

ment for the rigor of the season, but in all probability the only decent one which she retained. A subdued melancholy looked forth from her large, dark, pensive eyes, and she appeared like one who knew the extent of her misery and had steeled her heart to bear it. Her face was most pleasing, and in early life, though she was still young, she must have been very handsome. Near her, her slender form scarcely covered with her scanty clothing, sat her eldest daughter, a gentle, sweet-looking girl, who held in her arms a baby brother, whose destitution she endeavored, as much as she could, to conceal. It was a touching sight, that suffering child, hiding against her young bosom the nakedness of the little creature she loved. Another fine boy, whose neatly patched clothes had not one piece of the original stuff apparently left in them, stood behind his mother with glistening eyes fastened upon me, as if amused; and wondering who I was, and what business I had there. A pale, but very pretty little girl, was seated on a low stool by the fire. This was poor Jenny's darling Ellie, or Eloise. A rude bed in the corner of the room, covered with a coarse coverlid, contained two little boys, who had crept under the clothes to conceal their wants from the eyes of strangers. On a table lay a dozen peeled potatoes, and a small pot was on the fire to receive this their scanty and only meal.

There was such an air of patient and enduring suffering in the whole group, that, as I gazed heart-stricken upon it, my eyes filled with tears.

Mrs. — first broke silence, and asked to whom she had the pleasure of speaking? I mentioned my name, and told her that I was so well acquainted with her and the children, through Jenny, that I could not consider her as a stranger; that I hoped she would look upon me as a friend. She seemed surprised and embarrassed; and I found no small difficulty in introducing the object of my visit, but the day was rapidly declining, and I knew that not a moment was to be lost. At first, she rather proudly declined all offers of service; and said, she wanted for nothing.

I appealed to the situation of her children, and implored her not to refuse the help of those who felt for her distress,—and would do all in their power to relieve it. Her maternal feelings triumphed, and when she saw me weeping, for I could not restrain my tears, her pride yielded, and for some minutes, not a word was spoken. I heard the large tears as they slowly fell from her daughter's eyes, drop upon her garments. At last the poor girl said: "Dear mamma! why conceal the truth from Mrs. —? You know that we are nearly starving!"

Then came the sad tale of domestic woes—the absence of the husband and eldest son—the uncertainty of where they were, or what had become of them—the sale of the only cow, which used to provide the children with food. It had been sold for twelve dollars—part to be paid in cash, and part in potatoes. The potatoes were nearly exhausted; and they were allowed to so many a day. But the six dollars remained. Alas! she had sent the day before, one of the boys into P— to get a letter out of the post-office from her husband. They were all anxiety and expectation—but the child returned late at night, without the letter, which they had longed with such feverish impatience to receive. The six dollars, upon which they depended for a supply of food, were in notes of the "Farmers' Bank," which at that time would not pass for money. Oh! imagine ye, who revel in riches, who can throw away six dollars on the merest toy, the cruel disappointment, the bitter agony of this poor mother's heart, when she received this calamitous news, in the midst of her starving children.

For the last nine weeks they had lived upon potatoes. They had not tasted animal food for eighteen months.

"Then, Ellie," said I, anxious to introduce the sack, which had lain like a nightmare upon my mind; "I have a treat for you. Jenny baked some loaves last night, and sent you four with her love."

The eyes of all the children grew bright. "You will find the sack, which contains them, in the passage," said I, to the tall, black-eyed boy. He rushed joyfully out, and returned with Emilia, and the sack. Her bland and affectionate greeting restored us all to tranquillity.

The delighted boy opened the sack. The first thing he produced was the ham.

"Oh!" said I, "that is a ham, my sister sent to Mrs. —. She thought it might prove acceptable." Then came the white fish; "Mrs. C— thought fish might be a treat to Mrs. —, so far from the great lakes." Then came Jenny's bread, which had already been introduced. The beef and tea and sugar fell upon the floor, without any comment.

"And now, ladies," said Mrs. —, with true hospitality, "since you have brought refreshments with you, permit me to cook you something for dinner."

The scene I had just witnessed had produced such a choking sensation about my throat, that all my hunger had vanished. Before we could accept, or refuse Mrs. —'s offer. Mr. T— arrived, to hurry us off. It was two o'clock when we descended the hill, in front of the road;