

Sign the Pledge.

BY LEWIS K. LANSARD.

Sign the pledge, dear boys and girls,  
While your lives are fresh and young,  
While your hearts are pure and spotless,  
With God's rays on your tongue,  
Like a flower in all its beauty,  
Soon the cruel frost will blight,  
Mothers, bring your little children,  
Come and sign the pledge to-night.

Sign the pledge, fair young maidens,  
Pure and spotless as the snow,  
Oh, the good you can accomplish,  
As through the life you go,  
You may help a fallen sister  
Out of darkness into light,  
Some poor brother you may rescue,  
Come and sign the pledge to-night.

Sign the pledge, my young brother,  
Think not lone to stand  
The temptations of the wine cup,  
Come and join our noble band,  
God and country call you,  
Like a soldier to the fight,  
Come and help us raise the banner,  
Come and sign the pledge to-night.

Sign the pledge, father, mother,  
If you would the children save,  
Tell them of a life of sorrow,  
And the cold drunkard's grave,  
Tell them of the blood of Jesus,  
That will cleanse and make them white,  
Parents, if you love your children,  
Come and sign the pledge to-night.

Sign the pledge, let all the people  
Come and join our noble band,  
God is for us, we shall conquer,  
And drive intemperance from our land,  
Come and help us rout the enemy,  
Come and help us in the fight,  
Help to save the growing nation,  
Come and sign the pledge to-night.

PUDDIN'

An Edinburgh Story.

BY

W. GRANT STEVENSON, A.R.S.A.

CHAPTER VI.

FULLY two years had passed since the incidents narrated in the last chapter took place, and Jo's position had been regularly improving. He was now a partner, with the business completely under his control, as Mr. Inglis was too infirm to take any share in it. Mary and Jo were "engaged," though the date of the marriage was not fixed. In the smart business man no one would have recognized the boy "Puddin'"; he had always been making friends and extending the business, which was now in a much better state than when he entered it.

One Monday morning about this time, Jo was seated at the desk reading the morning's letters. One rather dirty envelope was addressed to himself in a stiff hand, and Jo was not a little astonished on reading its contents.

DEAR JO.—You will be surprised to hear from me. I have been working here for near three years, and am sorry not to have sent something to your mother before, nor to have come over. I just spent my money as I got it, and four months since I got my foot crushed, and was laid up ten weeks; if I had not been in the sick society, I might have starved, as I would not come to you then. I had plenty of time to think, and you may be sure I had some thoughts; but I made up my mind not to write till I could send some money. I sent ten shillings—five shillings for your mother, and the five shillings I took from you. I shall send her something every pay, and you might let me know how you all are. The boats are running now, and you might come over and see me. I send this with one of the men who is going across, and hope you will get it all right.

Your father,  
WILLIAM KEDDIE.

Jo sat thinking over the letter for some time—so long, indeed, that the men had to look in for their orders for the day, which he gave in a mechanical way.

"There's something up wi' the maister this mornin'," said one of the men to his companion. "He stood thinkin' for a while efter I asked 'um whaur to gang, an' I had to ask 'um again afore he told me—ay, there's something up when he's wool gatherin'." I hope it mayna be onything wraung wi' the business, for I wadna like to gang to a new maister. There's no mony like him, he's that kind to a body, even the beasts. I often wonder he can be bothered wi' that cat that gangs about the office; it's either up on his shoulder, or in

front o' um on the desk, he can hardly get written for't. An' there's Tam; he'll never let it gang out wi' a load if he can help it, an' the twa's as thick as thieves; na, it canna be onything wraung wi' the business, for naebody could stick closer titt than him."

After getting the men started with the morning's orders, Jo read the letter a second time, his first impulse being to look up the office for a little, while he hurried off to tell his mother the good news, but on second thoughts he determined to say nothing of it in the meantime.

In the first place a doubt arose in his mind as to the sincerity of his father, who might have heard of his success, and was trying to benefit by it, and even if this thought was an injustice to his father, his intentions in the meantime might be good enough, but he might not have strength to continue in his resolution. The five shillings sent to himself, Jo felt as a greater proof of his sincerity than the money sent to his mother, as it was an acknowledgment of wrong-doing; still, he did not wish to raise his mother's hopes while there was any chance of failing to carry them out. No, he would see his father first, and judge if he could trust to bringing him home. He would not even write, in case his father might be prepared to meet him; he must wait till Saturday afternoon, as there was no one who could take his place for a day.

It was a long time to keep the news from his mother, and a long time to look forward to; and when at last Saturday came, Jo took care to be near the door on his way out before he said, "I'll no' be in to tea the day, an' it'll maybe be late afore I'm hame, an' yo might hae something guid for supper, in case I bring up—somebody." This was said hurriedly, as if the thought had just occurred to him, and he was out before his mother had time to question him.

"Hasn't Jo been kind o' thochtful this week?" his mother asked of Maggie, as soon as he had left, the idea being brought up by his unusual message.

Maggie laughed, and said, "Maybe Mary an' um's lookin' for a hoose, an' he'll be gaun to bring her up here."

