

harshly to the girl, he said, "I have nothing for you."

Without uttering a word, the disappointed girl shrank back, and drew her tattered garments closer round her shivering frame. But the merchant, as he passed on, saw a tear glistening on her pale cheek, in the dim light of a street lamp.

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The next morning dawned bright and clear, but the snow was deep on the ground, here and there lying in huge drifts. The merchant was on his way to his counting-house. He turned down the same street up which he had come on the preceding evening. A crowd had gathered round the open cellar-door of a ruined tenement. The merchant inquired what was the matter.

"A woman has been found dead in that cellar," said one of the spectators; "she was starved to death, they say, and the coroner has just been sent for. Her daughter has come home after being out all night. She was begging, I believe, but has obtained no assistance. That is her you hear moaning."

A pang went through the heart of the merchant, as he remembered the occurrence of the preceding night. He pushed through the crowd, and descended into the cellar. A girl hung over an emaciated corpse which lay on a heap of straw in one corner of the deep apartment. It was the same girl whom he had refused to relieve.

"My poor child!" he said, "you must be taken care of. God forgive me for refusing to help you. But here, take this;" and he put a large sum of money into her hand.

The girl looked up, and gazed vacantly; then she put back the proffered money.

"It is too late, now," she cried, "my poor mother is dead, and does not need it;" and she burst into hysterical fits.

The merchant, at that moment, would have given half his fortune to have recalled her to life.

But the most affecting case of all, in connection with this subject, is that of a careless sinner, who, by trifling with his convictions, and putting off, day after day, the necessary work of repentance, is at length driven away in his wickedness," and finds himself in a world where there is "no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment." O, the horror that will seize upon his tortured spirit, when he remembers the golden opportunities he has neglected, and the means of salvation, once graciously vouchsafed to him, now irretrievably lost. "Too late, too late!" will again and again, and forever, fall upon his ear, like the knell of his departed hopes. In the day of his probation conscience would, ever and anon, lift its warning voice, and urge him to flee from the wrath to come; but its warnings and pleadings were alike disregarded, under the specious pretext, "When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." That season has passed away, and conscience now speaks in thunders louder than the crash of falling worlds, and more dreadful than the blast of the archangel's trumpet. While viewing beyond the confines of the impassable gulf, the company of the blessed, already in "Abraham's bosom"—and while listening to the minstrelsy of the angels—again will the voice of his sleepless conscience proclaim, "You might have been there, but you would not; you might have joined that blood-bought throng, in singing the hallelujahs of heaven, but you would not. Now it is too late—the sentence is irrevocably fixed, and the door is shut forever!"

This unhappy propensity to put off the thoughts of dying till a future period, is very pathetically portrayed by Mrs. Norton, in a poem entitled "The Child of Earth." From the truthfulness of the sentiments contained in the poem, and their appropriate bearing upon the subject of this paper, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting some of the stanzas:—