

ual existences may affect our thoughts, but unless they assumed material properties and relations they could not possibly affect our senses. And to say that we have no experience of consciousness apart from matter is no proof that it may not so exist. It is inconceivable to our minds *how* it should so exist, simply because we have no experience of it; but to say that it is therefore impossible, is to make our limited experience the test of truth, and is not far removed from the error of the Eastern Prince who declared that the story of water becoming solid in some countries was a fabrication. We are but slowly learning a little of the great book of knowledge, and we are acting like grown-up children when we maintain that no future page can contain anything different from those which we have laboriously learned to decipher. And while physical investigation can afford no disproof whatever of spiritual existence, there are, deeply rooted in the noblest part of our nature, indications of its existence which the most finely constituted minds find it impossible to distrust.

"All about the world and near it
Lies the luminous realm of spirit,
Sometimes touching upturned foreheads with a
strange unearthly sheen;
Through the deep ethereal regions
Throng invisible bright legions,
And unspeakable great glory flows around our lives
unseen;

"Round our ignorance and anguish,
Round the darkness where we languish,
As the sunlight round the dim earth's midnight
tower of shadow pours,
Streaming past the dim, wide portals,
Viewless to the eyes of mortals
Till it flood the moon's pale islet or the morning's
golden shores.

"O'er the world of sense for ever
Rolls the bright, celestial river;
Of its presence, of its passing, streaks of faint prophetic light
Give the mind mysterious warning,
Gild its clouds with gleams of morning,
Or some shining soul reflects it to our feeble inner sight."

It is in the inner sight, which is far more sensitive to spiritual influences than the most delicate test of the physicist, that we find, not a "physical theory of a future life," but its surest evidence. Like other sensibilities, it is capable of being deadened, and it would seem as if, in some great thinkers, it were deadened through the one-sided de-

velopment which results from too great absorption in the study of external phenomena. But that part of man which is satisfied with the contemplation of material phenomena, however wonderful, is not the noblest part of him. There is a whole world of feeling which the conditions of outward life can neither explain nor satisfy, as real, nay, often more real than our physical existence, and we are often made to feel intensely that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." The whole range of moral feeling; our perceptions of the beauty which lies not in matter, but in its presentation to our minds; the appreciation of justice, goodness, truth; the ecstasy or the suffering bound up with gratified or wounded affection; a thousand vague yearnings and aspirations which we cannot explain even to ourselves; all imply an existence which is not of this world, and which, in our best moments, we feel is in no sense dependent on it for its preservation. Not to speak at present of Christian faith, poetry, which is often the handmaid of faith,—not seldom indeed a secondary kind of faith, and so "the evidence of things not seen,"—has in all times pointed to spiritual existence and the immortality which, we feel, belongs to it. Most readers will remember how Wordsworth has referred to

"Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things;
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized;
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised."

And Mrs. Hemans has touched the same chord in some of her sweetest strains:

"The power that dwelleth in sweet sounds to waken
Vague yearnings, like the sailor's for the shore,
And dim remembrances, whose hue seems taken
From some bright former state, our own no more;
Is not this all a mystery? Who shall say
Whence are those thoughts, and whither tends
their way?

"Darkly we move—we press upon the brink
Haply of viewless worlds, and know it not;
Yes! it may be, that nearer than we think
Are those whom death has parted from our lot!
Fearfully, wondrously, our souls are made—
Let us walk humbly on, but undismayed!

"Humbly,—for knowledge strives in vain to feel
Her way amidst these marvels of the mind;