW.



I.

THE DOCTOR.

WHO said sickness was only a misfortune? Not the doctor, to be sure: pray, what would become of his pocket-book? Lying here deliciously lazy, counting the hours, the weeks, which run noiselessly by, we incline to think it was not the doctor's patient. Were we a croaker, croak we should, doubtless, sick or well; being rather of a speculative turn of

mind, we find the sick-room quietly suggestive, albeit sometimes of rather a woful bliss. Life here, if any thing beyond stupor or pain, is like looking through a blue-tinted glass far away; it is pale, faintly defined, delicate, poetical, full of ideal meanings. To be *well!* Ah, that is to go down into the every-day prose translation of it, too often to find it coarse, cruel, clamorous! It is to be forever "climbing up a climbing wave;" to chase will-o'-the-wisps; to pluck roses, and see both beauty and fragrance slip through unwilling fingers; to fold close a darling joy, and find it sting like a scorpion. Why, then, should an "atom" complain that it is now and then stranded from the whirling life-current,—shelved for repairs?

It is said imagination is the divinest of

human faculties. Physicians assert that never as in illness, and during the long stages of convalescence, does it have full play. Too often the dull energy of the material crowds out the earnest seeking of the spirit. Why, in this utter relaxation of the physical, may not the soul at times have keener vision? "The three thrones upon which life lifts itself to power are self-reverence, self-knowledge, and self-control." Why call that a misfortune, which brings to the soul the solitude, the discipline, necessary to mount the steps leading thitherward?

How could we know the divine beauty of unselfishness, how be able truly to number our friends, were we not sometimes thrown helpless upon their bounty? The world is divided into two classes,—

genuine people *with hearts*; and made-up, artificial people *without*, the latter largely predominating. In society we find this class mostly all moulded after one model; their smiles are “childlike and bland” (while they can use you), their favors and courtesies for sale to the highest bidder. These friends do not trouble your sick-room, and you are glad of it. They were monotonous, and tired you, when well; and now that you don’t care about the weather or the fashions, your servants do not worry you, or other people’s affairs interest you — what could you find to say to them? But the true, the loving hearts, how they open like beautiful blossoms about you! How patient, how untiring, how delicate, how thoughtful, is *love!* every sweet beat of the heart, a token

of something spiritual you know will be yours in paradise.

There are times when we think we know what God means by the "elect," and are half glad when life runs down to death's door to meet them. We look up at the doctor, and wonder he brightens to say we "are better." Why is it good fortune to be brought back? Death is no ghastly skeleton, that we need fear him more than life. We looked into his face; and, as it neared us, it paled with a celestial brightness.

"To die — to sleep —

No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished."

Hamlet's sigh for restful peace sent our

thoughts straying back to the beautiful young Macaria of Euripides, who voluntarily offers her spotless life a sacrifice to appease the gods — so long ago rose this passionate desire that the grave should end all.

“ Oh that there may be nothing ! If again
Beyond the grave we wake once more to pain,
What hope will there remain to us ? To die
Is of all ills the surest remedy.”

Something of this old Greek longing creeps into our own heart between its fever-beats. Oh for *rest* ! “ After life’s fitful fever, to sleep well ; ” rather *repose* than paradise !

We asked of the kind face that had so many long years looked into sick and dying faces, what was the innermost secret it

had learned of life and death. The reply came slowly: "Greater trust in goodness and in God; less faith in merely nominal piety; greater surety that beyond the scientists and their human confines of laws there extends a shoreless infinite, unknown and unknowable." Said he, "A thoughtful physician who goes down to the very gates of death with his patients, less than others, can say he *knows* of the beyond: he turns to face a *mystery*. He, more than others, knows the effect of the imagination upon the dying; before him surface conventionalities crumble away, and all shams are thrown aside; he comes very near the naked soul in its supreme hour, and unto him is a gospel preached not of the theological schools."

The fear of death, it seems, is with

most, at last, more a physical shrinking than any spiritual dread of the hereafter; certain characteristics are strong to the last. Our good doctor tells an odd story of a patient who was in life greatly given to joking. At length, after a long illness, he upon one occasion thought himself dying. The doctor suggested that immediate death was impossible, because his extremities were still warm. "Ah, but," said the patient, "there are exceptions." — "No," said the physician: "in years of study and practice I know of none." — "You cannot be well read, then," replied he. "I can cite a number. What do you say to John Rogers?" Before morning the man lay dead.

Jean Paul beautifully says, "Death takes place on earth, when on the heart the

flower-wreath of earth is great enough or the crown of thorns too great." We lie some days, faint and still, thinking of this. Delicious rest of death! it is as though after a dull, sad storm our head were anchored on the beloved breast, and like a sweet narcotic its tender warmth swept through our veins. Limitations of earthly knowledge are so faintly defined; where we most crave light, there is such a sense of darkness! We long to creep nearer the shadow of thy white and sunlit wing, O Death! We stagger in trying to keep the head aloft where purer currents sweep: the sense of responsibility weighs us down like a cross. May it not be that the guiding Father-hand permits us thus to stumble and be benumbed, that we may the more utterly lean upon him?

“Is this the way, my Father? — ’Tis, my child,
For thou must pass through tangled forests wild
If thou wouldst reach the city undefiled,
Thy peaceful home above.

O Father, it is dark! — Child, take my hand;
Cling close to me, I’ll lead thee through the land;
Trust my all-seeing care: so shalt thou stand
’Mid glory bright above.”

One must be sick to appreciate doctors. To us they had, in some indefinable way, been always too suggestive of bread-pills and humbuggery. We were homœopathic, because we liked our powdered sugar and dough in small quantities. We imagined them as occasionally interested, perhaps, in some curious phase of disease, or on the alert to experiment as to the effect of certain drugs on cats and mortals; and opened our eyes in a lazy sur-

prise when a grand, royal old face looked in upon us, questioning slowly. The *Doctor!* We glanced furtively up to see if he wanted to dissect us. The eyes were searching and kind that looked quietly back into ours. We wished the fever would go away, that we might study the face: sick or well, we like to study such faces. Certain heads and faces bear such impress of power, they make you comfortably sure of immortality. They enter a room: you are conscious of a grand presence, are impressed as with some emanation of purity, truth, or beauty. Others may enter, crowd, fill a room, and you know you are *alone* still. What is it, this thrill of kinship with immortals? Doctors, we take it, must be very good or very bad, and cannot,

like the clergy, vacillate between an orthodox head and an indifferent or heterodox heart. Think what a life-work! to minister to suffering—only to suffering; to become the confidant of sad secrets, to know sickness of soul that no medicine can touch, to bear around with you the burden of others' pain; to know no time your own, sleeping or waking; to be called forever to sustain, to abstain, to minister unto! What a labor of love! And if at the last God pronounces, "Well done, good and faithful servant," what riches of reward! We are glad of this for the sake of the kind, wise face, with its circle of gray hair, and the bit of sadness hidden away back of the eyes. We know this man will drop down some day in the harness; he will never rust out.

After half a century of busy work he will leave no fortune behind him ; but in a thousand hearts a tender thrill of love shall waken with his name, and the memory of his face with its rugged lines of patient sympathy and quiet endurance shall be to many lives a perpetual sermon. Behold how much better than *riches* is such an immortality !





II.

PATSY PRINGLE.

It is well to be kept prisoner by illness sometimes, just to get time to study the *sky*. Having all external Nature like an open book to read, we would never, perhaps, in all our threescore years and ten, guess what beauty is framed in by a three-by-six window. We have in health such excess of riches, it is as in viewing a varied and extended landscape: there is the sense of delight, but not the exquisite thrill of pleasure with which a stray beam of sunlight, the pure outlin-

ing of a passing cloud, or the soft coloring of a distant hill, touches us. Sad it is, but too much beauty often deadens the sense of beauty! We are but finite, and our eyes look too much *down* ever to take in half the beauty floating *above*. We are almost content to lie here, that we may have time to lazily drink it in. There need be no hurried glance; we are not driven hither and thither by business, by society, by fashions and follies; thrice blessed of mortals, we have no ruffles to seduce, or worries to perplex. What to us are laces or jewels? Have we not those square feet of changing sky? What lace-work like the fleecy veiling of the blue heaven-face shining in upon us? Such massing and grouping of winged clouds! such curious and grace-

ful outlining of hurrying forms! And the blue itself, — what soft gloom, what tender brightness, what lustrous depth! The sky appeals to us as do eyes of those we love, with an eager longing to get back of it all to the soul of it, to sound all depths of meaning and expression, as though in some way we were coming close to Deity. Human eyes may disappoint, but the returning glance of the sky is exquisitely pure and sincere. One longs to be born a star, to penetrate the blue abyss! Already is the body half forgotten in its weakness and weariness; the soul has found wings, and from yonder window flies forth toward paradise.

But the outer brightness fades; we close our eyes, and half between sleeping and waking summon the wonderful spirit

of the air, impulsive, passionate, beautiful Athena! How all the soft clouds flutter about her, a filmy robe veiling the roseate beauty of her limbs! her breast is like down, and all the gold of the sunsets dyes her floating hair. We feel a Pagan, half-sensuous longing to fall down and worship her.

Small wonder the old Greek thought wrought itself out in forms of immortal beauty we moderns can hardly conceive. Their life was an endless calm, a lifelong dream. From their golden skies to their gracefully curving shores and tranquil seas, all was infinite repose. They were children of the sun, and their art sprang up and grew and blossomed, a part of their life; body and soul opened in graceful and harmonious development; they lived long,

and died serenely. What have *we*, with our vulgar pushing and striving and elbowing and dodging, with our noisy steam-whistles and flying steam-horses, in common with these children of the gods? Only in dreams, or on some beautiful idle day like this, shall we be touched by a sense of the sweet vision of their life. Toward us (as unto them in those old days) all beauty approaches: but we moderns mostly tie the world-bandage too tightly about our eyes for seeing well; we pause not to look within or without, reaching out only for the gold coin which we can carry at last but as death-weights on our closed eyelids.

Oh, these long days of convalescence! How long they are, and how *full*! Sometimes a friend drops in; we like to lie still and watch when we cannot talk to

them. What a study the "human face divine!" the *nurse's*, for instance. Good soul, we use and then abuse her; her stout square frame with its soft yet heavy tread rises before us reprov-ingly. Lynx-eyed Nemesis! we never dare wink while she watches us; we eat as we are bidden, and should swallow nectar or poison with equal meekness. True, the soft fat hand has a touch like a kid glove, fine and soothing; many a time have we dropped asleep, and dreamed of angels and Madonnas bending over us, when it was only dear old Patsy Pringle, her face without a curve or a dimple, and her only halo the frills of her well-worn cap. We like her, and we detest her. She soothes and she rasps. Why need she forever taste our soups in advance? (we have eyes in the back

of our head, Patsy!) Why smell of all our medicine-bottles as though they held choice perfumes? We laugh to this day as we recall having substituted liquid ammonia in place of a colorless tonic one day, and her gasping surprise. Patsy's one vanity is her hands. Pretty and dimpled they were once, no doubt; unctuous with service and good-will they still remain. They have a funny way of crossing and caressing each other, of patting and rubbing, as if forever "washing with invisible soap, in imperceptible water." Poor Patsy! garrulous and kind, petulant, crotchety, old Patsy! To-day we enshrine thee among the saints; but beware, lest to-morrow we consign thee to purgatory!

But the other faces, the friendly ones that beam in upon us, how they ripple

and dimple with expression! what a study they are, to be sure! Here is one seems to us like some alabaster vase illumined by some white and shining light within. There is a certain refining and chiselling of features, a gracious moulding and development of brow, which forever suggest to us that apostolic expression, "the temple of the living God." Not beautiful, perhaps, but proudly noble, — quick, intellectual, sensitive, not always tolerant, too impetuous in judgment by half, but true, *true* always, longing for truth in others. Ruskin says, "The flesh-bound volume is the only revelation of God there is, or can be; a tremulous crystal waved as water: we see through a glass darkly, but except through the glass in no wise." How can one divine, pray, a

face like that bending over the flowers on the table near us? There is in it both strength and tenderness; is there also weakness? The brow is full; you would read courage and power, which you would dread in an enemy. Dare you lean upon it in a friend? If life is not a battle, is it not a play? If God gives power, must it not be used *or abused*? You try to read the fine lines about the eyes, etchings time has made; but alas! there are hieroglyphics a woman may not decipher. And the eyes! winsome they must always have been. Were they ever content? You are sorry for the hunger in them; but why will they forever question you, and never answer? Whence comes the swift fine light which quickly draws and lazily repels you? Can one be both wholly true

and wholly false? both thoughtfully constant and thoughtlessly otherwise? both tender and cold? Perhaps, as the soul may contain both heaven and hell.

In health, in the world, in society, we mostly all wear masks which in the sick-room are lifted a little; thus we seem to come closer to our friend's very self. As worldly conventionalities crumble, the heart comes uppermost; and it is the *heart* of our friend we want, after all, more than the *thought*. What is culture that does not form character? The Devil is wise! If one knows all, and *feels* nothing, let him be "anathema maranatha." The *cui bono?* of some lives, we are too simple to understand. To forever absorb and never diffuse light, — to have printer's type and moonshine in one's veins instead

of red blood! Bah! We hope to meet some responsive *dogs* we know, in our paradise, rather than these evolved and educated oysters.

But now, more than ever, much learning is too high for us; so our friends lay aside their abstractions, and let only warm glances of sympathy sweep over us. How the soul flashes out through some eyes! What immortal, evanescent, God-given beauty! too perfect, too divine, to cast a shadow; even the sun cannot paint it, much less artist put upon canvas its elf-like witchery. That was an exquisite thought, that Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" was an attempt to immortalize woman's smile. It is said the artist worked four years at this wonderful portrait, and gave up in despair. Are there

not some faces of which no picture can ever satisfy, save the beautiful gracious one we carry next our hearts? Ah, those eyes we love! that "light that never was on sea or land!" It would strike down fifty fathoms deep, and warm us in our graves, we know. Death may close them; but in eternity they shall open, young and beautiful forever. We think of them, and little touches of tenderness fall about us; our hungry heart is warmed and fed; we lie still, flooded with a sweet content.





III.

MRS. RUNABOUT.

“ONE should be willing to go to Coventry sometimes,” says Emerson. God’s mercies are not to be counted on the outside so much as on the inside. Why deplore the stillness of hours wherein truth passes over into the realm of spirit? To forever absorb amounts to nothing. Beauty and truth must become a part of and blossom into the life, must come through some fine alembic to be a part of the fibre of the soul, else for us they have no deep significance. A man’s

character writes his history. Our greatest dramatists, novelists, — Shakespeare, George Eliot, and the rest, — recognize this fact. Few writers are noble enough to put aside their own self-hood; few are great enough and subtile enough to comprehend individuality other and different from their own. The genius of a Shakespeare was at home with all characters; his wide charity could feel, think, and live with the basest as the best, finding good in all. If culture shall make us truly wise, if civilization shall be of permanent benefit, it shall somehow give us this sympathetic insight into other lives, into the great life of the universe. It shall engender a far-reaching benevolence, true kindness of feeling, — *Gemuthlichkeit*, as the Germans have it.

Truest life is lived both inwardly and outwardly. "Work and love, that is the body and soul of the human being." And truest life of individuals makes up truest life of nations.

Sometimes, as we look at it, our boasted civilization seems, after all, to be a good deal of a failure. Why should we send missionaries to the heathen? There have arisen among us, it is true, a few apostles, and no end of *martyrs*; but as for the rest, we go about "well wadded with stupidity," our lucid moments being few and far between.

How few of us seem to know how truly to live, even how truly to *enjoy* wealth, power, success, culture (if God gives them), not to speak of the greater but more common blessings of health,

thought, the sky, the earth, the air! How do we know that "resting quietly beside God, watching his working, and in some vague way living out his purposes of peace, charity, and good-will," the Feejee Islander is so far behind?

What is our social life in this enlightened nineteenth century? To quote a friend, "Society plants a stake, and Jones and Brown and all the rest of us must walk up and be measured." Now, Jones (if he is any thing at all) is not Brown, and never will be, trim and fashion him as you may. But society holds this to be high treason, is indignant at the absence of Brown in Jones, and votes him freezingly "not of our set."

Thus social life is death to all individuality, its inner circles too often made

up of people who indulge in the noble occupation of depreciating each other. How many of us are noble enough, broad enough, deep enough, to possess and exercise that delicate, sympathetic insight which would always put a friend in the best light, as we hang our pictures; which would judge him from his best moments, not his weakest? Who of us but has his lapses of folly? and shall we dis-crown another, we who can scarcely stand alone?

Our scholars too often become recluses, — creep into their shells, and are glad to stay there. Our men and women of genius — poets, artists, musicians, thinkers, and workers — lead a Bohemian sort of life, glad to run across each other, and touch hands for a moment anywhere,

everywhere, but in the fashionable drawing-room. Titans need room to stretch their limbs; the close, stifling air of most fashionable gatherings would cramp and stifle them. Do you call the scholars dumb or pedantic? Do not blame the sun-dial if it mark not the hours in the shade. In a pure and brilliant social atmosphere, they will blossom out like flowers. When men meet their mates, then society truly begins; all topics are discussed without offence, and the sincere and happy exchange of thought doubles our power. There *is* a social life that is delicious!

What have become of those *salons* of old with their brilliant gathering of highly organized souls? Where are the De Staëls and Recamiers? (for it is woman

who must lead here always. She is the intellectual irritant.) How swiftly does the conversation of our drawing-rooms descend to commonplaces, and how frequently do we go away from the most brilliant circles hollow and famished! We try too much to say what we are expected to say, to do what Smith, Brown, and our coterie expect us to do; and when the fine social attrition has polished and rounded off all our sharp corners, we fold our bejewelled hands over our fashionable Parisian finery, thanking God we are not as that poor "publican."

We are not so safely shelved but "the world" comes sometimes even into the sick-room. There is that little Mrs. Runabout who has just left us. She is called

“so sweet” by her friends, — “very ladylike and nice, you know.” You watch her as she drops into the low cushioned easy-chair by your side. Fascinating curls shade the small, expressive face, dimpling and smiling before you. From her ladylike head to the tips of her ladylike fingers this woman gives you an electric sense of unruffled adjustment; you quake a little lest the nurse forgot to put on your rings, or properly adjust the best wrapper. You feel sure that between her smiles this pious little worldling sees your under pillow-case is cotton instead of linen, and will item the same. You think of that lady friend of Emerson’s who assured him that “the sense of being perfectly well dressed gives a feeling of inward tranquillity religion itself is power-

less to bestow." You feel nervous about your back hair, and wish the lace on your breakfast-cap were hand-made instead of woven. You hope the nurse, stupid thing, will be sure to bring you your broth in the majolica bowl. You feel morally certain your dear friend, who sits smiling and dimpling at you, will go away, and say with a shrug, "Mrs. W—— ate her jelly made of gelatine and not calves-feet; that she presumed she wasn't so very ill after all." She a gossip! Heaven forbid! She disparage! Why, she never made a direct charge in her life! Who ever knew her to meddle with other people's affairs, except from a painful and conscientious sense of duty?

Your first-class scavengers are the birds who, with unruffled plumage, peck

daintily here and there, not the poor beggars who go about with arms and aprons full!

There are certain emotional, excitable, shallow natures, that tend inevitably to gossip and a certain sort of piety. To tell them to "stay at home in their own minds," not to recite other people's opinions or meddle with other people's affairs, would be simply to tell them not to exist.

Such women are not, perhaps, deliberately malicious or uncharitable: it comes rather from lack of breadth, from lack of insight and sympathy — principally from lack of culture. The cure for ignorance in any of its manifestations is culture, and it is better if this could run back a generation or two. To eradicate Mrs.

Runabout, you should have educated her grandmother!

In social circles made up of such people, it is a wonder the air does not rush in like a whirlwind to fill the vacuum. What is it George Eliot makes Gwendolen say at a fashionable party about "such a sense of empty benches"?

It is vain to affirm our social life does not run out into, and affect for good or ill, our political and national life. Why must we drop our eyes with shame at the follies and crimes this very year has opened up to us in civil and religious as well as social life?

What we seem to need mainly is moral courage; in society, courage to be simply one's self, to speak happily, truthfully, sincerely always; charity to judge kindly.

We need culture that shall raise us above low hopes and fears, above earth and earthiness, above self and selfish interests. We need enthusiasm; this is not fashionable, yet it is the "leaping lightning" that opens wide the pathway of genius, of talent. Without earnestness life settles into a stagnant pool. We need sentiment, true and deep feeling (not the sentimental mask of it), to renew and invigorate the heart, to burn up a sweet and gracious flame into the life. Lastly, we need a more frequent resort to the Divine oracle: *we need inspiration!* Let us, as Americans, crave a more profound and wholesome piety, supplied from a perennial fountain. Then shall our statesmen be also gentlemen, and our gentlemen be men of honor,

“*sans peur et sans reproche.*” Then shall intelligence, virtue, a truer manhood and purer womanhood, abound, and the coming century hold up American civilization as the light of the world.





IV.

THE HARPIES.

PEOPLE are undoubtedly born with different constitutional tendencies. We talk of inheriting consumption, scrofula, cancer. Why not spiritual disease as well? That sour-visaged man, that sharp-eyed woman, were, perhaps, predestined to see the wrong side of every thing. Life has its right and wrong sides, as people are made up of light and shade. The critics may, if they choose, sit off in the corner like the spiders, and weave their own little web of darkness, stinging to death

any poor fly that comes in their way. Possibly the spider-poison is in the blood, coming down from some remote ancestry. Like "goats browsing upon morning-glories," they have an inherited tendency to chew up what else might blossom into beauty for them and for others.

How different the sunny, blithe spirit that lifts its sweet "God bless you" everywhere! O ye children of the Sun! were ye born winged? We wonder the angels do not miss you out of heaven. How the world-cares and world-weariness slip away as your happy feet glide by! How dull faces brighten, and the old heavy load falls off, as your singing voices bid us good cheer! And if death shall silence them, what then shall be left for us on earth?

The Greeks had a curious way of weaving into their mythology odd truths of life and experience. Their gods were friendly or adverse, as they represented noble and tender or ungenerous and base attributes. On the more distant heights of Greek history, we find the worship of the one god Zeus; afterward the powers of Nature passed into a family of gods; later still, historical characters became deified abstractions. Mythology did not create its heroes, but laid hold of history, and "clung to it so closely, it was as difficult to separate as the lichen from the granite." Lastly, it coiled itself about the various *attributes* of humanity; and just here, we think, we may profitably go back to the old Greeks for many a lesson.

Who has not heard of the "Harpies"?

They were sisters of the rainbow, and near akin to much beauty and goodness. They were gifted in many ways, possessed of many charms, but alas! also of a cold unfriendliness of disposition, which is represented as always malign in its influence. The rasping, carping *Celæno* whirled fitful gusts of wind and dust into the eyes of mortals. Uncomfortable *Storm-swift* and *Swift-foot*, forsworn by *Boreas*, came with nipping and irritating frost to chill and sting. Together they were enough to bedevil the patience of a saint. It is small wonder that in the *Inferno* the Harpies are represented as hovering in the tree with suicides. The pitiful snugness of the grave must have looked peaceful to poor mortals coming much in contact with this spirit of unrest.

In strong contrast to that searching, helpful criticism, which comes of a *spirit of love and good-will*, and which the Greeks typified by Boreas, the north wind, kindly, invigorating, and bracing, is the petty spirit of fault-finding, ungenerous, uncomfortable, which carries a poison in its sting, sure to lash at last into feverish discomfort or fury.

All men have their superior and inferior parts, of which they are as conscious as others can be. Appeal to what is noblest in them, and you find few intolerant of even the most searching criticism; nay, more, they may be eager to know and vanquish themselves. But the human centaur cannot be cut in twain! You may not ignore the good, and expect to cure the evil. "Men recognize subtly the

true fire, and whether it be of heaven!" They look into your glass house, and know what manner of spirit it is that is throwing the stones.

It is said, if men would hate themselves as they often hate their neighbors, it would be a good step toward loving their neighbors as they do themselves.

"True virtue stoops graciously to lift inferiors toward itself; looks reverently at the merits of others, and only tenderly at their defects." It is a spurious article that shows its canine teeth, and reminds us how our forefathers tore each other in pieces for their morsel of flesh. True modesty is not so much an outlook as an *inlook!* It finds too much to correct in its own life, to have much time for criticism of other lives. "The real man or woman

is he who, beholding himself in a purgatory of self-condemnation, yet maintains his faith in purity and goodness without." The vulgarized man is he who, folding his "ice-cold, slippery, serpent skin of hypocrisy" about him, sits off in indifferent coldness, saying, "Stand off! I am holier than thou!"

Emerson says, "If greatness can be shut up in qualities, it may be found to consist in generosity and openness of soul. No man or woman can be truly great without large and extended sympathies which see their way full of warmth and light into all other souls." Man's capacity for *understanding* another depends entirely upon this loving insight. It takes a frank and generous nature to understand a frank and generous one. "Send a deep man to

town, and he finds another deep man there." The sharpest-sighted hunter in the universe is *prejudice*, for finding what he wants to find. It is a narrow and ungenerous soul, that entertains and cultivates it: true nobility would rise above it and dispel it. Dislike, envy, cast their own shadow before, so dark it would dim and cloud the brightest tints of any character.

