

A gloomy wilderness of dying thought—
Repined, and groaned, and withered from the earth,
His groanings filled the lands his numbers filled;
And yet he seemed ashamed to groan. Poor man!
Ashamed to ask, and yet he needed help.

DREAMLAND.

All of us at times wander into dreamland, that mystic realm where imagination, fancy, ambition and hope, summoned before our mental vision, seem as varied in their character and shape as are the clouds that float above us. As transient at times as the mirage of the desert, or the gleam of some wandering stars, and again as fixed and lofty as our lives are long. There is no person so worldly, so utterly lost to nature, that his mind does not steal away from the realities of the present into speculations as to what might have been, or what may be. But, although we travel into the vanished past, and the coming future, in quest of materials with which to build those airy castles, whose foundations are found upon the earth, whose summits rise to heaven, yet our pictures of the past are generally of a sombre hue; for side by side with the beautiful and well-proportioned edifice we might have reared, we see ruin, the unsightly pile that we have created, and angry with ourselves, we turn to the future, so free from all sad memories, so unshadowed by any vain regret, but made light and lovely to our eyes by hopes and aspirations seldom realized. These wanderings into dreamland are not idle excursions from which we return without gain or profit, for, in a great measure, they shape our present life, and we have it in our power to come back laden with the flowers of imagination and the blossoms of fancy, whose fragrance shall cheer us; or hardened with noxious weeds, whose baneful influence will serve to depress our hopes and encourage our fears. It gives vividness to our feelings, raises the tone of our entire mental activity, casts the light of fancy over the plodding steps of judgment. It lights up the whole horizon of thought, as the sunrise flashes along the mountain tops, and lights up the world. It would be but a dreary place without some light of this kind. In spite of all the good thus derived, we must not dwell upon its pleasing visions till we forget the sober face of truth, nor are we to look upon the dark and dreary side of

things till all nature appears as dull as our disordered fancy.

Our dreams of love and affection are perhaps the noblest and the best, for they bind in one jewelled circle the memories of the past, the realities of the present, and the longed-for and possible future, connecting heaven and earth by a golden thread so strong that neither misfortune nor evil can sever it, leading us to earth by the presence of loved ones here, yet wafting us into celestial vales, where hope and faith prompt us to believe our beloved who have departed yet live. As we sit alone and think upon those we love best, who are perhaps dwellers in some distant land, when we recollect that a portion of their hopes are centered upon us, that the beating of their hearts answers to our own, that their sympathies and prayers are with us, mainly, as we remember all this, do we feel encouraged to push forward in spite of present difficulty and oppression, until we attain the goal upon which we have set our ambition. Do we not indulge, the sternest among us, do we not indulge in delightful fancies as to what those we love are doing; do we not picture to ourselves the old familiar faces, whose lives are stamped upon our hearts, as we read them long ago, and seeming ten times more bright and beautiful from contrast with the living present. Then we think of friends who, when they were here, have cheered us so many times, and how often do we think of what they were and how reverently of what they are.

"Day after day we think what they are doing
In those bright realms of air,
Year after year, their tender steps pursuing,
Behold them grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with them, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, thought unbroken,
May reach them where they live."

Then across our memory sweep clouds of vain regret. We remember how we repaid their kindness with neglect. Though to no one perhaps is the memory of greater pleasure, strange as it may seem, than to the mourner. We would not forget what we have lost. Every recollection and association connected with them are sacred. Time assuages our grief, but does not diminish the pleasure with which we recall the forms we shall see no more. It is also to be noticed, though other things change,