



The old man, seizing the lamp, rushed to the chest of drawers, and throwing it open, jerked out the secret drawer.—P.



I was petrified and astounded—I knelt by the body, and kissed her again and again, but it was cold and senseless.—P. 38.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE
OF THE
LIFE, ADVENTURES, AND TERRIBLE CRIMES
OF
JAMES BAGWELL;

**WHO WAS TRIED AT THE OCTOBER TERM OF THE
CRIMINAL COURT OF SOMERSET, PA.,**

FOR THE
MURDER OF SOLOMON JONES,

**And who, after his conviction, made a full Confession of his dark
and terrible crimes to the Rev. W. Miller, his spiritual adviser.**

**This Confession is now published in the hope that it may
serve as a warning to those having charge of youth,
to guard well the souls which have been intrusted
to their care, and of which they will hereafter
be called on to give an account, and as a cau-
tion to the young to beware of the first
step in deceit, vice and crime.**

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THE REV. WILLIAM MILLER.**

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LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

JAMES BAGWELL.

It was in the year of our Lord 1848, in the small town of Sumersset in the state of Pennsylvania, that a traveler stopped at one of the public Inns, to rest himself from the fatigues of the day, and satisfy the demands of a well-sharpened appetite. Mine host gave the stranger welcome in that free and easy manner, which no one but a landlord can command; and, taking the saddle-bags which the other had borne upon his arm, and stowing them away behind and under the bar-room counter, returned to his guest with his brush-broom in hand, ready to remove the dust from the traveler's plain homespun clothes, which indicated, as well as his time-whitened boots, that the stranger, notwithstanding his saddle-bags, was a foot passenger along the turnpike highway which led into that village. It was a September evening, and the sun was going down behind the skirt of the distant forest, shrouded in that soft, mellow, misty haze which hovers like a vail of smoke over western landscapes, in the quiet hours of the Indian summer. Mine host kindly asked the stranger if he would not take something to drink, to refresh himself after his day's journey. The stranger looked around the room, to discover if any one could be found to join them; quite a number of idle fellows were sitting upon the wooden bench without the door of the inn, lazily carving the pine board, which bore many a mark of this laborious work of idleness. The only person in the room sat by the window. He was a large, powerfully-framed man, inclined to corpulency, with a clear, gray eye and a florid complexion; and the traveler addressed him:

"What say you to join us in a little something for the stomach's sake," as St. Paul has it; excuse me, my name is Solomon Jones, or Sol Jones, among my neighbors in old Herkimer county, on Moose River, in York state.—Come, taste a trifle?"

"Well; said the man at the window, rising from his chair, and dispelling a gloomy look from his countenance, "I will join you in a glass; I have been traveling, myself, for some time, and have stopped here for a month, or such a matter, and I know how comfortable a quiet glass makes one feel after a hard day's journey; but, Mr. Jones, my name is Bagwell, your very good health, and yours, landlord Hardin."

"Gentlemen, yours," said the rosy, fat old host, after filling their glasses and his own; and with the customary clink they tossed off their potations, when the landlord, Hardin, excused himself to see about the progress of supper; and the two newly made acquaintances seated themselves by the window, in a couple of the old-fashioned split-bottomed chairs, and Bagwell began the conversation:—

"You say, Mr. Jones, that you come from the state of New York; are you journeying farther south, in Pennsylvania?"

"Well, I cannot say," said the other, my present inclination leads me to turn toward the west, rather than to pursue my way further south; lands, hereabout, are too broken, too dear, and too thickly-settled to suit me; and that is my business, at present, to find some small but rich tract of land, where there is plenty of timber and game; for the fact is, Mr. Bagwell, I am fond of hunting, and heartily tired of plowing stony soil, which, after all your labor, returns not half a crop. I am, therefore, in search of some nook with the advantages of good rich earth, heavy timber, filled with game, a clear spring, and a good fishing stream close at hand. Now, Sir, if you can tell me of such a spot, I will thank you."

"Indeed, Mr. Jones, replied Bagwell, "you have struck upon the wrong person to give you this information, for it is just what I am looking for myself; I have been lingering hereabout for some time, but cannot satisfy myself to purchase the land, it being, as you say, too thin and too dear; what money I have must be used judi-

ciously, for although it is not much, it is of vast importance to me, being my all."

"Really, Mr. Bagwell," said Jones, "I am happy to meet you; our designs being the same, there is no sound reason why we should not make our search together. I have been a farmer, in moderate circumstances, and I now have with me some eight hundred dollars in cash, which will enable me to make a payment upon any property which I may purchase."

"Are you not afraid to carry money with you?" said Bagwell, and his eyes glittered as he spoke.

"No", replied Jones, "I have guarded against letting any one know it; though, in fact, I never have met with any accident in the way of robbery, in my life. I have always worn plain clothes, such as you now see me in, which avoids all appearance of my being possessed of enough means to make me an object of interest to thieves or robbers."

"But I am told," said Bagwell, "that there has been much talk, lately, in this vicinity, of a gang of cut-throats, who would not scruple to commit any act, they do say, not even assassination itself."

"Never fear me for that," returned Jones, "I have a trusty friend there," pointing to an immense Newfoundland dog lying on the floor, which was keeping an intent gaze upon Bagwell, "that shaggy-haired fellow follows me constantly, and I feel myself safe under his care."

"But is it possible," questioned Bagwell, with apparent surprise, "that you carry no other means of defense, no knife or pistol?"

"Not I," replied Jones, "daggers and guns are not in my line; nature has made me sufficiently strong armed for my own protection, and I think none but a coward or dishonest man would be the bearer of such weapons."

"Nay, Mr. Jones," said the other, pretending to be offended, "I have sometimes borne arms for my security, when I fancied myself in danger, and I am rated neither a coward nor a dishonest man."

"Well, said Jones, "excuse me, I meant no offense; there may be cases which will justify a person to guard against jeopardies; but,

for my own part, I have always looked upon the custom of bearing weapons as a mark of over caution."

At this moment the supper bell rang, and the two speakers went in, and sat, side by side, at the table. Travel had whetted the appetite of Jones to a keen edge, and he did ample justice to the viands of mine host Hardin. After the meal, Jones, seeing his dog well fed, took a seat upon the back porch, which was overrun with thick hop-vines, whose yellow blossoms threw forth a grateful odor upon the atmosphere of that autumnal evening. In a few moments Bagwell came up with a handful of cigars, and proffering them, said:

"Friend Jones, do you indulge in this weed?" "Certainly I do," answered the other, why what is more quiet and comfortable than the enjoyment of a good cigar, after a hearty meal? I like to fancy that aids digestion, and then the clouds curl up so quietly, that there is a peculiar dreamy satisfaction to watch them fade away.

"Well, I am glad to find," said Bagwell, "when I am smoking, a companion who enjoys a good whiff—though tobacco is not so social as a good glass of liquor—for you can smoke alone with much relish, but drinking by yourself is a dull, nay almost stupid habit."

"By George! I am heartily glad to hear you say so," said Jones, slapping the other upon the knee, "you are a man after my own heart; we must travel together; I like a good companion who is sociable and free from selfishness. Suppose you set out with me, and let us travel together, it will make the way more pleasant, and perhaps more safe."

"I cannot so well in the morning, when you purpose to start, as I have half way intimated, or partly promised, a farmer just over the way, to look at a piece of land which he wishes to sell."

