

into vanity and vexation of spirit.'” Goethe, the distinguished German philosopher and poet, declared, at the age of eighty-four, when the lights of time went out, and the great load-stars of eternity all there beginning to open out on his vision, that he had scarcely, in the last twenty-four hours’ solid happiness in the whole course of his protracted career. Lord Byron, the great poet, gifted beyond measure in genius, destitute more than many of grace, wrote on his experience in his own beautiful but unhappy strain, when he lay on the verge of the tomb:—

“Though gay companions o’er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill,
Though pleasure fill the maddening soul,
The heart—the heart is lonely still.

“Ay, but to die, and go, alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go;
To be the nothing that I was,
Ere born to life and living woe.

“Count o’er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o’er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
’Tis something better not to be.

“Nay, for myself, so dark my fate
Through every turn of life hath been,
Men and the world so much I hate,
I care not when I quit the scene.”

The bitter sarcasm of the poet contrasts, indeed, with the glorious confession of the Apostle, “I have fought a good fight, I am ready to be offered up. There is reserved for me a crown of righteousness.” Voltaire, a French atheist, pronounced the world to be full of wretches, and himself the most wretched of them all.—Moliere, one of the same school, died calling in his last moments for opium, to deaden the terrible forebodings of coming woe.—Rabelais died intoxicated and blaspheming. Hobbes prepared to take “a leap in the dark;” and Hume died joking and jesting about the boat of Charon, very much in the way which school-boys whistle when they walk through a dark and lonely place, just to keep their spirits up, and their terrors down.