

talities ; to deem every enjoyment dangerous, lest it cheat the heart into a happy repose upon the present, and every pursuit a snare, which fairly embarks the affections upon this world ; to consider all things here devoid of any good purpose, except to tempt us. The theory which crowds this life with trials and the other with rewards, which brightens the future only by blackening the present, which supposes that the only proper office of our residence here is to keep up one prolonged meditation on the hereafter, is a mere burlesque of nature and the gospel. Futurity is not to mar, but to mend our activity ; and earth is not given that we may win the reversion of heaven, so much as heaven revealed to ennoble our tenure of earth. I know of no peculiar preparation for immortality beyond the faithful performance of the best functions of mortal life : and if it were not that these will be more wisely discharged, and the attendant blessings more truly felt, by those who remember the sadder conditions of our lot than by those who forget them, there could be no reason why they should ever appear before the thoughts. But they are *facts*, solemn and inevitable facts, which come with least crushing power on those who see them from afar, and become reconciled to them, and even fill them by forethought with peaceful suggestion. The sense of their possibility breakes through the superficial crust of life, and stirs up the deeper affections of our nature. It refines the sacredness of every human tie : it dignifies the claims of duty : it freshens the emotions of conscience : it gives promptitude to the efforts of sympathy ; and elevates the whole attitude of life.

But, above all, we pay the fitting worship of the season, when we greet its peculiar ills in the *spirit of humanity* ;