

times the ideal picture of life takes the shape of ease and luxury, which the future, ever bright and rosy, is to bring. The ambitious youth sees glory and greatness before him. He in whom avarice has a leading place pictures wealth, lands and gold. The girl sees love and beauty, princes and courtiers and palaces and admiration. I cannot depict the dreams of all youth, but at the age of five, six and seven, I recall vividly, more vividly than the incidents of last week, how, wandering in the fields alone, I had the pictures of my career clearly marked out in my mind. Not a doubt crossed my thought as to the achievement of all these. No dark practical look at the difficulties or impossibilities came to cloud a vision all bright because beaming with the warm and glowing fancies of ardent youth. The range of life seemed so great, the years would be so many and so long, and the opportunities so great, that no carking doubt was permitted to throw its dark shadow over the picture. I was myself a great chieftain among men, marching on from one grand achievement to another, commanding multitudes, exacting homage and told of in history. Fame and glory were the absorbing yearning of life, and all happened according to the burning wish. Now I am past forty. The larger half is gone; the remainder that lies before me, though the full allotted span be reached, will fly away so quickly that the reckoning can scarce be kept, and there is hardly time to count the milestones. Yet, into those forty conscious years, barren as they may have been of great results, far as the reality has fallen behind the gem-decked visions of early youth, what dramas have been crowded, as seen from within. Without, it is merely the record of a common life, filling its share of space in the annals of the race: one traveller jostling his way through the crowd, leaving some behind and occasionally passed in the race. But within, who has known the burning ambitions, the

unspeakable yearnings, the wild hopes, the bitter disappointments, the moments of gloom, the dark secrets of hate, the gathering storms of passion and revenge, the insidious promptings to crime, which had to be cast aside with all the power of virtue; the struggle between the triumphs of the hour which were so easy but so fatal on the morrow, and the patient waiting for the slow development of the right, the sacrifice of the pleasures of to-day to reap the richer harvests of the future. Then, again, the solemn reflections upon the relation the ineradicable *ego* bore to the universe about it; what the destiny, not of a life—that seemed small—but of a soul: what could be done now that would affect, for weal or woe, this undying something which seemed to constitute the all-important self? Behold, the drama—nay, the very tragedy of a life!

The process of life is so strange, so moulded by necessity, and so much the result of development, that it is fortunate the reality does not appear until the play is about over. Tell the dreaming child that his visions are all moonshine, that he shall presently find himself confronted by a cold world, from which nothing is got except by force and by eternal conflict; that in the race are men swifter, and in the battle are men stouter, and that when the record comes to be made up it is simply the story of a man who has jogged along with the others for a short time and then lain down to rest—and who would face the struggle? But it all follows so naturally. The dreaming boy is soon at school, and there he begins to learn that something has to be done, sometime or other, to keep him in existence, and that youth is the time to prepare for the emergency. By contact and competition with his fellows he finds that there is always a better than he can do. And yet he has only reached the initial stage. Hope still shines like a fadeless star. Soon the tiresome and fruitless days