

ody, that glance of beaming love and triumph, must be hushed, and quenched forever, in the darkness of the grave. Then came the thought of his perished hopes, and of his heart's deep loneliness when her place on earth should be left unfilled and desolate; and, with a bursting sigh, and in a voice of subdued yet touching anguish, he murmured, as though unconsciously:

"It is a fearful thing to love what death may touch."

"It would be so indeed, dear Arthur," said Cecilia gently, "did this brief life bound the term of our existence. But when we remember that the soul is here only in its infancy—that this is the dawn of its eternal being—that here its knowledge is ignorance, its power weakness—its conceptions vague, its aspirations low and feeble, and that its faculties are destined to endless development and progression in another and a higher state of existence, can we refuse to believe that the pure thoughts, and holy affections, which on earth have constituted its happiness are not to endure with it forever?—to acquire might and strength with its expanding energies, and be to it, even in the midst of heaven's effulgent glories, as ministering angels of joy, and purity, and blessedness?"

"Such, thanks be to God, is our glorious faith," said Arthur, raised by her calm and lofty trust, above the selfish sorrow which, for a brief time, he had suffered to absorb him. "Such," he added with a beaming look, "the power which plucks from death its sting, and robs the grave of its terrors, giving us the victory through our Saviour Jesus Christ, over sin and death."

"Then wherefore should we, who have faith in this sublime hope of immortality, shroud our hearts in gloom, and our persons in the garments of mourning, when they whom we love pass through that portal, which some, with cheerful trust, have rightly named 'the gate of life?' We no longer behold them, it is true—yet may they still be near us. 'Nay, it is possible,' says one* whose lips were touched as with a coal from heaven, 'that the distance of heaven lies wholly in the veil of flesh which we now want power to penetrate. A new eye, a new sense might show the spiritual world encompassing us on every side. 'Unseen, yet around us' how beautiful the thought!"

"Beautiful indeed, Cecilia! beautiful the idea that we need only a purified vision to behold the glorious forms of the beatified, who even as we speak surround us with the splendor of their brightness."

"It is at least an innocent belief, and has a

*Channing.

chastening and consoling power, for those especially, who mourn. How far it is from truth we know not—for as yet the laws of the bright spirit-land have never been revealed to us,—but surely, if ever mind of mortal man had glimpses of its glory, it was his from whence emanated this pure and blessed thought."

"It is full of comfort, and therefore I will cherish it, Cecilia,—and cherish with it the memory of this hour fraught with sad, yet gentle thoughts, which if they breathed of sorrow, brought also on their wings the healing balm of an inspiring and immortal hope."

"If we have faith to behold it, dear Arthur, we shall ever see a 'silver lining' to the darkest cloud that overshadows us; now especially has it been visible to me, when heavy thoughts of my dear grandmamma's lonely and desolate age, filled my heart with sorrow, and infused its bitterest ingredient into the cup that was given me to drink. I knew indeed that your kind care and love, my cousin, would never fail her, but I felt that she needed one to fill my place, one loving and tender heart to minister to her comfort, and wait and watch beside her while the last sands of life ebbed quietly away. More and more terrible became to me each day, the thought of leaving her alone, and earnestly for her sake, I asked for longer life, when suddenly I saw the

"—————sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night;"

and one was raised up to be to her a daughter, in whose gentle care and affection, her age will find both solace and support."

"Can you mean that Grace will give up the gay companions, and recreations suitable to her age, dear Cecilia, to devote herself to an infirm and secluded invalid?" asked Arthur in a tone of surprise."

"Even so, Arthur. She has voluntarily declared this to be her wish and purpose, for greatly has the discipline of the last sad year changed and subdued her character and views," said Cecilia with a sigh. "Yet her bondage will not endure over long, for not many months, I think, will my dear grandmamma survive me. Even now, sorrow is undermining her little remaining strength, and her step totters more with feebleness than age. But it is a comfort to see with what trust she leans upon our sweet Grace, and how the dear girl ministers to her every wish, and fills, as though it were her natural sphere of duty, the place in her presence and her affections, which has so long been allotted solely to me."

"And I have been blind to this amiable conduct on the part of Grace," said Arthur in a voice of