

## THE BANISHED ONE'S RETURN.

HE was the king's son, and had been guilty of murdering his brother. He had fled to a neighboring king, where he remained three years, self-banished on account of his sin, and not daring to return to his father and his home. What a picture of a sinner, lashed by a guilty conscience, and fleeing from God's face, instead of confessing his sin, and falling upon His mercy!

But so it was with this young man. He dared not return home. He dared not meet his father, the king. Conscious that he was guilty of murder, and that he had deceived the king in beguiling his unhappy brother to the place of his death; and knowing his father's uprightness of heart in the maintenance of a righteous government, he sought shelter outside his father's dominions. But there was one thing he did not know, nor understand—a father's *heart*, a father's *love*. "David mourned for his son every day." "And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom" (2 Sam. xiii. 37-39). "Every day" for "three years"! Truly here was deep and unflagging affection. And yet no effort to bring the banished outcast back again. It was love yearning helplessly after that poor, wicked, guilty son, but unable to bring him back in the face of stern justice which required that the murderer should yield life for life. Thus the struggle went on between love and righteousness, love desiring, and righteousness forbidding.