

creatures here. Their bodies alike return to the earth of which they are made, and share the heat of the sun without which material life is inconceivable.

And yet neither of these great powers give us life. They only support it for a while, one by light and warmth, the other by material products, till we die. Thus between them, successive generations, animate and inanimate, appear and retire. The bud is unfolded in the summer air, and then the leaf falls to feed the hidden root of the trunk whose twig has brought its yearly food of sap. The long-grown forest-tree bows to the clay upon which it has looked proudly for a thousand years, and from which it rose, only to lie down at last. So with all moving creatures upon the earth which claims the warm-blooded eagle floating in the sunlit air, and the cold worm creeping in the soil.

And it is appointed unto man to die. "Dust thou art," says the Almighty Voice, "and unto dust shalt thou return." Nevertheless, though he shares the passing life of animate creation he claims part in that which is eternal, according to the vital sentence, "in the image of God made He man." He holds fast to this. His soul is kin to his Creator, though he leaves others to do their will with the familiar house in which it has lived since he was born. Thus the mourner is met by the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

But though the believer is assured that there is a spiritual body which he will receive in exchange for that of our humiliation (mis-rendered "vile"), there are incessant signs of his passage through the mortal life which he shares with others, and which he does

not always interpret as he might and should. They tell him of the subtle process always going on in our earthly house of this tabernacle which shall be dissolved, whatever care we take of it, for however long the physician may stretch the span of our days and put back the clock of dissolution. And, without any sinking of heart, it is possible for a man to note the significant tokens of his mortality. As I have said, we are here subject to the earth and sun, which attract and revive us, however wisely or unwisely we use the material sustenance of the one or admit the mysterious operation of the other. We are in the presence of Him to whom all things are naked and open. And Nature is His sentinal, to whom darkness and light are both alike. She knows no rest or sleep, but ever waits by night and day to draw us to the ground. She watches the drowsy eyelid till it droops, and then gently lays its wearied owner down. She never takes her hand off us whom she owns, but, though its pressure may be long unfelt, she leaps upon the lightest-footed body if it should slip, and throws it to expectant earth, which, however often balked, knows that a day will come when its final claim is due.

So with the other power which suns us directly from above; or from below through blazing logs upon the hearth which shed back flame imbibed from on high before the axe laid them on the ground, or through light and heat stored in coal once fed with vital shine upon primeval trees. For a little while it warms the moving dust of which a man is made, till he is left as stiff and cold as the clay in which he is laid at last. There is not a waking hour without some perceivable token of the powers which attend and support our present life. We may not feel them unless when we are tired or chilled, but every now and then their touch is felt, and maybe a flash of