There is a poem of Barry Cornwall's about a strange winged creature having the lineaments of man, that pecked at and tore and preyed on men, until finally, coming to a clear stream to drink, he beheld his own face therein, and found he had been preying on a creature *precisely like himself*.

"Acanthio" wears a garment of nettles

which puncture and provoke. The ivy-poison is in his blood. Stand off! beware! “Positiva” was born with a ramrod down her back; and to ask her to bend, to make allowance, to sympathize, would be to ask her to yield her obstinacy; and “when she won’t, she won’t, and there’s the end on’t!” Together they are a fair exponent of the spirit of censoriousness. So long as they are modest, large-hearted, and charitable, keeping prejudice undermost and benevolence uppermost, acknowledging “there are more things on earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy,” so long their positiveness is a virtue, and we have nothing for them save a “God bless you!” But of all the trials appointed to mortals in this sublunary sphere, perhaps the most rasping and

exasperating is the companionship of those eminently respectable individuals who know they know it, and know you don't; who, being immaculate, stake out their ground at right angles, and insist there is no other arrangement possible, — that those who differ from them in opinion simply lack discernment or judgment. “Positiva” is made up of frost and flint and backbone; excellent things in their way, but unitedly brought to bear would wear out an angel. She undoubtedly has her excellences, so have the bull-dozer and the South-Sea Islander; but they jar your ideal dreams, and shatter the chords of your life into discord, nevertheless. “Positiva” has her affinities and antipathies; if she takes a dislike, heaven and earth could not persuade her she saw

crooked and other people straight. Fichte says, "*Der Mensch kann was er soll; und wenn er sagt er kann nicht, so will er nicht.*" Who is pure enough, who is wise enough, to place himself in the judgment-seat of the Almighty? In life the points of view have much to do with making up opinion. When we grow divinely tall enough to overlook all, then shall we also know there lies within the meanest sinner the possibilities of a saint.

It is said, "manners are not idle, but the fruit of royal nature." The manner of doing a thing is almost as important as the thing itself. Even criticism may be made acceptable or offensive by the manner of giving it. Any person of spirit has pride enough to resent any thing bor-

dering upon *disrespect*. Wrongs may be forgiven, but this shadow shall sting forever. The more delicate the nature, the more sensitive to this pain, and the more lasting its scar. There are people whose very manner can be a perpetual insult, kindling every tingling drop of blood in the body into resentment. But gentle blood and purity of soul do not thus express themselves. The true lady is she whose readiness to appreciate your good makes you doubly ashamed of your evil; whose courtesy and delicate consideration are large-hearted and generous. Addison tells us, "Vulgarity is an untrained bluntness, a callousness to the feelings of others;" and Montesquieu says, "*Il me semble que l'esprit de politesse, est une certaine attention à faire que par nos*

paroles et nos manières les autres soient contents de nous et d'eux-mêmes."

"Look at the roses saluting each other,

Look at the herds all at peace on the plain ;
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,
And laughs in his heart at his peril and pain, —
Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain.

*Were it not well in this brief little journey,
On over the isthmus, down into the tide,
We give him a fish instead of a serpent,
Ere folding the hands to be and abide
Forever and aye in the dust at his side ? "*

There was a fairy once (Melusina) who had every talent under the sun, and many winning graces ; but at certain times, when she turned in *one direction*, became a serpent. Who of us has not seen and recognized her here ? Ah, my fairy sister ! with what spell can we exorcise that

blemish on thy beauty? See *goodness*? Of course you will not while you are all the time hunting for faults. Remember, the shellfish contracts its claws over an atom; besides, if you wear "a garment embroidered with hooks," which puncture and provoke, if you show yourself persistently ungenerous and unfriendly, you bring every thing unhealthy to the surface, — you may, indeed, *develop* the very evils you decry.

It is well that inherited tendencies for good or evil never come singly. "God does not crown natural gifts or faculties." It is to him that *overcometh* is given the palm. Our saints and martyrs are those who have come up out of great tribulation. Each soul has its own little battle to fight, — one more, another less. All

inheritance of evil is offset by some good, and unto every soul God gives the will-power to choose between them. The greater the forces arrayed against us, the more triumphant the victory over them. In every sense we are responsible for ourselves, — our own dispositions, our own lives. It is useless to attempt to shift this; but in judging of *another*, innate and inborn differences of character must be taken into consideration. Natures equally earnest and sincere express themselves often quite differently, see things differently, act differently under the same circumstances. They could not conform to one standard if they would, and perhaps they would not if they could. For the critic to judge others by himself, is simply, in nine cases out of ten, to mis-

judge them altogether. Let us, for example, take the practical and prose spirit of the age, in contrast with the imaginative and poetical. It has often been suggestive to us of a whole volume upon "the conceit of accuracy." People in this world either have imagination, or they have it not; the difference being one of *kind* rather than degree. Each should modify and help the other. Unfortunately, though these people speak the same tongue, they often speak a different language, and strangely misunderstand and misjudge each other. Of the two, it seems most likely (and is, as a matter of fact, noticeably the case) that the practical, prosaic spirit least comprehends the other, is most positive as to its right and the other's wrong. It is said, "Imagina-

tion is the supernal faculty: all others have the brown touch of earth upon them; this alone wears the livery of heaven." If this be true, certes the angel gets his wings pretty severely clipped in his wanderings to and fro on the earth!

There is an old North-German proverb, "He that is born poet can boil soup on a sausage-peg." Alger says, "To him, every moment of time is surcharged with expressiveness; every spot of space baffles ineffable truths." The poetical soul is likely to feel every thing intensely, and its expression of any feeling would seem an exaggeration often to others. The primrose by the river's brim, which to his matter-of-fact companion is but "a yellow primrose, nothing more," becomes to his heart a message, a sweet possession from

the heavens, a sacred voice, a revelation giving "thoughts too deep for utterance." His "loves" are other people's "likes." He has a passionate heart, easily moved; his happiness is an ecstasy, his pain a misery; lively, mobile, sensitive to divine, imaginative, impassioned, tender, he lives in the heights and the depths. God only and his own heart can know what life means, and *is*, to him. For Miss Accuracy to attempt to measure such a one with her yard-stick, is simply absurd.

Oh for the grace of adaptability! Oh for the virtue of loving kindness! Oh for the beauty of tender charity and sympathy!

It is a virtue of machinery, that it adapts itself to various uses and purposes. Why is it less so in life?

All *growth* implies capacity for change, progression. He who prides himself on holding the same opinion yesterday, to-day, and forever, is simply morbid or a bigot, and will always remain in some corner of his soul dwarfed and stunted and deformed.

“Judge not. The workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see ;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God’s pure light may only be
A scar brought from some well-won field
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.”

Charity embraces the wide circle of all possible kindnesses. The smiling (not frowning) in your neighbor’s face is charity ; your removing (not placing therein) thorns and hard places from the road is charity ; and your good deeds are your

wealth, the only treasure you can take over beyond.

What is the innermost secret of the Christ-life, but a charity altogether divine? And the history of all saintly lives that have followed after, has but mirrored back the story. May it not be that that is God's supreme lesson to us here, — a love not of self and that which is nearest, but of all, “from the mouse to the arch-angel”!





V.

LOVING.

NOVALIS writes: "Sickness is necessary to self-knowledge, to individualization. Every act of introversion, every glance into our interior, is at the same time an *ascension*, a going-up toward heaven; the more intimate the communion, the profounder our insight into the great soul of all."

Too often during illness the soul has only "feelers," not wings; the brain is hardly clear enough to get a lucid and unconcerned view of worldly interests, of our own deeper thought: for this

reason, it may be, love, sympathy, friendship, have glided from twilight obscurity into bold relief. The thought of friends is an abiding presence, softening and illumining like the sunshine; and it is not the many friends, but the *few*, who dwell with us now. Out of the hundreds, one is fortunate to count the tens who really touch the inner life, — are something to the soul. The long days of illness bring the thought home with great emphasis, that the world wastes much precious time in insincere and valueless friendships. The longest life is too short to afford it. We give hours which would be a delicious treat and an abiding benefit, passed in contact with congenial and elevated souls, to people who really care nothing for us, who visit us *pour passer*

le temps, — to amuse themselves, — or, perhaps, for some worldly profit that may accrue to them through the acquaintance. This visiting which means nothing, and is nothing, becomes a sort of dissipation with many women, leaving their life vacant and profitless. Inevitably their thought becomes shallow, spreading itself out more and more into idle curiosity and idler gossip over other people's affairs. Having no deep inner life of their own, they can form no conception of a profound and earnest life in another: individuality, enthusiasm, shock them; they judge superficially, and with all manner of uncharitableness.

. We always suspect that man or woman who is everybody's friend. Only shallow natures will crave *many* intimacies. That

public man who is "hail fellow well met" with Jones, Smith, Brown, and the rest, is no true friend at all; be very sure he will serve and use these dear constituents quite as his convenience requires. How is it possible to be profoundly and earnestly your friend's friend and the world's friend at the same time? Giving to all, what is there left of you that you should be more to your friend than to others?

That which is peculiarly and specially *you*, worldliness kills, society levels down as an excrescence. And yet in friendships that are elevating and enduring, it must be your *very self* that attracts, — that wherein you differ from others, not resemble them. Feeling that runs deep ever wraps about itself a delicate mantle

of reserve ; it resents bold and indecorous intrusion ; it has its holy of holies, across whose threshold, even, irreverent steps may not pass. Sunny natures will feel kindly toward all, will warm and gladden all, — that is well ! — but they cannot *abound* toward all. As love is valueless except it be the sacred consecration of *one toward one*, so friendship, to be delicate, tender, and true, cannot be too diffusive ; it must reserve itself, must enrich and deepen its own life, that it may become of worth to the life of another. “ Friendship is a kind of absolute, leaving the language of love even suspicious and common.” “ Friends are self-elected ; you do not choose your friend.” He brings to you what you have *not*, else will you after a while find his

love superfluous. It is not so much the *how* he loves you, as the *what* he is who loves you, that determines the duration and depth of your own regard and need of him.

Love is described as fickle, changeable, unenduring. Of love as a passion merely, this is perhaps true. It rests upon the mutable, the material, and must die or change with it. But of love sublimed from the senses to the soul, it is not true, or true only in a degree. In proportion as the soul has need, and finds not wherewith to satisfy, it must slowly drift away from the closest moorings. The saddest of all separations is not death: it is *life!* Who of us has not touched closely the heart of friends for a space, and finding a blank where we had expected the filled page, finding dissonant tones where we hoped

for sweetest consonance, finding death where we had expected life, has slowly felt the unclasping of hands, the fatal drifting out at sea?

“As barks upon the boundless main
Meet once, and never touch again.”

Blame not love that it is thus inconstant: blame rather the life that had not wherewith to give, to enrich, to hold. The love that is immortal *must rest upon the enduring!*

During the long days of illness, we have found one thought always uppermost. Sweet human companionship (visible or invisible) has been an abiding presence in the sick-room. Many problems of love and friendship have thus come from obscurity into clearer light. Our thoughts

have loved to cluster about and sun themselves in their soft and tender warmth, as in some delicious atmosphere. We have daintily toyed with, fingered over (as it were), our treasure; have loved to count it up, and, like the miser, tenderly hoard it away, only to bring it forth again, and say over again to our hearts how rich we were! We have found those natures which were most to us — present or absent — to be those most needed to complete our own; wherein we lacked, we craved of their abundance. Some one has said that “in the truest marriage of souls, a monotone is not agreeable or profitable or *possible*; consonant tones are required for the melody of life and true enjoyment, *not unison*: otherwise friendship is lost in mere fellowship.” One nature will inev-

itably be the stronger (representing the masculine element): yet each should be central, self-poised, in a certain degree self-sufficing, to be of truest worth to the other. We are not to run to our friend as to a confessor: God only is the Divine Leader, — He who is supremely invisible, faithful, and wise. He gives us our friend for comfort and inspiration. Let us take and hold the gift sacredly, reverently, as *in trust!* Thus we shall not treat our friends as we are likely to treat acquaintances according to their character, to adapt ourselves always and entirely to their moods and thought, simply to give them momentary happiness. That is not truest love. Perfect freedom from pain is not highest good. Such treatment simply leaves a man's character as though

it were unalterable. Noble natures are fearless of salutary pain, eager to know and vanquish themselves. True, we are not called on to reform our friends always, yet surely our friendliness is much to be doubted if it confirm in error. In proportion as we love, do the beautiful possibilities of the friendly soul gleam out upon us. It is a personal grief and loss to us when this beauty is marred. Love being the essence of Deity, in degree as the soul is filled with it does it see with divine clearness the mar, the blight, as well as the beauty. And yet in its tender pity sweet human love would veil away rather than probe the wound: not so *the Divine*. Should not a broad and deep love seek to give enduring happiness rather than fleeting pleasure? Should we not exalt our-

selves to be more than the temporary sweetness, the restful solace, the soothing opiate, to our friend? Is present comfort of soul better than abiding health? Shall we satisfy hunger with sweets, when invigorating tonics are better?

And then, on the other hand, life is *so short*, and beyond lies the great mystery. And all lives at best are so full of sadnesses that we do not know, griefs that are dumb and voiceless. How can we who love give a moment's pain, — we who so long to let our love bubble up and overflow, and drown out the ache and the void and the restlessness and the sadness? We would flood the life with sunny warmth, tint all gray and leaden days with rose, gild and glorify. We would bring the sweets of all flowers, the lustre of all

stars, the shine of all suns, and lay at the feet of the beloved. And must we twine thorns with the rose-wreaths, — *we too* with the rest? *And will not God take care of his own?* This little life is so short, between the two eternities! After all, will it matter so much? These questions have drifted over us, hither and thither during the sick days, — vague, phantom-like faces that would not be gone. Our heart and our head have pleaded with each other, and neither has gained the mastery. The old questioning, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” has glided out ghost-like from the dead centuries, to thwart and baffle. Somewhere, from some corner of the brain, there comes this song of the love that is golden. It is as a sweet narcotic to our tired thought.

“No! not with turbulence ;
 Not with fret and worry of doubt ;
 Not with uncertainty compassed about, —
 With wooing and coaxing to-day,
 And thwarting and crossing to-morrow ;
 Not with light laughter and play,
 Or too much trouble and sorrow,
 Or vexed tears scorching the longing eyes,
 Or pitiful glances or penitent sighs,
 Would I have love!

No; calm and earnest, good and true,
 Mellowed by tenderness through and through,
 Ever the same, yet ever new ;
 Quietly watchful, brooding above,
 O'er me and round me, — such the love,
 Such the love only, I care to have.
 Patient and restful, holy calm ;
 Life's pulse and breath
 Pouring into all wounds a balm
 Enduring till death.”



VI.

FRIENDSHIP.

SWIFT says, "I never yet knew a tolerable woman to be fond of her own sex. Clever women invariably prefer the wit, wisdom, and earnestness of cultured men, to the too frequent triviality of women."

Those women who are most to each other are generally very unlike, one nature being greatly the stronger. This unlikeness between natures congenial of the same sex being naturally rare, may in a measure account for the lack of frequent and profound attachments among them.

Friendship is the reflection of souls in each other. Jean Paul tells us, "A woman, unlike Narcissus, seeks not her own image and a second I: she much prefers a *not I.*" It has seemed to us a too common failure among women, to comprehend the innermost secret of enduring friendship. If mutually attached, they quickly become *too* intimate. They expect too much of each other, are too observant of each other; too soon, perhaps, their friendship becomes engulfed in love. They are too familiar, holding nothing in reserve; bore each other with ceaseless talk of their pursuits, of their ailments, of petty interests and pleasures. They lack cheerfulness and reticence with each other, are too critical and out-spoken. They do not take each other sufficiently *on trust*, are too in-

clined to be over-interested in the everyday life beneath the roof-tops, to dwell much in the more spiritual and enduring life that lifts itself above. With persons of opposite sex this is less likely. The closest friendship possible, that between husband and wife, if both natures are noble, is the most perfect and profound. The pity is, this is so rare! Men and women marry, thinking they need only love. Unfortunately, they need also reason, tact, unselfishness, forbearance. Many marriages commencing with these qualities, combined with respect and regard, give more enduring happiness than a union of lovers without them. This sounds heterodox. We are sorry that it is true, for we believe in love profoundly; but a very limited observation convinces one

that unless love rises into an ardent and profound friendship, it is not likely to be enduring. Too many men and women look upon marriage simply as possession, weighing much their own *right* in the compact, as though they held a chattel which is bound necessarily to them, whether they seek to hold or not. Unfortunately, love is not a matter of the will. It is not property, or substance, but a *relation*. “*We are loved as we are lovable to the person loving.*”

“The general laws of the mind are not suspended for the sake of the affections.” One’s tastes can be offended as easily after marriage as before; and, unfortunately, the most refined part of us lies in this region of subtle sympathies and antipathies. The wife before marriage seeks to charm

the husband with grace, gentleness, beauty, and wit. Is she not too often forgetful of it afterward? The lover is devoted, tender, thoughtful. Should the husband be less so?

It seems as if half the trouble of the world comes of lack of thought. If we lose a treasure, we blame the treasure, blame God, blame any thing but ourselves. It is true that men and women are sometimes led astray by the evil in them, but is it not also true that they often drift astray because of the lack of good about them? "Incompatibility of temper" covers broad ground in the divorce suits. If wives are irritable and sharp, all the more reason husbands, if noble and unselfish, should soothe and tenderly quell instead of carelessly incit-

ing anger. If husbands are morose or inconstant, greater need wives should delicately and kindly suggest the harm to themselves, to their own souls, instead of harshly resenting a personal offence. If women did but know it, nothing will make their homes so fair as that they themselves should be holy and noble. Woman's besetting sin is littleness, and it brings with it its own torture. If man seeks a home, and finds only a workshop or a nest of the "Harpies," he will quite likely seek rest elsewhere; he wants a *wife*, not simply a housekeeper, a nursery-maid, or a critic. There are too many Marthas, alas! self-burdened with overmuch care; and too many husbands go out to find the Marys. Some one has said men are flutes, they must be filled with the warm breath

of a foreign sympathy ; women are harp-sichords, only needing to be struck. To some natures friendship is more than a pleasure, it is a *necessity*. It is a fact running down through all history, that women have been the inspiration and the sustaining encourager of artistic creations in poetry, music, painting, and sculpture ; her swift perceptions and keen and tender sympathy have incited, consoled, and moulded the statesman as the scholar ; her sensitive regard to his honor and repute has been as a bulwark of strength to him. Who is it has said “to associate with a quick-witted woman is a liberal education”?

The soul seems to need something without itself, to which it may attach itself, about which it may rally all the powers of

its being. The more tender, contemplative, earnest, the soul, the more it hungers for true love and friendship.

Pure and elevated friendships are, perhaps, the most exalted and ennobling influence of life. To have a friend, and *be* one, that of itself will sublime and beautify any soul.

The friendship of young persons of the same sex is tinged with a romance that does not often come in later life, yet the friendships of those grown older should be by so much *richer* as to far surpass this early glow. Some one has said, "Friends must be units before they can be united." Individuality is mainly a growth, and comes only with years. We are gaining daily a more deep and extensive knowledge of human life as we recede more and

more from the clamor of the world and the distraction of its requirements. We gain more that clarity of vision, that serenity of soul, which shall make our love and sympathy a deep and abiding benefit. It is a lamentable fact, that society looks with great uncharity upon all friendships of maturer years between persons not of the same sex. The number of people who have taken out "Judge's patent" for themselves in these matters is great.

It requires a Pericles and Aspasia, a Michael Angelo, a Pope Hildebrand and Countess Matilda, a Klopstock, Madame Swetchine, De Tocqueville, or a Channing, to come out unsullied from the small bespattering of slime which these social guats continually send forth.

Woman ever idealizes her friends, and

moulds them by her fair ideal reflected in their own minds. Her instinctive love of goodness she imparts slowly, attracting the soul she loves to all high aims, and thus withdrawing it from all wretched ends of folly. A friend writes us : "Though silent, do not fear I am forgetting ; there can be no separation between friends who are noble, except a separation in the *purpose of their lives.*"

Whatever love is, it is *not* a commodity ; it cannot be put for temporary convenience "where it will do the most good." Our friends are a gift of God, or they are nothing worth the having or the losing. They are the sweetness of life, the delicious kernel of the nut "whereof all nature and all thought is but the husk and the shell."

We strike sharp bargains with the world, and find ourselves always the losers. We look for friendship where no true friendship is, or can be. We sell ourselves cheaply, and, not fitting ourselves to mate with the noblest, let all true nobility forever escape us. In fashionable life we seek comfort in "our set," and too frequently find it stale, flat, and unprofitable. If the congenial soul stands without, we dare not reach over to embrace, well knowing these people who use will also abuse us; that this "silken and perfumed amity" has claws as well as smiles, and does not *always go gloved!*

The vacant and artificial life of society disenchants the soul, is fatal to a magnanimous wisdom and trustful sympathy.

Our friends are the angel visitants who keep heaven near. It is a fatal mistake, then, to keep the petty joys and sorrows of earth uppermost before them; they are but the mere accidents of life, not of supreme importance to any soul. A noble friendship finds better subjects of discourse than the acts of the world that jostles about us; it should be independent of outward circumstances, enriching itself from within. We should not run to a friend for support, but meet personal trials with a brave strength, before which they are sure to retreat: relying supremely on ourselves, the loving sympathy of friendship is a delicious balm that but quickens the healing, — all the more sweet to us because it is *not* a necessity to the life. As with

pain, so with happiness, having resources within independent of it, *not needing it*, it comes to us in sweetest perfection; it gleams in upon our already peaceful heart a bright superabundance of joy. Thus we go to our friend, not as a weight, rather as an inspiration. He need not lift us, or hold us, or bear us: we have *wings*. All earthly supports may give way beneath us, we yet sing. He can, if he be able, go on before, and beckon; we soar serenely near, and shall not hold him back.

Too few of us look at friendship with any sense of responsibility. Why should we take of our friend's time, of his precious stores of strength or sympathy, lightly, for things of little worth?

The French definition of friendship,

“*bien de s’entendre*” (good understanding) is very suggestive. “Let there be truth between us forever: this is, perhaps, the highest compact.”

Character induces trust; simple and noble natures have no need of re-enforcing themselves or others by continued assurances of love, by tokens of remembrance, by bodily presence. “The soul is seen and known to be divine,” *therefore we love.*

There is a quick intelligence that comes of love, that needs not messages or caresses to assure. We know our friend, therefore he need not explain himself; it is not so much what friends *say* to each other, it is the *life* that tells.

The symbol of the clasped hands, a life in common, something close, hearty, en-

during; this is the marrow of all friendship. How delicate are its secrets! what refinements of feeling, what mutual unlocking and sharing of hearts! "The inner life of the soul is doubled, yet each individuality thereby rendered more clear and perfect."

The truth is, we do not care enough to either be a friend or have one. What the world mostly seeks, if it seek any thing outside of self, is *companionship*, which is another and a different thing. Even here how we stumble and are at fault! To be a good and acceptable companion is no slight thing. Like friendship, companionship must rest upon a thorough conviction of the fundamental difference in character, conviction, life, and education, of those by whom we

are surrounded. Some one says, "This is to social life what Newton's law is to astronomy." That "one piece of tree is cut for a weathercock, and one for the sleeper of a bridge, does not damage the virtue of the wood in either." We must learn to recognize truth and virtue under a million of disguises. No two souls are quite alike; and one soul cannot force its feelings, tastes, convictions, upon the other. If parents, relatives, friends, would only wisely consider this, how much time and ill-feeling might be saved! The world little knows how much active dislike is engendered within bonds that are closest. Every one likes to be justly estimated at his fair value; it is not vanity or egotism that makes him more comfortable when the good his soul feels within

itself is acknowledged openly. Too often relatives and intimates forget to praise, even if they recognize good, and in looking for flaws neglect altogether to see the real value of the gem they hold.

Our age has been too hurried, too wearied with frittering multiplicity of vulgar and sordid interests, to abound in noble and enduring friendships. We seek a friend not sacredly, nor hold him closely. We run to those intimacies which may profit us in externals, or merely put us at ease internally. We forget that to have a friend, one must *be* one, and that this requires character, individuality, purity; it is *you* yourself must attract, not any external painted mask of you. The lover may be deceived for a time, but the faithful friend never! Cupid was

not born blind, rather he was born all eyes. The lover *sees*, but looks through the gleaming rose-tinted glass of his passion, and finds only what he wants to find, — an idealized delight, a glorified “other self.” But faithful friendship rises (sometimes *through love*) to greater heights, to clearer vision. It sees and appreciates the beautiful possibilities of the nature, and through it as quickly recognizes wherein you fall short: yet though you disappoint seventy times seven, this love shall not fail. But one must have a personal inner life that abounds, else will a noble and gifted friend soon touch bottom, and, finding your nature shallow, tire of you. One must have individuality. “Whoso cannot repel, neither can he attract; the two powers are but one pul-

sation of the soul." Surface polish and culture may draw admiration, it can never win and hold love. There must be at the bottom *character*, or even in externals we do not long please. "The tint of the flower proceeds from its roots, and the lustres of the sea-shell are a part of its existence." The gist of noble friendship is the culture of the individual inner life of those who partake.

