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1852
SHADOW LAND;

OR,

THE SEER.

BY

MRS. E. OAKES SMITH,

AUTHOR OF SINLESS CHILD, LOST ANGEL, THE WESTERN CAPTIVE,
WOMAN AND HER NEEDS, ETC., ETC.

261
5/6/52

"Now since every opposite comes near to its correlative in one or more points of contact, which, as they establish, also serve to maintain the relationship between the two, so the state of the soul in dreaming will serve strikingly to illustrate its waking action."

SCHLEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

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TO

Mrs. C. A. Gardiner,

THE FRIEND OF MY GIRLHOOD,

THE BELOVED COMPANION OF MY SCHOOL-DAYS,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

Preface.

IN presenting the following pages to the public, the Author feels some delicacy on account of the apparently autobiographic aspect it may be supposed to wear; but she begs the reader to bear in mind, that she has not presumed to present her waking experience to their observation—like a child with a magic lantern, she has only thrown shadows upon the surface, keeping the substance still in the back ground.

She has been willing to cast what little light she is able upon psychological grounds, in the hope that others will do the same, and thus relieve the subject from much of its obscurity.

*Brooklyn, L. I.,
October, 22nd, 1851.*

1711

In presenting the following pages to the public, the author is aware of the fact that the work is not perfect, and that it may be found to contain many errors and omissions. He trusts, however, that it will be found to contain many valuable facts and suggestions.

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SHADOW LAND.

Chapter First.

Behold this dreamer cometh.—BIBLE.

Which gives me hope

That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,

Waking thou never wilt consent to do.—MILTON.

The dreamless sleeper—Poetry is truth of the highest kind—Dreams needless to the laborer—The true sphere—Marriage Vows—Process of Sleep.

WE were telling a dream, and looked into the face of our listener with that obstinate kind of idiosyncrasy that belongs to dreamers, but which it would be difficult to explain—we, an obstinate psychologist, believing in all spiritualisms, because the good Father has made this part of our nature so urgent and unmistakable, that it is more difficult to doubt the realities of the internal than the external life. We looked into his face—

“I never dream, madam.”

“Never dream! Then I am afraid you have no soul.”

“No soul! Madam, do you believe in the Bible? or are you only talking poetry?”

“Only talking poetry?—*only!* I am talking of facts—of the most undeniable testimony to soul-exist-

ence which dreaming affords. Suppose it *is* poetry. Is not poetry truth?—the deep, solemn truth, felt at the bottom of every soul?—truth that will lift up its voice and cry aloud in every human heart till the world stifles its utterance?"

"Oh dear, madam, I do not comprehend a word you say; and yet I dare be bound it is very good."

No more did he. How could he, who never dreamed, understand poetry? And what right had I to attempt indoctrinating him with the spirit of poetry, and disturbing his smooth dullness and excellent digestion with a malicious and energetic speech out of the common track?

Hence comes our book of Shadow Land; and hence, from encountering many, and often in the world, those who never dream, has arisen in my mind many an anxious questioning as to the hereafter of those who are denied this testimony of spirit to spirit. Now, in sleep, I imagine, there is a brief period which the perturbations of sense, and the jaded faculties of the brain, require for the subsidence of their activity. Gently and tenderly the sleep spirit enfolds a veil over each, and applies a "sweet oblivious antidote" to the "thick coming fancies" of the o'er-tasked head or heart.

The sturdy laborer sinks into dreamless repose. With him "'tis a good dullness," and he is attended by a very lob of a spirit,

"Stretched out all the chimney's length."

The "lubber fiend," who regales his ears with the

sound of his "shadowy flail," heard faintly in the night watches, "but we are spirits of another kind," to whom the mystic hours of sleep are the hours in which the spirit claims the supremacy, and with a companionable confidence, more than half turns the bright side of the lantern of eternal life to our view, affording gleams of light, and beauty, and power, otherwise hidden from the soul.

After the senses have been *cottoned* into quiet, and the needful checks applied to the brain locomotive, we are ourselves—we are in our own true sphere, and that sphere has its juxtaposition with others akin to itself. *Spiritual essences, high or low, good or bad, instantly recognize their fellow,* and hence arise the different experiences of dreams. When we awake we bring back to the world the impressions of our nightly companionships in spirit-land—we bear with us our own sphere, with its good or evil hail fellows; and we can no more escape these than we can lay aside our own identity. We ought to know, by our sleep observation, exactly what spirit we are of—whether our souls have any size or not to them—whether they are out and out large, active, beautiful and harmonious, or only the very babies of soul land, mere dwarfs in the spiritual; embryotic, undeveloped punies, hardly worth a resurrection; poor, meagre weaklings, unescaped from bib and tucker, with great thick lips and blubber cheeks, and piggish eyes, and dumpy legs, the very toads of the spirit. We ought to know if this be the case with us, because the inference is strongly confirmative, if we have no dreams. We ought to know, too, by the nature of these, whether

we are in the chaotic transition state of human development, or are evolving ourselves beautifully, and in harmony with permanent good. We ought to know whether our sphere centres in heaven or hell, for we are in one or the other, and it is well to know which it is.

The old astrologers believed that evil spirits had great power in sleep, and a passionate fondness for beautiful women, whom they caressed sleeping; and filled their fancies with voluptuous images, to which belief Milton probably referred, when he represents Satan breathing into the ear of Eve luxurious melody, and unholy desires, for the forbidden tree—he, “squat like a toad,” and fanning her brow with the breath of the infernals. The suggestion is a startling one, and accords with the injunction—“keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” The welling fountain may send forth streams to mingle with high and holy essences, or streams that shall commingle with those from less consecrated regions.

Did the pre-Adamite men and women sleep? Did they dream? I think not. Or no otherwise than the horse or the dog dreams, they being more elementary men and women, distinguished by sex merely. To dream well, one must be alone: there is a neutralizing of the divine essence where another head is busied with its angel on the same pillow. Hence, the all-importance that the husband and wife should be entirely congenial: for if they do not move in the same sphere, that of each will be either neutralized, or so jumbled up and confused, as to bar the joyous action of the true spirit. A kind of ward-

ership is established by which neither enters freely its own domain, but is met at the gate by a sort of sleep sentry, who demands why these two, who venture to lay their heads upon the same pillow, are wandering so far apart in shadow land, and they are each ashamed and fearful to go out; and so they return to the body and either dream not at all, or dream of what they have been about all day, and fret over what has before fretted them too much, and revive useless conferences and every day images, quite to the detriment and starvation of the soul.

It will be seen how all-important, in dream-land, are harmonious relations in life. When this is not the case, the husband or wife, whichever may be pure minded or endowed best with the gifts of the spiritual, will find him or her bewildered, and hindered, and obstructed in dream-out-going by the material sphere of his or her companion, which is, in effect, *a wall of imprisonment*. Where gross evils, uncharitableness, envyings, strifes, hypocrisies, exist, legions of blackness block the way of egress, and fill the unhappy night companion with terrors.

Adam, alone in Paradise, slept, and Eve was *his* dream. Milton says that Eve slept, and the serpent was *hers*, "squat like a toad" close to her ear. Alas! for the sad change from the solitary dreamer of Eden, when Eve was conceived, and the wild waste of earth, with its wearisome companionships, and the tree of knowledge guarded with the serpent stings of unsatisfied yearnings!

The spirit needs no sleep; what death is to the body, sleep would be to the soul. It finds its Sabbath,

which is rest, when it reposes upon some great and beautiful thought; when it has reached some companionship nearest its higher elements; when it finds itself in some atmosphere akin to its nature, and it breathes and glows in loveliness like the blossom of the field, too ineffably content even to need a voice. We may imagine the spiritual being laying down its material companion tenderly to slumber, withdrawing itself gently from the exhausted receptacle, and rejoicing in its freedom from the frettings of daily life; while itself, needless of repose, goes out into new and untried spheres, filling its urn at divine fountains, lighting the torch of its existence in the glories of the Infinite Source; holding its companionship with undying affinities, and enlarging itself by ranging through illimitable space.

Once, during a period of suffering, I must have remained soul-conscious from the moment of sleeping. I was then, as I often am, aware of the process of sleep, its coming on, and the fading away of consciousness. Ideas commingled, and I felt a sensation of pain in the region of the heart; a sense of dread, as it were, pervading the nerves, as if they shrank from a power which they could not resist. I think this state is not unlike death. It is always so distinctly defined, I am almost lost; then rouse myself, as if in opposition to some state which appals me, and then am gone. Death's twin brother has the ascendant. At the time of which I am speaking, I thought I raised my body up gently, and laid it in a grave that seemed ready for it; I smoothed the turf down or-

derly with a vague feeling that blossoms would grow therefrom, and then stood, the only mourner over my poor self, weeping bitterly. The impression was so vivid that I awoke before my soul could start upon its journey.

A DREAM.

I dreamed last night, that I myself did lay
Within the grave, and after stood and wept :
My spirit sorrowed where its ashes slept !
'Twas a strange dream, and yet methinks it may
Prefigure that which is akin to truth.
How sorrow we o'er perished dreams of youth,
High hopes and aspirations doomed to be
Crushed and o'ermastered by earth's destiny !
Fame, that the spirit loathing turns to ruth ;—
And that deluding faith so loath to part,
That earth will shrine for us one kindred heart !
Oh, 'tis the ashes of such things that wring
Tears from the eyes—hopes like to these depart,
And we bow down in dread o'ershadowed by death's wing !

Chapter Second.

"The things that day most minds, by night do most appear."—SPENSER.

I really am ashamed of the poverty of my dreams.—CHARLES LAMB.

Nay oft in dream's invention we bestow
To change a flounce or add a furbelow.—POPE.

Ah me, for pity! what a dream was here.—SHAKESPEARE.

Kitchen dreams—Influence of Inferior Ghosts upon Dreams—The Rapping Spirits—
Confessio

PERHAPS the majority of people in the world make such a medley of life, that they are mere fragments of humanities, the disjecta membra of men and women, never brought into any one, harmonious order of existence. We do not know where to find them when awake, and in sleep they are mere ignus fatui. It may be suspected that they will need be sent back to this world or some other, in some shape or other, till they may become consolidated into entire creations. They are oppressed with vagaries and weak or wicked conceits, and we look wonderingly upon them, unable to receive their flimsy, shallow manifestations into favor as representatives of any aspect of our race. We suspect they must have been born before their time, and never freed entirely from the pre-existent fishy, or amphibious preparatory state.

These dream only of subordinate, or intermediate objects. Their spirits, in sleep, infest marshes and pools, and see misty lakes, and huge serpents, fleas, and toads, and reptiles in all shapes; they never rise into the blue empyrean; never behold the mountain way and the denizens of the wilderness, nor the shadowy veils of supernal inhabitants.

They are imps of the kitchen, or drawing-room at most; and, if any spirit answers to their sphere, it must be those of unclaimed and disaffected ghosts, who, having no substance within themselves, out of which to compound a spiritual body, wander about church-yards, or haunt the localities where they enacted old crimes, or lived frivolous and disjointed lives. It is probable spirits of this kind infested the house of the elder Wesley, rattling the kettles of the cook, and knocking mysteriously in various parts of the domain. It may be that these uneasy spirits hoped to find relief from the better atmosphere they perceived about the dwelling; might have hoped to be "clothed upon," in their weak state, formless and naked, and thus be admitted into some sphere.

It may be that the spirits called the Rappers, if such exist, and I am unwilling to treat human testimony with such contempt as to reject them altogether, belong to this class. They are in, what Dante would call Limbo, driven to and fro, perturbed and lonely, These eagerly question the finer spirits, who pass through their realm on their way to higher spheres, of all the gossip that used to interest them on earth. But, inasmuch as the companionship of these people was in no way desirable while they lived in this world,

they become less so when separated from the body. They are the gossips of ghost land, poor, frivolous, flimsy wretches, who receive the shreds of thought here, and the shadows only of thought in the spirit world, *for all thought has a body and a substance* as it were to itself, so that we say a thought may be grasped in anticipation of the fact hereafter; hence, thought finding no opportunity for lodgment in these thin poor spirits, floats right through them. They have a restless desire for tangibility, and are perpetually trying to command material objects in a way to make themselves known.

We find in this world a class who do not dream, and yet who should not be regarded with distrust, notwithstanding the failure. They are persons of good health, and active habits, and well-balanced bodies, to whom existence by itself is a blessing. They realize the night comfort, denied to the miserable Macbeth when he exclaimed, "the Innocent sleep." They yield themselves joyously to the drowsy god, resigning to temporary oblivion their well cared for earthly tabernacles with an unctuous content, at once confiding and refreshing. These never remember their dreams, though dreaming all the time, for they

"Do God's will and know it not."

They awake with a new life, conscious only of wandering through interminable scenes of grace and beauty, ravished by sweet sounds, and fanned by breezes softer than those of Araby.

I belong to neither of these. As a child I used to

lay my head upon my pillow with an earnest expectancy. The sleep world was a vast, a peopled, and beautiful realm, into which I entered as an inmate. I used to wonder that other children would devour cakes and pies after having experienced the pains of illness, or the horrors of bad dreams from that cause. I, with the most dainty perceptions, never felt even tempted to repeat such an experience. Sleep gave me a sensation of terror, when unattended by dreams, even in early life. For to me it was full of images, often too vast for my infantile soul. Huge mountains, piled in solitary grandeur, towered forever around me, and shadows, floating like dense banners, were flecked with light, and gave place to rainbows, and stars and moons. I do not remember to have dreamed of the sun. *I seemed myself in light always, without knowing the source from which it came.*

I can recall now vividly the awe with which I used to pray before sinking into that state, and how I used to wonder if it was right to pray the good Father for pleasant dreams. Indeed, I was often puzzled to know how to call this sleeping experience, grotesque and disjointed, I found it to be in my companions, but with me consistent, solemn, and earnest. I used to wonder "if I did not go heaven" in my sleep, and yet never dared to ask the opinion of my friends, lest they should think me ill, or desirous to appear what I was not, for I was sensitively alive to a shadow of pretension on my own part, holding back the best impulses of my being, lest untruth or the love of approval should have a part in them.

I used to dream of joyous shapes floating in the air, which were angels to me. I must have started very early in life the heresy, that angels have no wings, because these creatures had none in my sleep. These did not speak to me, but looked lovingly upon me, and I would clasp my hands with such fervency of desire to be worthy of their companionship, that I often awoke in tears. I grew shy when others talked of dreams, lest I should be called upon to describe my world of visions, which then I felt would be a desecration. I am confident one reason why children dread being alone in the dark, is owing to the huge shapes, and vague impressions of unfamiliar scenes brought to the mind in the process of dreaming. It is cruel to compel them to darkness where this is the case. I have no doubt many a child might trace the morbid action of his faculties to an undue severity upon this ground. "Truly the light is good, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun."

For myself I needed no indulgence on this score. I was a courageous child, delighting in the mystical, and confidently expecting some revelation, longing for a mission such as came to the child Samuel—bending my ear to listen, and ready to say, "speak Lord." *I often heard my own name called*, both by day and night,—and found upon inquiry, that no one had spoken to me. I learned to clasp my hands, waiting and longing for the revelation, which should follow the invocation. As life wore on, and the actual presence was withheld, I redoubled my little fasts, and was more earnest in my prayers that I might be ac-

counted worthy, I inflicted childish penances upon myself, all to no purpose. Dreams of rare, significance I had indeed, and day-dreams of grandeur and beauty too deep for any utterance—poetry in its manifold forms came to my mind's eye, but unearthly shapes, to these strange voices were not vouchsafed.

I used to dream of being poised in space, surrounded with a gray atmosphere, which gave back neither object nor voice. I felt a weird pleasure in this pulseless kind of being; so aimless, silent, but yet full of unearthly rest, for I was a sensitive child, so acute in my perceptions that thoughts were so many pains, and joy and grief had a magnitude disproportioned to my years. They err, who say childhood is the happiest period of life; I am sure, that to me, with all the joyousness of my nature, my sense of suffering was so poignant, that even now it pains me to recall the remembrance. Intense happiness as well as intense suffering, had no external manifestation with me. I was still, and silent, and often have fainted without the utterance of a word, while the shades of feeling were so many showers of smiles or tears; hence, the comfort of this recurring dream of silence and eternal rest, with the consciousness of existence, free from all frettings, and holding every wearied faculty in abeyance.

As I grew older and my undeveloped reason was filled with perpetual questionings, and a conscience morbidly alive to the shadows of an evil, became oppressed with unchild-like dread, my dreams were changed into a more vivid character. I would find myself in a world of such glowing beauty and happiness in my sleep, that I confidently asserted my right

to heaven, and my claims to goodness from the character of my dreams. Bred in the strictest Calvinistic school, this self-righteous spirit was severely rebuked, but I boldly asserted, that if God condemned me to eternal punishment, when I so much desired to be good, and when I did nothing I knew to be evil, he would be not only unjust but cruel. Here was a polemic of six years, roused to antagonism, and suffering all the terrors of the law, not one of whose prohibitions I had ever dreamed of violating. Falseness in any way seemed so unworthy a little lady, that I hardly reckoned the most transparent truth as a virtue; wilful indeed was I, but not obstinate, and so courageous in my moral sense, that a thousand punishments would not have tempted me to the concealment of a wrong. A spirit of audacious fun might prompt to mischief, or the defence of a weaker child, make me violent, but then I prayed so fervently over my misdemeanors, over my errors of temper or short comings in duty, that I was quite certain that God would not only forgive me, but love me—for my childish logic ran in this wise—"If everybody that knows me, loves me, notwithstanding my many mistakes, surely God, who sees right into my heart and knows how I love goodness, will love me also."

