

honour, and received with flattering smiles by the same beings who had condemned an innocent man to die? These bitter thoughts made him weary of life, and tended greatly to diminish the natural fear of death. It was his last night upon earth. Yet amidst its silent dreary watches, he often wished it past. A thousand times he caught himself repeating that strong line of Dr. Young's:

"Man receives, not suffers, death's tremendous blow."

But it was not the mere death pang—the separation of matter and spirit, that he shrank from. It was the loathed gibbet—the disgusting exhibition—the public and disgraceful manner of his death—that made it so painful.

And he sighed, and prayed God to grant him fortitude to meet this worst trial, and fell into a deep, tranquil sleep, from which he did not wake until the hour of his departure was at hand.

At an early hour the next morning every avenue and street leading to the place of execution was thronged with human beings, all anxious to behold an erring fellow-creature suffer the punishment due to the enormous crime of which he had been found guilty. The rush of the gathering multitude was like the roaring of a troubled sea, when the waters foam and chafe, and find no rest from their tumultuous heavings. Intense curiosity was depicted in every countenance; and each person strained his neck eagerly forward, to catch the last glance of the abhorred monster—the unnatural parricide.

And there was one among that mass of living heads, the most eager, the most anxious of all—this was Godfrey Hurdlestone, who could not believe his victim secure until he saw him die.

"Why, squire," whispered a voice near him, "I did not expect to see you here. Are you not satisfied that he is condemned?"

"No, Mathews," responded the murderer, "I must see him die. Then, and not until then, shall I deem myself secure."

"What has become of Mary?" again whispered Mathews.

Godfrey's hardened cheek became livid. "She was lying speechless and given over by the physicians at Captain Whitmore's, damn her! I have no doubt that she meant to betray us."

"I wish I had put my pistol to her head, when she described the scene of the murder," said her brother. "But here comes the prisoner. My God! How well he looks. How bravely he bears up against his fate! Does not the sight of him make you feel rather queerish?"

"To hell with your foolish scruples!" muttered Godfrey. "His death makes rich men of us."

The prisoner appeared upon the platform, supported by Frederick Wildegrave and the good clergyman. A breathless pause succeeded, and he be-

came the central point to which all eyes were directed. His hat was off, and the wind, which was very boisterous, blew back from his lofty temples the thick masses of raven hair which curled profusely round them, revealing to the spectators his noble features and pale calm face. The expression of his countenance was sad, though firm. The dignity of conscious innocence was there. Every trait of earthly passion and earthly suffering was gone; and, as he turned his eyes with a pitying glance on the gazing crowd, the hisses and groans, with which they had greeted his first appearance, were hushed. A death-like stillness fell upon that vast assemblage, and many a rugged cheek was moistened with tears of genuine compassion.

Hark! He is about to speak. Is it to confess his crime?

In deep clear tones he addressed the multitude:—

"Fellow-men,—You are assembled here this morning to see me die. You believe me guilty of a dreadful crime—the most dreadful crime which a human creature can commit—the murder of a parent!" He shuddered, but continued in a firm voice: "Here, before you all, and in the presence of Almighty God, I declare my innocence. I neither committed the murder, nor am I in any manner acquainted with the perpetrators of the deed. Farewell! The God in whom I firmly trust will one day prove the truth of my words. To Him I leave the vindication of my cause. He will clear from my memory this infamous stain!"

"He cannot be guilty!" exclaimed many. "What a hardened wretch," cried others, "to take God's name in vain, and die with a lie on his lips!"

The prisoner now resigned himself to the hangman's grasp; but, whilst the fatal noose was adjusting, a cry—a wild, loud, startling cry, broke upon the crowd, rising high into the air, and heard above all other sounds. Again and again it burst forth, until it seemed to embody itself into intelligible words: "Stop! stop!" it cried. "Stop the execution! He is innocent! he is innocent!"

The crowd caught up the cry—and—"He is innocent! stop the execution!" passed from man to man. A young female was now seen forcing a passage through the dense mass. The interest became intense. Every one drew closer to his neighbour, to make way for the unexpected bearer of glad tidings; who, arriving within a few yards of the scaffold, again called out in shrill tones, which found an echo in every bosom.

"Godfrey Hurdlestone and William Mathews are the real murderers. I heard them form the plot. I saw the deed done!"

"Damnation! we are betrayed!" muttered Godfrey, as, beckoning to his colleague in crime, they fled from the scene. All was now uproar and confusion. The Sheriff and his officers, at length suc-