

nerved my weak frame, and endued it with super-human strength. Methought a thousand demons pursued me; a thousand monstrous arms were stretched forth to enfold my quivering, frantic form, and Armyn Redgrave was the foremost in this infernal chase. The moaning of every blast increased the rapidity of my flight; nor did I pause one moment in my frantic career, till I arrived at the home I had deserted—that home which now appeared to me my only haven of rest.

“Open the door! in God’s name, open the door!” I cried, mustering up my last remaining strength, as I sank with a heart bursting with fatigue and terror, across the threshold. My brother put his head out of the window, and said in a surly tone:

“Who’s there?”

“’Tis I—’tis Jane! For the love of heaven! rise and let me in!”

“Get to your husband!” was his reply. “This roof will never shelter you again!”

“I have no husband!” I cried, in a voice of earnest entreaty; “no home elsewhere—no friend in the world but you! Have mercy upon me! have mercy upon me, my brother! and take me in from the cold and pitiless night!”

“Hence! get to your paramour—you will find no countenance from me.”

“Then I must die here!” I cried, dashing my head against the sill of the door.

“The blood gushed from my mouth and nostrils—I thought my last hour was at hand—hell seemed to yawn at my feet, and I filled the air with wild and terrific cries. The next moment I was in my brother’s arms. Shocked at my condition, the tears fell fast from his eyes as he lifted me from the ground, and wiped the blood from my face.

“I remember seeing this—but I remember no more. Before the morning dawned I gave birth to a dead son—and I rejoiced that it was dead. During the ravings of delirium, my brother elicited from me every circumstance connected with my fatal marriage, and caused diligent enquiries to be made respecting my husband. But the poacher and his wife knew no more about him than I did. He was a wild, dissipated young man, they said, who had lodged some months in their house, and told them that he was hiding from his friends. He had often joined Pack in his predatory rambles, and in gambling in the low taverns he frequented. He was generous, and paid for what he got, and had always money at his command. Pack and his wife thought that he was a highway robber from these circumstances, and because he looked so much like a gentleman, and had such white hands. What

strange ideas these people had formed of a gentleman! That he was well born and brought up, but had committed some crime that had alienated him from his family, and rendered concealment necessary, I have no doubt.

“The spring had dressed the earth with flowers and verdure before I recovered my health; but my mind remained in a wandering and unsettled state. My madness, for such it was, was of a harmless character, and I raved continually of my husband and child. For hours I would sit upon the edge of the moss-grown well where I first met Armyn, looking down into the waters beneath, and laughing at the reflection of my own face. The poor people called me ‘Crazy Jane,’ and I used to repeat the title, and murmur to myself, ‘*Poor crazy Jane!*’

“One evening, while at my favorite post, a number of people passed me with the busy and hurried tread of those who hasten to behold a spectacle; and each person, as they flitted before me, like shadows over a glass, cast a mournful glance at me, and said half aloud:

“Ah! poor Jane! It is well thou art crazed. Poor Jane!”

“Deranged as I had long been, there were moments of sanity that streamed in upon my mind, like light upon darkness, in which my past guilt and present degraded, lost state, would start out in terrible relief, and I shrunk under the shadow that covered my mind, to hide me from the fearful consciousness of what I had been and what I now was.

“It happened that on this eventful morning I was under the influence of one of these lucid intervals,—my curiosity was painfully excited by these remarks, and I eagerly demanded of each person that passed me whither they were going, and what sight they were hurrying over the heath to see? but they all made the same brief reply:

“Alas! poor Jane!”

“Guided by the impulse of the moment, I determined to make one in this strange procession—I imagined that a mysterious connexion existed between me and them,—that whither they went I must go too, and I sprang from my seat and followed the crowd afar off. They directed their course to the poacher’s cottage, which stood, as I have before told you, at the bottom of the heath, and I seemed compelled by a supernatural power, to visit the same spot.

“I forced my way through the throng that surrounded the door, and every person drew back with a start of horror to let me pass. I crossed the threshold; no one attempted to stop me, but still I heard on all sides the half murmured exclamation: