

weeks and months without interchanging a word, or apparently conscious of each other's presence—each acting as his own housekeeper and provider, and taking his own course, independent of the other. At last the boy left, and went to the adjoining town, to work at the carpenter's trade, and the old man was thus once more alone,—still plodding on, working as though a large family were dependant on his exertions for bread,—denying himself almost the comforts of life, and seeking assistance from none. He rarely went to church, and never entered a neighbour's house, unless sent for and requested to assist in some remunerative labour. Sickness often assailed him, but he took care of himself without the aid of doctor or nurse. Sometimes a kind and pitying neighbour who heard, by chance, of his ailments, would volunteer a visit; but the reception, if not ungracious, was of a forbidding character, and left no inducement to repeat the kindness. By his own unaided labour he built a small saw mill in the woods adjoining his house, and there, bending down by the hoary stream that dashed over the old green rocks, making wild music in the still noon-time, might the old man be seen, week day or Sunday, toiling at his work, looking like some elf of the forest, or goblin spirit, with his weird glances and shadowy stooping form. His son, to whom he had not spoken for many years, took a violent fever, and for a long time hovered between life and death.

It seemed then as if every touch of nature was not dead in the old man's breast, for he went to see his son, taking him, occasionally, presents of game, or anything from the farm he thought he might fancy. And at last, when his physician recommended his native air as a restorative, and his father had provided the means,—and when he was preparing to take him to his home again, he found the fever had taken a sudden turn, and that death had reached his boy's bedside before him. Those who saw the old man then, thought that nature once again was dominant, and knew that he trembled beneath, what indeed to him was, grief: another blessed assurance, that, hardened and darkened as human nature may be, there are some chords that will never forget their music,—some drops in the fountain of life that are not all bitterness.

Since that event the old man has gone on in his accustomed way, only looking more bowed and feeble, but still solitary in his hermitage, seemingly uncaring and uncared for. It were matter of interest to unravel, whether his 'sunset of life' is ever tinged by the memories of early joys and sorrows, and what his thoughts are with regard to past or future. Age has now darkened the windows of his mind,—and the solitude of his poor tenement will soon be exchanged for the narrower one of the grave. Surrounded by persons of his own class and degree in life, while all others have turned to the companionship of their families and friends, he has shut his nature up from the approach of all, and chosen to live alone. And when the dark hour comes, so hard to all, because it brings the severance of those ties so very dear to our hearts, he will