

that others than parents and friends should be gathered round the death-bed, and watch the parting breath, and impart the final blessing ;—these are thoughts too trying ; and in the hope, dimly cherished, of escaping *these* bitternesses of the last hours, the steps are fondly and anxiously directed homewards again. After many wearisome weeks upon the world of waters, land is reached ; and amidst the obvious decay of the outer man, hope is awakened,—the hope at least that, although the anxiously sought home may not be reached, those most fondly borne upon and cherished in the heart may be permitted, through the providence of God, to come to that bed-side, and soothe the dying struggle, and join in the parting prayer. But, instead of the realization of the fond hopes of those who nursed that infancy, and watched that childhood, and rejoiced amidst the bright promises of that opening youth ;—look, for your own instruction in the world's ways of treachery and deceitfulness ; look rather for an evidence of God's mysterious and all-wise dealings,—look to yonder tenement of the dead, about to be committed to the solitary grave ! Is this then, we may ask, a combination of events,—is this a picture of life's distressful uncertainties, which we are to regard with indifference ;—in the contemplation of which we are to hush the voice of grief, and dash aside the stealing tear ? No, Brethren, no : the eyes which tears bedim may be raised to heaven with as much intensity of hope as those upon which no sorrow is pressing ;—the heart which grief overwhelms may waft its better loves to the eternal world, though the load which oppresses it may partake of the dross of this one. But