

each other; that the highest part of ourselves, the abiding part of us, passes into other lives and continues to live in other lives. Can we conceive a more potent stimulus to rectitude, to daily and hourly striving after a true life, than this ever-present sense that we are indeed immortal; not that we have an immortal something within us, but that in very truth we ourselves, our thinking, feeling, acting personalities, are immortal; nay, cannot die, but must ever continue what we make them, working and doing, if no longer receiving and enjoying? And not merely we ourselves, in our personal identity, are immortal, but each act, thought, and feeling is immortal; and this immortality is not some ecstatic and indescribable condition in space, but activity on earth in the real and known work of life, in the welfare of those whom we have loved, and in the happiness of those who come after us.

And can it be difficult to idealise and give currency to a faith, which is a certain and undisputed fact of common sense as well as of philosophy? As we *live for others* in life, so we *live in others* after death, as others have lived in us, and all for the common race. How deeply does such a belief as this bring home to each moment of life the mysterious perpetuity of ourselves! For good, for evil, we cannot die; we cannot shake ourselves free from this eternity of our faculties. There is here no promise, it is true, of eternal sensations, enjoyments, meditations. There is no promise, be it plainly said, of anything but an immortality of influence, of spiritual work, of glorified activity. We cannot even say that we shall continue to love; but we know that we shall be loved. It may well be that we shall consciously know no hope ourselves; but we shall inspire hopes. It may be that we shall not think; but others will think our thoughts, and enshrine our minds. If no sympathies shall thrill along our nerves, we shall be the spring of sympathy in distant generations; and that, though we be the humblest, and the least of all the soldiers in the human host, the least celebrated and the worst remembered. For our lives live when we are most forgotten; and not a cup of water that we may have given to an unknown sufferer, or a wise word spoken in season to a child, but has added (whether we remember it, whether others remember it or not) a streak of happiness and strength to the world. Our earthly frames, like the grain of wheat, may be laid in the earth—and this image of our great spiritual Master is more fit for the social than for the celestial future—but the grain shall bear spiritual fruit, and multiply in kindred natures and in other selves.

It is a merely verbal question if this be the life of the Soul when the Soul means the sum of the activities, or if there be any immortality where there is no consciousness. It is enough for us that we can trust to a real prolongation of our highest activity in the sensible lives of others, even though our own forces can gain nothing new, and are not reflected in a sensitive body. We do not get rid of Death, but we transfigure Death. Does any religion profess to do more? It is enough for any creed that it can teach *non omnis moriar*; it would be gross extravagance to say *omnis non moriar*, no part of me shall die. Death is the one inevitable law of Life. The business of religion is to show us what are its compensations. The spiritualist orthodoxy, like every other creed, is willing to allow that death robs us of a great deal, that very much of us does die; nay, it teaches that this dies utterly, for ever, leaving no trace but dust. And thus the spiritualist orthodoxy exaggerates death, and adds a fresh terror to its power. We, on the contrary, would seek to show that much of us, and that the best of us, does not die, or at least does not end. And the difference between our faith and that of the orthodox is this: we look to the permanence of the activities which give others happiness; they look to the permanence of the consciousness which can enjoy happiness. Which is the nobler?

What need we then to promise or to hope more than an eternity of spiritual influence? Yet, after all, 'tis no question as to what kind of eternity man would prefer to select. We have no evidence that he has any choice before him. If we were creating a universe of our own and a human race on an ideal mould, it might be rational to discuss what kind of eternity was the most desirable, and it might then become a question if we should not begin by eliminating death. But as we are, with death in the world, and man as we know him submitting to the fatality of his nature, the rational inquiry is this—how best to order his life, and to use the eternity that he has. And an immortality of prolonged activity on earth he has as certainly as he has civilisation, or progress, or society. And the wise man in the evening of life may be well content to say: 'I have worked and thought, and have been conscious in the flesh; I have done with the flesh, and therewith with the toil of thought and the troubles of sensation; I am ready to pass into the spiritual community of human souls, and when this man's flesh wastes away from me, may I be found worthy to become part of the influence of humanity itself, and so

Join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

That the doctrine of the celestial future appeals to the essence of self appears very strongly in its special rebuke to the doctrine of the social future. It repeats, 'We agree with all you say about the prolonged activity of man after death, we see of course that the solid achievements of life are carried on, and we grant you that it signifies nothing to those who profit by his work that the man no longer breathes in the flesh: but what is all that to the *man*, to you, and to me? we shall not *feel* our work, we shall not have the indescribable satisfaction which our souls now have in living, in effecting our work, and profiting by others. What is the good of mankind to me, when I am mouldering unconscious?' This is the true materialism; here is the physical theory of another life; this is the unspiritual denial of the soul, the binding it down to the clay of the body. We say, 'All that is great in you shall not end, but carry on its activity perpetually and in a purer way,' and you reply, 'What care I for what is great in me, and its possible work in this vale of tears; I want to feel life, I want to enjoy, I want my personality,'—in other words, 'I want my senses, I want my body.' Keep your body and keep your senses in any way that you know. We can only wonder and say, with Frederic to his runaway soldiers, 'Wollt ihr immer leben?' But we, who know that a higher form of activity is only to be reached by a subjective life in society, will continue to regard a perpetuity of sensation as the true Hell, for we feel that the perpetual worth of our lives is the one thing precious to care for, and not a vacuous eternity of consciousness.