"Oh! no matter for that, decline the purchase and we will wind our way to the west."

"Very well," said Bagwell, "I will overtake you at the next village."

"Enough," replied Jones, "I shall be off before sunrise to-morrow and will examine the country round the next town, and there we will dine together. As I am somewhat weary with my walk,

I will retire early; I will, therefore, wish you a pleasant night's rest."

So saying, Jones retired, followed by his noble dog, and in a short time the tired traveler was quietly enjoying a profound sleep.

On the morrow, the twittering swallows had not begun their airy circles in the golden sunshine, when Jones, with his saddlebags slung across his shoulders, was stoutly trudging his way through the distant forest, following a narrow horse-path which lay along the verge of a wild precipice. On either hand, for miles, the trees stood in their primitive denseness, and down in the valley, which lay to the left of the rocky precipice, a deep blue river quietly pursued its watery way. Just as Jones had reached a sudden turn in the road where the rocky ledge was most steep, he halted an instant to gaze upon the wild scene. Hard by, a small stream, formed by springs, coursed along, until it reached the steep cliff, when it fell, in a shining sheet of silver, down the abrupt wall, and rushed rapidly through the dark woods to the calm river below. In this glen the rich green of the forest trees was so deep, that although the morning sun gilded the tops of the trees on the opposite hills, within the valley the shade had almost the blackness of night. Jones was leaning on a huge fragment of rock, listening to the matin hymn of the thrush, which poured forth its wild, but melancholy stream of song from the shadowy darkness of the dell, when, hearing a footstep, he turned his head and beheld Bagwell coming briskly along the narrow path toward him. The large dog, which was standing by Jones, started toward the new comer, and growling low, at first, sprang to the direction of Bagwell, with a sudden and sharp bark, which rang through the silent glen.

"Why Hero!" said Jones, reprovingly, to the animal, "don't you know your friends, you stupid fellow?"

"Your dog don't seem to recognize me," said Bagwell.

"Oh! don't be afraid," answered Jones, "he is a fierce animal, but under perfect control. Come in!" said he to his dog, and the obedient beast returned behind his master, but still kept his fierce eyes upon Bagwell. "I have stopped," continued Jones "to look at this wild, but beautiful scene, and to hear that old favorite of mine, the thrush, sing his sad, sweet song."

"And I," answered the other, "have made all haste to dispatch my business and overtake you."

"I am glad you have done so," rejoined his companion, "we can now journey on together, but first, let us see this waterfall, which leaps with such a turmoil over these crags; I like these foaming little mountain brooks, which, like small men in the quiet country towns, make great noise by constant fretting, but when they reach the great river of life, the world of waters, and mingle with the broad and general current, their individual importance is swallowed up, and they are borne away as an undistinguished part of the great whole."

"Why, really, Mr. Jones," replied Bagwell, "you talk like a philosopher, not a farmer."

"But," answered the other, "why may not a farmer be a philosopher, can he not see the workings of the elements, the agents of nature, in flood, fire, air and earth? foresee the coming rains, know the most favorable time for the growth of grain, the character of soil, and the variety of plants; here, for instance, just upon the verge of this precipitous crag, is a rare flower, but I know it, it is the scarlet mountain pink." With these words Jones stooped to pluck the blossom from the cranny in the rock on the outer edge of the cliff, when a swift blow from the heavy cudgel which Bagwell carried, came upon the back of the victim's head, and he rolled over the frightful precipice, and fell a lifeless body upon the flat ledge of rocks far below. At that instant the powerful dog sprang upon Bagwell, and seizing him by the left arm, almost sank his teeth to the bone in the flesh of the assassin; Bagwell shrieked with pain, but grasped the animal by the throat with his right hand, and attempted to choke the enraged beast, which still retained its hold, and shook its head violently, when Bagwell, turning the dog toward the chasm, gave a sudden and well-directed kick with his stout boot against the belly of the beast, which gave a short groan and tumbled backward headlong down the steep precipice, but was saved from being killed by the fall, by dropping in a small pool beneath; Bagwell forthwith proceeded to strip off his coat and bind up his wounded arm with his handkerchief, and in a few moments his intense pain was almost forgot-



A swift blow from the heavy cudgel which Bagwell carried, came upon the back of the victim's head, and he rolled over the frightful precipice, and fell a lifeless body upon the flat ledge of rocks far below. — P. 8.

ten in his great solicitude to reach his victim, at length, by going some distance down the hollow, he managed, by the aid of the straggling bushes, to descend from the top of the cliff into the somber shaded glen, and reached the spot upon the flat rocks below, where the murdered body lay. It was horribly broken by the fall, both legs being snapped in twain, and beside the blow on the back of the head, which had fractured the skull, a sharp corner of the crag had cut a frightful gash in the forehead, which laid the skull bone wide open and bared several inches of the brains to the sight.

The dog, though very lame, was crawling away, when Bagwell seeing it, seized a stone and hurled it violently at the animal; but notwithstanding its wounded condition, the dog hobbled away so fast that he could not overtake it. Bagwell now turned to the bruised and bleeding body before him, and turning it upon its back commenced rapidly to rifle the pockets of pantaloons, vest and coat, successively, of their contents; blank and pallid horror overspread his countenance as he came to the last one, and had only spread before him upon the bare rock, a small knife, a bunch of keys and a large leather wallet, containing a number of yellow stained instruments of writing, a few dollars in paper bills, and some loose change in silver. Hastily the trembling fingers of Bagwell ran over the time dyed documents, and his eyes grew wild with desperation as he beheld old leaves and articles of agreement, title-bonds and various memoranda, in place of money; again he made search of the pockets, but with no better success, and again he ran with agitation over the contents of the wallet; a horrible despair darkened his countenance, and he gazed for an instant with agonized stupefaction upon the ghastly face and blood-spotted body of Jones. Suddenly flashed upon him the importance of secreting the body, and he rose from his kneeling posture to survey the scene; but a moment was necessary for him to decide that the most secure place to avoid all detection was to throw the body into the river, which coursed its quiet way by the foot of the forest shaded glen. With this resolve, he seized the yet warm corpse by the hair of the head and began dragging it with his right hand, which was not wounded, down toward the brink of the stream; where having

arrived, he bethought him to strip some elm bark from the bushes at hand, and fasten stones to the feet and head of the person, that the body might not rise from its watery grave to give evidence, from the bleeding lips of its wounds, of its untimely death. In a few moments Bagwell had fastened the weights to the limbs of Jones, and heaved the body over the bluff clay-bank, and it sank suddenly in the stream; the calm clear waters closed quietly over it, and not a mourner marked the burial of Solomon Jones, by Bagwell, save the melancholy willows which leaned over the stream and laved their long drooping branches in the scarce moving flood. But Bagwell, in taking off the coat of the murdered man, had discovered an inner side pocket, and from this he extracted the treasure for which this bloody deed had been committed; so after consigning the body to its watery grave, he started on toward the next village with the ill-gotten, additional wealth of eight hundred dollars.—The foul crime did not long remain concealed, the faithful dog Hero returned to the village of Sumerset, from whence his master had started in the morning, and the innkeeper, Hardin, as well as a number of others, remarked the extreme uneasiness of the animal and its wounded condition, but attributed all this to the probable supposition that he had lost his master, and had been attacked by the dogs of farmers in the vicinity; but the surprise was much augmented by Hero's disappearing and returning late in the evening, and exhibiting far more uneasiness than ever, running strangely about the tavern, and looking imploringly in the faces of the persons about the house; the anxiety of the animal seemed constantly increasing, and he gave short low moans and howls which were painfully distressing, and he constantly walked uneasily up and down the bar-room of the inn, exhibiting all possible signs of distress. At length, some one of the villagers suggested that the dog must be going mad, and at the bare mention of hydrophobia the curious group soon scattered and left the neighborhood of the inn, but the landlord, Hardin, well convinced that the dog was not mad, made him fast by a halter in the stable, supposing, thereby, to secure him at least for the night. But during the hours of darkness Hero gnawed the rope in two, and what was the horror of the host and his servants at sunrise on the morrow, to behold the powerful

