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Select Poetry.

SONG OF THE HARVESTERS.

BY S. D. HARRIS.

We gather them in—the bright green leaves,
With our sythes and rakes to-day,
And the mow grows big, as the pitcher heaves
His lifts in the sweltering bay.
O ho! afield! for the mower's sythe,
Hath a ring as of destiny,
Sweeping the earth of its burthen lithe,
As it sings in wrathful glee.

We gather them in—the nodding plumes
Of the yellow and bended grain,
And the flash of our sickles' light illumines
Our march o'er the vanquished plain.
Anon we come with the steed drawn car—
The cunning of modern laws,
And the sheaves stoop to its clinging jar,
As it rocks its hungry jaws.

We gather them in—the mellow fruits
From the shrub, and vine, and tree,
With their russet, and golden, and purple suits,
To garnish our treasury.
And each hath a juicy treasure stored
All aneath its tinted rind,
To cheer our guests at the social board,
When we leave our cares behind.

We gather it in—this goodly store,
But not with the miser's gust,
For the Great All-Father we adore
Hath but given it in trust.
And our work of death, is but for life,
In the wintry days to come,—
Then a blessing upon the Reaper's strife,
And a shout at his Harvest Home.

Choice Miscellany.

NOAH COTTON.

BY MRS. MOODIE,

Author of "Life in the Clearings," "Roughing it in the Bush," etc.

THE DISCLOSURE.

Twenty months passed away, and the young bride had never once been home to visit her old friends. Her mother grew more infirm and feeble every day, and pined sadly after the absent child; and the tears were often upon Mary's cheeks. Sophy's act of wilful disobedience had been forgiven from the hour that the thoughtless rebel had become a wife; but her neglect rankled in the heart of both mother and sister.

"She has forgotten us quite," said the ailing old woman. "The distance is not great. She might come, especially as her husband keeps a horse and chaise; and what are ten miles after all? I have often walked double that in my young days to see a friend, much more a mother and sister. Well, I shall not be here long—I feel that. The day of my release will be a welcome one to me, and she will be sorry when I am gone that she neglected to come and see me."

Now, though Dorothy Grimshawe, in her nervous, querulous state, grumbled over the absence of her daughter, she was never so dear to the heart of her faulty child as at the very time she complained of her neglect.

Sophy Cotton never knew the real value of a mother's love until she felt upon her own shoulders the cares and responsibilities of a house.—She longed intensely to see her mother and Mary again, as the nice presents of butter, ham, and eggs that she was constantly sending to——, might have testified for her; but there were painful reasons that made a meeting with her mother and sister everything but desirable to the young wife.

She was changed since they parted. Her marriage had been contrary to their wishes.—she did not like that they should know all—but if she did not go over to —— in the chaise, she went nowhere else—never did the most loving bride keep more closely at home.

Once Mrs. Grimshawe asked of her daughter's messenger, a rough clodhopper, whom she had summoned to her bed-side in order to gratify her curiosity and satisfy her doubts, the reason of Mrs. Cotton's long silence—"Was she well?"

"Yes; but she had lost her rosy cheeks, and was not so blithe as when she first came to the porched house."

"Did her husband treat her ill?"

"Na, na; he petted her like a spoilt child;—yet she never seemed happy or contented-like".

"What made her unhappy then?"

"He could na' just tell—women were queer creturs. Mayhap it was being an old man's wife that fretted her, and that was but natural, seeing that a pretty young thing like her might have got a husband nearer her own age, which, for sartin, would ha' been more to her taste."

"Was she likely to have any family?"

"No signs o' the like. It had na' pleased the Lord to multiply Noah's seed upon the earth."

"Was he stingy?"

"Na, na; they had allers plenty to yeat. He was a kind measter, an' good pay. There was only their two selves, and Mrs. Cotton was dressed like a lady, and had everything brave and new about her; but she looked mortal pale and thin, an' he b'lieved that she was in the consumption."

The man went his way, and the old woman talked to Mary about her daughter half the night.

"She was always discontented with her lot," she remarked, "when single. Change of circumstances seldom changed the disposition. Perhaps it was Sophy's own fault that she was not happy."

Mary thought that her mother was right; but she felt so anxious about her sister, that she determined to leave her mother, for a few days, to the care of a kind neighbor, and walk over to F——, to ascertain how matters really stood.—But her mother became seriously ill, which hindered her from putting this scheme into practice; and her uneasiness on her account banished Sophy and her affairs out of her mind.