I was warned in every shape against this self-righteousness, till my whole little being became chaotic; for I obstinately adhered to the assertion, that "I was a good child, and ought to go to heaven, and that if I did not go there, it would be an injustice." At this time I had a terrific dream; I recollect a baby brother was sleeping with me, and I hugged him closely, for

some one had told me that the evil spirits were tempting me, and that was the reason I thought so hardly of God's laws. I dreamed of being in a "faire countrie," with all that was light and joyous about me, when suddenly a grave severe personage, looked me in the face and said, "this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Suddenly every little misdemeanor, every unkind word, every piece of harmless mischief seemed to rise up before me like so many accusing spirits; indeed they were spirits, I thought, actual shapes, that barred the way to a golden gate, over the top of which I could see a faint gleam of ravishing beauty. I awoke in a torrent of tears, and now felt indeed as if shut out from heaven. So great was my distress, that it cost me a fit of illness, the cause of which I dared tell no one, lest they should know how very evil I felt I must be in the sight of God.

After this I was a long time too miserable to dream, but I fell into another state, with which dreamers are sometimes haunted; a state either of the mind or body, by which figures, not altogether human, stand before me, or if the state be less perfect, float in the air; these were not a procession of shadows merely, such as Locke describes, changing like the colors of a kaleidoscope; but forms perfect in themselves, often stationary for a length of time, and so palpable that I recognized their recurrence as *shadowy acquaintances*. Sometimes these images were inconceivably frightful; enormous glittering creatures with fiery eyes, and armed to the teeth, stood regarding me fixedly, while I looked on, with a not unpleased terror. We had an attend-

ant in the family, who was a perfect black letter-book, full of traditions of ghosts, and fairies, and men who had sold themselves for lucre to the Father of Evil. At this time I had not read Milton, but one lofty creature that seemed to fill the space of my little room, cold, still and erect, I firmly believed to be Satan himself. I became accustomed to this shape, and though not clearly defined, it impressed me with majesty; while an army of impish looking spirits, with distorted eyes and lolling tongues, overcame me, not only with terror but mortification. I had fallen from the dignity of Lucifer and was given over to mean, under-strapping devils, I imagined.

I began to contrive plots for getting into heaven, quite in a mean and cowardly manner, of which I subsequently grew ashamed. I had conceived of a sort of Jacob's ladder, up which the spirits of people were continually ascending to the golden gate—their long white robes floated loosely, and the angels helped them from bar to bar—I being a very little one, and always expecting to die a child, used to think I could smuggle myself up under the shadow of these long robes, and when I came to the portal, the angels seeing what a poor trembling child I was, who did not mean evil, *would not have the heart to turn me away.*

I read the miracles of Jesus at this time with great care, especially where he casts out evil spirits, and came to the solemn conviction that I was given over to the powers of darkness to be tempted for a while, but was quite sure I should overcome, for I prayed day and night for deliverance; and yet I am sure I felt a wild delight in these visitations; a curious child-

pleasure in contrasting these hideous images with the lovely and graceful ones, that peered in the midst of them, and which I believed were my good angels helping me in the conflict. I had nearly despaired of going to heaven myself, although I felt too proud to talk about it, and was ashamed to let anybody know what an evil-haunted child I was; but I redoubled my intercessions, for everybody I loved, or did not love, and used to imagine them all entering the beautiful gate of which I had dreamed, while it was to be shut upon me. I was calm in this conviction, thinking if it was so to be, it was useless to distress others by letting them know my state; yet with the inconsistency which time does not eradicate in any of us, I used to take a sort of savage comfort in thinking how badly, my friends, who loved me so much, would feel when they reached heaven, not to find me there.

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, now gave a coloring to my dreams; I had read the book of the Martyrs, and suffered all kinds of daily and nightly tortures on its account—had practiced severe penances, run needles into my flesh, burnt my fingers, and even drawn a blister for the sake of protracted suffering, merely to assure myself that I could endure all things with constancy where I had some great principle at stake. I was sorely puzzled to make up my little creed, but "faith in God, and in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer," were fixed points. That the death of the latter could insure the salvation of men, I thought perfectly natural; still more so, that he should die from *love*. That part of religion impressed me with the most profound and beautiful emotions. I could comprehend it I

thought, because it seemed natural to die for one that we loved; for I had quietly abandoned the ground, that our sins enhanced in the least the magnitude of sacrifice: because men were so weak, and knew so very little, I thought that God must pity and love them, just as I did those who injured me, and were unkind to me ignorantly; or were in that state of mind that they couldn't see how I loved, and prayed for everybody, especially for those who were evil in their nature. I was quite sure the more wicked one was, the more pitiful God must feel, and the more he would try to save him. I used to have an indistinct feeling that I was greatly loved by the celestials, but that I must renounce my consciousness of being good before they would assure me to that effect; but as I could not *honestly* abandon the belief, I was patient in waiting to see what would come of it, and devoted myself with great zeal in the meanwhile to the salvation of others. I became quite a supernumerary conscience to my playmates; settling casuistic points in the most solemn manner, and keeping a sharp watch upon their state, that I might know when my own prayers were most needed.

In my sleep at this time, I was toilsome and oppressed. Little children about me told of dreaming of dogs, and fruits, and new clothes; and going to banquets, and having great triumphs in the shape of school-girl erudition and juvenile rivalships. I was obliged to keep my dreams to myself, believing them to be so much an indication of the real state of the soul, that it was better not to grieve my friends by letting them into its secrets. They were all vast,

shadowy, supernatural, weighing upon my spirits with a mystical kind of awe. When these assumed a palpable shape, I was relieved and joyous for a while; and yet, child as I was, found myself feeling poor and circumscribed if these images were long withheld. A baby brother died about this time, and I remember how earnestly and sadly I speculated upon his fate—how I used to sleep in the fervent hope he would come to me in dreams. He never did, and I used to have strange questionings as to whether, when he was such a little one, he might not have been caught on his way to heaven by some evil spirit, and that was why I did not see him in sleep; and then I used to pray that God would find him, and take care of him, and love him. I used to wonder how the sun could shine, and the birds sing, when perhaps his dear, sweet little soul might be suffering. It looked strange to me to see people eat and go on in the world as they did, when everything was gloomy and stood still, as it were, to me. I used to go out and think of the moon shining upon his little grave, so cold, still, such a sad change from our warm room. I let the snow and the rain chill me, because he was chilled; and wept myself ill again and again, and yet did not see him in my sleep. It seemed as if the whole universe was changed, and become black and miserable, and that after all, people do not live after they left this world. I dared not express this skepticism, because it grew out of my dreams, an experience I rarely intrusted to any ear.

How little do people know of the mind of a child!

How little is its world, self-created, understood! There is such a clear, quiet rejection as false, of all that is beyond its comprehension; while it frames to itself a state perfectly consistent and harmonious. Childrens' questionings mean much more, too, than they are supposed; it is a mistake to be always putting children into shape, as if the good Father would not look after the needs of the spirit he has made. I remember the grave answers of a child of six years, to whom I had been pointing out some of the constellations, which led to a talk upon the Infinite and Eternal.

He held my hands firmly, lest a thread of his childish logic should be lost. "Now," he says, "I believe in God, because we can think of him; and I believe we have souls, though we can't see them, because we can't see a thought, and yet we know what it is; and our souls must live after our bodies die, because there is nothing in them to die, any more than in a thought; but, oh dear, dear, (and here his tears gushed to his relief), if *it is a suck in, what a dreadful suck in*, it must be."

The child had exhausted his spiritual vocabulary, and was obliged to find expression in the language of the play-ground; but how full of far-reaching thought must the child have been, to evolve such depth of feeling!

To resume—my sleep at this time helped me in a variety of ways. I used to read my school exercises over night, and in the morning I rarely failed to know them perfectly. Indeed, it must be confessed, I have always trusted much to aid in this way; whatever

has worried or perplexed me I have confidently looked to dreamland for elucidation. Once having some favorite plants, which became infested with aphides, I was greatly troubled to get rid of them. One night I dreamed I was watering my plants with an infusion of wormwood, which entirely destroyed these insects. I tried the experiment, and, as I believe, with success. But I think the deeper lesson that came to me was, that the *bitter*, or "herbs of grace," are exempt from these sweet-loving epicures—they spread forth their strong, healthful, and cleanly branches, to the sun and air, unmolested by any but the poor invalid, to whom they are a life-giving need. Then to him they grow beautiful, while my roses and geraniums, beautiful to all eyes, attract, not only me, but instincts of a lower order. Loving, fading, illusive, are they; while "herbs of grace" honestly present their bitter aspect, and leave nothing to deplore. A blessing on the roses, nevertheless; one can afford to bear the pain of their thorns for the sake of their delights.

Chapter Third.

We wandered, underneath the young grey down,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;

* * * *

And there was more, which I remember not.—SHELLY.

Confessions continued—Soul State prefigured—Prophetic Dreams—The Body of the
Resurrection—The Grief Child.

THE spiritualism of Bunyan affected me strongly at this period. I remember, too, having read at this time "Allen's Appeal to the Unconverted," feeling all the time that the fervent cry of exhortation could not mean a case like mine, yet it exhorted to a something of desirable attainment, and I was only terrified lest I should fail to secure it; and so I used to pray that I might be converted, if I was not already so, and dreamed of being in search of something, the exact nature of which I was not able to define; but it was a great and wearisome work, up toilsome ways, and through sad and solitary paths.

Never did poor Christian carry a heavier burden than I struggled under in my sleep. Gradually this disappeared, and I was forever wandering alone through strange scenes, and seeking some mystic good,

not very clearly revealed to my mind. Then this state of dreaming changed, and I began with toilsome labor to ascend high mountains. This was a great comfort to me. I associated it with the City set on a Hill, and now I felt assured there was no wrong in the disposition I felt to look at the dogmas presented to me, and make up my own estimate of the amount of truth they contained; for did not the action of my soul in sleep show I was going upward and onward? I longed to sleep, that I might realize more vividly this noble tendency. I dreamed of singing hymns, and hearing music steal from amid the hills, and when I sometimes lost the way, majestic beings took me by the hand and led me onward.

At one time I found myself on the shores of a great lake. It was nearly dark, and my way was across. I could see no boat nor conveyance of any kind. At length I discerned three causeways, one leading to the right, one to the left, and one straight onward. The right and left paths were filled with people very joyous, and I could discern trees and flowers, and music; while the central path was so narrow that it was barely a foot-path—barren, forlorn, and apparently without end. This path I took, and was advancing slowly on my lonely way—weak, terrified, and weeping—when the guide, of whom I so often dreamed, took my hand gently, and led me on till I came to where the path diverged again to the right and left, with the same narrow causeway stretching across the waste, when I found myself again alone. The two other ways were filled, as before, with happy people and pleasing objects; but once more I took the straight

path, and again my calm, silent, unfailing guide took me by the hand and led me onward, till a third time the path diverged, and I was left to my own unbiased choice in the way before me. I grew weary and faint, yet my steps sought once more the narrow causeway, and again my calm guide took me by the hand, till a vista of glory and beauty dazzled my eyes, and I awoke, repeating, "Turn neither to the right hand nor the left."

This personage, with whom I became so conversant in my sleep, I always associated with my father, who died while I was a mere infant, believing him to be the spirit sent to lead me onward—and thus my filial reverence grew into a sublime religious emotion. Dreams like these wear the aspect of invention, and sound like allegories, yet they were not such to me; but I regarded them as facts in my internal life, indications of the state of my soul. It would fill volumes to record my experience in this way. I visited foreign countries, became familiar with all the wonders of architecture throughout the world; the Pyramids of Egypt, and the ruins of Thebes, *seen always by moonlight*, as if the great shadows of ages had invested them with a moony atmosphere into which I wandered. I went to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and saw the vast multitude of bones bleaching in the sun; and there I saw a beautiful marble obelisk, with a pretty rivulet flowing beside it; this was the pillar which Absalom was said to have set up.

At length I dreamed of being in a great storm; the road was obstructed with fallen trees; I was alone and

drenched with rain. It was pitch dark, and I could hear the roar of the river over which my way led, as if it had burst its bounds. I struggled onward, led by faint gleams of light, till I came to a bridge. The foaming torrent had risen above it, and I grew doubtful whether it was not entirely carried away; but I went resolutely onward, till at length I saw that the centre of the bridge was gone, the river sweeping unobstructed through. There was nothing left for me but to go onward, as I felt the whole fabric sinking beneath me. I plunged into the stream, when instantly I found myself on the opposite shore, where the loveliest light was diffused, and green trees cast pleasant shadows upon hill sides, and flowers were the earth, and perfume the air. I went delightedly onward, saying, "there are shadows in heaven," and feeling blessed at the idea, and thinking to myself there is no dust here; for the scene wore an aspect of ineffable freshness and beauty.

Then I came to a great white palace, which seemed to extend column beyond column as far as the eye could reach, and these were festooned with vines, and lovely with flowers. The texture of these columns arrested my attention by their pure translucency, and I clasped my hands around them, striving in vain to think what they were akin to upon earth. I thought of alabaster and pearl, and opaque gems, but nothing satisfied the conception.

I ascended the steps and walked onward, with the soft air stirring around me, when suddenly I beheld a joyous group approaching, and recognized the dear ones who had gone before me to the world of spirits.

After this I grew tranquil in regard to my spiritual state, and felt quite safe in the little heresies I was supposed to have adopted, for I was confident I had seen heaven.

How tame and ineffective seems our written poetry to that of our dreams, when the breathing becomes melodious, and the internal meanings of words grow into the most beautiful and profound utterance! A dreamer of poetry can never be filled with conceit at his own manifestations in that branch of art, because the poems of the "Night Watches" are infinitely beyond anything he can grasp in his waking hours, when the whole soul seems to swell and undulate in melody, and his words glow with the inspirations of supernal spheres, and he vies with the infinite in creative beauty.

Often in our dreams we lay hold of clearer demonstrations in regard to our soul-nature, more vivid, profound, accordant, than we should have reached by any and the hardest labor of deduction.

At one time I thought I had just died, and was undergoing the resurrection. I did not dream of being apart from myself, and yet I could see myself as one sees an object removed from him; I did not look into a glass, nor water, nor any transparent object, and yet I saw myself in the same way. The first thing that arrested my attention after death was my improved looks, so much more beautiful than I had conceived human beings could look; then I observed the skin, the texture of which was like the finest and whitest net-work; next the nerves, a perfect

forest of them, but beautiful in themselves, like threads of pearl; next I saw the bones, and these were of the purest ivory. Palpable as these parts were, they were exquisitely beautiful to the eye, and made up a floating, transparent, white shape, affecting me with a sense of pleasure; but within all these—breathing, and diffused through all, and making up the solidness of what here, in this world, is flesh and blood, for I saw none in my dream—was a rosy light that seemed to live of itself, and imparting completeness to the whole body. I was repeating, when I awoke, “we shall not *all* die, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

Awake, with *malice prepense*, we should not have put together a spiritual anatomy in this way, all in harmony, complete, and yet beautiful, without wings, naked, and yet unconscious as the inmates of Eden when they walked in their innocence before God; we should have tried in vain to imagine the pure immaterial body analogous to this, on earth, and yet fit for the saints in light.

Virgil's description of the unhappy Dido bearing the pangs of her desertion into dreamland, and wandering through lonely and difficult paths, is full of pathos. Then too the queenly air with which she turns proudly away from the recreant lover, bearing into the world of spirits the sense of injury, is so suggestively true to some continuity, that we wonder where the fine old heathen picked up his sentimentality.

Every one who has read Jane Eyre will remember the author's description of Jane, wandering, desolate

and stricken, through her weary dreams, bearing a child in her arms, which she could not lay aside, but carried on, though faint with fatigue. The whole scene has that genuine stamp that could come only through the author's own experience. The superstition is old, and almost universal, that to dream of carrying a child in your arms is portentous of grief, and grief coming through the affections. So often has this dream preceded some calamity, that I have learned to look tenderly upon my Grief Child, as I call it, and even in sleep to recognize its face, and caress it mournfully. The Grief Child, borne in the bosom, before the climax of external sorrow, has grown dear to me, with its white, sweet face half veiled in clustering locks, wavy but not curling, with strange, unearthly eyes, fixed half mournfully upon mine; and clinging to me with a sorrowful tenacity, as if it owed its brief existence to my destiny, and dreaded to be cast off. Once I dreamed of carrying my Grief Child to the baptism, up the long aisles of a cathedral, moving slowly to the music of a dirge. At the altar I met — bearing a Grief Child also. Holy water was sprinkled upon their faces, and we gave the children our own names, both of us weeping bitterly. When these names were pronounced they were strange, and yet sweet sounding words which dreamed were the celestial meanings of our own. I have since tried in vain to recall the words, but they are lost to me.

THE GRIEF CHILD,

Two stood before an altar : in a land
Made up of shadowy dreams, and many tears,

Emotions counting ages not fleet years,
And there, in old Cathedral, hand in hand,
Amid deep peeling anthems from a band
Of unseen chanters, which the spirit hears,
Each with a burdened breast the altar nears;
Gleams of commingled angels round them stand,
As each, for its baptismal water, bears
A Grief Child, pale, and hushed, and weirdly sweet,
Long nursed in secret, now to God resigned.
All self-renounced, they kneel with holy prayers
And lay the fair Grief Child at Jesus' feet,
Then to their Earth-Task wend with willing mind.

Chapter Fourth.

Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality,
And dreams in their development have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy ;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking toils ;
They pass like spirits of the past—they speak
Like Sibyls of the future.—BYRON.

Byron—Congested Brain—Gunshot Wound—Socrates--Wisdom is Music—Milton's
--Sonnet Prayer—A Decision

BYRON must have been a most magnificent dreamer. Much of his poetry is evidently drawn from the fevered action of his sleep-life ; the wild, passionate dreaming of a spirit hardly able to separate his dream-life from the actual. It affects me always like one of my own, too vivid, intense visions, that, like miraculous food, carries me on in the strength of it through long periods of suffering.

It was pitiless to meet the o'er-burdened sensitiveness of Byron with the stale saws of common-life—the child of the whirlwind and rocked in the tempest, must be adjudged by the laws of the fiery elements, not by those of ordinary mortals. His life was one long fervid dream ; for he lived ages in his few years, centuries of emotion, and eternities of suffering.

It would be a nice question for a physician to determine the point of sanity in some cases of over dream-action. The little girl, so often cited by phrenologists who, by some accident of the head, had a portion of the skull removed, thus exposing the pulsations of the brain, was an active dreamer, and when these were vivid the brain swelled under the injured part, almost protruding through the membrane, and then subsiding, just in proportion as her visions were more or less vivid. I do not like to admit that dreams may be caused by a congested state of the brain, although this must be the occasion of some species of dreams. It is well known that persons in drowning, but who have survived the peril, attest to the vivid action of memory after all consciousness of suffering had ceased. I have heard my mother relate often the experience of my father in this way, who came very near death, but was eventually restored. He said everything in his past life, the most important as well as the more trivial, came back fresh to his memory—clear and distinct as when the events occurred in life, with this difference—he saw it all before him, knew it was his own experience, *but was divested of any emotion in regard to it.* He felt neither pleasure nor pain, satisfaction nor regret—they were simple facts again brought into notice, even the child-mischief with all the old localities painted, as it were, upon the soul. One scene was that in which he saw himself and brothers out behind the barn, singing some songs of a more hilarious and rampant character than the strict observances of Puritanic life would justify.

Sir John Barrow records a like experience, all the events of his life being thus vividly reproduced: but afterwards having fainted from a gun-shot wound, he was subject to no such phenomenon. To me, it seems obvious, that in the one case there was congestion of the brain, the blood acting as a stimulant, (and this does not in the least lessen the singularity of the fact, does not make it in the least less wonderful), and in the other the blood was suddenly *drained* from the brain, depriving it of even ordinary stimulant. In some dreams it is probable the brain may be in a state analogous to one or other of the states described in drowning, or in the prostration of the gun-shot wound. But in drowning no faculty seemed to have been imparted except that of *reminiscence*, and a very small portion of our dreams belong to this order.

I apprehend Wordsworth dreams little—Shelley is full of dreams—the very Ariel of Poets, breathing of ambrosia and the thin atmosphere of his shadowy Asia and Panthea, and lost at the golden gates like his own sky lark; beautiful himself, and loving the beautiful, unlike his Sensitive Plant.

“It desires, what it has not, the beautiful.”

The dreams of Coleridge and De Quincey, after all, are not of any value as psychological phenomena, from the fact that they were produced by stimulants, and were therefore a partial congestion of the brain. It is true, in the case of those remarkable men there must have been wonderful compass of brain, which the stimulant put into action; this becomes obvious when we compare it with the beautiful, but more

limited construction of Lamb, whose quaint but honest admission, "I am ashamed of the poverty of my dreams," brings the man so very near to the common heart. But then, Lamb must have schooled himself not to dream, must have dreaded any extraordinary action of the brain, as too nearly allied to the dreadful disease that hung like a gorgon head to terrify his sensitive nerves. Alas! Lamb's life was too terribly real to admit of the luxury of dreams.

The ancients believed that morning dreams were from Apollo, and therefore prophetic. Hence, Socrates, condemned to die, awaited in prison the return of the sacred ship from Delos, which would be the signal for his execution. "It will arrive to-morrow, when you must die," exclaimed one of his friends. "I shall not die so soon," answered Socrates, "for so I conjecture from a dream *I had this morning*. I thought I saw a very handsome, comely woman, clad in white, who, calling me by name, said, 'In three days thou shalt be in the fruitful Phthia.'"

Again, Socrates said, "all my life I have had dreams, which recommended the same things to me, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another. 'Socrates,' they said, 'apply yourself to music:' this I took for a simple exhortation for me pursue *wisdom*, which has been the study of my life, and is the most perfect *music*."

Milton has given us a beautiful evidence of the vividness of his dreams, which he thought not unworthy to be thrown into one of his exquisite Sonnets; and there it stands harping a-down the centuries, a beautiful psychological testimony, and a lovely monu-

ment to a most lovely woman, or Milton would never thus have recorded this evidence of soul-companionship.

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son for her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heav'n without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face, with more delight.
But O, as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

The visions of Jacob Behman and Swedenborg are classed by some minds as akin to, if not altogether the action of an insane element, while others rank them as reveries or dreams. Whether we accept their views as revelations or not, this mode of meeting minds of such an extraordinary cast is certainly weak and unjust. Few thinkers of any age have been able to pile up arguments at such length, and sustain them with such coherency as the latter of these writers; and where this is the case, the class of men, who admit the authority of Shakspeare in matters of less moment, should allow his judgment weight in regard to the great mystic.

"It is not madness,
That I have uttered: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will reword; which madness
Would gambol from."

We must look upon these men as creatures distinct and entire, and holding a higher relation to certain kinds of truths than men of ordinary construction. It is probable that many of us are conscious of intervals in which our organization acts in a manner analogous to theirs, but which we are not willing to accept as revelations. We reject and cast aside, struggle against these, fearful and doubting, and the consequence is, if our self-will is more urgent than the revelation, we sink into deeper darkness; if the revelation be great, and our worldliness greater, insanity supervenes and ends the struggle. Few dare to look cordially and manfully at these intimations of the spirit, which, if accepted, may remove them in some degree from human sympathy.

I remember at one time to have been greatly exercised upon the subject of prayer. A sense, well nigh bordering upon disgust, came over me at listening to the smooth common-place complaisant petitions of the pulpit, sometimes aimed *at* the congregation, and sometimes mere specimens of rhetoric; while the earnest, fervid, but often irregular prayers of some minds seemed to be in full accordance with human needs. I debated much in my own mind, and then settled down into the belief that a *passive reciprocity* was the desirable state; that to hold the whole soul subject to the will of the Infinite, without any eclecticism of desire

either in regard to the goods or the evils of life, was the true and acceptable frame of mind. I thought much upon this and fell into a state; I did not sleep nor dream, I was not unconscious, but the state was beyond myself.

I seemed to be in the midst of a great mass of people—an infinite number of all ages—we moved steadily and tranquilly forward; there was neither jostling nor noise, nor depression, nor joy, but a calm, not unpleasing, and yet it grew terrible to myself. I felt as if I might suffocate; I looked upon every side and saw the mass of heads, and each free, passive, content, and yet *aimless* in look. The more I realized this repose of soul, which seemed nearly ideal to me, the more deadening did it become, and I suddenly cried out, "Oh God deliver me from this terrible doom." Instantly I arose head and shoulders above the mass, and the vistas opened into gleams of ravishing beauty. I had but a glimpse when a voice said, "this is prayer," and the whole scene changed.

Now I could not have been over a moment in this state, I knew by what transpired around me, and yet I seemed to have passed through ages of experience, I had time for every shade of emotion.

Chapter Fifth.

Of the great multitude of Dreams which are, for the most part, confused and unmeaning, some occasionally stand out from the rest, extremely clear and well-connected, in which the feelings *oftentimes discover a profound significance.*—SCHLEGEL'S PHIL. & LIFE.

A Beautiful Vision—Face Expression—Daniel Webster—Oliver Cromwell—The Unfulfilled Mission—My Dream Foe.

I HAVE said that visions, for I know not what else to call them,—nothing can come from nothing—are not infrequent. I remember a clerical friend related to me an experience of his own, somewhat akin to the one I have related in the last chapter; but more beautifully significant. I would give the name, but am not sure that he is willing to be identified with experiences of the kind, although the claims of the mystical and spiritual are a very urgent part of his character, being allied, as it is, to a high poetic temperament.

He was not sleeping, nor ill, when he fell into what might be called the trance condition. He seemed to be moving onward with a vast and silent multitude but I did not understand that he was disaffected or pained at the uniform and steady progress of the mass. With an instinctive action he *looked up*, and

beheld a mass of beings *above the heads* of those in the midst of whom he moved, advancing in the same manner. As he looked up, the being above his own head said to him, "*You have waked up*: there is not one in ten thousand that does so."

This was very significant; and one so favored is not likely to be unmindful of the heavenly vision.

As we advance in life, our faces become expressive of our spiritual or moral experiences—there are some of whom it might be said, they have set their faces like a rock, so hard and material do they become; others are mere sensualists; and others again mere *masks*. Nothing is so perplexing, and so like a wall, so far as insight is concerned, as the human countenance is capable of becoming. There are those again, whose expression recedes inward, as if a thin lovely veil intervened between it and the observer, which is both modest and attractive, and indicates something beyond ordinary manifestations.

"Thine eyes are like wells of unfathomed light,
Or deep mysterious waves in which I gaze,
Yet find a depth beyond, sealed from my reach."

These have a weird unearthly nature which may, or may not be akin to the heavenly. To whatever sphere we may belong, we, most of us, have an instinctive, protective self-dom, which will not be invaded by mere curiosity however readily it may respond to true relations.

I have often wondered at the coarseness with which people will scrutinize a beautifully expressive face—

to me, it seems, the more sensitive is the organization, the more holy should it be in the eye of the observer; and we should respect that undraping, as it were, of a fine spirit, that seems more than half restored to the primal Eden.

I remember when I was a child I felt it to be a cruel injury when I detected, as I sometimes did, a willingness on the part of friends to play upon my sensibilities; and this, I fear, is too often done with children—too often converting them into little affectation, and falsehoods, or rendering them timid and reserved.

There is no question that dreams affect the expression of the face. Often

“The bosom’s lord sits lightly on his throne,”

simply because of a pleasant dream. We cannot help it—we dislike people who dream of eating and drinking, and of vermin, reptiles, huge serpents, and other prototypes of evil. These are gross natures, or envious and malicious ones, with knit brows, compressed lips, and cadaverous countenances. Your bad dreamer is a bad man. He may not admit it; but his true sphere becomes obvious by the experiences of his sleep. These people grow old prematurely, and assimilate in looks to the creatures of their dreams.

I would give much to know the nature of Daniel Webster’s dreams; for I am sure, with eyes like his, he is *predisposed*, at least, to the dream spirit. Michael or Lucifer must visit his night watches, which-

ever part of his nature being in the ascendant, inviting the one or the other; for with him, pre-eminently, "to be weak would be to be miserable."

Oliver Cromwell, in the early part of his career, while his vast powers were as yet unmarshalled rank and file, but were tumultuous giants, moving here and there; gloomy for lack of occasion, and painful in the process of growth, must have been a hard dreamer; for we find his waking hours disturbed by the pressure of what is called hypochondriacism—visions of the mind, which were but indistinct prototypes of the coming man. When the man of dreams became the man of action, and of action in harmony with the great struggle within, I apprehend he ceased to dream, nearly if not quite; for his active body, and the busy urgency of the times, kept the life experience equal to the soul intimations.

Your cowardly actor, your men or women, whose life falls short of the internal convictions; who fear to achieve a mission, have fragmentary dreams—little indistinct, impish kind of visions; are always tumbling into ditches; pursued by wild beasts; falling from towers, or pitching down stairs. Their sleep is in accordance with their waking life, without purpose and without dignity. The external appearance of that kind of people suffers terribly by the action of a meagre life and distorted dreams; and they have an uncertain sort of *unfinished look*; a pinched face or figure, as if nature, perceiving no growth in the spirit, supplied her aliment grudgingly.

The best of us, those who dream best, and live

nearest to our deepest convictions, leave still half the capacities of our being undeveloped; and where this is the case, there are always shadowy intimations, more or less powerful, which should stimulate to action, as the assurance of a something yet in store for us. After the period of childhood, dreams are so much a part of the biography of the individual, that they must be used cautiously. The following lines are the simple record of a dream, thrown into verse the next morning. It was a most vivid and startling vision, and the face of the woman remains fixed upon my fancy. As yet I have not seen its counterpart, though she is one I have seen more than once in sleep, always vindictive, sometimes with an oriental turban upon her head, sometimes a veil, and sometimes with masses of short black curls.

THE DREAM FOE.

Saddest dream I dreamed last night,
Of a lady large and fair,
Noble was she more than bright
Crowned with locks of ebon hair.

Three times did I slumber weary,
Three times I with terror woke,
For the weird shape, stern and dreary,
From my lids the slumber broke.

One strong hand upon my shoulder,
One upheld a dagger's gleam;
Touch of death was never colder
Than the lady's of my dream.

Eyes that flashed like livid lightning,
Springing feet with sudden start,
And the dagger came down brightening,
Piercing deeply to my heart.

From the bosom of the future,
Folded like the unborn child,
Mothers know in every feature,
Ere its life on earth have smiled,

I shall know that shape and bearing,
Know the deadly flashing eye,
Searching, cold, and all unsparing,
Though a thousand forms were nigh.

Chapter Sixth.

"They resemble the soothsayers of old, who dealt in dark hints and doubtful oracles; and I should like to ask them the meaning of what no mortal but themselves can fathom."—CHARLES LAMB.

Edgar A. Poe; Presaging Eyes; Swooning; A Dream.

YOUR true poet is always a dreamer. I know not what to make of Edgar A. Poe. Nature had given him the eye of a dreamer, and the intuitions of a believer, (I use the word in its broad sense), but a slight overbalance of the intellect was enough to destroy the beautiful harmony originally designed. His fictions have a malice prepense about them, and we instinctively reject what had produced no illusion in his own mind. I think he must have ceased to dream early in life, for a good dreamer has something cordial and primitive in his make, a touch of the child, by which all faith is pleasing to him; and like the child, he is in a very agony of desire to believe. I do not mean to say he is a mere reed shaken by the wind, for, on the contrary, there is a hardy consolidation in the mind of the true poet as yet but little understood; but being of "imagination all compact," he is able to bring authority from higher and broader sources than other men, and from his greater power of insight he perceives ana-

logies quite lost to the rest of the world; hence that which is blind superstition in other minds is to him but a penetrating of mysteries, a look within the veil, and a perception of the signs of the times. Your poet who comes before the public like a juggler, hoping to dupe it, with that in which he himself has no faith, is deserving of contempt. There is a harmony in the conditions assumed by the poet, which creates an illusion in the writer's own mind, and thence creates a response in the mind of his reader.

It is interesting to note the peculiarity of eye in a class of thinkers and actors in the world. They carry about them something mystical and presaging, so that to look upon them we should anticipate a mournful experience. We see in their melancholy depths the brooding of a destiny, the Cassandra pang of one instinct with mysterious truth uttered in pain to unbelieving and unsympathizing ears. The sensuality of Byron too often clouded the clearness of his vision, and Coleridge,

“The rapt one with the god-like forehead,”

by attempting to enhance the vividness of his perception by the use of opium “an offering of strange fire” upon the spiritual altar, rendered his views misty and uncertain, yet both were remarkable for the sad lonely expression, which grew upon them, when left a moment to themselves. Shelly's eyes were always raised when engaged in thought or conversation which interested him. In the remarkable portrait of the Cenci, the artist has preserved this expression of “the

shadows of a coming doom," the deep-set spiritual eye seeming to gather its light from a source foreign to its earthly surroundings. Vandyke's well-known picture of Charles the First, presents the same aspect of eye, the look of one impelled by fate. I remember a child of four years was listening to the conversation of a lady, with eyes such as we have described, suddenly she stopped, for she perceived the child to be weeping, "Why do you cry, my dear," she inquired. His reply indicated wonderful sensitiveness, "I don't know," he said, "but looking into your eyes makes the tears come into mine."

P R E S A G I N G E Y E S .

There are, who from their cradle bear
The impress of a grief,
Eyes, that a mystic radiance wear,
And looks that ask relief;

The shadows of a coming doom
Of sorrow or of strife,
When Fates conflicting round the loom
Wove the sad web of life.

Thus in the Cenci's mournful eye
Prophetic visions gleam,
Where folded shapes in shadow lie,
Like one in troublous dream.

And He, from whose unkingly hand,
His stern compeers bereft
The sacred truncheon of command,
And him all crownless left.

Beneath his large and curtained lid,
Receding lights appear,
Like those, where ancient graves are hid
By moss-grown abbey near.

And Shelly, song-inspired boy,
Pierced by Apollo's dart,
Within his eyes are beams of joy
Quenched by a breaking heart.

A god-like spirit brooding deep
O'er earth's chaotic wrong,
Till, like the music of our sleep,
He breathes, and it is song.

Oh! Eyes, strange Eyes! ye have a world
Where unseen spirits tread,
Upon whose banners half unfurled
The future may be read.

This prefiguring of life by our very bones and muscles, this answering of the body to the spirit, this response of the face to the soul beneath, seems to me quite as marvellous as any experience we may have in dreams. It is the configuration of the *spiritual body*, of which St. Paul speaks with such assurance, making itself manifest, and we see within the veil as it were, and are able to determine without slander to what sphere ourselves and others belong; for some do as assuredly dwell in the hells as others do in the heavens, even in this world.

