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Vita Sine Literis Mort Est.

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VALEDICTORY.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be."

Change and decay are on the face of all earthly things. Nature and nations, customs and families illustrate this universal law. The aspect of affairs in this world is constantly changing. We, ourselves, have our entrances and exits; our day of bright glory, followed by our night of dark oblivion. Here to-day and gone to-morrow, is the record of our strange eventful pilgrimage.

Nature herself does not continue the same. First, winter comes to rule the varied year, sullen and sad with all his rising train of vapours, clouds, and storms. How dead the vegetable kingdom lies! How dumb the tuneful! and the whitening shower descends through the hushed air until the broad fields are clothed in robes of purest white. But soon nature puts on the fresh green garb of spring: the little brooks so long silenced comes tripping down the mountain side, babbling as it goes; the violets and daisies raise their tiny heads; white wreaths of blossoms cover the wide landscape; the feathered songsters again appear on the window sills, and life and motion and activity are everywhere.

Radiant summer follows and its sunshine glorifies and beautifies all nature, giving splendor to the flowers and scattering "molten gold" over the corn fields. A season gay with all the profusion of luxurious bliss, the pomp of nature. Lastly autumn, "crowned with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf," comes nodding o'er the plain. Extensive harvests hang their heavy heads; downy peach and shining plum, and luscious grape make fragrant the evening air. But when the keen and cruel frost has touched the world with its blight, we pause amid the desolation of nature,—bird, and leaf and flower have all felt the blast. The desert no longer blooms as the rose; the song of joy is silent among the hills, and the earth is

strewn with that foliage which once bespoke the magnificence of summer.

The destiny of men and nations presents analogies corresponding with those of nature.

"Day follows night and night
The dying day; stars rise and set and rise,
Earth takes the example.

The great nations of antiquity flourished for a time and then gave place to others. Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria each had its day and ceased to be. On the plains of Marathon, at the pass of Thermopylæ, on the seas at Salamis, Persia learned her lessons of defeat and disaster. Phœnicæ with its sea ports of Tyre and Sidon, Carthage the land of Dido, Troy, Lydia, Phrygia, the wind passeth over them and they are gone, is the record of their fate. Of Greece—that nation which shone in arms, in arts, in literature, and in philosophy—Macaulay says, "Her freedom and her power have, for more than twenty centuries, been annihilated, her people have degenerated into timid slaves; her language into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen; but," he adds, "her intellectual empire is imperishable." Wherever literature consoles sorrow, or assuages pain; wherever it brings gladness to eyes which fail with wakefulness and tears, and ache for the dark house and the long sleep, there is exhibited in its noblest form the immortal influences of Athens. And, when those who have rivalled her greatness shall have shared her fate, when civilization and knowledge shall have fixed their abode in distant continents; when the sceptre shall have passed away from England; when, perhaps, travellers from distant regions shall in vain labor to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief, shall hear the savage hymns chanted to some misshapen idol over the ruined dome of our proudest temple, and shall see a single naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of the ten