

cate structure, its fine tissues, its marvellous beauty, its exquisite proportions, by contact with outward things? The eye of a brute animal is endowed with the same keen sensibility. Take that eye, after what we call life is extinct, and what then do we see? Is there any shrinking, any contraction of the muscles, any closing of the lids to protect the ball of the eye? The brilliancy has in a measure vanished. The exact form and nice proportion are still there, but where is the "higher agency" that vitalized and controlled all its movements? Gone! gone with the life of the animal. The life then, or what causes the life, must be this "higher agency" of which the poet speaks. What then is life? A sweet poetess says:—

"What is life? 'Tis a delicate shell,
 Thrown up by eternity's flow,
 On time's narrow quicksands to dwell,
 And a moment its loveliness show.

Gone back to its element grand,
 Is the billow that brought it ashore;
 See, another is washing the strand,
 And the beautiful shell is no more."

Thus says poetry; but, what is life? This tells me nothing of what I am so anxious to know—the cause of all these mysteries. They are still enveloped in mist; enshrouded in darkness. A cloud, impenetrable to my unassisted vision, hangs over all, and I am left as before, to grope my way out as best I can. Shall I call reason to my aid? Alas! What can reason do? The human mind has been gifted with reason ever since man was created, and placed in this world of beauty, but how much nearer a solution of the mystery are we of this century than were our forefathers? These and similar reflections have frequently been with me, since the time first spoken of, and I have arrived at no more definite conclusion than hitherto. This incomprehensible influence, this higher energy, this life-giving power, what is it, in what part of the human body does it reside, what are its functions, what its ultimate destiny? The scene witnessed

at my neighbor's was convincing proof that the *body* by itself is not the seat of this faculty, for during my stay, their youngest child, a little babe, who had long been ailing, was released from all its suffering, and naught was left but the inanimate form of the little one, who, but a short time before, had given signs of life and intelligence, now cold and still. Where was now the life that had throbbled through all his veins, imparting brilliancy to his eyes and expression to his countenance? Gone, all gone! yet there lay the *body* unchanged. What then was lost? This "higher agency," this vitalizing power was no more. Where was it, whither had it flown, on what errand sent? Will it ever return again to enliven what once had been so beautiful, and in death still lovely? The casket was there, still fair to look upon, but the jewel that made it so precious was not there. The watchers by the scene of death saw no token save the feebler pulse, the shortened breath, the dimming of the lustrous eye, and the gradual stupor benumbing all the faculties of the great, the solemn, change taking place. While gazing upon the yet beautiful features, now so placid and serene, such a little while before giving evidence of pain and suffering. Again I asked myself what is life, what is death? As I watched the breath growing fainter and fainter, I could but compare it all to a battle betwixt life and death—a striving of each for the mastery. The citadel of life had been attacked, and in the contest the foe had come off victorious, and there lay the trophy of his victory, sad memento of his power. Since then the *body* is left, but the intelligence that animated it is not there, it follows that it is that invisible, immortal, immaterial part that we call mind or spirit, that makes life bright, beautiful, lovable, a thing to be desired and valued, and that gives to it all its significance, its force and power, its fulness and its comprehensiveness, for how much meaning, what depth of thought, what wonderful ex-