

The transition is a mysterious one from life to death—from the consciousness, the effort, and the enjoyment of the present scene, to the silence and solitude of the grave. But that solitude has a voice and a language of its own; it is itself the utterance of a great truth—the memento of a fact of which it is the practical development; it is the solemn assertion of man's mortality!—the declaration and the proof that “man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.”

It is thus that death is embodied in a tangible reality, and transmitted from age to age, as the common inheritance of man. Often as the tomb throws open its gloomy portals, to receive the continuous stream of intrants to its dark domains, it anew records the fact that death is man's inevitable destination; that disposed as those may be to whom health and strength are assigned, to forget or to disregard the certainty of its approach, still the proof is continually presented in that testimony which the *departed* furnish, that “it is appointed unto men once to die.” It is written as the common epitaph of all; although, perhaps, the only thing they had in common—that they died. The decaying body, on which corruption fastens; the grassy mound, beneath which it dissolves into its kindred dust; the tablet, on which affection records a few incidents in the simple story of the earthly career; all have a voice for the ear of contemplation! And through these tokens of mortality, it is true of the occupant of the grave that “he being dead yet speaketh”—proclaiming the certainty that “the earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved.”