

spoke and shone through this now fixed and lightless countenance, that felt and acted through these senseless immoveable organs—whose vacant harmony and lingering consistence render the circumstance of so severe a dispensation only more distinctly visible, yet more terribly mysterious. Hath that living principle too suffered? Hath it submitted to similar ruin—ceased to act, to exist? or hath it merely changed its tenement; and taking up a new residence, is it now exempt from toil and woe; from any further or repeated dissolution? Or doth it continue in a cold and cheerless separation—hovering over the remains of its former companion, waiting and longing for a happy reunion?

But the ravages of death are not thus restrained. His dominion is unbounded. He rules in every clime—in every generation. Decay is the portion of all that is material—the lot of its inheritance. The animate and inanimate creation alike receive its impress. The tender plant—the creeping vine, falls before it. So doth the stately oak—the cedar of Lebanon—the meanest insect that creeps along, and the strong lion, king of beasts, fall together beneath its indiscriminate stroke. The fleet deer cannot escape it; the lofty eagle cannot soar beyond its reach. It comes too in due season to the human race—mortality is written on the brow of every child of man; its terrors are graven on his heart, and sooner or later, by disease or accident, in the feebleness of infancy or decrepitude of age, or perchance in the full vigor of manhood, Death, which levels all distinctions, will smite us, even us, and mingle the ashes of our now erect and healthful frames with the clods of the soil—with the dust of the beasts which perish!

But this is not all. The mere physical circumstances of death, even when combined with its commonness, are not half so affecting as its uncertainty. There is nothing sure about it, but that it will come: the when and the how—its time and manner are all unknown, and so in general are the consequences of death. The dead, proverbially, tell no tales; they will not return at our call. And would one rise from the dead to disclose to us the secrets of his dark and silent prison-house, it is improbable that we should believe him. It is then this secrecy and uncertainty which oppress us. They give to death the character of a gloomy and malicious tyrant, who refines upon cruelty, and rejoices more in the suspense than in the destruction of his victims. His very whisper grades harsh thunder in our ears and shakes the firmest nerves at the dread of his approach. Oh! how aptly is he called the King of Terrors! Wrapped in a mantle of obscurity, nothing is visible of him