There are other states akin, and yet unlike the natural action of the life in dreaming. I refer to that state of partial swoon, into which many persons fall from some action of the system. It is not a state of epe-

lepsy, nor yet of total unconsciousness, as in ordinary fainting.

I remember hearing a judicial friend describe with great clearness, his own experience in this way. He was subject, for some time, to attacks of this kind. He said that during their action, he was conscious of new and beautiful experiences, *totally unlike what* had transpired in his life. The scenery, the actors, all were distinct, yet all in perfect keeping; and what was singular, when he came out of them, as he did in a short time, he left parts of the Swoon Drama incomplete, which was resumed at the next swoon precisely where it had before left off.

I, myself, experienced something of the kind from having suddenly swooned at seeing a lady bled. I was insensible for a long time, colorless, and pulseless, but not convulsed. When I came to myself, I had vivid recollections of a beautiful country to which I had been, and of listening to the most ravishing music. States like these may perhaps be caused by sudden congestion, but that does not do away the mystery of experience, which must be sought somewhere distinct from the material blood and nerves. At least distinct from the grosser material. I do not know but the following dream may belong to this class, though at the time I was in good health, and my sleep natural.

A DREAM.

I thought I had passed, without pain, the portals of the grave—I stood in a gray, not blue atmosphere, which extended above, below, and upon every side of

me: I looked upward, downward, to the right and the left, where it extended into limitless space, the which my eyes penetrated with a continually growing power of vision, till they ached at the immensity and the solitude. There was neither sun, not star, nor shape of any kind. An intense loneliness made me shudder and cling my arms to my breast, as if, in the communings of my own soul, companionship would arise. At length a shield, light and translucent, was put into my hands, and a voice said, but still I saw no one—" *Guard thyself with this, and whatsoever thou cans't not walk over and subdue is thy companion, and kindred with thee.*"

Then meseemed I went on, covered only with this shield, which was without weight and most beautiful. Oh! the inexpressible rapture there was in motion. Now I trod proudly and buoyantly forward, with a sense of power and a sense of delight, which no language can paint. Anon I leaned upon space, and floated, as if every limb and fibre were exultant with motion. Then I recalled past dreams and said to myself aloud, and my voice was a new source of pleasure—" When I was in the material world, I used often to dream that angels and spirits had no wings, and now I find it true--and I am so glad--it is so much nobler, so much more beautiful and free, to move by the force of Will only."

Thus I went onward folding my arms, and the way brightening before me, though I saw nothing from which the light proceeded. At length I was conscious of a sharp pang, as if innumerable stings had

penetrated every fibre; I bethought myself of my shield and spread it before me, for the light had grown to a purple redness, and right under my feet I saw a creature who seemed one mass of flame, a burning coal as it were, huge, and darting spears of heat upon every side. I said, "Surely I have nothing akin to this loathsome shape," and I walked, not without pain, over his prostrate form.

Then I went onward again, encountering five others, each more terrible in shape and aspect, and each more erect, but I observed the light was growing constantly more intense—less burning, but yet more penetrating, and causing sufferings akin to that which we feel at the sudden obtrusion of some painful thought. I walked over each and all, writhing and suffering it is true, yet confident of success, and constantly saying—"I have nothing akin to these."

At length the light, which had been growing whiter all the time, became diffused in such clear brightness, upon every side, that I felt it not in my eyes alone, but as if it were a part of myself—as if I were shaped out of it—were all eye, and all life and light, and moved, still companionless, but not without joy. I said to myself—"People in the other world know little of this—that we are to test what manner of spirit we are of, by combat with spiritualisms." Suddenly I felt as if the light in which I moved were crystalized into the form of swords, and I cast my shield upon every side to save myself from wounds too terrible for endurance: even in my anguish I cast about in mind for something comparable in the world which I had left, to the sense of torture I endured now, and I said:

“Oh! I remember, in the other world mischievous boys in the streets would sometimes throw the light from a mirror suddenly in our rooms, and we recoiled from the pang, and now it is as if that ray were hardened to a sword, and become what in our Scriptures is described as the ‘sword of the Lord’, and I repeated with painful distinctness—‘For the word of the Lord is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.’” I still went onward, and there in my path lay, or rather up-rose a being more terrible than any I had hitherto seen, in shape not unlike a dragon, with innumerable heads; human they seemed, each *crowned*, and each full of power and beauty. The creature’s arms were myriads; his shape, convolved and towering, filled a vast space, and every hand was armed with one of those subtle swords framed out of light. I grew faint with pain and terror, yet determined to advance, for I said, ‘I am not akin to this.’ I plunged into the midst of these thousands of swords, bewildered by the glare of jewels, and the piercing beams of myriads of eyes. I held my shield upon every side. I pressed onward, saying to myself—‘I must not stay with these,’ and suffering with the sharp cuts of wounds inflicted upon every limb, and saying, ‘Oh! how much more terrible than the wounds from which we used to shrink in the other world!’ Then I tried to think where I had read something analogous, and the great Milton’s fight of Michael and Satan recurred to my memory; I awoke repeating that wonderful

passage, and assenting with terrible vividness to the accuracy with which he had described the agony of spiritual wounds.

“The clock struck one just as the vision departed, and for many moments after I opened my eyes I was flooded with light, but nothing visible, and then it passed away, leaving the night intensely dark.”

Chapter Seventh.

O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumb'rous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
KEATS.

The Unfortunate always Superstitious—Saul of Israel—He seeks the stray Asses, and finds a Kingship—The Witch of Endor.

THE unfortunate are always superstitious; just in proportion as the calamities of life impair the freedom of the human mind, do the elements of the dark and the mysterious gather about it. The past has been imbittered by care and disappointment; and, in the words of Scripture, their "way is hedged up," there is no hopeful vista to relieve the gloom of the present, and they appeal to omens, predictions, and the rude superstitions current amongst the vulgar.

Too feeble to boldly enter the precincts of Truth, grasping with a strong faith the very horns of the altar; and thus learn how the temporary yields to that which is eternal; how the partial is lost in the universal; they linger about the threshold, perplexing themselves with dim shadows and faint intimations. They pause in the vestibule, where Superstition sits portress, rather than enter to worship Truth herself.

It is the error of their destiny more than their own.

The light that is in them has become darkness. The clearness and vigor of perception are lost under the pressure of circumstances, in which human wisdom would seem to be of no avail, and they yield at length as to an irresistible fate.

The history of Saul, the first king of Israel, is an affecting record of this kind. Raised to the dignity of royal power, by no ambition of his own, but by Divine appointment; in compliance with the will of a people weary of their Theocracy, we look upon him from the first as an instrument, a being impelled rather than impelling.

Painful, indeed, is the contrast of the proud and handsome youth commencing his royal career in the freshness and freedom of early manhood, when life presented but a long perspective of sunshine and verdure, to that of the stricken man, weighed down by calamities, bereft of hope, bereft of faith, yet manfully marching to that fatal field where death only had been promised him.

From the commencement of his career the "choice young man and goodly" seems to have had a leaning to the occult, a willingness to avail himself of mysterious power, rather than to arrive at results through ordinary and recognized channels. We find him commissioned by his father, going forth in quest of three stray asses, which he seeks, not by the hill-sides and pastures of Israel, but by consulting the seer, Samuel. The holy man hails him king, and gently rebukes him as to the object of his visit, by saying, "set not thy mind upon the asses which were lost three days ago, for they are found."

Ardent and impulsive, he now goeth up and down in the spirit of prophecy, with the strange men who expound its mysteries, and anon he sendeth the bloody tokens to the tribes of Israel, rousing them from the yoke of oppression.

Generous and heroic, he repels the foes of his people, and loads the chivalric David with princely favors. Yet beneath all this, like hidden waters, heard but unseen, lurked this dark and gloomy mysticism, that imbibtered even his proudest and brightest hours. An evil spirit troubled him, which only the melody of the sweet psalmist of Israel could beguile.

Moses had been familiar with all the forms of Egyptian worship, and all their many sources of knowledge; but, as the promulgator of a new and holier faith, he wished to draw his people from the subtleties of divination, and induce them to a direct and open reliance upon Him who alone "knoweth the end from the beginning." No insight to the future is needed by the strong in faith and the strong in action. Hence the divinely appointed legislator prohibited all intercourse with those who dealt in this forbidden lore—*forbidden*, as subversive of human hope and human happiness. For the mind loses its tone when once impressed with the belief that the "shadows of coming events" have fallen upon it.

The impetuous and vacillating Saul, impelled by an irresistible instinct to this species of knowledge, sought to protect himself from its influence by removing the sources of it from his kingdom. For this reason he put in force the severe enactments of Moses

against dealers in what were termed "familiar spirits." Thus betraying the infirmity of his manhood, by removing temptation rather than bravely resisting it.

Vain and superstitious, oh "choice young man and goodly," thou wert no match for the rival found in the person of the chivalric David, the warrior poet, the king minstrel, the man of many crimes, yet redeeming all by the fervency of his penitence, and his unfaltering faith in the Highest. Yet the noble and the heroic did never quite desert thee, even when thou didst implore the holy prophet to honor thee in the presence "of the elders of the people," and he turned and worshipped with thee. A kingly pageant when the sceptre was departing from thee.

Disheartened by intestine troubles, appalled by foreign invasion, the spirit of the unhappy king forsook him, and it is said "his heart greatly trembled." Samuel, the stern and uncompromising revealer of truth, was no more. Unsustained by a hearty reliance upon divine things, Saul was like a reed cast upon the waters, in this, his hour of trial and perplexity.

"When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by prophets." Unhappy man, thy prayers were those of doubt, not of faith, and how could they enter that which is within the veil!

In the utterness of his despair, he consults the Woman of Endor. She might not control events, but she could foretell them. Perilous and appalling as his destiny threatened, he would yet know the worst.

There was majesty in thee, oh Saul! even in thy

disguise and agony, as thou didst confront thy stern counselor brought from the land of shadows—"the old man covered with a mantle." When Samuel demands, "why hast thou disquieted me?" we share in the desolateness and sorrow which thy answer implies.

"God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams, therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

The Woman of Endor! That is a strange perversion of taste that would represent her hideous in aspect. To me she seemeth all that is genial and lovely in womanhood.

So great had been the mental suffering of Saul, that he had fasted all that day and night, and at the terrible doom announced by the seer his strength utterly forsook him, and he fell all along upon the earth.

Now cometh the gentle ministry of the Woman of Endor. "Behold thou hast prevailed with me to hearken to thy voice, even at the peril of my life; now, also, I pray thee hearken to the voice of thy handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength."

Can aught be more beautiful, more touching or womanly in its appeal? Aught more foreign from a cruel and treacherous nature, aloof from human sympathies, and dealing with forbidden or unholy knowledge?

To the Jew, trained to seek counsel only from Jehovah, the Woman of Endor was a dealer with spirits of evil. With us, who imbibe truth through a thou-

sand channels made turbid by prejudice and error, she is a distorted being allied to the hags of a wild and fatal delusion. We confound her with the witches of Macbeth, the victims of Salem, and the Moll Pitchers of modern days.

Such is not the Woman of Endor—we have adopted the superstition of monk and priest through the long era of darkness and bigotry, and every age hath lent a shadow to the picture.

“Hearken to the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee.” Beautiful picture of primitive and genial hospitality! The Woman of Endor riseth before me in the very attitude of her kind, earnest entreaty. The braids of her dark hair mingle with the folds of her turban; her oriental robes spread from beneath the rich girdle, and the bust swells with her impassioned appeal. I behold the proud contour of her features, the deep, spiritual eye, the chiseled nostril, and the lip shaming the ruby. The cold haughty grace, becoming the daughter of the Magi, hath now yielded to the tenderness of her woman’s heart.

Woman of Endor! thou hast gathered the sacred lotus for the worship of Isis; thou hast smoothed the dark-winged Ibis in the temple of the gods; thou art familiar with the mysteries of the pyramids; thou hast quaffed the waters of the Nile, even where they well up in the cavernous vaults of the ancient Cheöps; thou hast watched the stars, and learned their names and courses; art familiar with the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and the bands of Orion. Thy teacher was a reverent worshipper of nature, and thou a meek

and earnest pupil. Thou heldest a more intimate communion with nature than we of a later and more worldly age. Thou didst work with her in her laboratory, creating the gem and the pearl, and all things whatsoever *into which the breath of life entereth not*.

There was nothing of falsehood, nothing of diabolic power in this. Men were nearer the primitive man, nearer the freshness of creation, and they, who patiently and religiously dwelt in the temple of nature, learned her secrets, and acquired power hidden from the vulgar, even as do the learned now, in their dim libraries, and amid their musty tomes.

Thus was it with the Woman of Endor. She was learned in all the wisdom of the East. She had studied the religion of Egypt, had listened to the sages of Brahma, and learned philosophy in the schools to which the accomplished Greek afterwards resorted for truth and lofty aspiration; yet even here did the daughter of the Magi feel the goal of truth unattained.

She had heard of a new faith—that of Israel—a singular people, who at one time had sojourned in Egypt, and yet who went forth, leaving their gods and their vast worship behind, to adopt a new and strange belief. Hither had she come with a meek spirit of inquiry to learn something more of those great truths for which the human soul yearneth forever.

Hence was it that her wisdom and her beauty became a shield to her, when the mandates of Saul banished all familiar with mysterious knowledge from the country. She was no trifler with the fears and the credulities of men. She was an earnest disciple

of Truth, and guilelessly using wisdom which patient genius had unfolded to her mind.

All night had she watched the stars, and firmly did she believe that human events were shadowed forth in their hushed movements.

She compounded rare fluids, and produced creations wondrous in their beauty.

There were angles described in the vast mechanism of nature, in the passage of the heavenly bodies, in the congealing of fluids, and the formation of gems, which were of stupendous power when used in conjunction with certain words of mystic meaning, derived from the vocabulary of spirits; spirits who once familiarly visited our earth, and left these symbols of their power behind them. These the learned, who did so in the spirit of truth and goodness, were able to use, and great and marvelous were the results.

Such was the knowledge, and such the faith of the Woman of Endor, the wise and the beautiful daughter of the Magi. She was yet young and lovely; not the girl nor the child, but the full, intellectual, and glorious woman.

She had used a spell of great power in behalf of Saul, who was in disguise, and unknown to her; and thus had compelled the visible presence of one of the most devout servants of the Most High God. Even she was appalled, not at the sight of the "old man covered with a mantle," but that she saw "gods descending to the earth."

The fate of Saul would have been the same had not the prophet from the dead pronounced that fearful doom, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be as I

am," but he might till the last have realized that vague comfort to be found in the uncertainty of destiny, and in the faint incitements of hope. Fancy might have painted plains beyond the mountains of Gilboa, where the dread issues of battle were to be tried, and he would have been spared that period of agony, when the strong man was bowed to the earth at the certainty of doom.

Saul and the Woman of Endor, ages on ages since, fulfilled their earthly mission, leaving behind this simple record of the power and fidelity of human emotions in all times and places; we cannot regret even the trials of Saul, in the view of enlarged humanity, for had he been other than he was, the world had been unblessed with this episode of woman's grace and woman's tenderness, in the person of the Woman of Endor.

Chapter Eighth.

The greatest defenders of Astrology do agree amongst themselves, that *it cannot reach so far as to foretell a thousand peculiar circumstances, which depend purely upon the freedom of man.*—NOSTRODAMUS. 1555.

I maintain that the colors, and aspects, and conjunctions of the planets, are impressed on the natures or faculties of sublunary things; and when they occur, that these are excited as well in forming as in moving the body over whose motion they preside.—KEPLER. 1606.

Astrology—A Horoscope—Nostrodamus—Predictions.

I ALMOST wish I had lived a few hundred years earlier, that I might have an unflinching faith in Astrology. I do not know but I have, as it is; for my own horoscope has been cast, which was so very satisfactory upon some points, that I desire to believe implicitly; and as for the evil predicted, one can readily perceive that the brightest light gives place to the deepest shadow. It is pleasant to throw the responsibilities of one's life upon the stars. I do not care if La Place does insinuate that this faith involves an extravagant egotism:

“L'homme porté par les illusions des sens à se regarder comme centre de l'univers se persuader facilement que les astrés influent sa destinée, et qu'il est possible de la prévoir par l'observation de leur aspects au moment de sa naissance.” *The world is the worse*

always, where individual self-respect is at a low ebb. But this is an assumption on the part of the Astronomers by no means in accordance with the facts of the case, for that a sympathy exists between every atom of matter, even to the very verge of space, is an established belief, and the premises of Astrology are based upon this sympathy, which is far from making all matter subserve the interests of individual destiny. We are affected by winds, and vapors, and lunarian tides, and it is not for us to affix the limits to such influence. There is, in truth, a mere enlarged philosophy in supposing that all matter repels and attracts; that the most distant planet held in its sphere, by kindred stars, must feel in its pulse the slightest change of balance; and if matter thus sympathizes with matter, that etherealized portion subject to our own organization must sympathize also. Yes! I think I believe—and here is an inkling of my own horoscope:

A HOROSCOPE,

“Quorum pars magna fui.”

Oh! loveliest of the stars of Heaven,
 Thus did ye walk the crystal dome,
 When to the earth a child was given,
 Within a love-lit, northern home;
 Thus leading up the starry train,
 With aspect still, benign,
 Ye move in your fair orbs again
 As on that birth long syne.

Within her curtained room apart,
 The pale young mother faintly smiled;
 While warmly to a father's heart
 With love and prayer was pressed the child;

And, softly to the lattice led,
In whispers grandams show
How those presaging stars have shed
Around the child a glow.

