

which he bore the jests of his fellow workers, on account of the Pledge, and the kindness with which he forgave them. Mr. Moreland had watched his progress with almost a father's eye, and at the end of two years, confessed to himself that Edward was all, or more, than he had thought to find him.

The worthy man was soon after seized with a malignant fever. His head clerk, who supplied his master's place in his absence, fell a victim to the same; and Mrs. Moreland, calling for Edward, told him that her husband had ever expressed the greatest confidence in his skill and care; and begged him to take charge of his master's concerns, and consider them as his own.

This sudden elevation made no difference in the manners of the modest youth; and so admirably were the affairs of Mr. Moreland conducted, and so faithfully was every part of Edward's duties discharged, that when his master returned to his place again, he not only gave the youth warm commendation, but took him into partnership with himself, that (as he told Mr. Richmond) since he had no son, Edward should be to him as one.

Mr. Moreland being now able to resume his duties, and thinking his young friend looked pale and sickly from too much application, advised him to seek a renovation of health by a "return home."

Joyfully the young man accepted the offer; he longed again to see his parents and his sisters. They knew not of his intended visit; it was to be unexpected.—Only one thought now pained Edward, and half damped his pleasure, and that belonged to his friend. Where now was he? None could answer that question: for from the night of his leaving Edward, he had never been heard of, had never written to his friends. Oh was it not too probable that the evil spirit had gained the mastery over him; that his health might have sunk beneath excess; that now he might be numbered with the dead. The thought was very painful, and Edward tried to turn his mind to something else. At last the little village,—its church, its scenery, well known and loved; its rustic noise; and more than all, his father's house, rose before the eye of the long absent one returned. When the coach stopped, he alighted, and muffled himself in a large cloak, and drew his cap over his brow, to escape recognition; but the twilight was deepening, and though (it being Saturday night) many were walking

in the street, many whom the youth well knew, yet he passed by unchallenged, and gained at last his father's door—his childhood's home. Edward's heart beat high, and his hand shook, as he raised the knocker. The summons was replied to by an old maid servant, a great favorite in the family. Edward asked, in a voice, as he thought, disguised, if Mr. Richmond was in? but instead of the reply, he heard only the exclamation, "Bless me! whose voice is it?" and laying his hands on her arm, cried in a low tone, "Hush, Jeanie, hush!" But Jeanie was too much entraptured to heed, and setting up a scream of delight, she rushed forward, flung open the parlor door, and exclaimed, "Master Edward, Master Edward." At the same instant, the youth himself appeared before the astonished circle, and parents and sisters sprang eagerly forward to meet and embrace him.

Books and work were laid aside, and all sitting round the household hearth, multiplied question on question; and Edward replied to all, gazed on the familiar objects around, and returned each affectionate smile; patted old Pompey; waked the cat from a sound sleep to fondle it, and took his youngest sister on his knee to play with his watch. But ere long, a shade crossed his brow, and he said almost involuntarily, "Poor Stanley."

"Ay, poor Stanley," repeated his father, "his was a return home indeed."

"Has he returned?" cried Edward with startling quickness.

"He has, my boy, but so altered; so worn; so emaciated in body; so bowed in spirits."

"Has he returned penitent?" asked Edward faintly.

"I hope so; it was but for a little time that I saw him; but his painful story was told me by his aunt. After leaving you, he went to Liverpool, and tried there to support himself; but he lost energy, health gradually failed, and he had none to encourage, to cheer, or to care for him; he lost hope; stooped to low employments; strove to drown the sense of misery and the voice of God by drinking to excess.—At last this mad career was stopped; a burning fever confined the poor fellow many days to his bed; here he had time to think; here, for the first time, he sought the help of his Maker. As soon as he could crawl (to use his own words) he took the Pledge. His heart yearned for his home: it was a long journey, and he was nearly destitute, and very weak; but