

bor, and walk over to F—— to see how matters stood. The increasing illness of Mrs. Grimshawe hindered her from putting this scheme in practice, and her uneasiness for her mother banished Sophy from her mind.

Other events soon took place that made a material alteration in the prospects of Mary and her mother. Their benefactor, Mr. Robinson, died suddenly abroad, and his nephew and heir had given the widow, through his steward, notice to quit. No provision had been made for a continuance of the pension allowed by Mr. Robinson to the afflicted woman, as he died without a will, and poverty and the workhouse stared them in the face.

Hearing of their distress, Noah Cotton came over to see them, and offered them a home with him and Sophy as long as they lived. This was done so kindly, that the sick woman forgot all her old prejudices against him, and she and Mary thankfully accepted his offer; but when the time came for their removal, the old woman was too ill to be taken from her bed, and the surly steward consented that she might remain for a few days longer.

Mary was anxious to leave the house. Since the appearance of old Magub's ghost, a most unpleasant notoriety was attached to the neighborhood. The most disorderly scenes were constantly enacted at the Brig's Foot, and persons had been robbed to a considerable amount upon the road to S——. These things at last attracted the tardy notice of the magistrates, and a large reward was offered for the apprehension of the person who performed the principal part in this disgraceful drama. Still no discovery was made, until one night Robert Magub was shot dead by Tom Weston, who had sworn to catch the ghost alive or dead. The striking resemblance the profligate young man bore to his father had enabled him to deceive many into the belief that he was the person he represented.

His mother, who had never lived on peaceable terms with her son since she discovered the part he was carrying on, and which she considered peculiarly insulting to herself, went mad, and this nest of iniquity was broken up. Such is the end of the wicked.

And what had happened at the porched house to change the worldly Sophy into a pale, sad, careworn woman?

She did not love Noah Cotton when she consented to become his wife, but he was superior to her in wealth and station, and his presence inspired her with respect and awe. He was grave and taciturn, but to her he was very kind. Every

indulgence and luxury he could afford was lavishly bestowed upon her. If he did not express his attachment to her with the ardor of a lover, he paid her a thousand tender marks of his esteem. He was grateful to her for marrying him, and Sophy was not insensible to his efforts to render her happy; yet happy she was not, nor was ever likely to be.

Noah was a solitary man, had been so from his youth. He had been accustomed to live so many years with his old mother, to mix so little with his neighbors, that it had made him unsociable. He had particularly requested his young wife to conform to these habits. She had tried to obey him, but at her age, and with her taste for gaiety, it was a difficult matter; yet, after a while, she mechanically sunk into the same dull apathy, and neither went from home, nor invited a guest into the house.

An old woman and her daughter came to reside in a cottage near them. Mrs. Martin was a kind, gossiping old body; her daughter, Sarah, was lively and very pretty. They had, once or twice, spoken to Sophy on her way to the Methodist chapel, and she was greatly taken by their appearance.

"Noah," she said, pressing his arm caressingly, as they were coming home one Wednesday evening from the aforesaid chapel, "May I ask Sarah Martin and her mother to tea?"

"By no means, Sophy!" he cried, with a sudden start; "these people shall not enter my house."

"But why?"

"I have my reasons. They are no friends of mine. They lived here long ago, and left the place after the son was hanged."

"Mrs. Martin's son hanged! What for? I thought they were decent people?"

"There's no judging people by appearance," said Noah, bitterly; "I look a decent fellow, yet I am a great sinner. But, with regard to these Martins, I tell you, once for all, Sophy, I will have no intimacy with them."

He spoke in a sterner voice than he had ever before used to his pretty wife. Sophy was piqued and hurt by his manner, and though she felt very curious to ask a thousand questions about these Martins, Noah looked so cross whenever she alluded to the subject, that she was forced to hold her tongue."

From the hour that the Martins came to live at F——, Noah became a different creature. He was more sullen and reserved, and his attendance at the chapel was more frequent; his counte-