

**THE PEAK IN DARIEN WITH SOME
OTHER INQUIRIES TOUCHING
CONCERNS OF THE SOUL AND
THE BODY: AN OCTAVE OF
ESSAYS**

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The peak in Darien with some other inquiries touching concerns of the soul and the body: an octave of essays by Frances Power Cobbe

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FRANCES POWER COBBE

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FRANCES POWER COBBE.

From "Life of Frances Power Cobbe." By Hersch.

THE PEAK IN DARIEN,

WITH SOME OTHER INQUIRIES TOUCHING CONCERNS OF THE
SOUL AND THE BODY.

AN OCTAVE OF ESSAYS

BY

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

“Das Leben ist der Güter höchstes nicht ;
Der Uebel grösstes aber ist die Schuld.”

Die Braut von Messina.



BOSTON:
GEO. H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
LONDON: WILLIAMS & NORGATE,
1882.

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PREFACE.

My last little book, *Lectures on the Duties of Women*, was addressed principally to the young of my own sex. The present volume is intended for my contemporaries who are daily brought face to face with some of the darker problems of the time, or are led by their advancing years to ponder ever more earnestly on the mystery of the great transition. In these various papers,—some new, some already published in different periodicals,—I have striven to meet fairly the questions whether the denial of God and immortality be indeed (as Agnostics and Comtists are wont to boast) a “magnanimous” creed, whether life be truly (as Leopardi and Schopenhauer and hundreds of their English disciples din daily in our ears) a burden and a curse, and whether (as much recent legislation and newspaper literature would seem to teach) bodily health be after all the *summum bonum* for which personal freedom, courage, humanity, and purity ought all to be sacrificed?

To these discussions, I have added one on the "Fitness of Women for the Ministry of Religion,"—a subject, I believe, destined soon to acquire importance,—with two or three less serious papers on other matters touching moral questions; and, in conclusion, I have returned to a speculation concerning the immediate entry into the life after death which I find has possessed interest for many readers. That "Peak in Darien," which we must all ascend in our turn,—the apex of two worlds, whence the soul may possibly descry the horizonless Pacific of eternity,—is the turning-point of human hope. And it appears to me infinitely strange that so little attention has been paid to the cases wherein indications seem to have been given of the perception by the dying of blessed presences revealed to them even as the veil of flesh has dropped away. Were I permitted to record with names and references half the instances of this occurrence which have been narrated to me, this short essay might have been swelled to a volume. It is my wish, however, that it should serve to suggest observation and provoke the interchange of experiences, rather than be considered as pretending to decide affirmatively the question wherewith it deals.

Perhaps it may be as well to forestall any misapprehension by stating plainly that I utterly

disbelieve, and even regard with intense dislike, all so-called "Spiritualist" manifestations and attempts to recall the dead; and that I have never found any sufficient testimony for stories of ghosts or apparitions of the departed beheld by men and women still in the midst of life. Only at the very moment when we are passing into their arms does it seem to me that the law of our being may permit us to recognize once more the beloved ones who are "not lost, but gone before." The lines of W. J. Fox precisely express my thought on this subject: —

Call them from the dead!
Vain the call must be;
But the hand of death shall lay,
Like that of Christ, its healing clay
On eyes which then shall see
That glorious company.

FRANCES POWER COBBE

JULY, 1882.

