

In mature manhood, when I had found my life-calling and consecrated my strength to it, I once more came across my flower. The presentiment which the frail and perishing blossom had awakened in my soul had ripened into insight, and I had recognised its true symbol in the deep-rooted, wide-branching, long-living tree. I had rediscovered that mystic tree of knowledge of good and evil that grew in paradise, and learned from it to discriminate between right and wrong, between illusion and reality. Now, at last, after fifty years, I know why in my musing boyhood I loved to peer into the heart of the flower. It was because my soul was stirred by a presentiment of the depth and meaning of life. What I beheld in symbol you, mother, behold in reality in your dear baby. Must fifty years pass over your head, as over mine, before you understand what his life is telling you about itself and about all life? Must you, too, wait until life is nearly over before you know what it means? Of what avail will such tardy knowledge be to you or to your child?

What shall we learn from our yearning look into the heart of the flower and the eye of the child? This truth: Whatever develops, be it into flower or tree or man, is from the beginning implicitly that which it has the power to become. The possibility of perfect manhood is what you read in your child's eye, just as the perfect flower is prophesied in the bud or the giant oak in the tiny acorn. A presentiment that the ideal or generic human being slumbers,

dreams, stirs in your unconscious infant—this it is, O mother, which transfigures you as you gaze upon him. Strive to define to yourself what is that generic ideal which is wrapped up in your child. Surely, as *your* child—or, in other words, as child of man—he is destined to live in the past and future as well as in the present. His earthly being implies a past heaven; his birth makes a present heaven; in his soul he holds a future heaven. This threefold heaven, which you also bear within you, shines out on you through your child's eyes.

The beast lives only in the present. Of past and future he knows naught. But to man belong not only the present, but also the future and the past. His thought pierces the heaven of the future and hope is born. He learns that all human life is one life; that all human joys and sorrows are his joys and sorrows, and through participation enters the present heaven—the heaven of love. He turns his mind towards the past, and out of retrospection wrests a vigorous faith. What soul could fail to conquer an invincible trust, in the pure, the good, the holy, the ideally human, the truly divine, if it would look with single eye into its own past, into the past of history? Could there be a man in whose soul such a contemplation of the past would fail to blossom into devout insight, into self-conscious and self-comprehending faith? Must not such a retrospect unveil the truth? Must not the beauty of the unveiled truth allure him to divine doing, divine living? All

that is high and holy in human life meets in that faith which is born of the unveiling of a heaven that has always been; in that hope born of a vision of the heaven that shall be; in that love which creates a heaven in the eternal now. These three heavens shine out upon you through your child's eye. The presentiment that he carries these three heavens within him transfigures your countenance as you gaze upon him. Cherish this premonition, for thereby you will help him to make his life a musical chord wherein are blended the three notes of faith, hope, and love. These celestial virtues will link his life with the divine life, through which all life is one—with the God who is the supernal fountain of Life, Light, and Love.