Other events soon took place that made a material alteration in their circumstances. Mr. Rollins, their benefactor, died suddenly abroad, and, leaving no will, the pension allowed to Mrs. Grimshawe died with him. His nephew and heir had given them, through his steward, orders to quit their present abode, and poverty and the workhouse stared them in the face.

Hearing of their distress, Noah Cotton came over himself to see them, and generously offered them a home with him and his wife as long as they lived. This was done so kindly, that the sick woman forgot all her old prejudices, and she and Mary thankfully accepted his offer. But when the time came for their removal, the old woman was too ill to be taken from her bed, and the surly steward reluctantly consented that she might remain a few days longer.

Mary was anxious to leave the house. Since the appearance of old Mason's ghost, a most unpleasant notoriety was attached to it, and the most disorderly scenes were constantly being enacted beneath its roof. Persons had been robbed to a considerable amount upon the road leading to——, which at last attracted the attention of the tardy magistrates, and a large reward was offered for the apprehension of the person who performed the principal part in this disgraceful drama. Still, no discovery was made, until one night Bob Mason was shot by Tom Weston, who had sworn to take the ghost alive or dead. The striking resemblance this profligate young man bore to his father had enabled him to deceive many into the belief that he was the person he represented. His mother, who was not in the secret, had never been on good terms with her son since he had personated the ghost; and the remarks he made upon his father she considered as a peculiarly insulting to herself, and his dreadful end drove her mad, and this nest of iniquity was broken up. Such is the end of the wicked.

Let us now relate what had happened at the Porched House, to change the wordly Sophy Grimshawe into a pale and care-worn woman.—She did not love Noah Cotton, when she consented to become his wife; but he was superior to her in wealth and station, and his presence inspired her with respect and awe. He was grave and taciturn; but to her he was invariably generous and kind. Every indulgence and luxury he could afford was lavishly bestowed on his young wife; and if he did not express his attachment with the ardor of a youthful lover, he paid her a thousand little tender attentions which sufficiently proved the depth of his affection and esteem.

He was grateful to her for marrying him; and Sophy was not insensible to his efforts to render her comfortable and happy. But happy she was not, nor was ever likely to be.

Noah was a solitary man—had been so from his youth. He had been accustomed to live so many years with his old mother, and to mix so little with his neighbors, that it had made him silent and unsociable. After the first week of their marriage, he had particularly requested his young wife to try and conform to his domestic habits, and she endeavored, for some time, to obey him. But, at her age, and with her taste for show and gaity, it was a difficult matter.—Yet, after a while, she mechanically sunk into the same dull apathy, and neither went from home, nor invited a guest into the house.

Twelve months passed away in this melancholy, joyless sort of existence, when an old woman and her daughter came to reside in a cottage near them. Mrs. Martin was a kind, gossiping old body; her daughter Sarah, though some years older than Mrs. Cotton, was lively and very pretty, and gained a tolerably comfortable living for herself and her mother by dress-making.—They had once or twice spoken to Sophy, on her way to the Methodist chapel, but never when her husband was present, and she was greatly taken by their manners and appearance.

"Noah, dear," she said, pressing his arm carelessly, as they were coming home one Wednesday evening from the aforesaid chapel, "may I invite Mrs. Martin and her daughter Sarah to drink tea with us? They are strangers, and it would but be kind and neighborly to show them some little attention."

"By no means, Sophy," he cried, with a sudden start; "these people shall not enter my house."

"But why?"

"I have my reasons. They are no friends of mine. They are no strangers to me. They lived here long ago, and were forced to leave the place, after her son, a mischievous, turbulent fellow, was hung."

"Mrs. Martin's son hung! what for? I thought they had been decent, respectable people!"

"There is no judging people by appearance," said Noah, bitterly. "I look a decent fellow, yet I have been a great sinner in my early days.—And, with regard to these Martins, the less you have to do with them, Sophy, the better. I tell you, once for all, I will have no intimacy with them."

He spoke in a sterner voice than he had ever before used to his young wife. Sophy was piqued and hurt by his look and manner; and though she felt very curious to ask a thousand questions about these Martins, and on what score they had given him such offence, Noah grew so cross, and spoke so angrily whenever she chanced to [illegible] subject, that she thought it most prudent to hold her tongue.

From the hour the Martins [illegible] side at F——, Noah Cotton seemed a different creature. He was more sullen and reserved, and his attendance at the chapel was more frequent. His countenance, always pale and careworn, now wore a troubled and anxious expression, and his athletic form wasted until he became perfectly haggard—the very spectre of his former self.