Born in the glowing summer prime,
With planets thus conjoined in space
As if they watched the natal time,
And came to bless the infant face;
Oh! there was gladness in that bower,
And beauty in the sky;
And Hope and Love foretold a dower
Of brightest destiny.

Unconscious child! that smiling lay
Where love's fond eyes, and bright stars gleamed,
How long and toilsome grew the way
O'er which those brilliant orbs had beamed;
How oft the faltering step drew back
In terror of the path,
When giddy steep, and wildering track
Seemed fraught with only wrath!

How oft recoiled the woman foot,
With tears that shamed the path she trod,
To find a canker at the root
Of every hope, save that in God!
And long, oh! long, and weary long,
Ere she had learned to feel
That Love, unselfish, deep, and strong,
Repays its own wild zeal.

Bright Hesperus! who on the eyes
Of Milton poured thy brightest ray!
Effulgent dweller of the skies,
Take not from me thy light away—
I look on thee, and I recall
The dreams of by-gone years—
O'er many a hope I lay the pall
With its becoming tears;

Yet turn to thee with thy full beam,
And bless thee, oh love-giving star!
For life's sweet, sad, illusive dream
Fruition, though in Heaven afar—
"A silver lining" hath the cloud
Through dark and stormiest night,
And there are eyes to pierce the shroud
And see the hidden light.

Thou movest side by side with Jove,
And, 't is a quaint conceit, perchance—
Thou seem'st in humid light to move
As tears concealed thy burning glance—
Such Virgil saw thee, when thine eyes,
More lovely through their glow,*
Won from the Thunderer of the skies
An accent soft and low.

And Mars is there with his red beams,
Tumultuous, earnest, unsubdued—
And silver-footed Dian gleams
Faint as when she on Latmos stood—
God help the child! such night brought forth
When Love to Power appeals,
And strong-willed Mars at frozen north
Beside Diana steals.

"Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus."

The stars govern men, but God governs the stars. It was in this way that those devout old astrologers reconciled in their own minds, and to the consciences of their followers, the apparently contradictory theories of an arbitrary destiny, and a superintending providence. The dim light of science in those days served rather to bewilder than guide, and they in their soli-

* "Lachrymis oculos suffusa nitentes."

tary watchings of the heavenly bodies, beheld a mysterious connection between their position, and concurrent human events.

We find in the earliest ages of society a tendency to this faith, and the Tower of Babel, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Temple of the Sun, the Tumuli of the west, undoubtedly served alike the purposes of the infant science of Astronomy, and its attendant Astrology, by which man sought to establish, as it were, a universal sympathy ; to link those solitary sentinels in space with the living and breathing existence about him, served these purposes as well as the more profound and needful one of religion, as yet groping in obscurity, and seeking material mediums for worship.

In a later age, when the Magi were supposed to yield the mysteries of their art at the feet of Him, over whose nativity the "star" that had thus far conducted them, "stood still," the science was supposed to be at variance with the clearer revelations of religion, and began to be regarded with distrust, not unmingled with abhorrence. Then its advocates became secret and solitary students ; living apart, and indulging in the wildest speculations. It became involved in the study of medicine, and the astrologer, pitying the sufferings of humanity, indulged in vague dreams of an elixir vitæ ; he watched the conjunction of planets in the hope that at some auspicious aspect, he might by alembic combinations, produce, within the crucible, that mysterious substance, the philosopher's stone ; by means of which the base metal would be transmuted into gold, and thus poverty and suffering cease to exist. In this way did Paracelsus, and

many others, far in advance of the age in which they lived, in real enlightenment, mingle astrology, alchemy and medicine.

At that remarkable era, when the religion of Jesus, imperfectly comprehended at the best, and expounded by men apart from the sympathies of humanity; cloistered men, to whom the ignorance of the many became a thing to be desired; and hence vague and wild superstitions became current, and the general superstition demanded something tangible upon which to exercise itself, Peter the Hermit became the interpreter, and led the chivalry of Europe to the shores of Palestine.

Here the sturdy knight, in the intervals of battle, relieved the vacuity of intellect, by studying the usages of the more elegant Saracen; and the doubtful learning of the East became mixed up with that of the followers of the Cross. The subtle ecclesiastics were not slow to detect real or imaginary danger, and pronounced such studies a device of Satan to mislead unwary believers. They pronounced them heathenish and subversive of the good of the soul, and the unhappy advocates of astrology were made the subjects of vigilant scrutiny and severe prosecution. Then the lonely barbican became the receptacle for occult science, and the nightly watcher of the stars here learned to predict that which was to come. As those calm dwellers in space pursued their untiring revolutions, the destinies of empires were supposed to be shadowed forth; and the particular position of certain planets at the nativity of an individual, indicated the kind of career that awaited him.

With few subjects comparatively to call forth the energies of human thought, it is not surprising that it should busy itself with those that seemed to elevate, and draw the soul from the circumscribed existence of earth. It was but the struggling of a creature in the dimness of its vision, seeking the point from whence light seemed to emanate.

Whatever might be said as to the utility of their studies, or of the tendency of their belief, we must yield faith to the sincerity, the religious integrity of purpose by which they were governed. Most anxious were they to exculpate themselves from the censure of heresy and diabolic practices of any kind. Hence the devout Michael Nostrodamus claims his gift of prophecy to have been that of an hereditary one in his family; and that, although he had certainly studied the "Arts," in which he included astrology, yet did he rather regard the power as his "genius," derived from a spiritual mind intent upon holy speculations, and, at the time of inspiration, wrapt in deep and tranquil musing, alone, and in the silence of midnight.

There is a beautiful quaintness, a genial simplicity in the manner he describes these things, that contrasts with the obscurity of his predictions. He warns his son Cæsar to avoid the study of "magic," as repugnant to the canons of the church and the doctrines of our holy religion, and then goes on to describe the process of these things in his own mind, and how he arrived at what he terms the "anointing of vaticination." He says, "being surprised sometimes in the week by a prophetic humor; and by a long calculation,

pleasing myself in my study, I have made books of prophecies, each one containing an hundred astronomical stanzas, which I have joined *obscurely*, and are perpetual vaticinations." And again, "Although I have inserted the name of prophet here, I will not attribute to myself so sublime a title, for prophets are, properly, those who see things remote from the natural knowledge of men; and by the perfect light of prophecy, may see things as well Divine as Humane."

These "Astronomical Stanzas," the result of "long calculation," upon "Celestial Bodies," are, it must be confessed, as the author says, "obscurely joined," nevertheless, commentators have not failed to detect the import of the same, and triumphantly to cite the fulfilment of prophecy. Many of these may be quoted as remarkable, were it not that the wise would at once repeat with exultation, the grave saying of Lord Bacon, that "men mark prophecies when they hit, and never mark when they miss;" and yet this very wise Lord Bacon, gives the prophecy of Luke Garrick, in the following remarkable words.

"When I was in France, I heard from one Dr. Pena, that the queen mother, who was given to curious arts, caused the king, her husband's, nativity to be calculated under a false name; and the astrologer gave a judgment, that he should be killed in a duel; at which the queen laughed, thinking her husband to be above challenges and duels; but he was slain upon a course at *tilt*, the splinters of the staff of Montgomery going in at *his beaver*."

The editor of Nostrodamus, who published in 1672, gives the same prediction recorded by Lord Bacon, as

also the prophecy of Nostrodamus to the like effect; though certainly "obscurely joined," as should be such things in the matter of great men. Indeed, it is not surprising that these supposed revealers of the future—that future into which all so desire to look, yet shrink from the contemplation—should be regarded with distrust by those who trembled with credulous fear at their predictions, even while the craving of curiosity led them to the oracle, with a faith equal to that which led the Greek to the sybil, or the Roman to the augur; at the same time that a more enlightened faith taught him that "of that day and that hour knoweth no man;" and a severe conscience condemned the attempt to pry thereinto, as a weak distrust of the goodness of Providence. It is no wonder they sought obscurity; no wonder they veiled their oracles in language so enigmatical, that its sense can scarcely be detected, even after the prediction is confessed to be fulfilled. That they did this is conclusive evidence of their own singleness of purpose, and firm belief in the reality of what they foretold.

Were we curious, many points of history might be without doubt found strangely coincident with these singular predictions. The school boy will cite the genius of Brutus, and the girl will remember the "star" of Josephine; and even a cardinal might be pardoned, in view of the keys of St. Peter, should he hesitate to adopt "the sixth," so fatal to Pius, the infirm old man, exiled, and bereft of Napoleon; who, it is said, in his misfortunes recalled with dismay the old prophecy, so strangely verified in his own fate:

"Sextus Tarquinius, Sextus Nero, sextus et iste
Semper sub sextus, perdita Roma fuit."

Nostrodamus is often so censured for his obscurity, that his predictions seem to have fallen into disrepute, excepting among the few, gifted with a clearer insight, and adhering with a lingering reverence to the faith of the "olden time." Such preserve his "crabbed" diction, with a fond delight in the earnest simplicity of the good old man, upon whom the mantle of "vaticination" descended from a long train of ancestors; and who beheld it finally settling upon his own son, Cæsar; even, it would seem, when he had well nigh despaired of beholding the gift continued in his family; for it must be in this light that we are to understand his exordium, "Thy late coming, my son, hath caused me to bestow a great deal of time in continual and nocturnal watchings, that I might leave a memorial of me after my death," &c.

But we must not linger upon these primitive details, but cite the prophecy reserved for us to detect, and announce as being in progress of fulfillment. And here be it understood we do not announce ourselves as the follower of any sect of the kind, but simply as a searcher after the truth. Here follows the prophecy :

"In Germany shall divers sects arise,
Coming very near the happy paganism;
The heart captivated and small receivings,
Shall open the gate to pay the true tithes."

Good old man, at this time thy words are by no means "obscurely joined;" or at least such is the clearness of fulfillment, that a light gleams, even to the lighting up of thy obscurity.

He intimates in the last clause of the prophecy, that these "divers sects" will captivate the heart, by which we trust is meant the religion shall be one of affection, rather than of logical deduction; for, indeed, if people reason themselves into religion, they will also be liable to reason themselves out; and we trust that he did mean that this is to be the state of the case, and that the "true tithes" mean a general sense of justice, a simplicity of life, by which all will be content with "small receivings."

ITALIAN PROPHECY.

I subjoin a few other predictions of this renowned soothsayer:

"They shall come to agreement, in which
The true Tithes shall be paid,
And every one come to his own again."

This, of the true Tithes, seems to be a favorite idea, and shows that he foresaw a better and larger humanity, that future times would develop.

"One coming too late, the execution shall be done,
The wind being contrary, and letters intercepted by the way
The conspirator's fourteen of a Sect,
By the *red-haired man* the undertaking shall be made."

I wish I could divine anything cheering for unhappy Italy, in the following. Indeed, I think the spiritually discerned may see the significancy of that quaint "Sharp by Letters," that creates a power more invincible than walls.

"Oh great Rome! thy ruin draweth near,
Not of thy walls, thy blood, or substance,
The Sharp by Letters shall make so home a notch:
Sharp iron thrust in all to the haft."

Chapter Ninth.

Hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers,
Then living on the earth, with laboring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries ;
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—KEATS.

Shakspeare's belief in Astrology—Madam De Stael—The Prescience of the Poet.

SHAKSPEARE is a northern mine of superstition. He is imbued, heart and soul, with the wildest and most beautiful faith. The stars walk up and down his pages, as if he himself had marshalled them in space, and they came and went at his bidding. His characters have the occult phraseology at their finger's end. He never insults us by forcing upon our minds what he does not feel himself. The Weird Sisters concocted "their broth under his own eyes," and "paltered in double sense" to him, before they warped the whole destiny of the noble Macbeth. His ghosts first curdled his own blood before it could ours, and he must have felt his own; "few men rightly temper with stars."

No matter what aspect of humanity he delineates, his astrological allusions are always apposite, touch-

ing, and beautiful. The weeping Margaret exclaims, over the head of Suffolk :

“Hath this lovely face
Ruled, like a wandering planet, over me,
And could it not enforce thee to relent?”

Poor Hermoine schools herself to patience by the reflection,

“ There's some ill planet reigns :
I must be patient till the heavens look
With an aspect more favorable.”

The half frantic Lear, bewildered by the ingratitude of his two daughters, looks to the stars as the only way of accounting for such manifestations, and cries,

“ It is the stars,
The stars above us govern our conditions,
Else one self-mate and mate would not beget
Such different issues.”

And Othello, appalled at his own misery, exclaims,

“It is the error of the moon ;
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad.”

So the wise and forecasting Prospero tells the beautiful and compassionating Miranda :

“I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, *whose influence*
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop.”

“The stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera,” is a well-known astrological allusion of scripture.

One secret of the interest with which Shakspeare has invested Hamlet, may be found in the clearness of his intellect, which repelled the suggestions of a fatality; his instincts shrink and recoil from the spectre, but its shape appears to his intellect a "questionable" one, and he speaks to it. He has long been convinced of the presence of wrongs, with which his *will* is too feeble to grapple, and the *doom*, which is forced upon him even by supernatural means, he still tries to escape. Not so with Macbeth; he is an uncompromising believer in his fate, and the desperate hardihood with which he closes his career, is but the fatal despair of one who sees, "that the juggling fiends, who palter in a double sense," had predicted such a destiny, when "Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane."

Madam de Stael has said, "there is no one who has not some mysterious idea of his own destiny,—one event which he has always dreaded, and which, though improbable, is sure to happen." In this way we are all gifted with a certain degree of prescience, greater or less as we rise in the scale of human endowment. The idiot has but the rudiments of common faculties, limited to the dull and wavering promptings of instinct,—the scale enlarges up to the god-approaching qualities of the philosopher and the poet, to the latter of whom is given, in the highest earthly compass, the faculty of which we are speaking. Seer and poet were originally one and the same term. To speak the language of coherence, yet as by a sudden and overwhelming impulse, is the action of prophecy, and such too is the action of poetry.

“Come curse me Israel, and defy me Jacob,” and the Seer lifted up his eyes and beheld the order and harmony of the wayfaring people, and he cried, “How goodly are thy tents, O, Israel! and thy tabernacles, O, Jacob. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab.”

Here is the inspiration of the prophet uttered in the most elevated and beautiful language of poetry. Had he been less than he was he might have cursed in obedience to the terrified monarch, and have been “promoted to honor,” might have sat by the side of royalty in purple robes and cumberings of gold, but being one of God’s own oracles of truth, it sprang to his lips despite of consequence. The man of talents may mould his career in accordance with interest and expediency, but the man of genius is God’s own child, endowed by Him who will take care of his own gift, will bring it to utterance, and to utterance that may sometimes appall even him who speaks. He may feel that he grasps his powers by a strong will, *but he will feel likewise, that those very powers impel him, that their action is beyond himself, to a certain extent*

How often must the poet, in after years, recoil from his own utterance, when he perceives that in the spirit of prophecy, what had been the fretwork of fancy became at length the web of his own destiny!

Men of genius are always what the world call more or less superstitious. Their own prescience so

often has anticipated events, that they are apt to perceive intimations, and detect coincidences unobserved by others; what to the common eye seems impossible and strange, to them has a feasibility and naturalness altogether accordant with their experience. Jacob Behman and Swedenborg had this quality of foreknowledge in an eminent degree. Both predicted the time of their own death, which occurred as they had foretold.

The world has come to the grave conclusion, that many things told by the poets are not truth, and are not to be received as such, and they call it "poetizing," "romancing," &c.; yet these very people will refresh themselves over the pages of the poet, and go forth with a deeper thought gathering in the soul, and forget to see that this is not the ignis fatuus of falsehood, but the steady light of truth, which has been made to shine into the dim chambers of their souls, and light up recesses that were damp and dark for want of use. The poet is the great truth-teller, for he speaks not to one or two faculties, but to all; and to those most which most link us to the eternal.

The poet is the prophet of his age. Who can read the noble aspirations of Milton, and not feel that he foresaw the great problem of human liberty, which from thenceforward was to be worked out; and the sublime resignation with which, in poverty, and neglect and blindness, he writes the following noble sonnet, is enough to bring tears to the eyes, so much does our own humanity weigh us in view of his god-like magnanimity.

“Cyriack, this three years’ day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot ;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun or moon, or star, throughout the year ;
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven’s hand or will, *nor bate a jot*
Of heart or hope ; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask ?
The conscience, friend, to have *lost them overplied*
In Liberty’s defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world’s vain mask,
Content though blind, had I no better guide.”

What further need had the great man for human vision ? His external life and labor were accomplished ; and the “orbs, though clear, to outward view, of blemish or of spot,” forgot their seeing only because their spiritual life had opened, in his own words,

“Heaven hides nothing from their view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell.”

Instances innumerable might be cited to show the prevalence of this prescience in the human character. We have before said it is an invariable element of the poetic mind, and all others have it more or less. Thousands feel themselves impelled as by an irresistible hand in a certain direction, from whence they expect more or less vaguely some good ; others are impelled in the same way, feeling and dreading an evil which they have no power to escape. The most un-

likely and splendid results of fortune have been realized in connexion with this feeling; crimes the most terrible have been committed under the sense of this blind fatality.

This is the great and overwhelming fate which held the Pagan world in thrall, and which gives such sublime and fearful interest to the Greek tragedy. The oriental world is yet in bondage to the faith as if the whole atmosphere had imbibed the spells of the terrible Parcæ.

