

and fulness of this world. The grave absorbs all, annihilates all—and as one generation maketh room for another, and the men of the present age are borne off by the men of the age that is to follow, we cannot but regard the history of our species, and indeed of all the living tribes that people the surface of this labouring earth, we cannot but regard it in any other light than as a series of abortions. There is so much of the promise of immortality in the high anticipation and heyday of youth—there is so much of the seeming power of immortality in the vigour of established manhood—there is even so much of the character of endurance in the tenacity wherewith age keeps itself rivetted to the pursuits and interests of the world, to its busy schemes and its eager prosecutions and its castles of fame or accumulated fortune—clinging as it does to these things, even on the very brink of the sepulchre, and keeping a firmer hold with the hand of avarice, the sooner that its deeds and its documents and its various parchments of security are to be torn away from it—why the whole looks so farcical, if we may be allowed the term, that well may it be said of life even in its happiest guise, and in midst of its gayest prosperity, that it is altogether subject to vanity.

23. But, as we have already said, there is with all this actual and undoubted helplessness, there is strangely and mysteriously mixed up a kind of vague aspiration or hope in the heart of men after some coming enlargement. The very thirst after immortal fame on the part of orators and philosophers and poets is an example of it—and so are