

house and obtaining a farm for himself on one of the adjoining islands—which by the accumulated savings of years he was enabled to do. It proved to be an unfortunate speculation, for the person from whom he purchased had no title to the land, and the rightful owner speedily appeared to claim his property. The former occupant had absconded, leaving poor Matthew *minus* his money and his farm.

His conduct for a time had been extremely wild and extraordinary, and this last disappointment entirely unsettled his reason. For a season he wandered by himself, moody and restless, violent when spoken to, and ungovernable when any attempt was made to control him. But, very soon, this state of mind, wretched as it was, became worse, and within a short period he lapsed into confirmed insanity. His actions had occasionally been so extremely violent, that his father felt it unsafe to allow him his liberty any longer. Thus every day his malady increased, and compulsory confinement was rendered inevitable. He was, accordingly, kept by himself in a distant apartment, whose doors and windows were securely barred. It was fearful at times to hear his wild ravings, and at others heart-rending to listen to his cries for liberty.

His father and brothers soon grew accustomed to his conduct, and ceased to regard it, but his poor mother's heart was not proof against the lamentations of her unhappy son. She often interceded with her husband for his release from constraint, fancying that by less severe measures he would be the more speedily restored to his reason: and of this consummation she never entertained a doubt. Many a long, miserable hour, would she spend in the chamber of the unhappy maniac, soothing his wildness by gentle words and loving acts, such as only a woman, and that woman a mother, can use, feeling stronger each day in her conviction that his madness was but a temporary visitation.

But weeks and months passed on, and no change was visible; until at last, with a maniac's shrewdness, he seemed to perceive that his mother was less inclined to confine him than were other members of his family, and day by day he grew more gentle at her approach, and talked more calmly and reasonably than he had done since his first lapse into insanity. His father, however, notwithstanding his mother's arguments and entreaties, had no faith in his improvement; he was witness to many an outbreak that Matthew had the cunning to conceal from the more tender-hearted parent, and he felt it would be unjust to himself and his family did he allow him to go at large.

Often might he be heard muttering deep threats of vengeance against those who deprived him of his freedom, and his father feared the worst results should he again be restored to liberty. But Mrs. Nass shared not in these unhappily too well-founded fears; she believed that harshness would but confirm his malady, and that freedom in the woods and fields where he might