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(For the Odd Fellows' Record.)

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CONVICT.*
BY "Y-LE."

CHAP. III.—THE RETURN.—A CLIMAX.

"A sincere penitent." If there be one thing more than another capable of calling forth the kindly sympathies of our nature for a fellow-man, it is when a transgressor unburdens his whole soul in all openness, expressing sincere regret for what he may have done amiss, and promising amendment for the future. Is it a friend who, in the heat of passion, has laid some unworthy motive to your charge! Let his temper become cool; allow him time for reflection. He soon feels uneasy; he is aware he has wronged you, and his internal monitor points out to him the means of redress. He approaches you timidly; the blush of shame sits in glowing colours on his reddened cheeks, but his heart tells him he is only about to do what is right. He extends his trembling hand towards you, and while he confesses his fault, you feel that your conduct would be worse than his, were you to refuse forgiveness. Such scenes are common among right-minded persons, and the heart must receive no small benefit from calmly contemplating such an act. But I must proceed with my narrative.

After our return to Glasgow, Mr. S—— made me accompany him to his place of business, from whence, when he had left such orders as he considered necessary, we set out for my father's dwelling. Various ideas crossed my mind on our journey. I did not know how I could meet either my parents or play-fellows. I felt ashamed; and the difficulties of my position increased, the nearer I approached home. I would fain have hung back, but my kind conductor would not allow me. At last I distinguished the shout and merry laugh of a few of my companions, who were amusing themselves in a field close by. I did not wish to encounter them, so we hurried on, and in a few minutes after entered the house. Mr. S—— preceded me;—my father was absent; but my dear mother occupied her usual place. She started when she saw us, and before my mediator had time to speak, her sharp eye rested upon me. Oh! what a look! it went quick and forci-

bly to my heart. Her face seemed to wear the same quiet uniformity it had ever done, but there was a glistering in the eye, and a tone in the voice, which sounded like the chiding of one who felt more than the being who was admonished. She uttered but one simple sentence, but that one was enough to open the flood-gates of my mind. Looking me stedfastly in the face, she said, "Weel, Jamie, hae ye come back again?" She could say no more; for her eyes filled with tears, and her sobbing stopped her utterance. In a moment my whole soul was in sympathy with hers, but I exhibited my feelings in a more noisy manner. The influence spread on all sides, and all in the house were soon in tears; even Mr. S—— himself was unable to restrain his feelings. This first overflow was somewhat subsided, when my youngest brother, then about four years old, came running up to me, and seizing one of my hands, looked up in my face, and, half crying, lispingly exclaimed, "you no gang awa' again, Jamie?" A fresh burst of grief on my part was the consequence, and I was singing out in a pretty high key, accompanied by my young brother, who played an excellent second, when my father entered; but his appearance did not prevent my finishing the bar. To Mr. S—— we must have exhibited a very interesting family group. How could it be otherwise; for all felt that one who seemed as dead was now alive, and he that had been lost was found.

My father's entrance gave Mr. S—— an opportunity of explaining where he found me, and what I had told him; nor did he conceal the great service I had done him, in saving his son. He also stipulated for my complete forgiveness. A long conversation ensued, in the course of which it was agreed that I should, at the expiry of another year, leave my parental home, to take up my abode with Mr. S——, into whose service I was to enter as an office boy, in order to receive the necessary instructions to fit me for filling the situation of a junior clerk in his establishment.

Six months passed from the date of what is above recorded, and all recollections of the runaway had nearly become forgotten. New Year's Day was approaching. Lochs and streams were covered with the handywork of the winter-king. Hedges and plantations were clothed in white, and nodded and shook their frozen branches in the winter's blast, like so many spirits of the ruling power. The windows of the sur-

* Continued from page 35.