

"The First Five Minutes After Death"

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound."

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound!"—Paul is describing the exit of the soul. The last of earth and the first of heaven. The snapping of the fibres which hold body and spirit together. The separation of the spiritual force from the natural form. The supreme moment in the soul's experience when earth recedes and heaven dawns. When time ends and eternity begins. When the stars fade and the eternal morning glories begin to bloom. When the light of the sun dies out and the soul survives. When the natural sinks and the spiritual reigns triumphant over all. When earth has finished its night and the eternal day reveals the splendours of the life everlasting. Oh, morning land!

I gazed on the dead white face of a sweet girl just twenty-three years of age. Asleep in death she lay, resting serenely. She had been called suddenly. Half an hour and she was gone. But how peaceful was the departure. Lisp- ing words of faith and confidence and clinging fondly to the dear old book, she bid adieu to kindred and friends. 'In a moment' death had come. The skeleton hand had turned the knob. The dark angel of night had spread black wings over home and fireside. The song of joy had ceased. "In a moment" the eyelids were closed, the hands folded, the pale form pillowed forever on the downy couch of an endless repose; and broken hearted loved ones sat near by weeping because of loneliness but sustained by a faith which rose superior to fate and circumstances.

I gazed on that still, silent face and exclaimed, "Asleep!" "But is she merely asleep?" I asked. And if she is asleep will she wake again?" To sleep and dream and if perchance to wake again, ah there's the rub! Death is so abrupt! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! Where does night end and the day begin? Where does spring end and the summer begin?" Where does summer end and the winter begin? Where does matter end and the spirit begin? Where does the body end and the soul begin? All things seem to merge, save death. Death fits into no set of circumstances, earthly or human. Death is a surprise. Death is an alarm. Death