

BARKER'S

CANADIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

KINGSTON, JUNE, 1846.

No. 2.

LEAVES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A LIFE.

LEAF THE FIRST.

"Thus the heart will do, which not forsakes—
Living 'n shattered guise—and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches."

Byron.

For many years I had been acquainted with Mrs. B. She was a woman somewhat past thirty, and a widow, with one son—a handsome, hard-working boy of seventeen years. The neatness and fashion of her dress, though the material was very coarse—her language, above her station—an air of calm resignation, and the relics of past beauty—conjoined, made her the object of much interest to me, and that of much curiosity to others.

But my interest awakened no response in her; and the curiosity of the little world about her was also foiled, from the absence of materials to gratify it. There she dwelt, in a small log house, with her boy, the owner of thirty acres of land, and there she had dwelt for the thirteen previous years, in the same humble way, with the same air of resignation, only that a cloud, as of sorrow, which at first hung heavy over her, had during that period glided slowly into an unobtrusive melancholy. At this point my little tale opens. I observed her son had been some time away: this I knew not from her own words, which were indeed few and far between, but implied it from each recurring Sabbath, seeing the seat he ever occupied beside his mother empty. This was more than unusual—it was passing strange. They lived so much together, so entirely in and for each other, that no common cause had brought about the separation, I felt assured; yet this separation, like all they did, was as much apart as any act of their lives from counsel and companionship with the outer world.

One evening, however, Mrs. B. called, requesting me to visit her son, whom she feared, she said, to be seriously indisposed. There was a slight tremor in her tone, and a stealthy