

at your approach. Desolate hearts, though compassed by all that the world deems beautiful and costly, count all things joyless without you.—Praying hearts are besieging heaven with petitions, that it would bless the holy covenant into which they have entered before God and man, and seal it with the impress of an infants face.’

But not alone in solitary or desolated homes and hearts is there a welcome for you. The arms of yonder mother have embraced already a goodly band of such as you. Several are about her hearth-stone yet; and not a few, with aching heart, she has silently laid away beneath yon little marble by the neighbouring church; but fear not to enter that bright though broken circle, and to repose upon that tired but loving bosom.—You will meet no cold, unwelcome looks; for the warmest corner in a mother’s heart is usually for the latest comer, no matter how long the little visitor may delay his advent, and lag behind the rest. Again, you see that little white-washed cottage, nestling under the shadow of those tall and taper trees. A group of children of all sorts and sizes may, at any time, be seen filling up the doorway, or sporting cheerily upon the green before it. It is evidently the home of a poor man; and, as is often the case now-a-days, a poor man with a large family; for a large family and limited means have become almost synonymous terms. Times are hard; and when are they not hard to some of the world’s many millions? How often, in the mysteries of providence, do they seem to be the hardest with those who murmur the least, and strive the most! In that same cottage there is rarely too much to eat, and many mouths to feed. Alert by every sunrise, some eight young trencher-men, of all ages and capacities, gather ravenously around that table at each meal time with the most persistent punctuality; which, if carried with them into the business of after life, will most indubitably make their fortunes. Now considering the state of affairs existent there, one would have deemed it a most unpromising locality for another few inches of humanity to light upon; and yet what is really the case?

Neighbour Newbald’s slatternly wife, who has no children, and yet is always well nigh neck-deep in dirt, debt, and difficulties, has just been circulating through the village, like a morning paper, edifying its inhabitants with the pitiable intelligence that “poor Mrs. Thornton has got another baby;” editorial remarks, of course, of the most gloomy character. But what of the parties most interested in the matter? “Poor Mrs. Thornton” looks pretty comfortable considering the lamentable state of affairs, and evidently expects rather to be congratulated than consoled with. The children may, perhaps, have a bite or two the less by and by, but it seems not to trouble them much just at present; for they have gathered round the new comer as eagerly and clamorously as if they had never seen such a production before. As for master Bobby, the youngest of