

front of the individual he was addressing—"If you are not out of this shop in two minutes by the watch, I'll kick you into the street! So there now—take your choice to go out or be kicked out."

Jarvis turned sadly away without a reply, and passed out of the door through which he had entered with a heart full of hope, now pained, and almost ready to recede from his earnest resolution and pledge to become a sober man, and a better husband and father. He felt utterly discouraged. As he walked slowly along the street, the fumes of a coffee house which he was passing, unconsciously, struck upon his sense, and immediately came an almost overpowering desire for his accustomed potation. He paused—

"Now that I try to reform, they turn against me," he said bitterly. "It is no use, I am gone past hope."

One step was taken towards the tavern door, when it seemed as if a strong hand held him back. "No—no," he murmured, "I have taken the pledge, and I will stand by it, if I die."

Then moving resolutely onward, he soon found himself near the door of another hatter's shop. Hope again kindled up in his bosom, and he entered.

"Don't you want a hand, Mr. Mason?" he asked in a hesitating tone.

"Not a drunken one, Jarvis," was the repulsive answer.

"But I've reformed, Mr. Mason."

"So I should think from your looks."

"But, indeed, Mr. Mason, I have quit drinking, and taken the pledge—"

"To break it in three days; perhaps three hours."

"Won't you give me work, Mr. Mason, if I promise to be sober?"

"No. For I would not give a copper for your promises."

Poor Jarvis turned away. When he had placed his hand to the pledge, he dreamed not of these repulses and difficulties. He was a good workman, and he thought that any one of his old employers would be glad to get him back again, so soon as they learned of his having signed the total abstinence pledge. But he had so often promised amendment, and so often broken his promise, and disappointed them, that they had lost all confidence in him; at least the two to whom he had, thus far, made application.

After leaving the shop of Mr. Mason, Jarvis seemed altogether irritable. He would walk on a few steps, and then pause to commune with his troubled and bewildered thoughts.

"I will try Lankford," he said, at length, half aloud; "he will give me work, surely." A brisk walk of some ten minutes brought him to the door of a small hatter's shop, in a retired street. Behind the counter of this shop stood an old man, busily employed in ironing a hat. There was something benevolent in his countenance and manner. As Jarvis entered, he looked up, and a shade passed quickly over his face.

"Good morning, Mr. Lankford," Jarvis said, bowing, with something like timidity and shame in his manner.

"Are you not afraid to come here John?" replied the old man sternly.

"I am ashamed to come, but not afraid. You will not harm me I know."

"Don't trust to that, John. Did you not steal—aye that is the word—did you not steal from me the last time I employed you?" The old man in manner was stern and energetic.

"I was so wicked as to take a couple of skins, Mr. Lankford, but I did very wrong, and am willing to repay you for them, if you will give me work. I was in liquor when I did it and when in liquor, I have no distinct consciousness of the evil of any action."

"Give you work, indeed! O no, John, I cannot give you another chance to rob me."

"But I will not get drunk any more; and you know, Mr. Lankford, that while I was a sober man, and worked for you, I never wronged you out of a sixpence worth."

"Won't get drunk any more! Ah, John, I have lived too long in the world, and have seen too much, to heed such promises."

"But I am in earnest, Mr. Lankford. I signed the pledge this morning."

"You!" in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, I signed it."

"Ah, John," after a pause, and shaking his head incredulously, "I cannot credit your word, and I am sorry for it."

"If I have signed the pledge, and if I am really determined to be a reformed man, will you give me work, Mr. Lankford?"

"The old man thought for a few moments, and then said, half sorrowfully, "I am afraid of you, John. You are such an old offender on the score of drunkenness, that I have no confidence in your power to keep the pledge."

"Then what shall I do?" the poor wretch exclaimed, in tones that made the heart of the old man thrill—for nature and pathos were in them. "Now that I am trying in earnest to do better, no one will give me a word of encouragement, or a helping hand. Heaven help me!—for I am forsaken of man."

"Have you been to see Warren?" asked the old man.

"Yes, and he threatened to kick me out of his shop."

"Mason wants a hand, I know. He will no doubt be glad to employ you."

"I've tried him, but he will not give me work."

Mr. Lankford stood thoughtful and irresolute for some moments. He pitied, from his heart, the poor creature who thus importuned so earnestly for work, and whose trembling hand indicated that he had forborne, at least for a time, his accustomed stimulus. But he did not wish to have him in his shop, for he had no confidence in him. At length he said "John, if you will bring me a certificate from Mr. R——, that you have signed the total abstinence pledge, I will give you another trial; but if you disappoint me again, you and I are done for ever."

The countenance of Jarvis brightened up instantly. He turned quickly away, without reply, and hurried off to the store of Mr. R——, the Secretary of the Society he had joined. The certificate was of course obtained.

"And you have joined sure enough, John," Mr. Lankford said, in a changed tone, as he glanced over the certificate.

"Indeed I have Mr. Lankford."

"And you seem in earnest."

"If I was in earnest about anything in my life, I am in earnest now."

"Keep to your pledge then, John, and all will be well. While you were a sober man, I preferred you to any journeyman in my shop. Keep sober, and you shall never want a day's work while I am in business."

"By the aid of him who knows how much in earnest I am, I will be true to my pledge," Jarvis said, meekly, and yet in a solemn tone.

"Only trust in him John, and he will be strength in your weakness."

"I will try," was the humble and sincere answer.

The poor man was now shown his place in the shop, and once again he resumed his work, though under a far different impulse than had, for years, nerved him to action. But his nerves were all unstrung. His hand shook so, that he could with difficulty use, with the required skill, the implements of his calling. He experienced, likewise, a sinking, sickening feeling; and at times a dizziness and obscurity of mind would suddenly come over him, exciting the liveliest emotions of fear, lest nature would not bear up, under so sudden a withdrawal of its accustomed stimulus. Gradually, however, as his mind became intently fixed upon his work, and his body felt the impulse of manual activities, a slight reaction took place, and the whole machinery of his physical frame moved on with something approaching to a healthy tone. His hand grew steadier, though it still trembled.

Two hours brought his regular dinner time, when Jarvis, who began to feel the want of food, returned home, with new and strange feelings about his heart. One impulse was to tell his wife what he had done and what he was doing. But then he remembered how often he had mocked her new springing hopes—how often he had promised amendment, and once even joined a temperance society, only to relapse into a lower and more degraded condition. "No, no," he said to himself, after debating the question in his mind, as he walked towards home, "I will not tell her now; I will first present some fruit of my repentance; I will give such an assurance as will create confidence and hope."

{To be Continued in our next.}