



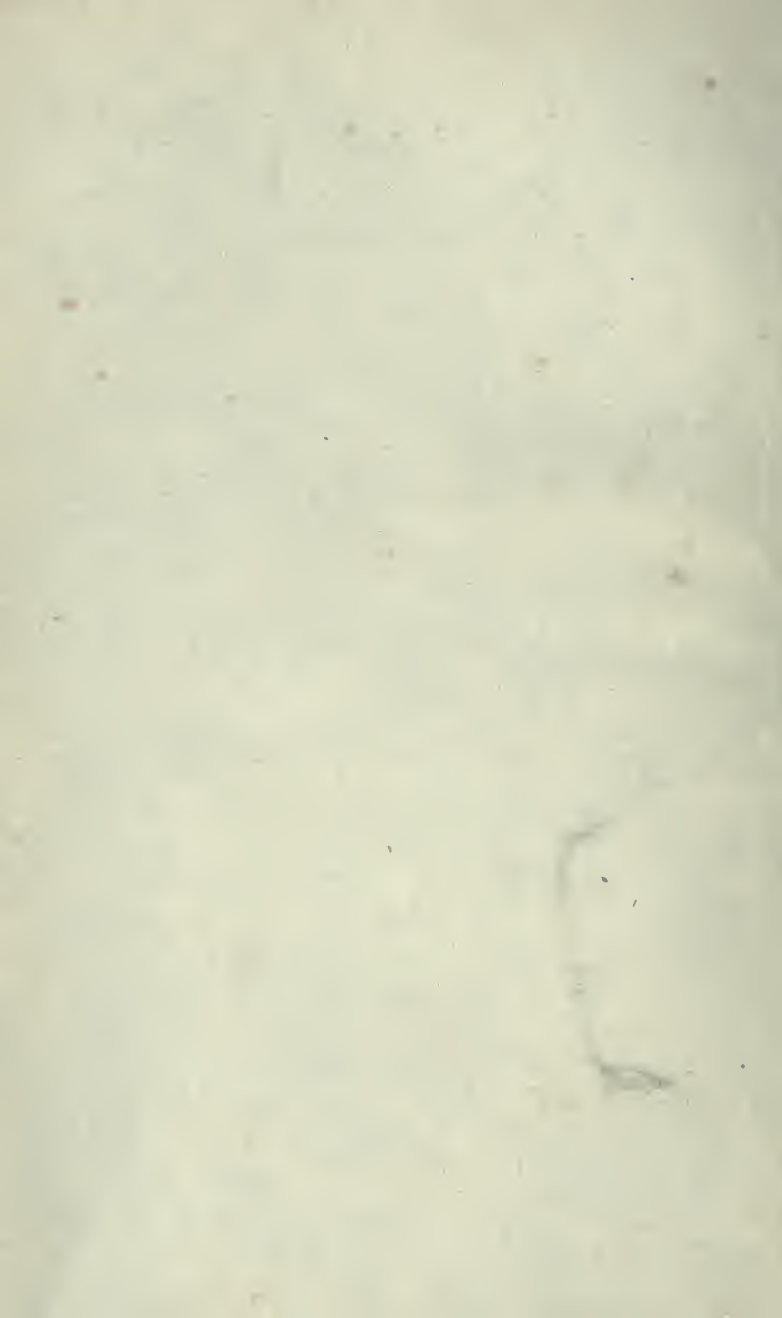
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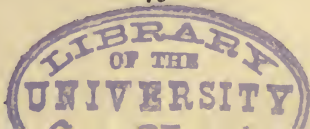
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## PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THERE is not a man whom sorrow has not touched, nor a pathway which it has not clouded. It walks in company with the heart that is glad, and speaks to the child whose steps are free from care. The subject, therefore, addresses each soul. It is the plaintive story of time.

The age in which we are living is an outward age. It touches matter rather than mind. It is scientific rather than philosophical. It needs to be more realistic, more subjective, and more inclined to look at the evil that marks off man. Whatever relates to the soul is a matter of interest. Whether the experience be dark or bright, painful or pleasant, we should know it. The words sin, remorse, unrest, grief, despair, unhappiness, point to experiences that are shaded; yet he who fails to scan them closely is not wise. The greatest human passions are linked with sadness. There is an ineffable sigh wandering through the soul, telling



of an infinite loss, and pointing to an infinite Satisfier.

It is a striking fact that the mind of man does feel an interest in the working of both guilt and sorrow. The popularity of "The Tragedies" of Æschylus, "The Divine Comedy" of Dante, "The Plays" of Shakespeare, and Goethe's "Faust," shows this. The romances of a people and their songs, the sermons and hymns of gifted minds, the paintings of the great masters, and the prayers of the good, all speak to the heart because of the pathetic element that runs through them.

The present treatise is not a devotional book, although veins of devotion are found in it. It does not strictly relate to the afflictions of man, or to piety on its sombre side, or to the absolute gloom of grief. It rather calls attention to certain phases of sorrow; giving shape to our consciousness upon the subject, and seeking to impress the mind in a way that seems right. Any person, therefore, may read the work, whether he be indifferent, joyful, or sad. The chapters are arranged rhetorically rather than logically, as that method seemed the most suitable.



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# SORROW.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF SORROW.*

WHEN *deep sad emotion* has been awakened in the mind by an object, that emotion *holds the mind to the object*. Let a father be ushered into a room where he beholds his son lying dead, whom he expected to see alive and well,—that father will be quite unable to think of any other object but his son. It seems to be a law of all the emotions that when they are strung they hold the mind with steady power to their varied objects. If I love most ardently any specific person or pursuit in life, that person or pursuit is ever before me. Let me be greatly terrified while sailing the ocean in view of

probable shipwreck, then the dread imagery of shipwreck settles around my soul. Is sin causing me to feel intensely, eternity alarming me, God starting sad and painful emotions? then I think of nothing but sin, eternity, and God. If I feel little, I think little. Men are depressed or elevated, saved or lost, by their emotions.

Many sorrows are *sharp* and *impulsive* at the *beginning*. Let a mother receive a letter stating that her daughter is dead; instantly she bursts into tears. Quite likely she will cry aloud, having neither power nor inclination to restrain herself. There may be people in the room with her, but she heeds not their presence. The fountain of sorrow has been opened, and the stream rushes forth in its own way. No art is at work here. The simple feeling acts according to its own law, and speaks in its own native language.

After a season, however, the sorrow *retires*, and the person is more *reserved*. At this stage, the grief may be more oppressive than it was at first, though outwardly it may seem to be less. The reflective faculty is now at work and the feelings are put under law, by which means the individual is more still.

There is pain from the fact that the sorrow is pressed into a region by itself. Consciousness also has come into play, and this fastening upon the sorrow, there is felt to be a greater weight upon the soul. With the thoughtfulness of the mind, there is a clearer apprehension of that which caused the trouble, which may help to deepen it. Persons just after a funeral are less boisterous in their sorrow than they were before; yet to say that they feel less is not true: the whole scene is mentally spread out around them, and they may even feel more. The desire now is to shrink back into themselves, not caring to go anywhere, or to mingle in company that once pleased them. Manifestations of sympathy are very grateful to persons who are bereaved. The kindness of friends stays them up. They feel stronger and happier. Yet if many calls are made to the house of mourning, it is best to allow the sorrowful to remain by themselves; simply tell them of the kind neighbors who came to sympathize with them in their distress. To be compelled to talk with each visitor about one's loss would deepen the sorrow, instead of diminishing it. The excited mind needs rest.

There is another stage, and that is when the afflicted person *comes forth from his retirement*, and is *ready to converse*. This is a sign that the sorrow is not so deep as it once was. New feelings are starting up in the mind, and there is more ease and freedom. Business is now attended to with more heart, and perhaps there is more carefulness about life than formerly.

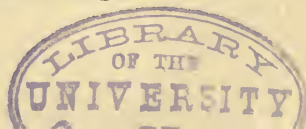
Again; *one sorrow may expel another* from the soul. Here is a man depressed in his mind by reason of some loss—say of money. All at once a much-loved friend is taken dangerously ill. His anxiety on that friend's account is so great that he forgets both the loss and the sorrow. Even in the common working of our mind, we may remember how frequently one state of sadness has been expelled by another. By reason of shifting trains of thought, new emotions appear and disappear with great rapidity.

Still, again, *two sorrows will sometimes unite*, and thus intensify the anguish of the soul. On the one hand, my house burns to the ground and poverty stares me in the face; while on the other, my nearest friend dies; and thus a double woe presses me to the dust. In-



stead of two evils, there may be any number above that. The collective force of a long train may strike and sink the soul. When report succeeded report, telling Job of the loss of his cattle, his servants, and his sons, we can understand how this must have affected him. Evil rose upon evil till the whole culminated and fell upon the soul of the patient man. There are cases also when a sorrow that has tarried long with us is now about to give way ; but, just as it is leaving, it is sent back into the heart, there to mingle with a new sorrow that has just appeared. A son clad in mourning for a father, who had been dead two years, is about to take it off ; but at that particular time the mother dies ; which fact awakens the previous sorrow and connects it with one that is present ; the garb of mourning being now the symbol of a double grief.

Furthermore, though two sorrows may agitate the same heart, the *heavier sorrow* may have *no tears*, while the *lighter one* has. This seems like a contradiction ; and yet it is a fact of nature. The following incident will illustrate the point : “ Cambyses, when he conquered Egypt, made Psammenitus the king prisoner ; and for trying his constancy, ordered his daughter to



be dressed in the habit of a slave, and to be employed in bringing water from the river; his son also was led to execution with a halter about his neck. The Egyptians vented their sorrow in tears and lamentations; Psammenitus only, with a downcast eye, remained silent. Afterward meeting one of his companions, a man advanced in years, who, being plundered of all, was begging alms, he wept bitterly, calling him by his name. Cambyses, struck with wonder, demanded an answer to the following question: "Psammenitus, thy master Cambyses, is desirous to know, why, after thou hadst seen thy daughter so ignominiously treated and thy son led to execution, without exclaiming or weeping, thou shouldst be so highly concerned for a poor man, no way related to thee?" Psammenitus returned the following answer: "Son of Cyrus, the calamities of my family are too great to leave me the power of weeping; but the misfortunes of a companion, reduced in his old age to want of bread, is a fit subject for lamentation."\*

It is quite singular that a great sorrow will cause some persons to sink into *sleep*, while

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\* Quoted in Kames' Elements of Criticism, p. 236.

others it will keep *awake*. When Elijah was afraid of losing his life at the hand of Jezebel, and a feeling of discouragement spread over his mind because of the general wickedness of the people, he yet lay down amidst the solitude of the desert and fell asleep. The disciples who were in the garden with Jesus during his agony "slept for sorrow." Dante mentions his own experience in these words: "Betaking myself to my chamber, where I could give vent to my passion unheard, I fell asleep weeping like a beaten child." All know that it is a very common thing for children to cry themselves to sleep. There is a certain heaviness about sorrow which, united with the drowsiness of nature at night, may terminate in slumber. There is a class of persons, however, who are kept awake by the excitement of grief. David says: "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." Priam, in his address to Achilles, thus speaks:

"Dismiss me now, illustrious chief, to rest,  
And lie me down, in gentle slumbers wrapp'd;  
For never have mine eyes been closed in sleep,  
Since by thy hand my gallant son was slain:

But groaning still I brood upon my woes,  
And in my court with dust my head defile."\*

Almost every person is acquainted with the fact that if we awake during the night, while the mind is in trouble, it is exceedingly difficult to fall asleep again. Persons also who have friends suffering, perhaps dying, can sit up night after night with them, the painful interest of the soul keeping them awake.

It is worthy of our attention also that if one is in *deep sorrow* he is apt to use *too strong language* when describing his condition. The mind at such a time is simply looking at one thing and feeling intensely about it, and so, as matter of course, all expressions are strong. If a man says, All my hope is gone, I am full of sorrow, I shall never see the light,—these various statements are not strictly true. The words *all*, *full*, and *never see*, cannot be understood literally; they simply express great sorrow of spirit. When David uttered the lament, "My life is spent with grief and my years with sighing," we cannot interpret such language as meaning that grief and sighing filled out the whole measure of his years; because in the very psalm from which the verse

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\* Lord Derby's Homer, vol. ii. p. 448.

is taken he says, "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust ; I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy." Dr. Channing, when he was a young man, says of himself : " I am sensible that my happy days are passed, and I can only weep for them." That was rather too dark ; for at another period of his life he uses this language : " I feel a noble enthusiasm spreading through my frame ; my bosom pants with a great half-conceived and indescribable sentiment ; I seem inspired with a surrounding deity." A degree of relief comes to us when we know that many a careworn spirit is not so unhappy as its thoughts would seem to imply. It is seldom that one feeling sweeps the whole mind. A man may have emotions of joy and thankfulness at the very time he is struck down by a wave of sorrow.

Another characteristic of sorrow is, that it affiliates with *simple language* and a *natural style*. The words must flow out of the heart as if they were the echoes of grief. It has been the opinion of certain writers that words of *many syllables* are the best fitted to express a melancholy state of mind. I think the opinion may be called in question. Many-jointed words look as if they were the fruit of critical study, rather than the out-flow of the feeling heart. The

long-sounding style seems to be *made*; it does not *grow*. The taste is artificial that is pleased with it. Our most important words are short. Take these as samples: Soul and body, heart and mind, good and evil, truth and grace, faith and love, hope and fear, joy and grief, life and death, lost and saved. How very striking it is that the word God is so small; and this not only in English, but in many other languages! The sensationalism of the present has destroyed the beautiful simplicity of language: If one will but try, he can treat the most difficult as well as the most tender themes through the medium of short words. There are few writers that excel Ossian in his language of sorrow. His style is very simple. Both words and sentences are short. Note this passage: "The wind and the rain are past: calm is the noon of day. The clouds are divided in heaven. Over the green hills flies the inconstant sun. Red through the stony vale comes down the stream of the hill. Sweet are thy murmurs, O stream! but more sweet is the voice I hear. It is the voice of Alpin, the son of song, mourning for the dead. Bent is his head of age; red his tearful eye. Alpin, thou son of song, why alone on the silent hill? Why complainest

thou, as a blast in the wood; as a wave on the lonely shore? My tears, O Ryno! are for the dead; my voice for those who have passed away. Tall thou art on the hill; fair among the sons of the vale. But thou shalt fall like Morar; the mourner shalt sit on thy tomb. The hills shall know thee no more; thy bow shall lie in the hall unstrung.”\*

Sorrow has a peculiar relation to *time*. When we sigh to reach those we love, time seems long. If we are on a journey, sorrow has great power to press us ahead, that we may meet those the sooner who are dear to us. If we are delayed on the way, that delay is most painful: the time we have to wait seems double its length. If a father receives the intelligence that his son at a distant place is dying, he would bound there with one leap if that were possible. All painful emotions make time to appear long. A night of sorrow is a long night. If the sorrow, however, contains the element of *pleasure*, time will appear shorter than usual. Let there be a religious meeting which is marked by deep solemnity, many of the worshipers being in tears,—that meeting, though it may be continued for

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\* The Songs of Selma.

hours, will not seem long. This relation of sorrow to time may be modified somewhat by the age of the person. To the old, time is short; to the young, it is long. We may say of sorrow that it generally has a *past*. We look back to that which has caused our grief. The punishment of a prisoner is not found merely in the daily toil; the memory that opens the volume of the past and compels the soul to read it, brings pain to that soul. It is the remark of Jean Paul that "a dying man knows no present,—nothing but the future and the past." There is much truth in this statement.

It is the nature of sorrow to cast its *shadow upon other objects*. The soul in this way lives in a world of its own creation, where all things speak the same language, wear the same dress, and have the same family likeness. In the house all is sad. The very walls and pictures are shaded. Sorrow seems to be written on the faces of our children as we behold them asleep; upon the books that lie here and there; upon the green fields and the eternal sky. We almost imagine that the trees that stand before our door are thoughtful and pensive, that the beautiful flowers look serious and sad, that the stream which murmurs along sends forth strains of melancholy,



and that the music of the birds has notes of sorrow. A great many bright things look dark to us just because we are in the midst of trouble. Is it not a fact also, that there is that about nature which tends to express all our mental states? If we are cheerful, we think of the smiling sun; if we are thankful, the rich perfume of the garden becomes a symbol; if we are in a state of peace, the quiet without matches well with the quiet within. Then, again, if we are angry, the wild storm is the emblem of our rage; if we are sad, we think of the cloud; and if we are lost in despair, we point to the thick darkness.

There is a sorrow which we *cannot refer to any particular cause*. It sometimes is found in the soul as an impulse, a feeling, or a state; but just how it comes we know not. The truth is, we have a variety of emotions at different times which we cannot explain. Influences subtle and secret in their nature no doubt move upon us. I retire to bed at night with a good degree of composure, sleep soundly, yet I awake in the morning quite sad. Just how this is I cannot tell. That there is a latent sorrow within us all, seems quite reasonable. This may be touched and moved at any hour, whether of

night or day. There may be times when fallen spirits set in motion our hidden grief; and so we sigh without knowing just what the real cause is. Or the great sub-conscious states of the soul may be at work—these, sending up to the surface messengers of sadness, even as the bubbles form on the top of the stream.

The ability to *realize a foreign sorrow*, so as to make it our own, is a characteristic of all human beings. How is it that we can be made to feel sad while reading a work of *fiction*? How can that which is purely *imaginary* start sorrow? The reason is, that, for the time being, what we read seems to be true. So much are we taken up with the story that we forget the fiction, and so it affects us as if it were no fiction at all. It is very much the same when we are saddened in view of a man's troubles which are mentioned to us; we feel for the moment as if we were standing in his place, thinking as he thought, and cast down with sorrow as he was himself. Whenever we are greatly attracted by the statements of an author, whether these be imaginary or truthful, we seem to lose our identity, and are pleased or pained, just as the persons were that we are reading about. I have noticed that when acts of *great self-denial* are stated with

life-like power to a congregation, the assembly will be instantly affected to tears. The reason I suppose to be, that the persons entered with heartfelt interest into the scene which was portrayed before them, realizing quite truly the feelings of the disinterested individual ; so that they felt for those who needed help very much as the person did who helped them himself. It is somewhat curious also that if we chance to meet at any time the son of an individual who once did us a kindness, the sight of that son will affect us tenderly. Dr. Woodbridge, whose mother was a daughter of President Edwards, mentions an incident which will illustrate this : " A few years ago, in a neighboring congregation," he remarks, " when I preached on a particular occasion, I met a man advanced in life, who told me he was brought up in Stockbridge, and wanted to know my parentage. When he found I was the son of Lucy Edwards, he lifted up his voice and wept so loudly as to frighten us all. ' God bless you sir !' said he, ' are you a son of Lucy Edwards ? Her face seems to me to be the face of an angel. I was a poor lad in Stockbridge, and she taught me to read and write, and inculcated on me the sublime lessons of Christian morality and religion ; and her kindness to me

has been the cause of all the respectability I have enjoyed in life.' He then put his withered arms around me, and wept like a child."\* It is no doubt a fact that one person will feel sorrow in given circumstances, while another person will not. A commencement day at college has appeared to me to be a time for starting pensive reflections in the mind of a spectator. Here is a company of young men about to graduate; full of excitement and hilarity; full of hope; we at once think of the difficulties before them, and the sorrows that will cut into their hearts; and as we think of these we feel sad. In such a case we enter more truthfully into the future of these young men, than they are able to do themselves, and by this principle of substitution we have feelings which will be theirs by and by.

The *weeping of a friend* in certain circumstances *will deepen our sorrow*. We draw the inference from the weeping that he cannot help us. When the captain of a vessel is in tears, the ship is about to sink. Let a hungry child see its mother weeping when it asks for bread; the quick thought of the child is, that the last

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\* Autobiography of a Blind Minister, p. 13.

morsel has been eaten, and means there is not to get more. If a sick son sees his father wipe his eyes after conversing with a neighbor at the door, he will very naturally imagine that death is not far distant. It is of considerable moment sometimes for the leader of a great enterprise to hide his fears. If they were revealed, they might discourage each attendant, and thus make failure a certainty.

There are times when our friends who have died *seem to us still to be living*. Ideas based upon this thought course their way through the mind. Shakespeare points to this characteristic in the following lines :

“If she comes in, she’ll sure speak to my wife—  
My wife!—my wife—what wife?—I have no wife!  
Oh unsupportable! Oh heavy hour!”

During the passage of some fleeting moment we think of a seat that is to be occupied, a piece of work that is to be done, a voice that is to fall upon our ear as it has fallen thousands of times before. To bury such a vast number of associations as we have had of the living, in the grave with the dead, is not easy. The wife who for years has been accustomed to see

her husband come home from his labor at the close of each day, will naturally think that he must enter the house as usual, though he has gone to return not again. The father who has always waked up his children in the morning, night, through the force of habit, call upon Mary to arise ; but Mary sleeps not in the home of her early years,—in the grave only she rests.

## CHAPTER II.

### CAUSES OF SORROW.

AT what *age of life* do persons have the most sorrow? Certainly not during the period of childhood and youth; for the mind then is not matured, and things are not seen in their true light. As it respects aged people, we know that they look more on the dark side than formerly; they are more inclined to be low spirited; the decaying state of the body tends to depress the mind. I do not think, however, that the aged are the most sad. *Feeling*, which is a necessary condition of sorrow, is not so strong and fresh in old persons as it once was. There is something of the prosaic and the tame about them. It is difficult to move them to tears, or to excite in them ardent emotion of any kind. The wings of the aspirations also have been clipped,

and the mind has a sluggish and heavy movement. The men of grief, as it appears to me, are those who think and feel with more intensity than the aged are capable of doing. A little beyond the prime of life, I should say, is the time when the sorrow of the soul is the most oppressive. *Then* there is a *sad, heavy consciousness*,—the true melancholy of man. The wail of sorrow that has come down to us has broken forth from spirits that were not old; and the literature of sorrow has been written, to a great extent, by men who had not seen the age of seventy.

One cause of sorrow, at least to a thoughtful mind, is *human greatness*. Earthly glory is a melancholy affair. A great army may appear splendid, yet it is surrounded with sadness. When we look seriously at a great city we sigh. The wealth and the poverty, the dazzling show and the misery, the excitement and rush of people by day and the mysterious gloom and broken silence of the city by night, throw around the soul the covering of melancholy. When we think of the fall of kingdoms we feel sad. Images seem to look out upon us from the darkness of the past,—Nineveh and Babylon, Tyre and Egypt. A great mind led astray is saddening.



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If a person of exalted attainments has been forced into a state of oblivion, with no opportunity to unfold the treasures of the soul, or with the spirit broken, it may be by the severity of the circumstances, the very sight of such an one awakens painful emotions.

Let us look at a picture of *extreme wretchedness* presented to us by a London physician. "The room which I entered," he remarks, "was a garret, and the sloping ceiling made it next to impossible to move anywhere in an upright position. The mockery of a window had not one entire pane of glass in it; but some of the holes were stopped with straw, rags, and brown paper; while one or two were not stopped at all; There was not an article of furniture in the place; no, not a bed, chair, or table of any kind. The floor was littered with dirty straw, such as swine might scorn. The rushlight eclipsed the dying glow of the few embers, so that there was not even the *appearance* of a fire. And *this* in a garret facing the north—on one of the bitterest and bleakest nights I ever knew. My heart sunk within me at witnessing such frightful misery and destitution. The mother of the family was a mere bundle of filthy rags—a squalid, shivering, starved

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creature, holding to her breast a half-naked infant ; her daughter ' Sal ' was in like plight—a sullen, ill-favored slut of about eighteen, who seemed ashamed of being seen. She was squatting, with a little creature cowering close beside her, in one corner of the room, both munching ravenously the bread which my money had purchased for the family. The miserable father was seated on the floor, with his back propped against the opposite side of the fire-place to that which I occupied, and held a child clasped loosely in his arms, though he had plainly fallen asleep. The child was trying to push the corner of its crust into the father's mouth, chuckling and crowing the while, as is the wont of children who find a passive subject for their drolleries. I moved from my seat towards him. His wife took down the candle and held it above her husband's head, and tried to awake him. He did not stir. The child, regardless of us, was still playing with his passive features. A glimpse of the awful truth flashed across my mind. *The man was dead.* He must have expired nearly an hour ago, for his face and hands were quite cold. It was fearful to see the ghastly pallor of the features, the fixed pu-

pils, the glassy glare downwards!—Was it not a subject for a painter? The living child in the arms its dead father, unconsciously sporting with a corpse!”\*

Sorrow is brought out by *contrast*. I can understand very well how one might feel sad while looking at a beautiful landscape, gazing at contented brute creatures, listening to the song of birds, and catching the hum of insects as they play in the air,—the joy of all these makes one think the more of his pain. A quiet sabbath-day might influence the mind in the same manner. A thought also of rest which no one has yet found, waters of peacefulness flowing from their eternal fountains, a home where evil is not known, a personal welcome by the Saviour as one enters the city of God, may cause the soul to heave forth a sigh. Beholding an infant asleep, a child praying, a saintly man quiet in the midst of insult, may start sad emotions. “I once knew a lady,” remarks Coleridge, “who, after the loss of a lovely child, continued for several days in a state of seeming indifference, the weather, at the same time, as if in unison with her, being

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\* Warren's Diary of a Physician, vol. ii. p. 90.

calm, though gloomy ; till one morning a burst of sunshine breaking in upon her, and suddenly lighting up the room where she was sitting, she dissolved at once into tears, and wept passionately."\* That was the effect of contrast. A widow looks more sad to us if she has an infant in her arms than if she has none. The child looking up into the mother's face, without understanding the sorrow that reveals itself there, seems to make that sorrow all the greater by the contrast. Homer awakens our sympathy for Andromache by representing her as engaged in household duties, and preparing for the return of her husband ; she not being aware that he was dead.

\* \* \* \* \* " Naught as yet was known  
 To Hector's wife ; to her no messenger  
 Had brought the tidings, that without the walls  
 Remained her husband ; in her house withdrawn  
 A web she wove, all purple, double woof,  
 With varied flow'rs in rich embroidery,  
 And to her neat-hair'd maids she gave command  
 To place the largest caldrons on the fire,  
 That with warm baths, returning from the fight,  
 Hector might be refreshed ; unconscious she  
 That by Achilles' hand, with Pallas' aid  
 Far from the bath, was godlike Hector slain."†

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\* Works, vol. ii, p. 480, Harper's ed.

† Lord Derby's Homer, vol. ii. p. 358.

How much of sorrow arises *from want of sympathy!* An encouraging thought, praise when it is suitable, a simple feeling of interest shown in any way, would revive and brighten many a downcast spirit. Human beings are at fault because they do not give expression to their pleasant feelings: the unpleasant showing themselves too easily. How much of sadness is caused by roughness! We are not made of cast-iron. It is the dignity of our nature that we can feel. Many have cultivated a clumsy manner without knowing it. They trample upon fine feelings just as they trample upon insects when they walk, not being aware of what they are doing. There are men also who mean to be independent, mean to speak their mind; such are frequently quite troublesome. The blunt, defiant words make many a spirit to shrink back, many a heart to bleed. Numbers are longing to hear a gentle word. They want kindness. They sigh because they find it not. Think of the amount of sadness that is caused by fretfulness and passion! There is a surliness of men and women, and even a spiteful silence that withers hearts quite as effectually as wrath

poured out. Some would prefer a rough word to a rough look.

There is a great deal of sorrow also from *imagined evil*. Since the present has so much trouble, it is strange that men will rush into the future to gain more. Although all want to be happy, yet it would seem as if all wanted to be miserable. Place human beings in the best position, and they will instantly dream of evil. If men have no trouble, they will be sure to make it. This tendency of mind is not without meaning. The soul has strayed from God! therefore it looks round and onward with agitation. It is far more natural to peer into the possibilities of darkness than into the possibilities of light. The race have been noted for gloomy apprehensions. Men may be told to banish fear and to look on the sunny side of existence, but with many attempts in that direction they do not succeed. Even the good man, who has a right to be quiet, is not as quiet as he could wish. The belief in evil seems stronger than the belief in Christ. What brooding cares! How much of suspense! Some carry the whole matter of imagined evil to a fearful extreme. They behold nothing but night; see neither star nor shore; affirm that "all men are liars."

Error is pronounced to be truth, and sin to be holiness. The human soul is made in this way to work backward.

How often we have sorrow when we think of a *friend who is dead*. By a simple law of association, a thought relating to the departed starts up in the mind; and so we feel sad. For a while the vision of the lost one stands before us. Finally it disappears. At another time it comes forth again; some incident or object being the cause. If we are eager to hold fast the conception of the one we love, the sadness deepens; but if we are afraid to think too intently because of the pain, the conception fades away. There are times, however, when we have no power over self; but spell-bound we stand and shed tears. How sorrow takes hold of us when we open the trunk containing the clothes and the various articles of a departed friend! They have lain there for months. We shrink from touching them. There is the diary with the last entry, and the pencil beside it. We look at the watch. It is still; a symbol of death. We put it back into its place, having no desire to wind it up. Some money is found in a pocket; let it remain there a while longer. Everything in that trunk is sacred. We close it gently, and

depart with a soft step. Not often do we care to look into it. The memorials of the dead are too numerous and tender for our poor heart.

Sorrow will arise because others are *sinning* and *suffering* as the *result of our folly*. Human beings give way to evil feelings, and then seeing the pain which they have caused feel troubled. Think of a spendthrift or drunkard looking at his desolate family after he has come to himself! He is cut to the heart. And what parent is not troubled when he sees his own bad habits acted over again by his children? Yea, the thought that these same bad habits may show themselves in generations yet to come. Our corrupt influence travelling on forever! To think of that is most painful.

If a friend, failing to impress us by words, yields himself up to *suffering in our behalf*, our *heart instantly melts*. "Let us present to ourselves a company of men travelling along the seashore. One of them, better acquainted with the ground than the rest, warns them of quicksands, and points out to them a landmark which indicated the position of a dangerous pass. They, however, see no great reason for apprehension; they are anxious to get forward, and cannot resolve upon making a considerable



circuit in order to avoid what appears to them an imaginary evil ; they reject his counsel, and press onward. In these circumstances, what argument ought he to use ? What mode of persuasion can we imagine fitted to fasten on their minds a strong conviction of the reality of their danger, and the disinterested benevolence of their adviser ? His words have been ineffectual ; he must try some other method ; he must act. And he does so ; for, seeing no other way of prevailing on them, he desires them to wait only a single moment, till they see the truth of his warning confirmed by his fate. He goes before them ; he puts his foot on the seemingly firm sand, and sinks to death. This eloquence is irresistible. They are persuaded. They make the necessary circuit, bitterly accusing themselves of the death of their generous companion.”\*

There is the sorrow also which springs from an *enslaved will*. Evil passions remaining for a lifetime : how saddening ! A man binding himself by a law, then breaking it ; making a promise, then breaking that ; putting forth a new resolution as if determined not to fail, yet failing. Almost discouraged by the repeated

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\* Erskine, *Internal Evidence of Religion*, p. 44.

falls, and wondering whether it is of any use to try again. Makes a new attempt under the pressure of better motives, and succeeds for the present ; yet by and by fails, and sinks to his former level.

There may be deep sorrow at last, in view of a *wasted life*. Wealth acquired, many honors, many friends ; yet no attention given to the chief end of existence. The redemptive idea of time forgotten ; not the least preparation for eternity. A life without any repentance ; without any efforts put forth to save men. How can one help being sad ? Even the good lament at last that they have done so little. But how fearful is the thought when a man looks back over the whole of his earthly history and says, "*My life is a complete failure.*" Such a reflection as that cuts the soul in two.

Why is it that the *dying do not shed tears*, while the *living who are standing around them do* ? Even a mother who is leaving a helpless family does not weep,—does not weep though the children are crying bitterly at her side. When friends are to be separated from each other for a long period they mutually shed tears ; yet in the case before us, where there is to be a like separation, the dying shed no

tears, though the living do. This explanation may be offered: The dying have their mind impressed at a different point from that of the living. The natural feelings are forced into the background, because now the higher emotions are compelled to act with reference to the great verities of existence. Fear, awe, perhaps an element of doubt, penitence, a sense of nothingness, a prayer travelling through the soul made up of many desires,—these holding the immortal spirit with a new power. The startling fact that I am to lose my life; that I am to enter an entirely new state—eternity; that I am to appear before a God of justice,—such pressing realities forming what seems like an original consciousness. The soul is waiting with trembling suspense the moment when it shall leave the body, and have its fate fixed forever; the mere natural sympathies therefore are kept down. A feeling of solitude hems in the trembling spirit, and it looks steadily at one point. The decaying body also affects the mind. Tears are not so natural as they once were. But with the *living*, all is different. The soul and body have a degree of freshness. The thought of *life* is before the mind. The mighty experiment of entering upon the

scene of future being is not to be made just now. The simple fact, therefore, that one we love is about to be taken away from us, arouses the *sympathetic nature*. The man who stands upon the scaffold to be hung will not shed tears, although his friends will. The awful realities that crowd about the mind of the criminal seem to petrify that mind : the friends are differently situated, and so they weep.

*Various causes of sorrow* may here be briefly noticed. I have met with persons who felt sad because they were compelled to use the money that was left them by a friend now in his grave. If a son has died in battle, the pension that comes to the mother as the result of that death will start painful feelings. It seems almost as if she were living upon his blood. Even the insurance money that falls to a loving wife, because her husband has died, troubles her. It is not a very easy thing to wear the garment of a friend who has died : a feeling of pain and a feeling of sorrow arise in the soul. Some persons are sad on certain days ; days on which one that was dear to them died. The voice is lower and the tears fall faster during such memorial periods. Here is a man who has lost his reason. Perhaps he thinks he has no friend ;

and battling with unreal foes, yet real to him, he is weary. There is a peculiar sadness which comes to one on a dark night. A star twinkles here and there. All is still, and that stillness speaks to the soul; it awakens the deeper emotions of our being. As we stand in a meditative mood and look at the surrounding creation, we almost imagine that it is sorrowful: that the few stars are but tapers burning in the hall of grief; and that there is a speechless prayer ascending to the Infinite Creator for help. We feel sad also when we think that the world will move on just as usual after we are dead, and that in a few days we shall be quite forgotten by those who were acquainted with us. How small this makes us! Like sighs travelling over the troubled ocean of life we seem to be. As echoes of an unknown land we hasten by, and are heard no more. I am sorrowful because of my sorrow; two griefs weary the soul. The sight of a wrecked ship, passing from cell to cell in a prison, walking across a battle-field, will start pensive reflections.

It is one of the fine characteristics of our religion that it softens hearts which never before have been softened, and makes the *tear to fall which for years had not been seen*. The grief

that is connected with Christianity is a wonderful thing. It has changed the history of the world. Millions it has caused to look from earth to heaven, from self to God. A converted atheist thus speaks of his new experience: "Once I seemed to have no feeling; now, thank God, I can feel. I have buried two wives and six children, but I never shed a tear—I felt hard and unhappy—now my tears flow at the recollection of these things."\* The emotional change produced by the power of Christianity among some of the natives of South Africa is thus stated by the Rev. Robert Moffat: "To see *females weep*," he remarks, "was nothing extraordinary; it was, according to Bechuana notions, their province, and theirs alone. *Men would not weep*. After having by the rite of circumcision become men, they scorned to shed a tear. In family and national afflictions, it was the woman's work to weep and wail; the man's to sit in sullen silence, often brooding deeds of revenge and death. The simple Gospel now melted their flinty hearts; and eyes now wept, which never before shed the tear of hallowed sorrow. We had been so long accustomed to

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\* Walker's Phil. of the Plan of Salvation, chap. xix.

indifference, that we felt unprepared to look on a scene which perfectly overwhelmed our minds. Our little chapel became a Bochim—a place of weeping ; and the sympathy of feeling spread from heart to heart, so that even infants wept.”\*

If we realize that we are doing anything for the *last time*, we feel sad. Let a statesman be conscious that he has performed the last public act of his life, and he will feel sorrowful. He may have a degree of pleasure that he is about to retire to the quiet scenes of private life, but yet a feeling of sadness will mingle with the pleasure. The author who has written his last page, the minister who has preached his last sermon, the physician who has attended his last patient, will from the nature of the case have a depression of spirits. The student who has finished his course of study in college turns his face homeward with a sigh ; and seldom does the annual examination of an academy close without tears being shed. Many a man who has sold his farm, or the house his father lived in, almost relents after the bargain is made. I have frequently felt sad when I said Good-bye

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\* Scenes in Southern Africa, p. 328.

to a stranger whom I had conversed with an hour or two in a railway car. The thought crossed my mind, that here is an immortal being who has met me but once, and who shall never likely be seen again by me till the judgment. A person who has been struck blind cannot fail to have a lingering feeling of sadness as he remembers the last words he read and the last human being he ever saw.



## CHAPTER III.

### *THE SORROW OF GREAT MINDS.*

A MIND of low development may suppose that a person of superior intellect is not subject to those dark visitations which trouble the spirits of other men. The exalted sphere in which he is accustomed to move is thought to be a region exempt from clouds. This is a sad mistake. Who can help thinking of De Quincey, Cowper, Burton, and many others? John Foster says of himself: "My mind is still familiar with melancholy musings; no place can banish them, and no society. There is 'that something still which prompts the eternal sigh.' "\* That *eternal sigh* is known to millions. If all great characters would make known their experience touching sorrow, they would say that its shadow evermore rests upon their heart.

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\* Life and Correspondence, vol. i. p. 91.

Many are consumed by the steady intensity of their grief. They sigh themselves away into the vast eternity. The sorrow of one mind will sometimes be the sorrow of thousands. There are central, typical souls,—persons in whom the manifold streams of a past grief seems to be headed up, and who represent myriads of sad spirits yet to appear. Men are found whose life is like that of the prophet's roll—"Written within and without with lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Numbers of brave spirits have fought nobly in this great world of sin, and have gained many victories, while at the last they have fallen in the one battle with their own sorrow.

"Alas, for my weary and care-haunted bosom !

The spells of the spring-time arouse it no more :

The song in the wildwood, the sheen in the blossom,

The fresh swelling fountain—their magic is o'er."

*Elijah* may be looked upon as one of the great but sad spirits of time. He was the puritan of the Jewish dispensation. How bold, stern, and true ! He saw evil and hated it with a perfect hatred. What faith he had, and what jealousy for God ! Yet the man who could slay the prophets of Baal became low-spirited. Fear

and sadness took hold of his heart. "He went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree : and he requested for himself that he might die ; and said, It is enough ; now O Lord take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers." The very language is a picture of sad loneliness. How strange that melancholy should darken the spirit of the man who was to be conveyed to heaven by steeds of light !

*Dante* may be mentioned also as one of the great chiefs of sorrow. He seems like an expiring star. His wail echoes through the eternal night. "That portrait, commonly attributed to Giotto, you cannot help inclining to think genuine. To me, it is a most touching face ; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it ; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory, which is also deathless,—significant of the whole history of *Dante* ! I think it is the mournfullest face that ever was painted from reality ; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child ; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into ab-

negation, isolation, proud, hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent, scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and lifelong unsurrendering battle, against the world. Affection, all converted into indignation; an implacable indignation; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god! The eye too, it looks out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this ‘voice of ten silent centuries,’ and sings us ‘his mystic, unfathomable song.’”\*

*Pascal* was another of the exalted minds that was sorrowful. He seems to us like the solitary fragment of a rainbow resting upon the earth. The world to him was one vast ruin. Uncertainty and imperfection he beheld on every hand. Nothing was real but God, redemption, and the blessed life. When we think of the quickness of his mind, his fine generalizations,

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\* Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, p. 77.

then of his sadness, we sigh. As we hear him talk of the weakness and misery of man, we assent to the truthfulness of his words. He had the faculty of looking beneath appearances. He laid bare the movements of souls. His sadness is like that of a wind wandering through a deserted temple ; like the wail of a great sea at night. Disease deepened the depression of his spirit, and shortened the days that were so full of melancholy. In the prime of life he died. "Upon opening his body the stomach and liver were found diseased, and the intestines in a state of gangrene ; and when his skull was laid open, it was found to contain an enormous quantity of brain, solid and condensed."

The *introspective mind* is peculiarly fashioned for grief. The soul turns in upon itself, and has an attachment to all subjective realities. To settle down into a contemplative state is natural and easy. The tendency is to look toward the deeper aspects of life. Food for meditation is very soon found, and grief with its pain is very soon reached. Sometimes there is a congress of the noblest ideas of the soul of man. These ideas will not finish their colloquy and separate from each other, without producing feelings of sadness. It should be observed also that *abstrac-*

tion, when centered upon *inward* things, is apt to fasten upon the heart's sadness, and to bring it out ; but, when it has an exclusive reference to *outward* things, the sadness for the moment is lost sight of. I forget the lake that is at my feet while looking intently at the sky that is overhead. Abstraction may thus deepen or lessen human sorrow according to the object on which it is fixed. There is a kind of *retiring inwardness* to the sorrow of all introspective minds ; but the meditative characteristic projects it into consciousness, where it is seen more distinctly. In fact the habit of thoughtfulness affiliates with sorrow ; really attracts it ; keeps it in motion ; makes a channel for it to flow in.