It is the existence of this faculty in all minds in a rudimentary state, that makes the dreams of the astrologer, and the predictions of the fortune teller in such repute among the common people, while those of a deeper fore knowledge often recoil from these things as "too mighty for them." The well known story of Josephine, whom an old negress foretold should one day become greater than a queen, is a curious confirmation of this faculty strengthened by the prescience, real or accidental, of another. Imprisoned in the Bastille, exposed every hour to be dragged forth to the guillotine; separated from her children, suffering poverty, proscription, and the loss of those dear to her, from the cruel persecutions of the period; she was often heard to say cheerfully, when others expressed their fears as to her fate, "No, no, I shall not die yet, it is not my destiny," and this uncertain promise of future good she frankly confessed helped to sustain her in the severity of her trials. "It is my star that rules your destiny," was her affecting remonstrance to Napoleon in view of the divorce.

For good or for ill all move onward to a point, often foreign to their purpose, yet hearing whether they will or no the warning voice, "I will meet thee at Philippi." The magnitude of results is in proportion to the depth and strength of the individual. Few escape poverty, exile and imprisonment to wear an imperial crown, and few like the Roman, find themselves at Philippi, with the ruins of empire and the hopes of the patriot crushed at their feet.

To the common mind happen common events, yet not the less those which a vague necessity would seem to imply. The whimsical story of the English girl who was wrecked upon the coast of Africa, shows how strong a presentiment of the kind had fixed itself upon her mind. When protection and a voyage home were offered her she refused to leave the country, remembering it had been predicted that she should wear a crown. Accordingly she was carried by a party of Arabs, across the country, and subsequently became queen to his majesty of Morocco.

Lady Hester Stanhope, yielding herself to the vagaries of this blind sense of destiny, wasted her beauty and her talents in the desert, surrounded by ignorant Arabs whose great point of sympathy with the fair exile consisted in a faith as unswerving as her own, in the fixedness of fate; had her nerves been a trifle stronger, and her purse deeper, it is impossible to predict what splendor might have marked the career of this singular woman.

Chapter Tenth.

The night has been unruly ; where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down : and, as they say,
Lamentings heard in the air ; strange screams of death,
And prophesying, with accents terrible.

The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night : some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake.—SHAKESPEARE,

Astrology—The two Horoscopes—The Unfortunate grow Superstitious—Pleasant
Fancies—Irish Superstition—Good Old Mary.

THERE is something sublime in the departure of such men as Cromwell and Napoleon, amid the wild war of the elements—and our own Jacob Leisler also was led forth to the scaffold in the midst of such tumult, as if the spirits of earth unwillingly yielded up these beings so wonderfully endowed, children compounded out of their own realms of power, *over whom they would have no control in the next great stage of existence.* There are many of the predictions of Lilly still extant, showing that the men of the times of Cromwell placed much reliance upon planetary indications, and one, in which the death of Charles is plainly intimated, and which is supposed to have had much influence in deciding the fate of the unhappy monarch. All imaginative minds have more or less delight in the occult, and make no scruple in admitting it. Cromwell, and Na-

poleon, and Goethe, and Scott, to say nothing of the beautiful Josephine, believed in these things. I have found very few entirely indifferent to the subject. It is a faith that seems quite harmless; for none of us square our lives by the stars, although we may be amused at coincidences.

I lately found, in an old astrological work, the horoscope of the Prince of Wales, (George the Fourth) together with that of a little chimney sweep, ushered into the world the same day and hour that witnessed the birth of the slip of royalty, and was therefore christened by the name of Prince George. One child wrapped in purple, the other rolled in its sooty blanket; yet the same *stars*, indicating a similarity of destiny, and the results is whimsically verified. Of the career of the Prince of Wales it is unnecessary to speak—his vices, his follies, his perjuries were all royal, and his fellow, the sweep, was not a jot behind him. The broom and scraper were found as ill adapted to the hands of the one, as the sceptre to the hands of the other. The parents of Prince George, tired of his profligacy which shamed their profession, finally established him as a tallow chandler. He was now a *ruler* with apprentices and coteries about him, and could follow the bent of his genius. He was handsome, courteous, gallant, a spendthrift, and a gamester, as testified before the age of twenty, the fortune and reputation of the family having suffered much through his tendencies of this kind. He soon became famous in his own sphere, dressed in the best style of his class, was the idol of the women, the essence of politeness, the greatest *better* and gamester at all the races and fairs within ten

miles of London, and finally kept the best asses, and run the best donkey-races of the day. All this time his royal compeer was working out his destiny perfectly analogous, excepting one is "high life above, the other below stairs"—the one races with a blood horse, the other with a donkey. But all glory must have an end; the Prince of Wales became bankrupt, and the Prince George "smashed"—the very day that the *stud of his Royal highness, Prince of Wales, was sold by Tattersal, the racing donkeys and ponies of Prince George were put to the hammer*. Sic transit.

There is something exceedingly affecting in the superstitions of the unfortunate in life—something touching in their instinctive loosening of the burden of ill from their own responsibility, and placing it to the account of the stars. My evil stars would have it so, they say; my ill luck followed me. They are not born, like the saucy Beatrice, under a merry planet, and they magnify the influence of the baneful. If a dog howl they at once think it an omen of death—a broken looking glass is ill fortune—to dream of the loss of a tooth is the death of a friend. All this is imbecile, and unworthy the dignified office of prescience.

There are some superstitions, however, too beautiful to be suppressed. Thus, when a tree is seen to bend its branches over a house, falling and encircling it, as it were, it is an indication of evil impending over the family; but when a tree in growing bows away from the dwelling, and suffers the sunshine to embrace it warmly, it foreshows honor and prosperity to the household.

So also to dream of myrtles, indicates a lover, and roses, happiness: here is a touch of classic beauty, inclining one to admit these into favor.

At Berlatz, when a family has lost one of its members, they immediately cut off all the flowers in the garden, and they suffer no more of them to blow while the mourning lasts. This touching custom prevailed among the Greeks.

The belief is universal, that when any of the family dies, if a badge of black be not put upon the hives, the bees will sicken, or else leave the place. I would not do away this belief if I could, for it springs from that depth of sympathy, that counterpart to love, which sorrow always bears, by which, when we mourn, we invest all nature and life with the sentiment, the universal pang, answering to the darkness within.

Amongst the Irish, whose cabins are often covered with the houseleek (*sempervivum tectorum*), it is regarded as a protection from all maladies to which they might be subject; and hence, to carry it off is a sacrilege. When in flower, they place crosses made of it over the doorway. So, also, the misletoe is still held sacred, traditionally, from the Druids, and its leaves, either drank or placed upon the stomach, are an antidote to poison.

To kill a toad is ill luck—to kill a swallow will cause the cows to yield bloody milk.

This too is a pleasing superstition, for the swallow is associated with quietude and sunshine, and should be sacred.

“No jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle;

Where they most breed or haunt, I have observed,
The air is delicate."

FRIDAY—THE SALT.

To see the new moon over the left shoulder is ill luck—good over the right. This is not an unpleasant mode of vaticination.

Friday is an unlucky day—this superstition came in with our religion, and as good Christians we will note it. All executions take place upon that day—hence, nobody will be married upon it. Some pretend to say more crimes, accidents, and monstrous births occur on that day than any other—well, I like to lump the evil into one great heap, and thus feel it worth submitting to: so Friday may as well take the responsibility. Sailors do not like Friday. A merchant wishing to overcome this prejudice to the day, laid the hull of a ship on Friday—she was launched on Friday—*was named the Friday*—she sailed on Friday, *and was wrecked on Friday*.

Never help your neighbor to salt—never put it upon his plate—it is said to part friends. I like all superstitions that recognise friendly relations. This must be of very ancient origin, when the salt was the bond of fraternity—the *salt-partaking guest* being sacred amongst the Arabs.

Dreams, say the wiseacres, are to be interpreted by contraries. Thus, if you dream of filth, you will acquire something valuable; if you dream of the dead, you will hear news of the living; if you dream of gold and silver, you run a risk of being without either; and if you dream you have many friends, you

will be persecuted by many enemies. The rule, however, does not hold good in all cases. It is fortunate to dream of little pigs, but unfortunate to dream of big bullocks. I dissent from this entirely. It cannot be good to dream of this filthy beast, in whatever state of incipency he may be. A swine is a swine, even when a "youngling," and an "innocent." *It argues a bad state of pulse to dream of them, just as it argues a depraved digestion to eat of them.* If you dream that your house is on fire, you will receive news from a far country. If you dream of vermin, it is a sign that there will be sickness in your family; and if you dream of serpents, you will have friends who, in the course of time, will prove your bitterest enemies.

Heaven bless the Irish; their faith is after my own heart. Nothing is without significancy to them. I always feel entirely safe with an Irish servant—I know she will stand watch and warder over all the mystical; and that must be a "shrewd" omen that can escape her. I yield up the whole occult realm to her keeping, sure she will give me due notice when I may prepare to rejoice, or get ready the lachrymals. I feel a tender security, released from responsibility as it were, for the time being. Then, too, they have such respect for one's idiosyncracies, feel so kindly towards our whims, and see so into the very soul of our humors, that we grow quite refreshed under their careful deference. They learn to respect the arm chair, the cosey corner, localities around which habit and affection twine themselves, and to move them is a desecration. "Mary, good Mary, leave the chair in the same spot." "Ah! Madam, it would look so

much prettier by the window, make the room look so much better." "Yes, Mary, but I have written there these three whole days."

The good creature gave me a look of commiseration—she knows my infirmity—the chair remains. Luckily for me she is akin to me in that respect. Does she not stay with me in spite of my many disadvantages, only because she has "got used to my ways?" Does she not even suppress that low, musical wheeze, her nearest approach to external melody, lest she should worry my nerves? Kind soul, she knows an extra wheeze of hers would give me the heartache.

We were moving. "Have you fed the cat well, Mary, and made her quite comfortable till our successors come in?" "Yes, indeed, Ma'am, if they do not come for a week!"

"Poor Kitty, delicate Grimalkin! I have never fondled thee, for truth to tell, I do not love thy species—but I have noted thy dainty ways with an artist's admiration—thy excellent maternity has not been unnoted; when thou hast chosen the nicest cushion for thy siesta, I have commended thy taste. Now I must leave thee—thou art the Genius Loci, and the gods bless the new comers, as they are kind to thee."

The reader will bear in mind it is ill luck to move a cat.

Mary held a broom in her hand—a better one, I fear, than often falls to her lot in our household. "Shall I take it to the new house?"

"Have your own way, Mary." "It is bad luck Ma'am, to move a broom." "Leave it, by all means, then."

Bless her true Irish heart, filled to the brim with the wild superstitions of her country. And now we must go, and leave all these nooks endeared by a grief, or saddened by some genial recollection that will live only in the heart's core. Go and miss the papers for a week, miss the penny-post; lose poor little Biddy who used to come, like a bird, every morning for a breakfast, or a penny, and inwardly rejoice me in the hope of her blessing.

No wonder the mandrake groans to be torn from the earth. We are all mandrakes when disrupted from home.

All is confusion! Will the Lares ever find the hearth-stone? the Penates their Penetralia? It is the chaos of the home world. "Place that beautiful rose there—that table here; gently, good Mary, it is weak in the legs; now for the arm chair, remember the castors are a little loose, and the covering must be touched gingerly. Bid Ned look to the pigeons, for they will have to learn to like the new home, and now I must write."

Mary smuggled some rubbish out of sight, brought her one eye to bear kindly upon me, and then went out feeling I carried a blessing in my bosom for her. I tried to write—alas! where was the ugly crack in the wall, where my eyes had been fixed for many a day. Where was the bust of Milton, the demi-god of my mind's eye—there, it is true, but one side of the nose gone. The knight holds his head between his hands. Cleopatra is turned to the wall—alack! alack! "I cannot get the hang of it," as the boy said of the new school house. I am on the verge of tears; let

me take the dent out of this hat, and I will go refresh myself with air, water, and sunshine; and it will be hard with me if I am not as good as new in an hour's time.

THE NEW HOME.

CHANGE, change! From childhood it was irksome to me—and to this day I have a stubborn rejection of the new. I hate new people, new clothes, and above all, new homes. Everybody has a buckram look in a new dress—they are full of angles; are Janus-like, looking behind, before and upon each side; there is a doubt whether they will take kindly to the garment—whether the limbs will fall naturally into their new location, or, fretful and rampant, reject it altogether. So with the new home, it glares upon you with newness; it walls you in with an ill sense of limitness;—for all houses give one a sense of compression, and one must out under the broad heavens sometimes to be quite sure that he is not “cabined, cribbed, confined.” To feel the full grandeur of freedom and life he must mount a horse and away—then home, to rein in his spirit; fold his wings, tame down the eye; still the beating of the heart, and be like the rest of the world, impassible and stupid.

I wandered uneasily from room to room wishing habits, which are dull but comfortable things, could be the birth of volition. The halls had a cold, solitary echo—shadows of retreating spirits, belonging to the former occupants, “uncannie,” I am sure, trailed bat-like wings along the walls. I saw a light under Mary's

door, all else was dark and silent. I touched the door gently and looked in, for sleep is a sacred thing—

“The soul, fatigued away,
Fled like a thought, until the morrow day,
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.”

Poetic imagery can never go beyond the grace and beauty of that last line; and though the sleeping of the good Mary might not remind one of a rose bud, yet her fifty winters of maidenhood have held in abeyance a blossom to be unfolded in Paradise. I was sure of it—yes, I knew it was so. I felt the descent of cherubs of peace and hope, perching themselves on the foot board; hiding in nook and peering out from behind the books; I heard them “tirling at the latch,” where the children slept, and bouncing in and out of the kitchen. Could they fail to obey the invocation of the good soul? There she was upon her knees, counting her beads, one eye closed, (and the other is of no account) while the rest of us were sleeping, or wandering, myself, like an uneasy ghost.

THE SUPERNATURAL.—I crept back to my room—hour after hour passed—twelve, one—suddenly three knocks, long, solemn, and at midnight, terrible, resounded through the house. What could they be? brick walls give out no such sounds, and all was silent; my heart certainly beat loudly—the room had a dim unearthly look.

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamed of in our philosophy."

I wonder if I should have courage to face the supernatural, to question it, if the conviction of its certainty were forced home to my mind? Last night, when the clock struck twelve, the remembrance of the knocks sent a chill through my veins. I began to close my desk, and then a sense of the childishness of such fear, made me resume my pen, and I was soon lost in my subject. Now the house clock is a steady, useful article, not given to "cantrips," ticking on, day after day, and never "discontented" with the labor; striking with clearness and precision the hours as they fill up the space of sixty minutes. It had struck the hour of twelve—"not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." Suddenly, slow, solemn, the clock struck, one, two—I took the light, and went out to solve the mystery. All was hushed—the clock was going on as usual—no change, the minutes, the hours were the ordinary time—a quarter past twelve. Sounds of mysterious import! where in space—where in this breathing world is the record two! The beat of whose heart at the mystic hour of two to them, quarter past twelve to me, has found an echo in my solitude! I will believe, I long to feel that such things may be—I am joyful at the thought, that communications adapted to our strength may be afforded us; intimations of the presence of the loved—the gone before, may be, are vouchsafed to us, not in shapes such as curdle the blood, but simple, yet impressive sounds, because "hitherto ye were not able to bear them, neither now are ye able," saith the divine Teacher.

Chapter Eleventh.

“The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Were mine in early days;
And now, unforced by Time to part
With Fancy, I obey my heart,
And venture on your praise.”—WORDSWORTH.

Contempt cast upon the Imagination—Latent Truths unfolding—Double.
Dreaming—Ghosts.

“IF they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.” These words of the Divine Teacher have the vividness and authority of Truth. The mind, incapable of receiving the demonstrations of the understanding, the evidence of human testimony, and the authority of tradition, will be far less ready to accept the testimony supposed to come through the doubtful source of the Imagination. It would be curious to inquire into the reason why such contempt is cast upon this God-like faculty, one more arbitrarily distributed than any other, as though it were a best and final gift imparted richly only to the few. Indeed, all that is essential for our well-being in this world can be carried on through the help of other faculties; we can be judicious, witty, provident, energetic, and

loving, without the aid of the Imagination; and, therefore, the majority of mankind have it only in the rudimentary state; and these are the dull wiseacres, who sneer at what they have not the instruments to measure; laugh at what they cannot comprehend, and go about triumphantly flaunting their own deficiencies.

A munificent bestowal of the Imagination, other things being equal, gives the man of enlarged and comprehensive views, the far-seer into truth, the prophetic observer, the Milton, or Shakspeare, of the age. It presents, as it were, wings to the soul; imparts aspiration; gives a glow and elevation to all the other faculties of the mind—shaking them from the dust, and lifting them into a higher and better atmosphere.

Now it is a curious fact, that all matters relating to the supernatural, are cast at once upon this faculty—thus giving it an omnipotence of power. A knock heard at an unwonted hour is at once referred to the Imagination—any unusual form, sight, or movement, is imputed to an excitement of this organ. To me, this seems an exceeding unphilosophic, not to say indolent disposal of the matter. Either these things did, or did not exist. I do not believe that a faculty that aided Shakspeare to comprehend the universal in the human mind, and the blind Milton to see all space peopled with beings intent upon missions from the Most High, Cromwell and Napoleon to detect the rottenness of empire, and Newton to grasp the impalpable chain that binds the Universe into one, was given to mislead, abuse, and trick us into fantastical spectacles. It is time we dared take hold of these matters

manfully; if truth be in them, accept it boldly, like any other truth—if not, reject it by the wholesale.

