

2. Individual human life passes through its little cycle of changes, and quietly closes in death. If this be all, then *for the individual*, when all is done, it is precisely as if he had never been. "Yes," answers the comtist, "for the individual, but not for humanity. Every human life leaves a residuum which enters into the life and growth of humanity. It is a glorious and unselfish religion thus to merge one's self into the only true object of worship—humanity." But, alas! the cycle of humanity also closes; and for humanity too, when all is done it will, be precisely as if it had never been. 'But the earth—the Cosmos—abides.' Yes, but only a little longer. Science declares that the cycle of the Cosmos must also close. And then, when all is done, after all this evolution reaching upward to find its completion in man, after all the yearnings, hopes, struggles, and triumphs of man, what is the outcome? It is precisely as if the Cosmos had never been. It is all literally "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Not only heart, but reason, revolts against such a final outcome. If we believe that reason underlies the phenomena of the Cosmos, we cannot accept such a result. We cannot believe that the Cosmos has no intelligible end. But what intelligible end is there conceivable, unless something is finally attained which is not involved in a cycle, i.e., unless man is immortal.

3. There are three primary divisions of our psychical nature: viz., sense, intellect, and will. There are three corresponding processes in making a complete rational philosophy: viz., (1) instreaming of impressions of the external world through the senses (facts); (2) elaboration of these into a consistent whole by the intellect (knowledge); (3) outgoing of this inactivity (conduct.) Now a true working theory of life must satisfy all these. But scientific men are apt to think that only (1) and (2) are necessary; that true facts elaborated into consistent theory is all we need care for. Theologians, on the contrary, seem to think only (2) and (3) necessary: they elaborate a theory of life consistent with itself, and apparently satisfactory in its application to Conduct, but are less careful to test its harmony with facts derived from the senses. But all three are necessary. The first furnishes material; the second constructs the building; the third tests its suitableness for human habitation. All admit that successful application to art is the best test of true theory. But Conduct is the art corresponding to our theory of life, and, therefore, the *test of its truth*. Now, is not immortality as an element of our theory of life in the highest degree conducive of right Conduct? Is it not a useful, yea, a necessary element in a working hypothesis?

(4.) But it may be objected, animals, too, have brains: in them, too, we have evidences of something like consciousness and thought. Are they too, immortal? If so, where shall we stop? We pass

down by sliding scale, without break, to the lowest verge of life. Shall we stop here? No: for vital is transmutable into physical forces. Thus all is immortal or none. Thus hope of immortality vanishes, as it were, by evaporation.

This objection, though serious, is, we think, not fatal. To make our view clear, we use an illustration taken from biology. May we not imagine that in animals spirit is in embryo in the womb of nature, unconscious of self, and incapable of independent life; and that in man it came to birth,—a separate spirit—individual, conscious of self, and capable of independent life, on a new and higher plane? According to this view, geological time is the period of gestation, evolution is the process of development, and the appearance of man the act of birth.—*Sel.*

## SKY LESSONS.

### I.

Low brown hills with not a touch of foliage on their barren crests,  
Show their loneliness unbroken, save by birds with brushing breasts.  
Skies of gloom their pall are gathering, all above, beyond, around,  
Never touching, yet pervading with a presence deep, profound.  
So the Soul, in moments deadened by the press of what must be,  
Crouches silent and submissive in a seething apathy.  
These are moments when the Higher seemeth deaf to calls for grace,  
And we weary turn from looking for the glory of His face.

### II.

Fl! oh clouds, across the hurrying sky—fly fast before the wind—  
Tear! oh wind, the clouds away, away, and show us that behind.  
Faster yet! the hills are gathering up their strength as strong men shake  
Slumber from their eyes and up to energy renewed awake.  
Rouse! oh Soul and with strong pleading break thee through the rolling dun;  
Throw aside the weight besetting and let in the healing sun.

### III.

Low green hills with all life springing, plunged in a golden bath—  
Up above the great sun shining, where no looks a glory path.  
Skies are quivering with the gladness, all above, beyond, around,  
Never touching, yet pervading with a Presence deep, profound.  
Fill our Souls, oh wondrous Presence, with thy Light and Life  
    always,  
That from Glory unto Glory we may grow from day to day.

—B. M.