

run dry; one by one we tarry by the wayside; the tender young, full of promise; the middle-aged, in the strength and pride of manhood; the decrepit old man, loaded with the weight of many winters—all alike must yield to inexorable death.

"Born at a certain period in the eternal flow of time, we are carried a little while down its current; the longest life a mere breath, a dot; then we disappear from the surface to be no longer seen of men, and the stream continues to flow, almost heedless of our having lived. As entities we have a birth; as entities we die; nothing remains of our individual existence but a fleeting memory, for those who remember us soon pass away.

"Whence came we? Whither are we tending? Ah! who can tell? Some profess to know, but they know not. Where have last summer's roses gone? What will become of yon dry leaf, torn from its parent stem by this wintry blast? Like us, they disappear, and are merged into the ocean of matter from which they are evolved, ready to be recombined into new forms of beauty; for although individual existences perish, matter is imperishable; having had no birth, it will have no death. Like time and space, it is infinite and eternal.

"Brought forth into this world without being consulted, we are hurried out of it without our consent. Like that leaf which was the hope of spring, the pride and glory of summer, we are rudely torn away, the sport of destiny, to return to the elements of nature, whence we sprung—dust to dust.

"Of the future, the hereafter, we are as ignorant as the infinite conditions through which we have passed during the eternity which has preceded our brief present existences. If we could know the history of our past, we might get a glimpse of our future; but no message ever reached man from beyond the grave. The past is a sealed book; the future is a blank. No records are left to us, save those written in the rocks, and evidences brought before our senses; they tell their own stories. Nature and her laws are our only safe guides. Whatever doctrine conflicts with these cannot be true.

"We submit to nature's inexorable mandates. We submit, for however great our aspirations, they avail not; we are mere toys or instruments, subject, as everything that exists, to her immutable and ever-acting laws. We accept the inevitable without fear. Death means but new forms of life; in this sense there is no death. Our birth is a resurrection, our death a new birth.

"The past is beyond recall; the future is veiled in obscurity and in doubt; the present alone is ours. Let us do our part while we live. Let us promote advancement by studying nature and her laws. Let us live honest, useful lives. Let us consider every man, whatever his creed or birthplace, as a brother. Let us love one another. Mankind is but one great family.