and sagacious animal standing at the door of the inn, holding in his mouth a piece of a man's leg!! In a very few moments the whole village was aroused, and the utmost excitement prevailed.—An evident disposition upon the part of Hero to lead them away, was manifested by motions of his head, by sudden startings and returning, indicating a wish for them to follow, which a number of the villagers did, and the dog guided them directly to a spot upon the bank of the neighboring river, where they beheld the leg from whence the dog, in attempting to drag out the person, had pulled off a portion of the flesh. Beneath the blue water the remaining outline of the human figure was plainly perceptible, and the party instantly recognized (notwithstanding it was shriveled and blanched by the action of the water), the face of the late sojourner in the village, Jones. After a proper examination by the Coroner's inquest, and a verdict returned of "came to his death by violence, at the hands of some person or persons unknown." The body was placed in a coffin, and respectably interred in the village churchyard.

In the neighboring town of Union, where Bagwell halted at the tavern for the night, two women, who lay in an adjoining room, heard a person lamenting and muttering in his sleep, and repeating in a low and mournful tone: "Why did I murder Solomon Jones? Oh, horrible vision! Oh, ghastly pale face! Oh, blood laced, pallid countenance—you too have come to haunt me, and waking hours will be more wretched, while night will become horrible." The women communicated this to the persons in the house, and in a short time a warrant of arrest was obtained from a magistrate in the night, and Bagwell was imprisoned upon these strong grounds of suspicion. Early in the morning messengers arrived from the neighboring village with news of the horrible murder of Jones, which confirmed the suspicions of foul play. The walking-staff of Bagwell was examined, and a hair or two, corresponding in color with that of the deceased, were found in the bark, it being of unpolished hickory, and a stain upon it which was evidently the mark of blood. No sooner did the dog Hero, which was brought along with the company from the other village, get sight of Bagwell, who had been brought out of jail to

see if he could be recognized, than he flew savagely at him, and the utmost severity was used upon the dog before he would release the hold which he had taken upon the throat of the person who had so cruelly murdered his master. Bagwell was remanded to prison, and remained until the next term of the court; in the meantime the spot where Jones had fallen over the precipice was examined, marks were found upon the ground, where the body had been trailed along to the water's edge, and all the circumstances of the case combined to give proof of guilt, and no one in the neighborhood could be found to doubt it. The sitting of the court came on and the cause was heard, and the jury brought in their verdict of "guilty, murder." The day was fixed for the execution of Bagwell. On the evening preceding the execution, Bagwell sent for the Rev. Wm. Miller, and made a full confession to him not only of the murder of Solomon Jones, but of all the adventures, dark deeds, and terrible crimes of his past life. He appeared truly penitent, and told Mr. Miller that he hoped his death would, in a measure, atone for the wickedness of his life, by warning the young to beware of the *first step* in crime. The Rev. Wm. Miller left the cell of the condemned about midnight. The next morning the jailer entered to prepare the prisoner for the execution, when he beheld the body of Bagwell stretched on the blood-stained floor; his throat cut from ear to ear, his hand grasping a knife, and his countenance fixed in the agonies of death and despair.

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OR

JAMES BAGWELL.

[As related by him to the Rev. Wm. Miller, on the evening preceding the day appointed for his execution.]

I WAS born in the state of Connecticut; my father was an officer in a small town, from a popular appointment by its citizens; he was a man of stern demeanor, but sterling integrity. His office, although one of small emolument, offered many opportunities for fraud and speculation; but during the long series of years which he held it, no defalcation ever occurred in either the discharge of the duties or the return of the monetary accounts. I lost my mother when I was quite young, and my father placed me with my aunt, his sister; she was a maiden lady of some thirty odd years of age, who, failing to find fortune in matrimonial affairs, sought solace by assuming to have an immense amount of godliness, and the less attention she received from the courtesy of gentlemen of marriageable years and character, the more assiduous regard she paid to her religious exercises. Indeed, so devout was she that she always made the servant cook enough on Saturday to last until Monday, rather than be guilty of profaning the Sabbath. In short, she was almost always upon her knees, especially when she conceived that her prayers could be observed, as well as heard, by her neighbors. No one could with scandalous gossip assail an acquaintance in her presence, when visiting among her friends, but what she would meekly undertake to say something palliating in behalf of the absent person; and by this course she was generally accredited one of the sweetest women in town. Every one said, "What an amiable woman Miss Eliza Bag-

well is, what a pity that she has not been well married before this, she would make some worthy man a most inestimable wife."

"Oh! yes," another would say, "she would be so kind to servants; did you ever hear how politely she speaks to her girl Bridget; and then how she sympathizes with the poor slaves in the South?" Although young, here I received my first and most impressive lessons in duplicity; what, thought I, can it be possible that these people are such fools that they cannot see the other side of my aunt's character! They do not see a thing which makes these cold Sunday dinners less extraordinarily austere, namely, a little private closet in her bed chamber, stored with many Sabbath condiments, such as a few bottles of ale or porter—a pine-apple, cheese, a private plate of sweet cakes, a trifle of cracked almonds, and a saucer of preserved plums or peaches, with frequently the accompaniment of a cup of sweet cream. I had often observed her slyly taking one of these quiet collations, and could have borne the greedy selfishness of her never offering me even a bit of cake, but my disgust always rose, when coming down to a dinner of cold meats, she would turn up her eyes toward heaven and give the most fervent thanks for the blessings before us, and at the same time compel me to swallow a revolting dish of cold rye mush, at which my gorge never failed to rise; and this, with a gross slice of solid fat pork, which I could not get down, and just enough baked beans to excite a ravenous appetite, constituted my Sunday dinner. I hated Sunday. I was always sorry when it came, and glad when it was gone. I was forced to go to church, and to listen to what I could not understand and took no interest in; and if I nodded or dozed over the long monotonous sermon—my aunt always, upon our return from church, would bid me walk up stairs; this I knew too well was a forerunner of a coming castigation—and to aggravate the matter she always found some pretext to be busy below, while I awaited above with the most painful anxiety; after this torture, she would come up and inflict upon me the most severe lashings, and often fasten me up in a garret room without food.

Upon other occasions, when she was visited by the minister of our church, who was a great abolitionist, she would shed crocodile tears of sympathy for the suffering of the poor slaves, and

after the arch hypocrite (and this minister was a great knave) had departed, my aunt would usually go into the kitchen and give the poor white servant girl such a storm of abuse, together with hailing a shower of boxes and cuffs about her ears, that made the poor girl weep bitterly; but sorrowing was fruitless; Bridget was bound to her, and the poor ignorant creature was firmly impressed with the belief that if she attempted to escape, and failed, that when taken, she would be confined in the penitentiary. I felt for this poor girl, because she had frequently given me something to eat, when my aunt was punishing me by starvation, and hunger forced me to pilfer. I began by stealing food, which, when she charged the larceny upon me, I laid it upon the rats; I thus added falsehood to theft, and began to practice the doubled-faced game, in which I saw my aunt so great a proficient. I had now become so callous to whippings, that being tied to the bed-post for my flogging was a regular thing, like a periodical toothache. I went to school, but my aunt positively forbade my playing with any of my fellows, and wrote notes to the master to be kind enough to give me a good lashing if I was not there in ten minutes from the time I left her house. This I soon learned to avoid the difference in clocks by keeping my aunt's well set back. Consequently I was cut off from all communication with my companions, save by stealth; I therefore lied to the master at school, and lied to my aunt at home; and to all persons I now commenced a regular series of falsehoods and deceptions. Whippings did not deter me from any act upon which I set my mind; I had become hardened, and the chance of escape by lying put me to work to invent the most cunningly-devised falsehoods; and here my ingenuity was wonderful in novel fabrications of the most intricate and elaborate character. The rapidity and adroitness with which I could frame a falsehood, was really surprising, and the hardy effrontery which I assumed, when detected, soon overcame all native modesty, which at first used to suffuse my face upon being detected. I stole away from the house by night, through the back window, to play with boys in the streets, which pleasure my aunt took singular satisfaction in debarring me of.—Other boys had their toys and playthings suitable to their ages, but not a kite, top or football ever came into my possession save

by theft. I never had a penny given me for pocket-money, and I was kept so miserably clad that I was ashamed to be seen in company with well-dressed boys; and when I had grown up to an age when I felt some desire to appear well in the eyes of the village girls, my shabbiness of attire always made me an object of aversion. But, Richard like, I determined if I could not be a gentleman, I would be a villain; I therefore began to quarrel with youths who were more neatly clad, and therefore more agreeable to the girls than myself, and vented my vengeance upon them in fist-cuffs; and, although I often suffered severely in these battles, yet constant habit inured me to hard knocks, and I grew to be a most formidable enemy—the fear of me soon made me quite a lion, and I became, as it were, the ringleader or captain of a mob of ragged young ruffians, which for daring and mischief would vie with any wandering band of thieving Gipsies.

We commenced robbing orchards, the hereditary larceny of school-boys, but this was soon extended to melon patches, and from that to hen-roosts—in fact, so frequent were our depredations that scarce one of our black, dirty-faced band of ragamuffins could pass a poultry-yard in the day-time, but some loud-mouthed cock, seeming to recollect us from former nightly visitations, would alarm the whole bevy, until the cackling would fill the entire neighborhood with noise.

The world of peculation being fairly open, we enlarged our sphere of operations, and committed thefts upon the stores and shops of the village; now and then one of our party would be picked up, but the lazy old magistrate would usually, after hearing the case, take a pinch of snuff, and assuming a very important and severe aspect, deliver a moral lecture, which would be listened to by the tristful-countenanced young depredator, who laughed in his sleeve the moment he escaped, at the innocent simplicity of the old man and his imposing admonitions. My own restless spirit now determined me to commit some act which would compel me to fly, for my aunt's house grew more unbearable as the frequency of the minister's visits increased; he having taken a singular aversion to me, which I returned with a full rate of interest. No regard being had as to whether I was at school or not, now, by my aunt,

I generally found some plea for being absent; at last I fell upon the bold design of enriching myself, or disgracing my aunt, who had so neglected and mortified me and my pride. In the village lived an old miser, whose name was Billy Poe; God never set his mark plainer, when he branded the brow of Cain with Murderer, than when He wrote Miser, upon this old man's forehead. His whole frame was withered, and his yellow, parchment-like skin was wrinkled and shriveled in every part; his small, gray pea-eyes glittered keenly from under enormously long bushy eyebrows.—This wretched old creature was well known to be possessed of plenty of means, but he always dressed in the most miserable manner, and I had heard that he even denied himself sufficient food to feed his squalid frame. One day I saw this avaricious dotard coming along upon his usual walk, when I seized the opportunity, as he passed, to whip my hand into his pocket, and extracted his handkerchief without his observing it; and he continued his walk, bending almost double over his smooth-worn walking-staff. With this booty I slipped around a corner, and in a board-yard took a glance at the faded piece of silk: as I unfolded it, what was my astonishment to find, carefully folded up in one corner of it, a small black pocket-book; I opened it, and found in it some notes of hand, well thumbed and worn, together with some trifling amount in silver. I carefully wrapped it up as I had found it, and making my way by an unfrequented lane in the village, arrived in sight of his cottage in time to see the old man, who had returned home, coming out of the house again, his countenance filled with the utmost anxiety; he halted upon the steps at the door, and holding his cane between his knees, began nervously fumbling over his pockets, and taking off his hat, he rummaged among a mass of papers with a painful countenance and an eager eye. While thus busily engaged, I came up to him and asked him if he had not lost something; he suddenly answered that he had. To which I questioned him if it were not a handkerchief; greedily he started up, and ceased his fumbling, while he answered, "and something in it, something in it!"

"A purse," said I, "Mr. Poe, a purse?"

"Yes, yes, yes," replied he hurriedly, "did you find it? Of no value, no value whatever; nothing in it, nothing in it!"

"Nothing in it?" questioned I, reiterating what he had already repeated.

"A trifle only," again hurriedly replied the miserable old miser, stretching his thin long hands out to clutch the article before I had brought it forth from my pocket; at length, after making some parade about establishing their identity, the pocket-book and handkerchief I placed in his hands; he snatched at them tremblingly, and turned into the house, and as if he had suddenly recollected me, he asked me in likewise, and offered me a chair. The apartment was most wretched in its furniture. The old man went up to an old-fashioned bureau, or chest of drawers, and after unlocking it, deposited therein his reclaimed treasure, and took out a rusty three-bladed knife, whose appearance indicated that it had not been touched for years; this he gave to me with a whisper, not to let any one know either of the gift or the fact of finding the pocket-book. After a time I left the old man, and I determined, in a few days, to know the contents of that same chest of drawers; I having noticed a small key in the pocket-book, which I observed the old man used when he opened the chest of drawers. Accordingly I came one night, when all the village was fast asleep, and by the misty moonshine made my way to the old man's house; the door was locked, and the windows were so tightly fastened down that I could not move them without breaking the glass, the noise of which, I knew, would arouse the old man from his sleep; after hunting for some time for a mode of ingress, I was about to give it up as fruitless, when my eye fell upon the iron grating which covered the mouth of a coal cellar, and the doors of this, to my great surprise, instead of being chained together, though both down, the chain had been fastened and locked upon two different bars of the same reaf or iron door; I lifted it with some difficulty, and descended into the dark cellar; after groping about some time, I felt a flight of steps, which I ascended; at the head of them I found the door ajar, and I entered the apartment wherein the old man was sleeping; he was breathing heavily, and I could see by the dim, sickly-looking lamp which glimmered by his bed-side, that he was soundly wrapped in slumber. Having carefully surveyed the chamber, and noted the locality of every object, I quietly pulled off therein my

