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THOUGHTS ON DEATH.

By "ROSEMARY."

THE idea of death being a consequence of man's succumbing to evil seems untenable. The remains of pre-Adamite animals show that death reigned triumphant over *them* before man *is said* by his deed to have involved all the brute creation in his own doom. The passage from this to any other world *must* have been made denuded of the flesh (no matter what man's moral state), for how can we banish gravitation? It is supposed by some that the act of dying in itself is not necessarily painful,—allow this to be the *rule*; do away with bodily suffering, which may probably with truth be considered the consequence of sin, let man choose the moment when he will quit this world for another, and we should probably see as many *voluntary* travellers to other worlds, by the conveyance called Death, as at present to other countries by any known means of transit. The endless diversity of earth's flowers suggests the idea that each of the countless worlds around us, which have been aptly termed the "flowers of the sky,"

may possess a beauty all its own and distinct from the rest. What exquisite colouring must the planet Jupiter possess with four moons of various hues! How revelling in light must Saturn be with his luminous bands, and what may not be the wondrous glories of Neptune with ρ attendant satellites! If it be our high privilege to visit each, and find in each fresh cause to reverence our Maker's wisdom and reciprocate His love, the undying Soul could bear unharmed the heights and depths of adoration never before called forth; but these poor bodies, for which even Earth's emotions often prove too strong, would not the fate of the surcharged Leyden jar be theirs?—shivered by excess of what it was meant to contain? If so, where would be the use of carrying them with us?—supposing it were possible they could traverse Space without the subversion of every known law of nature. How insupportable would be the idea of Eternity were it not for the counterbalancing one of Space! Unlimited Time may well be employed in learning the glories of unlimited Space. If we are destined to see the works of the Creator in various worlds, it follows as a matter of course that Death is an "*Institution*" whereby the Soul lays aside a covering, which its further requirements render useless, to take another more in accordance with *them* and with the specific gravity of whatever world is its next destination; and, on quitting that world, Death must probably again be the Soul's

mode of transit, and we need seek no further for the *reason* of Death than in the universal law, whereby everything no longer suited to its first purpose is put to another; hence, when by manifestations of Divine Wisdom and Love hitherto unimagined the Soul will be exalted by adoration never before called forth, a body suited to its higher requirements will doubtless be provided by the Creator; while thrifty mother Nature, after various revivifying processes; re-adapts these worn out frames to the requirements of her younger children.

We all know that great dread—even though causeless—is intense agony. Those who have witnessed two children of different temperaments, led by their father, approach a frightful shadow thrown by the magic lantern, can realise this. Neither child could really be hurt by the ugly shadow; but how fearful is the suffering of the timid one, compared to that of him who feels perfect security, because it is his *father's* hand which leads him. “The Valley of the Shadow of Death” is a suggestive expression!* Perhaps we should derive more courage from it than we do; at any rate, if Death, once passed, should prove but a terrific *Shadow*, can it ever again excite fear; or will it not, perhaps, be hailed as the invigorator of the Soul, as Sleep is now of the Body? or granted even that there may be aught of peril to the Soul in Death,

* See “Exposition of Twenty-third Psalm,” by Rev. John Stevenson.—Jackson; London, 1847.

which is a proposition the Writer cannot for a moment entertain, still, if we have once passed in safety through it under shelter of the "Everlasting Arms," shall we ever again distrust their power? *Therefore*, though Life and Death may alternate through all Eternity, as Day and Night do through all Time, there is no *reason* why Death's recurrence should ever *again* inspire dread. It is rare, however great a man's troubles may have been, to hear him declare he would rather never have lived; then may we not trust the same Providence which ordered our lot in *this* world (so that at least it is bearable) without misgiving for the future?