

JOURNAL OF TEMPERANCE.

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL.

FIVE SHILLINGS AND COSTS.

It was about half-past ten o'clock one Monday morning, when Mr. Gregson, one of the partners in an extensive machine manufactory, was going his usual rounds over his establishment.

Mr. Gregson, we may just say, had risen from the ranks. He had entered the very establishment in which he was partner as an apprentice, some five or six and twenty years before the time of our narrative. His parents, honest and industrious people of the working class, struggled hard to keep him at school till he was somewhere about fourteen years of age; although had they followed the example of many of their neighbours, they would have sent him much earlier to earn his livelihood in one of the large cotton factories, where at that time children were suffered to work at a far earlier age than now. "No, no," said his father, who worked as an operative in one of the factories, "I should like him to have a better chance than I've had, and I'll keep him at school a bit longer: he'll repay me some day."

When young Gregson entered the workshop, he found in it many men who were addicted to intemperance. They earned large wages, and they spent a great part of them in drink. They would gladly have induced Gregson to follow their example, but his father, a truly pious man, had instilled into him a wholesome horror of drunkenness, and of everything that tended to it; and, in the midst of many temptations, he stood firm. He was a quick sort of lad, and, what was much better, he was endowed with a spirit of dogged persevering energy, and soon mastered the mechanical part of his business.

Availing himself of the advantages afforded to working men by a mechanics' institute, he acquired a considerable proficiency in mechanical drawing, and no mean acquaintance with the general principles of mechanics. By-and-by he became foreman, and in time he was admitted partner. His chief province was to take the general superintendence of the working department of the manufactory.

In the fulfilment of the duties which thus devolved upon him, he was now look-

ing round one of the workshops, when, coming to a vacant bench, he exclaimed, "Does any body know where Wilson is? I promised that this engine should be ready by the middle of the week, and here his part of the work is at a stand."

There was a dead silence; but a few of the men looked at each other very significantly. He repeated the question: but still there was no reply. Just at that time the foreman came up. "Edwards," said Mr. Gregson, "do you know why Wilson is not at his work?"

"Why, sir," said the foreman, evidently reluctant to tell the real state of the case, "I'm afraid he's got into a bit of a scrape."

"What's the matter now?" said Mr. Gregson, who knew very well poor Wilson's failing. "Has he been getting drunk again?"

"Why, yes, sir, and somewhat worse than that I'm afraid."

"Well, what is it?"

"It seems, sir, he went on Saturday night to the Machine-makers' Arms, along with a lot more: they got very drunk, and then there was a row and a fight. The police came up, and finding Wilson especially uproarious and quarrelsome, they carried him off to prison, and there he was all day yesterday. I believe he will be before the magistrates this morning."

"I'm sorry to hear it. He seems to be doing no better, notwithstanding all his promises. Will you call, Edwards, on your way to dinner, and say I expect him to be at his work without fail this afternoon, if he does not intend to lose it altogether."

Mr. Gregson was always kind and considerate in his dealings with his work-people; but he felt a special interest in Wilson, and a special reluctance to deal severely with him. They had been fellow-apprentices of the same standing; they had, besides, been scholars in the same Sunday-school. For a little time they had been companions; but Wilson giving way to temptation, young Gregson, after a good many kind and faithful remonstrances, felt himself compelled to give up his society. If it had not been for the former intimacy, and the interest which still existed in consequence of it in Mr. Gregson's mind on

behalf of Wilson, it is very likely he would have been dismissed long before.

An hour or so after the time of commencing work in the afternoon, Wilson stole into the shop, looking sadly ashamed, and bearing the unmistakable marks of his Saturday night's debauch and fray. A black eye and a swollen lip, and a plaster which covered a great gash on his cheek, told that whoever had been the victor, he had not much reason to boast.

He set to work with a trembling hand and a brain sadly confused. It did not tend greatly either to the steadiness of his hand or the composure of his mind, when, glancing up the shop, he saw his master a very short distance from him. He expected nothing less than a public rebuke. To his great relief, after Mr. Gregson had stood near his bench for a moment or two, he simply and quietly said, "Wilson, I will wait for you in the office after the manufactory closes."

When the evening came, Wilson knocked at the door of the office. "Come in," said his master, kindly.

"Take a seat, Wilson," Mr. Gregson added, as Wilson stood before him downcast and ashamed; "I want to talk to you a little."

The man somewhat reluctantly complied. He could stand, he said, very well; but his master insisted on his taking the proffered seat.

"Well, Wilson," began Mr. G—, "I was very sorry to hear of this affair of Saturday night, and sorry to see you in the plight you are in now."

"Yes, sir," said Wilson, "and I'm sorry too; I never did anything so bad as that before, and I hope I shall never do so again. I hope you'll look over it this time."

"What did the magistrates say to you this morning?" said Mr. G—, apparently not noticing the concluding sentence.

Wilson hung down his head. They had said some very plain things to him, which, though he knew they were deserved, he did not much care to repeat.

"Well, never mind what they said: tell me what they did."

"Why, sir, to say the truth for that matter, I have not much reason to complain. They let me off very easily: they