The *manifold power* of great minds opens up ways of sorrow. A person who simply looks at life in the *mass* will not suffer as much as he who grasps it in all its *particulars*. To stand upon a lofty summit and see millions of men passing before you ; to be able to trace out the intricate causes which move them, and the mighty array of effects which stream forth from them ; to know the history of the chief nations of the past and present, and to give wise hints touching the coming future,—to have such mental abilities is to have sorrow. The less

thought, the less grief. Complete ignorance may relieve from sadness ; but what a price to pay ! It is not difficult to see that “ he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Yet it is an exalted privilege to be permitted to have a feeling that matches well with the actual state of life and man. If one could take in the whole of human things, and could exercise a grief that would be proportioned to the collective evil of time,—that grief, though painful, would certainly be of an exalted kind. I may say also that there is something in the vast and infinite which will excite sad emotions in a spirit of manifold power. A lofty range of mountains ; a plain that stretches from one horizon to the other ; a forest through which one walks for days ; the eternal sea ; the dome of heaven sparkling with silent stars ; the almighty energy that runs through the whole of nature ; time without beginning and without end,—these spread over the soul a pleasing melancholy.

According to the *fineness of the mind* will be its aptitude to suffer grief. Finish, as a characteristic of mental natures, certainly does make them more sensitive. The perfected musician has an ear so exact that the least discord causes

his mind to move and twitch, much the same as the body does when it is scratched with a pin. Let a man have an exceedingly fine taste for the beautiful and the true, and at once he is greatly discomposed if he meets with anything that runs counter to this taste. The very *quickness* of recoil in the mind is the sure evidence of a finished nature. A person distinguished for great purity of life and sweep of intellect will be pained by the touch of sin and the sight of ignorance. Avarice disturbs the benevolent, pride the humble, and profanity the man that fears God. The good suffer more from one evil act, than the wicked from a thousand deeds of darkness. Dull and dwarfed souls can neither be very happy, nor very miserable. A great mind can be the subject of ineffable joy, or of ineffable sorrow.

Usually there is some *infirmity* that belongs to the greatest of men, and this tends to breed sadness. The infirmity may belong to the body or the soul, may be constitutional or moral, or a combination of both. Completeness of being is not found upon earth. Irritableness, a tendency to levity, to indolence, may engender sorrow. There may have been some form of intemperance in the past, some leading sin



which has left a mark on the soul ; and so the result is sadness. I question whether Augustine ever forgot the wild passions of his youth ; Paul, his rage against the church ; Solomon, his fruitless trial of earthly good ; David, his adultery and murder. I have even thought that Adam, during his nine hundred and thirty years of probation, must have been a man of sorrows. All was fair when he appeared. The thought of sin he had not. Holiness and happiness were his. But he fell ; and what a change ! He is the only human being that has led off the entire race into evil ; the only one that began with holiness and ended with sin ; that began with joy and ended with sorrow. There is really a marked isolation about him. The farther he entered into time, the farther he was pressed back into sorrow. There was everything to deepen the sense of his primal fall. Whether he had a tendency to go as near as he could to Eden that there he might weep, we cannot tell. Perhaps not far from the place where he sinned, there he sorrowed. Of all the great minds, Adam was the first and the most sad. He was a type of him whose sorrow may not be mentioned here.

*True originality*, as the mark of a well-en-

dowed spirit, may be made an occasion of sadness. The person of original attainments is almost sure to be ahead of the time in which he lives. Much that he states, therefore, will not be understood and appreciated. That he will be opposed is almost certain. That he may be made to suffer is possible. Many have suffered in like circumstances. Take Socrates and Galileo as instances. In original moral action the danger is no less great than in the field of thought. In fact the danger is greater. The depraved nature of man is more thoroughly aroused by uncompromising righteousness than it is by any discoveries of the understanding; and when light and life combine their power, the opposition may be supposed to be at its highest point. It is one of the sad and startling facts of history that not a single reformer has appeared who has not been persecuted. This state of things must react upon the devoted mind. Whatever of confidence one may have in the eternity of truth and right, this is not sufficient to shut out all pensive reflections. The simple fact that wise and benevolent efforts have been trampled under foot will of necessity generate grief. Not to feel sad in view of such results, would be evidence of a debased rather than of a lofty mind.

Again, persons who have a *fine imagination* are usually tinged with sadness. Is not the imagination that one faculty that arranges sorrow-producing objects? It would seem so. Why do I shed tears while reading an article that recounts to me the great sufferings of men? One reason certainly is, that the writer has made the whole scene to stand out before the mind with life-like power. It is the imagination that has done the work,—the faculty that represents. When an object calculated to excite sad emotions is right before me, in that case I have but to look; but when the object is distant in time or space, I need the imagination to make it a present reality. A vivid imagination gives us a vivid consciousness; and thus a platform is raised for a well-defined image of sorrow to stand upon. It sometimes even happens that an event brought out with all truthfulness by the imagination, will affect us more sensibly than if it were witnessed by the naked eye; while, again, the direct gaze, say upon the thousands of dying and dead on a field of battle, will produce a deeper mental anguish than can be produced in any other way. In the one case, a master of language may do for us what we could not do for ourselves;

while in the other, nature can do for us what language cannot.

It is true also that the *finished ideals* of a cultivated mind prompt to sadness. All efforts to reach perfection in any form are connected with these ideals. Yet the sadness is, that there is always a falling short. Here is a beauty that I cannot paint, a harmony which I cannot reach, a love which I cannot feel. I can think of a happiness which is not mine, a rest more sabbath-like than that which visits my soul. There is a power of mind which I have not manifested, a work to be done which I have not performed, a Christianity which I have not realized, and a Christ whom I cannot describe. Deficiency may be written upon every page of the soul's life. A sublime melancholy takes possession of one when he struggles to reach unwonted heights, but cannot. The soul has unrest in the midst of its mightiest longings. It sighs as it looks toward that which runs on forever. The aspirations are greatly excited by the ideal images of the soul. There is a reaching after that which is infinite; the adaptations of time not being sufficient to meet the wants of the immortal spirit. A hunger is felt, which is but partially appeased; a good

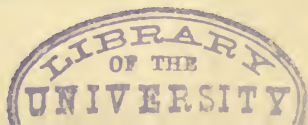
is longed for, that only comes in fragments,—the totality of it is never found. Sin has forged chains and fastened them to the heart. The spirit sighs in the midst of its bondage. When will the ransom-period come? A common mind is not so likely to be saddened by the sight of excellence as one that is highly cultivated. Superior natures work *antithetically*. Both the *bright* and the *dark* sadden them; while the sorrow of lower natures arises mainly from that which is dark. It has been said that Robert Burns could never read the verse—“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes”—without himself being affected to tears. His mind was antithetic. When the poet Campbell was told on a certain occasion that his “Gertrude of Wyoming” had been read by some lovers of the work near where the scene was laid, he wept; and remarked, “This is fame.” To be well thought of was no doubt pleasing to the poet’s heart; yet the praise of mortals, when contrasted with that which is truly great and durable, could start a sigh and even tears.

Look now at the *slow march of truth* in this world, and see how that sadly affects a highly gifted and thoughtful mind. Although six thou-

sand years have swept their round since the commencement of human history, yet the greater part of the race have no correct conceptions of God, of man, and of the method of connecting God and man together. Indeed I may say that the being we denominate God is not known at all by the majority of our species. This single fact, if there were no other, is sufficient to sadden a contemplative mind. To think that the Creator and Upholder of a universe is not known is appalling. We behold crowds of immortal creatures staring at dead forms, and at what may be called broken fragments of divinity ; while others have nothing more than a vague impression of a *great out-stretching power* that forms the background of all created things. In either case, the one veritable God of creation and Christianity is not found. It is the same as if he were dead, and men were occupying themselves with what seems like the remains of Deity. There are provinces of darkness upon this earth so black that into them a single gospel ray of light does not enter to break up the monotony of the gloom. There are eight hundred millions of people just now living who cannot give a correct answer to the question, "What shall I do to be

saved?" In everything like redemptive knowledge, there are entire races on the way to eternity at this hour, who have really sunk in the scale far below the tribes of a most distant antiquity. Instead of the march of truth, there is the march of error. And even in favored places, men are trying to destroy every idea of sin and accountability, providence and punishment, eternity and God. The most important truth is spurned out of existence as if it were a vision too bright for the dark soul of man, and as if he could find happiness in no other way than in the midst of blank negation,—all things gone himself, and he to go quite soon.

How painful also, as one beholds the merely *mundane life* of so many of our race. The reign of sheer earthliness. The soul's movements bounded by the world. No motive outside of time. Even those who assume to be upon a higher plane, yet still earthly as matter of fact. The *mundane drift* of the soul is the point that must be seized. Whether the occupation be mental or material is not essential; worldliness is apparent. What we find is simply a humanistic life. The end certainly is not to prepare for eternity. God is not the chief motive to the soul. The *mundane life* is



godless. Not only does this state of man sadly impress us, but the impression is deepened by the difficulty of breaking it up. The most serious views of life and destiny may be presented to the earthly mind, yet there is no giving way. A ripple on the downward current is all that is made. The fearful fact that the soul is lost, that an infinite remedy has been provided by the munificence of Heaven, that stupendous motives crowd upon the wayward spirit, do not make the least difference as it respects the governing earthliness of the mind,—it is permanent as ever. Here is a God-created soul living for the present, and trying to be contented with it. This is saddening in the extreme.

Not unfrequently one will have a feeling of melancholy as he contemplates the *mysterious nature of the present system*. How strange that the human race should exist at all! If an inhabitant were to come among us from one of the distant worlds of creation, he would be both startled and puzzled. Startled, in that the life which he beholds is utter vanity; puzzled, because he learns that the very creatures who are immersed in folly are also immortal. Great offenders are not frequently struck down with a sudden blow by the Almighty. There



are times when one feels that an infinite amount of evil would be obviated by the instant disappearance of a single man from the stage of life. The small number of pious men that are now upon the earth, or that have been upon in it ages past, is one of the enigmas of the present economy. Sin is the one mystery and the one evil.

The cry goes up, "*Would God it were morning.*" To a spirit of fine mould, a view of man is oppressive. Beholding so much of ignorance, sin, misery, death, one longs for the day. To obtain a little relief, we think of the good here and there; of the good that have once lived; and still more of the good that are to be in the ages to come. We cannot rest short of a *morning*. In our silent communings, a portion of divine light spreads over us. We ascend to a higher region of existence. We are moved upon by unseen powers. Troops of angels fly past us, on their way to heaven, and soft breezes fan us, and celestial odors touch us. We are inclined to think of the serene land, of the country of kingly men, of seraphs, and of God. The cry sounds forth, "*When will the night end?*" "Above the tumult of nature, above the clash of weapons, in tears, as

beneath laughter, we hear it still. This is the cry of all tender, all broken hearts ; of all who are unhappy, all who believe themselves happy. This is what the insane keep calling aloud, what the wise murmur, what perhaps even the fallen, the lost soul repeats unconsciously ; this is the language of the seekers after truth, the lovers of the ideal ; the shuddering question of lamentable sadness, the hope-thrilled sigh of sadness which is beautiful.”\*

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\* The Countess De Gasparin, *Human Sadness*, p. 209.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *SORROW AND HOME.*

WE sigh as we trace these words. They start in the mind pensive thoughts. The greatest *joy* and *sorrow* are connected with home. It is the one centre of life towards which we tend ; which we always love ; which we never forget. The very griefs of home, not less than its joys, attract us. That which is gained through suffering is more highly prized than that which is gained without it. A joy that comes from a great sorrow will leave a great sorrow in the soul when once the joy departs. Home is the place of contrasts. The brighter the day, the darker the night.

*Sin* casts a shadow over every home. Parents and children are struck with evil. The best feelings are not always manifested, the best words not always spoken, the best actions

not always performed. The ideal home is not realized here. Poets and novelists picture out family scenes which are not known upon earth. The higher the ideal, the more sad the disappointment. What sorrow arises from a lost father! what sorrow from a ruined son! "Look there! In that corpse you see the cold, dead body of one of the best and godliest mothers it was ever our privilege to know. She had a son. He was the stay of her widowhood—so kind, so affectionate, so loving. She lived to see that son a disgrace, and all the promises of his life blighted and gone. He was drawn into habits of intemperance. On her knees she pleaded with him. On her knees she prayed for him. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! She did not live to see him changed; and with such thorns in her pillow, such daggers, planted by such a hand, in her heart, she could not live. She sank under these griefs, and died of a broken heart. We told him so. With bitter, burning tears he owned it; charging himself with his mother's death—confessing himself a mother's murderer. Crushed with sorrow, and all alone, he went to see the body. Alone, beside that cold, dead, unrepenting mother, he knelt down and wept out his terrible remorse. After

a while he rose. Unfortunately—how unfortunate that a spirit bottle should have been left there—his eyes fell on the old tempter. You have seen the iron approach the magnet. Call it spell, call it fascination, call it anything bad, demoniacal, but as the iron is drawn to the magnet, or as a fluttering bird, fascinated by the burning eye and glittering skin of the serpent, walks into its envenomed, expanded jaws, so was he drawn to the bottle. Wondering at his delay, they entered the room; and now the bed holds two bodies—a dead mother, and her dead-drunk son. What a sight! what a humbling, horrible spectacle! and what a change from those happy times, when night drew her peaceful curtains around the same son and mother—he, a sweet babe, sleeping, angel-like, within her loving arms!''\*

*Sickness that appears to be dangerous* awakens sorrow. The soul is anxious and pained. We wait upon the sick with love; a love that is wet with grief. There is the smile of affection and the tear. What can be done for the sufferer? Has any means been left untried? There is willingness to do anything. The dark

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\* Dr. Guthrie, *The City : Its Sins and Sorrows*, p. 99.

cloud deepens in darkness. Fears multiply. Sorrow destroys our appetite ; destroys our sleep ; renders pale our countenance. The imagination becomes unduly excited. We think we hear sounds ; the sounds of the sick and dying. Did you call me ? Do you feel pain ? Would you like anything ?

There is that peculiar turn of the soul which makes us to think of the living as *dead*. The dying agonies we have witnessed. The last words have fallen upon our ear. We saw friends standing around the bed on which the dead was lying. All were weeping. The neighbors came in to assist, and to comfort us in our grief. We even think of the expressions which they use. Tears steal down our face as we keep thinking. The coffin is brought. The body is placed in it. The exercises of the funeral begin and end. The grave is closed. We return home. But this is simply the working of the imagination. Expecting that death will come, it seems many a time to have come. Those who have had a friend wasting away with disease, know how natural it is to think of the living as dead. There are times when we even imagine ourselves to be dying, although we are in the midst of health. We are giving our last advice to our children,

and thinking what shall be their state when we are gone. Into the dark silence we seem to enter, and on the borders of eternity we seem to stand. But the whole is a dream in the midst of wakefulness. Whatever we dread, comes to us in this way as a present reality. If the thought of poverty trouble us, then we are poor ; if we fear the loss of some situation, we lose it in our mind ; if we anticipate dishonor, there are meditative moments when it seems to have come. The son even, whose father killed himself, may have thoughts of self-destruction ; and the daughter, whose mother was insane, may imagine herself to be an inmate of a lunatic asylum. He who inherits consumption will seem to die many a time of that disease, and he who lives in a country noted for earthquakes will have visions of their coming. Yea, that which we anticipate with *delight* will so work upon the mind that oftentimes it will seem to be realized. The man who is struggling to obtain wealth will have his golden moments ; the aspirant for honor will seem to have reached it ; he who longs to visit a certain place will seem to himself to be there. When Robinson Crusoe desired to return to the island where he once

lived, his mind worked just in this way He says : " I actually supposed myself often upon the spot, at my old castle, behind the trees ; saw my old Spaniard, Friday's father, and the reprobate sailors, I left upon the island ; nay, I fancied I talked with them, and looked at them steadily, though I was broad awake."\*

What a dark shadow spreads over the household when *death* for the *first time* has entered it ! How must Adam and Eve have felt when they ascertained that Abel was dead, was slain, —slain by a brother ! No doubt the first home had a grief which never left it. Then, when the *first aged man died*, how sad the household ! Living so many hundred years and then passing away, what a loss ! But exceedingly painful it must have been when the tidings spread around that an *infant* had died. Nothing of this kind had happened before. All persons had lived to old age. Now for the first time a little child has breathed its last. What surprise must have seized the minds of friends and others ! Doubtless they tried to ascertain the cause of such a strange event ; doubtless they speculated as to whether such a thing would ever likely occur again. Time settled

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\* Sect. xxx.



the question. Infants die. The first death in any family is saddening. A new event has appeared in our history ; a new wound has been received in the heart ; a new consciousness characterizes the soul. If the *first* and *only child* has died, the grief will be exceedingly painful. The one flower that bloomed beside our door is cut down ; the solitary light that burned in our dwelling is extinguished ; the immortal that tarried with us for an hour has gone away.

The *excessive grief* of a parent may *depress and injure the minds of the children*. To move forward in the midst of night, with never a smile on our countenance, is dangerous. There should be a limit to parental sorrow. Duty demands that serenity should take the place of sadness. The quickness and elasticity of the youthful mind are taken away by compelling such a mind to look constantly upon sorrow. After Lord Russel had been beheaded, John Howe addressed a letter of condolence to his widow. In that letter he gives the following advice :

“Your continued visible dejection would be to the unspeakable disadvantage of your children. You will always naturally create in them a reverence of you ; and I cannot but apprehend how the constant mean

aspect and deportment of such a parent will insensibly influence the temper of dutiful children ; and (if that be sad and despondent) depress their spirits, blunt and take off the edge upon which their future usefulness and comfort will much depend. Were it possible their (now glorious) father should visit and inspect you, would you not be troubled to behold a frown in that bright serene face? You are to please a more penetrating eye, which you will best do, by putting on a temper and deportment suitable to your weighty charge and duty, and to the great purposes for which God continues you in this world, by giving over unnecessary solitude and retirement, which (though it pleases) doth really prejudice you, and is more than you can bear.”\*

I have been struck with the fact that a great deal of our popular music has words which relate to *mothers*. A characteristic of human nature is seen in this. Affection for a departed mother is universal. Poetical language therefore which celebrates her virtues, and which is made to speak to the heart through the medium of plaintive music, is exceedingly pleasing. The most tender emotions are awakened, and tears come to the eye as if by instinct. And even when a mother is not dead, pathetic feelings sway the soul when the beautiful traits of her character are mentioned.

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\* Life of Howe prefixed to his Works, p. 22.

The hearts of the most abandoned of men can be reached in this way, after all other means have failed. Sing about mother and home to a company of prisoners, and few dry eyes will be seen. Struggling it may be for a time to repress their feelings, they will finally yield to the pressure of nature, and weep like children.

“What amazing results have followed a *sudden paroxysm of joy*. A woman in the city of New York heard that her husband and child were on board a ship that had been wrecked. Accustomed to go to the wharf from day to day, as if desirous of being nearer the beloved objects that were supposed to be buried beneath the sea, she suddenly beheld them landing from a vessel that had picked them up. The joy on seeing them safe was overwhelming. After the first salutation her reason fled, and from that time to the present she has not known them. She still sits on what she thinks the same rock where she used to bewail their fate, wringing her hands with ineffable distress ; while every week the husband and son visit her, hoping to find a gleam of returning memory, but in vain.” \*

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\* Dr. Jones : Man, Moral and Physical, p. 56.

How much is implied in the words—*leaving home*. The daughter may be going off to some distant boarding school, the son to some distant city, there to live—in either case there is sorrow. Possibly the children may be so occupied with the enticing objects that are before them that their sadness does not fully appear at the moment when they leave home. After a time, however, the whole scene is revived, and there is no want of sorrow. As it regards the parents, they look forward to the hour of parting with pain. This increases till the day of separation arrives. When all are kneeling around the family altar, and the last prayer is borne upward to heaven, there is heartfelt sorrow. Then come the final arrangements ; the going out at the door ; the good-bye ; the falling tear. The mother stands looking, wiping her eyes : the father with choked utterance retires. It must be exceedingly trying when one leaves home in order to spend years upon the ocean, or to travel in foreign lands, to explore, it may be, dangerous regions. There is an element of uncertainty here which increases the mental pain. I have thought that when Abraham left home with Isaac, designing to sacrifice him at the command of God, there

must have been a tumult of emotion in the patriarch's soul. There is no evidence that a single human being knew anything of the intended sacrifice except Abraham himself. Not even did Isaac know it, nor Sarah his mother. *To think of the living as dead* must have been the experience of Abraham, considering his circumstances. He saw his son laid upon the altar, while as yet he was not laid there; he saw him expire while as yet he was in the fulness of life. Then, too, he must leave home without saying a word respecting the great event. The feelings of the mother, when she should hear of the death of her son, were no doubt realized by Abraham. Thus he departed with the burden of a great sorrow pressing upon his heart. There was a degree of inwardness to his grief not often experienced. The whole was shut in. Silence and solitude were there. The heavy sigh which he heaved forth that morning as he left the tent-door had a significance which the very unconsciousness of Sarah heightened, making one to think of it as if it were the smoking sacrifice of the prophet's soul ascending to God.

Sadness dwells with us when we are *living away from home*. Especially is this true of

those who are living in a foreign land. The sorrow seems to be increased by the distance ; increased also by the difficulty of reaching home. I have noticed that a great war develops the home idea, and also the feeling of sadness. When we consider the vast number of men who constitute an army ; their voluntary state of exile ; the hardships they have to endure ; the tremendous havoc which death makes among them,—we can see that thoughts about home must mingle with sadness. Even the correspondence which is kept up between the soldier and his family nurtures the sorrowful emotions. Many a letter is read and written with a sad pleasure. But whoever the person may be that is separated from home, and whatever may be his employment, there is a lonely feeling which creeps over the soul, an inward heaviness which hangs about the heart. There are times when one is homesick. This wears upon the mind. Force abates. There is a loss of appetite. To go home is life.

We may here consider how sorrow is modified by the *principle of association*. Thousands of associational lines communicate with the heart : touch any one of these, and there will be feeling. Sometimes, however, many of these lines

are out of order, and consequently there is no feeling. We occasionally behold men and women passing through scenes of great bereavement, yet with no feelings of sorrow that seem to be at all appropriate. A remarkable dullness characterizes such persons. There is enough to make them weep, but they weep not. Evidently they are lacking in the principle of association. Whole families are found in this state. One almost thinks that the deficiency is hereditary. Here are other persons who are in deep affliction. A remote hint is seized at once, and they feel. One incident after another suggests to them their loss. Not to show signs of grief is impossible. Niebuhr speaking of his child, and how its movements started in him a train of sad emotions, thus writes : " It often gives me a melancholy feeling, while in the evening he stretches out his arms toward the light, and makes me carry him to the window, where he gazes up into the sky with a fixed, bright, serious look ; then the recollection comes over me of how my Milly, too, gazed up into the sky the last time we took her out. I thank Heaven that I can at least shed tears over this remembrance."\*

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\* Life and Letters of Niebuhr, p. 350.

The action of the child in this case suggested to the mind what the mother did before she died. Tears flow as the result of this revived act. A striking illustration of the thought before us is found in what took place during the funeral services of John Wesley. "When the minister came to that part which reads, 'Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our *brother*,' his voice changed, and he substituted the word *father*; and the feeling with which he did this was such, that the congregation, who were shedding silent tears, burst at once into *loud weeping*."\* That single word *father* started a new train of associations. The change from silent tears to loud weeping showed that a new key had been struck. Of course, apart from the principle of association, there is a real difference in men in regard to feeling and in regard to the power which they have of suppressing it, yet, with this admission, there can be no question that a quick suggestiveness does have much to do with the movement of sorrow. In a public assembly it can frequently be discovered who has the associational characteristic,

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\* Southey's *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 335.



and who has it not. By starting one train of suggestion here and another there, during the delivery of a discourse, different persons are seen to feel ; yet it is equally certain that there is another class whose nature is blocked up,— association, the sympathies, imagination, are all at fault.

When we think of the *happy days of childhood* we are both *sad* and *pleased*. We are pleased, because of the simplicity, the freedom from care, the artless life and joy of those early years. We are sad, because those times are gone to return not again. Simply in the memory do they live. As a star that once shone and went away forever, so is it with the morning time of our life. The fact is impressive that all men have a *bright past*. As we think of the troubles that have met us during our short pilgrimage, and that are meeting us still, we call up the time when we moved along in quietness and contentment, fearing not the chilling blasts of life.

“ Give me back the joyous hours,  
When I myself was ripening, too,  
When song, the fount, flung up its flowers  
Of beauty ever fresh and new.

When a soft haze the world was veiling,  
Each bud a miracle bespoke,  
And from their stems a thousand flowers I broke,  
Their fragrance through the vales exhaling.  
Give me the freedom of that hour,  
The tear of joy, the pleasing pain,  
Of hate and love the thrilling power,  
Oh, give me back my youth again." \*

As we *visit the scenes of our early years* we have feelings of *sadness* and *pleasure*. What a peculiar pleasure there is in walking along the same streets where we used to walk ; or in standing by some stream or lake, some mountain or harbor of ships, where we used to stand. The days of childhood are all revived. *There* is where we played. Along these places we planned, and talked, and thought what we should be when manhood came. What changes we meet as we go from point to point in the regions around. Some houses are the same, but many new ones appear. The persons that pass by us we know not. Our old acquaintances are either dead or have moved away, with the exception of one here and one there who still remain as memorials of the past. The school-house where we were drilled for life

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\* Goethe's Faust, p. 21, Brooks's Trans.

is gone. The church which we used to attend is still standing ; but new worshipers frequent its seats, and a new pastor guards his flock, leading them to heaven. Where is the home in which we lived when a child ? It is all changed. No mother is there to welcome, nor father to greet us with his smile. They died long ago. Brother and sister sleep at their side. . As a stranger from a far off land we seem to be ; as the shadow of a wandering cloud we pass on. A voice, as if it were the voice of God, falls upon our ear, saying, " Arise, let us go hence."

There is a feeling that goes with us through life,—the feeling that we are *strangers*. We may have comforts around us, friends around us, a home that we call our own, yet the feelings of a stranger never leave the heart. We look into the eternal deeps that are beyond and sigh. This world pleases us not. Even our kindred do not appear as if they were fully related to us. The soul has evidently other relationships than those of time. There is a Father who is eternal ; there are brothers who never die. All things here are wanting. We are made for a higher sphere ; fashioned for God. Our nature is broken by sin ; like meteoric stones we have reached this world.

We look around for something, but cannot always tell just what we want. The word *better* simply goes with us wherever we go, and makes us restless wherever we stay. We want a better climate and better health, better houses and a better position in life, better souls and a better world. No word so significantly points out the moral condition of man as the word better. That we are all astray is evident. Home is not here. We think of the lands of eternity ; the love that is nothing but love ; the joy that becomes more joyful forever. When Neander was upon his dying bed, he said, as in the midst of a dream, "I am weary, let us now make ready to go home." Men all over the world can utter the same language. Their souls are weary ; they wish to go home.

"I feel a long unwonted yearning  
For that calm, pensive spirit-realm, to-day ;  
Like an Æolian lyre, (the breeze returning,)  
Floats in uncertain tones my lisp'ing lay :  
Strange awe comes o'er me, tear on tear falls burning,  
The rigid heart to milder mood gives way ;  
What I possess, I see afar off lying,  
And what I lost is real and undying."

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE LONELINESS OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT AS AFFECTING ITS SORROW.*

THE thought of the present chapter is not solitude of place, but the solitude of a *soul*. It is supposed that no one can fully realize the lonely nature of his existence without having in connection with that a feeling of heaviness. It is sad to think that so many of our race spend their years in the midst of gloom ; sailing upon a sea beset with storms ; approaching and entering the harbor of eternity, in the midst of fear and darkness. There are children even whose pilgrimage among us is one of painful loneliness. Their little spirits have been wilted by the frosts of spring, and no summer-like visions ever play around their hearts. In silence and bashfulness they track their way to the unseen future ; never opening their mind to any creature upon earth ; and no

kind friend getting near enough to them to cheer them on to God's land. Women in a peculiar sense are lonely. This may arise from their nature, from their want of experience in many things, from the fact that they are more dependent than men, and more by themselves. Each human being, however, is alone. No two ever felt the very same feeling, nor printed the same foot-mark. Each soul has an experience which strictly and eternally is its own.

*Personality* and *oneness* go together. I feel that I am. Consciousness isolates the soul. I cannot be another ; am destined to be myself ; from the thought of my creation, I cannot escape. I remember that I once was ; I am conscious that now I live ; I anticipate a tomorrow when I shall still exist. A kind of necessity is laid upon me. Instinctively I connect myself with time. From it I cannot escape ; and because I cannot, I know that I am a man. It makes no difference that a world of human beings crowd around me ; I am never lost in the midst of this ocean of men. There is always an *I*. More than that,—there is always a *thou*. More still,—there is always a *he*. As a single person, therefore, I must remain ; solitude of existence walls me in.

Then I have a *will*. That individualizes me forever.

The loneliness of the human spirit is seen also in the fact of *accountability*. If I were at all inclined to lose sight of my individual existence, and to be carried along blindly by the force of a multitude of men, my conscience at any moment could lead me into the great sphere of moral realities, and there I should feel that I was alone. I am related to law; to government, to God. The design is not that I should float about like a speck of dust in the atmosphere of the universe. In my heart I may be alienated from God, but in my conscience I am fastened to him by an eternal ethical principle. It is impossible for me to snap that asunder. If I say that accountability is one of the troublesome dreams of the race, and has no reality, that will not change it. Man is accountable to God, whatever he may say, think, or do. This fearful fact singles us out. We stand alone.

How solitary is *human destiny*. Each man is on his way to a fixed state of being. In the midst of profound solitude human souls are ripening for eternal worlds. Active or idle, conscious or unconscious, each mortal is on a

secluded journey to the great future. Any one who thinks critically upon human probation will see spread over it an air of solitude. What doubts, uncertainties, struggles, and griefs, there are! How we have to test, and weigh, and work in the line of probabilities, in order to find the truth! Sometimes a single word would make the whole clear, but the single word is withheld. Our one season of probation must be passed upon this strange, solitary world. We cannot leave this earth for remote realms, that among their inhabitants we might find the information which we desire. Here we are born, here we are to prepare for eternity, and here we die. Our weakness and greatness, our faith and knowledge, our hope and fear, our sin and the holiness we need so much, all press in upon us the fact of solitariness. Perhaps there is no time when the solitude of man is felt so truly as when he is about to die. Interests and topics which formerly occupied attention for long periods together, are now allowed to sink, and disappear. The man is alone in the sunless valley of death. A strange chill creeps over the whole being. Retiring from all that is outward, the soul sinks into itself. In a few minutes eternity will be



reached. The man is dead. A lone spirit is with its Judge ; a spirit that has been sinful, and that may be sinful still. How solemn is the solitude !

These ideas touching individuality, accountability, and human destiny, form the ground of that seclusion which belongs to a fallen soul. A peculiar sadness springs from such a peculiar fact of existence. The following thoughts may now be pondered :

A feeling of *reserve* may be said to belong to every human being. We speak of certain men as distant, difficult to approach, hard to get acquainted with. We speak of another class as free, open-hearted, sociable. Still, however much men may seem to differ in these respects, it is certainly a fact that all have an element of reserve ; only that some have more of it than others. We notice also that a good man, easy of access, perhaps with no great amount of mental power, is *loved* ; while another man, equally good, but not easy of access, yet with a richer mind, is simply *respected*. Deep reserve springs from a variety of causes ; as from bashfulness, quietness, thoughtfulness, gloom, pride. Or a person may be dull, obstinate, selfish, and misanthropic,—these characteristics

generating the same state. Do the pure spirits of eternity have anything like reserve? Are they not accustomed to show the contents of their minds to each other? It is difficult to answer. Under certain circumstances, a holy being may be reserved—as Christ sometimes was when upon earth.

*Secrecy* is also a characteristic of man. In each soul is a world of hidden experiences. How many shadows fall upon us which we never mention! how many doubts which we tell to no one! These doubts are quite frequently warning voices of the soul; voices which speak of danger ahead, and death. Some heed them, and are saved; some are too proud to heed them, and are lost. What conflicts, faintings of soul, aspirations, shut up in darkness, do we have!—The thoughts that wander far off; the pining away in the midst of the deep solitudes of our being; the despairing moments that seem like death, and the disquiet that keeps on forever. How much of ignorance is concealed, and with what a small capital does the soul transact its business. How large the volume of sin which every man carries secretly in his bosom,—proud thoughts, foul imaginations, enmities and envies, which

rankle in the heart. And as to the full history of our guilt and remorse, we never publish it. The solitude of all this, and the sadness, can be seen at a glance. We may think souls also that have no guide, and that are compelled to look through all their being if perchance they may find one of the milestones of God. It is possible that with the light which is all about us, we forget the solitary spirits that are anxiously seeking for truth, and for a remedy that will cure the evil of the heart. Among the purer characters of earth there is a tendency to meditate on themes of pressing moment. That much of this is wrapped up in the secrecy of the soul is quite certain. We have also favored seasons of communion with God, which really mark the great historic times of a spirit on its solitary passage to eternity. To think of the prayers that ascend to Heaven without a witnessing ear; the searchings that are made into inward character; the penitence which no one knows but God,—to think of these amid the deep solitudes of life, is impressive. The highest and purest existence is that which is unseen; the perfection of beauty no eye beholds.

“Interesting it is to observe,” remarks De

Quincey, "how certainly all deep feelings agree in this, that they seek for solitude, and are nursed by solitude. Deep grief, deep love, how naturally do these ally themselves with religious feeling; and all three—love, grief, religion—are haunters of solitary places. Love, grief, the passion of reverie, or the mystery of devotion,—what were these without solitude? All day long, when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house, or in the neighboring fields. The awful stillness occasionally of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of grey or misty afternoons,—these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods or the desert air I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my inquest of beseeching looks. I tormented the blue depths with obstinate scrutiny, sweeping them with my eyes, and searching them forever after one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment."\*

In certain natures there is a painful feeling of solitude at *night*. As one lays down his head

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\* Confessions of an Opium-Eater, p. 184.

upon his pillow in order to fall asleep, there is a shrinking of the whole being into a kind of dreary isolation. The chief language at such a time is a sigh. The soul feels as if the whole of mankind had dropped away. There is simply a deep realization of self. If the sense of sin and misery is profound, the loneliness is deepened. Silent prayer will quite likely ascend,—the breathing of a wounded and weary spirit. Such prayer has no art! no wasted words! no words without feeling. It is simply, O Lord, forgive my sins! help me to be holy! make me well. Nothing seems real now but God, eternity, the soul, and spotless purity. The solitary creature will take all these in as it were with one consciousness. There will be a solemn abstraction! the soul transfused into one state! varied movements arrested, and a single current moving in a circle. If the night is stormy, dreary, cold and dark, this will add loneliness to loneliness. The person will keep musing with closed eyes; he will arrange his head for rest, yet resting not. It would seem almost as if such night-musing were a kind of *thinking emotion*,—the feelings and the understanding blending together. This lonely being falls asleep, as does the shipwrecked sailor on

a rock of the ocean, as a stray cloud sleeps on the bosom of night.

How strange is the fact that *we never see sorrow as it is!*—a part is always hidden or *repressed*. When persons find the tide of sad emotion rising, what an effort they make to keep it down! how hard they struggle not to shed tears! And when tears really come to the eye, and they come so fast that it is difficult to see distinctly, yet many a time they will be allowed to run down the face before the attempt is made to wipe them off; and even then it is done as if the person were half ashamed. Individuals evidently look upon shedding tears as a weakness,—at least they think so at certain times. If we could behold sorrow acting itself out with all its native power, what a sight we should see! A groan, a sob, a choking in the throat, now make known the fact of stifled grief. There is great truthfulness to the language of certain of the Micronesian islanders when they say that they have a sorrowful *throat*, instead of saying that they have a sorrowful heart. Pungent grief, when it leads to crying, whether the attempt is made to repress it or not, generally is connected with a struggle or pain in the throat. Will the sor-

row of eternity be repressed in any degree? or will it burst forth in the totality of its power? Let the reader answer. As far as the present life is concerned, there are persons who can so hide intense grief in the depths of their being, that a stranger could not tell by looking at them, or by conversing with them, of its existence. They can even go so far as to appear to be the most happy beings in existence, while in reality their spirit is laboring like a ship in the storm. Think of a clown compelled to act his part, the day after the burial of his wife! There is no doubt that some of the most frolicsome compositions, as well as some of the most peaceful and serene, have been written while their authors were in the midst of the darkest melancholy. The loneliness of the human spirit under such circumstances is like that of a volcanic island looking out upon the infinite ocean,—the fires burning deep down out of sight, while on the surface is a mantle of green.

*Language* never fully unfolds sorrow. We simply have broken pieces of it,—a faint outline. Still, though the medium of communication be imperfect, the sorrow is to a great extent understood. The reason of this is, that

each one knows in his heart the sorrow that is shadowed forth by language. The soul thus makes up what is not expressed. A mere hint is sometimes all that is wanted. A simple pointing to the pathway of grief, allowing one to walk along that pathway by his own inward experience, is frequently the method which nature adopts. The mention of a grave, a parting, a particular day, a lonesome house or heart, will at times speak as powerfully to a soul as a lengthened chapter would. Even a solitary tear or sigh, a simple look or a silence, may be the highest eloquence to a spirit that knows the nature of grief.

“I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.”

“But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.”

“In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
But that large grief which these unfold  
Is given in outline and no more.”



Another thought, is the *solitude of want*. Just to keep repeating these words with a due sense of their meaning is oppressive. An immortal spirit realizing that it has nothing. Everything gone in which it once trusted. Fame, pleasure, knowledge even, sunk into forgetfulness by the utter pressure of the soul's need. The moralities of life found to be superficial. The motives of life with no divine quality about them. Inward sanctity seen not to exist. Hopes vain and destructive. A sinful self all that remains. Then the sense of ruin, wretchedness, want. This is a solitude whose breathing is a continual sigh. *Physical want* is but the counterpart of this. Here is an aged woman, weak and sickly, who is passing away her days in a dreary dwelling by herself. She has neither food nor fire, and it is winter. No friend is near to help. Courage and hope depart. Body and soul shrink into themselves. With her mind full of memories of the past, and miseries of the present, she enters into the great silence. Here is a sailor clinging to a plank in the midst of the ocean. His ship has foundered. The waves now roll over him; hunger and thirst torment him; the night drags slowly along; no vessel appears with

the day. Wearied and wasted he falls from his plank, and sinks into the darkness of the deep. Two children are lost. They wander here and there till the night gathers about them. They fall asleep. In the morning they awake and seek for their home. They find it not. Days and nights pass. Clasped together they are found dead on the bank of a stream. What solitude and grief do such cases show forth! Dante presents us with the following picture of a father and his sons, who were allowed to famish in a tower :

“I looked upon the visage of my sons.  
I wept not : so all stone I felt within.  
They wept : and one, my little Anselm, cried,  
‘Thou lookest so! Father, what ails thee?’ Yet  
I shed no tear, nor answer’d all that day  
Nor the next night, until another sun  
Came out upon the world. When a faint beam  
Had to our doleful prison made its way,  
And in four countenances I descried  
The image of my own, on either hand  
Through agony I bit ; and they, who thought  
I did it through desire of feeding, rose  
O’ the sudden, and cried, ‘Father, we should grieve  
Far less, if thou wouldst eat of us : thou gavest  
These weeds of miserable flesh we wear ;  
And do thou strip them off from us again.’  
Then, not to make them sadder, I kept down  
My spirit in stillness. That day and the next

We all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth!  
Why open'dst not upon us? When we came  
To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet  
Outstretch'd did fling him, crying, 'Hast no help  
For me, my father?' There he died; and e'en  
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three  
Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and sixth:  
Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope  
Over them all, and for three days aloud  
Call'd on them who were dead." \*

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\* The Divine Comedy, H. canto 33.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *SORROW AS CONNECTED WITH THE LOVE THAT SUBSISTS BETWEEN THE SEXES.*

SOME of the most touching compositions we have, relate to the sorrow of love. I question whether there is a single language in existence that does not refer to it. In fact religion, war, and love with its sighs and sorrows, may be viewed as the chief staple of the early writings of tribes and nations. The Bible, which delineates human nature more truthfully than any other book in existence, thinks it no infringement of modesty to mention the summer-like attachments of man. What a fine picture of a simple age do we behold when the servant of Abraham goes forth on a mission of the heart,—a mission whose object is to find a wife for his master's son. How religiously and

suitably the whole matter is conducted. We cannot read the account without having our emotions stirred, even as the bosom of the lake is stirred by the gentle breeze that passes over it. "And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." The simple shepherdess was willing to leave all for the sake of one whom already she loved; loved although as yet he had not been seen. This committing of the interest of one being into the hands of another is strange, solemn, yet beautiful and touching. The story of Jacob and Rachel also is a story of the affections. Each soul heaved with kindred emotions. No art is seen; no art was necessary. The flame of love seemed to have burst forth without any effort. "Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Pleasantly the years passed. The joy of two spirits had become one; and time that is long to hearts that are cold, was short to them by reason of a happy love. In heaven though there be nothing but

the roll of ceaseless ages, yet no one is ever weary, because joy and love bear the hours along upon their wings.

That is a significant moment in the development of human beings when they *begin to love*. A new motive works around the heart; and a new object stands out before the soul. The imagination has visions which it had not before, —brighter and more pleasurable. Longings travel through the spirit; sighs exhale from the heart; the fragrance of love spreads around. The phrase "*love-sick*," though it may be deemed sentimental, is a true feeling of the soul. The very ardency of the desire becomes painful. The spirit is quick and languishing at the same time. The very features give forth a new expression. The eye is apt to have a dreamy cast. Sometimes there is a look at a certain object, yet nothing seen distinctly. the very tone of the voice is modified by the passion of the soul. Words of tenderness and trifling may follow each other; also the sigh and the smile.

