

tear in her large blue eye, that were eloquent of sorrow. I walked out with her, and asked whither he had been? She said, working for Mr. Laird, (a large farmer in a neighboring township,) and that the heat of the harvest weather, with the long days' labor, had, she feared, brought on a serious fever. "Sir," continued she, "you know us!—we had not parted but for substantial reasons; yet I regret they swayed us now. My poor boy wanders somewhat. He has walked twenty-seven miles to-day, and this day has been one of the warmest of the summer. His coming, but a few minutes since, surprised me greatly; but his first words, poor fellow, still more. They were—'Mother, I feel very, very ill, and I think I shall not soon grow better either; and here I am, sick, sick and weary, indeed, but at home. Ah! I could hardly die away from you!' he continued, with a faint smile," she added.

"Think not on those words, my dear madam," I rejoined; "mere sickness of heart from bodily disease."

"I know it, sir," she replied—"I know it well; but loneliness has given me gloomy views, and I am, but for him, in this wide world a very exile."

"It is very true," was my answer. "You have dwelt too much by your own hearth-stone; perhaps concentrated the feelings over-highly. It is neither well nor healthful at any time, and when the occasion is sorrowful, much to be regretted."

"Now, Mr. Williams," said she, mournfully, "I feel it. Should I be called to bear the burden of his loss, I think I feel I have deepened the trial by avoiding society. But, sir, I have suffered by over-confidence, and have judged the many by the one. It is hard to forget! But here we are."

As she concluded she quietly raised the latch, and we stood beneath her humble roof. There lay her boy: he had cast himself upon the floor, a pillow beneath his head, and dropped into a deep but uneasy slumber. His jacket, boots, and vest, were thrown aside. His neck, unbuttoned, showed fair beside his brown and fevered face. The hair, black, thick, and tangled, lay like a cloud upon the pillow; while large drops were gathering upon his forehead, and dampening the mass into wavy curls. He moved, and some words broke from him. Mother and home were in his thoughts, I doubt not, for a smile wavered along the lip.

I sank silently into a chair. The room was faultlessly clean: not a speck upon the boards—not a hue of dust upon the little furniture. The broad chimney had its ornaments of boughs, and the mantle its broken pots with flowers. A clock was fixed to the partition which divided the mother's room from the one in which we were, and its monotonous click, click, was alone heard. The gothic spirit of destruction had spared (heaven only knows how,) a large maple. It stood without,