In spite of his stern prohibition, Sophy, if she did not ask the Martins to the house, often, during her husband's absence, slipped in to chat and gossip with them. Ere long, her own countenance underwent a visible change, and her wasted figure and neglected dress led a stranger to suspect that she was either in a decline, or suffering from great mental depression.

Several weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Cotton had not been seen outside her dwelling by any of the neighbors. Mrs. Martin and Sarah wondered what ailed her, and both at length concluded that she must be seriously ill. But, as no doctor was seen visiting at the house, and Noah went about his farm as usual, this could hardly be the case. They were puzzled, and knew not what to think. At last, on the day that Noah went over to——, in order to remove Mrs. Grimshawe and Mary to his own abode, the mystery was solved, and Sophy came across to visit her neighbors.

"Mercy, child! what aileth thee?" cried the old woman, hobbling to meet her, perfectly astonished at the melancholy alteration which a few weeks of seclusion had made in Mrs. Cotton's appearance.

"You are ill, Mrs. Cotton," said Sarah, placing the easy-chair for her guest beside the fire.

"I have not felt well for some time," returned Sophy, trying to seem composed; "and now, the alarming illness of my poor mother has quite upset me. I would have gone with Noah to——to see her, but indeed I was not able,"—and she burst into tears.

"How long hath thee been sick?" asked the inquisitive old dame.

"Only a few days. Noah took the horse and cart to fetch her and Mary home to live with us. It is kind of Noah—very kind. But, God forgive me! I almost wish they mayn't come."

"Why child, it would cheer thee up a bit. I am sure thee wantest some one to take care of thee."

"I would rather be alone" sighed the young wife.

"What has come over thee, Sophy Cotton?" said the old woman, coming up to her and laying her hand on her shoulder, while she peered earnestly into her face. "I never saw such a cruel change in a young cretur in the course of a few weeks! But there may be a cause—a natural cause," and she smiled significantly.

"No, no, thank goodness! You are wrong—quite wrong, Mrs. Martin. No child of mine will ever sport upon my threshold, or gather daisies beside my door; and I am thankful—so thankful, that it is so!"

"That's hardly in natur'. Most o' womankind love young children—'specially their own."

"My dear Mrs. Cotton," said Sarah, soothingly, "you look ill and miserable—do tell us what makes you so unhappy."

"Indeed, Sarah, I can't." And Sophy wept afresh.

"Is Noah cross to you?"

"Quite the reverse—he's the kindest of men."

"He looks very stern."

"His looks belie him."

"And do you love him?"

"If I did not, I should not be so miserable;" and Sophy laid her head down upon her knees and wept aloud.

"Mrs. Cotton, you distress us greatly," continued Sarah, taking her cold passive hand.—"Won't you tell a friend and neighbor the reason of this grief?"

But Sophy only wept as if her heart were breaking. The mother and daughter looked at each other.

The old woman returned again to the charge: "Tell one who loves thee like a mother." A deep, long-drawn sigh was the only answer.

"Speak out your mind, dear," said Sarah, pressing affectionately the thin, wasted hand that lay so passively within her own. "It will ease your heart."

"Ah, if I thought you would tell no one," and Sophy raised her death-pale face, and fixed her earnest eyes mournfully upon her interrogator, "I would confide to you my trouble; but oh, if you were so cruel as to betray me, it would drive me mad."

"Sure we can be trusted, Mistress Cotton," and the old woman drew herself up with an air of offended dignity. "What interest could Sarah and I have to betray thee? we be no idle gossips going clacking from house to house about matters that don't concern us. What good could it do us to blab the secrets of other folk."

"It is only anxiety for your welfare, dear Mrs. Cotton," whispered Sarah, "that makes us wish to know what it is that troubles you."

"I believe you, my kind friends," replied Sophy. "I know I should feel better if I had the thing off my mind. It is dreadful to bear such a burden alone."

"Does not your husband know it?"

"That is what occasions me such grief; I dare not tell him what vexes me; I once hinted at it, and I thought he would have gone mad. You wonder why I look so pale and thin; how can it be otherwise, when I never get a sound night's rest?"

"What keeps you awake?" exclaimed both women in a breath.

"My husband! He does nothing but rave all night in his sleep about some person he murdered years ago."

The women exchanged significant glances.

