

help you to laugh it off." She answered, half-sulkily, "Well, I suppose if you must know it, you must. It was very extraordinary, no doubt. I should have thought it the effects of the ball, but that I never saw, any where, anything in the least resembling it; and you must not suppose that you understand what I am about to relate, for you never saw, and never can imagine, any thing like it—I thought that I was walking in the wide street of a city; many people were walking there besides myself; but there was something in their air that immediately struck me. They seemed thoughtful and cheerful, neither occupied with business nor with gaiety, but having about them such dignity of repose, such high and settled purpose, such peace, and such purity, as never was stamped upon mortal brow. The light of the city was also strange; it was not the sun, for there was nothing to dazzle; it was not the moon, for all was clear as day. It seemed an atmosphere of light, calm, lovely, and changeless. As I looked at the buildings, they seemed all palaces, but not like the palaces of earth. The pavement that I walked on, and the houses that I saw, were all alike of gold, bright and shining, and clear as glass. The large and glittering windows seemed like divided rainbows, and were made to give and transmit light—only the light of gladness. It was, indeed, a place to which Hope might lead—where Charity might dwell. I could not help crying out, as I walked alone, 'Surely these are the habitations of righteousness and truth!' all was beauty, bright and perfect. I could not tell what was wanting to make me wish for eternity in such a scene, and yet its very purity oppressed me; I saw nothing congenial, though looks of kindness met me in every face of that happy throng. I felt nothing responsive; I returned in silence their friendly greetings, and walked on oppressed and sad. I saw that they all went one way, and I followed, wondering at the reason; and at length I saw them all cross over to a building, much finer and larger than the rest; I saw them ascend its massive steps, and enter beneath its ample porch. I felt no desire to go with them; but so far as the foot of the steps I approached from curiosity. I saw persons enter, who were dressed in every varied colour, and in all the costumes of all nations; but they disappeared within the porch, and then I saw them cross the hall. It was not marble—it was not gold; but light, pure light, consolidated into form. It was the moon, without her coldness; it was the sun, without his dazzling ray: and within was a staircase, mounting upwards, all of light; and I saw it touched by the feet and the white spotless garments of those who ascended. It was, in-

deed, passing fair, but it made me shudder and turn away. As I turned, I saw one upon the lower step, looking at me with an interest so intense, and a manner so anxious, that I stopped to hear what he had to say. He asked me, in a voice like liquid music, 'Why do you turn away? Is there peace elsewhere? Is there pleasure in the works of darkness?' I stood in silence; he pressed me to enter, but I neither answered nor moved. Suddenly he disappeared, and another took his place, with the same look, and with the same manner. I wished to avoid him, but I seemed rivetted to the spot. 'Art thou come so far?' said he; 'wilt thou lose thy labour? Put off thine own garments, and take the white livery.' Here he continued to press me, till I got weary and angry, and said, 'I will not enter; I do not like your livery, and I am oppressed with your whiteness.' He sighed, and was gone. Many passed by me; looked at me with mingled pity and kindness, and pressed me to follow on with them, and offered me a hand up the steps which led to their mysterious change; but I rejected them all, and stood melancholy and disturbed. One young bright messenger, stationed on the steps, came up to me, and entreated me to enter, with a voice and manner I could not resist. 'Do not turn,' he said, 'where canst thou go? Do not linger, for why shouldst thou weary thyself for nought? enter here, and taste of happiness. Do not all go in? Are any rejected? Do not all tribes, and all colours, press into that shall? Are they not washed, and clothed, and comforted?' He gave me his hand and I entered the hall along with him. Here I was sprinkled with pure water, and a garment of pure white was put upon my shoulders; and, I know not how, but I mounted the bright stairs by the side of my happy guide. Oh what a sight burst upon me, when I had reached their summit! But mortal words cannot describe, nor mortal fancy in any way conceive. Where are the living sapphires—where are the glittering stars, that are like the bright audience in which I stood? Where are the forms of ether, or the looks of love, that breathed in the innumerable company that moved around me? I sunk down, overpowered and wretched. I crept into a corner, and tried to hide myself, for I saw that I had nothing in unison with the blessed residents of such a place. They were moving in a dance to the music, to the harmony of song that never fell upon mortal ear. My guide joined, in a rapture, and I was left alone. I saw the tall forms, all fair and brilliant, in their own ineffable felicity: their songs, and looks of gratitude, formed the countenances and differences of each. At length I saw one taller than the rest, and every way more fair-