

sight grew dim, and that phantom of the past hovered before my eyes in myriad forms. The truth came home at last as all truths will, that to every-one, the phantom wears a different shape; yet each, from every other one, may be asunder, as the poles; as different as light and darkness, as love and hate, Niagara and falling dew.

Let us sketch the Present. Ah yes! but how? If we turn backward but a single step, we are in the past. If we move forward but a single step, we are in the future. Then the present must be but a single line of demarcation between those two realms. Yet, is it possible, that the all-absorbing present, only for which, so many boast to live, can be so small? Can it be, that all we know of reality, is encompassed by one single breath? Still so it is, for of this much, and this only, are we sure. Then let us sketch it as a gate, separating those two realms, past and future, at the only passable point. How many pictures we thus may see from the strong, substantial gate, with many a brace and bar, which moves upon its hinges, with a steady wing, down to the old rickety gate, with half its hinges broken, scraping upon the ground as it moves to and fro. This gate also has a keeper, the *will*; and only to his touch will it open, as the door of that storied cave, swung back but for those magic words, "open sesame." Guard the present. Keep your gate, in good repair.

Again, speculation leads us behind a cloud, to catch a glimpse of the mystic and un-definable, future. Upon an ethereal, and ever changing plain, which, one moment, is bright with joy, the next is over-cast with sorrow, there stands a beautiful throne, of strange device, resting upon a gold-tinted cloud. The pillars which support it, are of curiously cawed sunbeams, and the body of the throne which these support is of the form of a great arm-chair. The arms were made of sections of the brightest rainbow. Upon this beautiful throne, was seated, Ambition, the ruler of the realm. On either hand, was gathered a host of subjects, all seeming anxious to know his will. These

were gathered into little knots or groups, each with his own kind. Nearest the throne was gathered a group, with up-turned faces, as though anxious to do the monarch's bidding. As some of the faces were turned toward me, I noticed that the name of each was stamped upon his brow and conspicuous among them I noticed, Envy, Malice, Deceit, False Pride, Cruelty and many more of their kind. On the other side, seated at a short distance, was another group, of a different character. Among them I noticed, Truth, Honesty, Patience, Prudence, and others of their kind; but they all were sad, for their sister Hope, was gone to characterize her history in the past. Presently the monarch called two of his subjects to him, Dishonesty and Cruelty, and told them to go to a certain place where they would find an old man bent and footsore, carrying a ragged bundle, this they were to steal away while the old man slept, for Curiosity had reported that it contained immense wealth. The faces of those two brightened with a wicked joy as they started on their way. But soon, all was dark, for Sorrow cast her shadowy wing over all the scene and we returned, no less wise perhaps, for our flight on fancy's wing.

These three ideal pictures, two of the ideal, one of the real from that of life. When first the light of this picture breaks upon our eyes, all is in the future; but the present, swings back and forth, taking in breath after breath of the future till its hinges are worn through, then all is past.

O, that phantom Past, whose weird spectre comes up at such unseemly times! Thou inevitable, and ever present image of that which has been; the outlines of whose forms are but the footprints, of deeds, stamped upon the tablet of memory. Deeds, which, perhaps, the world would gladly be given for the power to obliterate; but which are branded upon the heart, with a fire that is unquenchable; one which, though it smoulders for a time and is ever hidden from the eyes of the world, may yet be burning with the fiercest flame.

Does the world, to-day, know a heart, which has not its hated secret? Is there one single heart, so that it could raise its perfect image, to eyes of the world, without a blush? The picture of a man's own heart is the landscape of his eternity, be it heaven or hell! Our Creator is our painter, and on that landscape we may trace the imprint of our every deed, our every thought, each bringing its own reward.