

APOLOGUE.—Look, wretched one, upon the stream that rolleth beside the dwelling of thy old age. Sec'st thou not within its waters the very stars which have shone upon thee in childhood?

The years have gone over thee and thou hast grown gray with many changes—thou hast changed thy home, thy heart, thy friends—but sec'st thou any change in the bright stars which look up to thee, even through the ever-changing surface of the rippling waters?

Thou dost not—they cannot alter, for they are the eyes which God has set upon thy path to watch thee. Alas! that thou shouldst have looked for them alone in the brooklet. Why hast thou not looked up for them in the Heavens?

Had they not beauty? Gave they not a sufficient and sweet light for thy guidance in the strange and solemn hours? Why hast thou striven to fly from their glances? Why didst thou refuse their light? Their voices spoke to thee in songs—faint, sweet echoes of the living music that streams ever from beneath the eternal footsteps. Ah! did no faint whisper of that music fall upon thy heart in its solitude?

Alas! for thee. Though thou hast lived apart from thy fellows, his spirit still hath been with thine—his spirit only. Thou, like him, seekest not the object which thy own mood may not shape at will. Thou lovest not to look upon the things over which the arm of thy power may not be extended. Thou lovest the dark and the forbidden—not the shining and the vouchsafed. Thy thought is shrouded in the darkness of thy own soul—so that thou seest not the blessed spirits which are commissioned to give thee light. Thou lookest upon vain hopes of earthly substance, even at the awful moment when God is looking upon thee.

Thine eyes are in the dark—thine eyes of the dust. These still seek and turn in lowly contemplation upon the thing from which they were made. But the eyes of thy soul grew blinded in this survey. Alas, for the myriad eyes that gaze downward in sweet benignity from Heaven—how few look up in return.

The proud man builds his palace, tower upon tower, huge of bulk and high, still aspiring to the skies; but his gaze from its terrace is bent upon the city that lies below him. It is the shepherd, who, along the hills, still singing a glad song of Heavenly rejoicing, evermore turns upward a yearning eye—fond—looking for the sweet planet that shall counsel his doubtful footsteps.

A THOUGHT ON IMMORTALITY.—When in reflecting upon pleasures that add a zest and a charm to existence, on absent friends whom we trust to meet, on amusements which we hope to enjoy, on anticipations of which we expect the reality—when in the eagerness of sanguine aspirations, and the plenitude of desire, we paint the loved object with unreal beauty, and feed our minds upon baseless visions that naturally flow from our innate desire for worldly happiness, how often does the thought invade the solitude of our meditations, that these pleasures must all end, that we meet with the absent but to part again, that all amusements which Earth affords are empty and transitory—that anticipations which we nourish, no matter how warmly, bring to us in their realization not half the pleasure with which our ardent minds had at first clothed them, and that finally, no matter how fondly we may cherish the Delusions of Life, Death must one day mark us for its own, and consign to its “starless and eternal slumbers,” the hopes, the wishes, and the anticipations of existence.

How unwelcome such a thought to him who can feel within him, no perceptions of an immortal principle, no assurance of a higher destiny, than that which is bounded by an Earthly existence, and an Earthly tomb; who amid the clouds that lower, and the storms that gather, sees no end to the murky darkness of the former, and no period to the horrors of the latter, save in the total annihilation of every perception, that makes us acquainted with the existence of both; to such, life must appear a blank, promising nothing here, and worse than nothing hereafter; a dreary vision, in the dim indistinctness of which, the *present good* is ever overshadowed by the gloom of the *coming evil*; and if such be the case—if our hopes of living hereafter are vain or illusory, who, I ask, would willingly *bear* to live, or living, *dare* to die?

HYPOCRITES soar up to heaven, not like the lark to sing praises, but like the hawk to pounce upon their prey. When they look up to the Mount of Olives, it is to build an oil mill; and if they weep by the brook of Kedron, they are watching to catch fish, or throw some one in to it; and when they kneel, it is like the soldiers in front rank, to load and fire. They call mankind their brethren, and treat them as the Turkish Sultans do their relatives.

It is a curiosity to find a fop who does not think he is the admiration of every one he meets in the street.