

EPILOGUE.

PRAYER.

THE light streams stronger through the lamps of
sense.

Intelligence
Grows as we go. Alas: its icy glimmer
Shows dimmer, dimmer
The awful vaults we traverse. Were the sun
Himself the one
Glory of space, he would but illustrate
The night of Fate.
Are not the hosts of heaven in vain arrayed?
Their light dismayed
Before the vast blind spaces of the sky?
O galaxy
Of thousands upon thousands closely curled!
Your golden world

Incalculably small, its closest cluster
Mere milky lustre
Staining the infinite darkness! Base and blind
Our minion mind
Seeks a great light, a light sufficient, light
Insufferably bright,

Hence hidden for an hour: imagining
 This vast vain thing,
We called it God, and Father. Empty hand
 And prayer unplanned
Stretch fatuous to the void. Ah! men my
 friends,
 What fury sends
This folly to intoxicate your hearts?
 Dread air disparts

Your vital ways from these unsavoury follies,
 Black melancholies
Sit straddled on your bended backs. The throne
 Of the unknown
Is fit for children. We are too well ware
 How vain is prayer,
How nought is great, since all is immanent,
 The vast content
Of all the universe unalterable.
 We know too well
How no one thing abides awhile at all,
 How all things fall,
Fall from their seat, the lamentable place,
 Before their face,

Weary and pass and are no more. So we,
 Since hope must be,
Look to the future, to the chance minute
 That life may shoot

Some flower at least to blossom in the
night,

Since vital light

Is sure to fail us on the hideous way.

What? Must we pray?

Verily, O thou littlest babe, too weak

To stir or speak,

Capable hardly of a thought, yet seed

Of word and deed!

To thine assured fruition we may trust

This weary dust.

We who are old, and palsied, (and so wise!)

Lift up our eyes

To little children, as the storm-tossed bark

Hails in the dark

Some hardly visible harbour light; we hold

The hours of gold

To our own breasts, whose hours are iron and

brass:—

So swift they pass

And grind us down:—we hold the wondrous light

Our scattering sight

Yet sees, the one star in a night of woe.

We trust, and so

Lift up our voices in the dying day

Indeed to pray:

O little hands that are so soft and strong,

Lead us along!