

VOICES NOT OUR OWN

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1 Many peculiar circumstances and events connected
with my childhood through the chambers of memory.
3 For some twelve months, when I was about eight years
old, I repeatedly heard a voice, calling me distinctly by
name, three times, in an ascending scale. I thought this
6 was my mother's voice, and sometimes went to her, be-
seeching her to tell me what she wanted. Her answer was
always, "Nothing, child! What do you mean?" Then
9 I would say, "Mother, who *did* call me? I heard some-
body call *Mary*, three times!" This continued until I
grew discouraged, and my mother was perplexed and
12 anxious.

One day, when my cousin, Mehitable Huntoon, was
visiting us, and I sat in a little chair by her side, in the
15 same room with grandmother, — the call again came, so
loud that Mehitable heard it, though I had ceased to
notice it. Greatly surprised, my cousin turned to me and
18 said, "Your mother is calling you!" but I answered not,
till again the same call was thrice repeated. Mehitable
then said sharply, "Why don't you go? your mother is
21 calling you!" I then left the room, went to my mother,
and once more asked her if she had summoned me? She
answered as always before. Then I earnestly declared
24 my cousin had heard the voice, and said that mother

1 wanted me. Accordingly she returned with me to grand-
mother's room, and led my cousin into an adjoining apart-
3 ment. The door was ajar, and I listened with bated
breath. Mother told Mehitable all about this mysterious
voice, and asked if she really did hear Mary's name pro-
6 nounced in audible tones. My cousin answered quickly,
and emphasized her affirmation.

That night, before going to rest, my mother read to me
9 the Scriptural narrative of little Samuel, and bade me,
when the voice called again, to reply as he did, "Speak,
Lord; for Thy servant heareth." The voice came; but
12 I was afraid, and did not answer. Afterward I wept, and
prayed that God would forgive me, resolving to do, next
time, as my mother had bidden me. When the call came
15 again I did answer, in the words of Samuel, but never
again to the material senses was that mysterious call
repeated.

18 Is it not much that I may,
With naught my spirit's breathings to control,
And feel His presence in the vast and dim
21 And whispering woods, where dying thunders roll
From the far cataracts? Shall I not rejoice
That I have learned at last to know His voice
24 From man's? — I will rejoice! My soaring soul
Now hath redeemed her birthright of the day,
And won, through clouds, to Him, her own unfettered way!
27 — MRS. HEMANS