

HAUNTINGS

FROM life's first dawn till now, when life's new stress
 Drives all things swifter into consciousness,
 Earth has been full of those strange secret things
 Which we touch sometimens in our quickenings ;
 When in the veils which commonly divide
 From that we vaguely term the further side,
 Rent or thin place makes possible to see
 That which encompasses so pressingly.
 There is no man, however steeped in sense,
 But can recall some such experience,
 When dusk or dark or daylight dimly gave
 Suggestions which are deeper than the grave,
 And soul in body for a moment felt
 Contact with souls that in no flesh have dwelt.
 And then we know there is a houseless host
 Of incomplete humanities, of ghost
 And spectral people, who, from dregs and lees
 And depths of stagnant and unconscious seas
 Exhaled, their evolution's course begin,
 But, though remote, are still our kith and kin,
 And in the process of the ages may
 Reach, as we reached, our larger share of day.
 You cannot draw your window blinds at night
 And not shut thousands from your chamber's light ;
 You cannot fling your windows wide at morn
 But thousands enter, on the sunbeams borne :
 Sad is their lot, midst all their crowds alone,
 To none responding and by all unknown ;
 And yet the pity in the human heart
 For all life's travail, of which theirs is part,
 By solidarity of all things here,
 Helps these poor souls, so far and yet so near ;
 Just as our kindness to the dear, dumb beasts
 First hallows us, making us Nature's priests,
 Then helps their prisoned yearning to assuage,
 And lastly leads them in their pilgrimage.
 Ah ! pity, tenderness, and love—these three
 And the Great God above—and these are He !

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