shoes, and stealing carefully along by the side of the bed, got close to the lamp; once more I marked the position of the various articles of furniture, and especially the situation of the chest of drawers; between the lamp and this chest of drawers stood a chair, upon the back of which I hung the old man's clothes, after having taken them from another chair and rifled the pockets of his pocket-book, in which I found, as I expected, the key—with this I stealthily moved in the shadow formed by the clothes hanging upon the chair to the secret hiding-place of the old man's wealth. I opened it, but the sight presented nothing but pigeon-holes filled with papers; at last I discovered a small brass bolt, apparently not more than the head of a nail; I pulled it, when lo! a small brass handle came in sight, which taking hold of, out came a drawer, and presented such a sight as I had never witnessed, gold, silver, and bank bills were confusedly piled together. The tempting treasure glittered before me, and now, for the first time, came upon me the sense of the great evil which I was committing; but there was no time for delay; I seized upon the rich mass and crammed it hastily into my pockets; the old man gave a heavy snore and my heart leaped into my mouth, but I started not, and he still slept. I had now the most of the treasure, and was making my way toward the door which led into the cellar, when down fell the top of the chest of drawers, which I in my haste had left open, and the old man sprang from his bed into the floor with uncommon alacrity, and his eyes glaring wildly around him; I dodged instantly behind an old plaid cloak which hung against the wall, and the old man, seizing the lamp, rushed to the chest of drawers, and throwing it open jerked out the secret drawer—his wide-stretched eyes glared as if they would burst from his head, and his countenance was white and bloodless; in an instant more he clutched the piece of furniture with a vice-like grasp, and the veins in his hands and temples swelled enormously; suddenly his whole livid countenance blackened, and his head rocked upon his shoulders, and the miserable creature sank paralyzed upon the floor, his thin fingers cramped with convulsive rigidity, and in a moment more his gray eye glazed dimly over, the glaze was gone, a cold, stony, glass-like film seemed to freeze over the watery orb, and the wretched old

man was a corpse. I came from behind the cloak, and advanced to him, he breathed not. I felt for his pulse, but it had ceased to beat; the case was clear—the miser was dead! I hurried from the house, and after reaching my aunt's house, crept in at the back window, and went to bed, but not to sleep; full before me came the picture of the miser, with his blue lip and frozen eye, and the money with which my pockets were filled haunted my thought perpetually. In the morning the news was abroad in the village that old Mr. Poe was dead; the doctors pronounced it apoplexy, and in a few days the miserable old miser was almost forgotten. During this time I had preserved the utmost quietude; at length, being convinced that curiosity and suspicion had blown over, I watched an opportunity, and with my money concealed in an immense pocket-book, even in my shabby dress took the stage, and made a bargain with the driver for a seat by him, and in a short time we were busily chatting away while the vehicle rattled on toward the great city of New York. I made myself as pleasant as I could to the driver, who in return told me of a house at which I could board cheaply, until I could find employment, which I told him was my business in the metropolis. We arrived; I shook hands with the driver and parted; took up my lodgings with a widow lady whose name was Osborne, who had an only daughter, named Mary. I now had, as I found upon examination, the large sum of two thousand dollars in my possession, but my own sense of necessary caution induced me to keep this fact secret. My first step was to furnish myself with a wardrobe suitable to my desire; this I soon accomplished, and by being a young man of large figure, I passed for a much older person than I really was. My pretended business now was to study medicine, and in a short time I installed myself in the office of a Dr. Davidge. An event now occurred in my life, which I dwell upon with mingled emotion; Mary Osborne was such a girl as poets would delight to dwell upon, she was mild, gentle, and amiable to the purest degree. Her eyes were a soft, heavenly blue, her hair a dark auburn, and her complexion as clear as a sea-shell, her mouth was as ripe and luscious as a pink-colored peach, and her figure full, round and voluptuous. She was as sweet and kind-hearted a girl as ever breathed, and was just verging

into the full roundness of womanhood when I came to board with her mother; from the moment I beheld her, I became deeply enamored of her, and every day my passion took a more fervid character. Paying little or no regard to my studies, my time soon became engrossed with my fellow-students in the office, and from these I soon acquired habits of dissipation which grew upon me daily. Old Mrs. Osborne soon perceived the attachment which was growing up between her daughter and myself; for, notwithstanding the maiden modesty of Mary, that she entertained an ardent attachment for me could not be concealed, and my chief study was to please her. I was naturally of a rather handsome face and person, and I spared no pains or money in my dress, and other personal adornments, to make myself appear well in the eyes of the girl, whom I now felt, that I deeply loved. My constantly avoiding Mrs. Osborne's inquiries, respecting my parentage and family, drew upon me the suspicion of the old lady, but Mary subdued all curiosity upon a subject on which she saw me not disposed to communicate. Our mutual attachment grew daily—I was not content to leave her, even for half a day. Everything was dull and heavy to me but her presence, and when we were together, it was strange how perfectly happy we were, simply to be near each other. Daily, as the affection of Mary grew warmer, the mother grew more cold and reserved toward me, and now constantly found excuses for keeping us separate. This very opposition, instead of serving to quell my passion, increased it fifty fold; I was all anxiety and excitement, and the more advances I made, the more distant old Mrs. Osborne became. Our every interview was marked by her presence, and for every look of kindness which Mary would bestow upon me, the mother would return upon the daughter the most stern and reproving glances. This spirit of opposition goaded me to the pitch of desperation. At last I made bold to inquire why she thus treated me, and her answer was, "that the attentions of an unknown stranger to her daughter, were disagreeable to her, and apt to divert her daughter's mind—which should have something else to employ it, beside listening to the follies of, she knew not who." This enraged me, but I yet withheld my anger, when she informed me that my room in her house would be needed, and

she would be pleased if I would vacate it. Resolving to preserve my equanimity as much as possible, I soon removed my effects to a neighboring Hotel, of much higher pretensions than Mrs. Osborne's plain apartments; and here I fell in with a set of "jolly dogs," as they were termed, young gentlemen who sat long over their dinners, and drank their wine, until they could scarcely reel. In a short time they were all in all with me; they offered me their wine, they learned me to smoke and chew; they drove out in fine buggies and harouches; they toasted me at dinner, and swore that I was one of them, a regular "jolly dog," and that I said the best things; was such a wit, and such an irresistible joker. Foolish vanity soon made me suppose these "jolly dogs" must be in earnest, for I frequently found myself replying to a sentiment after the cloth was removed, and under the exhilaration of champagne, I persuaded myself that my fluency was eloquence, and as a proof of it my companions made the glasses dance on the table, at the conclusion of almost every sentence. Evening parties would be made up especially for my amusement, at which a game of cards, and a little music, a fine bird, fish, or oyster supper, would make out the evening with a plentiful supply of fine wine and other liquors. My friends, the "jolly dogs," would not let me pay for anything; it was enough for them to have my company, and they were willing to pay for it, for the sake of that. We had excursions up the North river; parties in the country—dances at the villages on the various roads around the city. We went off on the Sound, to Long Island, Jersey, and countless other places. Scarce could one piece of pleasure be completed before another was projected. Our round of gayety was unbroken; balls, plays, concerts, and all manner of amusements contributed to employ our time—and occasionally we had games of ten-pins, billiards, and cards; and upon the latter my companions bet freely, but never asked me to hazard anything; however, I acquired a great taste for games, and the excitement attendant upon a wager, was one of great satisfaction to me. Although my associates were disciples of a school of morals, which held every woman's virtue pregnable, and were forming constant intrigues with the abandoned creatures, who were everywhere throughout the city; yet I avoided them, for the pure