“Do you believe, then?” it may be asked. I believe so far as my own experience, and the testimony of others justify. I will not believe myself deluded and bewildered by what is going on around me. I will not believe that senses, which have served me accurately hitherto, can be put upon by some little excitement only to play me tricks. *I will sooner believe there are hidden laws of what we call spiritual life, unknown to us as yet, but gradually unfolding, which, when comprehended, will cease to be supernatural.* I will not insult the veracity of others by doubting what they tell me as facts, because these facts wear an air of mystery, when I would take their word upon all other subjects even where the issues of life were concerned.

We know, in dreams, we seem to go forward, and anticipate what it may take us days or years to overtake. I remember at one time I was conscious of dreaming constantly and most deliciously, and yet could remember afterwards only some trivial or annoying circumstance in my dream, which was sure to transpire almost immediately—as though the mind, as it removed from the locality of the body, remembered only what was nearest to it. In this way, I was often whimsically reminded of my dream by the cook, who, unknown to me, served up the identical article I had seen in my sleep. For instance—I once said, “I saw —— bring in a lobster, I thought, last night.” Now I am not particularly fond of lobsters, and they were

but scarcely in the market. I had hardly finished speaking when he came in just as I had seen.

At another time I dreamed of walking up a very long, narrow wharf, when a man jostled me, and went by bearing a little coffin under his arm. I noticed his step was long and high. The next day, being invited to join a sailing-party, I walked up the identical wharf, and the incident I have described occurred—the man with the peculiar walk bearing the little coffin having jostled me precisely as in my sleep. At another time, I saw a man with a foreign, Jewish style of face, pass along, who fixed his eyes strangely upon mine. The next morning I saw the same individual as I walked with a friend through the Battery, who looked at me so fixedly as to attract the attention of my companion.

Now it would seem, that, as the soul went forward it encountered these unimportant features on its way, and these being nearest home, were remembered, while the images of its more distant excursion faded in sleep-land. In this way, it may be, arises that puzzled feeling which we sometimes have in regard to persons, events, and scenes—as though we had seen them all before—were acquainted with them, had lived with them, experienced them at some hidden time, we know not how or when. Coleridge and Wordsworth, with other Platonists, would call it pre-existence, but, may it not be owing to the experience of sleep?—we had lived it all before in that mysterious state when the body is wrapt in slumber, and the soul, ever active, journeys in space, and sees all

that the body shall undergo, and anticipates its own freedom from the bondage of materialism.

More than once have I in sleep hailed the idea, that *shadows* existed in that future state of beatitude which we call Heaven. I wander through a "faire countrie," joyful that my pilgrimage is over, and filled with repose at the purity and beauty of all things about me—when I behold a green slope with trees that lean lightly to the breeze. Shadows lie upon the side of the hill, cast from the trees, and I clap my hands with delight, saying, "on earth we thought there could be no shadows, as there was to be no sun, only a diffused light." Now this turn of thought had never occurred to me while waking, and it is certainly one full of beauty; for I fear the heaven preached from the pulpit would be a most monotonous and tiresome place.

At another time a clerical friend had died, whom I loved and respected. Unfortunately, to his way of thinking, we differed upon religious points, which he regarded as of such momentous interest, that the salvation of my soul was periled by 'disbelief. Shortly after his death, I dreamed he entered the room where I was sitting, looking the same, only more cheerful—a brighter, happier look. I knew him to be a spirit, and did not extend any of those courtesies common upon meeting friends, nor was I terrified.

I waited for him to speak. He looked at me kindly for a moment in silence, and then said, "I have come to tell you one thing in regard to the world in which I now am. I find that many opinions which I on earth regarded as all important are of no consequence

there." This wears much the appearance of revelation. I was very young at the time, and exceedingly sensitive in regard to religious truth, holding the opinions of Dr. Payson—for it was he of whom I dreamed—as next to the oracles of God, so that any retraction on his part would have been the last expectation of my mind. He was a dogmatic and prejudiced man, though gentle to the young—that kind of gentleness that is so touching from an austere character.

These were dreams, but certainly of a kind, that indicate not prophecy exactly, though we may call it such, but a *mental experience anterior to our corporeal*.

It is a mistaken idea that dreams always have their origin from some subject connected with our previous thoughts. This is sometimes the case, without doubt, to those clogged by the external world, but to those of a more spiritualized nature, sleep is, as it were, a disenthralment of the soul, leaving it to a joyous freedom of condition. Metaphysicians meet the subject of dreams as a mental matter only—as an intellectual—we mean, which is but part of the nature of man, whereas the intellect, sentiments, and affections, are all concerned therein, and if any part is quiescent, *it is that which is most exhausted by the urgencies of life*. I am willing to think that rest is essential even to the loftiest nature, that sabbath, which is at once peaceful and beatific; for even a spirit in a state of perpetual action must assume something of the diabolic. Repose is associated with a sense of power—it has dignity, divinity in it; whereas we instinctively give *unrest* to evil.

We rarely dream of those in whom our affections are most interested, or of the subject which last engaged our thoughts upon going to sleep, the spirit bounding as it were from what had exhausted or impeded it, and seeking a new subject. The reasoning faculties, those dry bones of the mind, devoid of feeling, and needless of rest, just as they are incapable of fatigue, (as all bores are,) will often pertinaciously continue a subject even in sleep, and having the field all to themselves, follow out results at once clear and profound; groups of the faculties combine and revel, leaving the sister powers to repair by rest the overaction of the world. The lover rarely dreams of the object of his affections, because his waking thoughts are so occupied with her that rest is required. The mother is disappointed that she does not dream of an absent or beloved child, whereas, were her affections less active in regard to him she might often dream, but as it is, sleep mercifully comes to close up that avenue of thought, or insanity would be the result.

So in the death of friends, those to whom we are most intimately and devotedly attached, rarely visit our dreams in the long paroxysm of our grief—as though the spiritual vision associated with them were already overdone, and we sleep in forgetfulness till time may have softened the sense of bereavement; while those whose loss affects us less painfully, seem to hover around us for awhile, as if they took pleasure in continuing our companionship, and would do so much longer did we not yield to the feeling that they are lost to us. Our enemies, those who are naturally and instinctively antagonistic to us, I believe, judging

from my own experience, never visit us in sleep after their death—from whence we may infer their sphere is entirely removed from ours in the next state of existence as well as in this. The reason why we are commanded to pray for them must be, not in the hope of sympathy, but lest in our hearts while we are willing their sphere should be divergent from our own, we unconsciously wish it may be a *worse* one.

Of those who eat and drink grossly, and then unblushingly tell of the disordered shapes that visit them in slumber, I can say nothing. If incubi come from overwrought nerves, and over-taxed sensibilities, it is an evil incident to the material and may indicate that it will soon be dissolved; but if they come from the persisted-in enormities of the table, or any other abuses of life, depend upon it, they are real shapes with which the dwarfed, impoverished, and degraded spirit will hereafter hold companionship, and who come now to hold boon revelry before you are freed from the world. How a human being can eat or drink twice an article that has played mischief with him, seems so puerile as to be incredible, did we not know it to be a fact. Sleep should be

“Light and airy from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapors bland,”

and the dreams of such are joyful and airy as the workings of the “dainty Ariel.” Our waking experience is certainly a hard unmistakable fact, and if our experience in sleep is equally coherent and far more congenial to our best nature, I know not why

we should not equally regard it as a fact, and as a part of that *true* life into which a state of existence more accordant will present us. At any rate, I am willing to do so, and to pray God that I may not owe this little evil world any spite, considering, that though waking may not have been over felicitous, sleeping has been a delight.

Not unfrequently, we not only dream, but dream we are telling our dream. All are more or less subject to visions that recur again and again, pertinaciously. De Quincey speaks of these—they seem to be facts in sleep-land—places or events to which we recur in *sleep memory*, or which the spirit visits.

I have had many of these; the latest is that of being in a high marble room, with windows in deep embrasures—lofty in height, and abundant in tracery. The furniture I did not notice, except at one side there is a luxurious mat, a sofa, table, books and boquets. There is an air of gloomy grandeur in the room—I am alone—but *always there is an open portal into which the sunlight streams with a warm cheerful glow*. Now I have seen nothing in life like this room, which I should recognize at once, if I ever had. All is foreign to me, and in my sleep, I say often, “Oh I am in Italy again.” I have so often seen this in my visions that I frequently tell in my sleep of this dream, and then I dream that I am dreaming it. (The reader must pardon this tautology inseparable to a subject whose vocabulary is limited). Once the operation became triplicate with singular clearness. I thought I had the dream so familiar to me, and was conscious it was a dream, for I said to myself, “I am dreaming

that I dream of that ancient room again," and then, as if struck with the singularity of the thing, I reached still another consciousness which can hardly be seized in a waking state. I thought I said softly to myself—"Hush, I am dreaming that I dream that old dream over again," just as if I feared to destroy the state into which I had fallen. I do not know whether this is common in sleep or not—I give the fact in the hope that others may be led to throw further light upon the subject. I never knew but one, and that was a boy of fifteen, who was conscious of *continued double* action of the mind in sleep. It is certain that we have an indistinct impression of vastness, magnificence, beauty, and infinitude, when waking from slumber, that no effort of mere volition can produce. There is a depth and breadth in the internal consciousness which we hardly reach in waking, and which fills us with sublime emotions whether the result be tangible or not.

In the nature of what are called Apparitions, I regret to say I have been less fortunate than in dreams. This may be owing to habits of poetic imagery, filling the life with ideal shapes, which I know to be such, and can by no means construe into the "majesty of Denmark."

Others in whose veracity I have the utmost reliance, have told me of experiences most singular, and I know of no reason why these should not be credited, and written down as a part of the testimony that shall go to establish a truth, or swell a denial. That slight communications have always existed between the Seen and the Unseen world, few will deny, if urged to the

point; and yet all will cry out sturdily and triumphantly, "I am not superstitious," as though that were any merit, one way or the other. Some are too dull to think at all upon the matter; they are not superstitious because they are nothing—others are too weak and credulous to think consistently upon any subject, far less upon these, that require a good endowment both of reason and imagination. Probably one cause why so much contempt is cast upon these things is, the poorness of the material. Ghosts are said to appear not with the terrific majesty of Hamlet and Banquo, or the terrible significancy of Cæsar's "I will meet thee at Philippi," but too often noisy and petty in their demonstrations, leaving a just doubt as to the existence of any truth as to the supernatural. Still many of these things have been thoroughly well authenticated, as in the case of the Wesley family, and some others of less note. It is objected that their revelations throw no light upon the eternal world—why do not they tell something that shall confirm our faith in those momentous interests? I have before spoken of these as the poor, weak gossips of Limbo, who know nothing which they might reveal.

Chapter Twelfth.

A spirit passed before my face : the hair of my flesh stood up : It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof : an image was before mine eyes, *there was silence*, and I heard a voice.—JOB.

A Presentiment—Traditional Authority—Impalpable Shapes—The One Sin—The Penitent Child Spirit.

IF we give credence to anything beyond what we are able to account for, upon the grounds of reason and experience; or, in other words, the supernatural, one point is established, namely, that a relation does exist between this life and a some future life, and that is all that is essential for us to know; for were the secrets of the eternal world entirely revealed to us, we should be less interested in the subject than we now are, while it is involved in doubt and mystery.

People often boast of not being superstitious. They may be the worse from the fact—lower in thought, and lower in the scale of being. Superstition is the blind element to the religious feeling, and however enlightened may be our views upon the great subjects of revelation, whoever stops short in a merely rational religion, lacks its best principle, that instinctive faith which springs from the needs of humanity. He

who believes warmly in these great truths, is apt to cast about to see what will confirm its hidden mysteries. A man who reasons profoundly, and yet is unable to recognize a consciousness beyond and above all reason, is devoid of one great and beautiful element, characteristic of an enlarged and elevated mind.

I have observed that persons not pre-occupied with metaphysic subtleties, and of pureness and singleness of life, are the ones to receive intimations apparently denied to others.

A PRESENTIMENT.

The mother of the writer once, while engaged in prayer, was conscious of "great freedom and out-going of the spirit," (quoting her own words, which have a primitive and apposite beauty about them), such as she had never known before, till she attempted to pray for a beloved son, who was then absent on a voyage at sea. When she named him, that he might be saved from the perils of the deep, her utterance failed her entirely—she attempted again and again, and each time found herself bewildered and expressionless. The next day she was silent, and greatly depressed, and told a friend, confidentially, that she was sure her child was dead. *He was drowned that very night, having been swept from the shrouds in a heavy gale.*

Now here was an intimation coming neither through the reason nor the imagination—one unexpected and painful—a fact in the experience of a mind, for she told the circumstance many weeks before the sad intelligence of his death reached her, saying, most affect-

ingly, "I cannot pray for him, and I am sure he must be dead, or I should find comfort in doing so."

I had a similar story from another mother, a courageous, matter-of-fact woman, of equal directness of thought and feeling with the foregoing, but taciturn, and far less spiritual. She lived on the sea-shore, and had a son, on a long voyage. One night she was kept awake by a heavy storm, which beat against the windows—it was intensely dark, no moon nor any light in the room. She lay with her eyes open in the direction of the foot-board—at length she became conscious that she had been looking, for a length of time, at *two small globes of light just above the frame of the bed*. She arose, thinking they might proceed from some vessel in the harbor. But there was neither light nor rent—neither moon nor stars. She moved her hand over the place, thinking of glow-worms, or fire-flies—the lights did not change, nor did they touch the wood. For the first time she began to feel a mystery. "The lights," she continued, "were about as far apart as eyes would be; were not glaring, but soft, and had a distant appearance, and yet seemed close to the foot of the bed. When I heard my child was drowned on that voyage, I felt as if he had *looked in*, that night, in the storm, upon his poor old mother." She rocked herself back and forth, with a new burst of grief.

Now it seems to me quite as philosophic, and quite as *human* to adopt the simple, true-hearted woman's solution of the mystery, as to cast about and refer it to an excited imagination. And admitting it to have been conjured by the imagination, which, by the way,

was not powerful with her, and had not been in a state of excitement, why may not that faculty have its truths, which are as real, as much facts, as any of the other faculties? Admit these are more ethereal, more intangible than others; do we not admit that we are not made up altogether of materialism? We raise corn and potatoes for our appetites, and roses and lilies for our sense of the beautiful, and one is as much a *need* as the other. Yet the gratification of the one is received through our ordinary and every-day necessities, while the other is a luxury and delight through the imagination: one is as real as the other.

A friend dies—we feel the bereavement of the affections—see the dead body—our loss is a fact. Now if we have a faculty, by which intimations, disconnected with the body of our friend, may reach us, I see no reason why we should not take comfort thereby—I see no reason why we should not admit testimony to that effect—nor why we should heap contempt and abuse upon the faculty by which we become cognizant of that kind of truth. We may ourselves be deficient in it—we may have dulled, neglected and abused it, but why should we not give credence to those of clearer vision? Did we do so in truth and simplicity, charlatans would not dare trifle and cajole the credulous, by attempting frauds of the kind, for the purposes of gain; *impiously pretending to sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

Strange that we should need appeals in behalf of our spiritual existence, for if we truly believe in it, why should we not be ready to recognize intimations

of a sympathy between that and the external? All the best sentiments and affections of our nature plead for this, and if the reason or understanding reject the faith, it is only because that is a part of the soul which needs it not, *which neither hopes nor fears, nor loves nor hates, but only demonstrates*. It is common to both gods and devils—the pure intellect—but it is not the *soul*. It is well to reason clearly—it is part of man to do so, but to *only reason* is impish.

Reason should take the aliment craved by each of the other faculties, and judge of its appropriateness, but why she should starve the imagination, and call it ill names, it would be difficult to conceive. It is as much a part of a true man, ay, and the best part too, as reason herself.

I confess I am willing to employ my reason to confirm my imagination. I do doubt, and yet long to believe. I look about for testimony—I am ready to receive authority—instead of replying to some thrilling story with the impertinent, puerile, and conceited—"I am not superstitious," I desire to be so, in the best sense of the term, and only regret the meagreness of my own experience. Yet, that there *is truth* in these things, is evident from the universal faith in them. True, the vulgar have loaded them with childish and terrific images, but the subject admits the latter element, and the former must be imputed to the weakness of untutored thought. The Banshee of the Irish, the Second Sight of the Scotch, and the Wild Huntsman of the German, all point to some truth, which has become crystallized into shape. I may not take

these things literally, but they are voices under the throne, to which I am willing to listen while the throne itself is enveloped in mystery.

I have regretted the meagreness of my own experience, and yet I once had a pretty incident of the unusual kind through a child. He was a healthful, lively and intelligent boy of three years old. One bright Sabbath-evening twilight he had been singing in my arms, and then sat awhile perfectly quiet; suddenly he turned around and whispered in my ear, "Who is that leaning over the rocking chair?"

"Who does it look like," I replied, without the least appearance of surprise—for the chair was empty, and stood quite near us.

"He looks so pleasant," was the reply, in his imperfect utterance.

"Will you go and shake hands?" I asked. He disengaged himself from my arms, crossed over to the chair, and looking confidently upwards, *grasped the air*, and not till he had done so two or three times did his countenance change, and then he whispered, "*I tant feel him!*" sighed heavily, and returned to my arms.

The child more than once spoke of seeing objects in this way — was perfectly healthful, playful, and noisy as other children. I never showed either surprise or curiosity in the matter, never repeated the story in his presence, scarcely ever have talked about it in any way, so there was nothing to pique the marvellous in the child, and nothing to tempt to falsehood, by making him the hero of a story. The pres-

ence must have been real to him, not caused by disease or excitement. I turned his attention at once to other subjects, without making any comment.

