

"The most distinct account of the eastern lamentations that Sir J. Chardin has given, is in the sixth volume of his MS.; by which we learn that their emotions of joy, as well as of sorrow, are expressed by loud cries. The passage is extremely curious, and the purport of it is as follows: "And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians, and the house of Pharaoh heard." This is exactly the genius of the people of Asia, especially of the women. Their sentiments of joy or of grief are, properly, transports; and their transports are un-governed, excessive, and truly outrageous.

When any one returns from a long journey, or dies, his family burst into cries, that many he heard twenty doors off; and this is renewed at different times, and continues many days, according to the vigour of the passion. Especially are these cries long in the case of death, and frightful; for their mourning is right down despair, and an image of hell. I was lodged, in the year 1676, at Ispahan, near the Royal Square; the mistress of the next house to mine died at the time. The moment she expired, all the family, to the number of twenty-five or thirty people, set up such a furious cry, that I was quite started, and was shoo two hours before I could recover myself. These cries continue a long time, then cease all at once: they begin again, as suddenly, at day-break, and in concert. It is this suddenness which is so terrifying, together with a greater shrillness and loudness than one would easily imagine. This enraged kind of mourning, if I may call it so, continued forty days; and equally violent; but with diminution from day to day. The longest and most violent acts were, when they washed the body, when they perfumed it, when they carried it out to be interred, at making the inventory, and when they divided the effects. You are not to suppose that those who were ready to split their throats with crying out, wept as much; as the greater part of them did not shed a single tear through the whole tragedy.

"The shadow of death," is a kind of proverbial phrase, which often occurs in the Old Testament, and sometimes in the New. It generally denotes some dark or gloomy scene, accompanied with imminent danger, fear, or terror, but has no immediate reference to death: the shadow of death is not death. In Job. xxiv. 17, the wicked, who had been committing their crimes during the night, are represented in the morning to be in the shadow of death: that is, they are in fear lest they should be discovered; light to them is what darkness is to others. The phrase occurs in the 23d Psalm, which David hunted from place to place. Though he was obliged to lie concealed in caverns and dreary forests, and suffered much affliction, yet he expresses his full confidence in God, as his Shepherd, who would guide, protect, and provide for him. This phrase should not be restricted to death; though it has often been improperly so applied.

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

"THERE IS NOTHING BUT TROUBLE IN THIS WORLD."

CONVERSING with men of different ages, and in various circumstances, I have heard many of them speak of the unsatisfactoriness of worldly enjoyments: nay, it has been very frequently affirmed, *There is nothing but trouble in this world.* Having heard this hackneyed expression drop from the lips of a person in company the other day, I was led to examine it. And was the more inclined to do so, because, I myself never found the world to be so much a vale of tears, as to afford "nothing but trouble." I have had that share of the troubles of life, which divine Providence has seen good to appoint, or to permit; and have several times been in circumstances peculiarly painful and trying. But on a cool, dispassionate review of the good I have enjoyed and the evil I have suffered, the former far outweighs the latter.

The enquiry then arose in my mind, "Is the world more indulgent to me than to others? The Maker and Governor of the world has been kind and gracious to me in every point of view; and he is loving to all, and his mercy is over all his works. I am not, indeed, sufficiently acquainted with the circumstances, comforts, and sorrows of others; to determine, with certainty, how far the one exceeds the other. However, so far as one

can judge from appearances, mankind, in general, have a greater share of good than evil. I say, in general, for there may be exceptions: Some particular persons are perpetually troubled on every side, and all under the sun, is, to them, "vanity and vexation of spirit." Allowing these exceptions, (which are comparatively few,) notwithstanding all the evils which sin has introduced into our world, through the merciful indulgence of God, our cup, though mixed, has more of the sweet than the bitter.

From these views, it is natural to enquire, how it comes to pass that such multitudes who are, at least, in tolerable circumstances, so often declare, "There is nothing but trouble in this world?"

To form a right judgment on this subject, it is necessary to attend to the character, spirit, pursuits, and conduct of men. By this means we may ascertain the true causes of that general dissatisfaction and discontent which prevail amongst men of all ranks.

1. The natural ingratitude of the human heart is one principal cause of those complaints of the world which are so common. A gracious Providence daily loads us with benefits. We receive ten thousand thousand precious gifts at his hands, and think little of them. But if any of them be withdrawn, we immediately complain as though we were injured: And when sickness, losses in trade, or loss of friends check our path, we arraign at our bar the Judge of all the Earth; "re-judge his Justice?" pass a severe censure on the divine conduct, and exclaim, "There is nothing but trouble in this world."

2. One extreme frequently produces another: and men, like the wind, turn about from East to West. Hence, an undue, idolatrous attachment to the world often produces dissatisfaction and discontent.