It is not merely that this eternity of the tabor is so gross, so sensual, so indolent, so selfish a creed; but its worst evil is that it paralyses practical life,

and throws it into discord. A life of vanity in a vale of tears to be followed by an infinity of celestial rapture, is necessarily a life which is of infinitesimal importance. The incongruity of the attempts to connect the two, and to make the vale of tears the ante-chamber or the judgment-dock of heaven, grows greater and not less as ages roll on. The more we think and learn, and the higher rises our social philosophy and our insight into human destiny, the more the reality and importance of the social future impresses us, whilst the fancy of the celestial future grows unreal and incongruous. As we get to know what thinking means, and feeling means, and the more truly we understand what life means, the more completely do the promises of the celestial transcendentalism fail to interest us. We have come to see that to continue to live is to carry on a series of correlated sensations, and to set in motion a series of corresponding forces; to think is to marshal a set of observed perceptions with a view to certain observed phenomena; to feel implies something of which we have a real assurance affecting our own consensus within. The whole set of positive thoughts compels us to believe that it is an infinite apathy to which your heaven would consign us, without objects, without relations, without change, without growth, without action, an absolute nothingness, a *nirvana* of impotence,—this is not life; it is not consciousness; it is not happiness. So far as we can grasp the hypothesis, it seems equally ludicrous and repulsive. You may call it paradise; but we call it conscious annihilation. You may long for it, if you have been so taught; just as if you had been taught to cherish such hopes, you might be now yearning for the moment when you might become the immaterial principle of a comet, or as you might tell me, that you really were the ether, and were about to take your place in Space. This is how these sublimities affect us. But we know that to many this future is one of spiritual development, a life of growth and continual upsoaring of still higher affection. It may be so; but to our mind these are contradictions in terms. We cannot understand what life and affection can mean, where you postulate the absence of every condition by which life and affection are possible. Can there be development where there is no law, thought or affection where object and subject are confused into one essence? How can that be existence, where everything of which we have experience, and everything which we can define, is presumed to be unable to enter? To us these things are all incoherences; and in the midst of practical realities and the solid duties of life, sheer impertinences. The field is full; each human life has a perfectly real and a vast future to look forward to; these hyperbolic enigmas disturb our grave duties and our solid hopes. No wonder, then, whilst they are still so rife, that men are dull to the moral responsibility which, in its awfulness, begins only at the grave; that they are so little influenced by the futurity which will judge them; that they are blind to the dignity and beauty of death, and shuffle off the dead life and the dead body with such cruel disrespect. The fumes of the celestial immortality still confuse them. It is only when an earthly future is the fulfilment of a worthy earthly life, that we can see all the majesty as well as the glory of the world beyond the grave; and then only will it fulfil its moral and religious purpose as the great guide of human conduct.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

NO SIGN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

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CHAPTER III.

"DOMINICK'S CURE."

The Clerk to the Union lodged in a house in a small, quiet street, which branched off from the main street of Narraghamore. His rooms were on the second floor; the first was used as a bookseller's and stationer's shop by an individual who did not do a roaring trade by any means, and whose temper had been much soured by the introduction of the Circulating Library system, and the necessity he had been under to adopt it. He had yielded, but in as restricted a degree as possible, and the "circulating side" of the shop was calculated to disappoint visitors a good deal. It had its attractions, however, in a small way, as a centre of gossip: women met each other beside the book counter who never met each other anywhere else, and it afforded a slight but welcome interruption to the deadly dullness of female life in a place which had plenty of resources for men: but, like most Irish towns, supplied nothing but church or chapel-going to women. Dominick Daly was busy writing in his sitting-room one day at the end of May, his table was crowded with official papers, and he was pulling up some arrears of business. He looked tired and troubled, and once or twice he left off writing, took a letter from his breast-pocket, read it, and replaced it. At length he laid aside the official papers, and said half aloud—

"There will be time to send it to-night."

"It" was a letter. He began to write it, slowly, thinking much, laying down his pen often, and leaning his head on his hands, gazed at the words he had written, but as though his thoughts were far away. Presently he took from the lower part of his desk a small parcel, done up in white paper, with the neatness of a chemist's making-up, but without any label, and folded round it the sheet on which he had, after all his thoughts, written only a few lines. He was about to place the packet in an envelope when a knock at the door interrupted him. He paused, and said "Come in." His visitor was Katharine Farrell.

"Katharine!" he exclaimed, rising, and while his face flushed at the sight of her, with visible embarrassment in his manner.

"Yes," she said, "I came to look for you. There's sickness at the Bellevs, and I'm not to go. You don't seem to want me much."

"You know I always want you; only—"

"Only you're afraid of the tongues about the place. Never mind, let them prate. I'm going next week. I slipped through the shop below, and nobody saw me. Are you ready? Can you come out?"

She had not taken a seat, and he had not resumed his. She was looking about with the curiosity a woman always feels in the surroundings and belongings of the man she loves.

"I can, in a minute or two. I must finish a letter."

Another knock. A man who wished to speak to Mr. Daly. "He can't come in here," said Daly, hurriedly, to Katharine; "I'll be back in a few minutes. Left alone in her lover's room, Katharine's eyes fell on his desk. The packet wrapped up in the letter he had just written lay upon it, also an envelope on which was a name, "Mrs. Daly."

Katharine's face flushed deeply, as she saw the words, "Mrs. Daly;" she muttered, "Ah, that will be my name some day. When—when? What people are left in the world, no good to themselves or others, but to stand in their way! I'd like to see what he finds to say to her."

After a moment's hesitation, Katharine slipped the packet out of the paper, and taking the seat Daly had vacated, she read her lover's letter to his sick and suffering wife; read it with eager eyes, and set lips, and a gradual fading out of every gleam of colour from her cheeks. Then she sat, holding the paper away from her perfectly still and white. There was no step on the stairs; Daly was detained longer than he had expected; she rose, opened the door, and looked along the passage and over the stairs. All was still, and she resumed her seat.