

widened by the accession of from two to three intelligent neighbors, who would drop in to listen; and then the book, after a space, would be laid aside, in order that its contents might be discussed in conversation. In the summer months, Uncle James always spent some time in the country, in looking after and keeping in repair the harness of the farmers for whom he wrought; and during his journeys and twilight walks on these occasions, there was not an old castle, or hill-fort, or ancient encampment, or antique ecclesiastical edifice, within twenty miles of the town, which he had not visited and examined over and over again. He was a keen, local antiquary; knew a good deal about the architectural styles of the various ages, at a time when these subjects were little studied or known, and possessed more traditional lore, picked up chiefly in his country journeys, than any man I ever knew. What he once heard he never forgot; and the knowledge which he had acquired he could communicate pleasingly and succinctly, in a style which, had he been a writer of books, instead of merely a reader of them, would have had the merit of being clear and terse, and more laden with meaning than words. From his reputation for sagacity, his advice used to be much sought after by the neighbors in every little difficulty that came their way; and the counsel given was always shrewd and honest. I never knew a man more entirely just in his dealings than Uncle James, or who regarded every species of meanness with a more thorough contempt. I soon learned to bring my story-books to his workshop, and became, in a small way, one of his *readers*—greatly more, however, as may be supposed, on my own account than his. My books were not yet of the kind which he would have chosen for himself; but he took an interest in *my* interest; and his explanations of all the hard words saved me the trouble of turning over a dictionary. An when tired of reading, I never failed to find rare delight in his anecdotes and old-world stories, many of which were not to be found in books, and all of which, without apparent effort on his own part, he could render singularly amusing. Of these narratives, the larger part died with him; but a portion of