

or that affords a theme for so much delightful and profitable meditation.

How wonderful and mysterious its nature and operations. No sooner does this ethereal, all-pervading agent glance upon a substance, than it is gone. Suddenly cut off the external light from a room, into which it is pouring a strong flood, and it is all dissipated, as instantaneously as thought. Not a solitary ray is left to render even "the darkness visible." Extinguish a candle, whose light can be seen at any point for a mile in circumference, and which, therefore, fills several entire miles of space, and with the extinguishment of the candle, every vestige of its light instantly disappears. The lightning blazes across the canopy of a midnight storm, and its dazzling light fills perhaps a thousand cubic miles of space. Blinded by the intense and lurid glare, the eye of the beholder shuts for a moment, and opens upon a darkness, deeper, if possible, by contrast, than before.

Never, for an instant, is this subtle agent stationary. With lightning speed, it glances from heaven to earth, from the sun to the planets. Its velocity is estimated at two hundred thousand miles a second, coming from the sun to the earth in about eight minutes, as demonstrated by observations upon the eclipses of Jupiter's moons. Hence the entire ocean of light, one hundred and eighty millions of miles in diameter, (twice the distance of the earth from the sun,) and containing billions of billions of cubic miles of light, diffused over space, is displaced every eight minutes by a new emanation—a fresh ocean of light—and that by the flood-tides of another ocean; and so on to infinity. Nor is this all. The whole space between us and the far off orbit of the newly discovered planet, Neptune, is filled with light, and that light is thus again displaced by wave succeeding wave, in endless succession.

Light is reflective and refractive. We see objects through the lines of light, that come from them to the eye—and as very few objects of vision are luminous, most of them are visible by reflection. But vision would still be imperfect, if not impossible, without the refraction of light, unless the structure of the eye were entirely changed. But God, who created the light, formed also the eye, and has shown infinite wisdom in its structure and adaptation.

Light is the great agent of life and beauty. Without its agency all things would become a shapeless, lifeless mass, and Byron's poetic dream on darkness would be realized—

"The world was void,
The populous and powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless;
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and oceans, all stood still,
And nothing stirred within their silent depths.
Ships, sailorless, lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal—
As they dropped, they slept upon the abyss without a surge.
The waves were dead. The tides were in their graves.
The moon, their mistress, had expired before.
The winds were withered in the stagnant air.
And the clouds perished. Darkness had no need
Of aid from them—She was the universe."

Light is also the great colorific principle. Objects have no inherent color, but take it from the kind of light, which they reflect. It is easily demonstrated, that light consists of seven distinct colors; by the nice intermingling of which, in the processes of absorption and reflection, nature receives her endlessly diversified tinge, and shade, and hue.

A colorless landscape, as when the wintry clouds spread their ice-white mantle over forest, hill, and dale, is a dreary scene; but mantled in the rich drapery and May-colored dress of the light, it becomes enchanting. When we linger in the flower garden, attracted by the beauty and delicacy of the violet, the dahlia, and the rose, let us remember, that light is the wardrobe from which Flora has brought their dress.

How beautifully and appropriately is light made the emblem of Christ. He is styled "the true light,"—"the light of the world,"—"the sun of righteousness." Until time began, darkness held empire over chaos. But this darkness was a faint image of that thick, heavy, utter, felt darkness, that gathered upon the moral world, when first man forsook his God, and his

sun set in gloom. A long night ensued. "The joyous sun did run his course, and oft arose, and scattered night away; but no morn of heaven came down to man—no rising sun did close his darkness or illumine his night." All virtue died. Love died, and hatred took her place. Hope let flag her wings and perished; and man groped in the rayless light, and famished in the dreary world. Then prophets arose, and told a coming morn. They watched with eager eye; yet died ere yet it came. Others arose and prophesied; and a dim light flickered over the way of time. They were stars; proclaiming, somewhere in heaven's wide expanse, a mighty orb of pure and holy light, whose beams they reflected back upon the world; just as the mighty lamps, that brighten in the vault of heaven, and publish the great and glorious sun, by whose reflective beams they glow and shine. And other prophets spake—and lo! a star arose. It was from Bethlehem—the bright and morning star—and soon did bring the promised morn—and full day was poured upon the world; for God had said again, "Let there be light." Q. R.

Light and Love.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF HERDER.

In the beginning all was waste and void—a cold and fathomless sea; and the elements of matter lay wildly intermingled. Then from the mouth of the eternal came forth the breath of life, and the icy chain was broken; and, like a brooding dove, softly moved the wavering mother-wings. In the dark abyss, all was now wildly heaving and struggling into birth. Then came forth the First-born—the soft and joyous *Light*.

Friendly *Light*, united with *Maternal Love*, moved upon the face of the waters; they darted up to the heavens, and wove the golden azure; they descended into the ocean, and filled the depths with life. From its bosom they bore up the *Earth*—an altar to God—bestrewing it with ever-blooming flowers, and infusing vitality into the smallest dust.

And when they had filled the sea and its depths, and the earth and the air with life, the heavenly Counsellors stood still, and thus spoke to each other:

"Let us create *Man*—a form like ourselves—a likeness of *Him* who, through *Light* and *Love*, created the heavens and the earth."

Life then animated the dust; *Light* beamed forth from the god-like face of man; while *Love* made choice of his inmost heart to be her secret dwelling. The eternal Father beheld, and pronounced the creation good; for all was filled—all was penetrated with his ever-operative *Light*, and his pure daughter, even life-giving *Love*!

Wherefore murmurest thou, idle philosopher! and gazest upon the world as upon a dark chaos? Chaos is reduced to order; order thou thyself. In the duties of life alone is the felicity of heaven.

The Sun and Moon.

DAUGHTER of Beauty! keep thyself from envy. Envy hath hurled an angel from heaven; it hath darkened the loveliest form of night—even the beautiful Moon!

From the counsels of the Eternal went forth the creative voice: "Two lights shall glitter in the firmament, as kings of the earth and distinguishers of the rolling time." He spake, and it was done. Up rolled the Sun, the first light. As a bridegroom cometh forth from his chamber—as the hero rejoicingly pursues his victorious path, so stood he then, clothed in the radiance of the Highest. A garland of every dye encircled his head; the earth shouted for joy; the plants yielded to him their fragrance; and the flowers arrayed themselves in lovely and varied garbs.

Filled with envy stood the lesser light, for she saw that she could not outshine the lordly Sun. "Why," said she murmuringly to herself, "why should there be two princes upon one throne? Wherefore must I be the second and not the first?"

Suddenly her beautiful light, banished by inward sorrow, vanished. Away, away it flew, far off into the regions of air, and became the countless host of stars. Pale as death stood Luna