

son, who was at that time, to all human appearance, at the point of death. He had for many years led an idle and dissolute life, and had necessarily occasioned much heartfelt grief to his widowed mother. Indeed, his present affliction was induced by his profligate and intemperate habits. Of this fact he was himself too deeply sensible. Finding that there was no hope of his recovery, and dreading the approach of the last enemy, he had expressed a wish to see a Christian minister, who might talk to him, and pray with him. When the pious woman communicated these particulars, the minister was in his study, employed in writing a work which was shortly afterward published, and which has subsequently passed through several editions; but he promised to call on the sick man during the evening. He continued in his study, however, till a late hour; and so deeply was he absorbed in the subject which occupied his pen, that the request of the poor widow was forgotten. When it recurred to his recollection, he instantly rose from his seat. He looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. He looked out from the window of his study. The night was dark and tempestuous. "Surely," he thought within himself, "it cannot be of much importance if I defer my visit till to-morrow morning."

On the following morning, at an early hour, he bent his steps to the dwelling of the afflicted man. "How is your son?" said he to the widow, on his entrance into the cottage.

"O, sir," was the bitter reply, "you have come *too late!* My son is dead—you can do him no good now. I told him you were coming to talk to him about his soul, and to direct him to Jesus, the Friend of sinners. At this intelligence his eyes glistened with delight. But when mid-night came, he said in a faint voice, "Mother, I fear Mr. — will not come, and I must die without seeing him. Perhaps he thinks me unworthy of a visit, and he is right; for I am one of the vilest

of sinners. Mother, you pray for me. No one else cares for me!" He continued to get worse. His end was drawing near; and while I was wrestling with God for my poor child, he heaved a deep, deep sigh, and soon afterward ceased to breathe."

The aged woman wrung her hands in hopeless anguish; but the feelings of Mr. —, while listening to this distressing account, may be easily imagined. Every word uttered by the afflicted widow was as "iron, entering into his soul."

And how often have the benevolent efforts of the most charitable persons been rendered abortive, because those efforts have been made too late! It is true, their sympathies have been awakened while listening to the tale of suffering, and they have resolved to minister effectual relief. Alas, they have delayed to tender that relief till the famishing objects, who had a natural claim upon their compassion, have been mercifully relieved from their sufferings by the friendly hand of death, and removed to a kingdom where they shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" and where the "Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and wipe all tears from their eyes."

I have somewhere read of a wealthy merchant, who, on returning home one dark and stormy night, was accosted by a poor, sickly girl, craving alms. "O give, if it's only a penny. My mother is sick and dying. We have had nothing to eat to-day."

The merchant looked at the girl. Her face was pale, very pale, and her garments tattered. He put his hand towards his pocket, intending to give her a shilling. She saw the act, and a momentary lustre glistened in her previously lustreless eye. But the merchant's overcoat buttoned tightly over his pocket.

"It is too much trouble," he whispered to himself, "and the wind is very keen. Besides, these beggars are often cheats." Then speaking