The solution seemed perfectly satisfactory to both; and Mrs. Keddie said, with a sigh, "I'll daresay ye'll be richt. Aweel, I canna expect to hae him aye wi' me, though there's few sons as kind to their mothers as he's been, an' though I wad like to see him mairrit I'll be rael sorry to part wi' 'um, an' he'll hae a guid sensible wife when he gets Mary, an' she'll hae as guid a man."

It was natural that these reflections on Jo's marriage should make her think of the lonely house without him, and of the absence of her husband, and she continued after a little, "I dinna like to speak about it afore Jo, but I often wonder whaur yer father is, an' what he's daein'. Ay, yin never kens what they're comin' to, an' it's maybe a blessin'; but I never thocht he could be forsaken as the way he's done."

Although the sail to Aberdeen was very pleasant, Jo felt impatient. When he looked over at the bow of the boat it seemed to be cutting through the water at a good speed, then when he raised his eyes to where he knew his father was, he seemed little nearer than what it appeared ten minutes before. His thoughts were away on before him, at the meeting with his father, whom he now saw in his mind's eye as he remembered him at his best, bright and cheery—hope wiping out his later sullen mood; then he imagined the return home, and the delight of his mother.

"I hope," thought Jo, "that it may a' turn out as weel as I'm expectin'; an' it's a guid thing I mided to put some mony in my pocket, for if he hasna a guid suit o' claes I'll see that he gets them afore I tak' him hame, so that my mother can see him at his best."

In spite of his love for Mary, Jo's first thoughts were for his mother's welfare, but it was natural that they should turn to the effect his father's home-coming would have on them. If his father settled down to work soberly, he knew he could leave his mother happy, but in the meantime he must be cautious.

His reflections filled up the time till the boat arrived at the pier.

"This is a bonnie place," he thought; "I wish I had brocht Mary wi' me. No, that wadna dae; but I'll bring them a' over suno, if a' thing turns out richt. It seems ower guid to be true, but I'll hope for the best."

Walking smartly up to the village, Jo asked of a group of navvies who were standing in the street if they knew William Keddie. "No," said one, "ye see, there's so many o' us we don't trouble much aboot names."

Jo's spirits fell, as he thought of the company and discomforts his father had been among, while he might have been happy and making others happy at home.

"He got his foot hurt a while sin'," he explained.

"Ah yis; brown whiskers, hasn't he?"

"Yes," said Jo impatiently. "D'ye ken whaur he is?"

"Well, now, I can't. I think it's them botches up there foreinist the church, but there's a foreman coming out o' the grocer's, perhaps he'll know."

"Thank you," said Jo, the idea immediately occurring to him that it would be safer to find out something about his father before seeing him; he did not like the feeling of distrust he had, but for his mother's sake it was necessary, and following up the men pointed out to him, he repeated his inquiry.

"Yes, I ken 'um," said the man; "an' if ye come wi' me I'll tak' ye to 'um."

"He had an accident, hadn't he?" said Jo.

"Aweel ye may ca' it an accident, but it was a dashit guid job for 'um, onyway at least if he hunds on as he's daein'."

"Ay," said Jo interrogatively.

"Ay," responded the foreman; "for if he hunda got his sair lit, ye wad a' had to look for 'um in yin or other o' the public hooses, an' then fand 'um drunk, mair nor likely. Ay, we've a bad lot to deal wi'. But Wull's got a fricht, I can tell ye. The doctor thocht at yae time that his leg wad hae to be cut off, an' says he to Wull 'Wull tell me himsel'—says he, 'When a man's been drinkin' as ye've been daein', the blud gets intie sic a state that I've kent a bit seart carry t' em aff; that was his very words, and it's sic to be wondered at; man, there's an awful siller wared on drink here on a pay day. Ay, but if Wull hands on as he's daein', he'll get a foreman's job afore lang, for he's a guid work-er when he's richt."

Although Jo felt pleased with the report, he determined to take his father home without waiting for his advancement.

"Ay," continued the foreman, "here's the readin'-room, an' I saw 'um gang in there as I gaed doon. Jist gang in an' look round, an' if he's no' there, come into the bothy, an' I'll sure find 'um for ye. Guid-day the noo."

"Good-day, an' thank ye," said Jo. His heart was beating with excitement as he entered the room, and his doubts were set at rest the moment he saw his father; there was a smartness about him he had not seen for many years, and as he looked up from the evening paper on hearing some one enter, he said in astonishment, "Hallo, Jo! Whaur hev ye come frae?"

Jo noticed, and was pleased to see, a slight blush of shame on his father's face, but attempted to put him at ease by shaking hands with him, the first time the formality had passed between them, and saying, "I jist thocht I wad come ower an' see ye. This is a bonnie place; wad ye mind takin' a turn?"

"Hoo? yer mother an' Maggie?" the father asked, when they were out on the street.

"They're baith fine. We might gang along this way, it's quieter. I got yer letter the ither day, an' thocht I wadna say onything to my mother aboot it till I cam' ower an' saw ye; but I jist said, when I was comin' awa', that she might hae a bit supper ready, in case I might bring somebody up."

