

Here the felon's manuscript abruptly terminated. Sophy still held it tightly in her hand, although her eyes blinded with tears, were unable to trace a single letter of the concluding page.

"My poor husband!" at last she sobbed. "Let us hope that you have found forgiveness and peace, for surely if your crime was great, your punishment was greater. God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live."

A gentle grasp was laid upon the shoulder of the mourner, and she looked up into the dark, sympathizing face of the hunchback.

She too, had her tale of sorrow. Their mother was dead, but she died in a blessed frame of mind and her end was peace. Mary, the good, kind Mary, could not wish her back. She had no home now. She had come to share the home of her more fortunate sister. At first she could not comprehend Sophy's tears, and her deep mourning dress; for the news of Noah Cotton's arrest, had not reached her, while attending the obscure death-bed of her mother.

What a mournful history Sophy had to tell, and how deeply Mary sympathized in all her afflictions. Left in comfortable and even affluent circumstances, Sophy was no longer haunted by the dread of poverty, but she often said with a sigh; "That poverty was not the greatest evil she had to contend with."

But much as she had murmured over her lot, she had been happier working for her bread, than in the possession of wealth, which had been acquired without industry; and which, emphatically, might be called, *the wages of sin*.

A few words more, and my task is ended. The death of Noah Cotton, fraught as it was, with agony to his wife, was the means of rescuing the only child of his first love, Ella Manners, from ruin.

The child, whose likeness to her mother, had made such an impression upon Noah. After the death of Sir Walter, and the dispersion of the family, the young Ella had married the curate of a small parish in the North of England. The match was one of pure affection. The beautiful young girl brought no fortune to her husband. The father, the younger son of a noble but impoverished family, had little to leave at his death; and Mrs. Manners died in India, shortly after the birth of her little girl. Sir Walter adopted the orphan child who lived with him until his death; she then resided for some time with her great aunt, at whose house she was in the habit of meeting Mr. Jermyn, the curate of the parish. His income did not exceed one hundred pounds

per annum; but in the eyes of love, it appeared sufficient for all their wants. The aunt remonstrated with her, and at last parted with her niece in anger, and a few days after, Ella Manners, became Mrs. Jermyn.

Several years passed away; and the young people though sorely pinched in their circumstances, did not repent the imprudent step they had taken.

Ella was the mother of three fine children; and she nearly doubled the slender income of her husband, by keeping a small, but select school. At length the day of trial came. After a long and severe illness, which not only swallowed up all their savings, but involved the hapless family in debt, Mr. Jermyn died, much lamented by his poor parishioners, by whom he was justly beloved; and the expenses of the funeral were defrayed by subscription.

During his illness, his wife had been forced to relinquish her school, and every useful article of household furniture had been sold in order to procure nourishing food and medicines for the sick man--and when all was over, the devoted wife found herself and her young family utterly destitute.

"I have trusted in God all my life," exclaimed the young widow, as she divided the last morsel of bread among her famishing children, "and though it has come to this, I will trust in him yet."

She sat down by the window, without breaking her own fast, and looked sadly out upon the desolate waste. The autumnal blast was stripping the fallow leaves from the trees; and roared like a hungry demon among the shivering branches. A little sparrow hopped upon the window sill, and relieved his hunger by picking at some grass seeds that the children had gathered in the ear, and left by accident there. And the text occurred to Mrs. Jermyn's memory, which so beautifully illustrates the providential care of the great Father: "Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows," and she dried the tears that were welling up in her eyes, and felt comforted; when the postman's rap at the door roused her from her vision of hope and trust, and she was presented with a letter.

Alas! the postage was unpaid. To her, who had not one copper, this was a fearful disappointment.

"John Hays—I cannot take in the letter."

"Why not ma'arm. I'm sure 'tis directed to you."

"Yes—but I am without money. I cannot pay the post."