In the sorrow of love there is an element of *tenderness* and *pleasure*. This throws an attraction around it. Two hearts discover that they beat in unison. Nothing is low and re-

elling. There is therefore delight. One of the charms of courtship is the pleasing and tender sadness that is connected with it. This kind of sadness seems like the chant of love. In married life it appears when all is pure ; especially during the early part of it. Dr. Lyman Beecher mentions the following incident : “ Soon after our marriage we were riding together from Sag Harbor. With great good nature we were reconnoitering to find if there were any faults in each other which might be the occasion of trouble. I told her I did not know as I had any faults—unless one : that I was passionate, quick, and quick over ; but if she answered quick we might have trouble. Her face overspread with a glow of emotion and tears flowed ; and that single thing prevented the realization of the evil forever. If she saw I was touched, she never said a word—she appreciated the thing ; she entered into my character entirely.” “ I scarcely ever saw her agitated to tears. Once, soon after we had moved in our new house, the two pigs did something that vexed me ; I got angry and thrashed them. She came to the door and interposed. The fire hadn't got out. I said quickly, ‘ Go in !’ She started, but hadn't

more than time to turn before I was at her side, and threw my arms round her neck and kissed her, and told her I was sorry. Then she wept." \*

*The literature of love is almost sure to have a vein of sadness running through it.* Why are novels read to such an extent? They are chiefly read because they recount the scenes of *love and sorrow*. Take these characteristics away, and novels would be quite insipid. How many love-songs are struck on a minor key. Separation, it may be, from one that is loved inspires the song; perhaps the pain of parting and the last look; perhaps the charms of the object of affection, and the death that soon withered the fair flower. There is a great deal of beauty and pathos in Burns's "Highland Mary."

“How sweetly bloom’d the gay green birk,  
 How rich the hawthorn’s blossom;  
 As underneath their fragrant shade  
 I clasp’d her to my bosom!  
 The golden hours on eagle wings,  
 Flew o’er me and my dearie;  
 For dear to me, as light and life,  
 Was my sweet Highland Mary.

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\* Autobiography and Correspondence, vol. i. p. 122.



Wi many a vow, and lock'd embrace,  
Our parting was fu tender !  
And pledging oft to meet again,  
We tore oursels asunder !  
But oh ! fell death's untimely frost,  
That nipt my flower so early !  
Now green's the sod and cauld's the clay,  
That wraps my Highland Mary !

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,  
I oft hae kiss'd sae fondly !  
And closed for ay the sparkling glance,  
That dwelt on me sae kindly !  
A mouldering now in silent dust,  
That heart that lo'ed me dearly !  
But still within my bosom's core,  
Shall live my Highland Mary."

There is a sadness which results from being *crossed in love*. It has been supposed that Pascal was strongly attached to the sister of the Duke de Roannes ; yet he never ventured to make known to her the existence of his love. This very secrecy of a passion caused it to eat into his spirit. A melancholy naturally deep, must have become still deeper. The story of Dante's love for Beatrice is very beautiful and affecting. His heart was set upon this young woman when he was quite young. He first saw her at a banquet in her father's house.

Her rank in life was the same as that of his own. For years he thought and sighed about her. The time came, however, when they parted from each other. They were parted forever. To forget her was impossible. She was the idol of his heart; the dream of his life. She was married to another, rather than to the one who has made her name immortal: but soon she died. Dante was only about twenty-five years of age when she passed away. Thoughts of a new life entered his mind. A sadness that never left him bore heavy upon his soul. He married; but the chief affection of his heart had been given to Beatrice. In the great eternity he seemed to see her spirit. He could not write his poem without placing her name there. He must commune with the object of his love. Her image was stamped upon his soul.

A touching scene is described by Ossian, which relates to a certain hero who *killed his loved one through mistake*. The words are these: "He went to the door of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She clothed her fair sides with his armor; she strode from the cave of Ronan. *He thought it was his foe*. His heart beat high. His color

changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew, Galvina fell in blood! He ran with wildness in his steps; he called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock. Where art thou, O my love? He saw at length her heaving heart, beating around the arrow he threw. O Conloch's daughter, is it thou? He sunk upon her breast! The hunters found the hapless pair; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps around the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came. He fought; the strangers fled. He searched for death along the field. But who could slay the mighty Comal? He threw away his dark-brown shield. An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps with his loved Galvina at the noise of the sounding surge! Their green tombs are seen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north." \*

How *tragic the love* which subsisted between Abelard and Heloise! Stained with a sin which like all sin must be condemned, yet there was an affection and a sorrow which will never fail to touch the heart. "When you are

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\* Fingal, book ii.

pleased," writes Heloise, "everything seems lovely to me. Nothing is frightful or difficult when you are by. I am only weak when I am alone, and unsupported by you ; and therefore it depends on you alone that I may be such as you desire. Even within these gloomy walls, my heart springs toward you with more affection than it felt, if possible, in the gay and glittering world. Had pleasure been my guide, the world would have been the theatre of my joys. Two and twenty years only of my life had worn away, when the lover on whom my soul doted was cruelly torn from my arms ; and at that age female charms are not generally despised ; but, instead of seeking to indulge the pleasures of youth, your Heloise, when deprived of thee, renounced the world, suppressed the emotions of sense, at a time when the pulses beat with the warmest ardor ; and buried myself within the cold and cheerless region of the cloister. To you she consecrated the flower of her charms ; to you she now devotes the poor remains of faded beauty ; and dedicates to Heaven and to you, her tedious days and widowed nights in solitude and sorrow." \*

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\* Quoted in Zimmerman's Solitude, part ii. chap. vi.

There is a consuming sadness when the one we love *has forsaken us*. Just in proportion to the greatness of the love, is the greatness of the loss. If an exalted happiness was found by us in our communions with one person,—that person having a pre-eminence to us above all others upon earth,—then the misery is great to that extent. The purest affection has been trampled upon. The heart is sick. In solitary anguish the spirit passes away its hours. There is nothing but a dark monotony of grief. The day is lost in night. The future was once viewed as full of joy : now it is nothing but one great wilderness of death. The chief disappointment to sensitive beings upon earth has been experienced. The foundation has given way ; the building has fallen ; the sole inhabitant sits brooding amid the ruins. Reason not unfrequently leaves her throne, and the spirit wanders wildly through life.

“Take one example, one of female woe.  
Loved by a father and a mother’s love,  
In rural peace she lived, so fair, so light  
Of heart, so good, and young, that reason scarce  
The eye could credit, but would doubt, as she  
Did stoop to pull the lily or the rose  
From morning’s dew, if it reality  
Of flesh and blood, or holy vision, saw,

In imagery of perfect womanhood.  
 But short her bloom, her happiness was short.  
 One saw her loveliness, and, with desire  
 Unhallowed, burning, to her ear addressed  
 Dishonored words \* \* \* \* \*  
 Upon a hoary cliff, that watched the sea,  
 Her babe was found—dead. On its little cheek,  
 The tear that nature bade it weep, had turned  
 An ice-drop, sparkling in the morning beam ;  
 And to the turf its helpless hands were frozen.  
 For she, the woeful mother, had gone mad,  
 And laid it down, regardless of its fate  
 And of her own. Yet had she many days  
 Of sorrow in the world, but never wept.  
 She lived on alms, and carried in her hand  
 Some withered stalks she gathered in the spring.  
 When any asked the cause, she smiled and said,  
 They were her sisters, and would come and watch  
 Her grave when she was dead. She never spoke  
 Of her deceiver, father, mother, home,  
 Or child, or heaven, or hell, or God, but still  
 In lonely places walked, and ever gazed  
 Upon the withered stalks, and talked to them ;  
 Till wasted to the shadow of her youth,  
 With woe too wide to see beyond, she died.”\*

Certainly there is such a thing as a *broken heart*. The speech may not always reveal it. The common actions of life may not make it known. The manner may even cover it over

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\* Pollock's Course of Time, book viii.

as a garment the wounded body. In silence and secrecy the evil is simply eating its way through the bleeding heart,—death is at the fountain. The pale face may show to a careful observer the fearful power of mind over matter. It is wonderful how mental pain will burn through the very tenement of the soul, and finally consume it to ashes! It is amazingly sad to think that there are creatures among us who are pining away in the midst of a hidden grief. They may not murmur. In quietness and sweet affection they may attend to the duties of their station. They may smile even as smiles the martyr on his way to the stake. Still, in the soul, there is a sad memory because of a friend that is gone! a broken heart because that friend will come back no more! On the part of the loved one there may have been no desertion; no ill usage of any kind: only this,—he died; died it may be on the very eve of marriage.

“Robert Emmet, who was executed on a charge of treason in Ireland at the close of the last century, had won the affections of a beautiful and interesting girl, the daughter of a celebrated Irish barrister. She loved him with the disinterested fervor of a woman’s first and

early love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him ; when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name, she loved him the more ardently for his sufferings." "The most delicate and cherishing attentions were paid her by families of wealth and distinction. She was led into society, and they tried by all kinds of occupation and amusement to dissipate her grief, and wean her from the tragical story of her loves. But it was all in vain. There are some strokes of calamity that scathe and scorch the soul—that penetrate to the vital seat of happiness—and blast it, never again to put forth bud or blossom. She never objected to frequent the haunts of pleasure, but she was as much alone there as in the depths of solitude. She walked about in a sad reverie, apparently unconscious of the world around her.

"The person who told me her story had seen her at a masquerade. There can be no exhibition of far-gone wretchedness more striking and painful than to meet it in such a scene. To find it wandering like a spectre, lonely and joyless, where all around is gay—to see it dressed out in the trappings of mirth, and looking so wan and woe-begone, as if it had tried in vain



to cheat the poor heart into a momentary forgetfulness of sorrow. After strolling through the splendid rooms and giddy crowd with an air of utter abstraction, she sat herself down on the steps of an orchestra, and looking about for some time with a vacant air, that showed her insensibility to the garish scene, she began, with the capriciousness of a sickly heart, to warble a little plaintive air. She had an exquisite voice ; but on this occasion it was so simple, so touching, it breathed forth such a soul of wretchedness, that she drew a crowd mute and silent around her, and melted every one into tears." " Nothing could cure the silent and devouring melancholy that had entered into her very soul. She wasted away in a slow, but hopeless decline, and at last sunk into the grave, the victim of a broken heart." \*

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\* Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book*, p. 92.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE INVENTIVE POWER OF SYMPATHETIC SORROW.*

LET sympathetic sorrow be understood in its most extended sense. Whether this complex feeling works simply among the desires and thoughts of our inward being, or goes out to suffering and sorrowful men, it makes no great difference as far as the identity of the feeling is concerned. The harp that is tuned to a single listening ear in the solitude of a chamber, is the same harp that cheers the thousands of a great assembly. All sympathy has in it an element of sadness; and I had almost said that all sadness has in it an element of sympathy. There is a warmth of sorrow as well as a warmth of sympathy, and the one naturally attracts the other. Who can even

*feel* without at the same time awaking emotions of sadness and sympathy? The *thought* and the *feeling*, which move and master souls, have a tendency to create and adopt many states of mind. In regard to sympathetic sorrow, we may say that when it is pure and strong it will have more of inventiveness than when it is impure and weak. Invention of any kind demands life. The poet and the orator invent when they are in the midst of emotion.

Perhaps the first lighthouse that was ever built resulted from a movement of pity. There is no telling how much the perfection of our charts has sprung from the same feeling. Even certain improvements in ship-building may be traced back to a thoughtful sympathy. The first idea of a life-boat and a life-preserver may have been the creation of a kind heart. Then what a world of invention we find in connection with our modern philanthropy. Its very commonness has caused men to lose sight of it. Here are hospitals for the sick, asylums for the insane, homes for the poor, reformatory establishments for the fallen. Even the idiotic are trained in schools. The blind are so educated, we imagine almost that they must be able to see, and the deaf that they must hear, and the

dumb that they must speak. The vision of Howard also seems to rest over every prison,—himself the very embodiment of sympathetic invention. Then the fine idea of a temperance pledge : this saving millions of men. The extended moral machinery also that has been set in motion for the benefit of great armies. Indeed, simply to name the living facts of philanthropy is out of the question.

In the sphere of *Christian life* the inventive characteristic comes out with great distinctness. In this sphere a new element is added to the sympathetic sorrow,—the element of holiness. It thus has greater power and greater value. It strikes out upon a new path. Souls that are lost it cares for. How many different methods are adopted in order to impress men ; in order to lead them to commence the new life ; in order to keep them from wandering from the way when once they have entered it ! If we could see the thoughts and plans of all the faithful, we should behold a fine specimen of inventive love. Simply looking at successful ministers of the Gospel, their inventiveness is a study by itself. What an amount of ingenuity is displayed in the selection of texts ; those texts which will arrest the attention and sound the

soul. Then the skill manifested in the preparation of sermons. The choice of so many different themes, unfolded in so many different ways, all for the purpose of preparing men for eternity. Defeat also sharpening the inventive faculty. A new stand-point taken, and a new train of thinking adopted. A mere pause, the use of a certain phrase or illustration, the emphasis put upon a certain word, the very tone of the voice and look of the eye, may all be so many inventions of an exalted sympathy. *Ah*, as expressing pity, had a new power in the preaching of Whitfield. The Christian nature itself seems to act sometimes by a law of necessity; starting new movements apart from any act of will. Sympathy, as if it were a soul, can write anxiety upon the face, can send a tear to the eye, can make the body to bend forward,—making the whole outer man even to be the image of the passion within.

When we really enter upon the work of saving souls, is not a feeling of *sorrow* one of the moving powers? It certainly is. It is the sorrow which shows that we are truly affected by the fallen condition of men. If sorrow be not found at the beginning of efforts which



look to the salvation of men, there is a marked deficiency, a want of fitness. Reason demands that I have a feeling which is suited to the exact state of man. Sin and sorrow are correlates. Suppose we could see a race of beings sinning for the first time,—what would be the first feeling? The first feeling would be grief. When we thus are grieved, we seem to take the sinner's place. The tears that we shed, he ought to shed. We almost repent for him. Pure sympathetic sorrow is a kind of prophecy of the new life; the new life is seen there in miniature.

*Organized efforts* to Christianize men, show the inventive element of sympathetic sorrow. Think of the foreign missionary movement. The very thought is instinct with the deepest sympathy. It bears a resemblance to the redemptive compassion of the Son of God. What an array of inventions have sprung forth from the one scheme of missions! It is only sufficient for one to think the matter over with carefulness, in order to see them. There is also the Sabbath-School enterprise,—a wonderful system of effort. The idea was the fruit of pity; and pity keeps it ever fresh and beautiful. Sabbath-School libraries and papers—

two fine inventions—have grown out of this benevolent movement. Take the thought also of a Tract Society. A certain pious woman was saddened as she beheld the infidelity of France. Sympathetic sorrow moved her to write a tract. The British Tract Society grew out of that. Then we have the exalted conception of a Bible Society. Nothing seems so appropriate for love as to multiply copies of the very book which generated the love. Who can tell now the inventions that have sprung from the Bible?—itself the great invention. We may not specify any further the various organizations. Only we are greatly struck with the thought of a Daily Prayer-Meeting, and with that singular movement of George Muller, of Bristol, England, carried forward by the simple power of faith,—money coming in from all directions, yet no one asked to give. Surely there is a God in heaven, and Love is his child.

The *cross in the heart* has an inventive power. “What was it that led to the establishment of the hundreds of monasteries, convents, and similar institutions, which, whatever they may have been in the days of their degeneracy, were founded by men of the purest zeal for their

own and others' welfare, and were for generations a source of refining, elevating, and civilizing influences to the districts around them? It was the cross. What was it that drove hundreds of the best men of their respective generations from their native lands to traverse pathless wilds, and seek out unknown and barbarous tribes for the purpose of saving them from temporal and eternal ruin? It was the cross in their hearts, whose image they often bore in their hands. What gave the signal for the movement of those immense masses of men of all classes and ages from all parts of Europe on Jerusalem during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries—to the crusades, which, however else we may judge of them, must be confessed to have been rooted in an enthusiasm such as the world had never before witnessed? It was the cross. What was it that inspired Italian art, at the noblest period of its existence, with its grandest thoughts and colors and forms? Was it not the cross? In whose honor were raised the finest monuments of the most spiritual style of architecture that human genius has conceived? Surely the cross, which they exhibit in their form—the cross that towers aloft on their summits!"



We may simply glance at the *inventiveness of the God-man*; a person whose compassion was bathed in sorrow. His miracles were inventions of love, as well as manifestations of power. How unusual that he should mingle so much with the poor and with the vilest of the people! How his feeling and truthful heart led him to rebuke the Pharisees; telling them that they were hypocrites, blind guides, devourers of the houses of widows. His power of rebuke makes one to tremble. No one has appeared who could speak with such boldness. Then the fact that, although the Saviour was Mercy itself, he yet unfolds the horrors of hell with such fullness as not to be equalled by a single Biblical writer, and states the eternity of punishment with such clearness and honesty as must puzzle those who are wont to descant on the omnipotency of Love. The thought, too, that he did not keep in the background the difficulties that were connected with the Christian life, but took special pains to press them into notice; and that instead of being anxious to gain numbers, he frequently announced some startling truth which thinned the ranks of his disciples with great quickness. Also the strange command to gather up the fragments,

when the original amount of food was itself so small! Then his inventiveness as seen in his silence, when other men would have spoken; his doing nothing, when other men would have done something. We may call the Saviour a being of *negative inventions*. He had a great unseen life that was wholly original. How strange that he wrote no part of the New Testament! that he baptized not a single person himself! that he left not a single word which might enable us to form an idea respecting his outward appearance! What a singular conception was that of dying for a world! His sympathetic sorrow began and completed redemption. An agony of love saves millions. The tender thought which he had of ransoming the thief on the cross: so that we are able to say of one man that he repented and went to heaven on the same day. Then at the last the exceeding beauty of the picture that, *while in the act of blessing his disciples*, "he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Emotion that invents, is emotion that *multiples power*. There is enlargement in every direction. Things are seen, which were not seen when the feelings were monotonous. The man whose heart is inventive will have a range

of being double that of his tame companion. The one seems to have two souls and two probations, while the other has nothing but singleness. The day of the inventive is two days, his week two weeks, his year two years, his life two lives. He is characterized also by moral sagacity, holy wisdom, a fine sense of fitness,—states which the prosaic good man only dreams of. With such a soul, opportunities are found; opportunities are created. Gold is seen where others only see rubbish. The higher emotions sharpen the intellect; a kind of sanctified perceptiveness is developed. There are men whose mental nature sleeps for years. By and by the heart begins to beat. The moment of awakening has come. Now they are powers. An extended consciousness, especially an extended moral consciousness, is the result of tearful emotions. We speak of genius as partaking somewhat of the intuitive. There is a quick seizing of particulars; a reaching conclusions with great rapidity. Let one have sympathetic sorrow that is Christ-like, and he will have genius in the spiritual realm.

The inventive characteristic comes out quite distinctly in connection with the fact of *death*.

I once saw a woman who had lost her husband, take three handfuls of earth and drop the same gently down upon his coffin as she stood at his grave. The act was new to all, and it affected all. It seemed to be the invention of sympathetic sorrow. The embalming of the dead ; the reversing of arms at a soldier's funeral ; drinking a toast in *silence* as a token of respect for the dead ; having a coffin made with a lock and key ; having a cemetery in a retired place, and beautified by art ; the wearing of black clothes as a symbol of grief ; the custom among the ancient Romans of calling out the name of the person who had died, with a loud voice, to see whether he was really dead, and then having the nearest friend to give the last kiss,—all these are tender inventions. To place flowers in a coffin or upon it are of the same character. Flowers are incarnations of love ! and when planted round a grave, they seem almost to be living beings who have come to perfume the body of the dead : having done which, they die. On the tombstones of Roman women we find the epitaph—“ *She that had one husband.*” To be married but once, and thus to be married forever, is a thought which we do not think of sufficiently. In the Catacombs we

meet with the simple inscriptions—" *In peace*" —" *He sleeps in peace.*" Thomas Fuller says : " Tombs are the clothes of the dead. A grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered." The various forms of epitaphs, wherever found, may be looked upon as inventions of sympathetic grief. That sorrow, which is the memory of the heart, wrote them. In the Old Testament, quite an inventive incident is stated. Five men had been hung. The mother of two of them went to guard their bodies. " She took sackcloth and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night." Surely the heart which prompted to such action was sick and bleeding. The idiot son who lingered at the grave of his mother after all the mourners had left ; who dug away the earth and lifted out the coffin ; carried that home in the darkness ; made a fire, and set his dead mother upright on a chair that she might warm herself,—the one who acted thus had an inventive heart. The poor thing knew nothing of death, but he knew something of love. Even the worship of relics and of

saints may have sprung originally from sympathetic sorrow. The superstitious realm has been filled with fancies from a sick heart. New sins, as well as new kindnesses, may be the children of tears.

Deep sympathetic sadness will sometimes originate *dreams* which seem almost to be prophetic. "A young lady, a native of Ross-shire, Scotland, was deeply in love with an officer who accompanied Sir John Moore in the peninsular war. The constant danger to which he was exposed had an evident effect upon her spirits. She became pale and melancholy in perpetually brooding over his fortunes; and, in spite of all that reason could do, felt a certain conviction, that when she last parted with her lover, she had parted with him forever. In a surprisingly short period, her graceful form declined into all the appalling characteristics of a fatal illness; and she seemed rapidly hastening to the grave, when a dream confirmed the horrors she had long anticipated, and gave the finishing stroke to her sorrows. One night, after falling asleep, she imagined she saw her lover, pale, bloody, and wounded in the breast, enter her apartment. He drew aside the curtains of the bed,

and, with a look of utmost mildness, informed her that he had been slain in battle, desiring her, at the same time, to comfort herself, and not take his death too seriously to heart. It is needless to say what influence the vision had upon a mind so replete with woe. It withered it entirely, and the unfortunate girl died a few days thereafter; but not without desiring her parents to note down the day of the month on which it happened, and see if it would be confirmed, as she confidently declared it would. Her anticipation was correct, for accounts were shortly after received that the young man was slain at the battle of Corunna, which was fought on the very day, on the night of which his mistress had beheld the vision." \*

Sympathetic sorrow, viewed as inventing various *forms* and *figures of speech* is really quite suggestive. A parent will say, "I lost a child," instead of saying, my child died. In the sadness of our hearts we speak of man as a *flower* that fades, as a *cloud* that passes away, as a *stranger* that tarries but for a night. Life we call a *shadow* and death a *river*. We speak

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\* Dr. Macnish, *Philosophy of Sleep*, chap. iv.

of the dead as *sleeping* in the grave ; sleeping so soundly that they hear not the voices of children or men. Heaven is to us a *haven of peace*, because now we are sailing upon a stormy sea. Some of the names which have been given to places in the polar regions are but echoes of lonely minds ; exclamations of men who are depressed by long darkness and cold. Take these : Cape Welcome, Providence Halt, Refuge Inlet, Point Security, Weary Man's Rest. Many names of persons are inventions of sad hearts. The second son of Adam was called Abel,—meaning *a breath, vanity*. How well that pointed to his short life. Like a sigh it must have seemed to Adam and Eve. The name that was given to the grandson of Eli is very significant. At the moment of his birth, his mother called him Ichabod,—meaning the *glory is departed*. Her father-in-law had fallen down dead, her husband had been slain in battle, the ark of God was taken, she herself was dying ; so Ichabod was a name which had wrapped up in it a sad history. Even in the very artificial language of Skaldic poetry, in which nothing was to be called by its own proper name, there might be found many inventions of sympathy. “ Blood was not to be



called blood, but the dew of pain, or the water of the sword. A warrior was not spoken of as a warrior, but as an armed tree, the tree of battle. A sword was the flame of wounds."\* The figures of speech which are found in the following lines of Cowper are evidently creations of a heart that was sad :

"I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
 Long since ; with many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades."

Apart from mere style, there is a great deal of literature which is the fruit of sympathetic sorrow. There are poetical compositions of the finest stamp which can be traced to a bleeding heart. Take Dante's "Divine Comedy," Gray's "Elegy," and Tennyson's "In Memoriam," as instances. Songs relating to love and freedom, hymns occasioned by the sufferings and death of men, the few verses that were written with tears, point to the sympathetic nature. Some of our higher works of fiction are but the outpourings of personal grief,—figures of men in battle array in the clouds,

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\* Muller's Science of Language, p. 194.

reflected from the earth. There are writers who have failed to impress, just because a true loving sorrow had no prompting and fashioning power in their souls. Then, again, there are books which are strictly intellectual, yet containing sentences of the deepest pathos. It is possible even for a treatise which turns out to be exceedingly dry, to have had its origin in the moving sympathies of the soul, just as many a scorching day has come forth from a dark rainy night. A physician may have a great deal of feeling, as he thinks in regard to a cancer which he is about to remove ; yet in the act of removing that cancer he may show no feeling at all : concentrating his attention upon the one business before him, he forgets all emotion. I am not aware that Butler's " Analogy " is in any respect a pathetic book ; yet a feeling of sadness, occasioned by the prevailing infidelity, may have led to its composition. There are many works on the Christian evidences, strictly argumentative, which show painful and profound concern for the higher interests of men. That one sentence of John Howe—" Here God once dwelt "—is the echo of deep feeling. Indeed, the " Living Temple," taken as a whole, was wrought out by what might be called

thoughtful sympathy. In the sphere of practical piety, we have fine treatises which have been moulded by the heart. Bunyan's Allegory was not merely the offspring of genius. Christian feeling, a very painful experience in connection with sin, a deep knowledge of human nature and divine revelation, had much to do with its composition. As that wonderful tree which bears twelve manner of fruits is planted by the river of life, so beside the fountain of love and sadness there spring up thoughts of great wealth and originality.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### *THE MISERY OF MAN AS DEEPENING HIS SORROW.*

**R**AIN that descends during a cold gloomy day is more disagreeable than when the sky is clear and the air pleasant. When misery inflames the soul, tears are scalding. Although sorrow is painful, yet all pain is not sorrow. We therefore present a statement of human unhappiness, that each one may see how wintry grief is made by its presence.

There is the feeling of *discontent*. No man is satisfied. There may be a general contentment with reference to one's outward condition ; a quiet submission to God and pleasure in his government ; but yet there is no absolute contentment. The best man living may be convinced of the truthfulness of this statement by watching the movements of his mind for a single day. Sin is found in every soul, and

because of that, men chafe and are dissatisfied. They rush towards this thing and that, in order to cool and quiet the agonized mind. Scenes and circumstances are imagined as peculiarly favorable to happiness. They are reached ; they are tried ; they are found wanting.

There is that *burden upon the heart* which all feel. The rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, are conscious of it. To think of a whole race, age after age, passing through life under the sinking weight of internal misery, is fearful. What cutting irony to speak of the happiness of man. Any poetic view of life is worthless when placed side by side of the awful reality. Millions may have a peace that covers the surface of their being ; they may be so intently occupied as not to think of the soul ; they may be exceedingly conceited, and thus imagine themselves wiser and better than they are : but beneath all this there is the burden upon the heart.

Take now the feeling of *disappointed ambition*. When one at first starts on the path of ambition there is generally a glow of pleasant emotion. Prospective greatness is cheering. By a peculiar working of the mental nature, the good that is wanted seems to be realized.

This deception adds to the pleasure. But by and by ambition fails,—the coveted object is not secured. A storm now sets in. The man is restless. He seems chained to a rock by bad circumstances. He muses upon his fate. This only adds fuel to the fire of misery. Silent and sullen to others, he complains to himself.

But even *if one has reached the height to which he aspired he is not happy*. Exalted position is fraught with care, and the strifes and envies connected with it are not pleasant. Quite frequently the higher the seat, the more intense the misery. There is a wish to be away from the turmoil and excitement that are incident to power and position. The buffeted spirit is weary of the world; hence retirement is now as eagerly longed for as publicity formerly was; yet retirement does not ease the troubled mind. The thought should be distinctly apprehended that unhappiness arises from the bad state of the soul, and that no circumstances can expel it. "Frequently, when in possession of everything that could make life pleasing," says Rousseau, "I have been the most miserable of mortals." Set a fallen soul down amid the perfect circum-

stances of heaven, and even there it would be wretched.

*Pride* is a centre of misery. It starts in the soul painful reflections, and it runs in the line of unhappy feelings. The proud man is sure to have enemies, real or imaginary. It is not possible for him to feel easy. He is full of abnormal wants ; is sensitive ; sour in his heart, if not in his speech ; is quite discontented. I have sometimes thought that if a man could only be humble, truly humble, he would have such an amount of peace that, in popular language, he might be called happy. As the loftiest trees have the deepest roots, so the greatest men are the most humble. None are so small as the proud. "I have sometimes dreamed that from time to time hours detached themselves from the life of the angels, and came here below to pass through the destiny of man ;" yet such hours only fret and tease the vain-glorious spirit. An incident is mentioned by a missionary in Africa, showing that *pride will force one even to choose death* rather than life. He remarks : "A feast had been proclaimed, cattle had been slaughtered, and many hearts beat high in anticipation of wallowing in all the excesses of savage delight. Every heart

appeared elate but one. He was a man of rank, and wore on his head the usual badge of dignity. He was brought into the presence of the King and his chief council, charged with a crime for which it was in vain to expect pardon. He bowed his fine elastic figure, and kneeled before the judge. The case was investigated silently, which gave solemnity to the scene. Not a whisper was heard among the listening audience. The prisoner's eyes indicated a feeling of intense interest, which the moving balance between life and death only could produce. The charges were clearly substantiated, and the culprit pleaded guilty. But, alas! he knew it was at a bar where none ever heard the sound of pardon. A pause ensued, during which the silence of death pervaded the assembly. At length the monarch spoke, and, addressing the prisoner, said, 'You are a dead man; but I shall do to-day what I never did before; I spare your life for the sake of my friend and father'—pointing to the spot where the missionary stood. 'He has pleaded with me not to go to war, nor destroy life. I wish him, when he returns home again, to return with a heart as white as he has made mine. I spare you for his sake. But you must be de-



graded for life ; you must no more associate with the nobles of the land, nor enter the towns of the princes of the people ; nor ever again mingle in the dance of the mighty. Go to the poor of the field, and let your companions be the inhabitants of the desert.' The sentence passed, the pardoned man was expected to bow in grateful adoration. But no ! holding his hands clasped on his bosom, he replied, ' O King, afflict not my heart ! Let me be slain like the warrior ; I cannot live with the poor ; how can I live among the dogs of the king ? No, I cannot live ! Let me die, O Pezoolu !' His request was granted. He was led forth, a man walking on each side. My eye followed him till he reached the top of a precipice, over which he was precipitated into the deep pool of the river beneath, where the crocodiles were yawning to devour him ere he could reach the bottom." \*

The fact of *loss*, viewed as a characteristic of souls, increases misery. Because of this fact of loss man is ever wanting something. The millions of strange objects that are fastened upon during a lifetime, only show the raging

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\* Moffat's Scenes in Southern Africa, p. 355.

nature of the soul's hunger. Men want labor and ease, variety and that which changes not, sin now and happiness forever, because that which is suitable for the whole of existence has been blindly cast away. The Divine and the holy are lost! therefore men do weary to find that which will take their place, and fill the void that has been created. Stray thoughts from a higher realm sweep past the spirit in its want, and sighs wander forever seeking for that which is gone. As the shell has within it the sound of ocean waves,—thus pointing to the home from whence it came,—so in the soul of man may be heard whisperings of the eternal sea—echoes of God. Is there not a feeling of loss in many a mind that has reasoned itself into the belief that Christianity is false? Pleased no doubt at first with the new infidelity; rejoicing that all restraints are now taken away; yet after a season of quietness, is there not a certain uneasy sensation—a feeling that something is wanted to make up for the lost Christianity? The very system of unbelief that was chosen as the pacificator of the soul, as the satisfier of its want, leaves it at the point of zero with nothing to help and nothing to fill. Cut off from all that is supernatural and

saving, there cannot but be a feeling of loss, which, though pride may want to conceal, is yet there as a fact of the sceptical mind.

The soul attempts to lessen its misery by *hope*. A future good is thought of, and the mind is made to centre itself upon that, in order that it may forget as much as possible its present unhappiness. It is really a very curious thing that in the majority of cases the fallen soul has *no present*; being occupied either about those things that are past, or about those that are to come. If there be any thing, however, that does hold man to a present, it is suffering. Indeed, by way of pre-eminence, the *present* may be called the tense of misery. Because of this, the mind hastens away to a future realm, seeking there a home which it finds not here. Hope never has such meaning as when it calls forth good with its golden wings to ease the fevered subject of pain. It seems like a ray of the excellent glory shining upon the ruined spirit of man. If we had no sin and no suffering, I doubt whether hope would be such a prominent characteristic as it now is. The pure mind has a continually blessed present, and there is no need to long for a happy to-morrow. Hope,

in a vast number of cases, is nothing but a golden dream ; pleasing only while the dream continues. Let one come to himself, and he is miserable. "The fires which illumine our night serve but as a signal to the phantom which haunts us. The very joy awakens in the depths of the soul a slumbering grief."

*A single list of evils which torment the fallen mind* may here be presented. There is malice with its darkness and venom. Revenge with its blade of death. Pride and envy souring the spirit. Impatience worrying the soul, and spite poisoning it. The fearful fact of bondage also,—held in chains by a sinful nature. The loss of manhood. The feeling of shame and chagrin. Square truthfulness not existing. Absolute honesty not found. The want of moral courage. Praise ending in flattery, and blame in anger. A feeling that all this is unworthy of a soul that is made in the image of God. Sick of self, and somewhat misanthropic in spirit. Guilt and remorse consuming the soul. The conscious war of discordant powers.

The misery of man is intensified by *visions of good*. Seeing men of a noble spirit living a grand life, torments us. The brighter they

are, the darker we appear to be. We may not be spoken to, but purity speaks. Gentleness, humility, disinterested love, a serene submission, arouse the unrenewed mind of a spectator, and cause it to pronounce condemnation upon self. As I behold patience, I think of my anger; peace, I think of my unrest. The very child that quietly lives and trusts and dies, brings to the light my unfaithfulness, and makes me bow my head and weep.

There are hours in every man's life which stand out as hours of *great unhappiness*. Evil supplements evil. The whole soul appears to be broken in pieces; there is pain all over. The spirit is faint because of suffering; it knows not what to do; there is the consciousness of a lost balance, and a tendency to despair. The soul is like a stranded ship breaking up by the tremendous force of the tempest; piece by piece wrenched off and swept upon the beach; the wind howling through the rigging, through the rent sails, playing fearfully about the broken masts and yard-arms; the water pouring in at one side of the vessel only to be forced out at the other by reason of its constant rolling. Perhaps also the shattered soul is hovering over the abyss of insanity about to

fall in, and dark thoughts of self-destruction may be passing through the mind. When such misery occurs, it may generally be looked upon as the result of various wrong feelings mingling together. Human existence would be a terror, if each moment of it were to be characterized by such a fearful ministry of unhappiness. It is only therefore once in a while that such misery is felt. When the painful moment comes, there are men who feel as if they could throw themselves down upon the floor and cry out in their agony. The book of Psalms, which unfolds a great many characteristics of human nature, gives touches of an experience that bears some resemblance to the kind just mentioned. I meet with such statements as these: "I am as a man that hath no strength." "My soul is full of troubles." "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps." "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow." Such language is painfully expressive. Men at times are like those dead trees which are seen lying in the midst of a stream, having perhaps a tuft of flowers growing out of their withered trunk. The most unhappy have yet

some bright vestige about them, even if it should be nothing more than a smile.

Men *will not generally reveal the full contents of their misery*. They consequently appear happier than they are. The laws of good society also demand that we should always appear pleasant. Hence a man will meet you with a smile at the very time he is suffering intense pain of soul. This makes it evident that we can not judge of men by the appearance. The very symptom which one would take to be expressive of joy, may need to be interpreted as a sign that the soul is in a state of turmoil; and the very labor which is put forth to appear happy, may only show the bitterness of the grief. I suppose also that men are trying to reach the ideal of their happiness *in appearance*, since they find that they cannot do so in reality. The appearance-life of mortals is very suggestive. It shows that they were made for a substantial sphere, and have failed to reach it; and so the *seeming* is selected because it has a resemblance to that which is real. Even children are playing the man each day. They mimic the showy and the great. Few things are so common as apparent good. It is the key that opens hearts, and shows that men are

weary in their sin. The poor maniac, with a straw for a scepter and his couch for a throne, is the symbol of us all.

There is another striking fact of human nature, namely this, that the soul will at times *hold itself to its misery*. No pity is craved ; no effort is put forth to obtain relief. There is simply a dark solitude, as if the stricken spirit had settled down in a desert, that there it might brood and suffer amid the terrible ongoing of a disjointed nature. I am not sure but that there is found in our souls a *punitive law* or principle, which holds us with a kind of iron grasp to the very suffering that we are enduring, and that because of this we make no attempt to escape. Is there not also an acquiescence of soul with respect to the suffering?—as if it were saying, This is all right, it is just what I deserve. It is difficult to explain the tendency of fallen beings to hold themselves down to their misery, unless it be by this punitive drift of mind. If such a view is correct, it helps to explain, in part, the backwardness of men to come within the reach of mercy. Guilt will not yield up its victim ; pardon is not sought ; there is simply a kind of suffering contentment. There are souls even



that will not forgive themselves ; justice reigns alone and supreme. Apart from unbelief, that state of mind is significant which makes one to say, I am so wicked that mercy is not for me ; then sinking into the arms of death hopeless and lost.

Is there a misery so great that *it cannot be remembered*? Coleridge intimates that there is. Note the following language :

\* \* \* "I lost all thought and memory  
Of that for which I came.  
I stood in unimaginable trance  
And agony that cannot be remembered,  
Listening with horrid hope to hear a groan ;  
But I had heard his last." \*

I should say that from the very nature of intense suffering we could not fail to remember it. The greater the pain, the deeper is the impression that is made upon the mind. It is equally so, I think, with intense joy. Although I am inclined to believe that great misery is more readily remembered by us than great happiness. It is true, however, of all high-wrought feeling, that it confuses the mind. Let any one attempt to read a book while in a

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\* Works, vol. vii. p. 392.

passion or state of excitement, and he will scarcely remember a single thing that he reads. We can say, then, as much as this, that certain movements of mind connected with great pain will be forgotten, while the pain itself will be distinctly remembered.

With such a view of the misery of man, it is not difficult to see how sorrow is deepened by it. The very misery itself develops a most dreary sadness. Shadow is therefore made to overhang shadow. A grief that is dark and heavy is the heritage of the soul.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *THE SORROW OF CHILDREN.*

**T**HERE is a tradition that the Virgin Mary and Tasso never wept when they were children. This is a beautiful fancy, but nothing more. There is no reason to think that any human being ever passed through the years of childhood without weeping. Did the infant Jesus shed tears? Did that soul which came from the climes of God receive a shock when it touched this earth? We think that the shadow of a mysterious sorrow must have fallen upon it the moment it found itself in contact with a mortal body. A world of sinners was reached by the world's Redeemer: the fact was announced by a sigh. And during the period of infant suffering, there must have been infant weeping. We almost imagine that the angels cannot fly over this earth without having their garments moistened with

the dews of our night. If heaven were to come down among us it would have to be shaded. The divine itself has to be veiled the instant it comes here. All over the earth and all over the years of man there is found sorrow. A figure of sadness is always enthroned in our sky. The very beasts that live among us pant and groan. The fish that glide through their watery world tremble. Even the trees lament. The winds mourn. The moon looks sad. Why should not the infant sigh ?

“There are, who think that childhood does not share  
With age the cup, the bitter cup of care :  
Alas! they know not this unhappy truth,  
That every age and rank is born to ruth.  
From the first dawn of reason in the mind,  
Man is foredoom'd the thorns of grief to find ;  
At every step has further cause to know  
The draught of pleasure still is dash'd with woe.”

The first and last breath of each human being is a sigh. The child cries before it smiles,—thus uttering a prophecy of life. Our day comes out of the night, and is edged with darkness. If the hours that are given to us were the children of heavenly time they would be joyful and fair, telling only of purity and God. But such is not their nature. Our souls are

damaged from the start, and the moments are weary when they pass away. The blight that fell upon Eden fell upon us. In this world death begins with life. The fountain that bubbles up at the foot of the hill flows onward a mixed stream. The flowers that bloom here were not brought from heaven. The first seed only was from that land. A cold climate, however, soon weakened it; and ever since that time there has been feebleness and decay. We call this world our native country; yet we do not feel well here. We look about us and sigh, as if there were another region for which we were made; and sometimes we dream of another land that is far better than this. Not real-children of God are we; and yet there is something in us that feels round for one Being, even as a child at midnight turns over in its bed and feels whether its father is there or not. All of us are weary, as if the journey we had travelled had been long. The very infant is tired before it steps; and a sudden cry in the midst of its wakefulness or in the midst of its sleep is the echo of its pain. I am convinced of this, that each child has a sadness that is never remembered. No history would be so interesting as the history of an infant mind.

One of the most striking things about a child is the feeling of *uncasiness*. This can be seen before there is any power of speech, or any attempt made by signs to let us know what is wanted. It is evident that there is something that is not pleasing. The uneasy sensation we interpret as the shrinking of the nature because of some evil, implying in this that a good is wanted. Certainly there is no absolute composure to the infant soul. That soul is not balanced. The infant is not an ideal creature. The instrument is not tuned. The harmony is not perfect. There is a stage of life when we can do anything with a child, and it will not know; yet there is another stage of life when if a stranger wants to take that child, it will shrink away from him and cry, clinging to its mother. The mother in this case is looked upon as a safe person, the stranger as one that is not safe; while fear prompts to flee from the one, and love to cling to the other; the crying being as it were the signal of danger. At a more advanced period, when the child begins to amuse itself, what changeableness is manifest. All engrossed at first with its playthings, it soon becomes tired and leaves them. How much this looks like

man. One hour he is pleased ; the next he is dissatisfied. Both child and man are restless. Something is lost ; something is wanted ; each is troubled. I wonder not that the saint leaves the earth with a sigh of relief, entering heaven with a song.

