

“The Lie and Forgiveness”

"A man," says the Rev. J. Todd, " who is now a minister of the Gospel, gave me the following account. I tell it to you in order to show you what repentance is. ' I had one of the kindest and best of fathers; and when I was a little white-headed boy about six years old, he used to carry me to school before him on his horse, to help me in my little plans, and always seemed trying to make me happy ; and he never seemed so happy himself, as when making me happy. When I was six years old, he came home one day, very sick. My mother, too, was sick, and thus nobody but my two sisters could take care of my father. In a few days he was worse, very sick, and all the physicians in the region were called in to see him. The next Sabbath morning early, he was evidently much worse. As I went into his room he stretched out his hand to me and said, "My little boy, I am very sick. I wish you to take that paper on the stand, and run to Mr. C.'s, and get me the medicine written on that paper." I took the paper and went to the apothecary's shop, as I had often done before. It was about half a mile off; but when I got there, I found it shut, and as Mr. C. lived a quarter of a mile further off, I concluded not to go to find him. I then set out for home. On my way back I contrived what to say. I knew how wicked it was to tell a lie, but one sin always leads to another. On going in to my father, I saw that he was in great pain ; and though pale and weak, I could see great drops of sweat standing on his forehead, forced out by the pain. O then I was sorry I had not gone and found the apothecary. At length he said to me, " My son has got the medicine, I hope, for I am in great pain." I hung my head and muttered, for my conscience smote me, " No, sir, Mr. Carter says he has got none !" " Has got none ! Is this possible ?" He then cast a keen eye upon me, and seeing my head hang, and probably suspecting my falsehood, said, in the mildest, kindest tone, " *My I little boy will see his father suffer great, pain for the want of that medicine.*" I went out of the room, and alone, and cried. I was soon called back. My brothers had come, and were standing—all the children were standing round his bed, and he was committing my poor mother to their care, and giving them his last advice. I was the youngest, and when he laid his hand on my head and told me " that in a few hours I should have no father ; that he would in a day or two be buried up ;—that I must now make God my father, love him, obey him, and always do right and *speak the truth*, because the eye of God is always upon me"—it seemed as if I should sink; and when he laid his hand upon my head again and prayed for the blessing of God the Redeemer to rest upon me, "soon to be a fatherless orphan," I dared not look at him I felt so guilty. Sobbing, I rushed from his bed-side, and thought I wished I could die. They soon told me he could not speak. O how much would I have given to go in and tell him that I had told a lie, and ask him once more to lay his hand on my head and forgive me! I crept in once more and heard the minister pray for "the dying man."

O how my heart ached. I snatched my hat and ran to the apothecary's house and got the medicine. I ran home with all my might, and ran in, and ran up to my father's bed-side to confess my sin, crying out, "O here father,"—but I was hushed: and I then saw that he was pale, and that all in the room were weeping. *My dear father was dead!* And the last thing I ever spake to him was *to tell a lie!* I sobbed as if my heart would break; for his kindnesses, his tender looks, and my own sin, all rushed upon my own mind. And as I gazed upon his cold, pale face, and saw his eyes shut, and his lips closed, could I help thinking of his last words; "My little boy will see his father suffer great pain for the want of that medicine;"

I could not know but he died for the want of it.

"In a day or two he was put into the ground and buried up. There were several ministers at the funeral, and each spoke kindly to me, but could not comfort me. Alas! they knew not what a load of sorrow lay on my heart. They could not comfort me. My father was buried, and the children all scattered abroad, for my mother was too feeble to take care of them.

"It was twelve years after this, while in college, that I went alone to the grave of my father. It took me a good while to find it; but there it was, with its humble tomb-stone, and as I stood over it, I seemed to be back at his bed-side, to see his pale face, and hear his voice. Oh! the thought of that sin and wickedness cut me to the heart. It seemed as if worlds would not be too much to give, could I then only have called loud enough to have him hear me ask his forgiveness. But it was too late. He had been in the grave twelve years, and I must live and die, weeping over the ungrateful falsehood. ! May God forgive me."