At another time, he crawled from his little crib, and waked me, saying—"The peasant (pleasant) man has tome adain," pointing to the back of his cradle. There was no object that could possibly deceive the fancy of the child.

"Well, go to sleep, my dear," I said. He laid down tranquilly, and presently called out, "He is done, dear ——" and soon was fast asleep again. There was nothing extraordinary in the habits of the child—he was affectionate, exceedingly truthful, and knew nothing of fear, never had known, and was of that joyous, happy temperament which many would suppose unallied to anything of the kind.

The next story I shall tell was related to me many years ago, by a woman in the country—a pious, plain woman, who had it from one of her neighbors. I have since seen a similar story in an old newspaper of that vicinity, which must have come from the same source. If this taxes credulity, I am willing to do so. The story is so strange, wears so much the aspect of truth, that it is easier to take it as a fact, than to conceive of it as an invention.

THE ONE SIN.

A poor widow woman lived in one of the back towns of Maine. Her husband left her with a small patch of ground, a one-story house, (as it is there called), and two or three children. The widow sup-

ported these children by spinning flax for the wives of the neighboring farmers. It may well be conceived that her means were limited—that the utmost frugality existed in the little household, and that the tone of the family might have been of a saddened character, likely to operate powerfully upon the nerves of a sensitive child. Accordingly, we find the youngest to have been one of those beautiful beings that come to gladden an earthly house for a while, and then depart, leaving it desolate. He was remarkable for his ingenuousness, beauty, and those ideal tastes which we are apt to think are developed only under refined and elegant associations. He was in fact the tenderly cared-for Benjamin of the family, and yet with a nature so fine that indulgence did not injure him.

It happened at one time that the widow received a sum of money for her labor, one piece of which was a bright silver two shillings, worth twenty-five cents. Small as was the amount, every penny was needful in the household, and was husbanded with care. Suddenly, to the surprise and grief of the mother, the bright piece disappeared; and from the appearance of the child, who was too ingenuous to deceive adroitly, and at the same time too young, being only about four years of age, she suspected him to have purloined it. She questioned him closely: he turned very pale, but denied all knowledge.

This he reiterated with so much appearance of distress, that the matter was allowed to drop; but at the same time the little creature grew pale, silent, and in a few days died. The widow was horror-struck—she

feared her suspicions had wronged the child and caused his death. In the excess of her grief, she spoke openly of her fault to the neighbors, and was well-nigh inconsolable, for all know there is nothing more torturing than remorse, and nothing which time so resolutely refuses to assuage.

A few nights after its decease, as she lay weeping, the child seemed to stand in the centre of the room, not looking at herself, but as if troubled and irresolute; at length it stooped down and put its little hand through an aperture or "knot-hole" in the rough boards of the floor, for the house was unfinished—the rafters and walls being all visible in their rough state—and the room but scantily furnished. When it had done this slowly, it turned toward herself and was gone.

The next night she saw the same appearance. The third night she resolved to rise, and see if the child would speak to her. She did so; but when she approached the spot, nothing was visible. She pondered the matter in her mind long and painfully, and, upon the first appearance of light, intent to learn all that could be learned in regard to this mysterious visitation, she lifted the board of the floor, and there, directly under the "knot-hole," was the lost piece of silver.

The poor child, ingenuous in nature, true in soul, had lied with the lips, while every nerve and fibre in its being had *pleaded and spoken truth even to death*. The contest had been too much for it, *and that which was perishable had yielded to the strife*. There is a terrible pathos in the incident, simple as it is. The

image of the beautiful but fallen child, hiding its purloined treasure in this child-like manner, and going in secrecy and dread to gloat over it: and then, when death had closed the contest between its best and weaker nature, the spirit returning penitently to hover over the place of its *one sin*, that it might cure the *stricken mother of the pangs of remorse*. There is a consistency and beauty in the tale, a simpleness and truth in its texture, such as belongs to a fact, rather than an invention. It is one of those things we would like to believe.

Chapter Thirteen.

“Coming events cast their shadows before.”—CAMPBELL.

The ominous Thirteen—Home Superstitions—The Ghost Father—The Step Mother.

OUR book closes with the fatal thirteen, which is so terrific to those who attach a false estimate to life. I remember, two years ago, I was in a group of thirteen. I drew no attention to the fact, for we were all in fine health and spirits; and all persons do not regard this world like myself as the enveiled eternal, therefore, I merely noted the circumstance in my own mind. In less than ten days, the finest child of the whole group died.

It is said that a party was once assembled in London, of which Lamb, Hunt, and other choice spirits of the day were members. Some one upon entering said, “thirteen”—and instantly retired—as did Lamb. Fontleroy, the forger, who it will be remembered was an accomplished man, said, “well, I will stay by, notwithstanding.” Before the year was out, he was executed.

I hope the reader will not let these omens curdle his blood; but so ancient and well attested an ominousness attached to a number must be treated kindly. If I were musical I think I should find analogy in the notation of the art, and I beg others to see what they

can do with it in this way, for I am sadly at fault in any theory to suit the occasion. I think I would be willing to be the victim of a thirteen, provided any good could come of it. Possibly the number is choice in the next stage of existence, which may account for its fatality in this world. The solar months are twelve, the lunar, thirteen.

It would be amusing to trace home the superstitions prevalent amongst different people, and follow the analogies of location and belief. It is the fashion of our people to refer everything that is marvellous amongst us to a foreign origin: if a writer avails himself of the treasures of his own imagination, or the mysterious lore gathered in childhood from the lips of nurses and simple country folk—he is accused of a German taint, of borrowing from some transatlantic source of which he never dreamed. The writer has listened to tales of the wild and marvellous when a child in an old farm-house, more thrillingly beautiful than any recorded in books.

Our country is peculiarly favorable for legends of the kind, especially to those whose families are allied to the first settlers of the soil. These have heard the traditional tales of "Fader-land"—of the "Old Countrie"—intermingled with those generated from the experience of the first settlers, who, removed from the turmoil of civilized life, having intercourse with it only after protracted and perilous intervals; surrounded by wild beasts, by merciless and treacherous savages, and the gloom of immeasurable forests—weighed by solitude, isolation, and religious asperity—suffering

privations, labor, and bereavement, unrelieved by the hope of better things in their own day, must have found all these combining to swell the power of that mystical element of the human mind, which I will not believe to have been idly given, or given only to deceive and degrade. Men thus situated must have acquired a preponderating introversive tendency; in their distress and gloom they would naturally be led to observe *presentiments and dreams*, and in their bereavements they would seem to be brought *very near to the unseen world*. Hence we find these old families abound with legends, at once wild, beautiful, and touchingly significant.

It is called superstition. Let that be the name. If we cannot restore the hardy faith of our ancestors—a faith evolved and strengthened by great and stirring times—if the need of their stoical virtues is lost in a more luxurious period—let us at least reverence the firmness with which they met the perils they encountered, and that purity, not to say greatness of life, by which they *stepped nearer to the spiritual* in their trials, instead of doing as we rather do, shrink from the hidden and spiritual, and *step, nay, plunge into the sensuous*. The superstitions engendered by the early settlers have a magnitude and solidness about them that refreshes the mind willing to grasp them. We feel their origin to have been in dark and trying times. I remember many of these; one shall suffice as throwing light upon the period.

It was when the country was thinly inhabited, the dwellings isolated and built of logs, that a poor young woman, who had been but lately left a widow, gave

birth to a fine robust child. No one was in the house at the time but a girl, who in those primitive days filled the office of friend and servant, and who was dispatched at midnight, a distance of three miles, to procure assistance, leaving the newly made mother entirely alone. The women of that day had so many actual perils to encounter, that they were not likely to suffer from the pettiness and nervousness of their more feeble descendants, and Mrs. L. seems to have little regarded the circumstance of being left alone at such an hour, and so far removed from human succor.

The girl made all haste, called up the "Goodwives" of the day, and hurried back, leaving them to follow. As she emerged from the forest, and was crossing the "clearing" where the house stood, she encountered a stranger bearing an infant in his arms. They passed each other rapidly, the young woman being so full of solicitude for her friend, that she gave the unusual circumstance of passing a stranger at any time, where the inhabitants of a whole district were all known to each other, and a stranger at so unusual an hour likewise, but little thought.

Upon entering the cabin, Mrs. L. was found in a swooning state; she had fallen in such a manner as to *over-lay the child, which was quite dead*. The first words she uttered on coming to herself were, "I have seen my husband; he came in and looked at the baby: I sprang to speak to him, but he was gone." Then the girl remembered the apparition she had seen.

Here was an operation upon the minds of two. In the case of the bereaved wife, we may suppose her

thoughts would naturally and vividly revert to the father of her child at such a time, and we may admit that her imagination would be not unlikely to produce the semblance of her late companion; but in the case of the girl this concession would have no weight, as she was not occupied with that current of thought in the least. The story presents a striking picture of the sufferings and isolation of the earlier settlers of the country.

I remember when a child, a servant girl at my mother's used to wear a string of large gold beads, an ornament still to be found about the necks of women in the back towns of Maine. These beads were often the subject of comment with us children, from their peculiar hue, being leaden rather than golden. I strenuously insisted they had never been gold—only a wash. I was checked in this assertion in a mysterious manner upon several occasions, and at the same time assured that the jewelers had tested them, and pronounced them gold, notwithstanding their singular color.

At length the girl took me one side and told the secret of the beads. Her mother had died many years before, when Sarah was quite a child, who by the way was a dull, plain girl, taciturn, and grave, and totally unimaginative; a kind of character which I, at that time, could not in the least comprehend. Ignorant, as children are, of constitutional differences of character, I supposed the stolid dullness of Sarah must be occasioned by what to Mrs. Chick's mind caused the death of poor Mrs. Dombey, "she did not make an effort."

Just previous to the death of the good woman she took these beads from her own and tied them around the neck of Sarah, saying at the same time in the most emphatic manner, "I hope these beads will turn white, if a mother-in-law ever lays the weight of her finger upon them, to take them away from my child."

At length the poor woman died, leaving her husband to another wife, as she had anticipated. The new mother was a stirring and harsh-tempered woman, not a little of a vixen, as the first wife might have been, judging from the speech we have recorded, and from demonstrations made when "out of the body," as we shall show, anon.

Great changes were made in the household—the children were removed to less commodious rooms than those they had occupied in the life-time of their mother. The youngest, a child of two years, was put away to sleep by itself, in an upper and dark, cold room, where it often cried long and bitterly. The older children were frowned into silence, and the father, who seems to have been rather imbecile, never had courage to interfere. All the best articles that had once been the property of the late wife, and should have been sacred to her children, were appropriated by the coarse-minded woman to her own use, and finally the beads were taken from Sarah's neck, and made to grace the throat of the imperious step-mother. "And then their hue was changed, as I could see with my own eyes," continued the girl.

These details were given me with a flood of tears; but the most remarkable was yet to come. The neighbors began to remonstrate, especially in regard to the

baby, who was known to suffer from cold and neglect of various kinds, but this interference was to little purpose, as the haughty woman was much feared.

Now the house was an old fashioned building, with a heavy staircase through the centre of a hall, into which the principal apartments opened upon each side. One night the child cried loudly from cold and terror, when the step-mother hurried from the room to still it, followed by Sarah. In traversing the hall, as she was about to put her foot upon the first stair, she stopped suddenly, uttered a loud scream, and pressed her hand to her cheek. She presently recovered herself, and said bitterly to Sarah, "your mother has just struck me in the face." *From that time a red spot existed upon that side, which no one had before seen.* The child did not cry any more, but when questioned said, "my dead ma'ma came and tucked me up and sang to me."

It repeated the same story often, and when put to bed would say, "Now my dead ma'ma will come." In the mean while a new child was added to the family, and now the turbulent selfishness of the step-mother rendered their home so uncomfortable that the first children were "put out" amongst their relatives and friends, to live as best they might. Sarah, at the time she served in our family, was probably something over thirty, a poor disheartened being, who told what I have related as a part of the painful experience of her childhood, which she revived with reluctance.

I have made use of the story elsewhere, with some changes for the sake of poetic beauty, and the critics have said I borrowed it from the German. Legends of the sort are innumerable, all having their origin in

that instinctive repugnance to second marriages, so rife amongst our people; a repugnance to be accounted for on the grounds of sentiment alone—for facts and philosophy are both opposed to it. A bride, it is said, was about to lay her head upon her pillow, when she saw the faint outline of one there before her. She moved back—nothing was visible—upon approaching the bed again, the same appearance chilled her with terror, for she saw distinctly the features of her predecessor, who waved her away.

We can imagine that in a primitive and straitened society, a sentiment opposed to second marriages, amounting even to superstition, might exist—in California, for instance, where the gentler sex are “like angel visits,” a community would hardly tolerate a monopoly of more than one; and the feeling to which we have referred may have arisen in part from this cause, but more through a sense of inflicted injury, somewhere; the husband has been cruel, the wife ill-used, and a spiritual visitation ensues. “*Could not rest in my grave under such a wrong,*” is a common expression, and may be true, for aught we know.

The writer has thus thrown herself into the midst of Dreams and Phantoms, impalpable shapes and airy nothings. Her material might be greatly extended, but perhaps her devotion to Truth will be sufficiently shown by what is written, and in her willingness to ally herself with a subject from which almost all shrink, as one stigmatized with contempt, and met

with scorn and ridicule. It is certainly popular, for, from the most cultivated to the most illiterate, a "ghost story," at once arrests the attention, and commands interest, if it does not respect.

It will be seen that the writer avows some faith; all that she can she is willing to award the subject—to her the Unseen world seems far more the true world—the real world—than the Seen; for, take our life at its lowest estimate, the needs that belong to the spiritual part of us, the thoughts and emotions that make up our being, are far more urgent, more real and unescapable, than anything that belongs to us as material existences. Joy and sorrow each make us forget the claims of hunger; heat and cold are forgotten in the intensity of thought or emotion—*physical pain is a relief, a comfort, in mental agony*—"what shall we eat, and what shall we drink," absorbs comparatively little of our attention, while the needs of a being capable of thought, of aspiration, of progress, all mental in their significance, are infinite.

This being the case, I long to see what gleams of light are let into the material dwelling; gleams from spiritual essences, coming from other, and more etherealized states of being, to assure and recognize the Tenant within ourselves. While the material, which passes away, has been so abundantly cared for, I desire to see how much light and solace is vouchsafed to that other more urgent and spiritual life. I am unwilling to reject the poorest atom of truth—but am ready to ask for more. It is time that men learned to meet these things fairly—giving them the weight to which they are entitled, separating the wheat from the chaff.

That much of crude imagery, of terror, and coarse if not foolish error, is mixed with the truth, all will admit; and it must be so till some clear, pure mind is willing to reduce the subject to shape, and give it the benefit of the light; for now it lurks in stealthy places, amid darkness and dread, paleness and the whisperings of guilt. Surely if there is a side thus dark and distorted, conjured by a guilty conscience, there must exist its counterpart of light, and beauty, and love; if *Demons, slinking and grim, may cross the path, Angels, likewise, fair and fearless, may walk the earth.* Why not look into these things openly and bravely? why leave them to the glowing imaginations, as they are called, of the few, and the fears of the many, when it may be they have an every-day significance and bearing upon the experience of us all, only we will not come to the light to learn the revelation.

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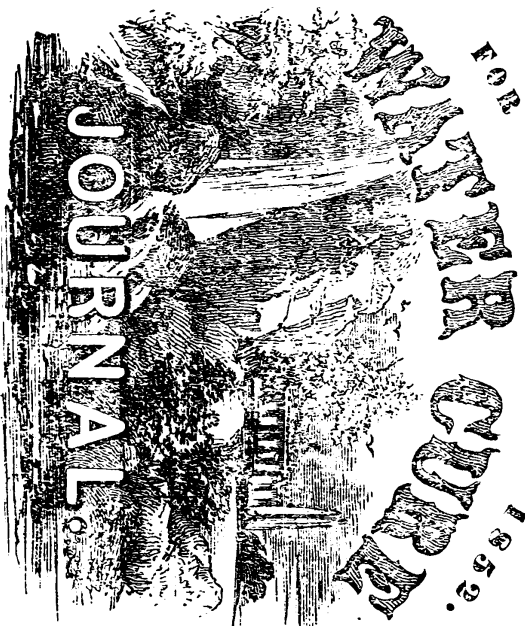
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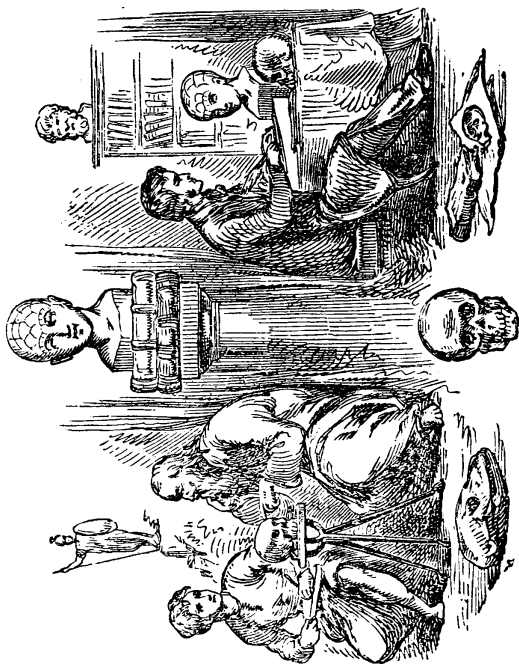
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