

RIZ-PAH.

THE evening droops across the eastern sky,
And over vale and mountain turret high
A stillness falls;
The hills around are touched with gleam of light,
And the calm splendour of the Orient night
The earth enthalls.

On Gibeah's mount alone deep shadows rest,
The light drew back nor touched her sombre crest;
It turned aside.
For up her reeking sides the jackals creep,
And birds of night around the summit sweep
In circles wide.

They dare not nearer come, for love is there;
Not love alone, but woe and wild despair
Their vigil keep.
Lo! where dim shrouded in the darkness rise
Those ghastly forms betwixt the earth and skies,
Doth nature weep.

O! woe of woes, that e're the earth should know
The awful shame—the bitter wringing throes
Of mother love,
That rends the heart of Riz-pah watching there,
While round her in the haunted midnight air
Weird horrors move.

Awake, ye winds that o'er the mountains moan;
Cease your low dirge, and wing ye to the throne
Where splendours dwell,
And bid the minstrel monarch sweep the chords
Of his sad harp, and set in tune the words
That anguish tell.

And while his trembling fingers press the strings,
Blent with the notes, unutterable things
Shall pierce the skies.
And He who reigns enthroned in heaven shall hear,
And, gracious to the broken heart, draw near
To sympathize.

The seven sons of Saul, O Zion! weep;
How can ye rest? Arise and vigil keep,
Nor leave alone
On yonder solitude the riven heart;
That from her heroes cannot, will not part
Till life is gone.

Enough; the winds alone a requiem keep,
Sobbing by hill-side dread and cavern deep—
Of death they sing;
And darker still funeral night will fall
On Gibeah's lonely mount, the wild beasts' call
More awful ring.

But she who fears not death will watch beside
Her mangled slain; no evil can betide
Her matchless love.
About the sack-clothed rock a wall unseen
Stands firm and tried, while pity drops serene
From heaven above.

MINNIE G. FRASER.

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY.

IS it possible to explain the unusual interest which is just now manifested in spiritistic and kindred phenomena by the magazines, and therefore, presumably, by the public? Everyone who reads at all must have observed it. The ball seems to have been started by Rev. M. J. Savage, of Boston, in an article in the *Forum* for December, 1889, entitled "Experiences With Spiritualism," and, from that time to the present, interest in the subject has certainly been growing. Two leading periodicals, the *Forum* and the *Arena*, have had articles dealing with it, and the eminent scientist, Alfred Russell Wallace, has contributed a paper to the January number of the last-named review, entitled "Are there Objective Apparitions?" in which, admitting certain facts gathered by the English Society for Psychical Research to be authentic, he argues very plausibly in favour of the existence of supernormal intelligences. Can this movement be a mere reaction against the crude materialism which has swayed science so potently during late years, or is the theory of a future life about to receive scientific demonstration? The question is absorbing and deserves thoughtful consideration.

In the eyes of Christian believers the hope of immortality has a sure foundation, being attested by the fact of the resurrection. In the eyes of the modern materialist it is a notion, a pleasing dream, of a piece with the fairy tales and mythologies of the early world, which man's maturity has outgrown. According to him the doctrine of immortality has no basis of fact, the story of the resurrection falls into a category with that of the gadarene swine, and the order of nature is declared to be against both. On the other side that curious product of evolutionary forces, the modern spiritualist, advances and asserts that immortality is not a dream, that intercourse between the terrestrial and spiritual spheres has actually taken place, and that facts indisputable, facts scientific, are forthcoming to prove it.

Science, it need scarcely be said, has not disproved immortality. And if the human soul in its sojourn on this

planet should turn out to be in a state of probation merely, passing on to higher development in spheres of which we have now no knowledge, the process would, doubtless, be strictly in accordance with natural laws. To some it will seem the quintessence of absurdity to suggest that the quadrillions of human souls, good, bad and indifferent, who have appeared upon this planet, may have passed into other orders. But their gravity will be restored by the familiar reflection that the stellar systems are but a drop in the ocean of the infinite, and that spheres innumerable might exist for the perpetual transmigration of souls, and millions of acres of virgin prairie ever inviting new immigrants would still remain.

