

greedy eyes the still unremoved heaps of household goods rescued from the burning tenements. The first figure that caught my eye was a singularly ludicrous one. Removed from the burning mass by but the thickness of a wall, there was a barber's shop brilliantly lighted with gas, the uncurtained window of which permitted the spectators outside to see whatever was going on in the interior. The barber was as busily at work as if he was a hundred miles from the scene of danger, though the engines at the time were playing against the outside of his gable wall ; and the immediate subject under his hands, as my eye rested upon him, was an immensely fat old fellow, on whose round bald forehead and ruddy cheeks the perspiration, occasioned by the oven-like heat of the place, was standing out in huge drops, and whose vast mouth, widely opened to accommodate the man of the razor, gave to his countenance such an expression as I have sometimes seen in grotesque Gothic heads of that age of art in which the ecclesiastical architect began to make sport of his religion. The next object that presented itself was, however, of a more sobering description. A poor working man, laden with his favorite piece of furniture, a glass-fronted press or cupboard, which he had succeeded in rescuing from his burning dwelling, was emerging from one of the lanes, followed by his wife, when, striking his foot against some obstacle in the way, or staggering from the too great weight of his load, he tottered against a projecting corner, and the glazed door was driven in with a crash. There was hopeless misery in the wailing cry of his wife,—“ Oh, ruin, ruin !—it's lost too !” Nor was his own despairing response less sad :—“ Aye, aye, puir lassie, its a' at an end noo.” Curious as it may seem, the wild excitement of the scene had at first rather exhilarated than depressed my spirits ; but the incident of the glass cupboard served to awaken the proper feeling ; and as I came more in contact with the misery of the catastrophe, and marked the groups of shivering houseless creatures that watched beside the broken fragments of their stuff, I saw what a dire calamity a great fire really is. Nearly two hun-