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There is no subject of thought more melancholy, more wonderful, than the way in which God permits so often His best gifts to be trodden under foot of men, His richest treasures to be wasted by the moth, and the mightiest influences of His spirit, given but once in the world's history, to be quenched and shortened by miseries of chance and guilt. I do not wonder at what men suffer, but I wonder often at what they lose. We may see how good rises out of pain and evil; but the dead, naked, eyeless loss, what good comes of that? The fruit struck to the earth before its ripeness; the glowing life and goodly purpose dissolved away

in sudden death; the words, half spoken, choked, upon the lips with clay for ever; or, stranger than all, the whole majesty of humanity raised to its fulness, and every gift and power necessary for a given purpose, at a given moment, centered in one man, and all this perfected blessing permitted to be refused, perverted, crushed, cast aside by those who need it most—the city which is not set on a hill, the candle that giveth light to none that are in the house—these are the heaviest mysteries of this strange world, and, it seems to me, those which mark its curse the most.—*Ruskin's Stones of Venice.*