

Crabbe have occurred to me in connection with your wife's untimely death:—

“Then died lamented, in the strength of life,
A valiant mother and a faithful wife;”

Not when the ills of age, its pains, its care,
The drooping spirit for its fate prepare,

But all her ties the strong invader broke
In all their strength, by one tremendous
stroke.”

Taking out a little Bible which I always carry with me, I said:—

“In thinking of you, last evening, I turned and read these words of Jeremiah in his Lamentations, which, it seemed to me, you could so appropriately use:

“I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.

“He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light.

“Surely against me is He turned; He turneth His hand against me all the day.

“My flesh and my skin hath made me old; He hath broken my bones.

“He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail.

“He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; He hath made my chain heavy.

“He was unto me as a bear lying in wait; and as a lion in secret places.

“He hath turned aside my ways and pulled me in pieces; He hath made me desolate.

“He hath bent His bow and set me as a mark for the arrow.

“He hath caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins.

“He hath filled me with bitterness; He hath made me drunken with wormwood.

“He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones; He hath covered me with ashes.

“And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forgot prosperity.”

“You could hardly express your trouble in so many and such various terms Mr. W., They all apply to you; and what a book

the bible is, containing everything suitable to each case!”

He made no remark; and I added—
“Job, too, was brought to my mind by your bereavements. All his children were cut off.”

“Yes, but his wife was left. She was not much, I am inclined to think; yet he had somebody to talk to, and to be with him. I wander all over my house, and there is not one place where I feel that I can sit down. It is haunted by some association, or it seems so lonely that I change the place but keep the pain. Oh, Mr. M., if I had the management of affairs, I would not ex-cruciate men in this way.”

“He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,” said I.

“Willingly or not,” said he, “it is done; and how can I think well of One who does this? Now, I am a rational creature; I have sense and reason; I am not a machine or beast. I must judge of things as they are, and I cannot bow my affections to a Being whom I cannot love. I suppose that I am worse than people in general in this thing, but I cannot help it, my feelings are involuntary.”

“I do not think that you are worse than people in general, by any means,” said I, “in having these feelings. Thousands have them who do not express them as you do.”

“Now,” said he, “that is the only decent thing that has been said to me this fortnight past. My relations are all Presbyterians, church-going people, and they think me a regular blasphemer.”

“But,” said I, “it is a poor compliment to say that you are no worse than thousands who, like you have a carnal mind, which is enmity against God; for it is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be.”

“That is rather plain language,” said he.

“You certainly are not the man to be offended at the truth, Mr. W., after uttering yourself as plainly as you have to me respecting the Most High!”