

GILES GRIMSTONE, THE MISER.

—“Resolve me which is worse,
Want with a *full* or with an *empty* purse?”

ONE chill autumnal evening, a pleasant social party was assembled, in our library, and as the cold wind whirled repeated showers of dry leaves against the casement, we all drew around the fire, with a feeling of comfort heighted by contrast. Since we had last met in that cheerful room, the most of us had been separated by hundreds of miles; for, following the fashion of our migratory countrymen, we had locked up our household gods and wandered off in various directions—some on business, some on pleasure—until the “sear and yellow leaf” of autumn warned us to seek once more our own hearthstone. Of course we had many a scene to describe, many an incident to relate, many a droll character to sketch. The awful sublimity of the mighty Niagara, with its wealth of diamond spray, and its rainbow bridge leading from earth to heaven; the series of exquisite pictures which succeed each other to the eye of him who treads the rocky defile at Trenton Falls; the gentle beauty which characterizes the valley of the Connecticut; the glorious panorama which glides by the traveller on the Alleghany mountains; all were in turn depicted with the zeal, if not the graphic skill of an artist. Then we had some rich scenes from nature, as exhibited at the breakfast-table of a hotel; some racy sketches of character, as displayed in those honest schools—the stage-coach and steamboat;—some stolen glimpses of the “cloth of freize,” which in our country is so often pieced out with “cloth of gold.”—But our conversation, varied as it was, did not seem quite to satisfy my little cousin Sue, who, having just come from boarding-school, her head filled with romance of novel reading, had not yet learned to *take the world as it is*, and to pity the weakness, while she smiled at the follies of humanity.

“After all,” exclaimed she, at length, “this travelling is dull work. Here have all of you been relating your ‘incidents of travel,’ and yet not one has been able to tell any thing worthy of record in the annals of adventure. I really believe I could tell as many ‘moving accidents by flood and field,’ though I have wandered no further than a little country village. It seems to me that people only require that sort of passive courage which enables them to risk the explosion of a steamboat or the overturning of a stage, and they may tra-

vel from Dan to Beersheba, with no more exertion of heroism than was required by the good old pair who only migrated from the ‘blue room to the brown.’ There are no banditti to level their pistols at one’s head; no highway-men to demand your money or your life; no opportunity, in short, of exciting an interest in some dark-eyed fellow traveller, by requiring him to risk his life in one’s defence. Alas! that I should have been born in such a prosaic age!” and the mock solemnity with which she uttered the last words, was followed by a merry ringing laugh.

“You must travel in other lands, my daughter,” said Mr. M., “if you wish to meet with the interesting scoundrels celebrated in the pages of your favourite authors, and even there, I imagine the race is nearly extinct.”

“Well, steamboats and railroads are doubtless very useful things,” cried Sue, “but they have certainly destroyed all the excitement of travelling.”

“When you are a little older,” said her father, gravely, “you will better understand the genuine and healthful excitement of travel.—To look upon the works of God in all their freshness and beauty, to admire the stupendous monuments of man’s ingenuity, to feel our own insignificance amid the wonders of nature, and our own immortality amid the miracles of art; such are the true excitements of travelling. Nor should I forget to mention the advantages which are afforded us, while we are thus ‘sojourners by the way,’ of learning something of the innumerable phases of human nature. So long as man remains an imperfect being, so long as he is the victim of evil passions and the plaything of weak principles, life will have its romance strangely blended with its reality. It is true, the heroes on life’s stage are not always young and well-favoured; nor are the heroines always beautiful, intellectual, angelic beings; but, believe me, dear Sue, life has scenes more thrilling than were ever forged in the heated brain of a novel writer. For my own part, I never enter a stage-coach or a steamboat, a railroad car or an omnibus, without finding something worthy of note among my companions—something that tells me of the hidden depths which lie beneath the dull surface of every-day life. There is many a tragedy daily, aye, hourly enacted among us and we take no note of it, because the heroes wear the squalid rags of poverty, instead of the trappings of wealth and power. I was witness to a scene during the past summer, which even you, my daughter, would have thought suffi-