"Oh, if you could but hear his dreadful cries—the piteous moans he makes—the frantic prayers he puts up to God to forgive him for his great crime, and take him out of the fires of hell, it would make your hair stand on end; it makes me shiver and tremble all over with fear. And then to see, by the dim light of the rush candle, (for he never sleeps in the dark,) the big drops of sweat that stand upon his brow and trickle down his ghastly face; to hear him grind and gnash his teeth in despair, and howl in a wild sort of agony, as he strikes at the walls with his clenched fists; it would make you pray, Mrs. Martin, as I do, for the light of day. Yes, yes, it is killing me—I know it is; it is horrible to live in constant dread of the coming night—to shrink in terror from the husband in whose bosom you should rest in peace."

"Doth this happen often?" asked Mrs. Martin.

"Every night for the last two months; ever since you came to live near us. He used always to be afraid of the dark, and sometimes made a noise in his sleep, but he never acted as he does now. Once I asked him what he was dreaming about, and why he always fancied he had murdered some one, when asleep. He flew at me like a maniac, and swore he would throttle me if he ever heard me ask such foolish questions again; that people could not commit murder in their sleep—that they must be wide awake to shed blood."

"Ay, ay," said the old woman, with a malignant smile. "Doubtless he knows. Does he ever mention the name of the person he murdered, in his sleep?"

"Constantly." "Did you ever, Mrs. Martin, hear of a person of the name of Carlos?"

But the old woman did not answer. A change had passed over her face, as with a cry of triumph she sprang from her seat and clapped her hands in an ecstacy of joy—it might rather be termed of gratified revenge. "Ay! 'tis out at last! My God! I thank thee! Yes, yes, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' My Bill! my brave Bill! and thee hadst to die for this man's crime! but God has righted thee at last—at last, in spite of this villain's evidence, who swore that thy knife did the deed, when he plunged it himself into the rich man's heart. Ha, ha, I shall live to be revenged upon him—I shall, I shall!"

"What have I done?" shrieked the unhappy wife. "I have betrayed my husband into the hands of his enemies!" and she sunk down at the old woman's feet like one dead. Gloating over her anticipated revenge, Mrs. Martin spurned the prostrate form with her foot, as she commanded her more humane daughter "to see after Noah Cotton's dainty wife, while she went to the magistrate's to make a deposition of what she had heard."

Shocked beyond measure at what she had heard and seen, ashamed of her mother's violence, and sorry for Sophia's unhappy disclosure; as she well knew that, whether the actual murderer of Squire Carlos or only an accomplice, her brother was a bad man, who deserved his fate, Sarah tenderly raised the fainting Sophy from the ground, and placed her on her own bed. Long ere the miserable young woman returned to a consciousness of the result of her own imprudence, her husband, who had returned from——without her sister or mother, was on his way to the county jail.

THE NIGHT ALONE.

Sophy returned to her desolate home, the moment she recovered her senses; for the sight of the Martins filled her mind with inexpressible anguish. On entering the little keeping-room, she shut the door, and covering her head with her apron, sat down in Noah's chair by the old oak table, on which she buried her face in her hands, and remained silent and astonished during the rest of the day.

"Shall I sleep with you to night, Mrs. Cotton?" said Sarah Martin, in a kind, soft voice; as towards the close of that long, blank day, she opened the door, and looked in upon

"That desolate widow—but not of the dead."

"No, Sarah, thank you; I would rather be alone," was the brief reply.

Sarah lingered with her hand still on the lock. Sophy shook her head impatiently, as much as to say, "Go, go; I must be obeyed; I know the worst now, and wish no second person to look upon my remorse—my grief—my bitter humiliation." Sarah understood it all. The door slowly closed, and Sophy was once more alone.

Many hours passed away, and the night without, dark and starless, had deepened around her cold hearth, and Sophy still sat there with her head bowed upon the table, in a sort of despairing stupor, unconscious of everything but the overwhelming sense of intense misery.

Then came painful thoughts of her past life; her frequent quarrels with her good sisters; her unkindness and neglect to her suffering mother; her ingratitude to God; and the discontented repinings over her humble lot, which had led to her present situation. She had sold herself for money; and the wealth she had so criminally coveted, was the price of blood, and from its envied possession no real enjoyment had flowed. The poverty and discomfort of her mother's cottage were small, when compared to the heart-crushing misery she at that moment endured.

Then she thought of her husband; thought of her selfish imprudence in betraying his guilt—that in his approaching trial she must appear as a principal witness against him; and that her testimony would, in all probability, consign him to the scaffold.