The race, it will be admitted, has no life apart from the individual, and, if the race have no life apart from the individual, then is the fate of the individual everything to the race. The expression that the individual exists for the race has become an axiom with a certain philosophic sect, but I should prefer the converse statement. I should be disposed to say (if to say so be not an hibernicism) that the race exists for the individual. Those who accept the materialistic position do not perhaps realize all that death, as they understand it, means. We habitually put that thought away from us. It does not concern this world, it has no practical value, we say. There is no money in it. We project ourselves in imagination beyond life's term, and see ourselves living in the lives of the human beings who come after us. But surely this is all illusion. When a man dies, if the materialist be right, it is not hard to see that, so far as he is concerned, the race is dead, the universe has gone out, as the quenching of a lamp. We talk of the race as if it were the unit of life, the finality, but it is not so—the totality of life, the organic unit is the individual. If we admit the extinction of the individual then there is an end to man.

But if it were not so—if the race were not simply the individual multiplied, and were, according to the Positivist idea, a larger existence in which the individual became merged and continued to live after his personal death—what better should we be? As the individual passes away so passes the family to which he belonged; as the family passes so passes the society in which it moved; as with the society so with the nation of which it formed part. Nation follows nation, as generation follows generation, into the darkness of oblivion. And eventually, in some far future age, when life on this planet shall have reached its highest development, we are told that man will retrace his steps, that he will go down the path he has so slowly and painfully climbed, and will sink again into the degradation of mere animality. Then in process of time the earth will become unfit to sustain life, and will finally become itself a dead world. This, I believe, is the last word of orthodox science. There is no gaiety in the prospect. The light of intelligence which fancied it perceived the universe gone out forever! The love, the friendship, the life—all gone! The charm of the domestic and social ties which make sweet the life of man—all gone, like words written in water or figures drawn upon the changing air. And all viewed by the robust materialistic philosopher without compunction; indeed, if you will believe him, with a sort of satisfaction. With the same absence of compunction and the same satisfaction he views the extinction of the countless generations that have preceded us into eternity. Some of us cannot have this satisfaction. I cannot have it. To me death is the saddest thing in life. Its dark shadow rests upon life's pathway; and though in youth we may not be conscious of it, in middle life and in old age we constantly walk in this shadow.

It may be admitted freely that to our ordinary experience there is nothing but the apparent universe—the universe that we see, hear, taste, touch, smell. Thus and thus do the senses report of this mysterious world in which we find ourselves, and the subtle processes of the intellect seem but an extension of the simpler movements of the sense-organs. This we must admit, and according to this measure, if this were absolute, there would be little hope for continued existence. But at this point we are confronted by a problem. How the brain thinks is still a mystery. The brain does not secrete thought as the liver secretes bile or the stomach secretes the gastric juice. It is doubtful whether you could discover an idea or an image among those convolutions of grey pulp. As Professor Huxley says, "what consciousness is we know not; and how it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as the result of irritating nervous tissue is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the djin when Aladdin rubbed his lamp, or as any other ultimate fact of nature." Therefore, though we do not know of the action of thought apart from matter, we cannot safely assume that thought is merely the result of certain changes in nerve-tissue, that it is not the agent, and that what we call mind is not distinct from matter as we understand the term. We have no ground for asserting this, and then to go further! Many persons believe that our five senses give us perfectly accurate reports of the realities of the universe, and that nothing exists of which they are not qualified to take cognizance. To persons with this conviction what I am about to say will perhaps have little force; and yet their belief should at once strike us with a sense of its strange absurdity, that a foot-rule should presume to measure the immeasurable! that a mind admittedly limited should make itself a measure of the possibilities of a universe admittedly infinite. Let us suppose that instead of five senses we had but three, that we were without the higher senses of sight and hearing. The world would have a rather different

appearance to that deaf and blind animal. Only, mark, the animal would not admit his deafness and blindness, because such things as sight and hearing, our friend with three senses might argue, if he could argue, were unknown, and therefore non-existent, which is precisely the position of the materialist. But we know that such powers as those of sight and hearing do exist. Let us admit that they might be added to, indefinitely. Let us admit that in an infinite universe there are infinite possibilities. If human beings had ten or fifteen senses instead of five, what a flood of perception there might be, what an efflorescence of intellect! What does the fish know of the beings that move in that rarer medium in which it could not exist. How do we know that in an infinite universe there may not be infinite differences in *habitat*, in modes of life. To me it sometimes seems as if it must be so. And, with the illumination which these added senses should bring, who shall say that we might not discover that the poets and dreamers were right, and that death is indeed but a birth: that, to quote one who is both poet and dreamer, "It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your father and mother, it is to identify you."

