

upon the heart heard and gave an answer of peace to that earnest prayer. Memory, ever faithful in the hour of grief, supplied her with a long catalogue of the sins and follies of a mispent life. Keenly 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 had never struck her as such 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 the world and turn with their whole soul to God; but of much tribulation they are new-born to life; and obtain a lasting inheritance in the promised kingdom of their Lord and Saviour.

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

"How like our earthly destiny," she sighed. "But there is mercy in the dark cloud, and hope even for a wretch like me."

The sound of horses' hoofs rapidly approaching struck her ear, and the next moment she had caught hold of the bridle of the nearest rider. They were the constables, who had conducted Noah to prison, returning to the town.

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

"Small chance of escape; he has confessed all."

"And did he really murder Mr. Carlos?"

"Yes. If his own tale be true burning alive is too good for such a wretch."

"He was very kind to me," murmured Sophy. "May God forgive him."

"Don't cry, young woman, but thank your stars that you will get rid of such a bad husband: you are young and pretty, and will soon find a better than him."

Sophy turned, sickening from the ribbald jest, and went into the house. She had made up her mind to go to her husband, and hastily packing a small trunk, she called an old serving man, and bade him harness the horse and drive her over to Ipswich.

The journey was long and dreary, for it rained the whole day. Sophy did not care for the rain, or for the dullness of the day, both were congenial

to her feelings. The gay beams of the sun would have been a mockery to her bitter grief.

As they passed through the village, a troop of idle boys followed them for a few minutes, shouting at the top of their voices:

"Noah Cotton's wife! The murderer's wife! Look how grand she is in her chay!"

"Aye," responded some human fiend, through an open window; "but pride will have a fall."

"It is meet," sighed the penitent Sophy, weeping afresh at these insults, "I was proud, I deserve this; and, oh, how miserably am I fallen."

"Don't take on so, Missus," said the old serving man, "sure its no fault of yourn; why you were not born when Master did this foul deed. I have lived with Noah for seven years and I never 'spected him o' the like, he was always kind to the dumb beasts about the farm, and you know that's a good sign. Some men are sich tyrants that they must vent their bad humors on something, and if not on their servants, why the poor dumb creturs in their power feel the strength of their malice. Noah was a good measter both to man and beast. I hope they'll prove him innocent yet."

Sophy had no hope upon that subject. She felt in her soul that he was guilty. The loquacity of honest Hodge pained her, and he remained silent until they reached the town, which was not until the grey of the evening. It was too late to visit the prisoner that night, and Sophy put up at a small, but clean inn, near the jail. From the widow-woman who kept the house, she learned that the assizes were to be held the ensuing week, and she engaged a private apartment until the dreaded period should be past, and her husband's fate determined.

"My husband! my poor husband! and it was I that brought you to this!" cried Sophy, as she fell weeping upon the neck of the felon in his gloomy cell.

"Hush, my precious lamb," he said, as he folded her in his manacled arms, and pressed her to his heart. "It was the voice of God speaking through a guilty conscience. I am thankful, oh, so thankful that it has taken place. I slept last night without being haunted by *him*, the first quiet sleep I have known for years."

"And with death staring you in the face?"

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

"When was this?" whispered Sophy.