affection I bore to Mary Osborne, came like a guardian angel, and led me from this temptation. Once more I determined to make a call upon Mrs. Osborne, and ask admission to her house, and the presence of her daughter. The old lady peremptorily and instantly refused it. Upon my inquiring why she did so, she expressed herself, as having been confirmed in her suspicions, that I was an unknown wanderer, and further, that lately my course was with a set of dissipated, dissolute youths whose time was occupied in drinking, gaming, horse-racing, lewdness and rioting. I essayed to prove to Mrs. Osborne, that I was not so deeply steeped in vice, as she had been led to believe; but she would hear no explanation; she said she could but judge me by my company of associates, and further, she would be frank with me, and say that she was anxious that her daughter should be married and well settled, as she, herself, was now growing old, and that if she permitted my visits it might prevent the calls and attentions of other young men, of much better standing, and much more reputable connections and associations. I vowed to her, that I loved her daughter too much to deceive her as to my mode of life; that it had been idle and wild, but not dissolute or vicious. And she returned that she loved her daughter likewise, too much to intrust her to one of a party whose chief boast was known to be, that they could seduce any woman whom they could set eyes upon, and afterward, in a duel, shoot father, brother, or any other relative or friend, who should espouse their cause. I explained to her, that I had some considerable means, with which I could support her daughter with respectability. At this the old lady flew into a violent rage.

"What!" exclaimed she, "do you suppose that I would sell my daughter to you, simply because you have money? no sir, you mistake me, my daughter is poor; but she shall give her hand only where she can give her heart; she shall not sell her person for your purse."

"Madam," I replied, "I love Mary Osborne, and I am certain that that feeling is returned, not for my means, but for myself."

"I can assure you," replied Mrs. Osborne, "she does not."

"Nay, madam," I answered, "I am convinced our affection is mutual; I know that she loves me. I am sure."

"How do you know it?" replied she, "has she ever told you so?"

"I cannot say," returned I, "that she has, but I have read it in those unmistakable indexes, her eyes; I have heard it in her tones, and beheld it in her looks and actions."

"You deceive yourself," said Mrs. Osborne, "you have misinterpreted the ordinary looks of a modest girl. Will her own words satisfy you of your error?"

"They will, madam," hastily replied I, "let me hear it from Mary's lips, and I am satisfied."

She called in her daughter; Mary came; she was altered, but oh! how beautiful; her face was pale, her eyes sad, and her whole aspect dejected. When she beheld me, she was evidently agitated, a scarlet flush passed over her countenance, as I saluted her with the customary salutation; she whispered a short reply, of which I could hear nothing, and took a seat.

"Mary," began her mother, "I wish you to say plainly and openly, whether you love this young man or not; whether your affection is more than common friendship; and whether you wish his attentions to cease."

Mary turned very pale, and what was my astonishment, to hear her reply that she loved me not, and wished a cessation in my addresses! I was amazed, and dumb from astonishment. At length I said, "Mary, is this of your own free will, and without coercion?"

"It is," she replied with a trembling, but distinct voice. I answered not a word, but rushed from the house. I sought my companions, and scarce had I taken my place among them, when one of the party commenced detailing a piece of news, which seemed to afford much merriment. "Yes, I tell you," said the speaker, "Mary Osborne is to be married to-morrow night; do you know Mary?" said he, addressing me. I stammered out that I did, and he continued, "yes, old Summers has got her; he has bought her from her mother; you know old Summers, the canting old hypocritical, old retired pork merchant, with his big red nose, and red wig; who goes drunk to church every Sunday, and is tolerated because he can afford to pay for it. Talk of seduction and

prostitution," continued the speaker; "this is the worst species of it, because it is legal." After a time, our party, who were busy playing cards and drinking, became pretty well intoxicated, save one of them, who said to me in a whisper, "what made you so nervous and agitated, when the marriage of this girl was mentioned? is there not something in the wind?" I moved aside with my companion, from the rest of the company, and confessed that I loved the girl, and that I thought she loved me; how the mother had thwarted my affection, and as I was convinced, compelled her to deny all returning love. "Well," said he, "my boy, you must not mind it, the old man out-bid you with the old woman, for the daughter; come," continued he, knocking off the neck of a champagne bottle, and filling a huge goblet for me; "toss it off, and be glad that you are not the victim." I drank the potation, and this, in addition to what I had already swallowed, made my brain all of a fire. I was all excitement. "Now," said he, "I have a scheme, and you must carry it out, to be revenged upon that infernal old woman; the girl is now sold—already to be yielded up to the senile embraces of that lecherous old beast, Summers. If the girl loves you, why not test it? I can arrange it beautifully; I have an assignation for half a dozen couples, to an elegant little masquerade, in a house in the upper part of the city, to-night at twelve, and, it is now past eleven—it is a perfect boudoir, bring her along, if she will come, it will be such a capital joke on the old woman, and the old beast that has bought her."

"Nay!" I answered, "I cannot be guilty of such an act."

"Guilty!" returned he, filling my goblet, and forcing me to drink the contents, "do you call that guilty, to punish that villainous old woman, by merely ascertaining if the girl loves you. Guilty, to forestall a procuress to an old dotard. Go along, boy, and see if the girl loves you; I will have a carriage at the next corner, and a mask apiece, for yourself and her, and we will rattle down to my little boudoir, and have a night for Epicurus and the gods to envy."

A raving maniac, wild with wine, I hurried off to the house of Mrs. Osborne; I climbed upon a shed from the back alley, which reached nearly to her window, everything was quiet and dark

around; the night was cloudy, and there was no noise in the street. I looked through the window of her chamber, and by the light of the lamp I beheld her sitting with one elbow on the center-table, and the hand pressed upon her brow; tears were in her eyes, and she had evidently been weeping long and bitterly. I whispered low and gently, "Mary, is it you?" She answered, starting from her seat and calling my name, "it is;" I replied, "thank God!" said she, "now I am satisfied." "Will you fly with me, Mary?" said I. "Instantly!" replied she, "anywhere, to escape from this place. You do not know?" continued she. Yes, I answered, I know all—come, away! In a moment more she was out of the window, and I had lifted her from the shed into the alley; and we hurried to the next corner, where we found my companion with the carriage; I helped her in; my companion gave the driver his orders, and away we rattled, as fast as the carriage could fly. At length we came to a beautiful mansion, somewhat retired from the street; into which we entered, and were ushered in private dressing-rooms, displaying great comfort and taste. I explained the masquerade to Mary, and assured her of the perfect secrecy of the place, and asked her to prepare herself for the entertainment, by disguising. This she tremblingly, but readily obeyed; and then entered another part of the house, when the sounds of the gayest musical instruments burst forth in a delightful peal; and we beheld a party, in the most gorgeous and elegant costumes. A magnificent chandelier illuminated the apartment, and the furniture was of the richest and most costly character. In a few moments we were mingling in the dance, with the merry masks. I recognized the voices of several of my companions.—Exquisite female figures floated through the merry mazes of the dance, and the gayety and beauty of the scene was enchanting; the suite of parlors opened into a green-house in the rear, where a sumptuous supper was spread, upon which, after dancing for an hour or so, we regaled ourselves. Succeeding this came delicious wines. I pressed Mary to partake of the rich juice of the grape; at first she refused, but at length yielded to my solicitations and drank freely, and became more gay and communicative. I grew excited with my libations, and imbibed deeply,



