

Yet undismayed, for do they not reveal  
Th' immortal being with our dust entwined ?  
So let us deem ! and e'en the tears they wake  
Shall then be blest, for that high nature's sake."

Putting aside the belief in immortality, we could not possibly explain the utter disproportion of man's powers and desires and aspirations to the short span and limited sphere of his earthly life. The very feeling of limitation which we often feel, and over which we often inwardly fret, seems to show that we have some dim realization of the higher and wider life towards which, amid many a check and struggle, our being is steadily tending. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not;" but it can at least catch a faint gleam, though it does not yet comprehend it. Many of man's endowments seem not only superfluous to his present life, but are often really a hindrance as regards his success in his present arena. How often do strength of emotion, sensitiveness of conscience, and finely organized spiritual nature, seem really dead weights in the "struggle for existence" of this life ! Without immortality we could find no *raison d'être* for a hundred rudimentary powers which find no development, no fostering atmosphere on earth. Without this we can find no logical justification for placing the hero's or the martyr's death above the prosperous life of selfish ease ; for if death be the end of being, we should have to admit that "a living dog is better than a dead lion." They who would take away man's belief in immortality would take away the strongest check from evil-doing, the strongest stay from the helpless and—so far as earth is concerned—the hopeless sufferer. Nothing but the immortality of man could adequately explain his religious cravings, or throw any light upon the countless mysteries that oppress him—the frequent seeming triumph of wrong over right, falsehood over truth, injustice over justice ; the prosperous tyrannies, the apparently blighted lives, noble careers cut short, thwarted aspirations and half developed powers ; the sense of failure and incompleteness that besets perhaps even the most successful lives ; the load of acute suffering under which some of earth's noblest benefactors have done their work ; while the selfish and self-absorbed have, on the other hand, appeared to live tranquilly on in as great happiness as their natures were capable of feeling. On any

adequate supposition of a Source of Life, who is also the origin of our moral nature, we feel that there *must* be another sphere in which the crooked shall be made straight, and frustrated powers and incompleted lives shall receive at last their due development.

" Hope, below this, consists not with belief  
In mercy, carried infinite degrees  
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts ;  
Hope, below this, consists not with belief  
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,  
That finds no limits but its own pure will."

Looking at life as it is, even at its best, and comparing it with the ideal written by the finger of God upon our hearts, we feel convinced that, in the words of the authors of "The Unseen Universe," "there is no impenetrable barrier to the intellectual development of the individual. Death is not such a barrier, whether we contemplate it in others or whether we experience it ourselves. And the same continuity which has been insisted on with reference to our intellectual conceptions of the universe, applies, we have little doubt, to the other faculties of man, and to other regions of thought."

But there are influences which bring the sense of a spiritual and future life far closer than does any exercise of our reasoning powers,—influences which, "striking the electric chain with which we are darkly bound," seem to bring us into the very presence of the unseen and eternal. To certain organizations especially,—the ecstasy of a spring morning, sweet with the balmy odours of a thousand opening blossoms ; the inexpressible sensations produced by the evanescent beauty of a sunset ; or the strains of noble or pathetic music, entering as it seems into recesses of our being of which we were previously unconscious ; or the silent rapture of a summer wood, when the play of light and shade and the soft rustling of the branches seem but the garment of the Invisible ;—each and all seem to bring the spirit into direct communion with the Unseen—

" A presence that disturbs us with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

And the same poet beautifully says, that as the murmur of the sea-shell expresses