

a better man on Sunday, than on any other day of the seven.

But in this church I felt myself continually thrown back upon the world by the pomp of the worms around me. The only being that seemed thoroughly to feel the humble and prostrate piety of a true Christian, was a poor decrepid old woman, bending under the weight of years and infirmities. She bore the traces of something better than abject poverty. The lingerings of decent pride were visible in her appearance. Her dress, though humble in the extreme, was scrupulously clean. Some trivial respect, too had been awarded her, for she did not take her seat among the village poor, but sat alone on the steps of the altar. She seemed to have survived all love, all friendship, all society, and to have nothing left her but the hopes of heaven. When I saw her feebly rising and bending her aged form in prayer—habitually conning her prayer book, which her palsied hand and failing eyes would not permit her to read, but which she evidently knew by heart—I felt persuaded that the faltering voice of that poor woman arose to heaven far before the responses of the clerk, the swell of the organ or the chanting of the choir.

I am fond of loitering about country churches; and this was so delightfully situated, that it frequently attracted me. It stood on a knoll, round which a small stream made a beautiful bend, and then wound its way through a long reach of soft meadow scenery.

The church was surrounded by yew trees, which seemed almost coeval with itself. Its tall gothic spire shot up lightly from among them, with rooks and crows generally wheeling about it. I was seated here one still sunny morning, watching two labourers who were digging a grave. They had chosen one of the most remote and neglected corners of the church yard, where, from the number of nameless graves around, it would appear that the indigent and friendless were huddled into the earth. I was told that the new made grave was for the only son of a poor widow. While I was meditating on the distinctions of worldly

rank, which extend thus down into the very dust, the toll of the bell announced the approach of the funeral. They were the obsequies of poverty, with which pride had nothing to do. A coffin of the plainest material, without pall or other covering, was borne by some of the villagers. The sexton walked before with an air of cold indifference. There were no mock mourners in the trappings of affected woe, but there was one real mourner who feebly tottered after the corpse. It was the aged mother of the deceased—the poor old woman whom I had seen seated on the steps of the altar. She was supported by an humble friend who was endeavouring to comfort her. A few of the neighboring poor had joined the train, and some of the running children of the village joined hand in hand, now shouting with unthinking mirth, and now pausing to gaze, with childish curiosity, on the grief of the mourner.

I approached the grave. The coffin was placed on the ground. On it were inscribed the name and the age of the deceased—“George Somers, aged 26 years.” The poor mother had been assisted to kneel down at the head of it. Her withered hands were clasped as if in prayer; but I could perceive by a feeble rocking of the body, and a convulsive motion of the lips that she was gazing on the last relics of her son with the yearning of a mother’s heart.

Preparations were made to deposit the coffin in the earth. There was that bustling stir, which breaks so harshly on the feelings of grief and affection; directions given in the cold tones of business; the striking of spades into sand and gravel, which, at the grave of those we love, is of all sounds the most withering. The bustle around seemed to waken the mother from a wretched reverie. She raised her glazed eyes, and looked about with a faint wildness. As the men approached with cords to lower the coffin into the grave, she wrung her hands and broke into an agony of grief. The poor woman who attended her took her by the arm, endeavouring to raise her from the