

plan to catch him and take him back to the country or the Refuge. This thought came next. He studied over it, and changed his view of the matter a dozen times, and, finally, determined that he would go and see who it was that wanted him.

The house bearing the number stated in the advertisement, was occupied by a hatter. James passed and repassed it almost twenty times before he ventured to go in. Behind the counter he saw, at work, a middle-aged man, with a benevolent, prepossessing countenance. Several times the man looked at him as he went by, and, he thought, fixed his eyes somewhat intently upon him. At last he ventured in, and said—

"Did you advertise——"

"For James Latimer," quickly spoke up the man. "Is that your name?"

"Yes, sir."

"Poor young man!" said the hatter in a voice of sympathy. "You have indeed fallen low."

There was so much of kindness and real sympathy in the tone of voice with which this was uttered, that James was affected by it.

"It is too true, sir. I am low and miserable enough. Heaven help me!"

"And Heaven alone can help you, my young friend," replied the man earnestly. "But I will tell you at once what I want with you; for no time is to be lost. Your father has been very ill, and has suddenly recovered his reason. He wants to see you and your sister before he dies. You both called to see him, he has learned since he became lucid, nearly two years ago, and he supposed one or both of you might still be in the city. Where is your sister?" James leaned against the counter to support himself. He felt his knees tremble.

"Dead," he replied huskily.

"Ah! How long since?"

"She was murdered on the very night after we called at the hospital."

The man lifted his hands in painful surprise.

"This we had better conceal from your father; the shock may be too great for him," he said. And then added—"But we must get into the stage and go out immediately. His life is hanging on a thread. He was alive I ascertained this morning."

The man came from behind his counter, put on his coat and hat, and started off in company with the miserable looking creature who had answered his advertisement. Young Latimer's clothes were worn and dirty, and his whole appearance of a most disgusting character. His face showed the marks of evil courses as strongly as did his garments.

On their way to the hospital, but little passed between the young man and the benevolent individual who had him in charge. When they arrived at the hospital, they learned that old Mr. Latimer was still alive, though sinking rapidly. Without any delay they were ushered into his presence. He was lying upon a bed, supported by pillows, and the hospital physician and nurse were standing near him. As James entered, his father raised himself up and looked at him for a moment intently; then sinking back, he shut his eyes and groaned aloud. The son understood the meaning of this expression of pain; and the groan of his father was like the entrance of an arrow into his heart.

Old Mr. Latimer soon recovered himself, and, as his son, who was almost forced to the bedside by the person who had accompanied him to the hospital, came and stood near him, he again, by the assistance of the nurse, arose up partly from his pillow, and, extending his hand, grasped that of James, while the last tears, and the saddest his eyes had ever wept, fell over his face.

"My poor boy!" he murmured in a low tone, that was tremulous with grief. His voice choked, and his head sunk upon his bosom. In a little while he recovered himself and said, more calmly—

"My son, to see you so wretched, and with so many sad marks of evil about you, crushes my heart to the earth; for I—I alone—am to blame! In an accursed hour, when you were a young and happy child, the bottle entered, by my hands, our pleasant home, and in a few short years destroyed your mother and little sister, made a madman of your father—for I know where I am—and turned you and Agnes friendless upon a wicked and cruel world. But where is Aggy?" the father asked in a changed voice.

James hesitated a little while, and then replied—"She is dead."

Latimer covered his face with his hands and was silent for a few moments.

"Dead!" he at length murmured. "Dead! It is well. God will forgive her errors, if she have committed any, for she must have suffered great temptation."

"James!" resumed the father, arousing himself from a state of abstraction, into which he had again fallen. "James! I see too sad evidences of the fact, that you have fallen already into the toils of that monster evil, intemperance, which cursed your father's house! I have but a little while longer to live, my son—even a few minutes may be all that are left to me. With my dying breath, I implore you to let the work of evil which I began, stop where it is. Turn, oh turn, from the path in which you are now walking, into the right way. Oh! my boy—my poor boy!"

The old man's voice choked again, and the hue of death passed over his face. The nurse laid him back upon the pillow. He gasped convulsively for some moments, and then became calm, but lay with his eyes closed, and his breath coming feebly. James saw his lips move, and he leaned closer to hear.

"There is but one hope—the pledge. If he would take that!"

The son heard and understood the meaning of the words. The moment this thought came whispering from the lips of the dying man, he started up eagerly, and groped about with his hands.

"James! James!" he said, as he grasped hold of his boy. "The pledge! the pledge! They say it is all-powerful to save. It is your only hope!"

The death rattle choked all further utterance, and old Mr. Latimer fell back, heavily, upon his pillow. His spirit had gone to its reward.

"Sign it!" said a voice, in the ear of the son, as he raised himself up from the dead body of his father, over which he had bent in a passion of grief. James turned, and saw the benevolent individual who had taken so much pains to find him out and bring him to his father, standing with an open pledge in one hand and a pen in the other.

"Sign it!" he repeated. "Your father said truly, it is your only hope."

James took the pen in his trembling hand, subscribed his name, and then, bending forward, with his face down upon the table at which he had seated himself, wept and sobbed for a long, long time, like a guilty but repentant child.

## The Victim.

BY HARRY.

How remorseless must be the gnawing of that conscience, if not "scared as with an hot iron," that can taunt its possessor with a crime, which, although the law in its self-styled and innate majesty cannot reach,—is the blackest upon the catalogue of sins registered beneath the All-seeing by the great arch-angel. No sterner frown shall sit upon the brow of Omnipotence than that which shall gather over it when shall be arrayed before him in judgment, the betrayer of virtue: then shall the poor victims of his inordinate lusts stand up as condemning witnesses, and those, who, but for his hellish persuasions, would ever bask in the rays of eternal bliss,—shall weave their long fingers in his hair, and down to the bottomless pit drag him, to expiate his crime in everlasting torments, and suffer as his merits demand.

There is in the state of Vermont—it matters not in what portion thereof—a smoothly gliding stream, rich in varied beauty, and renowned far and near for the sublime grandeur of the scenery lining it, and forming its shores. Its waters, soon after passing from their mountain channel, glide over a bed of sand and pebbles that cleanse and crystalize them until they seem as pure and transparent as the air above them.—Upon its shores, which there assume a beauty that is rarely surpassed, is situated a building of that order generally occupied by the wealthier class of husbandmen in our state. It sits upon an oval hillock that gently slopes toward the banks of the nameless river; upon the other side a lane approaches it from the main road.

It was a beautiful Sabbath evening. All nature was hushed as if conscious of the sacredness of the hour; the sun was fast receding from the view of man, and if nature be beautiful ever, indeed was it then. It could hardly seem that the wretched grovellers of earth, in view of such transcendent beauty and loveliness, could plan the ruin, the utter and endless ruin, of one