

sent. The result of the discussion on this point was, that one of the party offered to return to Shiu-hing if they would promise to bring him back to the same spot by daylight; this was promised, and he left in the *fast-crab*, reaching Shiu-hing at dusk. An officer of rank came off, and, after a brief conference to save appearances, the boat started back. The voyage up, however, on account of delay during the night, did not terminate till about 10 A.M. of the 21st. Here, with many expressions of mutual interest and satisfaction, the two companies parted, the mandarin boat to return to Shiu-hing, the travellers to make another day's journey westward. Favored by a strong breeze, they arrived about 9 P.M., at the city of *Tak-hing-chau*, a city of the third rank. They were soon boarded by officers, who at first with some rudeness, and long with great urgency, insisted on their return at once. This was as persistently resisted, as well as an offer to guard the boat to keep off thieves; the travellers declaring they had no fears of thieves. The discussion lasted until near daylight; new relays taking up the Chinese side; and then for a while the necessity existed of keeping watch, lest the boat should be cut adrift, and so swept away with the current. At daylight, one of the gentlemen, taking a large supply of books, entered the city, and marched northward, and eastward, and southward, and westward, until he reached the boat again; then, with a fresh supply, he made a similar tour on the western side, at one point meeting the frowning officials summoned to an early council to discuss so unheard-of a case. The return trip was safely accomplished without special incident; the distance from *Fat-shán* to *Fá-ti* was passed on foot to save the tide.—Yours faithfully, M."

From the New York Independent.

#### OUR FUTURE SELVES.

Man is a mystery to himself. Some facts of his existence he knows with infallible certainty in his own consciousness. That he has a personal identity, separate from the rest of his kind, that he possesses a reasonable soul, that his mind, however connected with matter as an organ of its impressions and an instrument of its acts, is yet a distinct substance or existence and not a mere principle of life in the body—these are among the primary facts of consciousness.

Other facts concerning his own being man derives through reason, observation, and the testimony of the senses. That he had a beginning and a Creator, that he is the subject of certain laws of development and growth, that he belongs to a race, and to a social and moral system, and that this connection involves certain duties and responsibilities—these are facts to which reason conducts him with the highest moral certainty. But still there hangs over this being a mystery, which reason and consciousness fail to illuminate.

I know that I am, I am conscious of my personality, I am satisfied that I began to be, that I am the intelligent offspring of the Infinite and Eternal mind; I know that I am under law, that I owe duties to my Maker and to my fellow-men; but after all what is this soul in its substance, what am I myself, and what lies before me? I have begun to be—shall I continue to be? And if so, where and under what conditions? I know that I must die; but what is it that shall die? Shall I forever cease to be; or shall only the body that encases me decay? Shall death prove to me the annihilation of consciousness, the end of being, or only a temporary suspension of consciousness, a little longer sleep? Or shall it prove, like

birth, an entrance into another mode of existence? Shall I be born again through the dark womb of the grave into a higher life? On this point consciousness, of course, is silent. Experience teaches nothing. Observation, the most close and scrutinizing, gives no clue to the answer.

*If a man die shall he live again?* I ask it of Reason, and get only conjecture. I ask it of History, and am mocked with silence. I watch at the bedside of the dying that I may see the soul I love at the instant of death. But no yearning of affection, no eagerness of desire,—not even the mind's second sight that seems to dispense with material organs and to give to phantoms shape and substance—can catch one glimpse of the spirit in the expiring breath. I knock at the door of Death; I cry aloud in my despair, but I hear only the echo of my own voice in the gloomy cavern.

*If a man die shall he live again?* I ask it of the oracles of God, and there I hear—oh, marvelous rapacious words—"He is not a God of the dead but of the living—Christ hath abolished death and brought immortal life to light!"

"A future state," says Whately, "which is to last forever, every one must allow to be in itself, a subject the most awfully interesting that can be presented to the mind of man. Many a person is conscious indeed that other subjects do in general interest him much more; yet every one must be also conscious that in point of real importance, all other subjects are comparatively trifles to us. I say to us, because though other matters of contemplation may be no less sublime and wonderful, none of them can so closely come home to ourselves. Admirable as are the works of creation, the whole of it, even if we could understand the whole, could contain nothing so interesting to us, as ourselves and our eternal existence hereafter."

That the present is a state of probation with reference to a future state of being, the briefest argument from the reason of things must show.

Either there is no moral government over the world; or the present state of things is complete as a moral system; or the present system is incomplete, and we must look for further developments in the future.

The first supposition, that there is no moral government over the world, is refuted by the testimony of conscience, by the analogy of natural laws, and by the general connection obvious even here between virtue and happiness on the one hand, and vice and unhappiness on the other.

The second supposition, that the present state of thing is complete as a moral system, is refuted by facts of every-day observation; for while in a general way right moral action is connected with happiness, and wrong moral action with misery, there are yet multitudes of specific cases in which this is not so. "Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world." There is many a rich Dives and poor Lazarus. No sober mind can pretend that this is a state of exact legal rewards and punishments.

It only remains therefore that this must be a state of probation under grace, with retribution lying in the future. But what that future shall be we can learn only from the Word of God. At those living infallible oracles, each soul must ask for itself the momentous question: "Where and What shall I be in the Hereafter?"

#### A NATION OF METHODISTS.

The mission to the Friendly Islands has been so successful, that the nation is a nation of Methodists;