

DEATH—THE DELIVERER.

BY JUDGE CONRAD.

PALE, trembling watcher, by the dark grave's brink,
Why dost thou falter? Wherefore dost thou shrink?
Death is no foe; and though—still, stealthy, near—
His creeping footstep breaks upon thine ear;
Why shouldst thou weep? With vain regrets away!
They cannot add, to lapsing life, a day.
Sorrow and fear, themselves the shades of death,
Hollow the cheek and check the struggling breath:
Thus the frail snow-wreath, in the wintry ray,
Shrinks from the sun and weeps itself away.
How vain the sordid fear, the miser kill,
That o'er life's treasured fragments trembles still;
Trembles and weeps to mark how fast decays
The wretched remnant of his tortured days.
Death cannot come, unless it come from High;
He mocks his God who meets it with a sigh.
Ungrateful, too! Life is a generous boon,
Which claimed to-morrow, is not claimed too soon,
'Tis Heaven's, not ours—the lease of a domain;
And is it well, when claimed by Heaven again,
To yield reluctant our departing breath,
And meet, with moody tears, God's steward—Death?
When earth was cursed, and life a dream was made,
Where crime dogs crime, and shade still follows shade,
Death would have been the worship'd of the land,
And man had perished by his own right hand;
But from our hearts to drive this fell despair,
The instinct dread of death was planted there.
Now, when relenting nature, sent to save,
Opens to wo-worn man the gentle grave,
And points him there, his griefs and perils past,
A refuge and a resting place, at last;
What hopes, what joys should swell his grateful breast
To greet the couch that yields unbroken rest!
There let him sleep! There all of us must sleep.
Why o'er his tranquil pillow should we weep?
A sun-lit mind, soul generous, bland and brave;
My twin'd heart slumbers in his distant grave!
Yet, o'er the blest and honored, why repine?
His is the cradled calm—the tempest mine.
Want cannot reach him, slander cannot harm;
No spurn can wound him, and no frown alarm;
No dreams of ill can haunt, no fears affright;
No foe can wrong him, and no friend can slight.
Sleep! thou whom ill can never more betide!
Sleep on! would I were resting by thy side!
Why wouldst thou live? For self? Behold the past!
Such is the future. Wouldst thou have it last?

Like Arctic mountains, on whose hoary brow
Each winter adds its growing weight of snow,
Life numbers seasons by increasing cares,
And, year by year, a heavier burthen bears.
But, for thy friend, thou'lt welcome every wo?
A day, perchance, will make that friend thy foe.
Or for thy child? Live; and his prayer will be,
That death free thee from ill, and him from thee!
Or for thy country? Or thy race? Away!
Sneers, scoffs and wrongs thy idle pains repay.
Death comes too soon, 't is said. The wise and brave
No season deem too early for the grave.
In youth, mid-life and age, the same our doom:
The best has fled; the worst has yet to come.
The grave alone ne'er changes. On its breast,
And there alone, we know untroubled rest;
Its kindness never wavers, wanes, decays:
Death is the only friend that ne'er betrays.
Man fears not age, yet shrinks from death. He knows
That age is weariness and death repose;
Yet from a coward fear, he trembling prays
To be accurs'd with length of wretched days;
To bear about a frame, convulsed with pains,
Whose watery blood scarce swells its frigid veins;
Yet cling, with palsied grasp, to torture still,
And deem death comes too soon, come when it will!
Death cannot sin. Each hour boasts now its crime;
And vice and folly mark the pace of time.
How few improve with years! E'en from our birth,
Our roots strike deeper in the sordid earth.
The grave! nor guilt nor passion haunts that shore;
We sleep, untempted, there, and sin no more!
Is death a stranger to thee? Look abroad!
'Tis on all life—the signet mark of God!
Creation's pale-eyed offspring and its heir,
Wherever matter is, lo! death is there!
We gaze around, and see but death: we tread,
And every step reverberates o'er the dead!
Death, in thy boyhood, gambol'd at thy side;
Was with thee still in manhood's strength and pride;
Mixed with thy toils and revels, joy and wo:
And wouldst thou meet him, as a stranger, now?
Mysterious minister! whose gentle sway,
Draws us from grief and gloom and guilt away;
May thy dread summons, whensoever 't is sent,
Meet the calm courage of a life well spent;
Take, without struggle, our expiring breath,
And give that better life that knows no death.

THE WIFE.

BY ELIZABETH OKES SMITH, AUTHOR OF "THE SINLESS CHILD," ETC.

All day, like a bright bird, content to sing
In its small cage, she moveth to and fro,
And ever and anon will upward spring
To her sweet lips, fresh from the fount below,
The murmured melody of pleasant thought,
Unconscious uttered, gentle-toned and low.
Light household duties, evermore enwrought

With placid fancies of one noble heart,
That liveth in her smile, and hither turns
From life's cold seeming, and the busy mart,
With tenderness that homeward ever yearns
To be refreshed where that pure altar burns,
Shut out from hence the mockery of life,
Thus liveth she content, the meek, fond, trusting Wife.