There was no need for a formal explanation from Jo; his father understood the invitation, and was as eager to return as Jo was to take him home.

"Ye'd better come in an' hae a cup o' tea wi' me," the father said, as they were passing the bothy, but Jo did not wish to enter the place, and said, as if he had not heard his father.

"I was thinkin' that you should jist gang in an' tell the foreman that ye're no' comin' back, an' I'll gang doon an' order tea at that temperance hotel round the corner. An'," he added quietly, "if ye hev ony auld claes, I wad jist leave them."

The father saw Jo's meaning perfectly, and left to do as desired.

"I'm sorry ye're gaun to leave us," said the foreman, "jist as ye're beginning to dae sae weel. I saw a young man askin' for ye."

"Yes, that was my son; he's in busin' as for himsel', an' his wantin's me at hame."

"Aweel, I wadna ask to keep ye in that case, an' I'm very glad to hear o't. Guid-by, then. Man, I was jist sayin' to yer son—a strappin' fellow von!—I was jist tellin' 'um that ye wad suno be a gaffer; hoover, nae doot ye'll be better whaur ye're gaun. Weel, guid-by, then."

At tea, and on the way across, Jo and his father had plenty to talk about; but Jo carefully avoided saying anything to make his father feel ashamed, and had some difficulty in broaching the subject of a new suit.

At last he said, smiling, as if the subject was a good joke—

"They'll get a start when we gang in thegither. But you'll get a new rig-out first; I hae plenty siller in my pocket."

The father was completely in his son's hands, and submitted to the proposal, feeling ashamed and sorry that he had not had a few weeks more to save up, and make himself look "respectable"; but he understood Jo sufficiently to know that, for his mother's sake at any rate, he had pride in what he was doing, and he had now regained sufficient

respect for himself to appear as best he could before his wife. His feelings were a mixture of anxiety and diffidence as they approached the house, but as far as the latter feeling was concerned it had to be got over, and the sooner the better; his wife, he knew, would be only too glad to see him, and looking so smart, thanks to his kindness.

"Ye'll pay a guid rent for this," he said, as they entered a stair in a new block of buildings.

"Oh ay," Jo replied; "but, ye ken, I'm no' extra gaun, and I could afford it afore I wad tak' it;" and he felt a masterly pride in producing a key from his pocket and opening the door.

"Whaur hae you twa been?" cried Mrs. Keddie on hearing her son's voice and expecting he was bringing in Mary. "Willie" was all she could say on seeing her husband, and he, in a choking voice, could only say, "Hoo are ye?"

"I'll be back in a wee," said Jo suddenly, seeing he had better give them a little time to get rid of their embarrassment, as Maggie was evidently out.

The husband and wife instinctively felt Jo's object, and, in a little while, explanations were made. There were tears of joy, repentance, and reconciliation; then they started in mutual praise of Jo.

"Ay, he's been a kind son to me, if ever there was yin. But, I doot, we'll soon lose him."

"What do you mean?" said her husband, in astonishment.

"Oh, he'll be gettin' mairrit, ye ken; an' I've been lookin' forrit wi' fear to the time, though she's a rael guid lassie,—ye mind Mary?—but now that ye're here, of coorse, it'll be different; an' I've nae doot the marriage will be a' the suner now, for I ken fine he didna like to leave me."

THE END.

THE VALUE OF A TRADE.

BY FOSTER COATES.

I REMEMBER some years ago, when I was a very young man, meeting John Roach, the great shipbuilder, in his shipyard at Chester, Pa. I remember, too, what he said then about the value of a trade to the average boy.

"Young man," he said, laying his great, broad hand on my shoulder and looking at me earnestly with his keen, steel-blue Irish eyes, "next to a clear conscience, a trade is as good a thing as any young man can have in this country. You can carry it with you all your life long, you have to pay neither rent nor taxes upon it, and it will help you around a sharp corner when most other things will fail."

I have never forgotten that utterance from a man who started in life—after landing in New York from Ireland—a helper to a machinist, who became the leading shipbuilder of his time, and who, up to the hour when he was stricken with a fatal illness, could take the place of any of his workmen, whether it was a man driving rivets or an expert putting together the most delicate parts of a steamship's machinery.

Something very like what John Roach said I heard another great man who is now dead, say. This was Peter Cooper, a man of whom American boys cannot know too much, and whom they certainly cannot too much admire.

"If I had my way," said this venerable philanthropist, on the occasion to which I refer, "I would give every boy a trade. Then I would have him stick to it, love it, and be good to it. If he does, it will be good to him."—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

A SHEWD DOCTOR.

"MY doctor is a real joker," said a Lowiston lady. "I didn't know that my talkin' bothered him when he was writing prescriptions until yesterday. He never mentioned it, and I always asked him all sorts of questions while he was writing them out. Yesterday he examined me, and sat down to write something. I kept talking. Suddenly he looked up and said: 'How has your system been? Hold out your tongue.' I put out that member, and he began to write. He wrote and I held out my tongue, and when he got through he said: 'That will do.' 'But,' said I, 'you haven't looked at it.' 'No,' said he, 'I didn't daft to. I only wanted to keep it still while I wrote the prescription.'"