J. H. BROWN.

AN IDYL OF HOPE.

A SHATTERED soul-case! An empty shell! Alas! A poor Stradivari, thy tones live but as memories, thine inspiration has fled. As thou liest there, yon mellow sunbeam kissing thy tawny skin to warmth, and caressing each melting line and graceful curve, I can only gaze and grieve that thou shalt never more vibrate to touch of humanity.

Perpetuum Silentium. No more shall melody fill the chambers of thy soul, or sweep in tremulous sweetness across those broken chords. For you and me the voice of music is dead. The pure and bird-like notes of Haydn are hushed, the mystic spell of Schumann and Mendelssohn is broken, the grand, deep harmonies of Beethoven are still, and Mozart's last requiem is sung. Ah! gentle friend, pity the heart sobs of a lonely man. Have you ne'er sought to tear away the cruel pall that enshrouds the past—that past which holds those beings from whom your life drew all its joy? The burial cloth once lifted, you too may cross the threshold, and penetrate with throbbing heart and trembling footstep to that inner sanctuary where the corpse of happier days lies mouldering upon the bier of the past.

She was my heart's fond hope—my little daughter, a delicate, sensitive plant, a blossom of song. Antonius was her master, and they loved; not as we rude mortals esteem that word—their love was that deep mysterious union of the spirit wherewith the soul leaps forth to wed its twin in passionate unending friendship; a love too pure for worldly uses, a dazzling shekina too bright for sin-filled eyes. Ah! those were halcyon days, that sped so swiftly on in glad succession, as well attempt to hold the trembling sand in the hour glass, to preserve the glistening of the dew drop, as to impede their blissful flight. It was the morning of the year, as yet the early dawn, when nature struggles to put forth her offspring, and every pulse is swollen with life and promise.

All barriers between master and pupil were burned away, and on the smouldering ruins rose that perfect equality of love. She gloried in her marvellous voice, each rare development brought her joy, and as the faithful violin answered to the master's touch, so she obeyed his every impulse with that sweet surrendering of self which is the hidden wonder of first love. Dolorosa! Dolorosa! How often have I sat thus, screened by this generous vine, listening spell-bound to her divine music as it floated out from yonder balcony, her voice was the essence of herself, and fell from her lips as drops of her soul.

As each day drew to its close, it was our custom to sit there watching the decline of the sun, as he seemed to dip and lave his scorching rays in the cool blue water of the Mediterranean Sea, and often as he sank from our view, and only a soft yellow light lingered on the horizon, a sad and wistful cadence fell aslant us three. At such times Antonius, taking his violin, would pour out the whole melody of his inner existence, alternate bursts of delight and melancholy would gush from his magic bow, the tender tones of a nature too deep for words, of a soul that loved and suffered, trusted and hoped with us, yet whose essence was music, whose element was delicious sound. As this sweet and peaceful hour dwelt with us for the last time, his soul melted into the grand weird notes of Beethoven's "Eroica," and ever and anon, through the melancholy splendour of the "Marcia Funebre," came a ray of melody that whispered of the coronation of hope in immortality. Yet scarcely had this celestial rapture escaped to upper air, when he was summoned from us. One fond *A Rivederci*, and we had parted. We knew whither he had gone, and his urgent reasons for leaving us, but fondly looked for his speedy return. The first period of expectancy over, I fell into doubt and dread, which, as days passed, deepened into despair; and she, though saddened by his absence and fearful for his safety, was never despondent but hoped in silence. Even when hope itself had died within her, and we learned that Antonius was dead, no accent of bitterness tinged her grief, but the light died suddenly from her flower-like face; the tendrilled vine had lost its support, and I knew that it must droop and die. The tale is soon told. The