

life sprang up, and therefrom the Sphinx developed wings, with which the souls of mortals should return to the skies. The evolution of the Sphinx, in short, is the history of the thought, especially the religious thought, of mankind. And always it is invested with a spirit of melancholy and sadness that inheres in the very existence of humanity."

"But in a world where there is so much that is beautiful," I said, "such a magnificent field for the highest employment of all our faculties, with an assurance next to absolute knowledge that this is but the portal of a future still better, why is it, my dear friend, that there should be so much sadness? I question the wisdom of poet, artist or philosopher that dwells so much upon it or gives it such prominent recognition."

"Your remark is purely a perfunctory one, my cousin, and you do not speak as the result of much reflection. No one who is at all familiar with the utterances of genius, or who has thought deeply upon the problems of life, can fail to be profoundly impressed by the universal recognition which humanity accords to grief—not mere personal sorrow, the result of a transient disappointment, but that world-wide gloom and passionate melancholy whose solemn undertone is never silent, and which consciously or not forms so large a portion of our moral nature. It dominates the Bible patriarchs; poets in all lands and ages have woven it into song; historians have admitted its existence; philosophers have tried to fathom it; the greatest novelists have idealized it in their best creations; while the toiling multitudes who have no time to theorize about their emotions, simply note the presence of an inexplicable heart-pain as they follow the dull tread-mill of existence. The cypress seems to be inextricably interwoven with the lives of all who wearily or joyously perform their part in the world's stern struggle. This world is the Sanctuary of Sorrow. Dante was pointed out in old Florence as the man who had been in hell. The truth is there are few who figuratively speaking might not enjoy the same destination; the difference being, that he told in immortal song what he there saw. So far from being an evidence of moral weakness, that person's emotional and intellectual endowments are not accounted complete to whom the moaning sea, the wail of wintry winds, and nature's universal melancholy, are the tones of an unknown music. 'Our life's star hath had elsewhere its setting.' Our struggle here is to regain that grander home from which the soul was born into this earthly one. Some, it is true, pass through this little interval of time between two eternal silences more easily than others, but each has his destiny to fulfill. Come early or come late, it must be obeyed. The sacrifice

may be very different from what was expected, but no matter. 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.' By casting life away we shall find it again."

Winthrop spoke in such general terms, and with such impersonal application, that I was deceived as to his true meaning. People often talk of destiny when they only mean that the ordinary trials of life prevent the accomplishment of their special aims; it is only those rarely gifted beings that see in certain events a destiny higher than themselves, which amounts to an absolute command calling for the renunciation of the ambitions of the world, even to the giving up of life itself. Some such thoughts as these my mind experienced while Winthrop spoke, and then I said—

"We all have a destiny to fulfill. One is adjudged to toil in the fields, to subdue the material forces of the world; another works with the more subtle elements of nature's laboratory; others, who are accounted more fortunate, attain honor and seeming great happiness; while still more, like the multitudinous sands upon the seashore, can only say when the day of reckoning comes, Lord, I have suffered much. Your destiny, my friend, is a grander one than all others; it is yours not only to suffer, but to embody in imperishable lineaments the divine elements of beauty and truth, to keep alive in the struggling mass of humanity those lofty principles which serve to keep the human heart pure and its aspirations heavenward."

"Write those words upon your memory in italics," said Winthrop, as he rose to go; "they will return to you ere long clothed with new meaning. But I have prosed enough; I have work to do before I sleep. Good night, my dear, dear friend."

"Cousin, do not go!" I exclaimed, still detaining him by the hand; "remain with me, and let us end this eventful day together. Our conversation has drifted into the unfrequented channels of the mind, and that which has struggled to the surface seems almost as gloomy as this cloudy night."

"It will be brighter when we meet again," said Winthrop, while a smile "that made me wish to steal away and weep" rested a moment on his handsome face, as he continued: "No, Cousin Arthur, I must go; your words have given me an impulse; I feel that quickening of the spirit which foretells an hour of vital work. The creative artist of whatever kind must be ready at all times to receive those visitations of divine power which work through him as an instrument for the accomplishment of great results. I shall finish my work to-night; come in the morning and you shall see it. Forgive me for having withheld it from you, of all persons in the world, so long. 'Twas because I place art so high, even above the