She felt that, however great the magnitude of his crime, he had bitterly repented of it long ago; that he had suffered untold agonies of remorse and contrition, that this punishment had been more than his reason could well bear; that he had suffered more from the pangs of conscience than he ever could experience from the hands of man. All his kindness to her, since the day she became his wife, returned to her with a sense of tenderness she never had felt for him before. She never suspected how deeply she loved him, till she was forced to part from him for ever; and her soul melted within her, and she shed floods of tears.

She saw him alone in the dark dungeon, surrounded by the frightful phantoms of a guilty conscience, with no pitying voice to soothe his overwhelming grief, or speak words of peace or comfort to his tortured spirit, and she inly exclaimed, "I will go to him to-morrow; I will at least say to him, 'I pity you, my dear, unhappy husband. I pray you to forgive me for the great evil I have brought upon you.'"

And with this thought uppermost in her mind, the miserable girl, overcome by her long fast, and worn out by the excitement of the past day, fell into a profound sleep.

And lo, in the black darkness of that dreary room, she thought she beheld a bright, shining light. It spread and brightened, and flowed all around her like the purest moonlight, and the centre condensed into a female, smiling and beautiful, which advancing, laid a soft hand upon her head, and whispered in tones of ineffable sweetness—

"Pray—pray for him and thyself, and thou shalt find peace." And the face and the voice were those of her dead sister Charlotte, and a sudden joy shot into her heart, and the vision faded away, and she awoke, and behold it was a dream.

And Sophy rose up, and sank down upon the ground, and buried her face in her hands, and tried to pray, for the first time in her life, earnestly and truthfully, in the firm belief that he to whom she addressed her petition was able to help and save her, in her hour of need. Few and imperfect were her words; but they flowed from the heart, and he who looks upon the heart gave an answer of peace.

Memory, ever faithful in the hour of grief, supplied her with a long catalogue of the sins and follies of a misspent life. Deeply she acknowledged the vanity and nothingness of those things in which she had once felt such an eager childish delight; and she asked forgiveness of her Maker for a thousand faults that she had never acknowledged as faults before.

The world to the prosperous has many attractions. It is their paradise, they seek for no other; and to part with its enjoyments comprises the bitterness of death. Even the poor work on, and hope for better days. It is only the wounded in spirit, and sad of heart, that reject its allurements, and turn with their whole soul to God. Out of much tribulation they are new-born to life—that better life promised to them by their Lord and Savior.

Sophy was still upon her knees, when the grey light of a rainy October morning gradually strengthened into day. Gloomy and [illegible], it seemed to regard her with a cheerless scowl as, shivering with cold and excitement, she unclosed [illegible] and stepped forth into the moist air.

"How like my own fate," she murmured. "But there is a [illegible] the dark clouds, and hope exists, even for [illegible] wretched like me."

The sound of horses' hoofs approaching rapidly [illegible] she had caught hold of the bridle of the nearest rider. They were the [illegible] who had conducted Noah to prison, returning [illegible].

"Tell me," she cried, in a voice which much weeping had rendered hoarse and almost inarticulate, "something about my poor husband—will he be hung?"

"Nothing more certain," replied the person thus addressed. "Small chance of escape for him. The foolish fellow has confessed all."

"Then he did really commit the murder?"

"Worse than that, Mistress, he drew his own neck out of the noose, and let another fellow suffer the death he richly deserved. By his own account, hanging is too good for such a monster. He should be burnt alive."

"May God forgive him!" exclaimed Sophy wringing her hands. "Alas! alas! He was a kind, good man to me."

"Don't take on, my dear, after that fashion," said the other horseman, with a knowing leer—"You were no mate for a fellow like him. Young and pretty as you are, you will soon get a better husband."

Sophy turned from the speaker with a sickening feeling of disgust at him and his ribald jest, and staggered back into the house. She was not many minutes in making up her mind to go to her husband; and hastily packing up a few necessaries in a small bundle, she called the old serving man, who had lived with her husband for many years, and bade him harness the horse and to drive her to B——.

The journey was long and dreary, for it rained the whole day. Sophy did not care for the rain; the dullness of the day was more congenial to her present feelings: the gay beams of the sun would have seemed a mockery to her bitter sorrow.

As they passed through the village, a troop of idle boys followed them into the turnpike road, shouting, at the top of their voices—

"There goes Noah Cotton's wife!—the murderer's wife! Look how grand she be in her fine chaise."

"Ay," responded some human fiend, through an open window, loud enough to reach the ears of the grief-stricken woman; "but pride will have a fall."

The penitent Sophy wept afresh at these insults. "Oh," she sighed, "I deserve all this.—I was too proud. But they don't know how miserable I am, or they would not causelessly inflict upon me another wound."

"Don't take on so, Missus," said the good old serving-man, who, though he said nothing to her on the subject, felt keenly for her distress.—"Surely it's no fault o' yourn. You worn't born, I guess, when Measter did this fearsome deed. I ha' lived with Noe these fourteen years, an' I never 'spected him o' the like. He's about as queat a man as ever I seed. He wor allers kind to the dumb beasts on the farm, an' you know, Missus, that's a good sign. Some men are such tyrants, that they must vent their bad humors on suffin. If the survant don't cotch it, why the poor dub creturs in their power dew.—Now, I say, Noe wor a good Measter both to man an' beast, an' I pray they may find him innocent yet."

Sophy had no hopes on the subject. She felt in her soul that he was guilty. The loquacity of honest Ben pained her, and in order to keep him silent, she remained silent herself, until they reached the metropolitan town of the county, in which the assizes were always held, which was not until late in the evening.

She could gain no admittance within the jail that night, and Sophy put up at a small but neat public house near at hand. From the widow who kept the house, she heard that the assizes were to be held the following week, and that there was no doubt but what the prisoner, Noah Cotton, would be found guilty of death. But her son, who was the jailor, thought it more than probable that he would cheat the hangman, as he had scarcely tasted food since he had been in prison. Mrs. Cotton then informed the widow that she was the wife of the prisoner, and confided to her enough of her history to create for her a strong interest in the breast of the good woman. She did not fail to convey the same feeling with regard to Sophia, to her son, who promised her an early interview with her husband on the following morning, and to do all for her and him that lay in his power.

Cheered with this promise, the weary traveller retired to her chamber, and slept soundly.—Before six in the morning, she found herself in the presence of her husband.

THE MEETING.

"My husband! my dear husband! and it was my imprudence that brought you to this!" cried Sophy, as she fell weeping upon the neck of the felon, clasping him in her arms, and kissing with passionate grief the tears from his haggard, unshaven face.

"Hush, my precious lamb," he replied, folding her in his embrace. "It was not you who betrayed me, it was the voice of God speaking through a guilty conscience. I am thankful—oh, so thankful that it has taken place—that the dreadful secret is known at last! I enjoyed last night the first quiet sleep I have known for years—slept without being haunted by him!"

"And with death staring you in the face, Noah!"

"What is death, Sophy, to the agonies I have endured?—the fear of detection by day—the eyes of the dead glaring upon me all night? No; I feel happy, in comparison, now. I have humbled myself to the dust—have wept and prayed for pardon; and oh, my sweet wife, I trust I am forgiven—have found peace——"

"When was this?" whispered Sophy.

"The night before last."

"How strange!" murmured Sophy. "We were together in spirit that night. I never knew how dear you were to me, Noah, until that night.—How painful it would be to me to part with you for ever!"

"It was cruel and selfish in me, Sophy, to join your fate to mine—a monster, stained with the blackest crimes. But I thought myself secure from detection—thought that my sin would never find me out, that I had managed matters with such incomparable skill that discovery was impossible, that the wide earth did not contain a witness of my guilt. Fool that I was. The voice of blood never sleeps; from out the silent dust it calls night and day in its ceaseless appeals for vengeance at the throne of God. I have heard it in the still, dark night, and above the roar of the crowd in the swarming streets of London at noon-day; and even felt a shadowy hand upon my throat, and a cry in my ear—*Thou art the man!*

"There were moments when, goaded to madness by that voice, I felt inclined to give myself up to justice; but pride withheld me, and the dismal fear of those haunting fiends chasing me through eternity, was a hell I dared not encounter. My soul was parched with an unquenchable fire; I was too hardened to pray."

"Noah," said Sophy, looking earnestly into his hollow eyes, "you are not a cruel man; you were kind to your old mother—have been very kind to me. How came you to commit such a dreadful crime?"

The man groaned heavily, as he replied—

"It was pride—a foolish, false shame of low birth and honest poverty, that led me to the desperate act."

"I have felt something of this," said Sophy, and her tears flowed afresh. "I now see that sinful thoughts are but the seeds of sinful deeds, [illegible] I only needed a stronger temptation to be guilty of crimes as great as that of which you stand charged."

