

of apprenticeship will be over. Education completed, profession gained—then will come the realization. Manfully he buckles down to the struggle. While yet on the brink of his career, love creeps in and takes masterful possession of his heart. A woman's lot is linked with his. With the beginning of real life, commenced so earnestly, so hopefully, so ardently, comes marriage, and the chivalrous sense that others are dependent upon his care. The struggle meanwhile is going on bravely. Then comes the first born, and all this suggests of love, pride and protecting care. In this way fly the years. Forty is reached, and, then, with wisdom comes reflection. Only thirty years at most remain. What is there, after all, in this thing we call human life? The best of it is past. Where is the realization of the fair dreams? Has there been success, as the world goes? What will it all amount to in the end? Has there been failure and the humdrum of the struggle for actual existence? What can you do? Drag along in the same old rut until the end? Gone are the dreams. And yet, withal, the romance remains. Hope still sheds its mild ray. It is not possible to stop in the race. The duties of the hour press. There is no escape from the round of duty. We jog along hoping that brighter days will come. We have not the time, the courage, nor the philosophy to look the whole situation squarely in the face. Forty passes to fifty. Quickly enough sixty is reached, then seventy. Then comes the close. Success is pleasant, but the greatest triumphs of ambition seem small when preparing to leave the scene for the unknown, and though the reckoning gives failure as the result, the hand of destiny is upon you and there is nothing to do but to turn back to the dreams of youth and mockingly compare the results. What can be done? The tale is told. What remains? The awful drama of life. That remains, and nothing can erase it. There is

memory, and this preserves, in green freshness, the hopes and fears, the struggles, the triumphs, the disappointments, the loves, the hates, the good impulses, the evil instincts, the touches of sorrow, the pangs of despair, the sufferings and agonies that none have known, which seemed to eat away the heart, and the blessed faith, that, when the way seemed dark and hopeless, pointed to another and better existence, where the failures of this life should give way to the full fruition of immortal hope. Ah, yes; whatever may be the disappointments of life, however all its fancied glories may disappear as the real unfolds, the great drama of life itself remains and is woven into every thought, feeling and reflection.

The problem of life, as thus far considered, is the philosophical one. Fortunately the most of us never stop to go so deeply into the bubble mystery. The mass of mankind is borne along on the tide and stays not to scan the reality, nor to peer seriously into the future. But there is another side. The only clue to the broader purposes of life is found in its relations to the eternal life beyond. In this light worldly successes are of secondary moment. Length of days is not to be taken into the account. The practice of virtue and the performance of duty, as it confronts us, are the sole tests of success. Be life short or be it long; be the objects aimed at achieved or left undone, the eyes can close and the light of life can fade away complacently, if we can look upon this span of temporal existence as simply a field for the development of a character which shall be fitted to fulfil its real destiny in a sphere eternal in its scope, and where nothing is fruitless and no aims fail of achievement.

If this be the real meaning of life, why should any struggle? In the profound words of Shakespeare:

Who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,