

From "Wilson's Tales of the Borders."

THE WIDOW'S AE SON.

We will not name the village where the actors in the following incidents resided! and it is sufficient for our purpose to say, that it lay in the county of Berwick, and within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Dunse. Eternity has gathered forty winters into its bosom since the principal events took place. Janet Jeffrey was left a widow before her only child had completed his tenth year. While her husband lay upon his death bed, he called her to his bed side, and, taking her hand within his, he groaned, gazed on her face, and said—"Now Janet I'm gaun a lang and a dark journey; but ye winna forget, Janet—ye winna forget—for ye ken it has aye been uppermost in my thoughts, and first in my desires to make Thomas a minister—promise me that ae thing, that if it be His will, ye will see it performed, an' I will die in peace." In sorrow the pledge was given, and in joy performed. Her life became wrapt up in her son's life; and it was her morning and her evening prayer that she might live to see her "dear Thomas a shining light in the kirk." Often she declared that he was an "auld farant bairn, and could ask a blessing like ony minister." Our wishes and affections, however, often blind our judgment. Nobody but the mother thought the son fitted for the kirk nor the kirk fitted for him. There was always something original, almost poetical, about him—but still Thomas was "no orator as Brutus was." His mother had few means beyond the labour of her hands for their support. She had kept him at the parish school until he was 15 and he had learned all that his master knew; and in three years more, by rising early and sitting late at her daily toils, and the savings of his field labour and occasional teaching, she was enabled to make preparations for sending him to Edinburgh. Never did her wheel spin so blithely since her husband was taken from her side, as when she put the first hot upon the rock for his College sarks. Proudly did she shew to her neighbours her double spindel yarn—observing, "It's nae finer than he deserves, poor fallow, for he'll pay me back some day." The web was bleached and the shirts made by her own hands; and the day of his departure arrived. It was a day of joy mingled with anguish. He attended the classes regularly and faithfully; and truly as St. Giles marked the hour, the long, lean figure of Thomas Jeffrey, in a suit of shabby black, and a half a dozen volumes under his arm, was seen issuing from his garret in the West Bow—darting down the trail stair with the velocity of a shadow—measuring the Lawn market and High street with gigantic strides—gliding like a ghost up the South Bridge, and sailing thro' the gothic archway of the College, till the punctual student was lost in its inner chambers. Years rolled by, and at length the great, the awful day arrived—

"Big with the fate of Thomas and his mother."

He was to preach his trial sermon—and where?—in his own parish—in his native village! It was summer, but his mother rose by daybreak. Her son, however, was at his studies before her; and when she entered his bedroom with a swimming heart and swimming eyes, Thomas was stalking across the floor, swinging his arms, stamping his feet, and shouting his sermon to the trembling curtains of a four-post bed, which she had purchased in honor of him alone. "Oh, my bairn! my matchless bairn!" cried she, "what a day o' joy is this for your poor mother! But oh, hanny, hae ye it weel aff? I hope there's nae fears o' ye sticken' or usin' notes?" "Dinna fret," mither: dinna fret, replied the young divine; "sticken an' notes are out o' the question. I hae every word o' st as clink as the A. B. C., The appointed

hour arrived. She was first at the kirk. Her heart felt too big for her bosom—She could not sit—she walked again to the chair—she gazed restless on the Pulpit. The parish minister gave out the Psalm—the book shook while she held it. The minister prayed—again gave out a Psalm, and left the pulpit. The book fell from Mrs. Jeffrey's hand. A tall figure paced along the passage. He reached the pulpit stairs—took two steps at once. It was a bad omen—but arose from the length of his limbs, not levity. He opened the door—his knees smote one upon another. He sat down—he was paler than death. He rose—his bones were paralytic. The Bible was opened—his mouth opened at the same time, and remained open, but said nothing. His large eyes started wildly around; at length his teeth chattered, and the text 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 a pulpit. The shaking and the agony begun 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 neighbours crowded round her to console her, and render her assistance. They led her to the door. She gazed upon them with a look of vacancy—thrice sorrowfully waving 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. Sicknes smote Thomas to his very heart; yea even into 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 forever, but there was no escape from the eyes of his tormentors. 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 oratory for ye!" said one. "Poor deevil;" added another, "I'm sorry for him—but it was as guid as a play; was it tragedy or comedy?" inquired a third, 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 beheld her where she had fallen upon the bed, dead to all but misery. "O mither, mither!" he cried "dinna ye be angry—dinna ye add to the afflictions of your son! Will ye no mither?" A low groan was his only answer. He hurried to and fro across the room, wringing his hands. "Mother," he again exclaimed, "will ye no speak ae word? Oh, woman! ye wadna be angry if ye kenned what an awfu' thing it is to see a thousan' ecn be-

low ye and aboon ye, and round about ye, an' staring upon ye like condemning judges, an' looking into your very soul—ye hae no ideo o't mither—I tell ye ye hae no ideo 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 the top o' the precentor. The very een o' the multitude soomed round me like fishes!—an' oh! woman! are ye dumb? will ye torment me mair? can ye no speak, mother?" But he spoke to one who never spoke again. Her reason departed, and her speech failed, but grief remained. She had lived upon one hope, and that hope was destroyed. Her round ruddy cheeks and portly form wasted away, and within a few weeks, the neighbours who performed the office of humanity, declared that a thinner corpse was never wrapt in a winding sheet than Mrs. Jeffrey. Time soothed but did not heal the sorrows, the shame, and the disappointment of the son. He sank into a village teacher, and often, in the midst of his little school, he would quote his first his only text—imagine the children to be his congregation—attempt to proceed—gaze wildly round for a moment, and sit down and weep. Thro' these aberrations his 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, cried, "Speak, mother!—speak now!" and fell with his face upon the floor. The children rushed screaming from the school, and, when the villagers entered, the troubled spirit had fled forever.

From the New-York Express.

NEW-YORK IN 1836.

LOOKING around over our own city, pondering upon her vast resources, thinking of her present power and future greatness, we have become almost bewildered with our own reflections. Amid the din and bustle of business, the unceasing life and motion of every street, lane and avenue, the midnight noise, second only to the noon day activity around us, we are compelled to pause and wonder at all we see. Every thing indeed is in motion, not your slow, snail-pace motion of olden times, when spinning wheels and hand labor took the place of steam-power, and water-power, but your quick, night-and-day, perpetual motion which never winks, sleeps, nor slumbers. Indeed, in New York there is no check to business, no check to enterprise, nothing can, if it would, clog the wheels of prosperity. We roll on with the velocity of steam, ayo, and faster too, for here there is no time when power and motion are exhausted, but with us there is no human power either to weaken or destroy. We roll forward with all the force of a tornado, going, going, always advancing in our journey, but with our journey never finished. The great cry with us is business, business, business. We eat faster and less often, rise earlier and retire later, because one eternal cry of work stares us every where in the face, beckoning us onward like the spell of witchery, and with a power wholly irresistible. Hence in New York, no man, who is a man, is ever idle. Our merchants live upon the land and the sea at the same time, with their bodies upon terra firma to be sure, but with their minds, nevertheless more frequently wandering at Cape Horn, in India, or along the Mediterranean, than in their own counting rooms, ware-houses, or private dwellings. *Quid factum, est factum sit* is particularly written upon the brows of every man. The *nil admirari* of Horace is out in every thing. "Nothing is impossible," says the man who contracts to build you a hundred houses in a year. "Nothing is impossible," echoes another who makes a journey from Petersburg through the capital of the nation, and to New York in two days, and from hence proceeds on to Boston between sun and sun. All things are possible cries