No words or caresses can assure, no protestations avail long, if the life be false. Love casts off its bandage, and sees with wide-open eyes that its gods are *clay*. It feels itself insulted in the holiest and profoundest part of its nature, and there can be no atonement. To trifle with love is sacrilege. Is love not the very essence of Deity, — "an off-

glance of the Infinite flame?" It is the last thing we should take on our lips lightly. No man or woman of true dignity or worth would think of it. Sentimental trifling is for boys and girls whose souls have not been born.

The soul of our friend thus becomes "the door through which we enter the society of all good and pure souls," — the beautiful gateway opening out toward heaven; the shining ladder on which we climb upward toward the Supreme Friend, the Supreme Good, — even *God*.





VII.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE SEA.

TO-DAY I long for the sea. It is some *Heimweh* of the soul, one can never describe or account for. Even in the folds of the long curtains I see its slow-moving waves, and listen dreamily for the lapping of the silver waters on the beach.

To picture the sea, is to paint a soul. What pen can limn that changeful, evanescent, untamable face, a commingling of dew and fire? To the landsman it is a new world, with its delicate, translucent coloring, its flowing, fantastic, curd-

ling curves. On shore there is much to divide the thought. Objects are clearly defined, palpable, disenchanting. Our little, every-day life projects itself into all, disillusionizes all.

As the fading shore recedes, we seem to leave the old world behind, to slip out of its life as from some chrysalis outworn. It is like waking from a fevered dream, into some still, cool, eternal morning. Great weights fall off, and we become, as it were, a part of nature, of the flowing wave, of sky and sea.

It is owing in part, perhaps, to the suggestions of another, that I so thoroughly enjoy always the marvellous gray effect of sea and sky. Who can ever express the deep obligation to that friend or companion who helps us to *see* well?

To be led out of ourselves, into something external to ourselves, is perhaps the highest philosophy; and no comradeship is more healthful than that of a nature touched quickly and profoundly by all beauty and truth, broad in its culture, sensitive, highly organized, cosmopolitan in its life.

To cross hands with such an one, is to be left richer forevermore in proportion to our receptivity.

Shelley tells us of the wonderful symmetry and variety of the fleecy white clouds, "shepherded," the poet says, "by the slow unwilling wind." At sea the lower rain-clouds are a brown, ochrous gray, only beautiful as they let glimpses of beauty through, and pique you with their soft, veil-like mystery. The clouds

of the central region, however, have pure aërial grays, are milk-white, opalescent. Notice those two lines of color along the horizon, how they meet and commingle. The gray of the sky is warm, rosy, amber, purple; that of the water, a green fire, a blue cold. To us there is often a more exquisite thrill of pleasure in a bit of coloring like this, in the pure outlining of a few delicate lines, or in the sudden glory produced from a stray beam of sunlight, than in the most varied and extended landscape. We are but finite, and can take in but slowly suggestions of the infinite.

Is it Schiller who has said, "We may wake some day to discover that which we worshipped as beauty, reveal itself as truth"? There was much mean-

ing in the old rite of worshipping the goddess veiled. We have often observed, that the more delicately organized the nature, the more unnecessary become vivid coloring or glaring effects.

The infinite suggestiveness of that which is not wholly expressed; the intangible, indefinable attraction of that beauty which is forever veiling, shrouding, attempering itself (as if a part of that Deity whose effulgence no mortal eye can look upon and live),—how noble souls lean toward it, yearning to unveil, to translate, to gather in, to hold close forevermore! It is as if ascending steps nearer and nearer toward the eternal source.

I have always felt *that* to be one of the delights of Turner's pictures. He seems

to intend to suggest far more than one sees.

A great thought finds no possibility of completeness of mortal expression; but to the elect ones a hint is enough. What care they, if all is not filled out in detail? Indeed, the greatness of the thought often loses through too elaborate expression. When Turner paints great things, like mid-ocean effects, then all the sea seems rolling in one huge wave toward you, and his work thrills you with delighted recognition; but the forms upon the vessel, or in the foreground — one may not be able to tell whether they are fish, flesh, or fowl.

Said a very practical and wise friend to me one day, after gazing long at the pictures in the British Museum, "Turner's

Venetian scenes are dreamy and poetic. I can understand and like them. But some of the others! My friend, I *can* tell a cow from a horse, and really that is more than your favorite artist has done."

A great many people feel in this way (but do not dare to express it), simply because their thought seizes upon just what Turner was *not* thinking of at all. It is one thing to get at the thought of the artist, and quite another to judge critically of his technique.

That mind seems to me greatest (other things being equal) where great thoughts so preponderate as to force strong expression, more or less forgetful often of details that do not directly contribute. May it not be that the work, spiritually,

of the Supreme Artist, seems to our limited vision lacking here, or awry there, or amiss altogether, because we never in any way comprehend His great thought in our lives, or in the larger life of the universe? And is it not a part of heaven *to learn to comprehend?* the knowledge beginning with many here below, and ending *when* and *where?*

And shall souls who, through some beautiful kinship, do see suggestions of the divine beauty and perfection, not trust it so absolutely as to bear witness of it to others?

Behold how we have wandered away, and forgotten our homesickness of soul, as one stills *all* earthly longing in the deep, cool wells of the Infinite.

The lessons of the sea are numerous and variable. It seems to us sometimes that all else is evanescent and shallow, in teaching us infinity, compared with this calm and luminous distance. The waters of the sea,—all its little ripples and great waves,—while seemingly discordant, move in a majestic harmony like the melodic notes of a symphony. There is unity in it all; one thought,—*God*.

We shall never forget one star-like hour, when we stood out among the cordage of the ship, a speck between sea and sky. There came the sense of wings, of exhilaration, as if from nectar of the gods. There existed no longer any “I” and “thou;” with the old earth-weariness, had dropped off all sense of personality. And the nights on deck, how perfect

they were with their lambent light, their cool stillness! The stars — “the forget-me-nots of the angels” — were our intimate companions. They seemed so near, it made the dear faces upturned in the moonlight seem sometimes very far away; and yet the pale light brought out fine, delicate points of expression we had not seen before, spiritualized, refined, ennobled them. We recall two that seemed to us poetic pictures of the genius of the North and South; one, dark, glowing, tropical, full of elegant languor and fastidious refinement. This one should have been born a prince; and yet, were he king, his queen might some day turn pale with envy of some lowlier one who knelt beside him. There are souls born to give, others to receive, homage. The

other face was but an alabaster mask with the light shining through; pure intellectuality, white, shining, cold; the emotional nature kept always undermost, that you knew. It may be, some high-souled Beatrice, who shall not lean or linger, but go ever on before, beckoning, alluring, will some day win and hold until for both the far-away paradise be gained; but this soul will never love downward; and, after all, the thought-life may be forever the most perfect.

Some natures attract, and yet touch one with sense of chill; you may know them absolutely pure, and yet, like the flawless gem, you long to cut down through the whiteness, and find the prismatic colors.

The sea has forever its wondrous lessons

of beauty, purity, symmetry, and repose. Our hearts are filled with its rhythmic cadence, with the tender suggestiveness and sacred rest of the sea; and in poor verse we try to express that which, like all deep feeling, is forever inexpressible.

O shining, shimmering sea,
Thy coral dells are still and fair,
Thy tinted weeds are soft and rare!
Hast thou no couch whereon to lie?
(We're very tired, my heart and I.)
Is there no place whereon to creep
Low down within thy breast, and sleep?

O vast and wandering sea,
Far out beyond thy purling foam,
And far below thy great waves' moan,
Thy silent depths flow on, flow on!

Oh, give thy secret peace to me,
Great-hearted, calmly brooding sea!
Life's vagrant streams, at last, at best,
But slip into some mother-breast.

.

In solemn, tender undertone,
The sea made answer to our moan:
"My face reflects the Light above.
Thyself must lose thyself in *Love*."





VIII.

THANKSGIVING.

OUR Thanksgiving Days, suggesting as they do every twelvemonth the thought, Are we thankful, and for what? send us to-day out into a deep sea of questioning for which the Thanksgiving sermons afford little answer. Thankful for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—yes! But what is life and liberty? and, above all, what is that will-o'-the-wisp, happiness? Life is a casket, valuable only for what we put in it. "Liberty is law," human or divine. And happiness—?

Taine says, "Society is made up of four classes: lovers, the ambitious, observers, and fools. The fools are the happiest." Carlyle says, "Man's unhappiness comes of his greatness." We wonder how many people to-day will say "grace" before the turkey and plum-pudding, and truly give thanks afterward — not that the Lord of the harvest has brought the sweets of all grasses, the sunshine of all fields and shining hillsides, in delicately compacted tissues of meats and fibres of vegetables and juices of fruits, to their table (though that is well!), but that through the long year His hand has led them, perhaps by rugged steps, up to some height from which, a year ago, they could not look down. What if the feet be bleeding? it is the height that charms, not the steps up

to it. "The life of the gods is infinite battle against infinite labor." Shall we sigh for the "soporifical good-for-nothingness" that comes of rest and ease and abundance,— companionship with shrimps and oysters and the rest? "God's mercies should not be counted on the outside, but on the inside." We are statues, not of clay to be softly and tenderly moulded, but of imperishable marble to be hewn and cut and chiselled by the refiner's fingers to some beautiful perfection of which we cannot know or dream. Why will not our preachers thunder in our ears, Forget happiness, and accept instead thereof blessedness? Fools that we would sit supinely down, and cry out for a gay bauble afar off, which in our hands turns dull and heavy and dead! "Love not

pleasure — love God ; this is the everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved.”

As our thoughts go chasing back through the passing year, we count here a joy, there a sadness ; here some good gift of thought or love, there a veiling away or an unveiling (which is sadder) of loved faces, shadowing God’s too much ; here long flecks of sunshine, there deep shadow ; now sweet memories of bliss that make us forgetful, and then sad memories of pain that bid us remember. It is a good old year, for the dear God is in it all. If our thought could but touch His, then should we also see and know. *Vouloir ce que Dieu veut, c’est la seule science.* What if more and more, as we ascend, we sit solitary ?

So that the shadow of *self* does not blot our sunshine, we shall not feel the cold. Life is always rich, if we will but receive; even misfortune may be “a disease of long standing which becomes a pearl.” Every noble crown is, and forever will be, a crown of thorns: shall we bare our head the less reverently to receive it?

Is not this whole subject of Thanksgiving treated too often superficially?

Gratitude, devout emotion, will not bubble up at call, “like the fountain at formal turning of the spigot.” Our thanks for material prosperity, if it has come to us, are checked too often by the thought of the many from whom it has flown; of the world’s poor, who can count neither goods, nor home, nor

friends. We Americans are quite inclined to thank ourselves for our successes, not God. We say we are "self-made" men. We are our own special providences. And, in a measure, this is true. "The animal man fights for his morsel: game is rare, and on every side an untrained covetousness leaps to seize it." He that gets up betimes, goes out earliest, lies down latest, gathers most dogs and arms and nets and friends, walks quickest, and scents most keenly, shuts up his bag most closely, — he gets the best dinner.

But is this dreary grubbing for bread and butter, this unending hurry and drive and push, — is this ALL? Shall we count that a success, which fills our bare homes with upholstery, our bare life

with gay trappings of material successes? How shall we ever know the hidden sweetness of our grapes, if we continually take thought but to add a furlong to our vineyard? It is not our wealth, but how we are to our wealth, that constitutes true riches. It is the silent growth within, that makes up the true life: new gifts are well, but the capacity for better appreciating the old is better. When our souls shall have grown "divinely tall and most divinely fair," then shall the beautiful meaning and possibilities of life dawn upon us. No day can be stale or hackneyed with thought of death beneath and God just overhead! Our mistake is, we call the outward details of life, *life*, and think not of the immortal one growing silently up

within; and so, when our festival days wheel slowly round upon us, we wonder sometimes what we have to be thankful for, — or turn irreverently, and thank God “it is no worse.”

As life brings us only what we take into it, as all beauty and truth exist in the soul or *not at all* (for us), so all purest happiness grows from within upward, and that which tends most to enrich our own soul is to us of greatest worth.