Are not children *more sad than they appear to be* ? I am inclined to think that they are. The difficulty is, that we do not get near enough to them to know how they feel, nor they near enough to us to open their hearts. There are childish troubles which are insignificant to us because we are men, but they are not by any means insignificant to the child. The causes of sorrow in a child differ in many respects from the causes of sorrow in a man. By losing sight of this fact we form a mistaken judgment in regard to the young. Very small things awaken their emotions. The little boy who receives a gift of a ball may be as much pleased with that as the man who receives the gift of a hundred dollars ; and if that ball should be lost, there may be as much sadness in the mind of the boy as in the mind of the man, if his hundred dollars should be lost. Children have a notion of values that is peculiarly their own. Hence they will be found

gathering together old buttons, pieces of iron and wood, strings and broken watch-keys ; anything in fact that seems to them to be suitable for their own little sphere,—that sphere where they mimic those who are above them. If we were to watch a child closely during a single day, in order to become acquainted with its sorrows, we should be astonished at their number. That child may be **at** home, yet the home-life has its troubles ; it may be at school, where there are tasks, strifes, and emulations ; at play, where there are deceptions, partialities, and cruelties,—in all these there is sorrow. “Cowper was frequently heard to lament the persecution he sustained in his childish years, from the cruelty of his school-fellows in the two scenes of his education. His own forcible expression represented him at Westminster as not daring to raise his eye above the shoe-buckle of the elder boys, who were too apt to tyrannize over his gentle spirit.” Just think of the mockeries, the calling of names, the playing of tricks, and see how much of anguish comes to the mind of a child from these sources. We have been startled also at the amount of destructiveness which belongs to children. “The popular idea,” remarks Herbert Spencer,



“that children are innocent, while it may be true is so far as it refers to evil *knowledge*, is totally false in so far as it refers to evil *impulses*, as half an hour’s observation in the nursery will prove to any one. Boys when left to themselves, as at public school, treat each other far more brutally than men do ; and were they left to themselves at an earlier age their brutality would be still more conspicuous.” \* We do not believe, however, that children at first are barbarians ; that afterwards they become civilized ; then perfected, —the civilization and perfection being reached through self development. This would make the child worse than the man. Such a theory is no better than that other one which makes all children to be good at first, and bad afterwards. The idea of infant saints or infant savages does not match with the truth.

Many a child is *sad without realizing it*. The very thought of such a fact is painful to us. If we saw a man in the last stage of consumption who considered himself to be well, or who expected to be well quite soon, we should feel troubled. If we entered a house and there

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\* Education, p. 206.

beheld a mother watching over an only son who was sick, she having the conviction that he would be restored to health, when he would not, —seeing the mother thus deceived would make us feel sad. The sight of a man gradually losing his money, and he not aware of it; of a captain steering his ship towards a point of danger, which he takes to be a point of safety; of a person lost, yet he thinking that he is saved, —such visions are exceedingly depressing in their nature. In the same way are we depressed by the fact of a youthful sorrow that is not realized. What an array of children there are whose whole existence is clouded! They seem like those who have always lived in a prison; who have always lived in a mine. Sadness is in their nature, in their blood, in the faces and forms of those who surround them. The very laugh of such children is like the playing of a sunbeam on the face of a tombstone. What they call happiness is misery; what they call life is death.

Here is the picture of a pitiful child by Victor Hugo: “Cosette was thin and pale, she was nearly eight years old, but one would hardly have thought her six. Her large eyes, sunk in a sort of shadow, were almost put out by

continual weeping. The corners of her mouth had that curve of habitual anguish, which is seen in the condemned and in the hopelessly sick. Her hands were, as her mother had guessed, 'covered with chilblains.' The light of the fire, which was shining upon her, made her bones stand out and rendered her thinness fearfully visible. As she was always shivering, she had acquired the habit of drawing her knees together. Her whole dress was nothing but a rag, which would have excited pity in the summer, and which excited horror in the winter. She had on nothing but cotton, and that full of holes; not a rag of woolen. Her skin showed here and there, and black and blue spots could be distinguished. Her naked legs were red and rough. The hollows under her collar bones would make one weep. The expression of the countenance of this child of eight years was habitually so sad and sometimes so tragical that it seemed, at certain moments, as if she were in the way of becoming an idiot or a demon."

Suppose we stand and look at a sad child while it is sleeping. Poor thing! do you now have rest? Anxiety and sorrow are written upon your features. A melancholy wind seems to

have long swept over your being. You look tired. Even in your sleep you sigh. Perhaps you are acting over again some dark scene of yesterday. My child, what a history is yours! Turbulence and crime have always surrounded you. Nothing but corruption have you breathed. You scarcely know what it is to be loved. How a single day's kindness would cheer you. The person called your mother is now in the midst of a drunken sleep upon the floor. Even when you are awake, you do not realize her sin. Being so near to her by nature, you think that much of her evil is good. Unconscious creature, one pities you. Do you know anything of God and the soul, of Christ and heaven? Have you ever uttered a prayer or entered a church? From a wrecked ship you seem to have been washed ashore upon a desolate island. Like a flower in a cave art thou; the sad inhabitant of an evening land.

It is a fact worthy of notice that the *dreams of children are to a great extent painful*. How often they dream of falling from some height, and awake trembling all over when it seemed to them that they were about to strike the bottom. Those who live near the sea will

dream that they are falling from a rock into the water, and those who inhabit a mountainous region will dream that they are falling from a lofty precipice into a deep chasm below. In their sleep also they imagine that they are attacked by robbers, and awake just as one is about to strike them down. In very many ways they are tormented during the night hours. A bad state of the body no doubt tends to produce painful dreams. Fear also is a leading passion in the minds of children, and that calls forth dismal pictures during the night. There is reason to think that even the hours of infancy have troublesome dreams traveling across them. The groaning and starting in sleep would seem to betoken that. I presume also that many children who die in a state of stupor, have unhappy motions of soul caused by a diseased body. When they reach eternity and look back, death must appear to them as a painful dream.

That there is an *apparent frivolousness* about the sorrow of children is no doubt a fact. They may be seen crying one moment because mother is dead, and laughing the next at some trifle. Influenced it may be by seeing others in tears, and influenced again by seeing others

in joy. This seeming fickleness is explained by the fact that the child does not fully comprehend its loss. It is moved to a great extent by the breeze that touches the surface of its being. The mind is immature, and things cannot be seen in their totality. Children will sometimes manifest more sorrow because a dog or cat is dead, than because a human being is dead. The reason of this is, that the dog or cat was really a companion. Some of the most pleasant hours were passed in its society.

As *crying* is quite a characteristic of children, we may here note its causes : 1. They are apt to cry when they suffer pain. Whether the pain is the result of chastisement, disease, or an accidental wound, makes no difference ; if it is keen enough it starts crying. 2. Children will cry when certain things belonging to them have been injured. If a rude boy has broken their playthings, has soiled or rent their clothes, they instinctively cry. 3. There is also the crying of resentment. The tears that flow at such a time are like the drops from an angry cloud. A boy will sometimes strike another, or will utter wild, noisy words, when revenge excites him. 4. Children cry when they are about to be punished. They will do this with

great loudness, hoping thus that their avenger will punish them but lightly, or that he will not punish them at all. 5. We have crying also in view of some loss. There may be the loss of an article that was valued, of some position that was greatly prized, of some person that was greatly loved,—in either case there is bitter weeping. 6. I have noticed also that there are children who will cry when they have missed their lesson. Perhaps the simple fact of failure troubles them, or perhaps shame or pride may be at the bottom. 7. When something is wanted very much, crying is introduced as a means to gain the end. This is a stroke of policy with the young. To tease and whine, naturally go together. 8. There are children who will cry when they cannot have their own way. Temper, self-will, open rebellion, all show themselves in the noise that is made. The crying may change to sobbing. This tells us that the grief is bitter ; frequently it shows a stubborn disposition,—the child sobs because it does not want to yield. The sorrow, however, is giving way a little. When a storm at sea is subsiding, the waves have a longer swell, and are farther apart ; so is it with grief when crying changes to sobbing.

There is a crying that results from weakness. 9. The nervous system may be unstrung, the usual tone of health gone, every little thing troubles, and so the tendency is to complain and whimper. 10. Children will cry through the force of sympathy ; as when they see others in tears, or when they see their school-mates punished. 11. There are some young people who have a painful weeping because they find themselves alone in a dark world. The friends they once had are gone ; no one feels an interest in their welfare ; their path through life is dreary and difficult ; therefore they weep. 12. A true child will cry because it has sinned. This shows life ; shows turning to God and heaven.

Children are saddened by the *deceptive*. Even the distinction between a literal and spiritual meaning they do not always understand. They are to a great extent literalists. Fables to them at first are quite absurd. An allegory they read as if it were a real story. Irony is a style of speech that puzzles them ; especially if used by a good man. A joke is sometimes a source of great uneasiness to a child. De Quincey mentions a case in his own youthful experience which illustrates this. He had sub-



scribed for a work on navigation which was to come out in numbers, extending to sixty or eighty. Being somewhat uneasy about the probable size of the treatise, he entered the bookseller's store one day in order to ascertain the truth as near as possible. Finding a young man attending to customers, who was full of fun and frolic, De Quincey says : " I described the work to him, and he understood me at once. How many volumes did he think it would extend to? 'How many volumes? O! really, I can't say; maybe a matter of 15,000, be the same more or less.' *More?* I said, in horror, altogether neglecting the contingency of less. 'Why,' he said, 'we can't settle these things to a nicety. But considering the subject' [ay, *that* was the very thing which I myself considered], 'I should say there might be some trifle over, as suppose 400 or 500 volumes, be the same more or less.' What, then,—here there might be supplements to supplements,—the work might possibly *never* end! On one pretence or another, if an author or publisher might add 500 volumes, he might add another round 15,000. I asked no more, but slunk out of the shop, and never again entered it with cheerfulness, or propounded any frank questions, as heretofore.

For I was now seriously afraid of pointing attention to myself as one that, by having purchased some numbers, and obtained others on credit, had silently contracted an engagement to take all the rest, though they should stretch to the crack of doom. Certainly I had never heard of a work that extended to 15,000 volumes; but still there was no natural impossibility; and, if in any case, in none so reasonably as one upon the inexhaustible sea." \*

The *intense life* of children forms a groundwork for sorrow. To move, to look about, to inquire, is natural to them. The multitude of strange questions which they ask should be answered with readiness, as far as that is possible. To drive children away as mere troublesome interrogation points is a great wrong. Such a course dampens and depresses the mind. *Feeling* is the native element of the child; therefore sorrow or joy quite easily arises in the soul. It should be known also that "the young child has a nervous system at least *five times larger*, in proportion to its body, than the adult. Hence the restlessness and animation of childhood, its quick exhaustion,

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\* Confession of an Opium-Eater, p. 216.

and ready recovery, its power to bear rapid and varied movements, and its intolerance of monotony. If we do not consider this nervous constitution in training children, we shall do violence to Heaven's laws, and inflict injury on them, with woe to ourselves."\* This great amount of nervous power in the young causes them quite frequently to go too far in the schemes which they may have adopted. Hence they are subject to reactions. Hence also a tendency to sadness.

Some children are sad because they feel that they *may die quite soon*. This feeling is reasonable. Their brothers or sisters have all been taken away very early ; and so they are thinking of the time when they too must die. Perhaps they have learned the fact that a hereditary disease has tainted all the family ; so the prospect of long life is cut off. To hear a child say, " I shall die next,—die quite likely in a year or two,"—is sad. The young immortal carries a burden each day ; passes on to the great future in the midst of a sigh. There is a loneliness about such an one. As a stranger he tarries here. He is watching for

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\* Dr. Moore, *The Use of the Body in Relation to the Mind*, p. 97.

that to-morrow when he shall join those who have crossed the river ; when time to him shall be no more.

There is a sadness among children because *they do wrong*. Perhaps there is more of this kind of sadness than people are generally aware of. With the young the feelings are tender, and there are many desires to do better than they have done. Children who are well instructed, very soon begin the struggle with sin, and very soon discover how bad the heart is. They find that they cannot do the good which they want to do. A degree of despair sometimes settles down upon them. They feel as if there were no use in trying to become better; they have tried so many times and failed. Dependence upon God, however, is thus learned. It is encouraging to know that a few simple truths will lead a child to the Saviour. The idea of a new heart, the fact that Christ died for each one, that we are to love him and be truly sorry for sin, are freely adopted by the child, and a new life commenced. It is a blessed thought that numbers of children have been able to seize hold of the essential truths of Christianity in all their singleness and wealth. With a faith that would shame those who are

older, and a hope of heaven that had no cloud, they have lived the simple and true life. Many die peacefully and with joy, quite certain that Jesus will receive them into his kingdom. It is one of the chief glories of our religion that it fits all classes of minds. The ignorant heathen, the little child, and the great philosopher find a way of salvation that is suitable to them all. If the Christian remedy demanded close and prolonged study before one could make use of it, millions of the young and the uneducated would be shut out from its influence. To have a child now in heaven waiting for us, who while upon earth rested quietly on Christ and died with a smile, is an exceedingly pleasant thought. It may be that our loved ones will meet us the first as we enter the gate of the city of God. Quick-winged seraphim may hasten away from our death-bed, and announce that we are coming; so that when we reach the celestial country our children may be at our side to greet us, and to introduce us to the exalted-beings who are there to welcome us home.

## CHAPTER X.

### *THE BIBLE AND SORROW.*

AS one reads through the Bible he is struck with the *calmness* of its writers. Considering the great variety of subjects which are treated by the inspired penmen, we are astonished at their self-command. There are times when to our view their whole being would be a heart, and that heart tumultuous with grief, yet the language used does not show anything of the kind. The expulsion of our first parents from Paradise and the murder of Abel, are stated without any manifestations of deep sorrow. How strange that such significant occurrences should simply be noted in plain historic style. We have no sorrowful pictures of the flood,—no mention is made of the cries and struggles of drowning people. Even the doom of the finally wicked is pronounced without

any outward marks of sadness. I am not sure but that Infinite Justice means to teach us by such instances that *penitive emotion*, when it is called for, should have a pre-eminence over sad or sympathetic emotion. It is worthy of notice also that *in no part of the Bible is the attempt made to be pathetic*. Facts are not selected and arranged for the special purpose of making one shed tears. Few speakers or writers, with suitable materials before them, fail of making an effort in this line. It is a relief to find one book where everything is rigidly truthful; where nothing is mentioned merely because it will appear well; where nothing is drawn out for the sake of effect.

How remarkable it is that the *sufferings of Christ* should be stated with such cool balance of mind. Here was an exalted person; he had no sin, he suffered unusual pains, suffered in the room and stead of the guilty; yet he is spoken of with a sobriety of manner that is certainly peculiar. The *brevity* of statement also is exceedingly strange. If exhaustiveness would seem to be required anywhere, why should it not be required when speaking of the atoning sufferings of the Son of God? A simple hint, however, here and there, is all that

meets us. High-wrought description, which demands length, is not found. The life of Christ as written by John can be read in two hours : the life of Washington as written by Irving would take two weeks to read it. The gospel writers never paint. Christ is not eulogized. No contrasts are drawn out in order to exalt him. Art cannot set him off. He would be lessened by it. He is more perfect than all art. Even when stating the fact of his agony, no expressions of wonder are used ; not even expressions of sympathy. There is not the least sign of uncontrollable feeling. It must be confessed that all this is out of the range of mere human composition. Read any sermon on the crucifixion scene,—how the most tender emotion trembles with every word ! Read the biography of a deeply pious man,—especially read about his sufferings and death,—what sorrow is manifest ! If the gospel writers do not show to me a human sorrow where naturally I would expect to see it, they do at least show me a divine wisdom where naturally I could not expect to find it. The account of the sufferings of Jesus cannot be a fiction. Fictitious writers would never travel in the track of the four Evangelists ; and



mere uninspired writers telling of a true Christ, or one they thought to be true, would never describe him as he is described.

In giving statements of *great wickedness* also, the Biblical writers are oftentimes exceedingly calm in their manner. There are times when we should think that expressions of abhorrence, indignation, and sorrow, would leap forth, but nothing of the kind appears. The facts are merely stated; stated with great exactness; and thus left upon the inspired page as dark memorials of evil. We wonder at times why the writer does not make known his opinion touching the greatness and guilt of the sin which he has just chronicled, or why he does not throw out some warning in regard to it; but to write as we write was not his mission. A human hand holds the pen, but a Divine Spirit guides it. With what apparent composure the drunkenness of Noah is stated, the lying of Abraham, the incest of Lot, and the destruction of the innocents by Herod. The narrative of the latter case, however, closes with a sad quotation: "In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Still,

though the sacred penmen are not accustomed to express surprise and sadness in view of the sin which they have mentioned, they yet are careful to record the sorrowful utterances of good men ; utterances that were called forth by beholding the evil that was done. Hence we are told how Elijah felt when he saw the idolatry that was around him, and how Hezekiah felt when the name of the God of Israel was reviled.

There are two leading ideas of the Bible which tower upward like pyramids,—*God* and *redemption*,—and these are designed at first to generate a *serious thoughtfulness*. We behold one God, ever living, ever present. He is never spoken of philosophically. He is not a cold abstract Deity throned amidst the silent eternities, but a Being whose footmarks are seen all around us, and whose voice speaks in the ear of both child and man. There is no interest of mortals that is free from his power. According to modern science it is an antiquated idea to say that “God made us.” Yea, it is among the early follies of untaught mind to say that God made the first man. Herbert Spencer thus speaks : “Surely there can be no difficulty in understanding how, under appropriate condi-

tions, a *cell* may, in the course of *untold millions of years*, give origin to the human race."\* Certainly there is no nonsense that is so absurd as the so-called wisdom of wise men. To get rid of God would seem to be the ultimate knowledge. It remains true, however, that "in him we live, and move, and have our being." God as revealed in the Bible impresses the soul. Man is made to think about subjects to which he does not incline. *Redemption* also arrests his attention. Scripture would have no meaning if a supernatural redemption were taken out of it. Every man his own saviour, is essentially the idea of all systems which deny the fact of a remedy that centres in the person and work of the God-man. What an array of redemptive words do we find in the Bible: Altar, sacrifice, blood, propitiation, priest, Mediator, Redeemer. Then we have atoning phrases: "Lamb slain," "bruised for our iniquities," "made a curse for us," "died the just for the unjust."

Finding thus God and redemption as the warp and woof of Scripture, man is made thoughtful. The thoughtfulness takes that form

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\* Principles of Biology, p. 350.

which is called *pensiveness*,—there is *sorrow* connected with it. It is impossible for a fallen man to think seriously and not have emotions of sadness. No doubt it is easy to select a novel with its fictitious hero and adulterous plot that will start more tears than the Bible, with its infinite God and infinite redemption; but this very fact only shows the superior worth of these two great Bible facts,—*they* lead to that consideration which may be the first step to an eternal life, and to that sorrow which may show that sin has been broken in upon and that holiness is begun.

A chief design of the word of God is to produce *painful feelings*. At first a certain *uneasiness* may simply be the result of divine truth. Ideas are moving around the soul; they are seeking to find an opening into it; they are attempting to tear away that which opposes,—the feeling therefore is one of uneasiness. A mere pleasure-seeker has no liking for the Bible; light pains the diseased eye. There are pictures in the divine word which start *fear*. Sometimes a single word will cause the soul to tremble; as judgment, eternity, lost. There are short sentences into which are crowded a universe of meaning, so that no one can read them

thoughtfully without being startled. For instance these: "The wrath of the Lamb;" "God is a consuming fire," "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There is no book that has such power to produce a healthy kind of fear as the Bible. To attempt to weaken this power in any way is ruinous. The sense of *guilt* is also awakened. No volume of heathenism or scepticism has ever presented such a view of sin as the Bible. No minds have burned with such remorse as those that have come under the power of Christian ideas. These painful feelings are awakened that man may understand his true condition, and may look about him for a Saviour. It is the part of wisdom to face the tremendous facts of divine revelation, that thus they may suitably affect the mind. If one can only save his life by having a limb cut off, it is best to suffer. The desire for pleasant sensations must not be heeded. Pain first, then peace. Of course mental agony must not be allowed to go too far. There is a sorrow which leads to death, and a view of sin which leads to despair. If man were to see himself as he is, he would not only be utterly miserable, but he would be utterly *faithless*. Redemption in that case could not reach him.

Says Mr. Mercein: "The fiery indignation which sometimes glares upon the guilty soul unfits it for every duty, and for all the offices that perpetuate and civilize the race: like poor Bunyan sitting on the horse-block listlessly, day after day, the very sun that cheered all others seeming to him the burning eye of vengeance, and may we not say at once, that an essential preliminary to probation would be to deaden this sensibility so far, that while remorse and fear might attest their presence, and teach their lessons, they should *not overawe* and *paralyze* the soul." \*

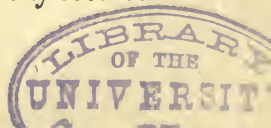
The *apocalyptic nature of Scripture thought* will be almost sure at first to generate *sadness*. Divine truth searches the soul even to its lowest depths, and hidden chambers are brought to the light. No book has such a self-revealing power as the Bible. Especially is this seen to be the case with inquiring persons who read it for the first time. Such persons are struck with wonder, as if visions of a new world stood before them. They keep poring over the divine pages, held to the work by a kind of magnetic power, till each leaf of the soul seems to turn

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\* Natural Goodness, p. 151.

over with each leaf of the Bible, and they have a most vivid consciousness of mental realities. A new sadness springs up within. The Bible is closed with a sigh. It is opened again with reverence. It is read again with tears. Indefinite longings now take form. Thoughts are clearer, feelings are more intense, aspirations go quicker toward their object. The word of God has power because it is the great book that contains a *complete statement of human nature*. Man beholds himself as in a glass; beholds himself more truthfully than if he looked into his own mind, because the mind is deceived and darkened by sin, but God, the author of the Bible, is not. Only let the Spirit work upon the soul with the truth, and that soul will be ushered into a region of light.

Franke, the founder of the Orphan House at Halle, who had even preached while in a state of spiritual darkness, speaks thus of the change which passed over him: "My whole former life came before my eyes just as one sees a whole city from a lofty spire. At first it seemed as if I could number all my sins; but soon there opened the great fountain of them—my blind unbelief, which had so long deceived me. I was terrified with my lost con-



dition, and wondered if God were merciful enough to bless me. I kneeled down and prayed. All doubt vanished. I was assured in my own heart of the grace of God in Christ. Now I know him, not alone as my God, but as my Father. All melancholy and unrest vanished, and I was so overcome with joy, that from the fullness of my heart I could praise my Saviour. With great sorrow I had kneeled; but with wonderful ecstasy I had risen up. It seemed to me as if my whole previous life had been a deep sleep; as if I had only been dreaming, and now for the first time had waked up." \*

Perhaps Scripture has failed to impress us just because of a certain *freedom* we have taken with it. Too much familiarity is not conducive to deep emotion. The sound of certain words may have fallen upon our ears so many times that we cease to grasp their distinct meaning. A rigid and serious discipline of attention may be necessary on our part. There is no doubt a period coming when the word of God will make a deeper impression on the minds of men than it does at present. We have never yet witnessed the full power of di-

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\* Hurst, Hist. of Rationalism, p. 94.



vine truth. The Bible that has thus far been realized in human consciousness is a very different production from the real Bible. If the *mental Bible* could be written out and placed side by side with the *literal Bible*, we should be astonished at the difference between the two. If it were possible for us to see a world of souls receiving the full impression which the word of God is capable of producing, it would be a most instructive sight. Sometimes we catch hints in regard to the capabilities of Scripture,—as when a single sentence enters the soul of a wicked man and changes the current of that soul in a moment; also when hundreds of people are made to bend under the power of one divine thought, and incited to press on through utmost danger because of it.

There is a sorrow referred to in the Bible of a lofty kind; namely, that *sorrow which the good feel* when they see the *wickedness of men*. We hear one saying: "I beheld the transgressors and was grieved." "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." Another says: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Still another

says : "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." It is in making known such sorrow as this that the Bible stands pre-eminent. The common grief of man does not resemble it. To weep at a sick-bed or a sepulchre, to mourn because of a joy that will return not again, is natural ; but to entreat men with tears to forsake sin and turn to God is not natural. Let the good simply behold moral indifference, behold a happiness that is delusive, and they will sigh in their inmost being. Immortal creatures are seen with their conscience benumbed, their reason darkened, their heart dead. Men are asleep dreaming of heaven with a knife at their throat. The sight palls and pains the soul. The constant vision of evil causes the grief to settle down into a fixed state. The burden which the wicked ought to carry, is carried by the righteous. The righteous in this way become vicarious sufferers. A book that points out such sorrow is no common book. The very sorrow appears to be divine. How much more divine is that volume which first reveals it ; yea, which first develops it !

Portions of the Bible are strictly *pathetic*. Take the story of Joseph and his brethren. It is next to impossible to read that without shedding tears. What a mournful cry sounds out from the book of Job. A language of sorrow is put into our mouth ; the very language at times we would want to use. For instance this : “ When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone ? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. Oh remember that my life is wind : mine eye shall no more see good.” How plaintive are such words. They seem like the lament of a stray wind that is wandering around a cottage where one is dead. And when we come to the book of Ecclesiastes, we reach the painful dissatisfaction of man ; a dissatisfaction which reveals itself in a kind of double wail,—“ vanity of vanities ; *all is vanity*.” As if the immortal soul were sick of all earthly things, that in the midst of its being it was weary and longed for repose ; sighing for a good never yet found, a good which can only be realized in God. There is a sorrow of man which is like the *foam* on the surface of a stream ; that foam breaks asunder and is gone,

but the stream rolls on forever : there is an abiding sorrow which is like the *stream* ; it was that which agitated the mind of the preacher, causing him to say of each earthly object, "this is vanity and vexation of spirit." Turning to the lamentations of Jeremiah, the fact of ruin meets us, and in the midst of the ruin we seem to sit oppressed with sadness. The weeping prophet utters his lament as it were at our side : "How is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed ! Our necks are under persecution ; we labor and have no rest. The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music. The joy of our heart is ceased ; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our heads : woe unto us that we have sinned."

The *book of Psalms*, however, may be looked upon as the great pathetic book of the Bible. It has been said that "no man is qualified to write a commentary on the Psalms of David, who has not known some great sorrow." The statement is correct. Let one be despondent, afflicted, suffering the pangs of guilt, in want of a friend, he turns to the Psalms. These inspired odes have wonderful manifoldness. They touch the soul at every point of experience. They

seem to contain a synopsis of human sorrow, and equally a synopsis of that good which is able to counteract it. Here we have a Bible within a Bible ; as if the most pressing thoughts of God and of man were made to flow in emotional language, that they might reach the hearts of wandering and downcast people. "How men of all conditions, all habits of thought, have here met, vying with one another in expressions of affection and gratitude to this book, in telling what they owed to it, and what it had proved to them. Men seemingly the most unlikely to express enthusiasm about any such matter—lawyers and statisticians immersed deeply in the world's business, classical scholars familiar with other models of beauty, other standards of art—these have been forward as the forwardest to set their seal to this book, have left their confession that it was the voice of their inmost heart, that the spirit of it passed into their spirits as did the spirit of no other book, that it found them more often and at greater depths of their being, lifted them to higher heights than any other." \* He who would weep the praises of God as well as he who

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\* Trench, *Fitness of Scripture for Unfolding the Spiritual Life of Man*. Lect. III.

would sing them may look into his Psalter. Millions of penitent men have read the fifty-first Psalm. Millions of dying saints have comforted their souls with these words : “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” And what can equal that fine funeral classic, the ninetieth Psalm ?—“ The days of our years are threescore years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

It is not a little remarkable that the great pathetic and devotional book of the Bible should be found in the *Old Testament*. Strange that writers, amidst the imperfect light of Judaism, should compose such a work for the finished dispensation of Christ ! No doubt we should have struck out a different thought. Men who had seen the Lord, who had witnessed the power of the Spirit, who had labored and suffered with the early church,—these are the ones, we should have said, to write a book of devotion for the saints of the Christian ages. In the New Testament, however, there is nothing of the kind. Right in the *centre of the Bible*,

as if in the *heart to speak to the heart*, is found the language of meditation, of sorrow and of worship, on the wings of which the soul may be borne upward to the throne of God and the Lamb. Human weakness, temptation and sin, hope and fear, contrition and faith, are essentially the same in all ages. The Psalms, therefore, may fit all periods. They will be sung during the years of the millennium; will be wept over during the darkness that precedes the last day.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WORKING OF THAT SORROW WHICH ARISES BECAUSE OF THE DEAD.

SORROW that arises because of the dead will sometimes *unite enemies*. Past differences are forgotten by reason of the greatness of the common loss. The grief is sō great that it drowns the enmity. Coleridge, speaking of a certain English admiral, says : “ When he died it seemed as if no man was stranger to another : for all were made acquaintances by the rights of a common anguish. In the fleet itself, many a private quarrel was forgotten, no more to be remembered ; many who had been alienated, became once more good friends ; yea, many a one was reconciled to his very enemy, and loved, and, as it were, thanked him, for the bitterness of his grief, as if it had been an act of consolation to himself in an intercourse of private sympathy.”\* In fact all *intense emo-*

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\* Works, vol. ii. p. 517. Harper's ed.



*tion* that differs in its nature from the enmity will have a tendency to weaken it. Suppose a whole family have been murdered in cold blood : the entire community will be excited, and men, whatever their enmities, will league together in order to search out the murderer. A general feeling of joy will also tend to bring foes together, and a *high degree of religious feeling* will work in the same way. Impending danger (as during a shipwreck) will cement those who have been the most unfriendly, causing them to do anything in order to provide a way of escape. A man also will speak to his enemy before he dies, although formerly he would not notice him. It is felt to be too dangerous to carry hatred into eternity.

We have a feeling of *sorrow* and *indignation* when one has come to his death by the *carelessness* or *crime* of others. Our sorrow arises because of the *death* ; our indignation, because of the *wrong* that caused it. If a man allowed his friend to die because he was so penurious that he would not provide the means by which to restore him to health, we feel indignant at such hard-heartedness. Or if an ignorant nurse or physician has failed to do what was necessary for the sick person, and he dies as a conse-

quence, we are displeas'd and sadden'd at the same time. If one is kill'd outright, we are enrag'd at the murderer, and wish to have him seiz'd and punish'd; while we lament the untimely fate of him who has been slain. This double feeling can be seen in the following quotation from Homer :

“Meantime the Greeks all night with tears and groans  
 Bewail'd Patroclus : on his comrade's breast  
 Achilles laid his murder-dealing hands,  
 And led with bitter groans the loud lament.  
 As when the hunters, in the forest's depth,  
 Have robb'd a bearded lion of his cubs ;  
 Too late arriving, he with anger chafes ;  
 Then follows, if perchance he may o'ertake,  
 Through many a mountain glen, the hunter's steps,  
 With grief and fury fill'd ; so Peleus' son,  
 With bitter groans, the Myrmidons address'd.”\*

Death may generate a sorrow so overwhelming that, for the time being, it *stupefies the conscience*. The mind is wholly absorb'd with the one great loss, and moral distinctions seem to fade away. There is a sinking down of the soul ; a feeling of inability to do what ought to be done ; a strong tendency to remain in a

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\* Iliad, vol. ii. p. 225. Lord Derby's Trans.

state of seclusion ; then allowing religious duties to pass by unheeded. If the individual is spoken to in regard to such remissness, the overwhelming trouble is mentioned as the reason and the excuse. He says : " I really do not know what I am about most of the time. I do not seem to feel an interest in anything." There is a peculiar practice with some persons of staying at home on the Sabbath after a friend has died. Sometimes a whole family will thus be absent from the sanctuary. Such a practice cannot be justified. A stronger desire than usual should prompt to attend church, rather than to stay away from it. If divine help is needed at any time, it is certainly needed during a time of trouble. Sorrow should make us better, not worse. We can well admit that the grief may be very great. Perhaps a son has died suddenly ; died at the beginning of manhood. All his prospects are blasted in a moment, and the fond hopes of the parent sink into night. When the aged die it is natural ; when an infant falls asleep in death, there were no great thoughts and plans which swept on through life ; but when a young man dies, it is like the wreck of a ship just after it has left the harbor ; the friends gaze at the scene with

most excitable grief. Yet even in such a case, duty need not be forgotten.

I have seen what may be called a *forced sorrow* in connection with death; as when a person is conscious that he does not feel sufficiently to meet the demands of public opinion, and so tries to deepen his grief. However saddening it may be for us to confess it, there are men who really have a feeling of relief when one near to them has died. While the person lived, he or she was felt to be a burden; love between the parties was not very strong; and so now, when a separation has taken place, this is deemed the best thing possible. Of course there may be some slight movements of sorrow,—human nature not being so broken up as to be without these,—yet a secret wish being gratified, a feeling of satisfaction takes the place of a feeling of sadness. Indeed, there may be sharp sorrow arising from the instinctive affections; yet because of another class of feelings which have the moral ascendancy, the intense emotion speedily subsides. A long indifference will very soon dry up an impulsive grief, even as a scorching day the moisture of a short dashing rain. I have seen a wife weep most bitterly over the death of a husband, who soon had her grief assuaged

by finding another one to take his place; and I have seen a husband, with his awkward sorrow at the grave of a wife, fix upon a new partner,—a partner whom he took to himself before three moons had ceased to gaze upon the darkness of mortals and of night. Those who are familiar with the history of England will remember the affected sorrow of Queen Elizabeth. “This woman, upon learning the execution of the Queen of Scots, for which she was so well and so eagerly prepared, burlesqued surprise and grief with outrageous hypocrisy, clothed herself and her court in mourning, spent her time in solitude and tears, declared that the warrant was sent off without her knowledge, protested that she never intended the death of her dear kinswoman, banished Cecil from her presence, ruined her dupe Davison by imprisonment and a fine of ten thousand pounds, wrote a letter of pretended sorrow and perfidious condolence to the son of her victim, succeeded in imposing silence and submission upon his craven and unfilial heart, but neither deceived nor silenced the opinion of the world.”

Our sorrow is intensified *if we were not present when a friend died*. Death in such circumstances seems to us to be dreary, and it throws

a darker cloud than usual around our spirit. How glad we should have been to have done something for the dear one before he left the earth. The pleasure also of speaking to him, and he to us. Then the simple consolation of seeing one before he dies. Nature impels friends to be together when one of their number is departing. See how the wife of Hector laments that she was not present when he died :

“Thou to thy parents, bitter grief has caus’d,  
Hector! but bitterest grief of all has left  
To me! for not to me was giv’n to clasp  
The hand extended from thy dying bed,  
Nor words of wisdom catch, which night and day,  
With tears, I might have treasur’d in my heart.” \*

If it was not possible for us to be present during the dying hour, it is deemed a great privilege if we are permitted to look upon the dead body ; to shed tears over it ; to kiss the marble brow in our love. If the expression of the features is all natural, we could linger for a day and gaze upon them. If one dies far from home, dies with no friend near to comfort or to help, we have an exceedingly painful sorrow. If we

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\* Lord Derby's Homer, vol. ii. p. 454.

sent a letter to him which did not reach its destination till after he was dead, the gloom of our spirit is deepened ; but if it did reach him in time, and he was able to read it, this mitigates our sorrow. Then, again, if I alone remain out of a whole family, I sigh the more that I was not present when my relative died. I think of the fact, that no father or mother was there to mourn ; that the tears which were shed were the tears of strangers ; or that perhaps he was laid to rest with none to weep at his grave. I seem like a solitary tree standing after the other trees of the forest have been cut down ; like a solitary star trembling amidst the wastes of night, the other stars being covered with sackcloth and gloom.

Is our sadness more deep, when a *friend is buried on a dreary day in winter*, or during a *pleasant day in summer* ? It is my impression that *people generally* have their sorrow deepened when a friend is buried on a cold wintry day. The gloom of nature is added to the gloom of the mind, and the mind feels how sad it is to carry one away to the place of burial under such circumstances. Our tender love to the dead on the one hand, and the wild desolate storm without on the other, wring the heart.

As the wind and the snow beat against us while we are on the way to the grave, we think the more intently of the departed, and heave forth a longer and heavier sigh. A funeral at sea, with the sea and wind raging most fiercely, must be exceedingly dreary. A corpse left in a dark, deep mine, or rudely thrust into a hole, is very saddening. That we want to deal tenderly even with the *dead body* is certainly a characteristic of refined natures. We lift it with the greatest care ; and if, through some mistake, it slips from the hands and falls to the ground, we feel pained. The idea even of a rough man making a coffin, and rough men carrying that coffin to the grave, is not pleasant. If we had a young child to be buried, we should want that child borne to its last resting-place by boys that were quiet and kind. If carriages in a funeral procession are driven onward with great speed, we are shocked in our minds. Even to throw the earth down upon the coffin in a violent manner, jars our feelings. The truth is, we want gentleness and pleasantness in connection with the dead. Hence a beautiful day in summer is more agreeable to the bereaved mind, than a dreary day in winter.

I am aware, however, that there are a class



of thoughtful persons whose sorrow is really intensified by a day that is serene and charming. De Quincey was one of this class. "I have had occasion to remark," he tells us, "at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is (other things being equal) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think : first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and, (if such a solecism may be excused,) more infinite ; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads, are in summer more voluminous, massed, and accumulated in far grander and more towering piles ; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite : and thirdly, (which is the main reason,) exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed, generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist.

as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer ; and any particular death, if not more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season.”\*

The *art and show* that sometimes connect themselves with *funerals* are distasteful to a sad spirit that is pure and refined. The least vestige of ostentation runs counter to unmixed sorrow. If we see friends anxious to make a grand impression with reference to the dead and with reference to themselves, we turn away with loathing ; conscious in our own minds that if the sorrow was pure and simple it would *lose itself in the lost object*, there being no heart to make capital out of a matter so sacred as death. Too much publicity is an evil : it does not match with the retiring nature of grief. The attempt that is sometimes made to have a large number attend a funeral, and the selecting of the Sabbath as the most suitable day for that purpose, is a species of vanity that

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\* Confessions of an Opium-Eater, p. 120.

strangely contrasts with the sorrow and solemnity of death. John Foster, in requesting a minister to officiate at the funeral of his wife, thus states his feelings: "I am perfectly sure that the dear deceased would have earnestly deprecated any marked reference to *her*; and as to the survivors, all of them, and myself especially—I need not say you can perfectly understand that it is a sorrow that seeks privacy, earnestly shrinks from public gaze and curiosity. But for the consideration of what is conventionally regarded as due on such an occasion, my own preference—I may say infinite preference—would be that it were an office performed at midnight, in perfect silence and with no attendance but that of the parties immediately concerned. The vulgarizing curiosity, what will be said of the deceased—how the survivors comport themselves, whether they appeared distressed or stoical—which of them the most or least—and all the other circumstances of the occasion—are repugnant and irksome in the last degree."\* In the matter of eulogizing the dead,—that is certainly carried to an extreme at present. In many of

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\* Life and Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 146.

our funeral addresses, it is difficult for a nearer to ascertain whether any distinction is made between the righteous and the wicked,—all are good at death. With reference to most men who disappear from the stage of life, it is best to say nothing. The Bible is remarkable for its silence respecting the dead; remarkable that it praises men so little, whether living or dead. Adam and Eve died, but nothing is mentioned respecting their fate. Even the wisest king of Israel enters eternity with a cloud around him. The greatest prophets and priests died, but we read of no eulogies being pronounced over their remains. There is no reference to a funeral sermon in any part of the Divine Writings. There are times when to us it would seem proper to preach,—as when John and Stephen died,—but a significant silence is all that speaks to the soul. An approach to the Bible method would be an improvement. A simple prayer offered up to the great Searcher and Strengthener of hearts, and a few words of counsel addressed to living men, are all that is requisite when one dies.

When we think of the *last words* of a dying friend we feel sad. These last words are sacred. They are treasured up with love. They seem

to bear the image of the departed, and so we keep them near the heart. A wayward son will tell with tears what his mother said to him before she died. Even the last letter that a friend ever wrote to us will be preserved with care, and will be read again and again with sad interest. Sometimes a poor man will simply smile before dying, just as Alpine flowers will burst forth while the snow is yet upon the ground, heralds of approaching spring. We remember the smile with an interest that almost equals that which centres in last words. Even the reciprocated pressure of the hand, and the opening of the eyes before they were closed forever, will be remembered and mentioned with love. The same is true whether sounds of joy or sorrow fall upon our ear as one is passing through the gates of death.

The last words of Christ were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Many of the martyrs repeated the prayer of the first martyr, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The last words of Jerome of Prague were, "Lord God, have pity on me, forgive my sins, for thou knowest I have sincerely loved thee." While Bradford was burning at the stake he was heard to utter these last words: "Be of good

comfort, brother ; for we shall have a happy supper with the Lord this night." John Valentine Andrea was silent after he uttered this sentence : "It is our joy that our names are written in the Book of Life." During the closing moments of President Edwards' earthly career, "as some persons who stood by were lamenting his death, not only as a great frown on the college, but as having a dark aspect on the interest of religion in general, to their surprise, not imagining that he heard, or ever would speak another word, he said, 'Trust in God and ye need not fear.'" A fit ending was this to so great a life. Sir James Macintosh being asked by his daughter how he felt, answered, "Happy." That was his last word. Andrew Fuller in his weakness said, "Help me." After that short prayer he spoke not again. The last words of John Mason Good were, "Who taketh away the sins of the world." About two hours before Vinet expired he said, "I can think no longer." These were his last words. "Neander, having by the aid of friendly hands stretched himself in bed for his last slumber, whispered in a tone of inexpressible tenderness, which sent a strange thrill through every heart: 'Good night.'" He

said no more after that pleasant farewell. I have read of a soldier who breathed forth the word "mother," and then died ; of a child who said "mamma," and then fell asleep. A single word or sentence becomes in this way a legacy to the soul.

