

when we think of them, not simply as they came from God, and may come to ourselves, but as they actually do befall our neighbors and fellowmen. It were selfish to gather round our firesides, and circulate the laugh of cheerfulness and health, without a thought or deed of pity for the poor sufferers that struggle with the winter storms of nature or of life. Who can help looking at this season with a more considerate and reverential eye upon the old man, to think where he may be? Year after year he has been shaken by the December winds; but not yet shaken to his fall: deeper and deeper the returning frost has crept into his nature, — and will it reach the life-stream now? You watch him, as you would the last pendulous leaf of the forest, still held by some capricious fibre, that refuses perhaps to part with it to the storm, and then drops it slowly through the still air. You gaze at him as he stands before you, and wonder that you can ever do so without awe; for the visible margin of existence crumbles beneath him, and he slips into the unfathomable. And as the tempest wakes us on our pillow, it is but common justice to our human heart, to send out a thought over the cold and vexed sea in search of the poor mariner that buffets with the night, or perhaps sinks in the most lonely of deaths, between the black heavens that pelt him from above and the insatiable waste that swallows him below. Nor will generous and faithful souls forget the dingy cellar or the crowded hovel, where in a neighboring street the fevered sufferer lies, and the ravings of delirium and the sports of children are heard together, or life is ebbing away in consumption, hurried to its close by the chill breath of poverty and winter. O could we but see the dread gripe of want and disease upon