

There is a destiny higher than that of earth, a realm where the rainbow never fades, where the stars will be spread out before us like islands of the blessed which slumber on the ocean, and where the beautiful beings that here pass before us like shadows shall stay in our presence forever. And lastly, a future existence is necessary in order to equalize the distribution of justice by the moral governor of the universe among intelligent beings, and "justify the ways of God to man."

It has been alleged that even in the present state of our existence, virtue brings with it its own reward, and vice its appropriate punishment; this may be, and probably is, generally true, and therefore may be regarded as a general truth. But are we not compelled to admit that individual cases exist, and have existed, where the most virtuous have suffered grievous persecution, merit has been neglected, the most just and benevolent acts have been treated as crimes, and honest and laborious industry have been doomed to pinching poverty and hopeless wretchedness, while idleness has been pampered with wealth, and vice and crime have been rewarded with pleasure and power. It is, I apprehend, from a conviction that, in the present life good and evil, happiness and misery, are not distributed in accordance with merit and demerit; that the mind, almost in spite of itself, is charged with the dreams of fiction, whether fabricated by the novelist, or sung by the poet. It is the office of history to relate events, in respect to men and things, as they actually occur; if the honest man wears out his life in poverty and wretchedness; if the patriot is villified and scorned, and finally terminates his career on the scaffold, or the christian expires at the stake, history must record the facts; while it is the business of the novelist and poet to reward virtue and punish vice in the present life, that is to do what is called *poetical justice*. The writer of history exhibits to us the world as it is; he who composes fiction shows us the world as it ought to be. The one lives in a *real*, the other in an *ideal* world. Whence then is it that we are delighted, that we can not avoid being delighted with *fiction*? Is it not because we are conscious that in this world good and evil are not equally distributed, and that fiction enables us (if I may so speak) to enjoy in anticipation the execution of that justice which will be measured out to all intelligent beings in another state? If this life were all of life, well might the sensitive man ask why these things were so?—and how can the enquiry be answered in a manner consistent with the character of the Supreme