

## THE NOVELIST.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A MURDERER.

concluded.

It was a lady, young and most beautiful. Her years were few, to have taught her resistance to the vanities of our nature; her beauty was heavenly enough to have charmed them in others. She leant forward, and whispering in the sexton's ear something unheard and unnoticed by the rest, her command was made known to me, and I was conducted to a separate seat. I gazed upon the fair lady—I marked her countenance, and its heavenward expression; to me it was an unknown pleasure to contemplate one so innocent; and the atmosphere in which she lived could not, it seemed, give birth to other than meek thoughts and aspirations. For I—even I myself, in my foulness and blackness, and depth of deserved misery, felt the dew of heaven fallen upon my soul, to refresh it after its long toil, and purify the vapours which darkened its innermost chambers!

From that hour my mind fled its old employments; and I lived in dreams of the future, whose sweetness was cheerily bought by all the woe I had hitherto undergone. With my remaining wealth I purchased land; I laboured in a thousand ways to advance myself, and fortune did not frown upon me. The lady was a near relation—they said, a niece, of the clergyman who officiated on that momentous Sunday in the village church. Amongst his parishioners there happened to arise a feud respecting the payment of tithes; and the little commonwealth, so peaceable when I first came to it, was soon afterwards rent with all the violence of civil commotion. The malcontents increased in number and obstinacy; and perhaps the more so because a stranger, who had scarcely yet become one of the actual population, dared to espouse the cause to which they were opposed. That stranger was myself; and whatever malignity on their part was caused by this conduct I was more than repaid by the familiarity which it was the means of promoting, between myself and the family at the vicarage. Then, the more I knew of the sweet lady, whose countenance had acted as a charm to draw me into this quiet existence, and disperse the dreary recollections of my past career; the more also was my heart filled with a love which I did not then confess, but which afterwards, when my prosperous course permitted it, I did not, because I could not, utterly conceal!

It was a strange thing, that one so rude and so wicked as myself, could move the kindness of that gentle maiden. Perhaps she knew, by the secret consciousness which stirs the pulses of woman's heart, that she had exercised no mean control over my fortunes; that my spirit had bowed to her influence; and that to make itself worthy of her, a reformation most wonderful must be effected, of whose present progress she was the human instrument.

Perhaps, too, she discerned under the rough exterior of bad habits and early debasement, something that was not wholly vile; something generous, that came from a line of honourable ancestry whom I had disgraced. She conversed—she loitered with me when we met by chance—she almost sought occasions of meeting, when they were not given otherwise; and once—only once—she permitted me to make with her an engagement to meet by stealth.

On that evening, most sweet, most rapturous were the words that passed between us. I spoke freely of my passion, and I was heard without sorrow or rebuke. I tried to learn what were my hopes of success, not only with herself, but with those in whose guardianship she had lived. She told me that there existed no chance of my suit being listened to by her relations with anything but disesteem, for that they had persisted long before in anticipating her own choice; and had destined her to be wedded to a neighbouring gentleman who had worldly qualifications, with which mine could not vie. She spoke, as I thought, sorrowfully. Her hand, which lay in my own, trembled, while she indicated her distaste for the man who was selected to claim it by a better title. An inarticulate sound—perhaps of some word which she could not utter; perchance a soft sigh—filled up the measure of her implied confessions. I asked her if she loved me, or if she could love me hereafter?—and silence was my only answer.

She despaired of the assent of her kindred to the proposal, if made to them, and with the heartlessness which was natural to me, I suggested another plan by way of substitute. Cold, selfish being! well wast thou rewarded! I entreated her to forget the wishes of those, whose control over her was that of accident, not of nature. I urged her to obey the dictates of her own heart. I assured her that we could be happy together, under whatever circumstances, and that flight would give us the instant means of becoming so.