“Life rounds itself between the two opposite but mutually sustaining poles of what we long for, and what we must.” Alas! “we make a ladder of our thoughts that touches heaven, but sleep ourselves at the foot.” The sturdy strength that enables us to live life rightly does not

come of wishing. There must exist a sacred confidence between our souls and God, that we be ever receptive of the Divine inspiration. There must be an earnest sincerity, — truth in dealing with ourselves and others. There must be courage that shall look the ills of life in the face, knowing they are but accidents, and not of supreme importance to any soul. “The man in pursuit of greatness feels no little wants.” There must be openness of soul that shall see its way into all other souls, feeling their experience, thereby broadening his own. “The great man is in himself a *people!*”

To be truly wise, we must know and experience all; and shall this discipline be lost more than the other? Life is a school. The scholar shall not omit cer-

tain studies because they are painful or distasteful. In the end he shall be glad of all knowledge. But the scholar, if he is wise and aspiring, does not go out straightway and forget what he has learned. He does not lock it away in his brain. He inwardly digests and assimilates, making *it a part of his life.*

Above all, there must be the continual remembrance that this life is not the end; that it is the school of trial, not in any sense of completion or attainment. As our beautiful ideals forever recede, so our steps must ever, more and more swiftly, follow on after; "not that we have already attained, but that we *press forward* toward the mark of the high calling."

Sainte-Beuve says, "The golden age is not behind us, but *before us*." Our lives are a drama, wherein *we* are the hero, who must vanquish or be vanquished. Other men take knowledge of the play, and learn from it some good or ill. They recognize subtly the true fire, if it be of heaven, and know us *better than we think*. "We are the photometers, the irritable gold-leaf and tin-foil, that measure for them the accumulations of the divine element." No life is lost. The true fire burneth upward. The *true life* is warmth and light, an *atmosphere* pervading and illumining all other lives.

Let us take this beautiful thought home to our heart and life, that the Creator has *not* deserted his offspring; that in proportion as we turn and open

our souls to receive emanations from the Divine Spirit, He does come and dwell with us. The days of inspiration are not past. Where does goodness come from? where love, holiness, wisdom, if not from the divine source?

Has the year brought suffering in its train? How do we know pain was not the best good that could have come to us? All knowledge is good. We are not gods, to know without experience. The truth is, "we think too much of what the gods have given us, and too little why." If transition into the divine is ever woeful, yet it is life. The day and the night make up the perfect day. If the day be great and final, who shall repine at the brief darkness? All knowledge that expands the soul is good—

why not that of pain also? An old Italian painter once said, the secret of all effect and beauty in his art lay in the putting black upon white, and white upon black. And shall not mortal man trust the Great Artist?

It is said women should not think pronouncedly, but give forth the exquisite perfume of a thought. Read from a sweet woman and true poet what she has better said than we can write,—a text about which to crystallize our Thanksgiving thought:—

“If, as two colors must be viewed
In a seen image, mortals should
Need good and evil to see good;

If to speak nobly comprehends
To feel profoundly; if the ends
Of power and suffering Nature blends:

What say ye unto this? Refuse
This baptism in salt water? Choose
Calm breasts, mute lips, and labor lose?

.

Rather content to be so bare
Before the archers! everywhere
Thy wounds being stroked by heavenly air;

To lay thy soul before His feet,
That images of fair and sweet
May walk to other men on it.

.

For knowledge by suffering entereth,
And life is perfected by death."





IX.

THE MATERIALIST.

BURNS has said there were two creatures he envied,—a wild horse in the forests of Asia, and an oyster on some desert shore: one had no wish without enjoyment; the other, neither wish nor fear. Perhaps the nearest we mortals are likely to attain to this latter degree of blessedness is just here, where we drift for a space near the edge of the boundless shore of existence,—run on soundings, as it were, the great world-roar being far off, faint. If there are

days when the spiritual within us is quickened, and thoughts move their "buskined dew-bathed feet" through our soul with heavenly clearness, so also there come days like these, when a dull gray veil, like some vast eyelid, seems folding down over all. It is winter: thoughts and feelings are dried up and dead; "the senses lie under a heavy dream carpet." We have neither wish nor fear, only a vague content, if God choose, that he stretch the time out *very wide*. Is he not working out his own ideals? We are the statues unshaped; what have we to do but lie still and wait? We suppose, if the oyster could be said to have a creed (and why not? since many who think as little, are seemingly firmly anchored), it would run

something in this wise: "The world without God is an impossible idea; God without the world is impossible: *ergo*, one will take care of the other; let us not give ourselves headache over it. Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we are evolved!" There seem to come states of physical and mental languor (debility, if you choose so to name it), when we easily drift into a sort of negative acceptance of any thing.

Are there not certain temperaments that, even in health, are full of this spiritual languor? They hold a parasitic home in the church, perhaps living on the more vital faith of others, or oftener drift, anchorless and rudderless, into the deep sea of materialism, simply from lack of force to bring themselves up standing.

Goethe conceived the essence of evil to be negative, rather than positive, in its character. As cold is the privation of heat, darkness the absence of light, so is evil the negation of good. The Mephistopheles of Faust is made to say, "I am the spirit that denies."

The materialist's creed, "This life ye have, what know ye of any other? Follow nature: there is no other law or revelation. Take thine ease, O soul! the Creator shall not condemn the created," dispels its fine spiritual malaria through all our social life, and dwarfs and mars often what else might be good and noble. Of all the siren voices that lure from our energetic, intense, practical American life, this which calls to sensuous irresponsibility is, perhaps, most fatally

attractive. From our thought and our work, from our struggle and our aspiration, we lean wearily towards its winsome promise of rest and ease. Alas that the deadly night-shade grows in its soft, warm shadow, and the serpent and the asp love also its brooding warmth!

Men talk of "drifting" into weakness, error, inconstancy, crime, as though the very fact they do drift were not sign and token of weakness. George Eliot says, "Drifting depends on something beside the currents, when all the sails have been set beforehand." We believe there is an underlying stratum of *weakness* running through all the languor, the refinement, the falsehood, of character built upon this creed; dig down

deep enough, and you are sure to strike it. Intellectual gifts, graces of person and manner, refinement, amiability, do not make character. It is because we let them cloud and confuse our vision, that we so often judge falsely, and tie cords which bring great unhappiness into our lives.

The materialist, whose life is in the senses, if he make personal happiness the controlling thought of life, drifts speedily into the sensualist, and mars other lives with scarcely a pang or a regret. Self-gratification becomes, in its last analysis, selfishness pure and simple. Law, human and divine, considers the greatest good of the greatest number, not of the individual; and if one become a law unto himself, there comes sooner

or later the inevitable necessity of concealment.

Thus falsehood creeps into the life, distils its poison through it; like a terrible cancer, eats its way down to the very vitals; and when it touches the heart, spiritual death must come sooner or later.

Moral deformity often wears a shining mask of gifts and graces, is full of apparent strength and tenderness; but bring it to the test, and you shall find the courage and honor upon which you leaned but a brittle reed, shaken by the winds. True strength is developed only by struggle. "God never crowns natural gifts or faculties." Up on the heights the air is chill, but it is full of life; the deadly miasma crawls low in those shin-

ing valleys which lure you down. Aspiration, struggle against self, are to the materialist words from an unknown tongue.

Woe to him who has laid aside his ideals! He who keeps himself in a purgatory of self-condemnation, because of his ardent faith and longing and striving for things noblest and truest and purest, — he is the real man: he who brings himself out of purgatory into a condition of self-complacency, because he requires so little of himself, is a vulgarized man.

The voice which would lead us through flowery labyrinths, to “taste, eat, and be as gods,” takes but to the desert whose bitter sands shall parch and burn. When the feet wander, cut and bleed-

ing, over its flint and stones, and the eyes are blinded with mist and dark, then, in some supreme moment of need, the friendly mask shall fall.

“Be happy, make happy.” The creed is beautiful (in words); but like some shining shell, if you clasp it close, it crushes in, — is hollow. Be loyal first, O soul! then if the beautiful bauble, happiness, escape thee, still thou art doubly blessed in that thou hast so richly earned it. Whatever in life induces falsehood in any of the relations of life, brings its morbid unhealth. Let no human soul think to touch its lips to poison, and not drink in death. Happiness must be purchased. The difference between the true and false happiness is, that one is paid for in ad-

vance and the other afterward. "Faust" tastes of earth's ripest and richest and rarest, but comes to dwell at last by the shore of the eternal sea, and to find true happiness only in self-abnegation. All else is but vague unrest. The earthy never yet soothed and quelled any human soul. The infinite cannot be buried under the finite. Knowledge and amiability do not make character, but strength and truth do. They are one and inseparable. "The more falsehood, the more weakness: strength goes straight; every cannon-ball that has in it hollows and holes goes crooked." It is the pilotage of the ship, not the weight or ballast, that tells.

The materialist would develop a splendid, successful animal; and the very pros-

perity, indulgence, and ease he covets, are fatal to him. Strength grows from earnestness; it courts the struggle that lifts, and is glad of the storm that purifies. Zimmermann tells us, "The hereditary sin of human nature is not pride, or ambition, or egotism, but *indolence*." All good must stagnate where there is not spiritual activity. The vine that spreads itself in rich luxuriance of leaves brings small fruit to the vintage; it must be shorn and cut and pruned, that its "very loss of blood may redound in rich return of fruit for the harvest." Our life is a drama, where we are the hero who must vanquish or be vanquished. In every act and scene, it touches other lives for good or ill. Men take knowledge of the play, and recognize subtly

the true fire, if it be of heaven. The true life is warmth and light,—an atmosphere pervading all other lives. The false life spreads its poison-shadow like the upas-tree. Woe to the flowers that open into bloom, the tender vines that cling about it! it shall breathe a subtle darkness through all the summer of their lives.





X.

PRESENTIMENTS.

DURING the long hours of illness, when the physical is at low ebb, spiritual truths loom out with startling distinctness; phantom-like questionings stalk to and fro, and will not "out!" The whole subject of the action of mind upon mind, and spirit upon spirit, has, during these days of convalescence, repeatedly confronted us. A physician has many interesting experiences. The wonderful efficacy of bread-pills and sugar-powders is almost incredible! Mesmerism, too,

has its uses as a curative, as every physician of large practice knows. Thoughts upon these subjects open a great field of inquiry out into the border-land of the spiritual.

We are aware it is much the fashion to scoff at any thing beyond one's own practical vision or ken, as if there were not "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of" in any mortal's "philosophy!" Bettine prettily says, "Limits of earthly wisdom are but the star-lighted little men who grope blindly."

"Common-sense" stigmatizes any faith foolishness other than its own. Ah, well! it may be it requires a finer kind of sense to apprehend spiritual relations.

“ Sparks electric only strike on sparks electrical
alike ;
The flash of spirit soon expires unless it meet
congenial fires.”

Man draws with pretty conceit the boundary lines between the spiritual and the sensual, thinking he knows the one and the other. How can he assert that one does not run into and become the other, if properly apprehended? “ The more thought with emotion blends, the more, up-buoyed by both, the soul ascends.”

Sense and spirit are the fine warp and woof of the checkered fabric of life. Time is the element in which it is woven. The something beyond, without, we call God. What we can absolutely say we *know* of either, is that it is all a

mystery. Whatever we judge of internal powers of things, we judge by presentiment, by sympathy. Thus "every man has his own individual universe," and cannot decide for another. The great man is he who can transport himself into the universal life around him, *not* he who seeks to compress it all within his own little experience.

For ourselves, we do not incline much to a belief in super-mundane influences and interferences, preferring to refer the whole subject of visions, clairvoyance, and the like, to the existence and operation of natural laws beyond our ken; but to ignore them, or deem their existence only the illusion of weak minds, is to beg the whole question. Because half mankind are moulded of common potter's clay,

does not prove the other half may not be of finer material.

How is it in the natural world? A touch that would not be felt by the tough oak-leaf, would wither the delicate mountain fern or sensitive-plant.

Goethe believed in the existence of a spiritual aura, through which impressions independent of the external senses might be communicated. He relates with emphasis the prophetic visions of his father. Luther held that influences from guardian spirits give direction to our sleeping and waking thoughts. His sermon upon the "ministry of angels" is too well known to make special reference to it here necessary. Surely this is a sweet and consoling illusion (if an illusion); and, as John Hay very irreverently ex-

presses himself, it seems better business for the angels than "loafing around the throne." Whatever judgment we may pass upon the visions of Swedenborg, and his peculiar views, his writings certainly evince a power and spiritual insight not to be disregarded.