It is very natural to *lament* and *soliloquize* after one is dead. In various parts of the writings of Ossian we notice such tendencies. Take this passage : "How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs of Erin's race! they that were cheerful in the hall, when the sounds of the shells arose! No more shall I find their steps in the heath. No more shall I hear their voice in the chase. Pale, silent, low on bloody beds are they who were my friends! O spirits of the lately dead, meet Cathullin on his heath! Speak to him on the wind, when the rustling tree of Tura's cave resounds. There, far remote, I shall lie unknown. No bard shall hear of me. No gray stone shall rite to my renown."\*

A mind excited with sorrowful emotion will sometimes *apostrophize* the departed. If one has died during the early years of life, fully prepared, the afflicted parent may be prompted thus to express his feelings : My child, thou art

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\* Fingal, Book III.

no more. Thou hast gone to another land. Thy words fall not upon mine ear. Thy countenance gladdens me not. I think of thy coming, and expect to see thee enter and take thy seat as on other days, but thou enterest not. For weeks and months thy spirit was gentle before it went away. I think of thy beautiful life. How it speaks to me. I cannot help but weep when I see my sin, remembering thy purity. There was a serenity about thee, while I am full of care. Child, thou hast been greater to me than all teachers, better than all friends. Surely thou wert washed in the fountain of God, that thou mightest be clean among the angels who never fell. I watched thee when thou wert dying. I spoke to thee, but thou didst not hear. Thou hadst gone so far into the valley that my words reached thee not. I saw thee breathe thy last. Thou seemed to be in a sleep. Dreaming perhaps of father and mother, thou didst leave thy home; dreaming it may be of heaven, the Shepherd of eternity took thee away. No evil has darkened thy spirit since thou hast been with God. Well is it with thee. In the midst of an infinite life thou art living. Joys that have no end fill thy soul, and the rest that is everlasting is thine.



Precious to me is heaven since thou hast gone there. How eagerly I long to see thee. Meet thy father when he comes to the land where thou dwellest. Soon we shall be together. Long shall we abide in peace.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *THE MAN OF SORROWS.*

ONE holy being at least has been sorrowful. There is no other historic instance of the kind. Whether angels and glorified men are ever moved with an exalted sadness we know not. We cannot say absolutely that the whole realm of pure spirits is free from a pure sorrow, because if one sinless person has been touched with grief, why may not others be? There is certainly no constitutional difficulty in the way. We must admit that all pure beings are capable of exercising the feeling of *pity*; and does not pity contain the ingredient of sorrow? As far as men are concerned, the pity which they manifest is tinged with sadness; and as it respects Christ, his love was anointed with sorrow. Even if we were to view Christ as having no connection with redemption, I do not imagine that that would destroy the nature of his feel-

ings. It is simply *probable*, then, without being certain, that angels and glorified men sigh over the fallen when they think about them ; for, as it respects their own pure condition, no feeling of sadness can spring out of it. What shall we say now touching the Supreme Being? Is there such a thing as divine sorrow? We have quite a strong conviction that God cannot suffer. Infinite perfection seems to us to exclude suffering from the divine nature. And yet, whether there be or not a tender and beautiful sadness in the Deity, it is very difficult to settle. As far as many parts of the Bible are concerned, and many of our sermons, hymns, and prayers, they go upon the supposition that there is a phase of sorrow connected with God's love. Whether all this is merely a humanistic style of speech is a question. It is quite evident that there is great need of a mature philosophy of the divine emotions.

Christ had a degree of sorrow from the fact that he was *living in a strange land*. There was nothing here that matched his wonderful nature. I think the idea of strangeness went with the Saviour all the way through life. I can almost imagine that even when he was an infant he had dreams of another land. There

must have been something exceedingly singular about the childhood of Jesus. Here was a plant growing in a foreign soil. - It would seem as if the roots must have twinged and turned themselves upward, when the surrounding earth was felt to be so different from that of heaven. Sunlight fell upon the leaves, not the same as that which is wont to touch the flowers of Paradise, and the dew that settled there was not like that which descended upon the hill of God. Was there not a something about Jesus when a child which marked him off from all other children; so that a close observer could see that he belonged to another race? Although he grew up in Nazareth, that place did not meet his wants. Its people could not fit the taste and tendency of his soul. It must therefore have appeared to him like a foreign city. Even his mother was not to him, as the mothers of other children are to them. There was no doubt a strangeness that showed itself in different ways, which we cannot very well express. As he advanced in years, I do not think that the strangeness of his existence became less; it rather increased. He began to see things with greater distinctness. Singled out by himself, he seemed like a new star shining in our sky,—

a world of light that had burst forth amidst the darkness of time. Most remarkable words fall from the lips of Jesus. For instance these: "Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." "Before Abraham was, I am." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "I came out from God." We do not wonder that the person who could thus speak felt strange among us. Something like weariness possessed him. In his own land it was the summer of God: here it was the winter of man. What solitudes of thought and feeling must have moved through the soul of Jesus! then wandering away as it were to the great regions of life; echoing as they went like the solemn chant of sadness. There is a passage which is quite striking; it seems to contain an eternal thought. The gospel writer says: "Looking up to heaven, *he sighed.*" We picture to ourselves an exalted stranger living among men, who ever and anon turns his face towards the world from which he came, and sighs. The loneliness of Jesus is sad. It is as if an evening broke in upon the day of heaven, and the city of God were dimly seen, and the mountains of eternity were gathering blackness, and the harpers were all at rest; so that in the temple of the Highest One ne

song of praise ascended, and no tread of priest or king echoed on any ear.

There must have been sorrow in the mind of Christ from the fact that he had to *face so much evil*. Imperfection and disharmony were all about him: his fine delicate nature shrunk back. We are to remember that the soul of Jesus was complete. He was not merely innocent; holiness had wrought itself into his being; he had become one great habit of goodness. He did not grow from sin to holiness, but from purity to purity; so that his character had great strength and finish about it. The texture of his heart was of the finest material. His whole being was sensitive. We might imagine flowers growing in the air; fine ethereal flowers; having a beauty and perfume which the angels only can detect when they come among us. So all about Christ were graces which only heavenly beings could see. The very atmosphere of his soul was love. There was nothing in him, therefore, that could affiliate with evil. He found no kindred mind to commune with. He was alone in the midst of a world of transgressors. He seemed to suffer punishment by the very conditions of his earthly life. Let any one of us be compelled to live among a most

abandoned people,—profane swearers, drunkards, thieves, cut-throats,—would there not be a pain of soul, and a longing for a better place? There can be no question about it. Even when we are living in what seems pleasant circumstances, the better nature sighs for a pure land, where evil and evil men shall never come, and the taint of sin shall affect no heart. This idea of being pained with evil, may be the spring of a great deal of the motions and movings of good men in this life. There is evidently at the centre of pious souls a thought and a picture of a divine land; a country where the sky is without a cloud, and the people that live there without a stain. This vision of a paradise yet to be gained, beckons the spirit away to its joy and its life, making the heart sick of the evil that now is. If this be the case with good souls when in the midst of quite favorable circumstances, how must the Sinless One have been pained when he was always surrounded with moral death! To the eye of Jesus the deformities of men all came out. A revelation of sin in all its phases must have been exceedingly distasteful. He recoiled from it with the quick instinctive movement of his holy heart.

Much of the sorrow of Christ is to be traced to the working of his *sympathetic nature*. His sympathies were exceedingly refined and great. He beheld our sorrow at once : he felt it ; his soul carried it. He seemed to have gone through a kind of second incarnation ; entering as it were into the very nature of each soul ; reproducing in himself the sad experience of mortals. His spirit sighed in view of the absolute weakness of men. Their sufferings affected his heart. He beheld them seeking for rest, and failing to find it. Each moment some one died. He gazed at the constant procession of death. Night and day through all the years it was passing. Each second of time a human heart was bleeding. The tear was always falling. Then the whole race were lost. This agitated his soul more than all things else. He felt the greatness of their woe. Their collective evils reached his soul. He sunk in anguish. He was lost for them. "Herein is involved the deep thought," remarks Dorner, "that love to what is below it has a mediatory significance, which puts itself on an equality with the humble in the spirit of sympathy, without at the same time renouncing itself."\*

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\* Doct. of the Person of Christ, vol. iv. p. 339.



There is one thing about the sorrow of Christ which is of great importance—it was connected with strong *judicial emotion*. The God-man had an idea of *demerit* that makes our idea to seem as nothing. That sin is merely an imperfection, an error, a disease, a misfortune, found no place in his mind. *Sin* and *guilt* have an unchangeable connection; so also have *guilt* and *punishment*. That justice has rights, Christ knew full well; that it could not be sustained without intense suffering, he felt in the very centre of his being. The idea of the wrath of God was to him a reality. It was because of the vigor of his judicial emotions that he sorrowed so deeply. Minds that do not quiver under the ministration of justice have a sorrow that is exceedingly superficial and sentimental. There seems to be a want of capacity at the present time to comprehend the nature of Christ's sorrow. The word *love*, with vast numbers, represents what seems like a tender and beautiful weakness; something for poets to sing about and effeminate writers to praise; whilst justice is merely the harsh feature of a theology that is now obsolete. Christ did have tenderness, compassion, meekness and gentleness, in full perfection; yet he

also had righteousness, moral abhorrence, indignation, and judicial severity. Jesus was the embodiment of all true emotion. "In him is justice satisfied in its severities, and mercy in its indulgences. The riches of grace are twisted with the terrors of wrath. The bowels of mercy are wound about the flaming sword of justice, and the sword of justice protects and secures the bowels of mercy. Thus is God righteous without being cruel, and merciful without being unjust." \*

Christ must always have had a heaviness of spirit from the fact that the evils which were to assail him were *all seen beforehand*. There is a striking minuteness in the following passage: "The Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him." By a prophetic hand the volume of woe was written, and he was compelled to read each sentence. The darkness of the future deepened into the darkness of the present. The shadow of death

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\* Charnock, *The Attributes of God*, vol. i. p. 567.

fell upon his spirit. I seem to hear his groans, and the wail of his oppressed nature. As I look and listen, I bow my head in sympathy: I suffer with his pain, and am saddened with the sadness of his soul. His journey is not that of other men. Whatever the path he takes it leads to Calvary. Indeed I cannot think of him save as carrying a cross. There is a death in the very midst of his life. The cup of sorrow was not left standing at the end of his path. He drank it as he went along. It was evermore filled and evermore emptied as the hours passed. Where is the man that could bear a revelation of the evils through which he must go during a lifetime? Would not our souls be in one continual agony, if the calamities we are to meet and the miseries we are to endure, were all made known to us beforehand? There are persons who really suffer more by anticipation than they do by actual contact with the evil which they fear. There can be no question, then, that Christ had to go through life with a dart transfixed in his soul. What significance is locked up in such a verse as this—"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The soul seems to stagger

under some great weight ; hemmed in by some great woe.

There is another thought, namely this, that the divine man assumed what may be called *atoning obligation*, which atoning obligation was *painful*. The position of the Redeemer in the universe was entirely unlike that of any other being. The obligation which rested upon him was different in *kind* and *degree* from that which rested upon any created intelligence. He had come forth specifically that he might bear the burden of a world's sin. The loftiest spirit of heaven could not even think of this. The thought was not in a line with any creaturely understanding. Christ was divine-human ; and he had assumed an obligation which only a divine-human person could assume. And yet we must believe also that the human nature of Christ had a work to do and a suffering to endure which belonged exclusively to that nature, and but for which it never would have been called into existence. It is a fact that his human nature was racked to its utmost tension by reason of the burden that pressed upon it. Admitting that the human in Christ was strengthened by the divine, yet, the point seemed to be, to tax the human to its

utmost limit. We do not see this wonderful personage tracking his way through Palestine with light and easy step. He had not come on a quiet embassy of reconciliation, allowing his divinity to lift up and bear away with no great trouble the sole burden of the atonement. Viewing him from the human stand-point, the thought may have reached his mind, What if I should fail? How fearful the results to man and the universe if I should sink during some trying moment! willing at such a moment to let redemption go, the price demanded being altogether too great. Obligation which well nigh overwhelmed him is seen in his prayer—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He even says to his disciples, "Tarry ye here, and watch with me;" craving in the depth of his distress the aid and sympathy of weak mortals! This touch of human nature only reveals the intense anguish of the Saviour's mind.

"In the gardens of the Carthusian Convent, which the Dukes of Burgundy built near Dijon for the burial-place of their race, is a beautiful monument, which alone of that splendid edifice escaped the ravages of the French Revolution. It consists of a group of Prophets and Kings

from the Old Testament, each holding in his hand a *scroll of mourning* from his writings—each with his own individual costume, and gesture, and look—each distinguished from each by the most marked peculiarity of age and character, absorbed in the thoughts of his own time and country. But above these figures is a circle of angels, as like each to each as the human figures are unlike. They, too, as each overhangs and overlooks the Prophets below him, are saddened with grief. But their expression of sorrow is far deeper and more intense than that of the Prophets whose words they read. They see something in the Prophetic sorrow which the Prophets themselves see not: they are lost in the contemplation of the *Divine Passion*, of which the ancient saints below them are but the unconscious and indirect exponents.\* It would seem as if all the sorrow of godly men was a kind of prophecy of the wonderful sorrow of the Son of God. The great tragedy is that of the cross.

It is not unlikely that Christ, in a *literal sense*, died of a *broken heart*. There is every reason

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\* Stanley, *Hist. of the Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 12.

for thinking that he suffered intense pain of soul during his last moments, apart from the pain of crucifixion. I imagine that his great culminating sorrow is echoed forth in that startling cry—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This mental agony may have been so great that it really ruptured his heart. Why also he should be found dead so soon upon the cross,—a thing quite unusual, and which even startled Pilate,—and why *water* as well as blood should flow forth from the side that was pierced by the soldier's spear, are facts not easily explained, except upon the supposition that his heart literally broke by reason of the mighty passion of sorrow which rushed around and through his soul. This view may be correct. If it is correct, redemptive sorrow has a most profound meaning. It points to the very core of the atonement. Body and soul together were yielded up as a sacrifice. Divine justice and human guilt could only thus be pacified.

There is something very precious in being permitted to sorrow with Christ. That we should be allowed to approach him in any way, allowed to walk in the track of his pain and to touch the footprints of his grief, is an exalted

privilege. Sorrow is forever sacred, inasmuch as he felt it. Our burden seems lighter when we think of his, and the clouds that overhang us are not so black when we know of the darkness of God that surrounded him. That we should be weary with an inward woe is nothing to the heart-sadness of him who may fitly be styled the great Sorrower of men. Sorrow glistened in his eye, spoke in his words, was the breath of his atoning spirit, and the incense that ascended to God with his prayers. We lose much because we allow our griefs to be so earthly and so full of self; thinking more of the pain which they cause, than of the Saviour to whom they should lead us. To suffer and to serve with the Crucified is to live. If Christ had not sorrowed, man had not repented with tears. Penitence is a passion flower which grows only beside the cross.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### *THE SORROW THAT IS PLEASING.*

IT is remarkable that both pleasure and pain should be connected with sorrow. That suffering should characterize grief is what all expect ; but when joy is seen to radiate around it we are astonished, and eagerly ask why this should be so.

How are we to explain *tears of joy*? Do the tears really spring from the joy? The common opinion is that they do. We call in question that opinion. As well expect rain to come from the sun, as tears to come from joy. It appears to us, that sadness and evil go together, just as pleasure and good go together. When a person in joy sheds tears, there is an object thought of that starts the joy, and another object thought of that starts the tears. There are certainly two different feelings in the mind, and not one ; two different objects before the mind, and not one.

Here is a mother who has good reason to think that her son is dead. On a certain day, however, he enters his old home. The mother is astonished and overjoyed, and tears roll down her face. Two feelings have evidently met together in the mother's soul, even as two clouds meet together in the sky. Seeing the son *alive*, she is joyful; yet the remembrance of the fact that she thought he was *dead*, is still with her, and so she weeps. A certain man has been confined in a dungeon for ten years. He was sent to prison for life; yet on a certain day he is told that he is free. He is happy, and bursts into a flood of tears. The thought of *confinement* caused the *tears*; the thought of *deliverance* the *joy*. Strictly speaking, the tears are not tears of joy, but *tears in connection with joy*. The experience bears a resemblance to a sudden shower on an April day,—the sun is shining, and yet it rains. The rain is from the cloud: the shining light is from the sun. When the foundation of the second temple was laid, we read that “some wept with a loud voice, and some shouted aloud for joy.” Those that wept, saw the *inferiority* of the second temple as compared with the first: those that shouted aloud for joy, viewed the second temple as a

*superior structure*, not having seen the first. If these two opposite feelings had been in *one man*, instead of in two classes of men, they would illustrate the point before us. The soul may, in fact, have more than two different feelings mingling together at once. I may be disgusted, saddened, alarmed, and in part pleased, at the same moment of time. The mind works with a complexity and quickness that people are not usually aware of.

But not only does a man shed tears of joy *in view of his own mixed condition*, he feels the same way *in view of another's mixed condition*. Robert Glover, who died as a martyr in 1555, thus states his feelings to his wife: "I thank you heartily, most loving wife, for your letters sent to me in my imprisonment. I read them with tears, more than once or twice; with tears, I say, for joy and gladness, that God had wrought in you so merciful a work; first, an unfeigned repentance; secondly, an humble and hearty reconciliation; thirdly, a willing submission and obedience to the will of God in all things. Which when I read in your letters, and judged them to proceed from the bottom of your heart, I could not but be thankful to

God, rejoicing with tears for you."\* The joy of this man arose from the fact that his wife had commenced a religious life: the tears that mingled with the joy were started by the remembered fact that she was formerly unreconciled to God. If I behold a person in distress, and run to help him, I am both sad and happy. Sad because of the evil that has befallen him: happy because of the love which I manifest. *Pity suffers and loves* at the same time,—it is a compound feeling. If a scene is acted out before me which awakens my sympathies, I may shed tears of joy, because it is the nature of sympathy to be both sad and agreeable.

While these thoughts seem to be correct as far as they go, I am convinced that there is an element of pleasure in certain kinds of sorrow which they do not explain. How is it that the *permanent sadness* of the soul is somewhat pleasant to that soul? Here there is no complex state producing a complete feeling. I have pleasure in simply brooding over a deep inward sadness; a sadness that perhaps can be traced to no particular thing. There are hours when the spirit sits spell-bound in the midst

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\* John Foxe, Acts and Monuments of the Church, p. 815.

of its grief. There is such a thing as a *pleasing melancholy*. Melancholy seems to be loved for its own sake. To breathe its air, to hear the monotony of its moan, to sigh in the midst of it, and even to shed tears is happiness. All this is strange. I cannot understand it. I know of no one who has been able to explain it. I even find pleasure in a sorrow whose cause I can point out. Yea, the cause may be exceedingly painful to me when I think of it, yet the sorrow has some element of pleasure. It would seem as if sadness were the offspring of the imperial part of man's nature ; as if there were something of the divine about it ; and that consequently it pleases. Take the weariness of the soul ; the unrest that never really abates ; the panting for something not yet found,—these mental states have all a sad pleasure connected with them ; they point also to that which is divine in man. I have an impression that so long as the regal part of the human spirit is allowed to work, it must furnish some sensations of pleasure in its working. Strike out all the higher movements of the soul, and there would be a dead sadness with no joy.

There is a *witchery* about sorrow that sometimes conducts one to a point where he is struck

with the dart of *disease*. Love of the melancholy, when it goes beyond a certain limit, may be itself a symptom of disease. It may be the dreamy pleasure of a weakened nature! a nature that finds comfort in the darkness rather than in the light. To be attracted by the power of grief may seem natural and easy; yet to sit down at the fountain of sorrow and dwell there is death. The *reverie* of sorrow is pleasant. We seem to be sailing on a river that is partly shaded by trees on either side. Through the openings that are between the trees we see hills, and fields, and distant city spires, and clouds of glory resting on the bosom of heaven. The mind now is not trammelled. There is simply the easy flow of thought and emotion. One feels sad during the whole movement, yet the sadness is pleasant. Tears may even come to the eye as object after object strikes the mind. They come, however, almost unconsciously. The soul is in the midst of a waking dream; a dream which it wishes should be prolonged; a dream which betokens excitement and the pleasant mastery of grief. Any one who has read the "Confessions" of Rousseau, will have noticed in that work traces of the reverie of sorrow. Take for instance this passage:

"Walking along these beautiful banks, on

my way to Vevay, I gave myself up to the soft melancholy ; my heart rushed with ardor into a thousand innocent felicities ; melting to tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child. How often, stopping to weep more at my ease, and seated on a large stone, did I amuse myself with seeing my tears drop into the water."\* All emotional natures are inclined, now and then, to lose themselves in a reverie of sorrow.

We have a pleasing sadness when we think of the *pleasant traits and acts of a departed friend*. How natural it is for the members of a family to talk to each other about all that was interesting in the one who has left them. Certain sayings that he uttered are repeated with pleasure. If he had a fine taste with reference to any particular thing, we mention it. If he was quite proficient in any calling, we state the fact. If he had any scholastic traits, these are noted with interest. Then if he had fine manners, was gentle and loving, self-denying and self-forgetful, we mention all these characteristics. Perhaps one reason why so many books have been written about good children is found in the pleasing sadness which

has prompted the mind to act in that particular sphere.

There are *sighs* of the soul which may be called pleasant. Dante speaks of "sweet sighs." Such must be the breathings of a sad spirit when light and health touch it. Let any brooding anxiety be swept away from the mind, and there is a sigh of relief. Let there be a victory gained over some sin or sinful passion, and there is a sigh of freedom. If one is in the midst of great comfort and is looking round upon the serenity of the heavens and the earth, he may sigh, and say how beautiful and blessed do all things appear. There is a sigh of compassion and of peace ; a sigh in view of the infinite and the eternal ; a sigh that arises because of the Divine and the holy,—each of these is pleasant. As the soul finds relief in a sigh, so also it finds relief in tears. Augustine, speaking of the death of his mother, says : "I gave way to the tears which I before restrained, to overflow as much as they desired ; reposing my heart upon them ; and it found rest in them."\*

We may note here the *smile of sadness*.

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\* Confessions, Book i IX., chap. xi. i.



This is the outward expression of that inward serenity which sometimes encircles the sad spirit. There is even the laughter of sorrow. Excitable natures who have been happily surprised in their grief will express themselves in this way. Their grief and gladness alike tumultuate ; so that wailing is the echo of the one feeling, and laughter the echo of the other. Such persons would almost laugh in their prayers. What a significant trait of human nature it is that we generally *smile* when we *salute people* ! The sense of fitness here seems almost instinctive. Certainly the smile comes without any effort. It is all the more beautiful on that account. Even when we feel sad, our good evening is gildèd with a smile. I have noticed, however, that when we salute a person in deep sorrow, the smile is not apt to appear. A fine sense of fitness makes known what is proper in such a case.

It is to be observed also that pensive minds have generally a vein of *humor*. Burton is mentioned as "a melancholy and humorous person." Pascal, as seen in his "Thoughts," is sorrowful, while in his "Provincial Letters," he is humorous. Hood, Goldsmith, and Irving, were also pathetic and playful. Cowper, with

all his dark sadness, had a vein of humor. His "John Gilpin" is proof of that. Many a one has been compelled to "laugh tears" by listening to the recital of that comic ballad. Flashes of wit and humor are to the troubled mind what the northern lights are to the inhabitants of the Pole,—the darkness is lessened, and the very winter is made to dream of summer. Evidently there is a *happy principle of compensation* in souls, which tends to mitigate human sorrow. The imagination has a morning of hope; the reason has ideal order; the heart loves some one or some thing; the thought of home travels with the exiled spirit in all its wanderings; and eternal litanies ascend to God from the ruined temple within. Even the earth upon which we live; the seasons that come and pass away; the labors that drive us onward,—all have a compensatory influence. Then there is God, who may be called the great compensatory Being. Absolute misery is not known here. The infant sleeps on the bosom of its mother, and the blind sing during the night of their woe.

The mind has a pleasing sadness while it is engaged in certain *speculative inquiries*. Perhaps the charm of spiritualism to some natures

is found in the tender emotions which it awakens. The soul is thought of as a harp ; a harp that can be played upon by unseen fingers. All inquiries relating to the dead are strangely attractive. The fate of our friends on the other side of the river ; what they do there and what they think ; whether they are as eager to see us as we are to see them,—such thoughts spread over the soul a pleasing melancholy. Even to speculate about races of men who have lived upon the earth and passed away from it, leaving no vestige of the language which they spoke, is not without an agreeable interest. If we are allowed to walk among their ruined buildings ; allowed to dig amid the rubbish of fallen temples and tombs ; finding it may be some tool, idol, or weapon of war,—in such a case there is both exhilaration and awe ; we are affected like men in search of an undiscovered sea, who, standing in silence, catch the echo of its waves as they break along a shore that is not yet seen. All the queries about a northwest passage ; about the men who have gone into eternal winter and died ; about those who have gone to search for their remains,—such queries are wrapped around with a kind of weird pleasure. I have



supposed that there might be something about geology that would attract us in the same way. Facing the remains of beings that lived during a dateless past ; looking at footprints upon the rocks ; trying to imagine the length of earthly time,—one both sighs and wonders. Is not the dream of pantheism sad and pleasant to those who are in the midst of the dream? Are not all speculative systems that attempt to be *universal* of this character? “Gnosticism,” remarks Isaac Taylor, “all gratuitous as it was, and rich in a gorgeous pneumatology, on this very account captivated the meditative, the excursive, and the pensive orders of minds ; because it dared to unfold the upper world, which could be conversed with only by a spiritual intuition, disdaining the trammels of reason.”

Another thought bearing upon our subject is this, that if a *scene of sorrow be described*, it may *please* us, while if we are allowed to *look upon that scene* it may *pain* us. In many cases, distance from objects tends to heighten our pleasurable feelings. To depend upon a description is to be placed at a distance from the reality. There are features of sorrow which, when they are described, simply awaken our sympathy ; but when these same features are

seen with the naked eye they appall us. Besides, no picture of wretchedness is complete in every particular. It therefore cannot impress us just as the reality does. If we are reading the description of a scene of sorrow, the points may be so arranged as to produce the greatest effect; some things being kept out purposely, and other things made quite prominent. The style also of the writer may be exceedingly attractive,—the words may be full of music. Or, if we are listening to a public speaker who is using all his art to interest us in the scene of sorrow, the voice comes in to affect us, the manner impresses, the tears touch the heart. In this way persons may have a pleasing sadness from described sorrow, which they would not have if they looked upon the dark reality.

How very striking also that we *shrink* from a person in *great pain*; yet if we *love* the person, the *love holds us to the painful object*. If the natural tendency to flee from a scene of suffering were allowed to work with supreme power, there is no telling how misery in this way would be increased. It is a fine arrangement, therefore, to have one feeling overcome by another. A proper balance is thus kept up

in the soul. Sometimes the moral nature has to be aided by the instinctive, and then again the instinctive nature has to be aided by the moral.

Still further, a *sad object* may be a source of *pain* to one, and a source of *pleasure* to another. If I hate a man, there is a degree of pleasure in seeing him suffer; but if I love him, I am pained because of the suffering. Let an army be defeated, and all who are friendly to that army will be saddened; while those who are opposed to it will be joyful. A child will take pleasure in torturing an insect; a man will have no feeling of that kind. In one country the people are delighted with bull-baiting; in another country they abhor the practice. A question is raised by Dr. Chalmers, whether, in fact, we are ever really pleased with a scene of suffering. That is, does *suffering in itself* please us? It would seem as if it did not. The probability is, that it is something in connection with the suffering that pleases us, and not the suffering itself. The fact that the worshippers of Moloch beat drums that they might not hear the cries of their dying children, shows that it was not the suffering that pleased them, but rather *obe-*

*dience to their God.* The spectators of a prize-fight are not charmed by the mere sight of wounds and blood. They want to see manifestations of skill and pluck, and whether their favorite man will come off conqueror or not. The young surgeon who rejoices that he is called upon to amputate a man's limb, does not rejoice because of the suffering, but rather because he has opportunity of becoming proficient in his art, or because of some other motive that may be present to his mind. Sympathy, in view of distress, and not delight on account of it, is the natural feeling of the soul.

“Upon inquiry into the education of butchers, it will be found, that, instead of receiving aid from any original law of nature in their bosoms, by which the pain of another was followed up with pleasure in oneself—that, instead of this, all the relentings of nature had to be overcome—a struggle had to be made, and other emotions were pressed into the service, that the one troublesome emotion of sympathy might be effectually overruled. We can be at no loss to understand what these other emotions or influences are—the absolute need of a livelihood—the love of gain—the spiring

on of the uninitiated—the factitious conjuring up even of something like a sense of honor—the rivalry of young apprentices, with whom a resolute and unshrinking hardihood will confer the same distinction, that adventure does in the chase, or that prowess does in war.” “The most appalling confession that we ever heard upon this subject, was given by one of the brotherhood with whom, upon this very topic, we deemed it of importance to hold a most minute and searching conversation ; and who reported of one of his fellow-savages, that, instead of the one deep and deadly incision which he ought to have given, it was his habit at times to do the work by halves, and then suspend the wounded animal by the feet, where it had to welter long in agony ere it expired. The recital is just distressing enough—but we resolved, if possible, to get at the motive which could prompt so horrid a barbarity—and the explanation was, *‘that he just wanted to see how it would carry on.’*” \*

It is worthy of attention that the mind has a degree of pleasure while *thinking of sorrows that are like its own*. If we are reading a book,

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\* Chalmers' Moral Phil., p. 261.



and that book is rehearsing scenes of grief that are almost the same as those through which we have passed, we have a pleasing sadness from that fact. If a mother has lost a child and happens to find a piece of poetry that applies to that child, the piece of poetry is saved. If a person has passed through the same troubles that we have ourselves, he is listened to with greater interest on that account. When the sorrowful are visited by those who feel for them, it is natural to mention the trials and griefs that are common to each party. Is it not true also that *men love to see their own image?*—it making no difference whether that image is seen in a sorrow or a joy, in a body or a mind. Does not God even find delight in that which resembles himself?

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *SORROW AS A CONSTITUENT ELEMENT OF RELIGION.*

IT is a striking fact that almost at the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ throws a radiance around sorrow. Having mentioned spiritual poverty he says, "Blessed are they that *mourn*." Manifestly religion is born in the midst of sorrow. As night has been represented as the mother of the gods, so it is the mother of that which is god-like among men.

*Penitence*, which is the first step of religion, has in it the element of sorrow. It is not that sorrow itself is repentance. It is only a part of it; a necessary part. There can be no repentance without it. Grief because *sin* has been committed is the very soul of penitence. It is not so much that *trouble* has arisen from the fact of sin that the mind is grieved. Mere natural repentance looks mainly to *consequen-*

ces ; while in spiritual repentance *sin per se* is hated, turned from, and its opposite followed. The sorrow therefore is not wrapped about with a cunning selfishness. It is no stroke of policy. Utilitarianism could not lead to it. Wherever I see true penitential grief, I see that which is holy, that which is divine. If there be no disinterested regret, the soul is still mastered by a depraved nature. The sorrow of repentance can be seen as a living reality in the following account which Dr. Samuel Hopkins gives of his conversion. He says : "As I was in my closet one evening, while I was meditating, and in my devotions, a new and wonderful scene opened to my view. I had a sense of the being and presence of God as I never had before ; it being more of a reality and more affecting and glorious, than I had ever before perceived. And the character of Jesus Christ, the mediator, came into view, and appeared such a reality, and so glorious, and the way of salvation by him so wise, important, and desirable, that I was astonished at myself that I had never seen these things before, which were so plain, pleasing, and wonderful. I longed to have all see and know these things as they now appeared to me. I was

greatly affected, in the view of my own depravity, the sinfulness, guilt, and odiousness of my character ; and tears flowed in great plenty. After some time, I left my closet, and went into the adjoining room, no other person being then there. I walked the room, all intent on these subjects, and took up Watt's version of the Psalms, and opened it at the fifty-first Psalm, and read the first, second, and third parts in long metre, with strong affections, and made it all my own language, and thought it was the language of my heart to God. I dwelt upon it with pleasure, and wept much.\*

*Great moral victories* generally spring out of sorrow. The drunkard who truly reforms has a vein of sadness deep down in his heart. The profligate youth who tramples his sins in the dust is incited to do so by the inspiring power of grief. Peter became a conqueror for life by reason of his heartfelt sorrow. Does not every leading victory of the Christian seem like a new conversion, having connected with it a kind of new repentance? In appearance this is so. Yea, so much is it so, that truly pious persons have even imagined that they were not con-

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\* Merks, vol. ii., p. 17.

verted till they had passed through 'one of these great changes of their life. The sorrow which agitated their whole being at such a time seemed alone worthy to be called the sorrow of penitence. John Wesley may have been converted before he came into contact with the Moravians, although it was his opinion that he was not. In many cases what is called conversion may be nothing but a *higher stage of spiritual development*. There are natures in which the new life is hidden for a time, just as a stream is hidden while working its way through the central openings of a mountain. Almost every revival of religion has more converts than rightly belongs to it, some having submitted to God before the revival commenced. However strange it may appear, there are persons who are really converted while as yet they know it not. Some who think they are Christians are not: some who think they are sinners are in fact Christians.

*Solemnity* may be looked upon as one of the elements of religious sorrow. There are times when the human spirit has no affinity for that which is solemn. It is deemed the destroyer of peace, and the dark cloud that eclipses joy, There are other times, however, when solem-

nity has a charm about it. Soft, sacred waves roll over the troubled mind ; waves that are silent, and that seem like the undulations of God's air. It is wonderful sometimes the spell that lays hold of a congregation while truths of eternal import are impressing the soul. A stillness different from that of night pervades the assembly. The solitary voice of the speaker seems like a sound from eternity. We almost imagine that an angel is holding each man by the hand, and pleading with him to prepare for the great to-morrow of heaven. The intent ear, the suppressed breathing, the occasional sigh, show that the fallen spirit has found something which suits its nature. The solemnity is sealed with a tear. It may be the tear of hope or of penitence, of love or of joy.

The distinction between *guilt* and *penitential* grief may here be noticed. In some respects they are alike. Guilt is painful, has to do with sin, sometimes produces tears : godly sorrow is in part painful, has to do with sin, sometimes produces tears. Yet in their chief elements they differ altogether. Guilt is constitutional, and arises by a kind of necessity : the sorrow of penitence shows the working of the will. The former springs up in the natural

conscience ; the latter in the spiritual heart. The one is judicial, the other gracious.

“Repentance and remorse are not the same ;  
That is a heavenly, this an earthly flame :  
One springs from love and is a welcome guest ;  
And one an iron tyrant o’er the breast.  
Repentance weeps before the Crucified ;  
Remorse is nothing more than wounded pride.  
Remorse through horror into hell is driven,  
While true repentance always goes to heaven.”

Remorse may exist along with increasing wickedness : but repentance cannot exist save as there is holiness. As the tear that drops from the leaf of the *baca* tree is warm and sharp, but has no virtue, so is it with the tear of remorse. If remorse were repentance, all would be repentant, for all have remorse. Persons who go through life with a deep sense of sin and guilt are in danger of viewing such an experience as similar to *hatred of sin*. They may thus encourage themselves with the conception that they are growing in grace, while in reality they may be living in a state of unbelief. When unbelief is joined to an enlightened conscience it will keep the soul in a state of burning pain ; which burning pain may easily be mistaken for a bitter repentance.

The burden which such a soul carries is the burden of guilt; guilt that has not been removed by the blood of Christ. Faith is what is wanted. Among some Christian people there is a want of the *penitential* element, and among others a want of the *trusting* element. The former fail in their experience touching sin; the latter, touching the Saviour. The one class seem to have faith, but no conviction or repentance: the other class seem to have conviction and repentance, but no faith. Those who have little sin and much confidence are easy: those who have little confidence and much sin are unhappy.

We must distinguish also between the *sorrow of sympathy* and the *sorrow of piety*. There can be no religion without sympathy, yet there may be a great deal of sympathy without religion. Sympathy is natural: religion is supernatural. All have the first: only a few have the second. Constitutional sorrow, however pure it may be, is not of the same *quality* as godly sorrow. There is danger that persons will adopt a sympathetic form of piety just because all piety is born in the midst of emotion. Then there are many things about Christianity that appeal to the feelings; so that if the mind



is held to these things exclusively there may simply be developed the religion of feeling. Sir W. E. Parry states that "he knew a convict in New South Wales in whom there appeared no symptom of repentance; but who could never hear a sermon or comment on the Parable of the Prodigal Son without bursting into an agony of tears." A preacher of great dramatic power may so present the Fatherhood of God to his congregation that many of them will shed tears. Or perhaps better, because more human and nearer to man, he may discourse on the death of Jesus, and so portray that death that all his hearers will be carried away by a flood of most tender emotion. Even the trials and victories of humble Christians in dark times may be so described that each man and child will weep. How easy now for one to think that all this sorrow which has been called forth by visions of God, of Christ, and the good, is really the sorrow of piety. The very *purity* of the *objects* which occasion the sorrow, seems to imbue it with a quality that is also pure, even as water presented to a beggar in a golden cup seems to add to its excellence.

I have noticed that the sorrow which has

been called into existence by the *death of a dear friend* is quite likely to be *thought of as better than it is*, just because of the very tenderness of the relation and the unusual sacredness of the grief. Nothing is so attractive to some as to weep themselves into heaven ; hoping when they reach that land to sing forever with those they love. Says Dr. Chalmers : “ The delusive imagination of a worth and merit in these sensibilities is very often to be met with in circumstances where it is most painful to encounter it—as when the bereaved mother, after that her infant has been deposited in an early tomb, cherishes the treacherous complacency that her tenderness and tears will arise in acceptable memorial before God ; and so open a way for that heaven where, in blissful reunion with all that is dear to her, she will be compensated at the last for the agony of her now wounded affections. To discourage an anticipation so fond and so beautiful as this, would seem to require a certain amount of hardihood, nay, might provoke the antipathies of aggrieved nature, against that stern theology which knows not how to soften or relent even before the most gracefully touching of all spectacles. And hence the exceeding delicacy of

that task, which often comes in the way of a conscientious minister, whose duty it is to weep with them that weep ; but who must not forget that Christianity is firm as well as merciful, and, while exuberant of comfort to all who comply with its overtures, it is not a comfort which as the ambassador of his master in heaven he can dare to minister at the expense of principle and truth."\*

Almost every one has known certain religious men who seemed to have *no tears*. They were persons of great decision and perseverance. They had moral principles that would not bend, and moral courage that would not falter. Generally they were men who had cultivated the positive virtues instead of the passive. The *will* and the *conscience* had been powers in their development: the *heart* had not been sufficiently warmed and mellowed. They seemed to think that it was wrong not only to murmur, but wrong to show any signs of grief when trouble had cut into their being. To manifest signs of grief would be to them an evidence that they were not reconciled to the divine arrangements. The doctrine of submis-

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\* Moral Phil. p. 239.

sion to God is a sublime doctrine ; but yet if it has so mastered the soul that the very fountain of tears is dried up by its presence, then it is a distorted form of submission. The lofty mountain has all the more grandeur when a river is seen to flow at its base ; and submission to God is never so stately and divine as when the stream of sorrow is allowed to meander gently beside it. One does not cease to be a man when he becomes a Christian. Many have given all their children back to God at God's request ; and then having done this, they prayed with submission, yet with a sigh which told of the greatness of their loss. The mother who kisses her dying child with a tear in her eye is more beautiful, than if with quietness she manifested no symptom of grief.

I may call attention just here "to certain *abnormal* growths of Christian life which are *unproductive of Christian joy*. When certain varieties of temperament come under the sway of regenerating grace, they shrink instinctively from faith, even from hope, that the life of God may have been imparted to such as they. The credibility of experience in these cases is marred by no overweening self-confidence. The most fastidious sceptic is not here repelled

by the assumptions of haughty sanctity. No honest lip can curl in contempt of the inconsistency of character with profession. These Christians make no professions. They express no assurance. They enjoy little or no hope for themselves. The inner life of some of them is as the valley of the shadow of death. Yet who that knows anything of unrecorded Christian history does not recall some from this group of crushed spirits, who have exhibited to all spectators an overwhelming testimony to the working within them of infinite power? They have seemed to exhale the evidence of God's indwelling. They have commanded from others a confidence which they dared not whisper to themselves." "I can never listen to the singing of some of the hymns of Cowper without a thrill of reverence for the grace of God which could work so mightily in a diseased soul. Some of Cowper's most affecting lyrics, to which millions of Christian hearts have turned lovingly, as to the most truthful expressions of their own experience which they have ever found, except in the Psalms of David, were composed during those eleven years in which, as he tells us, not a solitary moment

of hope of his own salvation ever cheered his soul.”\*

The truly pious man has a feeling of sadness when he *scans closely his past life*. When John Mason Good was upon his death-bed, he uttered this sentence: “I have been led astray by the vanity of human learning, and by the love of human applause.” The past was not pleasing. Deficiency is written on the top of every page of life’s volume. What an amount of mental and bodily effort which has counted nothing. The time which has thus been wasted. Then that kind of existence which has looked no farther than this earth,—blank worldliness. The exceedingly faint vision we have had of the Deity, of the supremacy of his plans, of the vastness and sublimity of his movements. The number of men that we have seen during a lifetime, and the opportunity thus granted for benevolent labor: the fearful range of our evil influence. What we might be at this moment if the past had been all worked up so as to form character and mental strength. The feeling of sadness which necessarily arises in view of such a retrospect;

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\* Prof. Phelps, *Biblioth. Sacra*, vol. xxiii. p. 300.

a sadness, however, which, as it prompts to repentance for the past, makes us more careful with reference to the future.

