

A PROSE PREACHMENT

removal to Lakeview. This, too, is a gain in the spiritual enlargement of the impalpable relations of human society and life. Still further, as material presence of a person is not a necessity for spiritual presence and communion, so there need not be regrets and tears over the removal of a person to a distant place in space: parents and friends of the departed bride know that she is just as real and alive at a distance from them as she would be if close at hand, and that they can proceed to her home and discover her there. This real possibility of *visitation* is another spiritual gain, otherwise unobtainable, and creates a new joy in existence. The truth is, then, that the departed bride, *by her very departure* from her home town to another, has enlarged the social radius and the spiritual relations and life of two physically separated communities.

In some such terms of similitude we should think of death—of the departure of our dead into the noumenal, into the spiritual world. If we individually will thus to think of death, we shall not have suffered loss by the death of those we love, but have gained a threefold good for our spirits while we sojourn on earth. For the dead have not died—our beloved have not departed—futilely, to no purpose, even for us who remain behind; they have died, departed, *to enlarge the world of life.*

Strange paradox it may seem; but recall our simile of the departed bride and we shall readily see the threefold—nay, more than threefold—gain that death brings us, the living—if we, the living, but *will* the gain to be real and ever present. Gone hence from us into another world, as our dead have gone, they wait upon us to have “other-worldly” thoughts of them, to follow them thither in affectionate memory, and to resuscitate them by spiritual communion with them, not as unreal spectres but as real persons. Sorrow—continued, excessive sorrow—over our dead is an absolute fatality: it prevents the resurrection of our dead: for it implies a belief on our part in a great gulf fixed between the living and the departed, nay, the utter vanishment and irrevocable loss of our beloved. Sorrow is equally fatal to us and to them; it blinds our eyes, so that we no longer behold the dead beckoning to us, importuning us for resuscitation in our mind and hearts; and it drives them away from us into the abyss of nothingness. This is our fault, our sin. But by memory of our dead, spiritual communing with them, we immediately establish a real and abiding connection between this world and the extra-mundane sphere—between earth and Heaven. Surely it is obvious that if there were no death, no departure hence of our beloved, there would be no “other world,” no pure and ennobling thoughts of “other-worldliness.” We are debtors to our dead—and we can be their their homagers; they have opened up and made real and lovely