The case of Jacob Böhme, the German mystic, is, perhaps, as wonderful an instance of the influence and power of visions to shape a life, as any we can cite. Born in 1575, of poor, ignorant parents, apprenticed to a shoemaker, with absolutely no instruction, and until his eleventh year unable to read, and then having access to no book but the Bible, he yet, through visions and dreams, communicated to the world thoughts upon philosophic and religious subjects, that

largely influenced the minds of Schelling, Goethe, and the most cultivated of German transcendentalists. Thrice (he states) he was environed by a celestial light, which so quickened his intelligence that in walking he was enabled to see into the essences of herbs and grasses. Knowing little of the use of language, he could not communicate his thoughts as clearly as he might otherwise have done; but his interpretation of the Trinity and of other religious mysteries is certainly quite wonderful.

That we ourselves have no seemingly supernatural experiences, is no argument *against* them. If we are blind, and can see but a few steps ahead, it does not follow that others may not see hundreds of degrees farther on, even, at times, it may

be, into the "deep, cool well of the fore-world," and there discern, bright and clear, what to us lies hidden in a fog-bank.

What if we do not see the Divine motive always in direct spiritual influences? Do we know the *cui bono* of the earthquake, the devastating fire, the plague, the whirlwind? We say God would not set aside "natural laws." What do we know of natural laws? The scientists tell us, if within the next century our knowledge of the nature of electricity and the laws that govern it advances as during the last, we may almost divine the creative power itself. We now know that nerve-force and life-force are electroid in their character, the blood a "metal-bearing fluid." But what

may we not learn of their possible combinations? What of the force or forces brought to bear on them? Each century unfolds its link in the chain of knowledge. Alas that the chain yet ever ends "in a link unknown"!

Wonderful instances of mesmeric influence are of common occurrence. If minds in proximity act thus upon each other separated by fleshly barriers, why not at greater distance, separated still by the material only? The soul takes possession of the body to make it a tool, not a *prison*. What is distance to spirit? What do we know, anyway, of *space*, except our failure to overcome it? London is nearer New York to-day, than Boston was to our great-grandfathers of a century back. The distance of the fixed stars

is nothing to *light*. Are, then, light and electricity more potent, more intelligent, more free, than spirit? Who shall say?

Who of us has not, at times, felt a sweet consciousness of some loved presence that was yet leagues away? How it gleams in upon us in unexpected moments like the sunshine, fair and radiant! A sudden force has drawn us to the beloved heart; and through all sense of cold or loss, we have felt its divine warmth. If this is an illusion, it is a royal one; let us hedge it about. Who knows but love itself may be an illusion, or life? Verily, earth is arched round about by mystery. Only now and then do we drift on soundings, even! The unknown, the "*beyond*," stands sphinx-like, fingertip on lips. Who knows when the pres-

cient soul may see behind the veil? or *how*, or *what*? Men do not relate their deepest experiences. There are thoughts and feelings that seem but the fine aroma of thought and sense, too delicate for words, beyond expression.

Perhaps music, better than any other form of expression, suggests that which is beyond words. Unable thus to speak, I have tried to say in verse the thought that comes to me now, for which bald prose seems inadequate:—

As on the stream that swiftly winds its way
O'er pebbled sands, and flowers and mosses gay,
There shimmers ever from the heaven above
A shadowy mirroring of its sun and clouds:
So in the soul of man, where reason stands perplexed,
Is mirrored faintly light from that world next

The heaven that arches near, whose roof fits
 closely round,
Though through the night of sense it yields nor
 sight nor sound.

Whence come those shadowings faint, that fine
 intelligence,
Unsanctioned by the will, untouched by any sense,
That ofttimes limn life's prison-walls with light,
(Heaven's glory flung across our waves of night,)
As if the gleaming shadow of some lustrous wing
Had shaken all its soft bright sunlight down?
Sweet "Heaven-born instincts!" may ye not to
 loving souls
Be loving answer to questionings of God untold?

It is said there exists a subtile, powerful fluid, which transmits to the brain impressions received by the senses; the excitement caused is *ideas*. The soul is a lute to be touched, a mirror to reflect,

a pilot to guide. Life is at best, mostly, but a beautiful night, wherein only now and then some stars shine out. May there not come twilight moments before the dawn, when through the dim clair-obscure we faintly discern the light?

Whatever we may believe, or refuse to believe, on the subject of clairvoyance, presentiments, prophetic visions, and the like, it is very certain our ancestors attached great importance to them. Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and most of the ancient philosophers, refer repeatedly to their influence. The Bible is explicit in its testimony to the existence of the seemingly miraculous. Job says, "in slumbering upon the bed, then God openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Even great Cæsar trembled at

Calphurnia's visions, and Columbus beheld in dreams "God would give him the gates of the ocean." All who are familiar with Dante's "Vita Nuova" remember his wonderful vision of the illness and death of the beloved Beatrice, then leagues away.

Life ordinarily, to one highly organized, vibrates like a pendulum between pleasure and pain, the more intense as the nature is more exquisite. To feel keenly, — what is it but to hear the little grasses growing under one's feet; to see forever, beneath all gilding and show, the great, silent, pale face of God's poor, hungrily uplifted; to know height and depth of love and loss; to feel the ecstasy of all winged life; to dwell in the azure, sipping nectar of the gods, and with glass up-

lifted hear slowly the woe, the sob, the heartbreak of humanity, weaving its sombre minor in and out? Sadly the old chorus, semi-Calvinistic, Greek, what not, comes floating over us:—

“The tides of life uneven flow,
And ever betwixt weal and woe
We drift and waver to and fro,
Because the gods will have it so.”

In illness, if bodily pain be not too great, the soul is likely to attain a sort of serenity and rest. There are moments when one is left utterly alone with one's self; society, business, outside cares, being far away and dim. Coleridge says, “Reflection is like looking back at one's self in a mirror.” You resolve the past into details,—regard yourself curiously,

seeing there were in reality *two* selves amazingly alike; one thought, aspired, hoped, and longed, went *winged*; the other crawled, low down, was a mask and a subterfuge too often, needed the quickening life and fire of the other, was of clay, dull and heavy. This self went into society, to the dinner-table, smiled and talked small nothings, was trivial and ordinary: the other lived sacred and recluse. You perceive in this dual existence, there were conflicts of soul and body, not always harmony; and yet you can perceive also, dimly, that this was not so fore-ordained.

Genius has an immortality of its own. It is an efflux of Deity, and cannot die. Not so the earthly vessels that hold it. To-day men are quarrelling about the

personality of Homer; centuries hence men may question if ever such a person existed as Shakespeare. Already they are asking if he wrote his own plays.

We believe all high and noble thought, all original and vivifying thought, to come not so much from the perfect co-working of all man's faculties in their most harmonious moments, as directly from Deity, the divine source. Can *matter, under most favorable auspices, originate spirit?*

The soul at times, as in sleep, lives within itself; the will-power is dormant; impressions from without touch it without the intervention of external objects. Awake, one's whole being is affected; in sleep, only the ever-active brain.

Some time we may understand better man's double nature. At present we may as well confess we know little or nothing. Dreams may often be but the memory of sensation; and as there is no chance for one sensation to rectify the other, as when awake, we should accept impressions thus given guardedly, if at all: but that is not to deny that forces external to ourselves do act upon the soul. It has passed into a proverb, that "coming events cast their shadows before." The soul, delicately organized, seems to pass into the shadowy penumbra, feeling the dark and chill, even before life's sad eclipses enshroud it. How often, too, do we know with vague sense of loss or sadness, the pain of the beloved far away! It is as though their night or

storms sent misty arms of darkness over our day.

The wisdom of the wise may call this foolishness; but they cannot reduce life to a mathematical problem, if they would. Reason may sneer at imagination; all the same, it is God's supernal faculty: all others have "the brown touch of earth upon them — this alone wears the livery of heaven." Our sweetest possessions we must ever take *on trust*, — love, God, immortality. If we *believe*, may we not be said already, in a measure, to *possess*?

"We cry to the spirits, 'Come nearer, come nearer,
And lift up the lap of this dark, and speak clearer;
And teach us the song that ye sung;'
And we smile in our thought, if they answer or no,
For to *dream* of a sweetness is sweet as to *know*."



XI.

CHRISTMAS MUSING.

“WE are only God’s thought when he is ours,” some one has said. If this were true, perhaps at no season of the year would the golden network of human sighs and prayers and thanksgiving bind God closer to earth than now, at the slipping-out of the old year, and incoming of the new. At no season do we pause to take breath and be glad,—sometimes even to *think*,—as in this holiday time. All the year, life so presses upon us, our every-day cares, business,

and follies so crystallize about the soul. We Americans, especially, can never tarry to pluck flowers by the wayside, much less to look up and adore. We rub all the gilding off life, sighing that our days become commonplace and wearisome. The flying years drive us on with whip and spur, and only death's terrible "Halt!" can command our weary feet at last to rest. All about us lie the wrecks of men and women, yet we are not warned. Our feet go on crushing out the exquisite mosses and lilies of life, in swift and vain pursuit of some phantom of riches or success or worldly honors just before. Half-way up the hill, Nature utters her protest; and, tired with life's burdens, we drop silently by the wayside.

And is this all of life? Goethe writes the inscription on Mignon's tomb, "*Gedenke zu leben.*" What if to-day we also inscribe these words, in shining letters, upon the tomb of the old year, "Think how to live"? We hear a great deal from our spiritual teachers, of preparation for death. Would that they could tell us oftener and more intelligently how truly to live!

Philosophy tells us all life is comprised in two words: to *sustain* and to *abstain*. According to Plato, the heart and the understanding are the two wings by which man ascends; and he who by his goodness, his veracity, his chastity, his efforts to attain a luminous intelligence, most honors God, most truly lives. On the contrary, the world says, "Eat,

drink, and be merry, for to-morrow ye die." Our own hearts bid us taste the kernel of each day's sweetness, for is not to-morrow already here? Which of all the conflicting voices shall we heed? Some good preacher has said, "There is no use of life but to find out what is fit for us to do, and, doing it, it matters not whether we live or die: God wants not our work, but our willingness to work."

If we could, to these holiday feasts, bring hearts less tainted with worldliness, perhaps we might touch closer the pure Christ-life, and receive answer; but we come overburdened with selfishness, and because we do not see God we say he is not near our life. The soul must be still to hear him speak. "God hath no other harbor but the spirit of man:"

How if the harbor be not open to receive?

The Christian Church, mindful of the rest and undercurrent of thought of these days, takes this first week of the New Year to offer up prayer and praise (which it may be God has already heard in the richer speech of human aspiration, sighs, and longings). As we tenderly fold away the old year, its memories, its hopes, and its regrets alike slipping from our clinging hands, shall we make of it a sepulchre like the rest, wherein we only bury our dead? Surely God had other uses for this bit of eternity vouchsafed us. Time is really but a name: it is what we do with it, makes the substance. What are a dozen centuries to the rock, to the stars? And yet, of all our little "three-

score years and ten" (deducting the proper ratio for sleep, for recreation, and illness, the needs of our physical nature, and for the days of preparation), we have hardly a paltry dozen left for work and worship.

What wonder if the little dumb heap of thoughts, wishes, cares, and loves, which lie at our feet within the shroud of the old year, look up with sadness and warning in their sweet, dead faces!

Ah! life is indeed a puzzle; it is full of "dark alleys leading nowhere:" how may we avoid them? It is full of will-o'-the-wisps beckoning, eluding: how may we know them? It is full of depths and heights, of sun and storm; of a misery we cannot redress, and a luxury we cannot attain — how glide serenely

through this labyrinth? How glean and bind and bear richest sheaves to the Lord of the harvest? How make the flying years steps up a ladder of light, the last always the best, because richer, fuller from the experience of those gone before?

Have the Christmas Glorias no voice of reply? Shall the new year bear no torch in its hands to light the way? Shall our lives forever consume beneath the level of the roof-tops, nor rise to pierce the low mist clouds which alone obscure the sun?

It is said, "Men seem to need little less than every thing to make them happy, and little more than nothing to make them unhappy; for the former a sun, for the latter a particle of saw-

dust." How sad that with all true happiness and nobleness so near us, we yet court misery because we cannot touch the stars! To think, to read, to love, to hope, to pray,—will man ever have power to do more?