The overwhelming sorrow of Archbishop Cranmer, because he had recanted in view of the terrible death that awaited him, illustrates the thought before us in a most striking manner. The historian says : " A man might have seen the very image of perfect sorrow lively expressed in him. More than twenty distinct times, while listening to the sermon that was delivered in his hearing a short time before he was led to the stake, the tears flowed abundantly, dropping down upon his fatherly face. Those who were present, do testify that they never saw in any child more tears than burst out from him at that time, during all the sermon : but especially when they recited his prayer before the people. It is marvellous what commiseration and pity moved all men's hearts that beheld so heavy a countenance, and such abundance of tears in an old man of so reverend dignity. ' Forasmuch as my hand offended,' he remarked, ' writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished for it : for when I come to the fire it shall be first burned.' " Then an iron chain was tied

about Cranmer, and when they perceived him to be more steadfast than to be moved from his sentence, they commanded the fire to be set to him. And when the wood was kindled, and the fire began to burn near him, stretching out his arm, he put his right hand into the flame, which he held so steadfast and immovable, that all might see his hand burned before his body was touched. His body did so abide the burning of the flame with such constancy and steadfastness, that standing always in one place without moving his body, he seemed to move no more than the stake to which he was bound; his eyes were lifted up to heaven, and oftentimes he repeated, '*this unworthy right hand.*'" \*

I may here note, that *religion is not all sorrow*, though there is no religion without sorrow. The *shadow* and the *cloud* do not make known the whole of materialism. The beautiful coloring of nature, the sweetness of fruit, the rich perfume of flowers, the music of living creatures, are not revealed by the shadow: the soft light and universal air, the electric current and wonderful movement of light, are not expelled from the universe by the existence of the

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\* John Foxe, Acts and Monuments of the Church, p. 904.



cloud. So in the same way the fine traits of piety are not annihilated by the presence of sorrow. As the *smile* remains with all human beings, even though they have fallen,—as if it were the memorial of Eden's first day, and a remnant of glory from the skirts of God,—so joy radiates around the religion of sorrow, making known the fact that holiness is its delight and heaven its home. The tear of piety has in it the image of Jesus. The religion of eternity has no sorrow. That may be called the absolute religion,—the ideal life. The religion of time has carative elements mingling with it. It is for man fallen. As the rudiments of the piety of heaven are contained in the piety of earth, so the blessedness that pertains to the one is partially realized in the other. Sorrow is nothing but the cold breath of man's winter; a winter that gives new life, and prepares for the summer of God.

Sorrow! thou art alike the friend and the foe of man. With unhappiness thou dost wear out his soul, and with joy thou dost move his heart. Thy footprints are seen in every land, and thy likeness is beheld in every human countenance. The day knoweth thee as well as the night; the sabbath as well as the working week

of man. Thou art found in the haunts of sin, in the chamber of the widow, in the house of the Lord. Amidst the joy of wedlock thou art seen ; in the silent room of death ; and beside the sepulchres of men when the winter of years has come. The infant hears thy voice and weeps ; the youth is pensive in the midst of his song ; the full-grown man sighs with care, and the ancient man is weary with his pain. In thy right hand thou holdest the cup of life, and in thy left the dark pitcher of death. Even the angels invoke thine aid in their mission of love, and foul spirits ask thee to tarry with them till their work is done. Thou art found in the heart of the good man and the bad. Without thee there would be no beauty in souls ; yet there is a deformity which thou sweepest not away. Thou didst darken the spirit of the Son of God. The shadow of all the earth fell upon him and became night. All thy woes were poured upon his head. He sank to the earth as one slain. Sorrow ! thou art full of mystery and might ; the purifier and punisher of men ; the one whom all wish to be free from, yet the one that lingers till the last. What an hour that shall be when thou art gone ; when the mind shall work in harmony like the sor-

rowless minds of heaven ; when eternity shall be passed in joy, and the thought of thee shall be at last forgotten amidst the glories of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *THE SORROW THAT IS BEAUTIFUL.*

A CERTAIN writer has remarked, that "grief is a divine and terrible radiance which transfigures the wretched." This is true of a certain kind of grief; a kind which is marked with sublimity. There are sublime sorrows, just as there are sublime storms. I would not say that all sorrow is beautiful. If a person before us shrieks because of the bitterness of his grief, we instinctively turn round and look at another object; the sight troubles us. *Exceedingly painful sorrow* is not beautiful. When Prometheus made known to Io her fate, she manifested grief that cannot be called beautiful. The state of her mind she thus expresses: "Eleleu! Eleleu! Once more the spasm and maddening phrensies inflame me—and the sting of the hornet, wrought

by no fire, envenoms me ; and with panic my heart throbs violently against my breast. My eyes, too, are rolling in a mazy whirl, and I am carried out of my course by the raging blast of madness, having no control of tongue, but my troubled words dash idly against the surges of loathsome calamity.”\* Quite different from this is the sorrow of the Queen of France, in Shakespeare’s “King Lear.” Her sorrow as described has touches of real beauty about it.

“Now and then an ample tear trill’d down  
Her delicate cheek : it seem’d she was a queen  
Over her passion ; who, most rebel-like,  
Sought to be the king o’er her.

O, then it mov’d her.

Not to rage : patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
Sunshine and rain at once : her smiles and tears  
Were like a better day : Those happy smiles,  
That play’d on her ripe lip, seem’d not to know  
What guests were in her eyes ; which parted thence,  
As pearls from diamonds dropp’d.—In brief, sorrow  
Would be a rarity most belov’d, if all  
Could so become it.” \*

The sorrow that starts *tears* is more beautiful

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\* Tragedies of Æschylus, p. 29, Buckley’s Trans.

† Act IV., scene iii.

than the sorrow that starts *crying*. The sound of the voice in weeping is not so pleasing to us as the sight of the silent tear in the eye ; consequently it is not so beautiful. If the crying is loud and tumultuous, we never think of it as beautiful ; it simply in that case expresses the deep anguish of the spirit. When the weeping is the gentle voice of a crushed nature,—a nature that is subdued and that looks upward,—there is then a degree of beauty pertaining to it. The lament of a bird that has lost its young is both touching and beautiful. Suppose that the Creator had so fashioned us that we never could shed tears or cry when in sorrow, what a want that would be ! Or suppose that the *voice alone* expressed grief, and the *eye did not* express it, approaching in that case to certain of the lower orders, what a deficiency would exist. I cannot but think that man is exalted just because he can shed tears. Certainly this characteristic of our race is beautiful. Perhaps there is no other being in the universe that weeps but man. At all events, as far as this earth is concerned, man may be defined as the being that weeps. It is a very strange thing that sorrow should connect itself with the eye ; sending forth a tear as its

symbol. This is even more strange than that it should connect itself with the voice. Tears and weeping point to a distinct language ; a language that is understood over the whole earth.

There is a loveliness about the *tears of gratitude*. Grateful feeling seems to be doubled in value by their presence. It is also rendered more sacred ; for we think of the tears as memorials of a sweet affection ; as a kind of prayers and offerings. The tear of gratitude expresses thanks, though not a word is spoken. It makes us think of the evening star that shines so beautifully ; of the rainbow that spans the sky when the storm is abating ; of the dew that gems the flowers of paradise, giving a friendly welcome to the saint during his walk in glory. When I see a man shake another by the hand and thank him with a tear in his eye, I know that the love of the heart is pure and ardent. Of course it is strange that a *tear* and *gratitude* should be found together ; but the tear is a witness of the evil from which the favored man has been saved. The witness is transformed, however, into a messenger of joy, as if it were participating in the good which had been received. If blood should ooze

forth from the wounded brow of the warrior because of the joy which he felt while beholding his friends, that blood would be the sign of a greatness which appeared all the greater by reason of a memorial that was so affecting. The tear is the seal of gratitude. It is the diamond that sparkles in the ring of love ; the beautiful hieroglyph of a sorrow that is gone ; pointing to a joy that already has come.

The tear of *joy* is more beautiful than the tear of *sorrow*. It receives a lustre from the one feeling which it cannot so fully receive from the other. The tear of sorrow simply points to a single emotion ; while the tear of joy intimates that two emotions are mingling together, even as the cloud and the sunshine mingle together in the heavens.

There must have been a singular beauty in some of the phases of the *sorrow of Jesus*. The fact that he was sinless, and yet sorrowful, arrests the attention. His whole character threw a radiance around his sorrow. When Jesus wept, that was a scene which no one has been able as yet to put upon canvas. Think of *Christ's tear of love!* When did mercy ever appear so beautiful ? If a saint in glory or a seraph were to drop a tear upon his white robe



while thinking of the earth and man, such a tear would not be so beautiful as the sorrow of the Son of God. The tears of Jesus were like the pearls of heaven. It is true that he had a sorrow that was sublime, and a sorrow that was terrible and full of mystery ; yet he also had a sorrow that was beautiful. The rose of Sharon did bend because of the heavy dews of night.

That sorrow which springs from the *higher nature* of man is beautiful. Here is an immortal spirit putting forth its strength to overcome evil, and yet failing. A sigh goes up because the way to perfection is so difficult. The soul looks around upon all earthly things. Nothing seems as it should be ; nothing satisfies the pure reason of man. Here is a soul that was modelled with reference to eternity, with reference to God, yet wandering among the shadows of time, side by side with those who have strayed from the Infinite Excellence. There may be persons whose minds are not troubled by the deformities of life. Their effort may be to have a joy that is not shaded by any true conception of men and things. A great indifference may have hardened and fortified their nature. Their composure may be that of a

dead sea. The state of such persons may seem to some to be enviable; but a thousand times more enviable is that beautiful sadness of a great spirit which has been generated by a sight of life as it is. There is something exceedingly attractive about the longing of immortal creatures for a harmony which has not yet been found, and for a home which has not yet been reached. When I behold such beings passing through among us, with pensiveness written upon their brow, and their eye telling of earth and heaven at the same time, I say these are the men who alone are reasonable; their sad consciousness, if it proclaims the night, heralds also the day. The whole of this kind of sorrow shows the working of superior states and tendencies in the human spirit. We notice that a God-created mind is somewhat alive to the great realities of existence, and so it sighs as one who is in exile,—wearied because of the pressure and obduracy of evil, longing for an eternal day at God's right hand. All that sorrow is beautiful which arises in the soul as one gazes at the ever-moving procession of mortals, the serene depths of the eternal sky, the vanishing away of ships to a remote land with friends on board, the setting of suns and

the approach of night. "I had contracted a habit," remarks Rousseau, "of going in the evening to sit upon the sandy shore, especially when the lake was agitated. I felt a singular pleasure in seeing the waves break at my feet. I formed of them in my imagination the image of the tumult of the world contrasted with the peace of my habitation, and this pleasing idea sometimes softened me even to tears.\* Such tears were beautiful. Suppose we are seated upon the summit of a lofty mountain. A great city is seen in the distance. A winding river flows through the plain. The sound of a human voice does not reach us. Winged creatures are journeying through the air, and there is the constant murmur of winds. We look all around; look upward and sigh. That sigh is beautiful. We think of the great Being who is throned above all. Storms reach him not. His pavilion is the infinite light. He has a serenity which our ideal does not reach, a blessedness which we cannot tell. Meditating upon this Uncreated Person, there touches the heart a divine sadness.

What a sacred beauty there is about the

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\* Confessions, p. 548, London ed.

*sorrow of penitence.* Here is a man who was careless, conceited, lost in the world. Now his heart is intent on goodness, God, and the future life. Sin pains him. He sheds tears over the past, looking with hope towards the future. The sight is pleasing. Here is a youth sighing over his fall, longing for the light, kneeling before God. His prayers are borne aloft on the wings of sorrow, on the wings also of faith. Youthful penitence is beautiful. Confession to man and to God; the repentant feeling or the act of restitution; the tear in the heart or the tear in the eye,—all are beautiful. Sin has no beauty, even as darkness has none. The selfish thought, the malicious feeling, the rebellious choice, are all abhorrent. The beauty of penitential sorrow may be seen in the case of Odo of Tournay, who flourished in the twelfth century. “At first a teacher of the realistic philosophy, in the cathedral school at Tournay, he was attended by crowds of enthusiastic pupils from France, Germany and the Netherlands. In his school, engaged in the exposition of Augustine’s work ‘Concerning Free-will,’ he came to a passage which sets forth the wretched condition of those whose souls are devoted to earthly pursuits, to the forfeiture of heavenly

glory. Applying the argument to himself and his ambitious scholars, so greatly was he moved by his own expostulations, that, bursting into tears, he rose from the chair, and, followed by a number of his pupils, went forth to the church, where he devoted himself to the pursuit of those higher honors which come from God." \* That "bursting into tears" in view of a vain life was beautiful.

We may notice the sweet attractiveness of *sympathetic sorrow*. Behold friends standing round a coffin, in tears, and those looking on shedding tears also: the sadness is beautiful. "Sir Walter Scott and his family declined a distinguished invitation to dine out on a certain day when a favorite dog happened to die, and the whole household went to his burial in a romantic spot of the garden, and were not ashamed to shed tears over the green spot that covered him." Some persons may smile at such sorrow. I think, however, that there is a phase of beauty about it. A dog that has watched carefully our dwelling for years, that has proved more faithful than man, that once saved us from death, may well cause sorrow when it is gone.

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\* Quoted in Baird's Elohim Revealed, p. 27.

Love bending over a wounded enemy, and wiping the wound with one hand and the tears from the eye with the other, is very beautiful. Equally so is a mother's sadness, as for months she watches over a sick child. The lamp of affection is burning through the night of trouble. It goes not out. The tears of a mother are beautiful as she kisses her new-married daughter. The thought of giving up the child of one's love to the love of another ; the fact that home is to be left and a new life to be tried,—these affect the heart. As the unmarried sisters kiss her who is about to leave them, they weep. The whole is natural ; it is beautiful. The father tries to restrain his sorrow. He, however, wipes his eyes.

That *meditative sorrow* which relates to a departed friend, when it is not carried too far, is beautiful. Suppose that that departed friend is a *mother*. She went away before age had come. Beauty was on her cheek. Her life was full of kindness,—it was like the beam of the west in the season of spring. The words that fell from her lips were peace. As a being from another realm she lived here. But death came. In the summer she went away. Her last hours were gilded with a quiet joy. She

spoke to each of us before she died. I have wept many times since. As a presence I find her with me in solitude. Even now she directs my steps. In moments of danger I am cautioned ; in moments of trouble I am comforted. I think of some unkind word which I spoke to her. Tears drop from my eyes. It is three years to-day since she died. The day is sacred. I am serious in the midst of the laughter of men. They know not my thoughts. I enter the graveyard. The clouds, like floating islands, are sailing across a heavenly ocean, and the mountain bird is hastening to its nest. I stand by the grave of my mother ; I read her epitaph ; I recall the past. Quickly, however, my mind wanders off to the fields of eternity. I would reach those who have left me. But the time is not yet ; neither am I prepared. I must weep and work a few days more. When the great to-morrow comes I shall depart.

A heavenly lustre is given to sorrow when it blends with such feelings as *patience, resignation, love, joy, hope*. This is much the same as surrounding the dying bed of a saint with a company of angels. We think also of the blending of colors in the rainbow ; making that to be one of the most beautiful sights in

nature. When sorrow unites with bad feelings—as misanthropy, pride, envy, revenge, avarice—it is not beautiful. Sorrow in such a case is like the gloom of a cold stormy day. The passive virtues are all queenly and attractive, and so they easily blend with sorrow. It is a significant fact also that if we want a friend during a time of trouble, we make selection of one who has the passive traits. He may not be wiser than others, may not be better than others, yet we love him; love him because he works through the heart. Says Edmund Burke: “Those persons who creep into the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from care and anxiety, are neither persons of shining qualities nor strong virtues. It is rather the soft green of the soul on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects.”\* We *admire* fearlessness and decision, but do not say that these active virtues are *beautiful*. Still, if a fearless man sheds tears, it looks very beautiful; perhaps because of the contrast. If we behold a courageous soldier weeping at the grave of his sister, wife, or child, it impresses

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\* The Sublime and Beautiful, p. 138.



us more favorably than if a common man were doing the same thing. We think of the dangers through which he has passed, as if he were made of iron and had no tears to shed; so when he weeps, it is all the more beautiful to us.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*SORROW OF DIFFERENT RACES—THE SORROW THAT IS ENGENDERED BY THE BODY—LAWS OF SORROW.*

OUR first inquiry is in relation to the *sorrow of different races*. A rude people will generally be more boisterous in their sorrow than a cultivated people. There is not that self-command with the one that there is with the other. The rude people are governed more by feeling than the cultivated are ; hence to express feeling with intensity is quite natural. I may say also that the Eastern nations are more impulsive in their sorrow than the Western. This arises somewhat from temperament and custom. It would no doubt be a very curious study to trace out the influence of *custom* upon the expression of the feelings. The Oriental practice of wailing at funerals may be kept up, simply because it is a kind of fashion of sadness. When the body of Jacob was carried to the land of Canaan, there to be buried, we read

that the Egyptians “mourned with a *great and very sore lamentation.*” It is not to be supposed that such mourning was as deep as it appeared to be. The father of the second man in the kingdom had died, and Egyptian custom demanded that there should be an expression of grief sufficiently great to match with this fact. Herodotus says: “When a man of rank died, all the females of his family covering their faces with mud, and leaving the body in the house, ran through the streets, girded up, and striking their bare breasts and uttering loud lamentations. All their female friends joined them. The men beat their breasts in like manner, and also girded up their dress.”\* Dr. Kane calls attention to a kind of fashion of sorrow which prevails among the natives of the polar regions. “There is a singular custom,” he says, “which I have noticed here as well as among some of the Asiatics, and which has its analogies in more cultivated centres. I allude to the regulated formalities of mourning for the dead. They weep according to system; when one begins, all are expected to join, and it is the office of courtesy for the most distin-

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\* Quoted in Hengstenberg's *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 74.

gushed of the company to wipe the eyes of the chief mourner. They often assemble by concert for a general weeping-match ; but it happens sometimes that one will break out into tears and others courteously follow, without knowing at first what is the particular subject of grief. It is not, however, the dead alone who are sorrowed for by such a company. Any other calamity may call for it as well: the failure of a hunt, the snapping of a walrus-line, or the death of a dog Mrs. Eider-duck once looked up at me from her kolupsut and burst into a gentle gush of woe. I was not informed of her immediate topic of thought, but with remarkable presence of mind I took out my handkerchief, and, after wiping her eyes politely, wept a few tears myself." \*

A *sad tone* of voice is peculiar to certain races. "A stranger in Greece or the East is struck at once by a certain sadness of tone, amounting at times almost to wailing, which marks the speech of the people, and especially of the women of the lower order. Some travellers have ascribed this to the long centuries of humiliation and oppression under which

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\* Arctic Explorations, vol. ii. p. 117.

women have groaned in the East ; but I think it belongs rather to the *races* than to the sex ; for it is not altogether confined to the women : and, besides, something of the same sort is found among the most primitive and simple tribes, and the fact, if it be a fact, that the music of ancient Greece and Latium, like that of most Oriental countries, was wholly in the minor mode, seems to confirm this view." \*

I do not think that *passive* tribes and nations have such a *volume of sorrow* as those that are *positive*. Outwardly they may seem to be more sad, but inwardly they are not. To whatever extent manhood is weakened, to that extent sorrow is weakened. Let a race be crushed for ages, till finally all desires for freedom and personal advancement are extinguished, in that case grief will run low. To suffer and to be oppressed seems natural. An unmanly contentment takes possession of the soul. Where a higher race would be cut to the heart, a lower race is quiet and easy. The sorrow of the *natural feelings* may be as strong among a passive people as among a positive, because those ties, the severing of which causes the sorrow,

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\* Marsh, Lectures on the English Language, p. 285.

are common to all. The relation of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, is universal. Pain and death also strike every human being. The positive races have a *greater number* of sorrows than the passive, just because their energy carries them farther and gives them a wider experience.

Is it not a fact that the *great modern nations are more sorrowful* than the *ancient*? We certainly believe that they are. The field of modern thought is quite extended. The amount of light that is pouring in upon nations increases sadness. Melancholy is a sign of intelligence. It is a very striking fact that suicides are more common in civilized countries than in those that are not civilized. Cannibals may kill one another, but they do not kill themselves. They have not the pain and perplexity of soul which lead to self-murder. The extent of insanity also among civilized men is quite a noticeable characteristic. A hidden sadness is certainly at work. Hurry and worry mark the present. The excessive demands of a great selfishness, the sharp competitions and conflicts of trade, the fevered life and thought of the age, have a tendency to increase sorrow. The wonderful extent of novel-reading develops a cheap sad-

ness. At present also there is a great movement of Christian ideas. These are looking in upon souls and troubling them ; troubling them because they want them not, though feeling that they cannot do altogether without them. These ideas are facing all our philosophies, and keeping up a most vigorous realism amid the clouds of human opinion and sin. In this way grief and goodness appear, even as the moon is both light and dark. The Christian conception of God and the God-man, of the soul with its fall and recovery, of human probation as confined exclusively to time, of eternal death and eternal life, must affect depraved natures and sadden them, as they could not be affected and saddened by the training of ancient times. Everything would seem to be greater at present,—greater holiness and greater sin, greater joy and greater sorrow.

Our second inquiry relates to the *body as tending to generate sorrow*. There may be *hereditary evils* in the body which lead to sadness. I should suppose that the children of drunken parents would have a degree of melancholy about them. In those families also along which travel vestiges of insanity there must be sadness. Even a body which seems to be healthy

may have that within it which darkens and depresses the mind. As there are movements of the soul which lie beneath the plane of consciousness, so there may be causes of sadness in the body which no physiologist has yet been able to discover. There are some things, however, which we know with certainty. The gloomy influence of a *diseased liver*, is a fact which persons have been acquainted with for a very long period. The word melancholy—meaning *black bile*—is a proof of that. What vast numbers of people are inclined to look on the dark side! The bad liver casts a shadow around the soul. Depression of spirits may also spring from a *disordered stomach*. A dose of medicine or a day of fasting will quite frequently brighten the mind as well as rectify the body. Too much food is stupefying; yet too little food has not by any means a good influence. Shipwrecked sailors, who have lost all their provisions, sometimes look with an evil eye upon each other; and mothers in the straitness of a siege devour their offspring. It has been noticed by travellers that Mohammedans during their great fast are exceedingly quarrelsome. Are not very poor people who live in large cities irritable? A family is crowded in-



to one room, the air is vitiated, the light is darkness, the food is insufficient,—hence peevishness. The children quarrel and fight,—Both soul and body may be spoken of as *ill-natured*. “When there is *too much blood* in the veins of the head, there is a dull pain or great depression of spirits, and the feet are always cold. It is this excess of blood in the veins of the head or brain, which always induces the despondency which so frequently causes suicide. When this is attempted by cutting the throat, the relief is instantaneous, and the victim becomes anxious for the life he had just attempted to destroy.” *Nervousness* will start melancholy feelings. The person is weak, is excited, is also depressed. There is no ability to battle with opposition. The will loses its power. There is a want of self-control and decision. A course will be adopted one hour, and changed the next. The individual sinks down into a state of gloom and grief. The soul staggers on the borders of lunacy.

It is necessary that I should state also that *secret vice* is one of the leading causes of melancholy. There is no telling how many minds are sent into night by this one evil. There is most urgent need that an alarm should be

sounded. "According to the uniform testimony of educated medical men at home and abroad, whose office it is to superintend those establishments founded for the restoration of the insane, thousands of persons languish every year in these institutions, and finally die in drivelling idiocy in consequence of practices fallen into unwittingly, and eventually habits formed in early youth, without the slightest idea of their being immoral or physically destructive." "The writer knew a gentleman of wealth, who had two sons; the elder was sent to a distant institution of learning at the age of eighteen years. He was a youth of manly bearing and of high promise. His attainments were unusual for one of his age; an estate was coming to him at his majority, which would yield him a revenue of twenty-three thousand dollars a year. His health began to decline. This was traced to practices into which he had been inveigled, of which no one could know anything but himself. He was ignorant of their tendencies, and continued them until the morning debilitations became a drain so exhaustive to the vital powers, that he grew pale and thin and nervous. In a few months his bodily elasticity was gone. In place of the

habitual courtesy, the high-bred deportment, and the joyous abandon which once characterized him in a remarkable degree, there was a listlessness of demeanor, a slovenliness of person and dress, with a settled shade of deep melancholy. A mental depression seized upon him, which it seemed impossible to remove by the amusements and diversions which commonly have great attractions for the young. In short, he became idiotic eventually, lost the power of speech, and now for nineteen years has not uttered a single word, nor is it at all likely that he ever will, although thousands are spent every year in vain efforts for his restoration." \*

There is no doubt also much *sadness among religious people* which springs from a *diseased body*. By not knowing this, mistaken causes are fixed upon. Many good men trace the whole of their inward sadness to a weak faith, to depravity of heart to the hiding of God's face; while certainly a part of it ought to be traced to a body that is out of order. As showing how religious states may be modified by ill health, the following experience of Dr.

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\* Dr. Hall, Treatise on Sleep, p. 143.

Beecher may be noted: "I have experienced," he says, "for some days a melancholy headache. It spoils all attempts at prayer, and every other duty; for, while it continues, I see no subject except on the darkest side. It disqualifies me for reading, meditation, or writing, or even conversation. But this is not all. If I ever felt any religion, it seems to have forsaken me. I cannot feel. God is distant. I cannot realize, cannot get into his presence. At times I fear I have never known him."\* A deeper depression than this characterized Isaac Milner, Dean of Carlisle. He remarks: "Though I have endeavored to discharge my duty as well as I could, yet sadness and melancholy of heart stick close by and increase upon me. I tell nobody, but I am very much sunk indeed, and I wish I could have the relief of weeping as I used to. My views have of late been exceedingly dark and distressing; in a word, Almighty God seems to hide his face. I intrust the secret hardly to any earthly being. I know not what will become of me. There is doubtless a good deal of bodily affection mingled with this, but it is not all so. I bless God, however, that

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\* Autobiography, vol. i. p. 108.

I never lose sight of the cross ; and though I should die without seeing any personal interest in the Redeemer's merits, I think, I hope, that I should be found at his feet. My door is bolted at the time of my writing this, for I am full of tears." \* When we know that this distinguished man had " spasms in his stomach, severe and uninterrupted headaches, oppression of the breath, broken slumbers," it is not surprising that a most painful sadness weighed down his spirit.

The third inquiry before us relates to the *laws of sorrow*. Our statement may not contain the whole truth. It may suggest, however, to some minds, the very conditions that are needed.

The first law of sorrow is, that sadness will arise from the sense of *loss*. As showing the working of this law, these points may be noted : 1. We have sorrow from the loss of property. In whatever way the property has been lost there will be a feeling of sadness. If one loses a particular situation, or the means of gaining a livelihood, he will be cast down in his mind. 2. Losing an opportunity will breed sorrow. Fail-

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\* Quoted in *Man, Moral and Physical*, by Dr. Jones, p. 85.

ing to improve a particular occasion, failing to meet a person at a time specified, failing to receive a letter of great importance, or to be in time for the boat or the cars, will engender sadness. No small amount of sorrow arises in life from disappointment. 3. The loss of a pleasure will sadden the mind. Men love happiness; therefore they sigh when it is gone. The gambler is restless when he does not have his accustomed excitement, the drunkard when he does not have his cup, and the religious man when he does not have his peace and joy. 4. To lose the respect of men troubles us. All love to be well thought of. The feeling is natural. The child would rather see a smile than a frown. He who cares for no one is a bad man. 5. The loss of friends starts a painful sadness. Those we love have departed. They have entered the unknown land. We see them not on any day. In a cloud we travel towards the regions of eternity.

The second law of sorrow is, that sadness will arise from the fact of *evil*. The evil may be moral or it may not,—the feeling of sorrow will be of a kind to match it. 1. Sin in our soul produces sadness. There is certainly a sadness which exists independently of the will.

From the very nature of the human spirit it must lament in the midst of its evil. Let a man deny all sin, deny his own personality and the personality of God, he will yet have a sigh wandering through his soul which he cannot deny. 2. We sorrow because we have committed sin. This is the sorrow of penitence. It may be a question whether every fallen being will be the subject of *natural repentance* sometime or another. My impression is that they will. In the very depths of perdition men will repent; but it will be the repentance of death. Judas had sorrow because of his great crime; but there was no godliness in it. 3. When I see a man doing wrong I am grieved. The sin itself troubles me. 4. When I exercise pity towards a wicked man, that pity has in it an element of sorrow. A mother receiving her wayward son and weeping over him, shows the working of this feeling. 5. An intellectual evil will cause sorrow. If I have forgotten something which I wanted very much to remember, I am greatly pained. An error in judgment, as telling a man the wrong way to a place, will end in sorrow when the error is discovered. 6. Certain evil results of an act, when there was not the

least intention of doing evil, will cause sorrow. If in attempting to shoot a wild beast I kill a man, not knowing that the man was there, I have the most bitter grief. 7. Sadness will arise from bodily evil. We know that depression of spirits may spring from a diseased state of the system. If in any way also the body has been injured, we feel sad because of that injury. 8. Some outward material evils will engender melancholy; as cloudy weather, an unhealthy place where one is living, an uncomfortable house, and many other things that may be thought of.

These are the two laws of sorrow; all that I can discover. The illustrations of each law might be multiplied, but that is unnecessary. I have sorrow from *loss* apart from the idea of evil; and I have sorrow from *evil* apart from the idea of loss. Sometimes, however, both ideas are found together,—as when ten thousand dollars have been stolen from me by my own son. Here *money* is *lost* and *evil committed*. I can think of no sorrow that may not be classified under the one or the other of these laws.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE BEARING OF SORROW UPON CERTAIN OF THE HIGHER THEMES OF EXISTENCE.*

**S**ORROW in a fallen soul will not be clearly understood unless that soul is viewed in its relation to the *Deity*. Man was made for God. This ultimate fact must be distinctly apprehended. Blessedness is found when the soul acts in unison with the Divine Being. Sin is a departure from God. A *painful state of mind* arises because of this departure. The feelings of guilt and remorse do not express the painful state to which we here refer. It is back of these and deeper than these. There is a *soul sadness* that does express it; a sadness which is nothing but the immortal nature in trouble because *God is lost*. There is scarcely anything that is more suggestive than a human sigh. It is the breathing of a spirit that has wandered away,—the lament of a God-made



soul in the midst of its exile. The sigh is really a painful prayer that is travelling blindly towards Heaven ; a prayer which the will can neither guide nor stop. We never can understand the sorrow of a lapsed nature if we attempt to scan it from the summit of any of the faculties. In the very nature of fallen mind is found the sensation of sorrow. We must think of the soul as an indivisible spiritual substance, and that spiritual substance crushed and weary. Sin is a wound ; sadness is the pain that results from it.

Let it be carefully observed also that this *sad pain*, which differs from all others, *may be realized at any moment of life*. Let a man in the midst of pleasure and gay companionship stop for a single instant and look within, and at that instant he will be conscious of a pain of soul. One may work or be idle, may go abroad or stay at home, may strive to gain knowledge or be content with ignorance, may seek honors or wealth—the pain of the human spirit remains as a constant fact. Not only is this true, but equally true is it that the saint differs but little from the sinner as far as this sad characteristic is concerned. Let a Christian man go back of all his benevolent activity, communion with

God, holiness of heart, and he will find that the sin-crushed spirit is in a state of suffering. At the close of the happiest hour of life, yea, during the continuance of the happiness, if the soul will but turn in upon itself, the pain is felt. Even if one awakes out of a deep sleep and instantly scans the soul, the misery is there. Man lies down upon his bed at night with a sigh, and he arises in the morning with the same state of mind which he had when he retired. The very dreams are tinged with sadness, and the brightest visions of hope are shaded by the standing clouds that overhang the sinful soul.

That Christianity adds to the happiness of those who receive it is certain. The quieting of the troubled conscience, the joy that springs from pure emotion, the void that in part is filled, the peace with God, the hope of heaven, are so many streams of Christian happiness. But it should be known by all that native sadness, just like indwelling sin, remains as the dark background of the inner life; and that though it may be modified somewhat by the power and presence of religious principle, it is not destroyed till the last hour comes. I can only look upon this universal anguish of souls

as retributive in its nature. Like death itself it must be endured by all. It is evidence that the whole race have strayed from God ; and to mark the greatness of the offence, the sadness is to sweep the whole of life, the whole of earthly time ; the infinite atonement of Christ not even venturing to set it aside. To the good, the hour of victory shall come with its songs ; and the return home shall be greeted with smiles, and words of joy that gladden forever. The bad, weary in their sin, yet, not forsaking it, shall lie down in sorrow ; and the cloud that overhangs them shall be eternal.

The idea of *perfection* will, in certain circumstances, *look forth upon sorrow*, even as a bright star upon the darkness of night. How saddening is the thought that we pass through the whole of our life and never see a perfect being ! The idea of perfection we have in our reason ; it shines there like a lamp of God ; but every man we meet is struck with sin. The sight of so much imperfection is oppressive. Always beholding depravity and ruin the heart-sickens. We seem compelled to walk along a shore forever, gazing upon wrecks, looking upon dead bodies that have been washed upon the beach, upon children and men as they sit shivering in

the cold. We turn to the past. What do we see? Perfection stands like a heavenly image at the beginning of our race. But the image falls; the image is broken. After four milleniums of years perfection returns and dwells with men for a season. This time there is no fall; perfection departs as pure as when it came. Aside from such an exception, darkness reigns over all the earth. A perfect man, the true descendant of the first man, has not yet appeared. Through all the future, in the best and brightest ages of the future, there is to be no moral perfection. This world during its entire history is to be characterized by sin. Then to think of souls throughout the whole of an eternal existence beholding nothing but imperfection. Only the splendors of perfection on the last day to deepen, by the contrast, the awful gloom of the everlasting night.

Perfection is an ultimate idea. We can think of it better than we can express it. The perfect we say is the complete, it is the finished. This is the Bible meaning of the term. "When that which is *perfect is come*, then that which is *in part shall be done away*." A piece of work that is only *partly* finished is imperfect. There must be wholeness. A thing

must be as it ought to be. The Hebrew language, with its simple *past* and *future*, is significant. The past tense holding up the idea of perfection ; the future tense the idea of imperfection. A present and a future are strictly imperfect,—the act is not yet finished. Then, too, a perfection that *is to be will cheer us*, while a perfection that *is lost will sadden us*. We therefore look forward, rather than backward. The architect who has spent months in drawing out the plan of a palace will be pleased if it appears to him what it should be ; and when he sees the building in process of erection, and one part is made to fit into another with the utmost exactness, a feeling of joy is his ; and still more is he delighted when he beholds the entire structure finished according to his plan. The skillful gardener no doubt derives much pleasure from the beauty and order that belong to his workmanship. The farmer has a feeling of quiet joy as he walks over his fields and sees everything approaching maturity. The painter has a glow of pleasure from the fact that his mental picture has taken shape on the canvas. The same feeling of joy thrills the orator, the writer, the Christian, as they approach perfection in their several spheres. The

thought, therefore, is finely adapted to the sorrowful spirit. There is a way to reach perfection.

The *fixed* also has great power to *steady the agitated mind*. The fleeting, the changing, the dying, deepen the feeling of sorrow; hence the value of that which abides. Much of what belongs to the present life is changeable. A mighty array of different events crowd the years of a lifetime. The changes of the clouds, the weather and the wind, form a kind of typology of the existing state of man. The ocean is a symbol of the human race. The whole moving world seems like a show, an ever-shifting panorama. If it were possible for us to look upon every human being at once, and to keep seeing them for a day, a week, a year, the sight would be sufficient to throw the soul into a complete storm of sorrow. There are mortal men who are absolutely stripped of everything. God and goodness, friends and friendships, have vanished away, leaving them as solitary voyagers upon a sea forever. There must be a scene of being where stability is a prime characteristic. That which will abide, eternally abide, is demanded. The fixed and the great are apt to go together: Rocks that

stand forth in the midst of ocean ; mountains that will keep their place till the fires of the last day consume them ; the throne of God ; God himself. The purpose and promise of the Infinite remain. A divine redemption is fixed ; that constitutes an eternal refuge. Faith, hope, love, will never fail.

*Silence has a charm about it to a sorrowful mind.* When the spirit is in a downcast state noise irritates. Quietness is like a soothing balm to the troubled mind. The stillness of a beautiful day seems to be suggestive to a soul that is sick and weary ; so also is the stillness of a beautiful night. There is a tendency to meditate. The soul is sounded to a greater depth than usual. Unbounded emotions come forth with new power. There is an element of *far-reachingness*. Silence makes one think of the unknown and the infinite. We desire to keep thinking ; there is a spell ; to hold on to the vast and the limitless is pleasing. We cannot speak of silence as joyful. It inclines rather to a soft, dreamlike melancholy, which the sad spirit loves and wants to continue. It is not strange that certain religious characters should have adopted a still, contemplative life. No doubt the matter has been carried to an ex-



treme. But yet, if the piety of the present age would have depth, tone, spirituality, it must ally itself more than it has done with a quiet thoughtfulness. The outward and the sensational are bending the soul down to a shallow existence. We are not to forget that even the Son of God was accustomed to steal away from the noise and presence of men that he might commune with the supersensible and the divine.

What silences there are throughout the universe! Innumerable worlds are sweeping through space at this moment without a single jar or sound. Gravitation is acting everywhere, and yet it is silent. Great oceans of light are spreading over immensity, but these are silent oceans. Movement sufficient there is not to awaken an infant or insect. Then think of the silent march of life. We are prompted almost to call it divine. Simply look at vegetation as it comes forth in the spring, and perfects itself in the summer. The whole world is apparelled as if to meet God, yet there is not a whisper. Silence suggests the idea of the spiritual. What power there is in mind! what stillness! God is silent. Human sadness finds here a home. Turmoil and noise flee away. Excitement subsides. The soul rests.

Some persons while agitated with deep sorrow will plunge into an *indefinable abyss*, hoping to escape there the agony that torments them. The common principles of Christian belief do not satisfy them; objections have assumed a formidable shape; so they cut loose from the redemptive and divine, and float they know not where. These unhappy beings have an idea of an infinite justice and mercy; but rather than look closely at such characteristics, they make choice of the indefinite, and so lose themselves there as a substitute for infinite realities. It is sufficiently evident that they need God, but just as evident that they do not want him. Certain souls are governed by an unconscious pantheism. They seem to have an inclination to drift away from personal identity and a personal God. The divine idea and the human idea they have in their minds; but by a transcendental chemistry they would mingle the two together, and then lose themselves in the mist that spreads around them. I presume there are persons who can give no exact account of the region where they find themselves. They inhabit the territory of the unknown. In the blind search for relief they have reached that land. Whether they have found what they

want, they can answer. The likelihood is that a certain uneasy sensation goes with them where they go. They would rather not be annoyed by any sharp arguments.

Isaac Taylor thoughtfully remarks: "It is common to human nature (we need not here stay to inquire why) to throw itself off from the familiar ground of proximate and intelligible causes, and to seek such as are abstruse, difficult, and ultimate, whenever it is agitated by undefined and powerful emotions. We have in this fact one of the sources of superstition; and as it is in a sense true that fear is the mother of the gods, so, in a sense, it is also true that anxiety, despondency, and the impatience of pain and sorrow, are teachers of metaphysics. It may be doubted whether certain profound speculations would at all have suggested themselves to the human mind, if life had been a course of equable prosperity. It may be questioned whether the inhabitants of worlds unvisited by evil—how large soever their intelligence may be—have ever thought of asking, What is virtue? or, What is the liberty of a moral agent?" "The conflict of hope and fear in the heart, and the assaults that are made upon hope by the scepticism or the mock-

ery of those around us, impel us naturally, yet unwisely, to throw up the good and proper evidence which, though it be simple, and intelligible, and sufficient, does not open to the mind a depth profound enough to give room for the mighty tossings of the soul in its hour of distress." "When this unhappy mistake has been committed, two courses offer themselves;—the one is to beat up and down through the regions of night whereupon we have entered, until we find, or fancy that we have found, solid footing, and discern a glimmering of light:—the other course is by a buoyant effort of good sense, to spring up at once from the abyss, and effect our return to the trodden and familiar surface of things." \*

We may here notice the *power of the unseen* during a season of sorrow. The sorrow may have been caused by the removal of some visible object. By a mental process that object is made to stand before the soul. Is it not a principle of our nature that whatsoever generates grief is fastened upon by the mind? There can be no question about this. Whether the object was loved or hated that occasioned

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\* Logic in Theology, p. 24.

the sorrow, will make no difference ; it is present to the soul. The property that I lost, the man who led me astray, the friend or the child whom I shall never see again, are thought of. Then, again, the dejected spirit is inclined to go off in search of objects, both bright and dark, that with these it may commune. Sorrow quite frequently acts the part of a malignant magician, and dismal pictures are made to surround the soul. The troop of evils will sometimes march off to a point where they take their stand ; and the mind will keep looking in that direction. Cloud may also unite with cloud, deepening evermore, until the disconsolate spirit sits down in the midst of a tabernacle of darkness. By-and-by, however, an opening of light is made. Visions of good appear. A loved friend living at some remote place is remembered. Benefits of various kinds are known to exist. These objects, though distant and unseen, are brought near to the mental eye. Prospects brighten ; there is a feeling of pleasure. Good that is real holds out the hand to a good that is imagined. The volume of bright possibilities is opened. A page here and there is read. The spirit has more elasticity. A new cycle of life begins.

