

In her turn Annie was stretched lifeless upon the soil, and her heartrending shrieks stilled for ever.

From this moment Tom was no longer human. He had only one impulse, and that was destruction and murder. He was thirsting for blood. He could have wished the entire humankind to stand before him, since it was so barbarous as to impose work upon him, in order to destroy it at one blow as he had destroyed his two sisters, Elizabeth and Annie.

Dishevelled, haggard, terrible, he was considering his second victim with a furious rage, and seemed to enjoy this horrible contemplation, when a sudden thought recalled him to his infamous work.

The thought of Helen and Patrick rushed through his brain on fire.

He raised his head as would a tiger disturbed over its prey by an unexpected noise.

Tom was surprised to hear strange sounds coming from the house, only a few steps from the scene of the butchery.

Helen and Patrick had witnessed the flight of their sister Annie and had seen their big brother strike her down as she ran.

Poor children! Terrorized, and moved by the supreme instinct of self-preservation they had hastily tried to barricade themselves in the house by piling articles of furniture together in the vain hope of escaping the ferocity of the murderer.

It was this noise that had caught the attention of the fiendish brute.

Poor Helen! Poor Patrick! They had seen Annie fall under Tom's blow, and seeing the fury of the murderer, were afraid to share her fate. The unhappy children did not want to die, and, after having erected their useless barricade, they were begging Tom to spare them.

Vain efforts! The brute had tasted blood and was beyond control. With a wild rush he threw himself on the door, which resisted unexpectedly.

"Open the door," shrieked the fiend, with a horrible curse.

The two children, crazy with fear, held to each other with the energy of despair, and only these words could pass their pale lips:—Mercy! Mercy!

Unhappy children! Mercy! Why mercy!

The fiend was getting impatient. The resistance shown by the door increased his exasperation. He retreated one step, lifted his murderous axe and struck the door with all his strength.

The door fell with a sinister noise over the frail obstacle that the children had placed behind it.

With a violent kick Tom scattered what lay in his way, and penetrated into the bare room.

Instinctively the two children separated and fled, each in an opposite corner, as if they were trying to gain time by dividing