In a moment more she was out of the window, and I had lifted her from the shed into the alley.—P. 30.

pledging her, frequently in amorous and complimentary toasts ; to which my companions would join with enthusiastic hilarity, and flattering sentiments. The wine flowed freely, and the joy of the whole party grew wild and rapturous. Through her mask of crimson silk I could behold the dark eyes of hazle, flashing with exhilaration and excitement ; my own brain reeled in a deep delirious trance of delight. I poured out my whole soul of love in her ear, in passionate and poetic language. Again the dance moved on, and once more we were threading the giddy mazes, with a company whose glad voices and happy laughter made the rooms ring with sounds of joyousness. Again we were at the wine, drinking freely of its ruby flood ; and again at the dance, until our ardor had heated our blood so much, that we retired to the cool rosy shades of the garden in the rear of the building ; we sank together upon a bench, within a summer-house, embowered with running honeysuckles, and I clasped her in my arms, and tearing away the mask, pressed thick and fervid kisses upon her cheeks and lips : it was a maddening dream of ecstasy, a voluptuous vision of ecstatic beatitude. She yielded to my passionate advances, and returned my kisses of love with an unreserved fervor. I pressed her close to my bosom, and planting her rosy lips upon my own with a hot kiss, she fainted in my arms ; I found a cup of water at hand, and dashed a handful in her face and she revived. One of my companions, more sober than the rest, assisted me to bear her to one of the bed-chambers of the house, and left us. We were alone, and I was frantic with excitement ; and she was wildly delirious with passion and with wine, and twined her round white arms about me, and glued her ripe red lips to mine, with insane ardor. Why proceed with this rhapsody ; we were both burning with delirium, reckless, desperate, and alone—no more. She was a ruined creature, and I the wretch who brought her destruction. In the morning the papers were filled with her abduction ; but I kept her carefully secreted. My companions were in delight ; nay ecstasies, calling it a capital, a glorious affair, and I was sunk in black despondency and mortification. Mary bore it in silence and shame, but not a word did she breathe of reproach. I soon found a quiet and retired cottage, wherein I placed her, and determined

to act honorably and honestly by her, and, as far as in me lay, make reparation for the foul wrong which I had committed. My associates now began to weave the toils about me, with which they had long designed to enmesh me. That scheme was the device of gaming. The rapid manner in which this passion grew upon me was, and is, a mystery. At first I was unfortunate and lost largely, but after a time, my luck seemed to change, and I won back thrice as much as I had lost. We visited faro tables, and at one time I came away with some nine or ten thousand dollars. At this time how Mary prayed me to break off from my habits and companions, but I could not resist the temptation. She begged that I would fly from the city, and buy a small farm in the country where we could live quietly and happily. She gently and meekly hinted that I should, in honest keeping with my promise, marry her, and thereby relieve her from her painful position, which was isolated and cut off from all acquaintance and society save the occasional intrusive visits of my rude and riotous companions. Her gentle manner melted me to tears, and I determined to break from my vices and be once more a man. But I could not part from my fellows without one farewell night. Mary asked me not to go, but I was resolved just to pass one night with them at the cards, and then have done forever. I felt assured I had found a certain mode of winning, and would return rich enough to retire from the world comfortably. Mary begged, but I was firm. She entreated, but I was immovable. At last she supplicated me by my love for her not to go forth, as she felt that misfortune would befall me. I laughed at her foolish presentiment and promised to be gone but an hour. Still she clung to me and prayed that I would not part from her, saying that we had means enough and to spare. But I insisted upon having my own way just this one time. She clasped her arms about my neck, and bending her mild eyes full upon mine, was speechless, while the thick tears chased each other rapidly down her cheeks. I disengaged myself from her, and she sank upon a chair, and taking my pocket-book from a drawer, put on my hat and hurried to my comrades who were busy in a gaming-hell at high play. I told them that I was upon the eve of leaving the city to visit an uncle in the

west, and that I had merely come to say farewell. They all expressed the deepest sorrow and declared that they should be inconsolable until my return, but urged me to join them in a few bottles, for the parting cup, and to try my luck before I started—I drank and bet, and lost, and again with like effect. I now doubled the stakes and won, and my apparently delighted comrades would drink with me my excellent luck; again I won, and this called for a bumper. And now the fiends began their game upon me; I lost again, again and again—I doubled and lost—still doubled and lost again. They called for brandy to give me luck and courage. I hazarded a thousand dollars on a single card! and it won!—I continued, but my ill fortune returned and I lost bet after bet, as fast as I could make them—my knavish and pretended friends urged me to drink again, but I was almost delirious with liquor and excitement, and would drink no more. In vain they urged, it was of no avail—I would not drink but still played on. It was a mania which held me at that table, an unaccountable and irresistible mania. I saw my money melting before me, I saw it drawn into the whirlpool and sucked down, and yet I could not refrain from casting it in. I looked for an eddy of returning fortune to bring it up again, but it came not. I wagered rashly and boldly, then cautiously and timidly, but alike fruitlessly. My whole fortune was burning up before me, and there I stood, like a madman, feeding the flame. I was reduced to my last thousand dollars—with insane desperation I hazarded it all, a moment more and it was gone. I gazed for an instant appalled at the table, and with a crazy haste burst from the room and ran to my residence; I entered pallid as a specter and quaking with agitation—Mary was startled but preserved her presence of mind. I bade her not to speak to me but give me all the money she had. Without a word she took from her trunk one hundred dollars in gold, which I had given her—and I flew once more to the gaming-house; I risked half of it and it won—I risked the whole, winnings and all, and again it won; once more I ventured a moiety and it lost—and now I staked the entire remainder, and it was lost—but I saw the dealer cheat, and charged him with false play; he denied it, and I proved it; again he denied it, and I called him a liar and a swindler, and

with these words he knocked me down. I was stunned for an instant, but rose from the floor and drawing a pistol I fired at the gamester, and the ball took effect full in the forehead, and scattered his brains all over the table. The whole party retreated in dismay, and when they returned I professed myself ready to stand my trial, and in a few moments officers took me into custody, and on the next morning, I was arraigned before the Mayor for murder; I was committed for further examination, and after two days' imprisonment, was again brought before court and released upon my own recognizance.

Without loss of time I rushed to my own dwelling, the door was closed but not locked; I pushed it open and entered; I saw Mary lying upon the sofa asleep. I thought it strange that she should be reposing at that time of the morning; I spoke to her softly that I might not wake her too suddenly, she answered not but remained immovable; I spoke more decidedly, but no reply; I stepped up to her and laid my hand upon her shoulder, as her face was turned from me, but she did not stir—I turned her body over, but oh! my God! she was a corpse, a cold, inanimate mass of clay! I could not believe my sight—the rosy bloom of life was on her cheek, her peach-blossom lips wore yet their pale pink hue, and around the corners of her mouth a smile seemed to linger, while her eyes shaded by their long dark lashes seemed as if closed in a quiet dream. I was petrified and astounded—I knelt by the body, and kissed her again and again, but it was cold and senseless. I ran into the adjoining house and called an old widow lady and her two daughters; in a short time the whole neighborhood was in a state of excitement, and among the rest of the persons, who came into the house, was an apothecary who lived close at hand, who remembered having sold prussic acid to the deceased—in a few moments a small vial was found at her side, which confirmed his statement and explained the fatal mystery.