The unseen in a higher sense influences a certain class of minds. There is the whole of the supernatural—a wide realm—into which the drooping spirit will enter at one side or the other. Even if sadness walks hand in hand with superstition, a phase of the supernatural is there still. Dreams, omens, fortunate occurrences, unearthly sights and sounds, visitations of unseen creatures and help from God, bespeak the idea of the supernatural. Eternity!—what a thought that is. Is there not something about sorrow that makes the everlasting more natural to the mind than it usually is? Do we not find it easier to speak of the future life to a man in trouble than we do to a man in prosperity! Has there not been a cutting away and a smoothing down, so that there is a more open pathway for the eternal? It seems so. Evidently the spiritual world and the world of sense are now closer together. As ships on a dark night will sometimes sail hard by the land, so during the dark night of sorrow we are coasting beside eternity. If a suitable vision were ours, we could see residents of the everlasting state quite near us, even as men from a vessel see men upon a shore. It may be, however, that some of the inhabitants of

eternity see us though we cannot see them. Their sharp penetrating eye may behold us at our work or at our worship as the case may be. Actions that we think not of, may be seen by these celestial creatures as they line the hills and the shores of the great kingdom of eternity.

There is an idea that goes with us in all our wanderings, and which casts a soft radiance around our minds—I refer to the idea of an *eternal youth*. The thought is beautiful, and the very sound of it is exceedingly pleasant. We keep repeating the words—keep listening—thinking—cherishing as it were the prolonged echo of a hymn sung by the angels. The idea awakens in us a sigh for a loftier realm, and for a purer region than is found here. It may seem strange that there is not a passage in any part of the Bible that gives us a *direct* statement touching an immortal youth. It is only indirectly, by way of inference, that we catch the thought. The angels who were seen at the sepulchre of Christ were called *young men*. They appeared as such ; yet thousands of years had passed away since their creation. The glorified bodies of the saints must always have the freshness of youth about them from the

fact that they are never to show any signs of decay,—they are to be immortal bodies. We never could think of the divine man as appearing old. Young comparatively he was when he ascended to heaven, and young he will be forever. Eternal youth will mark all his followers. As is the God-man, so will be the redeemed man. As far as the Divine Being is concerned he has no age. Time with him there is none. Neither beginning nor succession marks his self-sufficient life. The only approach that creatures can make to him is in the fact of an immortal youth. When I think of the country that has no night, the world that has no winter, the people that have no sin, I cannot help thinking of a youthfulness that abides with the everlasting years of God. The crown that is never to fade and the worship that is never to end teach as much as that.

What is the meaning of that strange fact of our race that *all want to be thought young*? Why is it that all want to live a *long time*, yet none want to be old? Why is so much done to restore the hair, the person desiring to destroy the signs of age? Why is it that all are *pleased* if they are *judged to be younger* than



they are, yet never pleased if they are deemed older than they are? Are these phases of human nature mere trifles, having no meaning? Are they so many freaks of pride, and nothing more? Pride may connect itself with them, but does not wholly explain them. Even the desire to be thought wise without wisdom, good without goodness, is an evidence of a previous verdict in favor of both wisdom and goodness. So in the wish to be thought young there is the hint of an eternal youth. I can see in that wish the vestige of a better time that has been lost, and the prophecy of a better time that is to come. A few rays of the early morning of love have kept close beside the spirit in its straying, have lighted a few of its steps in the midst of the darkness, and have smiled upon it a little in the midst of its weariness and want. "I shall be sorry if I am not younger to-morrow than to-day." When we stand far up on the mountain summits of heaven, close beside God, we shall be young. How the idea of *innocence* lives with us in all our living. Wicked as we are we cannot forget it. It seems like the vision of a former life, and the morning-star that heralds a coming day. A helpless infant placed in the arms of a maniac has caused

him to shed tears. The innocence of the young immortal touched the heart. How natural and pleasant for us to look back to the years when we were young. The great discontent of souls had not then arisen, and the clear consciousness of life had not then appeared. We played as those who possessed all things, and fell asleep at night without the dread imagery of some dark to-morrow. It has been said that "to want a star is the beautiful insanity of the young." That insanity clings to us all. The aged man and the child, the good and the bad, the sick and the well, all want a star. We sigh for a day that is brighter than any we have seen, for a home that has in it no evil of any kind, for eternal vigor and youth amidst the heights and glories of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *SORROW BECAUSE OF THE SHADOWS THAT FALL UPON US FROM THE OTHER LIFE.*

“No rainbow colors here, or silken tale ;  
But solemn counsels, images of awe,  
Truths, which eternity lets fall on man  
With double weight.” . . . .

YOUNG.

THERE are sounds and sights and warning thoughts which make men look around, as if some strange and fearful evil were coming on the wings of twilight down to souls. As voyagers sailing towards an unknown land, seeing fragments of wrecked ships and signs of danger, are afraid, so men on their way to eternity are anxious, beholding omens which tell of gloom and misery. What person is there that never had a troubled dream about death or the great judgment day? There are *presentiments* which have a tendency to sadden the mind. Whether these be thoughts of God or thoughts of man, makes no great difference ;

they do affect certain natures. "It is related of the nonconformist writer, Isaac Ambrose, that he had such a striking internal intimation of his approaching death, that he went round to all his friends to bid them farewell. When the day arrived which his presentiments indicated as the day of his dissolution, he shut himself up in his room and died. It is stated of Pendergrast, an officer in the Duke of Marlborough's army, that he had a strong foreboding that he would be killed on a certain day. He mentioned his conviction to others, and even made a written memorandum in relation to it. And the event was such as he had foretold it would be. Henry IV., of France, for some weeks previous to his being assassinated by Ravallac, had a distinct presentiment, which he mentioned to Sully and other men of his time, that some great calamity was about to befall him."\*

I presume that almost every man has a certain heaviness of spirit just because an *immortal existence* is before him. Persons are depressed with reference to this very point without knowing the cause of their depression. Next to that burden upon souls because God is lost, is

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\* Upham's Mental Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 392.

that other burden because of a dark and mysterious future. The inclination of fallen natures to turn away from conceptions of eternity, is sure evidence that these conceptions are not pleasing. Even those who pretend not to believe in a life after death are not aware how much the troublesome nature of that life has influenced them in forming such an opinion ; that really at bottom they wanted to feel easy, and so they denied the immortality of man. Those also who are trying to convince themselves and others that all is well beyond the grave are possibly influenced in the same way ; yet the thought no doubt reaches them once in a while—I wish I *knew* whether all was safe or not.

That there is before us an *untried* existence awakens in the mind pensive reflections. We have not the least experience touching that great futurity. How it stands off by itself ! No being have we ever seen who has been there. The whole human family are simply swept forward on the bosom of an ocean ; trembling that that ocean will be crossed so soon ; afraid to set foot on that unknown land which holds fast each spirit forever. The mind is excited because of the endless possi-

bilities. I am not surprised that mortals should want to live here for a very long period; that even in weakness and weariness they would rather tarry upon the earth than enter upon realities that are everlasting. The whole of this feeling may not be strictly religious; it has the merit, however, of being strictly natural. How can I, a creature of such impotency, be in haste to enter a world where law is to try me as I never have been tried! I am now the inhabitant of a sphere where, along with much that is painful, there is much that is pleasant. I have some knowledge of the present state of things. For years I have lived here, and for years other men have lived about me. I am afraid to enter a system that is strictly judicial.

There is the dread *possibility of being lost*. I cannot divest myself of fear. Millions of men are just in the same state that I am in myself. That I want to be saved is true; but am I *quite sure* that I will be saved? I am not. Rousseau tells us how he felt at one period of his life. He says: "In the midst of my studies, and of a life as innocent as man could lead, notwithstanding every persuasion to the contrary, the dread of hell frequently tormented me. I

asked myself, 'What state am I in? Should I die at this instant, must I be damned?'"\* . . . . There is the fact also that every man has in him an element of *deception*. No one sees himself just as he is. What should hinder, then, that a soul should make an eternal mistake? Looking at the point in this way, I wonder not that so many go through life with the feeling that they may be lost. Even with the pious, who have a right to hope without fear, it is not surprising that they do fear. The best of men are imperfect. Nothing is done with that intensity, finish, and compass, which the law of God demands. The fact also of a depraved state of mind whose vapors confuse the judgment; the conception that everything good can be counterfeited; the strong likelihood, in a world like this, that many will adopt a form of religion which will turn out to be spurious; and the appalling fact that vast numbers expect to reach heaven who will be shut out at last,—these start the feeling in the soul, *I may be lost*. The reason why death is such a terror to human beings is not merely because of the pain that will arise from the

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\* Confessions, p. 191.

separation of the soul from the body, but it is the fear that some dire evil will overwhelm us when we reach eternity. A man must either be very good or very bad who is divested of all fear with reference to the everlasting fate of his soul. That person is not wise who will manifest the least degree of lightness or superficiality in regard to the destiny of an immortal spirit.

There is one very curious fact which we ought to look at, namely this, that *vast numbers of the good are walking in darkness*, though on their way to the kingdom of light. Why is there such an amount of *uncertainty* among the children of Infinite Love? That there is a superabundance of grace in the God-man is not to be denied. We naturally think that there is a royal robe for each saint upon earth, and a sun-like hope for each forgiven soul while that soul tarries in the flesh. But clear it is that all are not thus circumstanced. A cloud rests upon the brow of the good. This seems to be a remarkable feature in the administration of mercy; a remarkable feature in the training of souls. Perhaps the God of creation and the cross permits uncertainty to linger around the minds of the pious as a means of discipline.



Uncertainty is peculiarly a characteristic of the present mundane system. An exceedingly instructive volume could be written upon the uncertainties of nature and redemption. There is such a hurried cry for certitude at present that whatsoever is above matter and man is thrown into the ever-moving river of time, there to be buried and forgotten. God means to try men more than they are willing to be tried ; to teach them that they know less than they seem to know ; and to constrain them to take up and examine over again what they once cast away. Humility is what is wanted ; faith also.

The very *joy* that springs up in the soul as one thinks of the blessedness of heaven is shaded somewhat with sorrow. If heaven were the only place, and holiness and happiness filled each human spirit, then no shadow could exist. The fact that we are evil and that evil is about us and beyond us, must cloud the brightest feelings of the soul. We may visit the most beautiful cemetery that is to be found in the land on the most beautiful day of the year ; may mark the pleasant walks with seats here and there ; may be charmed with the great variety of flowers and trees and high-

ly finished tombstones ; may think that this is the place where we should want to rest when life's day of toil is ended,—yet all is shaded with death. So the very light which gilds the soul has beneath it a realm of gloom, and the smile which seems to be heaven itself is sure to awaken the hidden sorrow of the heart. I think we may say with safety that there is no human joy but that is tinged with sadness. A skeleton form dwells in each habitation. The air of human happiness is always damp.

“There is no music in this life  
That sounds with happy laughter solely ;  
There's not a string attun'd to mirth  
But has its chord of melancholy.”

*Unanswered queries* respecting the kind of existence after death may even sadden us. If a saved or lost man were to come among us from eternity, we should question him thus :—What was it to die ? Did it seem like going into a sleep, or were you distinctly conscious ? When the soul had left the body how did you feel ? If you went to the place of punishment, what was your experience on the journey ? Did evil spirits conduct you to the prison of woe ? Can you give us any definite conception

of the miseries of the lost? Or if you went to heaven, what were your feelings on the way? How many of the celestial inhabitants accompanied you, and how did they appear, and what did they say? In what way do spirits convey their thoughts to each other? How did you feel when you entered the city of God? Who met you first,—Christ, angels, or your departed friends? Is it possible for you to describe the appearance of the God-man? What is the nature of the glorified body of Enoch and of Elijah? As it respects the blessedness and employments of the saved, can you make us to understand the simple truth in the case? What peculiar divine glory fills heaven, and what is meant by the vision of God? Many other questions we might ask; but there is no one to answer them. At the end of all our inquiries we have to sigh. Great leading thoughts relating to the future state are all that God has favored us with. A degree of dimness is meant to cloud that wonderful region of life.

The *dark side of eternity* affects us more *sensibly* than the bright side does. Intensity of suffering is greater than intensity of happiness. Take remorse of conscience and peace of con-

science as instances. We are certainly more affected by remorse than we are by peace. So also painful sensations of the body exceed in degree those that are pleasurable. Let a man be slowly cut to pieces until life departs, or be burned to death, and the intensity of the suffering will far exceed the intensity of any kind of bodily pleasure. So when sinful beings look steadily into the future, they are more alarmed by the fact of eternal misery, than they are cheered by the fact of eternal blessedness. It requires an effort for man to hope for the best; but fear lays hold of the soul whether one wants it or not.

That the wicked when they enter eternity will see themselves to be *wholly evil* is a startling thought. A man living and dying full of conceit: the moment after death gazing upon a depravity that has no line of goodness running through it! There is something frightful in the conception that the unnumbered hosts of the lost shall be compelled to look around their character hour after hour, conscience uttering only one ceaseless condemnation. To be stripped of all that was once thought fair; to be cut off from all the influences which once threw a radiance around our souls; to be left alone with

ourselves in the "outer darkness" of eternity,—to be thus situated is death.

Possibly we have fears also that a departed friend of ours *is lost*. The shadows of the other life thicken around us. We thread our way to the future in the midst of sadness. What is the real meaning of those words of David?—"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." Was the father simply troubled that his son was dead? Something deeper than that seems to us to have agitated his spirit. Was he not overwhelmed with grief because his son was struck down in the midst of his *wickedness*, and that he had been thrust into eternity without any preparation? His wishing that he might have died for Absalom, seems to convey the idea that *he* might have left the world in safety, for he was a religious man, while his son was not. To see one entering that great futurity with confirmed habits of evil is extremely saddening. Especially is it saddening when one we love dies without penitence or hope; dies locked up in sin. To blink the matter is not wise. To offer any sophisticated reasons is utter trifling. An immortal creature has gone to meet God in a state of

moral obduracy, and how can we deny the fact? We see it and tremble.

If I have a loved friend in eternity that I *once injured*, the thought of that act of evil will cut me to the heart. Simply a cross word addressed to a mother, wife, or child, will torment the soul for years after the loved object is gone. It will be next to impossible for us to forgive ourselves. God may have forgiven us; yet the act will ever and anon come up before the mind, causing intense pain. And the bitterness is increased that we did not confess our sin before our friend left us. There will be an utter loathing of ourselves because of our backwardness in this particular. How glad we should be if the one we injured would come back from eternity that we might confess to him our fault, and ask forgiveness. But this is impossible; and so we must suffer, feeling that we are the most wicked of men. Even a very small offence, or slight mistake, will trouble the mind exceedingly. "I knew of a case," says De Quincey, "where a mere semblance and shadow of cruelty, under similar circumstances, inflicted the grief of self-reproach through the remainder of life. A boy, interesting in his appearance, as also from his remarkable docility, was

attacked, on a cold day of spring, by a complaint of the trachea—not precisely croup, but like it. He was three years old, and had been ill perhaps for four days ; but at intervals had been in high spirits, and capable of playing. This sunshine, gleaming through dark clouds, had continued even on the fourth day ; and from nine to eleven o'clock at night he had showed more animated pleasure than ever. An old servant, hearing of his illness, had called to see him ; and her mode of talking with him had excited all the joyousness of his nature. About midnight, his mother, fancying that his feet felt cold, was muffling them up in flannels ; and, as he seemed to resist her a little, she struck lightly on the sole of one foot as a mode of admonishing him to be quiet. He did not repeat his motion ; and in less than a minute his mother had him in her arms with his face looking upwards. 'What is the meaning,' she exclaimed in sudden affright, 'of this strange repose settling upon his features?' She called loudly to a servant in another room ; but before the servant could reach her, the child had drawn two inspirations, deep, yet gentle—and had died in his mother's arms ! Upon this, the poor afflicted lady made the discovery

that those struggles, which she had supposed to be expressions of resistance to herself, were the struggles of departing life. It followed, or seemed to follow, that with these final struggles had blended an expression, on *her* part, of displeasure. Doubtless the child had not distinctly perceived it; but the mother could never look back to that incident without self-reproach. And seven years after, when her own death happened, no progress had been made in reconciling her thoughts to that which only the depth of love could have viewed as an offence." \*

There is a great struggle at present, among certain classes, to do away with all kind of anxiety touching the future state. *Fear* is looked upon as evidence of a superstitious mind; it is the enemy of all happiness; it must therefore be destroyed. *Indifference* is looked upon as the great passive virtue. Indifference in the new vocabulary is called *peace*. Thus with fear gone and indifference anointed and enthroned, men stand and cast their eyes around with composure, pitying those who are still in bondage. But all this is merely the at-

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\* Confessions of an Opium-Eater, p. 165.



tempt to substitute sin for salvation. Fallen souls finding no way to escape from their troubles, have struck upon the thought of voting them out of existence, supposing that then all will be well. The rationalistic movement just now, the sceptical movement, is turning much of evil into good, and much of good into evil. In this is found the progress of the race. We are told with great certainty that the ideas of eternal sin and eternal punishment are false. If assertion were proof, the point would be gained. Touching the problem of endless evil, the human understanding can give us nothing more than a mere *guess*. As reasonable men we cannot accept that guess as sufficient. It is far better to say that the subject is beyond the line of our reason. We make our appeal to Scripture. There we stand. The Bible view of the state of the wicked in the future is that it is *fixed* and *final*. Eternity shuts down upon it. There is not the least intimation given of any release from punishment; no hint of any repentance or faith; no mention of any redemption. The people are lost, and they are lost forever. That a fact of this kind is dark and mysterious we will not deny. Sin in any shape is a mystery. No

one has been able yet to harmonize it with the divine benevolence. We take sides, however, with God. He will do right. Certainly if the Bible made it clear that after an exceedingly long period sin would end and punishment also, we should believe the truth. We find nothing, however, of the kind in the great drift of Scripture teaching. He that is unjust will be unjust still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. Permanent evil character is the one fearful fact.

It may be that sin in lost souls will *dwarf them*. The nature being essentially dead as it respects goodness, the soul sinks. Men in this life will do great things under the power of sin; but in eternity this power may run out. When an immortal spirit has lost sight of holiness and God, and simply moves round in its own dark orbit, it would seem as if it must be ultimately enfeebled in all its faculties; approaching more and more to an existence that is marked with stupidity; sin resulting in a *death intellectual* as well as *moral*. Despair itself may crush out the animating power of the soul. This, of course, is simply a speculation. If it has any truth in it, the fact of sorrow will be somewhat peculiar in the future

state. We do not venture, however, to draw any inferences. The point is not sufficiently clear.

It may be well to state here, that the alarms of men with reference to the future are not wholly the result of Bible teaching. "We have every reason for believing that much the same views of death, and the same apprehension of future retribution as now prevail, have ever existed among mankind. In all ages, too, and in all creeds, the representations of the nature of this future punishment have been of the most terrific kind, as though the imagination, for this purpose, had been taxed to its utmost powers. Fire, and chains, and utter darkness, and similitudes of ever-ungratified desire and of ever-raging passion, have always formed a part of the dread machinery of Hades. Leaving out of the account the solemn confirmation of the doctrine which may be derived from the fearful imagery employed by our Saviour, and taking into view only the heathen world, we may well ask the question, *Whence came all this?* The great problem is for them to solve who assert that the doctrine of future punishment is contrary to the Scriptures, the reason, and the feelings. Whence, then, came

it, in the face of all these opposing influences? Men are not fond of what is irrational for its own sake, and they certainly do not love their own misery.”\*

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\* Taylor Lewis, Dissertation on some Points of the Platonic Philosophy, p. 320.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *THOUGHTS ADDRESSED TO SORROWING PARENTS RESPECTING THEIR INFANT CHILDREN WHO HAVE PASSED INTO ETERNITY.*

“One time my soul was pierced as with a sword,  
Contending still with men untaught and wild,  
When he to the prophet bent his gourd,  
Gave me the solace of a pleasant child.

A summer gift my precious flower was given ;  
A very summer fragrance was its life ;  
Its clear eyes soothed me as the blue of heaven  
When home I turned, a weary man of strife.

A few short months it blossomed near my heart ;  
A few short months—else toilsome all and sad ;  
But that home solace nerve I me for my part,  
And of the babe I was exceeding glad !

Alas ! my pretty bud, scarce formed, was dying—  
(The prophet's gourd, it withered in a night !)  
And he who gave me all, my heart's pulse trying,  
Took gently home the child of my delight.

My blessed Master saved me from repining,  
So tenderly he sued me for his own ;  
So beautiful He made my babe's declining,  
Its dying blessed me as its birth had done.”

MRS. MONTEATH.

**I**F parents had their own choice, not a single infant would die. The desire is that each child should live and grow up to maturity.

There is an apparent severity about God in that he blasts the hopes of so many households. The Creator seems to have no fellow-feeling with his creatures. He can look upon the bereavement and anguish which he has caused without abating in the least the terrible work of death. If our feelings were to be the rule for the Divine Being, there would be no death. God, however, is governed by that which is right, by that which is best.

The sorrow that connects itself with the death of a little child is peculiar. The fact that the child was our own ; that a new class of feelings thrilled the soul when it came ; that it was the centre of interest to all in the house ; that it was so helpless and dependent, appealing instinctively to us to care for it ; that it was struck with disease, and suffered ; that it stayed with us for an hour, and then died,—all this saddens the heart. As the thief prayed and then went to paradise, so the little one smiled and then went home. Its very clothes and coffin ; the grave where it sleeps ; its look which has been printed upon the soul ; its short history that is remembered so well,—these bring tears to the eye. The child seemed like a new star shining upon our night ; like

a visitor from God's land ; like a messenger sent to call us home. Our heart carries within it a sigh. Wherever we go there is a sense of loss. In our waking thoughts its presence is before us, and in our sleep we hear it cry. Our whole being has received an influence from that frail creature, and nothing is the same as it was before. I have seen a mother weep more bitterly over the death of her child than over any friend she had ever lost, and I have seen a father of rough exterior crying as one who refused to be comforted.

Considering the vast number of infants that die, it is most wonderful that *the Bible is almost silent respecting their fate hereafter!* The passage where David says of his child, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," has been understood as conveying the idea that the soul of the child was in heaven, and that there the father would meet it at the end of his own life. This may be the true meaning. Understood thus, it would show the belief of a pious Jew in regard to the salvation of his child. Of course such a belief has no special authority connected with it, any more than our own belief relating to the same subject. The great passage that we must fall back upon

is this—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." It is certainly quite remarkable that this is the only definite statement which is to be found within the pages of divine revelation touching the salvation of infants! We should have supposed that God's word would have contained many utterances relating to the future condition of little children. Even the verse just quoted is not thought by some commentators to have any reference to the salvation of infants. They understand it simply to teach that we must be *childlike* before we can be subjects of the divine kingdom. If such be the meaning of Christ's language, then there is not a single authoritative passage in the Bible that makes known to us the fate of the infant race in eternity. The very idea is oppressive; a chill creeps over us. We incline to think that the verse *does intimate* that infants are saved. This is the first impression; this is the general impression. It will be next to impossible to get the common mind to understand the passage in any other way.

Possibly the Bible says so *little* upon this subject just *because all is well with the infant dead*. God having taken the matter of their



salvation entirely in his own hands, he finds it not necessary to unfold his plans. The very silence of Scripture is Godlike ; and the silence in this case is really an argument that infants are saved. Into this world they came with no will of their own, and into the world of light they may enter without any choice on their part. They were struck with the blight of sin with no personal agency in the matter, and so they may be made holy without any voluntary movement of their own. Besides, if God by his sovereign grace does regenerate, sanctify, and save millions of men, we have the strongest reason for believing that he will regenerate and save the millions of infant creatures who die ; and this all the more, inasmuch as the depravity which clings to their nature is far different from the depravity of those who have *voluntarily* trampled upon law and mercy. If God does the greater work, we cannot help thinking that he will do the less. Our conclusion then is, that all the infants who have died in past time have gone to heaven, and all who will die in the future will also reach that glorious land. We have gone upon the supposition that no child is admitted into the eternal presence of God without a complete

change of nature; the change being effected by the Divine Spirit. Every human being is damaged from the start. There is a tendency in all to evil, but there is no tendency to good. If an infant were to go to heaven without any change of heart, it would just as certainly sin in heaven, as it would certainly sin if it remained here upon the earth. The circumstances of heaven may be perfect, but perfect circumstances will not keep a human being from sinning. There is *evil in the soul*, and not till that evil is destroyed is there any escape from sin. If sin were an outward affair, just like a bad odor that had touched the hand or a black mark that had been made upon the face, it could as easily be washed off as we could wash off the bad odor or the black mark.

The thought that all infants are saved is one of great comfort to those who have lost them. The joy which arises in view of their endless life should far outweigh the sorrow that has been created by their death. Just what may be the exact state of these young immortals in heaven, of course we cannot tell. The Bible saying not a word upon the subject, we are left to do the best we can in the line of conjecture. To think of those who have left us so soon,

and to imagine the scenes that may surround them in that other land, is natural. The following thoughts, which seem to us to be in harmony with reason and revelation, are presented.

It is likely that infants when they reach heaven will be placed *under the care of mature minds*. The soul of an infant is but slightly developed. That soul will not be left like a gem which has been washed upon the shore of heaven, to lie there and sparkle in the light of eternity, but the gem will be taken up by careful hands and set in the diadem of Jesus, that it may honor him forever and ever. Indeed, I cannot help believing that an unusual interest will cluster about the advent of an infant's spirit into heaven. One almost imagines that there will be a rivalry among the powers and princes of the celestial kingdom as to who shall first wait upon the little inhabitant who has made its appearance among them. According to its immaturity it will be surrounded with all the care that is needed; and it will be led out and upward step by step under the attentive direction of superior minds. I see nothing contrary to the nature of heaven in an idea of this kind. Perhaps, if we knew the whole truth, it might be found that many

adult souls which have reached heaven are placed as scholars under teachers of exalted attainments. How very fit it would seem that some lofty angel who had lived ever since the beginning of time, or some practised saint who had been a resident of heaven for thousands of years, should be the teacher of men who had but few advantages in the present life. If such thoughts be reasonable, then we may well believe that infant minds will be put under the care of a Moses or a Gabriel, and that light will be poured into the soul which has just opened itself amid the splendors of eternity. Is it not a law of all finite intelligences that mind has to depend upon mind for its development, especially at the beginning of its career? If there is no creature to aid, then God must, —one or the other. This appearing to be a necessary condition in the primary development of souls, I am led thereby to believe that infant spirits are nurtured by higher spirits when they have entered among the sons and citizens of glory.

Is it not reasonable to suppose also that there will be a *great quickening of the whole mental nature* the moment the infant reaches heaven? This quickening I would view as

something different from that which results from heavenly instruction. The fact to be noted is, that the soul is *holy*. A holy nature must work freer and faster and better in every way than one that is sinful. A *divine life* animates the whole of the mental faculties. Then, too, the collective circumstances of heaven fit the soul. The ransomed spirit seems to have been set down in a place where the conditions of development are just as they should be. A kind of maturity is therefore reached by a short march. The seed that is planted to-day bears fruit to-morrow. No frosts nip the bud that has begun to show itself. The opening flower does not bow its head and die because of the heat of a burning sun. The soul simply lives, grows, becomes great. As if heretofore it had been held down and held back and could make no progress; very much as a plant trying to grow beneath a stone, or a sick man trying to get well while breathing poisoned air. That is a grand historic moment when a child opens its eyes in heaven and finds all as it should be. The wheels of the soul run at once with regularity like a watch made in glory, like a planet that

never wanders from its sun, like a seraph that never strays from his God.

“Depart my child! enjoy in heaven’s pure day  
 What earth must still deny ;  
 Here many a storm awaits thy longer way,  
 And many a tear thine eye.  
 Go, where the flowers have never faded,  
 Where love may smile unchilled, unshaded.  
 Depart, my child!

Depart, my child! soon shall we meet again  
 In the good land of rest :  
 Thou goest, happy one! ere grief or pain  
 Have reached thy gentle breast.  
 Happy, our thorny path forsaking,  
 From life’s vain dream so early waking.  
 Depart, my child.”

Some one has said that when a child has died we always think of it afterwards *as a child*. The thought is true to nature. Our other children that live, reach the years of maturity, and we think of them as *men*; but the infant that went away to heaven, whatever its advantages and growth, is still thought of as an infant. The image of the being that stayed with us during the time of sunrise is the image that was stamped upon the soul, and we know of no other. The photograph of the departed which we keep in our Album, which we look

at when we feel sad and show to those who come to visit us, no doubt helps to keep the image fresh in the mind. Is it wise, however, to think merely of our child as an infant? In *mind* it is an infant no longer. It is a highly developed human spirit. Quite likely it has a range of being far greater than our own. In fact we are the children, and that child is the adult. It is a question more than curious also whether the infant body that was laid in the grave, will be raised *as an infant body* at the last day. It would be my opinion that it would not. Inasmuch as the soul in heaven will have reached a very high state of development before the morning of the resurrection, it seems not to be at all suitable that such a soul should take possession of an infant body. As I do not understand that a man who weighs four hundred pounds when he dies will be raised at the last day with a body of the same weight, so neither do I understand that an infant's body will be raised as such at the last day.

Another question suggests itself to us, namely this, will an infant in heaven *be taught anything about this earth*? I should suppose that it would. This is a dark world, and all

the darker by reason of its contrast with heaven, yet I think it would be well for the saved child to know something about it. To know that it belonged to a fallen race, and that the Son of God had to suffer for man in order to redeem him, would be deeply important. The thought then would dawn upon the mind of the child that it had been *saved*. To be ignorant of this would be an injury to the soul; for in that case it could not be thankful,—could not praise God for his salvation. But knowing this great central fact, it could join intelligently and heartily in the song of redemption with the millions of the purified. It could know also that numbers of the human race became exceedingly wicked and were finally lost, and that numbers died in infancy and were saved. This would make the young mind to see what a blessing it was to die at the beginning of life. If it had grown up like others in a world of evil, like others it might have been lost forever. In fact the leading things relating to this earth could easily be revealed to the child as it was able to bear them,—giving it in course of time a synopsis of human history.

Will *heaven appear* to the saved infant as *its*



*native land?* In the case of some little children who have died, there may be a slight remembrance of having lived upon the earth; even as a child born in one country and moving away to another when it is quite young may remember a few things,—a house, perhaps the one it lived in, a yard or street, a fence around the garden or a certain tree that grew there, a bird that used to sing in a cage, a particular boy or girl that lived near by, a man or woman who had bestowed some favor, the physician who had to lance a certain part of the body. I have noticed this, however, that while young children remember at first several things connected with the place where they formerly lived, it is not long before they have forgotten all. The picture that was engraved upon the mind was so delicate that the rush of thoughts across it wore it all away. Whether anything like this will take place with the child who has gone to heaven is a question. I should rather suppose that what was remembered at first would be remembered afterwards; that the heavenly child would not forget like the earthly one. My reason for entertaining this opinion is found in one of the thoughts already stated. We have mentioned as probable that

there will be a quickening of the whole mental nature when the infant spirit reaches heaven. If this be so, then the *memory* will be strengthened; that which entered the mind at first will be revived afterwards with great distinctness. Visions of the past will not fade away like the image from a coin; impressions will not be effaced like footprints in the sand by the force of waves. It is certainly a pleasing thought that the little pilgrim who tarried with us for a night bore away with it to the skies some memorials of the earth; as if some of the golden grains of time clung to its feet when it departed, which, without even thinking, it carried upward to its home among the stars. Perhaps in this way many an infant in heaven will think of the mother who watched and wept over it; of the father whose voice was distinguished from that of others; of the sister who carried it about the room, or played with it during the passage of some quiet hour. The angels when they come to see us have always about them some of the fragrance of heaven as if they held in their hand one of the flowers of paradise, so when the infant departs to glory it may have about its person some of the sweet perfumes of earthly love. It is possible

that this may be so ; it would be pleasant if it should be so. There would in this way be vestiges of a former home ; reminiscences of a land and a life that are far away.

It may be that when an infant dies *quite young* no relic of the earth and time goes with it. To all intents and purposes heaven may appear as its native land. As the infant that has been laid down at some one's door on a dark night is taken up and placed in a family where it lives and grows, knowing no other father and mother but those who care for it, and no other home but the one in which it finds itself, so the young creature that lives in heaven, having no recollection of any other country, may think of that as its home. It is a blessed thing to begin life essentially in heaven. What a pure and peaceful land that is ! far removed from all human care and woe. This world is a weary place. The people that live here are not well. One almost wishes that he had died young, and that in heaven amidst all perfection he had found the blessed land. It fills the soul with a quiet joy to think of myriads of infant beings inhabiting the city of God, as if that was the place where first they saw the light ; and dwelling in a palace home

with the principalities and powers of eternity, as if no other home had ever sheltered them, and no other companions but sinless creatures had ever been theirs. It is more blessed than we can tell to begin life amidst the purity and glory of heaven; where never has come any evil thing; where each one has his golden vessel filled with love; and where the songs and services of the temple worship of God sweep the eternal hours, like winged messengers of light uttering joy. From many a lonely dwelling of earth there have gone up to heaven infant spirits made clean: in poverty here, in riches there; to-day clad with rags, to-morrow with the garments of royalty befitting the children of a King. From tent and town, from city and sea, thousands of youthful immortals have winged their flight to the mansions of the good; tarrying here but for a moment in their crumbling habitations, even as birds of passage do sometimes light upon a foundered ship to rest, after which they fly away to a sunny land.

Those who have lost infant children may be quiet and peaceful. Pleasant it would have been to have had them remain here; but God is wise and good in what he does. To prepare

to meet those who have gone before us is the chief thing. A child saved and a parent lost—what a thought to fill the mind! The hands of the departed seem to be outstretched as if they were pleading. They beckon to those that linger here to come. They point with the finger to the open gates of life. A voice seems to reach us, saying, Wipe thine eyes; see the crown; come away.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *THE MINISTRY OF SORROW.*

WE shall first notice the *problem of sorrow*. Whatever of mystery there may seem to be connected with sorrow in the system of an All-wise Being, it can be resolved into the *greater mystery of sin*. Let sin cease, and the difficulties connected with sorrow will also cease. That sadness should bear heavy upon a soul because sin has been committed is certainly a state of things which the soundest reason approves. The question is not, why should sorrow exist? but rather this, why should sin exist? I am not aware that men find any difficulty in reconciling the fact of guilt with the power and benevolence of God. It would be a most mysterious thing to have sin and not to have guilt. Would it not be equally mysterious to have sin and not to have sorrow? The problem of moral evil is to all in-

tents and purposes the one great problem of the universe. To solve that we make no attempt. No new light has appeared. Time, therefore, need not be wasted.

But viewing man simply as an *emotional* being, and not as one who is sinful, we may be asked how it is that sorrow arises in his soul. It arises in this way : Every feeling from its nature has two opposite movements. If a person is joyful because some desirable object is gained, he must be sorrowful when that desirable object is lost. We are pleased with that which suits us, and displeased with that which does not suit us. If we love that which is good, we hate that which is evil. I have hope in view of reward : I have fear in view of punishment. One class of objects cause us to move towards them ; another class cause us to shrink from them. Here is a person that we trust : here is another person that we cannot trust. If I am happy in the companionship of a friend, I am grieved when that friend is taken away from me. If I have a feeling of pleasure because I have done right, then I have a feeling of pain because I have done wrong. Joy courses through my soul when I hear that a man is saved, therefore sor-

row when I hear that a man is lost. It is the nature of the human spirit to feel just in this way.

In fact sorrow, as thus springing up in the soul, is a fine manifestation of *divine wisdom*. It is far better to be made with a nature that grieves, than to be made with one that does not grieve at all. There is a *greater compass to our being* by the possession of sorrow than by not possessing it. The range of the sad emotions opens up such a wide sphere of life that to be excluded from it would be a very great loss. Sorrow is wealth. It is possible for more of the real man to appear in sorrow than in any one of the other feelings. Instead of envying those who have no tear to shed, we rather sigh in view of their condition. Jesus is far more to us because he could weep. To live upon this earth with all its changes and sins and behold no symptom of grief, would be fearful. There may be a great deal of pain about the sorrow of man, yet the sorrow is so suitable that we would not want souls to work without it. To attend a funeral and see all smiling, or all indifferent, would not be a very desirable sight. Surely love is all the more beautiful in that it can weep, and mind is all



the more precious in that it can grieve over its fall.

Sorrow is a *great awakener*. Not only does it extend the area of mental life by its very existence, but it arouses the soul at different points. The intellect awakes, and at once beholds a wider realm. The memory is made to throw open its gates, and to show more of its treasures than are usually shown. The conscience is quickened and sharpened. Some of the leading ideas of the reason come forth more freely from their seclusion. The feelings also are moved. Streams that were shallow are now deepened. There is even at times the appearance of a freshet. The will also is turned about in part. Attention is very much increased. There is a listening characteristic; sometimes even a listening with tears. As music sounds sweeter during the night than during the day, so during the night of sorrow divine words fall more pleasantly on the ear than they do at other times.

Those great *epochal periods* which mark the existence of a higher form of life are generally *preceded by a baptism of sorrow*. The spirit sinks before it rises. Entering the door of grief, the soul finds itself in the midst of a

temple. There is no waste of time. The progress is rapid. The golden point is reached as it were at once. There is simply the divine sorrow ; the crisis ; the new cycle of life begun. As a case illustrating the thought before us, we may point to the Rev. Dr. Brown of Edinburgh. His son thus writes : " My mother's death was the second epoch in my father's life ; and for a man so self-reliant, so poised upon a centre of his own, it is wonderful the extent of change it made. He went home, preached her funeral sermon, every one in the church in tears, himself outwardly unmoved. But from that time dates an entire, though always deepening, alteration in his preaching, because an entire change in his way of dealing with God's word. He took as it were to subsoil ploughing ; he got a new and adamantine point to the instrument with which he bored, and with a fresh power—with his whole might, he sunk it right down into the living rock, to the virgin gold. His entire nature had got a shock, and his blood was drawn inwards, his surface was chilled ; but fuel was heaped all the more on the inner fires, and his zeal burned with a new ardor ; indeed had he not found an outlet for his pent-up energy, his brain must have given way,

and his faculties have either consumed themselves in wild, wasteful splendor and combustion, or dwindled into lethargy." "He changed his entire system and fashion of preaching; from being elegant, rhetorical, and ambitious, he became concentrated, urgent, moving (being himself moved,) keen, searching, unswerving, authoritative to fierceness, full of the terrors of the Lord, if he could but persuade men."\*

*A person with sorrow can understand more correctly the race to which he belongs than one who is destitute of sorrow. Only he who knows by experience what fear, guilt, remorse, unrest, and sorrow are, can speak to the consciousness of troubled men. A mind that has gone through the whole round of mental pain can address the whole race and be understood. Those flippant and gleeful beings who talk of man, merely skim the surface. "No poet has so well understood as Shakespeare has the trials which burden contemplative and inquiring spirits with inward struggles and with mental griefs, and troublous thinkings and uneasy doubts, with unanswerable questionings as to the problem of existence, the meaning of life*

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\* Dr. Brown's Spare Hours, p. 134.

and the mystery of death. As Shakespeare's genius seems thus to have within itself the consciousness of all moral humanity, in both its essence and phenomena, in its good and evil, in its truth and error,—so is that genius rich beyond any other earthly genius in exhortation and counsel, in threatening and encouragement, in suggestions of guidance, strength, and wisdom, of remedy, or of consolation." "Without being in any formal sense religious, the intellect of Shakespeare is habitually contemplative of religious ideas, and an abiding sense of an invisible and infinite existence fuses itself into all the deeper workings of his genius. Musings of the soul from the centre of its solitude we detect in all his graver thinkings. These musings are not always from a soul at peace, but they are always from a soul in reverence. They have in them much of Teutonic sadness; they have also in them some Teutonic doubt. The awful question of existence is considered in every aspect in which a sublime anxiety can place it; and in every aspect it is made fruitful of meditation."\*

A great sorrow may be looked upon as a

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\* Henry Giles. *Human Life in Shakespeare*, pp. 41, 245.

*well-compacted means of good* to the human soul. There is pressure, but the pressure is wisely arranged, and the blessing that results from it is greater than it seems. Divine riches came to Abraham when God himself tried him. The sorrows of death may be the appointed means to usher the soul into an endless life. It is certainly a fact that sorrow *subdues* and *chastens* the wild spirit of man. Persons of an exceedingly rough nature become gentle and childlike by the sacred ministry of grief. There is not so much severity, not so much stubbornness, not so much pride. The vanity of life is felt also more than formerly; and the great future stands out before the mind. The wounded spirit bows before the Supreme Will and struggles to be better.

