

he hurried along the streets, regardless of the cold, which was more than usual so at that season in Devon. On arriving at the station, he learned that the train would not start for some time, as an accident had occurred down the line, and they must wait till the line had been cleared. Scarcely knowing how to pass away the time, he walked along Mill-bay, and unfortunately met two of his old companions, who had arrived only the day before from London. He endeavoured to get rid of them, but this he found no easy task. They insisted on his accompanying them to a neighbouring inn. He urged several reasons for not doing so; but they would not be put off.

"You have abundance of time," said they. "The train will not leave for an hour. We *must* have a parting glass together; perhaps we may never meet again."

He lacked decision of character, and gave way, and accompanied them into the parlour of an adjoining inn. The moments flew rapidly away; and, after drinking several glasses of wine, James was about to leave the room, when one of the young men prevented him, exclaiming,

"Resume your seat, my dear fellow. I will run down to the station, and enquire when the train will leave."

Ten minutes elapsed before he returned to the inn, during which time the bosom of poor James beat with feverish emotions. On his return, the wily youth appeared disconcerted.

"The train," he said, "had gone; but another would leave in two hours. Be not alarmed, my dear fellow," he continued; "you will be in London by eight o'clock in the morning. Sit down, man, and enjoy yourself. You have treated us with wine, and now we will treat you with a glass of grog. It will arm you against the chilling atmosphere, and enable you to encounter the cold of the frosty night."

The tears started into his eyes, and the colour forsook his cheeks, at this unexpected . . . There was, however, no alternative, and he reluctantly resumed his seat, bitterly reproaching himself for being so imprudent as again to join their society. As he had for some time abstained from the use of

wine and spirituous liquors, those stimulants, of which he had drunk freely, now began to operate powerfully on his reason; and, feeling rather drowsy, he leaned against the back of his chair, and sank into a profound sleep. On awaking, he found himself *alone*; his companions were gone! He rushed into the street, and ran down to the station, — the train was again gone. He put his hand into his pocket, when, to his horror and confusion, he discovered that his purse was gone! He had been robbed during his sleep, by the two wretches who had seduced him into their company. In a state of mind not to be described he wandered from street to street. The wind was not boisterous, but it was sharp and piercing. The sky was studied with innumerable stars, but they afforded no warmth to his shivering frame. Thus he walked about till he found himself on Mount Wise. At length, exhausted, he threw himself on the cold ground, and inwardly cursed his own folly, as the retrospect of the past rushed with terrible fury to his mind. His face was turned towards the starry heavens, and he thought of his home. The mind began to wander; and, unable to bear the stings and arrows of his conscience, he sank into a state of insensibility. Bright and cloudless was the appearance of the sky, when, on the following morning, he awoke to life and consciousness. He was then an inmate of the hospital. He gazed in dumb amazement round the gloomy ward. His face was deathly pale, and it was evident his end was approaching. The lamp of life was flickering in its socket. Addressing the surgeon, who stood at his bedside, he communicated his name, and, with a feeble voice, gave the residence of his wife in London. On the evening of that day he was a corpse! A letter was immediately sent Laura; and she arrived in Plymouth barely in time to witness the husband of her youth committed to the silent dust. Not long did the heart-broken Laura survive this afflictive stroke. Her young and tender heart had received a stroke which tended gradually to undermine her constitution, and her sun went down while it was yet day. Within a few short months after the death of her husband, the once