Far back in time was the advent of the new year celebrated; the Greeks and Romans both observed it, and throughout Christendom it has ranked next Christmas rejoicings. The celebration of Epiphany (the twelfth day) was adopted somewhere about 1550. At this feast went round, in old Saxon times, the "wassail bowl." Homes were decorated, great candles lighted, and at Christmas time the great yule-log rolled in to make bright the hearth; the boar's head, bedecked with rosemary, was car-

ried on a silver platter to the table ; parties went from house to house singing " Christmas carols " (the oldest of our English songs) ; and from our jolly forefathers down to our day has crept something of the general rejoicing. Why is it all, but that into the world has come the new love impulse ? The Christ-life was a bubbling-over in thought, word, and deed, of the love side of Deity. We sing our carols and our Glorias to the spirit of love. Heretofore man had thought to love only what was lovable, — to give only what might yield ample return. Ah ! poverty of soul ! We must needs grow taller and diviner. Christ came, and life became energy of love. He was the Sun of the world more than the real sun ; the fire of His

wonderful heart swept light and heat down all the centuries. "God planted the beam of revelation into mankind; but Love must enter his bosom, and plant the desire for revelation." Our small loves became coldness to the Divine burning. We must teach our heart not only to be full, but to overflow. What matter if our riches fall on shallow soil? No love is lost. "The fountain, unto itself returning, shall fill it full of refreshment." If love is strong, "it tarries not to heed or know if its return exceed its gift; to its sweet haste no greed, no strifes belong." Out of our own heart must we know what God is. No words or sounds can tell in the smallest point what love means. We cannot cleanse our life in spots; it must

be whole manhood, pure womanhood, supplied from a perennial fountain, or it is nothing at all worth the giving or taking. Love must "strike the chord of self till it vanish out of sight." Then shall we seek our pleasures not selfishly, but purely and with exultant reverence; feeling them not to be necessary, but added to, enhancing, the true life. We shall be content oft-times to live and breathe in a cloud, seeing it opening here and closing there, "rejoicing to catch through thinnest films of it a glimpse of stable and substantial things, but perceiving a nobleness in concealment, glad that a kindly veil is spread where the infinite clearness might have blinded and dazzled."

How can men spend so much time

quarrelling over Christ, some asserting, some denying his divinity, when anyway it is such blessing to call him "brother," "friend," "master," even if we do not say "Lord"? If he had taught us nothing more than that "love is a questioning of God, and loving his answer," that love meant service, and truest living was truest loving, how could we ever count up our thanks, or too reverently remember and adore? Oh! if we, as a nation, could be found oftener learning and reading and worshipping, finding whereof to grow soulward, then should we also find that happiness which most of us are forever pursuing, and forever failing to attain. If we would oftener pause to "consider the lilies," the mosses, the clouds, to look into

the still depths of our own soul, then would the sweet secret of life shine out in letters of gold; and the mystic light from the Holy Grail would fall down upon us from the heavenly cloud wherein the tender hand of God has forever locked it away. Knowledge passes, philosophies and theologies fade and give place; but Faith, Hope, and Love, these three *abide*.





XII.

FROM NIGHT TO LIGHT.

TO-DAY a gray pall seems to hang over the earth. The Lenten days have come; and my soul, with the rest, sits much in shadow. Through the dim light of the open door, a darker shadow falls. It is he, my friend, pale, calm, defiant. "You, too, are sad?" he said. "I chose to-day, because I would not blot the sunshine of any brighter one for you."

"I am a philosopher," I cried, "and depend not on the sunshine without. Mine I hold imprisoned within. Come

in, bend low your head, and it may be a few rays of light will fall upon you.”

I had been thinking of him, and of that great universal law of suffering, through knowledge of which all souls in this disciplinary state must pass to light. Patiently, tirelessly, he had hammered away in life's conflicts, only to return thwarted and baffled, driven back by great waves, that ate more and more deeply into his soul as they washed him nearer soundings.

“And has my philosophic friend quite taken in the lesson of pain yet,” he said, “physical pain, I mean, and *ennui* and weariness? When the Potter fashioned His jars, wherefore did He make *any* of them, pray, thin and twisted

and brittle? Tell me, why should the infinitely wise One have fashioned a body to clothe the soul, so imperfect as only to clog and dim its vision, or so intricate in its mechanism as to be forever run down or out of order? Man's side of the story has never been told, save perhaps in that ringing line of old Omar Khayyam, 'Man's forgiveness give *and take.*' I tell you, life is only a grand Inquisition, wherein one after another of us is turned on the wheel, and if perchance in some rare moment there comes surcease of pain, it is only that we may gather new and keener life to suffer. And do you blame us, if, beaten upon and broken by this remorseless wheel of destiny, we are some day cast up by life's great waves as wrecked and useless

on the wide, infinite shore? No, it is all gray, *gray*, my friend, like this Lenten day; even you yourself cannot penetrate the thickness of this cloud."

"Look up," I cried, "way out beyond these shaded fields, beyond the violet lake, do you not see that glinting of sunlight on the crest of the hills? Must you always need *see* and *feel* the warmth of that bit of reflected light, to know the sun is still shining? *I* need not; and that is all the difference between us. Only climb the great hills high enough, and you will leave this belt of cloud below; but remember, my friend, it must grow more and more solitary as you ascend.

"Of course, if you stay down in your cave of shadow, and bar the door, your

soul will find darkness and cold enough to fill the Purgatorio of great Dante.

“Have you never read those sweet lines of Alfred de Musset?

‘La joie a pour symbole une plante brisée,
Humide encore de pluie, et couverte de fleurs.’

“Think you the great Gardener loves the plant the less, that he permits the rough winds to blow upon it, and the tears of dew to fall, if so be that new strength shall go into its final blossoming and fruit? May He not even, in tender pity, bend it low to earth before breaking it from its earthly stem for transfer to His courts of life and light?”

“Ah!” he sighed, “all that is very sweet, it is poetic and pure. It floats in upon my harassed and troubled life like

some refrain of low music. You women are imaginative; we would not have you otherwise: but your dreams are only *dreams*, and facts are stubborn things. Alas that it is *not* life-giving breezes that blow, or gentle dews that fall, but harsh, rasping north winds, and enervating, insinuating siroccos, and acrid, bitter tears, that eat into and corrode! They do not make the soul better, but worse; even the blossoming of a rich nature is stunted and dwarfed by them. You make your God refined, poetic, generous, and good, like yourself. But I do not wonder half the world have made His image of stone and brass, and seen Him only in the lightning and storm and consuming flame."

"Since no created soul," I replied

slowly, "can reflect more than existed in its Creator, since man's highest and best attributes must have come from some source higher, why not grant as reasonable, that any thing lovable you see in your friend must have its counterpart in something more lovable? Does water rise higher than its source? Tell me, is beauty also but a figment of a few feverish brains? Because the ploughman sees only the brown earth at the roots of the daisies his ploughshare is turning, or the miner delving for gold mid his shadows forgets to take note of the rose-tints and bright warmth of the outer sky, would you say, therefore, no crimson-tipped flower or golden glowing heavens smiled down in blessing on the poets who sung their halle-

lujahs? It is in contemplation of the beautiful, the sense of beauty grows into the soul. Shut the eyes to it, and the most finely organized soul will never find it. But Athena does not wholly unveil her face to any mortal. One may interpret here, and another there. So God: all beautiful souls that ever lived but faintly reflect the multitudinous rays of this Sun of suns. Are your highest dreams ever more beautiful than beauty? Then how can you prove that the saints' purest visions rise ever beyond the radiant Source? No: the more our being revolves about the highest and best we know, more and more will the vision unfold itself of that which is higher. What are rough winds to the eagle? Does he not soon leave far beneath him the ener-

vating sirocco? and what rasping sleet or rain shall dull his glorious plumage?"

As I ceased to speak, lo! the little rift of sunlight from the hills had spread itself down their green sides into the water. My head fell back with a sigh of weariness on the richly cushioned chair. Just then a ray of brightness streamed in across the room, shedding a sort of glory that was almost blinding.

"There it is!" said my friend. "You always coax all sunshine to follow you, but alas! I must have been born under a shadow. *Kismet!*" and he waved an adieu.

Perhaps he had seen her coming; for into his vacant place stepped my lady Lovell, calm, placid, content. "I am glad he is gone," she said, "though, poor fellow, I am rather sorry for him. Too

proud, you know, by half, always feeling things too deeply, over-sensitive, and all that. That is just the sort of man to wear himself out by rasping himself with small straws. Give me placid, shallow natures! *Why* love much what you may lose, or hope much what may disappoint, or aspire for that which you may never attain, or think deeply of what you can never absolutely know? The truest and wisest philosopher is he who sits much in the sun, lets no emotion take deep hold, avoids strong and excitable natures, and, *enfin*, lives mainly on the lotus."

She laughed a little as she said this, slowly drawing off the long gloves, and regarding with complaisant satisfaction the bejewelled fingers, watching to catch the play of light on them.

“And what if all your wonderful diamonds were paste, instead of the deep-hearted, light-imprisoned stones?” said I. “Fancy them when the newness and the freshness were gone, how dull and bleared and dark! What if the expression of suffering, of discipline, of patience, of tender sympathy, of deep feeling, of fortitude, and of persistent study and thought, were all taken out of the old faces? After the color and fulness were gone, what would be left? After the glow of youth and the vigor of manhood had departed, what would be left? Did you ever think what darkness, what chill and damp and loneliness, what slow accretion, go to make up the true diamond?”

The ray of sunlight faded slowly from

the room. It was the last; and before the ashen night crept in, my lady had gone. A great weariness of soul crept over me. After all, was I right, and were they all wrong? And if I saw the Light more than they, *wherefore!* did not they also wish to know the truth? I thought of a letter that had come only yesterday to me. My friend had written:—

“If there be such a God as you think, he will understand *why* I do not understand. I am not a hypocrite, and I will not say I believe that which, so far as I have light, I do not believe; nor will I worship what I neither comprehend nor (so far as I comprehend it) do I approve! I wait for light. When it comes, I *may* see.”

Can one see the distant hills with a sevenfold bandage over the eyes, — I thought, — or know the glories of light by looking through deep-tinted glasses?

The natural attitude of the soul is one of affirmation. It is the spirit of Mephistopheles that denies. As the eyes are opened to receive light, and the ears to catch the faintest sound, so should the soul of man hold itself ever sensitively receptive toward the Divine. But we can close the eyes from seeing if we will, and perhaps even a God cannot penetrate the soul that deliberately shuts Him out. Now I think of it, God does not promise to come to him that waits, or even to him that wishes, but unto “them that hear my call.” How can the soul hear the “still small voice,” if it be not

in the attitude of intently listening? The ear may be finely attuned, but if the rush and the roar of the world fill its outer chambers, or it be dull and inattentive within, will the song of the skylark touch it?

And yet, so long ago, these very days of shadow fell heavily upon One supremely good and pure. Did not He also once cry out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" I thought of His church draped in gloom; and even as I thought, the sweet jangle of the evening bells came to me, and one above them all seemed to triumph, saying, —

"Tu demandes à Dieu, de soulager ton âme,
Ton âme est immortelle, et ton cœur va guérir.

.

Le regret d'un instant te trouble, et te dévore,
 Tandis que le passé te voile l'avenir ;
 Ne te plains pas d'hier, laisse venir l'aurore,
 Ton âme est immortelle, et le temps va s'enfuir."

And with these words, *laisse venir l'aurore*, coming in soft refrain, I fell asleep ; to wake with the radiant brightness of an Easter morning shining full in my face.

A print of Raphael's "Transfiguration" hung over my head. There was the dear Christ, no longer borne down by the weight of his cross, but erect, risen, triumphant, — fit type of the human soul, its chrysalis outworn, all weights fallen off, risen, treading diviner air!

And can the gem not wait its thousand years, if so be at last it shall take this limpid light to its heart of hearts?

With the new day came a new friend, with all the light of the morning in his open brow. This face has a peace not of the lotus, but as if coming from hidden sources of perennial refreshment; the eye looks out steadily, sympathetically, into life, not flinching, you can see, at its pain. Happily, not through the long procession of life's love and loss was this soul educated to the divine; but when God called His own, with quick response the laborer went out into the harvest.

Do not human faces, after all, tell their own stories of heaven and purgatory and hell? What is it, — this visible impress of the something back of the soul within? I said to my friend, "Verily, you seem part of this Easter day. For once, come you to the confessional, and let me be high

priest. Let the very soul of your soul speak through the latticed grating, and tell its most secret creed."

In knightly fashion, he half knelt before me, and slowly and reverently repeated, —

“ Who dare express Him,
And who profess Him,
Saying, ‘ I believe in Him ’ ?
Who, feeling, seeing,
Deny His being,
Saying, ‘ I believe Him not ’ ?
The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,
Folds and upholds He not
Thee, me, Himself ?
Arches not there the sky above us ?
Lies not beneath firm the earth ?
And rise not on us, shining,
Friendly, the everlasting stars ?
Look I not eye to eye on thee ?

And feel'st thou not, thronging
To head and heart, the force
Still weaving its eternal secret,
Invisible, visible, round thy life?
Vast as it is, *fill* with that Force thy heart,
And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
Call it bliss; heart; Love, — *God!*
I have no name to give it!
Feeling is all in all.
The name is sound and smoke
Obscuring Heaven's clear glow."





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