"Sophy," said her husband, solemnly, "I wish my fate to serve as a warning to others. Listen to me. In the long winter evenings after my mother died, I wrote a history of my life. I did this in fear and trembling, lest any human eye should catch me at my task, and learn my secret. But now that I am called upon to answer for my crime, I wish to make this sad history beneficial to my fellow creatures.

"After I am gone, dear Sophy, and you return to F——, lose no time in taking to your home and making comfortable your poor afflicted mother and sister for the remainder of their days. This key"—and he drew one from his pocket—"opens the old-fashioned bureau in our sleeping room. In the drawer nearest to the window you will find my will, in which I have settled upon you all that I possess. I have no relations who can dispute with you the legal right to this property. There is a slight indenture in the wood that forms the bottom of this drawer; press it hard with your thumb, and draw it back at the same time, and it will disclose an inner place of concealment, in which you will find a roll of Bank of England notes to the amount of £500. This was the money stolen from Mr. Carlos the night I murdered him. It is stained with his blood, and I have never looked at it or touched it since I placed it there, upwards of twenty years ago. I never had the heart to use it, and I wish it to be returned to the family.

"In this drawer you will likewise find the papers containing an account of the circumstances that led to the commission of the crime. You and Mary can read them together; and oh! as you read, pity and pray for the unhappy murderer."

He stopped, and wiped the drops of perspiration from his brow; and the distress of his young wife almost equalled his own, as she kissed away the tears that streamed down his pale face. His breath came in quick, convulsive sobs, and he trembled in every limb.

"I feel ill," he said in a faint voice; "these recollections make me so. There is a strange fluttering at my heart, as if a bird beat its wings with my breast. Sophy, my wife—my blessed wife! can this be death?"

Sophy screamed with terror, as he reeled suddenly forward, and fell to the ground at her feet. Her cries brought the jailer to her assistance.—they raised the felon, and laid him on his bed; but life was extinct. The agitation of his mind had been too great for his exhausted frame.—The criminal had died self-condemned under the arrows of remorse.

THE MURDERER'S MANUSCRIPT.

Who am I, that I should write a book? a nameless, miserable and guilty man. It is because these facts stare me in the face, and the recollection of my past deeds goads me to madness, that I would fain unburthen my conscience by writing this record of myself.

I do not know what parish in England had the discredit of being my native place. I can just remember, in the far off days of my early childhood, coming with my mother to live at F——, a pretty rural village in the fine agricultural county of S——. My mother was called Mrs. Cotton, and was reputed to be a widow, and I was her only child. Whether she had ever been married, the gossips of the place considered very doubtful. At that period of my life, this important fact was a matter to me of perfect indifference.

I was a strong, active, healthy boy, quite able to take my own part and defend my own rights, against any lad of my own age who dared to ask impertinent questions.

The great man of the village—Squire Carlos as he was called—lived in a grand hall, surrounded by a stately park, about a mile from F——, on the main road leading to London. His plantations and game preserves extended for many miles along the public thoroughfare, and my mother kept the first porter's lodge nearest the village.

The Squire had been married, but his wife had been dead for some years. He was a tall, handsome man, in middle life, and bore the character of having been a very gay man in his youth. It was whispered, among the [illegible] gossips, that these indiscretions had shortened the days of his lady, who loved him [illegible]. At any rate, she died of consumption before she had completed her twenty-fourth year, without leaving an heir to the estate, and the Squire never married again.

Mr. Carlos often came to the lodge—so often, that he seldom passed through the gate on his way to and from the Hall, without stopping to chat with my mother. This was when he was alone; accompanied by strangers, he took no notice of us at all. My mother generally sent me to open the gate. The gentlemen used to call me a pretty, curly-headed boy, and I got a great deal of small change from them on hunting days. I remember one afternoon, when opening the gate for a large party of gentlemen, with the Squire at their head, that one of them tapped my cheek with his riding whip, and exclaimed—

"By Jove! Carlos, that's a handsome boy!"

"Oh, yes," said another; "the very picture of his father."

And the Squire laughed, and they all laughed; and when I went back into the lodge, I showed my mother a handful of silver I had [illegible], and said—

"Mother, who was my father?"

"Mr. Cotton, of course," she answered, [illegible], "but why, Noah, do you ask?"

"Because I want to know something about him."

