

ony, and Morton entered the house reeling under the influence of drink. From that day, he fled—the poison he had in abundance, and more he was the raving maniac or the senseless wretch, who had darkened the existence of those whom fate had placed in his power. The strangers whose company he had shared were escaped convicts—men whose crimes were dreadful to think upon; they had become “bush rangers,” and frightful depredations were committed by them on the settlers. Dwellings were burnt and the wretched inmates murdered, whilst they escaped pursuit in the solitude of those vast plains, and with these men did Morton Lindsay connect himself; the once virtuous, talented, honoured and beloved—but such is drink’s doings, and obeyed by the power of the demon spell, he became their confidant. Now Mary’s sorrows increased; her son, a fair and gentle child, had withered, and lay at the point of death. Her daughter was her sole companion, Morton had been absent for a week with his new companions; the drought had increased, and oh! how horrible the scenes it brought—the grass withered and the earth opened in wide chasms, the lake had shrunk to a small muddy stream, and the black swan floated screaming o’er its waters. The wolf-dogs howled around it, shuddered at the sight, yet unable to approach the soft slime which lay between. The wild bird flapped its dreary wing, and animals, whose very being is a paradox on nature’s laws, with reptiles of hideous form, all gathered there, tormented by their raging thirst; and in the midst of this was Mary and her rag child—not one drop of water to cool its parched lips. Her tears fell upon his brow—he started from his sleep and said, “alas! mother! I thought I again felt the rushing of our own sweet brook at Glenallon.”

“Oh! for one drop of its waters to give to me, my darling,” said Mary, as she kissed his damp cheek.

At that moment, Helen, who had gone to seek for water, had found a little; the crystal glass gleamed upon the vessel’s sides, and as she passed o’er the pale features of the boy, where she reached it to him, it was snatched from her hand and drained to the bottom.—Morton had come in, tormented with the burning agonies of a drunkard’s thirst, and seized the treasured cup; Mary sprung from her seat—but she paused—the child was dead, and that brutal father looked upon his corpse.

One morn when Mary sat weeping for her son, a party of soldiers came across the plain,

they were in pursuit of the three villains, the measure of whose crimes was almost completed—they passed, and that night the “bush rangers” met at Morton’s dwelling. He agreed to join and proceed with them further up the country. Mary heeded them not, when a proposition was made by one of them which thrilled her with horror, such as she thought not earth contained now for her. He declared that Helen should accompany him; the innocent, the beautiful girl, clung frightened to her mother—the fearful thought had never before crossed her mind. Helen was fourteen, but so child-like in her nature that even her mother fancied her younger than she was.—She flung her arms around her daughter, and on her knees prayed them to leave her, but Morton himself unloosed her grasp, and Helen was borne away in their strong arms; instantly she followed them, but how vain was her speed—still on she toiled, led by their voices through the darkness and the long tangled grass, ’till the glaring sun arose, and she saw them enter a thick coppice of brushwood, where doubtless they meant to rest during the heat of the day. The thought of the soldiers flashed across her mind—might they not now be returned. Heedless of the fatigues she had undergone, she retraced her path and met them returning from their fruitless search; she had hardly breath to declare her story. One of the soldiers was on horseback, her fainting form was placed beside him, and on they hastened in the direction she shewed; a red flame of fire arose from the coppice, and one wild shriek came on the air; they increased their speed, but ere they reached it, a light cloud of smoke alone arose on the cloudless sky. Amid the ashes of some rude building lay a blackened corpse. One long bright tress of golden hair was untouched by the fire, and Mary looked on all that remained of her lovely child.—The three convicts were taken at a short distance from the spot, and as they returned with their prisoners, the discharge of a pistol was heard near, and behind some bushes lay the disfigured body of Morton Lindsay, destroyed by his own hand; the grave was dug where he fell, and by the unhallowed grave of the “suicide,” was laid the ashes of his child.—Mary was borne from the dreary place, and once more she reached Glenallon. The events that intervened she could never tell, but the remnant of her life was passed in peace.

One day a meeting was held in Glenallon, and although not the sabbath, the kirk was thronged. A stranger from another land lec-