The coroner's inquest pronounced it "suicide," but I felt in my bosom that it was murder, black and damnable murder, measured and malicious murder, upon my part, of the gentlest and most forbearing angel that ever wore the human form. Now came Horror to me, dark-winged Horror, bearing the bloody body of the game-

ster, and sad-faced Remorse holding in his extended arms the shrouded figure of my murdered Mary.

Terrible were the tortures which I underwent, anguish and agony unutterable beset and haunted me night and day; day and night, ceaseless torment preyed upon me—I was ready for self-murder, but fear of my Maker deterred me; I felt that I dare not rush with bloody hands into the court of the Almighty, and in the tribunal of my own conscience I stood a trembling coward.

I sold the furniture of my house, and ran immediately into the depths of dissipation, seeking to steep my misery in the madness of intoxication. I secluded myself from the public gaze and haunted the low, underground grog-shops, and associated with drunken, filthy sots, whose maudlin dream was never broken until their means were exhausted. Here I found only a temporary oblivion when steeped in liquor to stolidity, and with returning soberness heart-sickness would seize upon me. Thus I swilled with these beasts, with an inflamed and vitiated stomach and a bursting brain. At length one of these wretched creatures, who haunted this subterranean hell, and myself, having spent all of our money but a few shillings, combined our trifle of means and purchased a gallon of whisky, and having been several days upon little food and a very small portion of liquor, we fell to work and drank off the vile whisky until we were dead drunk, and the keeper of the low den dragged us into a back cellar to lay upon the cold, damp earthen floor, without light and almost without air, save the humid and sickly vapor which filled that foul spot. We were both taken sick, deadly sick, and borne off in a cart to the hospital. Here we were confined together in a cell scarce better than the vault from which we had been dragged thither. My fever notwithstanding our situation abated, and my appetite returned, but the watcher of the wards would give me but a bowl of rancid, greasy soup and a piece of bread, hard and dry as plaster and green with mold. Filthy straw was our bed and the place reeked with filth and feculence.

The effect of the dreadful debauch upon my companion resulted awfully; by degrees the fever fled, but succeeding it came (oh! horrible to think of) mania a potu! Human tongue will never be

able to utter the terrors which that wretch beheld. Truly did "horrors upon horror's head accumulate." At first he saw strange birds—men with three cornered heads—dwarfs and nondescripts, then came grinning apes, monkeys, mowing ourang-outangs, and then slimy lizards; at last snakes crawled hissing around and stung him. He would spring from his straw and rush to the corner of the room to hide from them. After a time he beheld imaginary soldiers firing at him through the grating of our dungeon, and he would fall pierced with the balls, the same as if there were in reality shots fired at him. Anon he would summon courage to fight them, but again fancying himself shot would fall and crawl away to the other side of the cell—enormous serpents and dragons fenced him in—and he would fight them until he would fall back exhausted. I called long and loud for aid, but it was night and my voice could not be heard out of our prison house. Oh! it was horrible to behold his pallid countenance and eyes of fire by the light of the lamp (which had been left us to take our medicine by). And now, as he lay upon his back on the floor of the cell, he called me to look upon a little green monster with a three cornered head and a face half of a man and half demon, which had risen up out of his breast and now sat gazing in his eyes, he prayed and supplicated me to come and drive or pull it away, for its weight was suffocating him. I moved over to relieve him if I could of the phantom of his imagination, when suddenly he sprang upon me with a grasp of iron and a strength which, instead of seeming to belong to a weak, sick man, was almost supernatural, he clinched until I was almost suffocated before I could make him relax his gripe; when he did, he ran across the cell and crouched in the farther corner. I called, I hallooed, I screamed for aid, but no one came to my rescue. Oh! it was dreadful to be confined with a madman, a wild, ferocious maniac, who was suffering the tortures of the damned. His eyes seemed green in hue, and blood-shot, while his face was wan and colorless. Again he started toward me and there was nothing wherewith I could defend myself; I shrieked for aid, and he gave a wild yell, and cried "I see you, fiends, devils, and hell-hounds, ye have me, ye have me, I am lost! lost! forever doomed and damned!"

With these words he fell full length upon the floor of the cell and struggled in the most intense agony with a horrible convulsion. Every limb and every tendon grew knotted with cramp, his eyes turned upward in his head until there was nothing visible but the flame colored balls which should have been white. He wrenched and screwed his body about under the terrific torment, and his countenance wore the most horrible aspect that my eyes ever witnessed.

But enough, he struggled, gasped, and died; and, Oh! my God! it was the most awful scene which I ever beheld. Men came and set me free, and buried him, and now I was upon the wide world, without a penny, wretchedly ragged and filthy, and almost starving; I went around to where my old companions generally loitered; I begged a trifle as charity, all pretended not to recognize or know me, save one; as I was turning away, smitten to the soul with mortification, one came to me, and placed ten dollars in my hand; I hurried off, got something to eat, and purchased of a Jew, a plain, second-hand suit, resolving never to drink another drop of liquor, and to go honestly to work; the horrible death of my companions having nearly frightened the life out of me. I was weak and could find nothing to do for some time, at last, however, I obtained a small job, and from that time barely managed to earn a meager subsistence. During my hours of labor I had some cessation or softening of my mental anguish and remorse, but when night and solitude came, the mournful and maddening memory of the past haunted me perpetually. And then in my dreams, Oh! God? what unspeakable misery was mine! what nightmares and incubi hovered over, and filled the apartment around me. Oh! how I feared the night to come, how did I dread the dismal horrors of darkness. At last these wretched, sleepless (or worse than sleepless), dream-haunted nights drove me from the city. In hope that change of persons, place, or scene would work some change I wandered far away, traveling from place to place, like the Wandering Jew, and goaded on by the scorpion stings of conscience. Long did I stroll thus from town to town working for my support, but unable to escape the fiend which followed me, like my own shadow. Day after day, and week after week, did I strive to gain

contentment and quietude, but there was no rest for me. Vain were all my attempts at cheerfulness, the smile died on my lips, and laughter froze within my heart. Finally I grew reckless and hopeless, and resolved upon some desperate measure which should seal my fate. In this mood I met Solomon Jones. The devil now tempted me to drink with him—he held out the lure of money to my avarice—the devil triumphed. My virtuous resolves vanished, my better angel, which had come to guard me, fled and left me the *Victim of vice!*—The rest you know. Shortly I am to suffer death—it is my desert—I am fearful to meet it, but I must; and I have, thus briefly and indifferently, related my history to you; this confession can avail me naught, but it may teach a lesson to parents and those who have the guardianship of children of tender years. I do fervently hope and pray that it may guard and warn, by its fearful example, the unsophisticated against the wiles and allurements of gaming and drinking, and when I have paid the penalty for my rashness and folly, Oh! may the young halt and reflect ere they take a step astray from the path of virtue into that of vice; and may God give them fortitude to avoid temptation, which has brought me to the verge of this fearful and shadowy abyss of death.”

THE END.