But my mother did not choose to answer impertinent questions; and, though greatly addicted to telling long stories, she seemed to know very little about the private memoirs of Mr. Cotton. She informed me, however, that he had been a fellow-servant with her in the Squire's employ; that he quarrelled with her shortly after I was born, and left her, and she did not know what had become of him, but she believed he went to America, and from his long silence, she concluded he had been dead for some years; that out of respect for his services, Mr. Carlos had placed her in her present comfortable situation, and that I must show my gratitude to Mr. Carlos for all he had done for us, by the most dutiful and obliging behaviour. I likewise learnt from her, that I was called Noah, after my father.

The brief sketch of our family history was perfectly satisfactory to me at that time. I remember feeling a strong interest in my unknown progenitor, and I used to castle-build and speculate about his fate.

In the meanwhile, I found it good policy strictly to obey my mother's injunctions, and the alacrity which I displayed in waiting upon the Squire and his guests, never failed in securing a harvest of small coin, which gave me no small importance in the eyes of the lads in the village, who waited upon me with the same diligence that I did upon the Squire, in order, no doubt, to come in for a share of the spoils. Thus a love of acquiring without labor, and of obtaining admirers without any merit of my own, was early fostered in my heart, which led to a taste for fine dress and a boastful display of superiority, by no means consistent with my low birth and humble means.

In due time I was placed by Mr. Carlos at the village school, and the wish to be thought the [illegible] panions, stimulated me to learn with a diligence and determination of purpose, which soon placed me at the top of my class.

There was only one boy in the school that dared to dispute my supremacy, and he had by nature what I acquired with great toil and difficulty—a most retentive memory, which enabled him to repeat, after once reading, a task which took me several days of hard study to learn.—How I envied this faculty, which I justly considered possessed no real merit in itself, but was a natural gift. It was not learning with him, it was mere reading. He would just glance his eye over the book, after idling half his time, and then walk up to the master, and repeat it without making a single blunder. He was the most careless, reckless boy in the school, and certainly the cleverest. I hated him. I could not bear that he should equal, and even surpass me, when he took no pains to learn.

If the master had done him common justice, I should never have stood above him. But for reasons, best known to himself, he always favored me, and snubbed Bill Martin, who, in return, played him a thousand impish tricks, and taught the other boys to rebel against his authority.—Bill called me the *obsequious* young gentleman, and Mr Bullen, the master, the Squire's Toady.

There was constant war between this lad and me. We were pretty equally matched in strength; for the victor to-day, was sure to be beaten on the morrow; the boys generally took part with Martin. Such characters are always popular, and he had many admirers in the school. My aversion to this boy made me restless and unhappy. I really longed to do him some injury. Once, after I had given him a sound drubbing, he called me "a base born puppy! a beggar, eating the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table."

Foaming with rage—for a wound to my pride was far worse in my estimation than any personal injury—I demanded what he meant by such insulting language, and he sneered in my face, and told to go home and ask my virtuous mother, as she, doubtless, was better qualified to give me the information I desired. And I did ask my mother, and she told me "I was a foolish boy to heed such nonsense, spoken in anger by a lad I had just thrashed; that Bill Martin was a bad fellow, and envious of my being better off than himself; that if I listened to such scandalous lies about her, it would make her miserable, and I should never know a happy hour myself."

I felt that this was true. I loved my mother better than anything in the world. Her affection and kindness to me was boundless. She always welcomed me home with a smiling face, and I never received a blow from her hand in my life.

My mother was about six-and-thirty years of age. She must have been beautiful in youth, for she was still very pretty. Her countenance was mild and gentle, and she was scrupulously neat and clean. I was proud of my mother. I saw no woman in her rank that could be compared with her; and any insult offered to her I resented with my whole heart and strength. I was too young to ask an explanation of the frequency of the Squire's visits to our house; and why, when he came, I was generally dispatched on some errand to the village, and had the real explanation been given, I would not have believed it.

Mr. Carlos had no family, but his nephew and niece came twice a-year to spend their holidays at the old hall. Master Walter, who was his heir, was a fine, manly fellow, about my own age; and Miss Ella, who was two years younger, was a sweet, fair girl, as beautiful as she was amiable.

I had just completed my fourteenth year, and was tall and stout for my age. Whenever these young people were at the Hall, I was dressed in my best clothes, and went up every day to wait upon them. If they went fishing, I carried their basket and rods, baited their hooks, and found out the best places for their sport, and managed the light row-boat if they wished to extend their rambles further down the river.

Often we left boat and tackle, and wandered through the groves and meadows. I found Miss Ella birds' nests and wild strawberries, [illegible]