In the morning of life, while the spirits are vigorous, and the heart beats high for happiness, and the mind is blinded by the god of this world, many please themselves with flattering prospects of uninterrupted prosperity. The path through life appears smooth and flowery: No thorns or briars in the way. The voyage of life is to be accomplished without storms, without danger, or inconvenience. Every succeeding change in their connections and condition is to be a gradual ascent from pleasure to pleasure; and the deluded mind sees no end of its enjoyments. For a while, perhaps, a variety of agreeable events, confirm the high expectations of the enraptured soul. But soon the path of life becomes rough and thorny,—the sea becomes tempestuous,—"Disappointment smiles at Hope's career." Those changes which promised increasing delight, are sources of sorrow, and the mind, soured by disappointments, can relish none of the enjoyments of life.

3. The observation just made seems, however, to apply to those only who have been what is commonly called unfortunate. There are others whose path scarcely appears chequered: Health and prosperity have been their constant attendants. They are not in outward trouble like other men, and have more than heart can wish. Yet even some of these will join in the common cry, "There is nothing, &c." The reason is obvious. They put the creature in the place of the Creator; and find, by sad experience, that the best things the world can afford, are disproportionate to the desires of the rational, immortal mind.

But this general complaint of present troubles, is not confined to worldly men. Religious persons not unfrequently fall into the same error.

In some cases, this may arise from a culpable weariness of the world, an unwillingness to endure affliction. Such expressions often drop from the lips of pious persons of a gloomy, discouraged temper, under the pressure of present trials. Sometimes good men are so distressed with the views which they have of the corrupt state of mankind, and are so afflicted on account of the wickedness, perhaps, of near relatives, that they view the world through a wrong medium, and can see nothing but evil. And we frequently hear aged people, who are sinking under infirmities, whose "world is dead," and, therefore, have little left to endure life unto them, exclaiming, "There is," &c.

Learn, O my soul, 1. To value the comforts of life as the gifts of divine bounty, and improve them to the glory of God. Let the evils of life be so many means of weaning thee from the world and the creature.

2. Make thy God thy All: Then thou shalt preserve equanimity of temper in all conditions and circumstances.

3. Look at the things which are not seen. Soon shalt thou enter into that state and place where all is rest, quietness, and assurance for ever. Amen.

A SICK DISCIPLE.

I fell in with such an one lately, and felt moved to give some account of him. A few particulars may possibly help some to recover who are now sick, and keep others from becoming so.

1. *His countenance was changed.* Sick people's faces are not apt to look like other people's. They look pale, and often sad and sorrowful. The healthful glow had left the countenance of this disciple. Moses' face shone, and the Lord accepted Job's face, and a cheerful one, for that reason it must have been. David could say, "The Lord is the health of my countenance," and hence it could not look sickly and sad. And Paul's face was so steadfastly set towards Heaven, was so illumined with hope, and so animated by a cheerful courage, that it must have been a comfort to look upon it. But this disciple's face was the contrast of all this. There was neither courage, nor hope, nor peace, nor any of the characteristics of spiritual health upon it. This was partly the result of another thing.

2. *He had no appetite.* And if one has not, in due time his face will show it. I saw the very best of food offered him. It was such food that one of the best judges in the world pronounced it "the finest of the wheat." "Oil out of the rock, and honey out of the flinty rock, and more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles had fond it the greatest luxury in the world. But one disciple did not relish it. There was a banquet house near him where he could find this food served up in good style, once a week, and social repasts were very frequently within reach, beside having a store of it in his own house. But the unfrequency of going after it, and the indifference shown to what he had at home, manifested that he had a miserable appetite. The utmost pains had been taken to provide him with the most savory dishes, but all would not do.

3. *His weak and tottering steps* also showed that he was out of health. When I saw him, there was some appearance as though he was commencing a pilgrimage to a distant but beautiful country. It seemed as if something had been done towards having his loins girt about, and his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and there had been hope that he would have walked on firmly and boldly; yea, even run without being weary. But those who had hoped for all this had to take it all back. He was scarcely in motion at all when I saw him. What there was of motion was so languid and feeble that there was little progress. There was no question about his being sick. People said he was a strong man to run a race in regard to the world, but I was looking at his progress to Zion. If he was worldly well, he was spiritually sick, that I shall not give up.

4. *Sick people are often excessively drowsy.* And this was one aspect of the disease of this sick disciple. A voice of prodigious energy and power, had often broke upon him in the appeal, "Watch!" but he would nod with drowsiness while it was ringing in his ears. And again, the same voice, waxing very loud, had sought to shake him with the sound, "Awake, thou that sleepest!" But his eyelids only opened a little way when they basted together again, and he was in as sound a slumber as ever. And he has been long in the same stupid state. And as all means, even the very best, have been used to rouse him into wakefulness, and have failed, there is great anxiety about his case.

There are several more things that I might say about the sick disciple, but I can stop now only for two.

1. *His sickness makes others sick.* Some diseases are not contagious, and thankful we might well be if this were one of them. But very sorrowful instances have I seen of the contrary. His drooping face has made other faces droop. His want of appetite for spiritual food has seemed to cause others to lose theirs. And some of his companions in the Christian pilgrimage here, appeared to learn of him to pursue their way with feeble, languid, and tottering steps. And his