

therefore, whose wisdom and power constructed it, placed its action beyond our own control, so that we cannot reach or modify its movements, if we would. For had we been commissioned to keep this great life-propeller in play by our *voluntary* agency, as we at pleasure employ our lips, our head, or our feet, he well knew that the frequent excitements and torturing cares of life—its sudden emergencies—its ecstatic joys or poignant griefs, might at some time so absorb our whole attention as to lead us to forget to work its muscular machinery, and then the whole beautiful and complicated organism of this animal body would suddenly and prematurely drop into the grave.

But I must now close this chapter upon the circulation of the blood, and in doing so, I wonder how many of my young friends who may honour it with a perusal, will be able to account, one week hence, for the throbbing of the pulse which they feel in their wrists. It will be worth an effort to remember.

DREAM OF THE TWO ROADS.

It was New Year's night. An aged man was standing at a window.

He raised his mournful eyes toward the deep blue sky, where the stars were floating like white lilies on the surface of a clear, calm lake.

Then he casts them on the earth, where a few more hopeless beings than himself now moved towards their certain goal—the tomb.

Already he had passed sixty of the stages which lead to it, and he had brought from his journey nought but errors and remorse. His health was destroyed; his mind vacant, his heart sorrowful, and his old age devoid of comfort.

The days of his youth rose up in a vision before him and he recalled

the solemn moment when his father had placed him at the entrance of two roads, one leading into a peaceful, sunny land, covered with a fertile harvest, and resounding with soft, sweet songs; while the other conducted the wanderer into a deep dark cave, whence there was no issue, where poison flowed instead of water, and where serpents hissed and crawled.

He looked toward the sky, and cried out in his agony, 'O youth return! O my father, place me once more at the entrance to life, that I may choose the better way!'

But the days of his youth and his father had both passed away. He saw wandering lights floating far away over dark marshes, and then disappear; these were the days of his waste life.

He saw a star fall from heaven and vanish in darkness. This was an emblem of himself; and sharp arrows of unavailing remorse struck to his heart. Then he remembered his early companions, who entered on life with him, but who, having trod the paths of virtue and of labor, were now happy and honored on this New Year's night.

The clock in the high church tower struck, and the sound, falling on his ear, recalled his parents' early love for him, their erring son the lessons they had taught him; the prayers they had offered up on his behalf.

Overwhelmed with shame and grief, he dared not longer look toward that heaven where his father dwelt; his dark eyes dropped tears, and with one despairing effort he cried aloud, 'Come back, my early days! come back!' and his youth did return; for all this was but a dream, which visited his slumbers on New Year's night. He was still young; his faults alone were real.