

INTRODUCTION.

OLD Winter is once more upon us, and our inland seas are "dreary and inhospitable wastes" to the merchant and to the traveller;—our rivers are sealed fountains,—and an embargo which no human power can remove is laid on all our ports. Around our deserted wharves and warehouses are huddled the naked spars,—the blasted forest of trade,—from which the sails have fallen like the leaves of the autumn. The splashing wheels are silenced,—the roar of steam is hushed,—the gay saloon, so lately thronged with busy life, is now but an abandoned hall,—and the cold snow revels in solitary possession of the untrodden deck. The animation of business is suspended, the life blood of commerce is curdled and stagnant in the St. Lawrence—the great aorta of the North. On land, the heavy stage labours through mingled frost and mud in the West,—or struggles through drifted snow, and slides with