

The greater the number of the living, the more frequent their lamentation for the dead ; for it is the dread spoiler's business, unshackled by any such fixed times and seasons as regulate the succession of light and darkness and the blooming and fading of mere material things, to be continually turning man's little day into his last long night, and thus and ever strangely blending the joy which is proclaimed when one is born with the sorrow which is caused when another dies.

Know then, O man, whosoever thou art, that this thy day of merciful visitation, and grave responsibilities, and appointed labour, is hastening on to its inevitable close ! Is it with thee only the morning of thy life, and art thou saying to thyself, " I have many years to live " ? Thy day may have neither noon nor evening. Is it with thee the prime of manhood, when conscious vigour, and buoyant hope, and joyous prosperity fill thy soul with sunshine, and art thou looking forward to a long career of active usefulness ere this, the brightness of thy season begins to decline ? Before the stars appear again in the nocturnal heavens thou mayest be numbered with the dead. Is it with thee the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened ?* Kindly would we speak to thee, old

* Ecclesiastes xii. 3.