She listened mutely; but my words, so quick and earnest, and so like her own impulses, could not fail of their purpose. She breathed a low acquiescence, and we were locked in a close and affectionate embrace. The tumult of thought that succeeded this determination, gave way to the necessary schemes of action which immediately engaged our whole thoughts. In a little while our project was formed, or at least tangibly sketched out. I was to sell, or otherwise convert into money, all the land and goods that belonged to me—the fruits of my former crime and my latter industry. The simple girl possessed some fortune, and expected more; and what wealth she could then boast was to be thrown into the common stock. It may be supposed she was not very minutely acquainted with the means of claiming what she had a right to, nor even with the amount of this possessed, or withheld property. Yet she spoke with energy, unlike a mere love-sick puppet, and looked to the future good as well as the present enjoyment.

"I am ignorant," she said, "how my uncle derives his supply for my expenditure. I know my father's small estate descended to me; and my mother—my poor mother—could not have intended any one but myself to succeed to all she had; but I know not in whose hands it is, or whether I can now command it."

"Be persuaded, dearest," I replied, "that you are all I need on earth; and nothing could add to my riches, if I were so blest as to call you mine."

But still she proceeded in her former vein.

"Even the few trinkets which I have," she said, "are scarcely worth carrying away. The more valuable jewels—"

I shuddered at the bare word

"Oh! forget," I said, interrupting her, "forget that you are speaking with a man whom you may have some reason to consider avaricious and worldly. Think for me, as you would for yourself. And these baubles—"

"Nay," she added, with the simplicity of a mere child, "if they were really valueless, I should not remember them; but I know that they constituted a dowry for more than one of my mother's family; and she herself proved too well how highly they were estimated. But when the barbarians shed her blood to gain possession of them, it was not likely they would leave behind them any thing of real value."

"Her blood!—her blood! What do you mean, my dearest Rachel?—speak—speak quickly!"

"Did you not know then that she was murdered?"

"When?—by whom, and where? Oh, tell me all!" She did tell me all, with a fearful and fatal accuracy, which is remembered to a syllable, even at this late hour of my life. A pause—a little pause only succeeded her narrative. It was I who terminated it.

"Forgive me," I cried, "forgive the wretch hereafter, who has drawn you to this precipice. Be free—be happy! I cannot see you again in this life, for I have once done you the most tremendous of injuries; and but just now I was on the eve of sinning in a like way, though not so willingly.—Your mother, your mother was murdered at my instigation!"

I rushed from her side, deaf to the piercing shriek that followed this announcement, and was seen no more by her. I did dispose of my property; but for a new purpose. In a few days I had fled from my native country, and was shortly afterwards landed on a shore to me more hospitable, where for years I struggled with remorse, that would not kill me, though most sincerely did I long for death. For ever were rising up before me those phantoms, which had once been the realities I speak of here—the deed of crime—the wanderings and woe that followed—the short-lived dream of tranquillity—the happiness so nearly consummated—the sudden reverse, and renewal of all my old self-torture. Few and uncertain were the calm intervals of this long season. A hand more mighty was at last stretched to pacify the waters of my strife: it came in its strength, during my solitary sojourn amongst strangers; it calmed the restlessness of my spirit; it gave a holy, and therefore, a happy aim!

Many, many years elapsed, before I returned to the country of my birth. My nature and aspect were changed; but I could not then—I cannot now, recall to mind one portion of my hideous manhood, without an agitation which may have communicated something of itself to the tenor of these Recollections.—"May mercy be mine, in the sadness of those times!—and oh! much rather may mercy be mine hereafter, when those times will be remembered in judgment against me!"

It was on such a morning as that I have before described, when I entered the village where had dwelt my young love. The church bell was tolling now also, but with different melody. It was the requiem of one, not yet over-borne by years or decay—but sunken under the hostility of a saddened existence. It was a lady who died, chiefly, they said, of a spirit bruised by early ill-treatment. She had wedded some brute who broke heart by neglect. Had she been mine, I believe—perhaps I dream—that this would have been otherwise. And yet, who can say that whatever has been might have been amended? Am I the wise man who would correct the ordained course of things? or do I grieve, Rachel—my beautiful, my beloved! that thou hast gone thus early to thy grave, shrouded in thine innocence—thus early to behold and taste the joys from which I would have kept thee back?

