

was announced, though half the congregation disputed it. "My brethren!" said he once, and the whiteness of his countenance increased; but he said no more. "My brethren!" responded he a second time; his teeth chattered louder; his cheeks became clammy and deathlike. "My brethren!" stammered he a third time, emphatically, and his knees fell together. A deep groan echoed from his mother's pew: his wildness increased—"My mother!" exclaimed the preacher. They were the last words he ever uttered in the pulpit. The shaking and the agony began in his heart, and his body caught the contagion: he covered his face with his hands, fell back, and wept: his mother screamed aloud, and fell back also—and thus perished her toils, her husband's prayer, her fond anticipations, and the pulpit oratory of her son: A few neighbors crowded round to console her, and render her assistance: they led her to the door. She gazed upon them with a look of vacancy—thrice sorrowfully waved her hand, in token that they should leave her; for their words fell upon her heart like dew upon a furnace. Silently she arose and left them, and reaching her cottage, threw herself upon her bed in bitterness. She shed no tears, neither did she groan, but her bosom heaved with burning agony. Sickness smote Thomas to his very heart; yea, even unto blindness he was sick—his tongue was like heated iron in his mouth, and his throat like a parched land.—He was led from the pulpit. But he escaped not the persecution of the unfeeling titter, and the expressions of shallow pity: he would have rejoiced to have dwelt in darkness for ever, but there was no escape from the eyes of his tormenters. The congregation stood in groups in the kirkyard, "just," as they said, "to hae anither look at the orator," and he must pass through the midst of them.—With his very soul steeped in shame, and his cheeks covered with confusion, he stepped from the kirk-door. A humming noise issued through the crowd, and every one turned their faces towards him: his misery was greater than he could bear. "Yon was an orator for ye!" said one. "Poor devil!" added another, "I'm sorry for him; but it was as guid as a play." "Was it a tragedy or a comedy?" inquired one, laughing as he spoke—the remarks fell upon his ear: he grated his teeth in madness, but he could endure no

more; and covering his face with his hands, he bounded off like a wounded deer to his mother's cottage. In despair he entered the house, scarce knowing what he did: he held her where she had fallen upon her bed dead to all but misery. "O mother! mother!" he cried, dinna ye be angry; dinna add to the afflictions of your son! Will ye no mother? will ye no?" A low groan was his only answer: he hurried to and fro about the room, wringing his hands. "Mother," he again exclaimed, "will ye no speak a word? Oh, woman! ye wadna be angry if ye kened what an awfu' thing it is to a thousand een below ye and aboon ye, a' round about ye, a' staring upon ye like condemning judges, an' looking into your soul—ye hae nae idea o' it, mother—I tell ye hae nae idea o't, or ye wadna be angry. The very pulpit floor gaed down wi me the kirk wa's gaed round about, and I thought the very crown o' my head wad pitch on top o' the precenter. The very een o' the multitude soomed round me like fishes!—oh, woman! are ye dumb? will ye torment me mair? can ye no speak, mother?" But he spoke to one who never spoke again. His reason departed, and her speech failed; his grief remained. She had lived upon hope, and that hope was destroyed: the round ruddy cheeks and portly form was away, and within a few weeks the neighbors who performed the last office of humanity, declared that a thinner corpse was now wrapt in a winding sheet than Mrs. Jeffries. Time soothed, but did not heal the sorrow, the shame, and disappointment of the son: he sank into a village teacher, and often in the midst of his little school he would gaze his first, his only text—imagine the child to be his congregation—attempts to proceed, gaze wildly round for a moment, and sit down and weep. Through these aberrations, the school dwindled into nothingness; and poverty increased his delirium. Once, in the midst of the remaining few, he gave forth the fatal text: "My brethren!" he exclaimed, and smiting his hand upon his forehead,—"Speak mother! speak now!" and, with his face upon the floor, The child rushed screaming from the school, and when the villagers entered, the troubled spirit fled for ever.