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The World of Mystery

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The evening fire is lighted
 In yonder rural home,
 The broken group, heart-blighted,
 Weep that thou dost not come.
 Ah! hushed thy voice in silent earth;
 Thy seat is vacant at the hearth!

The Winter snows descending,
 Their virgin mantle spread—
 A shroud to nature lending,
 To wrap her children dead.
 No minstrel bird is keeping
 His vigil o'er thy tomb—
 The voiceless air is sleeping
 In chill, unbroken gloom;
 But earth shall break her icy chain;
 So thou to life shalt wake again!

THE WORLD OF MYSTERY.

“THE spirit of the age,” which we are continually hearing extolled by cracked-brained authors or saintly hypocrites, may be briefly defined “the love of money.” As this principle (if it may be so called) pervades everything, upon it are founded the prevalent ideas of moral and intellectual culture. We are taught to believe that there is no education but that derived from books, for these are expensive; and that we are bound to observe no moral laws but those set forth by some worthy divine, who must be well paid for his trouble.

But the human mind, though fortified (or rather imprisoned) by such “moral and intellectual culture,” cannot resist the powerful influence exercised over it by an innate though suppressed belief in dark and hidden mysteries of the universe, which books cannot explain. In vain we struggle against this fascination—there is something hidden from mortal eyes which we long, yet dread, to look upon.

The first emotion of this secret principle of our nature is called forth by the nursery tale of fairy or goblin, and active still, life itself departs as the dying sinner trembles at the dread spirits of that mysterious world into which he rushes, while the joyful Christian pauses for a moment with awful wonder at the gates of heaven. We may close up the heart in the rigid barriers of philosophy, and confine the imagination to mathematical lines, but its boldness leaps these artificial bounds and laughs to scorn the

puny art of man, which would fetter that independence which receives its charter from heaven.

Though credulity in the supernatural is ridiculed by a large part of mankind, there are few but feel its influence. The selfish philosopher struggles against his better nature—he traces every effect to its natural cause, and with scorn derides the superstitions of the vulgar and bigoted; but when the “icy hand of death” is laid upon him, he feels something for which he cannot account—his false pride deserts him, and in agony of soul he expires believing.—

Our holy religion—all our conceptions of a Deity—our very origin and being, are a mystery. To us a part of the creation is visible and palpable; but this does not prove that nothing more exists. A belief in the existence of supernatural beings upon earth is by no means deserving of ridicule. The mind has a natural tendency towards it until warped by the prejudices of education. Why, then, is this tendency checked? Our wise instructors tell us that it is for our own good—to curb the wandering fancy, and turn the attention to useful objects—to the every-day affairs of life. But we may question their wisdom in viewing the common business of this life of primary importance. This state of being is not the last nor perhaps the first. We go to a land of spirits, and from a land of spirits, perchance, we come. Life is but an atom in eternity. Should we then narrow down all our thoughts to this brief period of existence—confine ourselves to that alone which we can see, in the hope that, fettered to the one idea, earth, we can excel in transient honors and wealth? Will it be any obstacle to our progress to think the spirits of departed friends are hovering around our path to cheer us on to noble deeds? That heavenly beings are continually guarding our wayward steps or smiling upon our virtuous endeavors? That, in short, our earth is not “a mere sepulchral clod,” but a bright world peopled by immortal spirits, who weep over our faults or bear to heaven with joy the records of the just?

HUMAN LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

THERE is no past—but fond remembrance flings
 Its shadowy image o'er us ;
 THERE is no future—hope delusive brings
 Unreal forms before us ;
 THE present only is, then disappears
 In blank nonentity ;
 WHAT, then, is human life? Its fleeting years,
 A point, a hope, a memory.