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 The evaporation of a joyous day
 Is like the last glass of champagne, without
 The foam which made its virgin bumper gay;
 Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
 Or like a soda bottle when its spray
 Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
 Or like a billow left by storms behind,
 Without the animation of the wind;

 Or like an opiate, which brings troubled rest,
 Or none; or like—like nothing that I know
 Except itself;—such is the human breast:
 A thing, of which similitudes can show
 No real likeness,—like the old Tyrian vest
 Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
 If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
 So perish every Tyrant's robe piece-meal!

 But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
 Undressing is a woe; our *robe de chambre*
 May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
 Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than
 amber.
 Titus exclaimed, 'I've lost a day!' Of all
 The nights and days most people can remember,
 (I have had of both, some not to be disdained,
 I wish they'd state how many they have gained.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
 And fevers into false creation:—where,
 Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?
 In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
 Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
 The unreached Paradise of our despair,
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
 And overpowers the page where it would bloom
 again?

The Beings of the Mind are not of clay:
 Essentially immortal, they create
 And multiply in us a brighter ray
 And more beloved existence: that which Fate
 Prohibits to dull life in this our state
 Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,
 First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
 Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
 And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

 Such is the refuge of our youth and age—
 The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
 And this wan feeling peoples many a page—
 And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:

Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse . . .

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Criticism

I can sincerely say, that I am not very much alive *now* to criticism. But—in tracing this—I rather believe that it proceeds from my not attaching that importance to authorship, which many do, and which, when young, I did also. 'One gets tired of every thing, my angel', says Valmont. The 'angels' are the only things of which I am not a little sick—but I do think the preference of *writers* to *agents*—the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes, by themselves and others a sign of effeminacy, degeneracy, and weakness. Who would write, who had any thing better to do? 'Action—action—action'—said Demosthenes: 'Actions—actions', I say, and not writing—least of all, rhyme. Look at the querulous and monotonous lives of the 'genus'; except Cervantes, Tasso, Dante, Ariosto, Kleist (who were brave and active citizens), Aeschylus, Sophocles and some other of the antiques also—what a worthless, idle brood it is!

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Matter

Matter is eternal, always changing, but reproduced, and, as far as we can comprehend Eternity, Eternal; and why not *Mind*? Why should not the Mind act with and upon the Universe? as portions of it act upon and with the congregated dust called Mankind? See, how one man acts upon himself and others, or upon multitudes? The same Agency, in a higher and purer degree, may act upon the Stars, etc., ad infinitum.

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The soul

Of the Immortality of the Soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of Mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body: in dreams for instance incoherently and madly, I grant you; but still it is *Mind*, and much more *Mind* than when we are awake. Now, that *this* should not act *separately*, as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state 'a Soul which drags a Carcase: a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains, being material, may be shaken off'.

How far our future life will be individual, or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our *present* existence, is another question; but that the *Mind* is *eternal*, seems as probable as that the body is not so. Of course, I have ventured upon the question without recurring to Revelation, which, however, is at least as rational a solution of it as any other.

A *material* resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment, which is to *revenge* rather than *correct*, must be *morally wrong*. And *when the World is at an end*, what moral or warning purpose *can* eternal tortures answer? Human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here, but the whole thing is inscrutable. It is useless to tell me *not to reason*, but to *believe*. You might as well tell a man not to wake but *sleep*. And then to *bully* with torments! and all that! I cannot help thinking that the *menace* of Hell makes as many devils, as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains.

Man is born *passionate* of body, but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Mainspring of Mind. But God help us all! It is at present a sad jar of atoms.

The great object of life is sensation—to feel that we exist, even though in pain. It is this ‘craving void’ which drives us to gaming—to battle—to travel—to intemperate, but keenly felt pursuits of any description, whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment.