

wandered and flitted in the dark nether world.' This 'wandering and flitting,' however, is rather the spirit of Herder's poetry than of that of the Hebrews; for the whole tenor and drift of the representations in the Old Testament show that the state of disembodied souls is deep quietude. Freed from bondage, pain, toil, and care, they repose in silence. The ghost summoned from beneath by the Witch of Endor, said, 'Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?' It was, indeed, in a dismal abode that they took their long quiet; but then it was in a place 'where the wicked ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest.'** Solomon declares and gives it as a reason for energy in this life, that "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."† Job, in bitter despair, asks, "Why died I not from the womb? . . . For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest."‡ And in Isaiah we meet with such language as this: "Thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust."§ These passages, and others of a similar kind, have been frequently quoted to prove that the world of spirits, as believed in by the ancient Hebrews, was a region of darkness, silence, gloom, and total inactivity, corresponding in the sense of the repose, but not in that of the gloom, with the Buddhists' *Nirwana*. The last passage evidently refers in some manner to the calling up of the spirits of the dead by the art of necromancy; it having been imagined at that time that spirits so summoned could only speak in a whisper. Whether the shadowy and unsubstantial region thus imagined, constitutes in reality the spiritual world of the Old Testament, we shall see as we proceed. Certain it is that an existence in a land where no light shines, no harmonious sounds break through, and no events occur to relieve the everlasting monotony and gloom, would be little worth the having, and would be no place to look forward to with joyful hope and anxious expectation, as a crowning reward for one's labour when "life's fitful fever" is over,

* *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life.* By W. R. ALGER, p. 153.

† *Ecclesiastes* ix., 10.

‡ *Job* iii., 11, 13.

§ *Isaiah* xxix., 4.