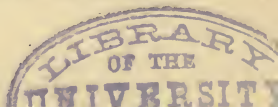
Grief reminds us that life is a *discipline*. There is a very strong tendency among human beings to take things easy. Man does not want to be troubled. He would like to have a pleasant passage to the future. This, however, will not answer. The sinful soul must be tried and trained if it would be fitted for the great life of eternity. We must face the evil that is about us; must carry a cross from infancy to old age. Latent energies are called forth by

severe afflictions. The loss of sight has so stirred the souls of some men that they have done wonders in their blindness. No one can tell what he is or what he can do until a great sorrow has struck him. The nightingale sings the sweetest when wounded ; so does many a suffering child of God. “Richard Baxter, during his whole life, might be almost said to die daily. Hardly ever was such a mind connected with so frail an earthly lodging-place. At about fourteen years of age he was seized with the small-pox, and soon after, by improper exposure to the cold, he was affected by violent catarrh and cough. This continued for about two years, and was followed by spitting of blood. One physician prescribed one mode of cure, and another a different one ; till, from first to last, he had the advice of no less than thirty-six professors of the healing art. He was diseased literally from head to feet ; his stomach acidulous, violent rheumatic headaches, prodigious bleeding at the nose, his blood so thin and acrid that it oozed out from the points of his fingers, and often kept them raw and bloody. His physicians called it hypochondria. He himself considered it to be premature old age ; so that at twenty he had the symp-

toms, in addition to disease, of four-score. He was certainly one of the most diseased and afflicted men that ever reached the ordinary limits of human life. How, under such circumstances, he was capable of making the exertions which he almost incessantly made, appears not a little mysterious. His labors were prodigious. The works he wrote, if printed in a uniform edition, could not be comprised in less than sixty volumes, making at least thirty-five thousand and closely printed octavo pages. At the same time, his labors as a minister, and his engagements in the public business of his times, formed his chief employment for many years."\* How one feels ashamed and humbled, yet also inspired, when he sees how much a single human being can accomplish though pressed to the earth with trouble. There is a royalty about mind when it can thus toil in the midst of pain and sadness. Far better is it for the soul to reach heaven through a discipline of sorrow than through the quiet ministry of joy. The creaturely spirit has more of vigor and endurance by the one kind of training than it has by the other. The north temperate zone of the

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\* Prof. B. B. Edwards' *Biography of Self Taught Men*, vol. i., p. 234.



spiritual world develops the noblest minds. Among the ancient Greeks there were persons who engaged in a race with lighted lamps or torches ; and that person was the victor whose lamp did not go out in the race. It was not an easy thing to gain the prize upon such conditions. Great labor, wisdom, and watchfulness were demanded. Our life is a torch-light race. Through very many difficulties we must press forward ; guarding our light lest it should be extinguished. God did not mean that we should gain an established character and an eternal crown without painful effort.

Infinite Goodness frequently breaks up our *plans* through the agency of sorrow because there was *too much of self in them*. If we could once see the amount of selfish planning in this world we should be appalled. Even many schemes which we imagine to be benevolent are grounded in selfishness. A vast number of things are done in life under the supposition that we are acting for the glory of God, when in fact we are simply striving to escape from a little trouble and to gain a little more comfort and happiness than we now possess. It is well that Divine Love does not always allow us to have our own way. It is good that



our cup of pleasure is dashed to the ground ; good that we are compelled to begin life anew with deeper spiritual affections and more divine thoughts. The loss of a wife that we loved, of a child that was the joy of our heart, of a father or friend on whom we trusted, has forced us to reconsider and to be more wise. As the manna which nourished the Israelites for forty years descended during the night, so during our night of trial blessings come to us from heaven. There is a tradition that in the cell in which Joseph was confined a fountain of water appeared, and at his door a tree,—the one to quench his thirst, and the other to furnish him with fruit and a shade. But when Joseph seemed to forget God by invoking the help of man, we are told that the water dried up and the tree withered. This is an instructive symbol of the way in which the Supreme Being treats his creatures. There is a time of sorrow when blessings surround our habitation ; but quite soon forgetting the Author of these blessings, they are withdrawn ; leaving us to think of God and goodness in the midst of darkness.

Whatever may be the benefits which result from the ministry of grief, *a changed heart is not one of these benefits.* Sorrow has no re-

demptive power. It is simply a means which may be used by the Eternal Spirit in the work of purifying the soul. Some have so written and talked about sorrow as to convey the idea that it is the chief healing agent in this world. No sentiment is more delusive and dangerous than this. We have been astonished many a time to see what little influence the deepest sorrow has had upon the character. The tears that are shed over the loss of friends are not the tears of repentance. The grief may not extend beyond the natural sympathies. It may simply be the pain of severed feelings. We have almost thought sometimes that pungent sorrow really stood in the way of a thorough reformation of character. The mind was so occupied with it that the attention could not be gained, and a good impression could not be made. With all the sorrow and solemnity of funeral occasions, how very seldom it is that souls are ever converted at such times; yet it would be our first thought that they would be the most favorable seasons for that purpose. I am not aware that the great plagues of history have generally resulted in a high spiritual life. Man can go through anything and be no better. As the coral islands sleep on the

bosom of a melancholy sea, heeding not the wail and murmur of its waves, so mortal men sleep away their golden hours amidst the sighs and sorrows of life, unmindful of that soul that is so valuable and that future that is so near. The truth is, human character is not a very easy thing to remedy. It is more easy to improve it in our imagination and on paper than it is to do so in reality. No complete change will ever take place in the state of the moral nature save as it is the result of divine power. Sorrow may beautify certain characters up to a certain point, but when that point is reached the ability is gone. Grief and pain are never more than secondary causes. Even the highest truth and the most convincing arguments are simply weapons that may be used by a divine hand.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *SORROW ALLEVIATED AND DESTROYED.*

THE attempt to *drown trouble* is common among men. To obtain relief, or to escape from self, is what is wanted. The goodness or badness of a course is not always thought of. The exciting and stupefying are apt to be chosen. Trouble is lost sight of for the moment. The man seems to be another man. He lives in a new world. There is no reason, however, in all this. The quiet that is gained is nothing but a *forgetting*; it is a *not-thinking*. Stupidity is made a virtue; secularism is turned into sanctification; that which is godless is thought of as the ultimate life. The attempt to cultivate unconsciousness, to shut the eyes and be lost in a reverie of forgetfulness, is simply Buddhism over again. The man who approaches the nearest to the Supreme Nothing is in this way the most happy man.

When the Persians in former times gained a victory, they were accustomed to select the best slave, clothe him in the garb of royalty, make him a king for three days, give him all that he wanted ; but the man who was thus so happily circumstanced was put to death at the end of the three days. Many a one is trying to make himself a king for three days, not thinking that at the end of that period he is to be cut down. To lessen sorrow by such means is madness. There are methods of alleviation which are reasonable, and which may be adopted on that account. A statement of these we now present.

*Employment* is life for one who is cast down in his mind. Work presents an object which is suitable, while at the same time it occupies the mind. Calvin, writing in regard to the death of his wife, says : " Although I am very much bowed down, I continue to fulfill diligently all the duties of my office." To brood over one's troubles is to sink deeper into night. The sooner, therefore, a man begins to attend to that which is useful, the better it is for him. Even if one has to whip himself into labor, let it be done. That which is a task at first will be a pleasure in due time. If skill and patience are manifested, these traits are pleas-

ing to the mind. If one does a good and profitable day's work, there is a feeling of satisfaction. Labor which has no reward, while it may be beneficial to both body and mind, is not so beneficial as when it does have a reward. A sad, poor man becomes a new man when gold meets him with its smile.

Our sorrow is less than it would be just because we have a *body that must be cared for*. The sorrow of a spirit that has no body must be exceedingly intense. Mind in such a case is left to itself. Sharp emotions take their own way. There is no leaning upon materialism in order to keep the soul from sinking,—the drowning creature has no plank. Mere body provides occupation to the mind. There is something to do as matter of necessity. Food and drink are to be thought of, clothing and cleanliness, exposure to the weather and seclusion from it, fire to warm and light for dark hours. The simple instinct to live is a power against grief. The feeling of self-preservation leaves sorrow in the background. He who kills himself because of trouble, cuts away the covering of the pit and drops into it. When an unhappy soul realizes that its body is gone, it would seem as if it would move back and

around in order to find it. The feeling must be strange and painful ; there is a loss and a want. When a man's hand or foot is amputated, there is a sensation as if it were still in the old place. May the soul not have a similar feeling when it has lost its body ?

The influence of a *brisk walk* tends to lighten the heavy heart. The system is stimulated ; the vapors are swept away from the soul ; there is a clear sky, and a feeling of being refreshed. Augustine mentions that some persons had the idea that the *bath* received its name (*balneum*) because it drives sadness from the mind. I can understand how this might be so. Bathing revives the body, and in so far as it does this it revives the soul. Air and water, light and exercise, have a bearing upon the spiritual as well as upon the physical nature. When sadness can be spoken of as a feeling of heaviness, a dull taciturnity, a want of interest in all human things, in that case a quick walk or a run is a suitable medicine. "A hypochondriacal student of Oxford, after a life of bodily indolence, imagined himself on the point of death, and ordered the bell to be tolled, that he might hear it before he died. He had been fond of bell-ringing, but finding it now to be execrable,

he leaped out of bed, and hastened to the bell-fry to show how the bell ought to be rung. He then returned to his room that he might die decently. But the *exercise had cured him*; and having been once diverted, he could now continue to attend to other subjects than his own morbid impressions. From that time his reason and health returned together.”\*

What a blessing is *sleep* to the sorrowful. There are natures that view it as their chief friend. Not because sleep heals the wounded heart do they love it; but they love it because it is a means by which they lose sight of their misery. Yet such persons do not sleep with great quietness. They dream; and their dreams are not pleasant. Once in a while they sigh; once in a while they groan; uneasy in spirit they turn round; they gather the clothes tightly about them as if to shelter themselves from evil. Poor as the sleep is, it is yet a blessing to such troubled natures. The friction of the mind abates a little; the cancerous sorrow stops somewhat of its gnawing. There are sad people, however, to whom sleep is not merely a refuge, but a *positive refreshment*. Their dreams are not shaded in the least by

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\* Dr. Moore, *The Body and Mind*, p. 306.



sorrow ; all is pleasant. Mr. Moffat, the missionary to Southern Africa, mentions the following. Says he : " We continued our slow and silent march for hours. The tongue cleaving to the roof of the mouth from thirst, made conversation extremely difficult. At last we reached the long-wished-for waterfall ; but it was too late to ascend the hill. We allowed our poor worn-out horses to go where they pleased ; and having kindled a small fire, we talked about our lost companions. We bowed the knee to Him who had mercifully preserved us, and laid our heads on our saddles. The last sound we heard to soothe us, was the distant roar of the lion, but we were too much exhausted to feel anything like fear. Sleep came to our relief, and it seemed made up of scenes the most lovely, forming a glowing contrast to our real situation. I felt as if engaged, during my short repose, in roving among ambrosial bowers of paradisaical delight, hearing sounds of music, as if from angels' harps ; it was the night wind falling on my ears from the neighboring hill. I seemed to pass from stream to stream, in which I bathed and slaked my thirst at many a crystal fount, flowing from golden mountains enriched with living green. These

Elysian pleasures continued till morning dawn, when we awoke, speechless with thirst, our eyes inflamed, and our whole frames burning like a coal.”\*

Even *laughter* has a tendency to break up the spell of sadness. A person who is cast down because of some misfortune, and who is looking upon life as dark and discouraging, may receive a new impulse from a hearty laugh. A comic remark addressed to a sick man inclined to despondency, may be the very antidote which he needs. The influence of the ludicrous in tending to lessen the troubles of life is far greater than we are apt to suppose. There are thousands of irritating circumstances which might worry the soul exceedingly, if it were not for the simple power of laughter. Times there may be, serious and deeply affecting, when to laugh is a sin ; yet there are other times when to laugh is a duty.

*Music* alleviates a sorrowful mind. If the sorrow is wild and excitable, a soft sweet tune subdues the spirit. If there be a dull and sluggish melancholy, exhilarating music will arouse the soul. If dark designs lurk beneath the

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\* Scenes in Southern Africa, p. 115.

melancholy, celestial music may drive them away. The evil spirit departed from Saul when David played upon his harp. Not all kinds of music, however, will dispel sorrow. When the music is sad it produces sadness. The slumbering grief is awakened by such an agency. The plaintive tune strikes the memory. Forgotten times and persons are remembered. A wave of sorrow rolls over the spirit. Tears fall. It should be noted, however, that the sorrow which results from music has *pleasure* connected with it. This fact makes it a kind of relief. Many love plaintive music just because they love sadness. The sadness seems to be all the more attractive in that it mingles with the soft and beautiful strains of music.

*To manifest friendship towards one who is in trouble* is pleasing to him. The happy conversation of a friend spreads sunshine over the soul, and his kind attentions ease the heart. A gift to the sorrowful has a fine influence. An act of self-denial is greatly prized. Then if the person in trouble is assisted by one who himself is in trouble, the act is doubly pleasing. Suffering adds value to the deed of kindness. Let a dying soldier divide his last drop of water with another soldier who is wounded,—the im-

pression made is deep and tender. Community of suffering seems also to lessen pain. It is a remark of Rousseau, that "nothing so cordially attaches two persons as the satisfaction of weeping together." There is truth in this statement. To mingle with a person during a season of great affliction is to make that person our friend. The love that rises out of sorrow is quite enduring. I should suppose that Christ and the penitent thief had a union of feelings that was exceedingly close and tender. I have even imagined that the Saviour was cheered during his last hours by the very look and words of the repentant man who hung at his side.

*Nature* and *art* put new life into the drooping spirit. A gorgeous sunrise or sunset; islands gemming the waters on which we are sailing; hills, plains, and winding streams; cattle reclining in the shade and men at work in the field; towns and trees and far off sights which line the horizon,—these charm the eye of the sad. Architectural beauty, statuary and painting of a superior kind, gardens displaying great taste in their arrangement, inspire and please. Says Zimmerman: "I cannot recollect without shedding tears of gratitude and joy, a single day of the early part of my residence in

Hanover, when torn from the bosom of my country, from the embraces of my family, and from everything that I held dear in my life, my mind, on entering the little garden of my deceased friend, M. de Himber, near Hanover, immediately revived, and forgot, for the moment, both my country and my grief."

Aside from these various thoughts, I am convinced that sorrow can be considerably weakened by the simple power of *self-determination*. Unless one does rise up in all the force and majesty of the personal soul, he will many a time be lost in gloom. It is a dangerous thing to allow sadness to become the controlling agent in the mind's movements. Deep mental depression unfits for action. Success in life may be gone forever by the presence of a dark melancholy. One has no heart to do anything. Backwardness, timidity, the loss of a proper self-confidence, chain the soul, and all is lost. The person must feel that it will never answer thus to give way to a depression of spirits. A bold stand must be taken. The latent power of the soul must be called forth to do battle against the enemy. It is a matter of life or death, and one must be in earnest. *Sorrow may be a sin.* This should be understood.

We have no right to waste our time, weaken our influence, and draw off the very life of the soul by melancholy musings. There is a great deal of sad feeling caused by fretfulness and pride, which never can be justified. Extreme sensitiveness should be guarded against. Persons of great accomplishments should know that it is not possible to pass through this life and be fully appreciated. All the excellences of any particular mind are not seen by surrounding minds. The care which a man takes in some special vocation is only known to himself; he cannot, therefore, expect that other men will honor him as he deserves. There is no need of being grieved because of this. It is a foolish thing for a man to sink into hopeless melancholy just because human beings will not admire the fine piece of work which he has done. Fame is but a name; and to be truly great one must rise above it. If apart from all consequences we must do right for right's sake, then apart from all praise we must aim at perfection in any sphere for perfection's sake. It is well enough to know, however, that although mental and moral excellence may be lightly esteemed while one is living, it may be appreciated after one is dead. How many poets,

musicians, philosophers, and reformers have gained a verdict in their favor after death, who in their lifetime gained nothing but hatred. Almost every great character is struck at by envy, and distorted by prejudice. But when death has consigned exalted persons and mean passions to the sepulchre, truth and reason come forth to do their work.

The points stated thus far, tend to *mitigate* sorrow. No one should think, however, that grief can be *destroyed* by such means. Something deeper and more thorough is demanded. We turn, therefore, to a class of thoughts which look to the expulsion of sadness from the soul.

*Devout thinking upon exalted topics* has a tendency to settle and soothe the soul. Great thoughts when they enter a receptive human spirit are fitted to start a class of high and pure emotions. As the rough music of the Alpine horn is rendered sweet and beautiful by coming in contact with the surrounding mountains, so the downcast soul of man is quickened and elevated by coming in contact with eternal and divine ideas. The mind is lifted out of its region of dampness and darkness, and made to face the pure and healthful objects of existence. Facing such objects it lives. The change is

like that of a man who passes from a dungeon to a palace. If the topics of thought have the element of *certainty*, the mind has a more solid repose from the fact. In so far as I am confused I am restless. I may say also that truths which are *massive* have a great power to steady the mind. A single great object will quiet the soul much better than a multitude of small objects. With one great object the entire soul is centered, and brought into a state of rest. Mark the influence of a *word* which is known to come directly from the Divine Being! Men have endured persecution with joy, because they could lean upon some definite utterance of God. The surest way to comfort the soul of a good man is to press into his consciousness a divine promise. There is an authority connected with a word from God which at once gains the assent of the soul, and which sweeps away all doubts, fears, and discouragements. How many have fallen asleep in death, resting upon a divine sentence! uttering to themselves a golden passage as they passed over the river. Even careless men are exceedingly anxious to find an express statement of God by which to comfort their heart; and if they cannot find such a statement, they will at least *imagine*



that the Most High looks favorably upon them, and so with that imagination they will stay up their soul. The conviction is strong that the good will of the Supreme Being is everything.

*A reception of the divine remedy* is God's way of curing sorrow. Under a pressing necessity we must look upward for help. Niebuhr, after he had buried his wife, and apparently all his hopes and happiness, says: "I was able to weep bitterly, and to pray from the bottom of my heart." The weeping bitterly was a relief: the praying from the bottom of the heart brought a blessing from Heaven. Human power cannot effect the cure of sorrow. Prayer is the first duty. It points to a want to be filled, a pain to be eased, a sin to be slain. Lord, help me, is the beginning of life. Many a weary mind has found rest in prayer when it could find it in no other way. He who tells God his sorrows will soon thank God for his comforts. There is an idea that was believed in by some of the ancients, which is really very significant. It was thought that around those whom the gods loved a cloud was thrown to protect them in time of danger. The good who were inside of this cloud could see through it, and thus could behold those who would do

them injury ; but the peculiarity of it was, that the enemies who were outside could not see through the cloud, and consequently there was no way by which to harm the good. So troubled and trembling men dwell safely under the shadow of God's wing when they pray. The *more of faith* also we have in a Divine Redeemer, the *less of sorrow* we have. To take the soul with its burden of sin, sadness, and guilt, and place that in the hands of Christ is to find rest. It is wonderful the repose that comes to an anxious spirit when once it allows the Saviour to take the responsibility of its salvation. Men are crushed with grief because they will not believe.

Vaughan, in his "Hours with the Mystics," mentions the following incident: "There was once a learned man who longed and prayed full eight years that God would show him some one to teach him the way of truth. And on a time, as he was in a great longing, there came unto him a voice from heaven, and said, 'Go to the front of the church, there wilt thou find a man that shall show thee the way to blessedness.' So thither he went, and found there a poor man whose feet were torn and covered with dust and dirt, and all his apparel scarce

three hellers worth. He greeted him, saying, 'God give thee good morrow.' Thereat made he answer, 'I never had an ill morrow.' Again said he, 'God prosper thee.' The other answered, 'Never had I aught but prosperity.' 'Explain to me this,' said the scholar, 'for I understand not.' 'Willingly,' quoth the poor man. 'Thou wishest me good morrow. I never had an ill morrow, for, am I an hungered, I praise God; am I freezing, doth it hail, snow, rain, is it fair weather or foul, I praise God; and therefore had I never ill morrow. Thou didst say, God prosper thee. I have been never unprosperous, for I know how to live with God; I know that what he doth is best, and what God giveth or ordaineth for me, be it pain or pleasure, that I take cheerfully from him as the best of all, and so I had never adversity.'" "Then understood this Master that true Abandonment, with utter Abasement, was the nearest way to God."\* He who rests in the All-sufficient finds rest.

It is a fact worthy of notice that a true peace comes to the soul when a *besetting sin has been overcome*. There is no calculating the amount

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\* Vol. I. p. 152, Lond. ed.

of misery which comes to a human spirit from a single besetting sin. There is an unbalanced state of mind, and a constant fretting pain. To cut loose from such a sin has seemed to be impossible. Conscience has condemned, the heart has grieved, the will has resolved; but all to no purpose. Once in a while a slight victory is gained, and there is joy in proportion to the extent of it; but the joy soon ends in sorrow, because the victory soon ends in defeat. As the result of this state of things, a sense of weakness has taken possession of the soul, and a steady sadness which deepens ever with each returning fall. But now there is a change. The besetting sin is conquered. The soul lives as it never has lived before. Elasticity of movement is now its characteristic. There is an unwonted sense of freedom. To be delivered from one great sin seems like a new conversion. Thankfulness, happiness, readiness for work or worship, bear the spirit onward. The very joy is life, and the life is joy. This is a far different thing from the mere stimulus of nature, the glow of ambition, the radiance of hope, the pleasure of praise, or the peace of imaginary goodness.

It is a very curious fact that when we labor

for the highest good of man *till we are weary*, we ultimately have a high degree of satisfaction. It is not sufficient that we do a little ; limiting our labors with great care lest we should seem to go too far ; taking a kind of holy recreation ; but we must so labor that we really feel tired. Such hard work in love consumes sorrow. Our spirits may seem to flag by reason of the constant activity, yet the *heart grief* is certainly lessened. The purest benevolence is acted out, and such benevolence must diffuse joy around the soul. The finest character is built up in this way. There is gold, silver, precious stones. Two ends are accomplished by the one course of benevolent activity,—others are benefited, and my own soul is strengthened. Then, as I view the good which I have done, I am pleased ; while the love that works in my heart adds to my happiness. Not only is sorrow lessened by the expulsion of selfishness, but it is lessened also by the presence of joy. The more we love, the more we live. The very sun seems to be happy because it shines, and the stream because it flows. Millions are trying to make themselves happy by doing as little as they can. How much better it would be if they would try and bless others by doing as much as they can :

for them. A man is to be measured by the amount of his self-denial ; and he who suffers when he serves has the peace of the Lord. We need more patient endurance, more self-sacrifice, more of the courage that begins and ends with love. A battle once raged between the Moslems and Greeks. The latter far outnumbered the former. The conflict was long and bloody. The standard of Islam was carried by a person named Jafar. During the battle, his right hand was cut off. He placed the banner, however, in his left hand ; but it was not long before the left hand was lost also. He then pressed the banner to his breast by the aid of his bleeding stumps, determined that it should not fall to the dust. His bravery nerved the soldiers with new power. Fifty wounds marked his body, yet he would not yield. With a blow his head was struck off ; then he fell. Such valor and self-forgetfulness speak to all.

When *sin is destroyed, sorrow will be destroyed*. It is impossible to be free from grief so long as depravity lingers about the heart. At the end of days, then, the good shall be delivered from sadness. When that time comes, joy without any sorrow and righteousness with-

out any sin shall conduct the spirit to its home ; and throughout all eternity it will be well. Evil shall simply be the cloud of the early times ; the short night which preceded the eternal morning.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *GOD AND HEAVEN AS THOUGHTS OF POWER TO THE SORROWFUL.*

TO think about God and heaven is refreshing. I will therefore mention some leading thoughts relating to each; allowing these thoughts to impress the mind in their own way. It is a gain to be moved by the direct power of great objects. Too much of human guidance is sometimes an injury.

We begin with *God*. "Give me a great thought that I may quicken myself with it," was the language of Herder to his son during his last illness. How significant was that request! Surely the *great thought* which he needed was God. When the crisis comes, there is but one Person that will answer.

I am arrested by the very *uniqueness* of the idea of God. The idea is altogether peculiar. In a most strict sense it stands alone. If God were simply an enlarged creature, a kind of



infinite angel or man, in that case the idea would have no divine peculiarity. But the fact that he is without beginning and without end, that he exists of necessity, that he is self-sufficient, shows that he is not like any being in existence. It is because God *is God* that he has an eternal significance to the creature. The soul of man, viewed in its nature, in its development, in the wonderful sweep of its lifetime, points alone to God. The more we can see the Divine Being in the singularity of his existence, the more healthy is our thought of him. The God of many persons is nothing but a fiction of the imagination.

In the midst of mental uneasiness I think of the *calmness* of the High and Lofty One. He has no want ; never can have any. We cannot speak of God as *becoming*. There is nothing to become. He *is*. That *is* takes in the whole of eternity and the whole of God. What a sublime oneness characterizes the divine nature ! Nothing goes too far ; nothing is out of harmony. I can say, God is order ; therefore God is calmness. We speak of the repose of good men, of the peace of the angels, of the ideal rest of being ; but what is all this to the rest of God. The mind is lost in

the midst of a serenity that is absolute. I can say, God is truth, life, love ; he is perfection, calmness, blessedness. It is curious that the mere *idea* of calmness quiets the mind to a certain extent. Having found the idea, we think of that which it represents ; and as we keep thinking upon the reality, a soothing influence spreads over the soul. A calm and beautiful day ; the slow murmur of a stream ; the gentle motion of birds and insects in the air ; the repose of the ocean ; the ship quietly anchored in the bay after a long passage,—these tend to producé serenity of soul. I am quite sure that there is a state of mind which loves *stillness*. Noise, confusion, undue excitement, irritate the soul. The troubled spirit wants rest, wants it greatly ; and anything which seems like the type or image of that rest is loved. A quiet day is more soothing to the mind than a quiet night, because the day wears a smile, while the night is sad. The noise of children at play will not trouble us so much as the noise of men at work, because in the one case it is natural, and in the other it is not. The strife of women is more painful to us than the strife of men, even as a turbulent Sabbath seems more out of place than a turbulent week-day.

I am impressed with the fact that God is carrying out *one eternal thought*. A soul is great in proportion to the greatness of its plans and the ability which it has to carry them out. The man who is only able to sketch a plan with a few particulars in it, is far inferior to him whose plan includes a thousand intricate points. A plan also that will exhaust itself during a month, shows less compass of mind than one that will take a year to exhaust it. Or if a person should toil for half a century in order to realize an idea, we are impressed at once with his greatness. Suppose that some one were permitted to live for a thousand years, and that he had formed a plan which would well nigh reach across that period, what a conception we should have of mental greatness! Or if it were among the possibilities of finite mind for some exalted intelligence to lay out a plan and then to realize it during the march of a thousand ages, how that would awe us, and cause us almost to fall down and worship such a being. It is quite likely, upon the high scale of eternity, that creatures will be found whose plans shall be worlds of thought, demanding not less than a million of years to carry them out. But even with such imaginings before us, what are they

all to that great thought of God which is strictly eternal? The divine idea includes all that has been and all that shall be. What an array of particulars, and what a duration is demanded for their realization! The plan of God as it regards *time* is *endless*; may we not say as it regards *space* that it will *extend farther and farther forever*?—thus movements in time and space having a beginning, but no fixed end. Who can tell but that now we are members of a system, not the first that has been created, but rather the last of a great series of systems? During the mighty roll of a past eternity, universe after universe may have flourished and passed away, or may be still existing in the remote regions of immensity, while we, the children of a later hour, have just begun the journey of endless ages. There may be some great commonwealth of spirits at an infinite distance from our realm of being, whose age is not less than a billion of years. In any case, what an immense sweep there is to the divine plan! Surely the troubled soul may be quite content to leave itself in God's great hand. The Being who has such a vast reach of mind can certainly attend to a human spirit.

I am struck with the *latent power* of God.

When I try to conceive what he *might do*, I gain a conception of the ability of God that seems to be equal to what I gain by noticing the actual manifestation of divine power in creation. Of course, having the whole universe before me as a sample of omnipotence, I am led by that to understand more correctly the unused omnipotence of God. The visible leads to the invisible ; just as the works of a great man show what he *might have done* had he been permitted to live. Viewing God as the Infinite, he must have a residue of power that is far greater than that which runs through the totality of created things. Let the Infinite even multiply his works a thousand-fold, that will make but little difference in the hidden energies of his unbounded nature. The God that is revealed is nothing to the God that is concealed. A thought of this kind gives us a more correct idea of the *strength* of that Being whose aid we invoke ; whose mighty arm we wish to be placed underneath us in our weakness. Certain of the ancient warriors were accustomed to have upon their shields a likeness of some particular god. In this way they were nerved to action ; and in this way a protecting power was supposed to be granted to them. Our God

cannot be represented. We are simply to "trust in the Lord forever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." An Arabian story has come down to us respecting Solomon. The story says that the greatest of men had a staff on which he leaned, but that inside of the staff was a *worm* which was secretly gnawing it asunder. As the result of this it finally broke in two. Many a friend that we lean upon gives way. Our staff has a worm inside of it. God, however, will never fail. If we trust in him, we are just as safe as if we ourselves were possessed of divine attributes.

There is something about the presence of a *superior mind* which tends to comfort a sad spirit. The mere consciousness that one of exalted merit is at our side subdues us. We feel that new resources are coming forth to our relief. New thoughts indeed touch us. There is a life and a warmth which we have not had before. The very strength of the exalted being seems to become ours. We are cheered by his presence ; see hope beckoning us on ; a firmer assurance steadies the soul ; a balancing power composes the mind. No direct effort we may put forth to quiet our heart, yet we are quieted. Influences come to us from without. Our passiv-

ity is the condition of life. Our nature being in a receptive state, virtue reaches us from the person of worth. If thus we are affected by the presence of a great mind, how much more when the great mind is God. Nearness to the Infinite Life *is life*. He lays his hand gently upon us ; we bow our head ; peace enters the heart. A voice speaks through the silence—“Be still, and know that I am God.” We hear ; we obey ; we find rest.

God is the *ultimate Being*. Man may try himself, try friends, try teachers, try anything beneath the Supreme,—they all fail. No mind can rest until it reaches ultimate conceptions. If I look for ultimate authority,—some one to command, from whom there is no appeal,—I look to God. Do I want a person that I can love supremely, pray to, trust in forever?—God is that person. Then, too, as I reflect, I think of a beauty which is not seen in nature, of a wisdom so high that no creature can have it, of an eternity and infinity that cannot be limited, of a cause that is before and after all other causes, of a perfection that cannot be reached. If there be no Being in whom these ideas are realized, they are without meaning. Atheism forever is impossible. God is the source and

centre of all. The mystery that explains all mysteries. The person without whom there is nothing.

Thou great One ! what shall we say of thee? To be permitted to think of thee is itself a blessing. Thou art far away from us, and yet thou art near. What an eternity was thine before creation began ! No beginning. Life with no time to mark it. A sun there was not to shine. Thou thyself art light. We speak of thee as being alone in the ancient past. But solitude pertains not to thee. Thou art three as well as one. Happy therefore thou wert in the midst of a communion which we cannot know. What a day is thine ! the eternal Sabbath of the Lord. Thou sovereign of the ages and of the worlds, thy stray creatures look to thee. Thou hast forgiveness for the repenting, joy for the sad in spirit, purity for the unclean. All power comes from thee and all life. Thou holdest in thy hand the cup of mercy. Men drink. They are well.

We take up now the idea of *heaven*. One of the leading thoughts of heaven is *life*. Just what it is to live we know not as yet. The life of the holiest among us is partly a death. The entire being is not animated. There is a



struggle between two powers. Sighing mingles with joy and fearfulness with hope. In heaven all is changed. Life is found there in its completeness. The soul is cured. I do not wonder that all men want to go to heaven. The very thought of it is pleasing. It calms the soul to a certain extent. It is a dream of joy. One sees himself entering the harbor in safety. He joins the company of the blest. He gains their treasure. Will the redeemed man of eternity finally reach a point when he shall be higher than the angels who have never sinned? It is difficult to answer this. I should suppose, however, that saved men will sometime in the far-off future outstrip the angels. An *infinite atonement* would have a significance like itself from such a fact. The unusual nature of the divine remedy; the application of its power to a specific race; its necessary connection with a God-man; the fact that it is the central medium of divine manifestation; the bearing which it will have upon the entire government of the Most High,—these considerations may demand that the highest form of creaturely life in heaven should be found among the ranks of the saved. From the fact also that the incarnate Son of God is

the head of the creation, it may seem fit and proper that the men he has redeemed should be nearest to him.

Having caught the thought of highest life in heaven, how overpowering is that life when it is viewed as *endless*. The collective pain which may torment one during his sojourn in time is absolutely nothing when compared with the blessedness of an eternity. The sorrow of earth is but the midnight cry of an uneasy sleeper, the slight scratch of a pin, the flight of a shadow. How strange that even good men should brood over their troubles! An immortal is worried and wounded with trifles. The heir of heaven is depressed because of an angry word, a cold look, a dark providence. The one fact that all the evils of life will end quite soon, and that forever, is sufficient to stay up the soul while here. It is evident that the endless is not made a permanent topic of human thought. There seems to be no state of mind developed by it. Emotions now and then simply arise. I presume, however, that there are minds that may be said to have a tendency to that which is eternal. They live in the future while as yet they live here. The powers of the world to come centralize and govern them. Such men

as Howe, Edwards, Whitefield, and Wesley, were of this class. Persons of this stamp diffuse an immortal fragrance around them. They see that on the gates of the heavenly city and the palace walls, on every glittering spire and dome and arch and pillar, the word *life* is written ; and the great clock of eternity strikes off its hours ; but no toll of death is heard in all that land. The very streams seem to be eternal rivers, as if they had started from the fountains of God ; and the same trees that were planted at the dawn of creation bear fruit still. The skies that stretch far away have all the clearness and serenity of the everlasting morning ; seeming like the reflection of God's great eternity, or like the garment that covers him as he sits upon the throne of life.

Heaven is a place of *unimpeded energy*. How such a fact addresses human weakness. The glorified soul and body will each be great powers. There will no doubt be an ability to sweep over vast spaces in an exceedingly short time. What a relief also to be able to carry forward some great mental process to the very end without any hindrance. The most gifted minds are hampered. There is frequently a mixing of subjects. This partly arising from a

deficiency of knowledge ; partly from a diversion caused by the principle of association ; and also by reason of a break in the logical process. The great scholars of eternity will have a complete mastery of certain leading topics. When the mental process has been brought to a close, it will be strictly *complete*. Exhaustiveness in eternity will be a different thing from that which goes by the same name in time.

We have a right to believe also that saved souls will be led forward by the power of *unmixed truth*. No man upon earth is thus led for any length of time. In heaven alone all is true. How much that suggests to a thoughtful mind. Truth will be seen as it is, will be loved for its own sake, will be the food of the soul. A mind eternally developed under the sole guidance of eternal truth will be a mind of lofty finish. Then to have all the movements of the heart and the life to be truthful, how high that shall raise the character of heaven. To see every being without the least deception or falsehood will be a blessed sight. To be able to exercise complete confidence in all the inhabitants of heaven forever and ever will be a blessed state of things. What ease, frankness, and openness there will be. Purity in all

its singleness and identity ; hence no feeling of shame. Concealment, which is one of the great characteristics of time, not found in the world of light. The likelihood that there will be a rapid and free interchange of mental treasures among the heavenly powers.

We think of heaven as the place of *ideal blessedness*. There is not found a single human being who is contented to live among the stern actualities of every-day life. The wisest men and the most ignorant, the best men and the most wicked, charm themselves with a scene that appears to them better than the one that is around them. Some sweep the earth in search of a treasure, and some ascend to heaven in order to find one there. We sometimes think, in the midst of our pain and weariness, what a universe this would be if all were well at heart ; no trouble of any kind disturbing the spirit, no sin of any kind staining the soul. The idea that all creatures are at rest makes us sigh. We long at once to be away to the pure land, to the kingdom of limitless life and joy. There each one is clad with a garment of peace, and each brow is radiant with the glory of the Lord. As the eternal times move away there is seen no cloud of evil. Only in the light do

men walk ; the day fills all the hours. Yet in our imagination we want to ascend higher ; we would go to the very summit of ideal blessedness ; we therefore reach God. We try to realize the harmony of an Infinite Being, the joy and peace of the Eternal One. Far above us all he reigns. In himself he is complete. He is most blessed forever. Thus does the troubled mind of man wander far away, wander upward to God, if so be it may get a glimpse of that which as yet it has never found.

Heaven is the place where *we shall meet our ransomed friends*. Sometimes a new direction is given to the soul by the fact that one we love has gone to live in that world. Simply to have a *child* in heaven makes it exceedingly attractive. A new motive is placed there to draw us over to its blessedness. We feel that this world is colder than formerly. We sicken more in view of its pleasures and pastime, its earthly good and gilded show. We therefore look off with anxious longing to a home among the stars, where we shall mingle with those that are so dear, and pass away the hours of eternity in scenes of unbroken friendship and joy. The dreariness of a cold winter's day, or the beating of the midnight storm, sends the

soul upward to the region of the blest, where our friends are sheltered in peace, and where the desolations of time reach them not. As we think also of the vanity of all earthly things, the coldness of human hearts, the suspicions and standers of men, we sigh the more to reach those we love, hoping to meet them quickly on the other shore. There are a vast number of things here that prompt us to go away, telling us that this is not the place of our rest. *There* is our home, and *there* are found those we long to see, waiting to receive us when we come. Take it all in all, it is one of the beautiful things of a sanctified humanity that love unites friends even though they may inhabit different worlds, and that love burns stronger and stronger till heart meets heart and soul touches soul in the great kingdom of eternity.

The ultimate conception of heaven is that of a region of life where *all is right*. I know that this idea of heaven cannot be unfolded; neither is it necessary that it should be. Quite likely the thought is touched with eternal and infinite realities, and for that reason it evades us. There is a degree of pleasure in coming into contact with ideas that our minds cannot fully grasp. I think that frequently a weariness

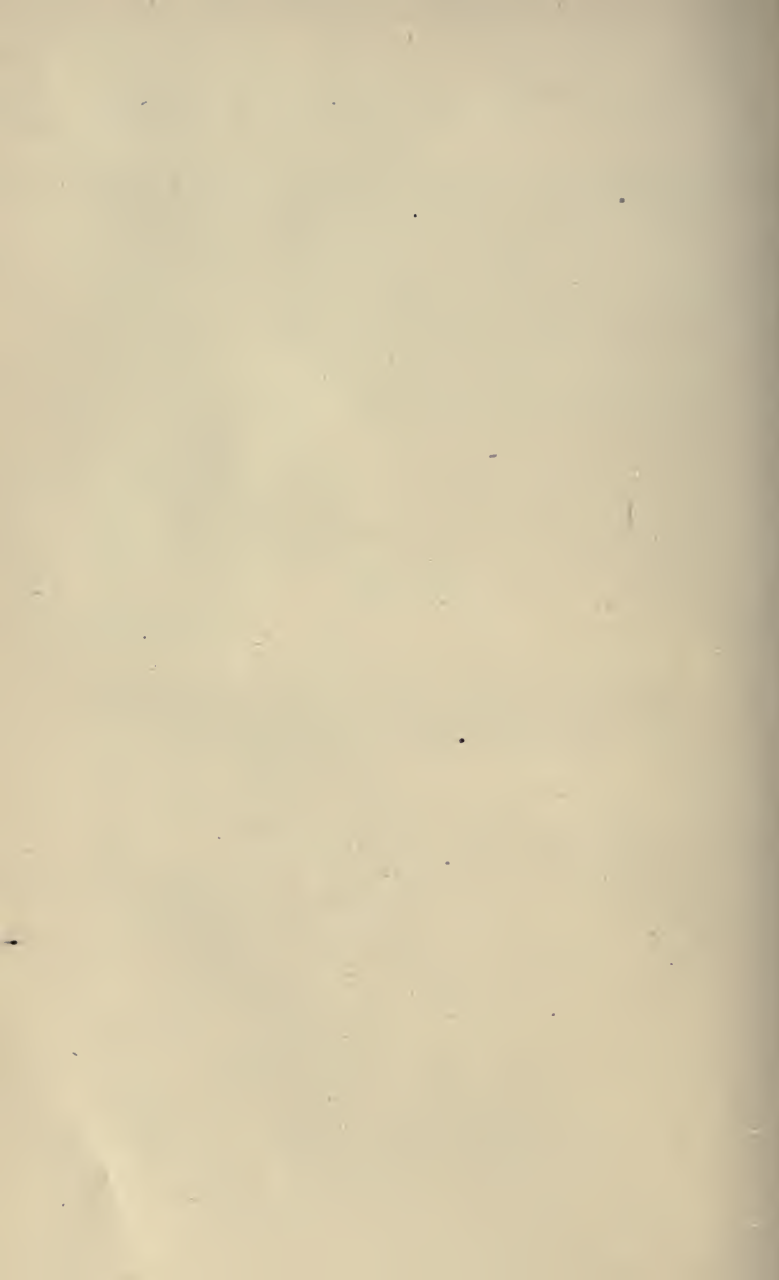
comes over us because we are living in the midst of thoughts that we can master quite easily. The teacher who teaches the same things year after year must be wearied, in the long run, with the very simplicity and tameness of his life. It would seem as if at the close of each week, if not at the close of each day, he would hasten off to a high realm of thought; and communing there with the everlasting and the divine, the supersensible and the changeless, he would nourish his immortal nature with food which could not be obtained from the definitions and duties of a common profession. Heaven is a place where all is right. The mind hovers around that thought; is pleased with it; settles down in it. We are living upon the surface of a shattered world. The earth is in the midst of an eclipse. A deformed race are born here, and here they die. No damaged thing is found in heaven. The souls and circumstances there, are just as they should be. Heaven is the chief joy amid the realms of God. Glorious land! how many sigh to reach thine abodes. In exile we wander here; in darkness; in the midst of death. No day finds us well; no hour is radiant with the light of the eternal morning. How the spirit tires



in its toilsome way ; wishing that repose might come quite soon. We long for a righted nature ; for a vision of complete life ; for a Divine Presence to beam upon us. What a moment that will be when first we reach heaven ! The soul imbosomed in bliss ; at home in the lands of eternity ; living with God.

THE END.





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