

MORNING.

THE PRIZE ESSAY FOR 1884—UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

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IN THE CITY.

IT is a cheerless morning as we step out upon the damp pavement. The air is sharp and piercing, and the uncertain light that begins to glimmer, seems rather to increase the gloom of the scene. The houses are grotesquely large, the sidewalks are bare, and look half expectant of the great human tide that will flow back over them with the return of day. The streets are noiseless and empty. Even the darkness, as if reluctant to leave, lingers yet in shady corners, and down dark alleys. Out on the broad streets the perspective of the long lines of houses is harder than ever. The street corners never seemed so mathematical, the church spires never so fantastic. As we pass along and look up at the windows, here and there a drawn blind betrays the sleeper within, while down below, articles exposed for sale, and left over night, look odd and out of place. Next, we reach a cross street, and glancing along expect to see some living being. Not a soul is stirring, and the long street ends only in a dim mist that suggests miles and miles away in the country—the home of the green fields and the summer clover where nature rules alone, and all is innocence, and purity and hope. Dreaming, however, of them brings the fields no nearer; as we wander on we see for miles around us acres and acres of the roofs and chimney tops of the great city. You would

almost fancy that the whole population had fled during the night, till a stray beam of light falling on the pavement attracts our attention, and looking up we see that the dim ray of a lamp has struggled out through a closed shutter only to die in the first light of day. Perhaps, too, with that dim ray, struggles out the muttered, long-forgotten prayer of a dying man. For within, the other rays of the low-burning lamp fall across the feverish face of the sufferer, who welcomes the morning but to wish it gone, and only sees the day decline to long for it back again. As the first light steals in on him, his thoughts wander away back to the old home and the little room where, long ago, he used to lie and watch the same bright sunbeams glisten and glance on the little square window-panes, while outside high overhead, the birds were praising Him who sends the sunlight. Life was very fair then, but now repentance seems a mockery, and hope comes too late. Leaving the light and the reflections it awakens, we pass on. A stealthy breeze comes up the street behind us, making the shop signs swing and creak till they look ashamed of their own faces, and sending a rabble of last year's leaves with their bad city acquaintances—scraps of dirty paper—scampering across the roadway. A little farther on, down at the end of a lane shines a gas lamp looking dismal in the increasing light. Led by curiosity, we pass in and disturb what seems a bundle of