

## ASPIRATIONS.

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WERE there no other value to be attached to life, the discipline that is afforded by honourable labour, and the satisfaction arising from the knowledge of labour well performed, would alone make life worth living. It matters little whether a man, in the image of God, works with his intellect, which is most truly God like, or toils with his hands in the God-given garden of earth, delving, in very truth, into that layer of mould which enshrines all that is mortal of many generations of predecessors. In either case is he fulfilling the highest destiny that even an Almighty and omniscient creator could pre-ordain for a created being, his own handiwork. There is a dignity in labour that is not of earth, though prosecuted on the earth. The lined brow of the student, and the crooked finger and horny palm of manual toil are patents of a higher nobility than can be conferred by earthly potentate, other than the supreme and imperishable potentate of Self—self-ennobled and self-consecrated by the consciousness of duty well performed, of reverses well endured, of rewards modestly yet gratefully accepted and worn.

There is no such thing as idleness in Nature. There is no such thing as cessation, even in the grave. Suns pursue for evermore their giant paths through space. Round them in never-resting gyrations circle the minor spheres, pendulums of the ages, swinging in their limitless orbits. Meteors flash out of immensity into dust, yet trail in their splendid wake the inevitable necessity for re-adaption and re-assimilation. Continents rise, bourgeon, moulder, subside. "The multitudinous sea incarnadine," tireless, laps the shores of ever-shifting sands.

The gardens of earth perish and bloom again. The store-houses of Nature are exhausted to be refilled. The children of Creation are never silent in her workshops, never asleep, never dead, but somewhere their voices are heard, their great hearts are throbbing. Even the dust of humanity is alive, rife with purpose and pregnant with nascent being. The grave may be dug to-day, but it cannot long hold the cold form that is lowered into its depths. Already chemical action is at work. To-morrow the fabric is resolved into its elements to be re-utilized in the construction of a hundred forms that we reckon not of, that we see not, that we acknowledge not, yet, that nevertheless are. Such was the fiat of immutable Law from the beginning. Matter once formulated is indestructible. Nothing is lost, only transmuted. Nothing is obliterated, only re-fashioned.

And this leads to another consideration. If the animating principle of all that is loftiest in being, call it what you will—sentient intelligence, soul, spirit, divine spark—be, in very deed in the body, but not of the body; a visitant in the temporal frame, but not necessarily a perpetual co-partner of the temporal frame; then, according to the same law of indestructibility is its mission, its office, eternal. Whatever may be its changes, the rude fingers of annihilation can never crush its fluttering wings into nothingness. Phoenix-like it will spring again and again from the ashes of dissolution to spread its pinions abroad in the renewed light of day.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks  
And these are but the shattered stalks  
Or ruined chrysalis of one.