In the darkness and loneliness of the days which are left to me on earth, when the spectres of the past stand most thickly, and with the deepest horror, around me—poor solitary wretch as I am, and must be, till that funeral bell proclaims the termination of my own sad pilgrimage—when I am most hopeless, may the thought of this departed Angel point me a tract all bright and luminous, with just a patition of a final rest. When I am most self-deb and wrung with anguish for my sins, may her and pity for me, soothe the delirium of the moment, and teach me that though I could not then desert yet my ways may in time be those of pleasure and the ruffled river may emerge at last into an of eternal calm!

I know, I know that my crime is one which should not, cannot pardon: I know that the very mention of my name must ever be followed with contempt and execration; that, like another Cain, I bear upon my brow the marks of meditated, of accomplished homicide! But to this I am resigned, by the conviction that it must soon terminate, by the hope that it may be terminated for ever: for who—who shall say that the blood of the Redeemer, which cleanseth from all sin, may not cleanse even from this? Who shall say that even I may not be heard when I offer the prayer of the Psalmist,—a murderer too, like myself.—Pardon mine iniquity, O Lord, for it is great! O my God! if I have remembered thee in my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking; if I have been made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights have been appointed to me; if one hour of guilt has been followed by years and years of the deepest and bitterest repentance, grant me deliverance in the great and fearful day, for I have sought it carefully with tears!

(Continued from the first page.)

in the out-ports, where commerce is confined and harbours generally commodious, the want of them is not attended with inconvenience, yet in this emporium of the island, where commerce is upon a very extended scale, while the port itself is not only more confined than most others, but the access to it is often difficult, some regulations become very desirable as to the management, laying down, and use of the transporting

buoys, the anchoring, and taking up of lost anchors in the harbour, as well as the throwing out of ballast, the improper extension of wharves and other nuisances, which tend to injure and obstruct the anchorage, and which it is essential to put a stop to. As connected with this subject the Legislature will no doubt hereafter direct their attention to the dangers and difficulties attending the approach to this harbour in foggy weather—at present when a fog lies on the coast a gun is fired from Fort Amherst to warn those of their position who may be approaching—but Fort Amherst lies so much embayed, and the winds, when fogs exist, being generally on shore, the sound cannot reach to any great distance, and, when the breeze is strong, Cape Spear becomes an object of apprehension to them. Upon this point an ordinary light and a heavy gun would no doubt prove of great advantage to the trade, and might be established and maintained at a very moderate expense.

## No. 9.—POLICE OF ST. JOHN'S.

The Legislature will find it desirable to take into consideration the state of the Police of this town both as to the efficiency of the establishment, and the powers with which it is clothed, to maintain its peace, cleanliness, and good order, both of which are very inadequate to attain those objects: a very dense population, for the extent of the town, is collected within it—the houses, generally, of a very wretched description, and filthy in the extreme—and, while a succession of fires has led to the widening of the principal streets, many are still too confined. The precautions against fire are very inadequate, as well as the means of subduing it, when it unfortunately occurs. The streets are generally extremely dirty, which is partly caused by there being no means of carrying off the filth by proper conduits. They are very improperly undermined by numerous cellars, although the ground has become, by the payment of an indemnity to the former proprietors, public property. In the spring of the year, many parts of the town are scarcely habitable, in consequence of the effluvia from the seal-oil vats—the public coves are a receptacle for every sort of nuisance. These, and many other circumstances, discreditable to so populous and commercial a town, will afford fit subjects for the consideration of the Legislature.

The present police establishment consists of three magistrates and nine constables.

## No. 10.—CULTIVATION OF WOODS.

The cultivation of this Island is upon a very limited scale: and, with the exception of the vicinity of St. John's Harbor Grace, and one or two other places, is confined to small patches of ground attached to the cottages of the fishermen distributed along the coast, for the purpose of raising their supply of potatoes as an auxiliary to their fishery. The whole quantity of land, either petitioned for or granted, does not amount to 15,000 acres.

The Woods, in the vicinity of St. John's, formerly grew to the water's edge, but the wants of the fishery, as well as domestic purposes, have, more than once, destroyed them, and the increased demand for fuel, of late years, has cleared the country, and compelled the wood-cutters to go 8 or 10 miles in search of it. Unfortunately, no law has hitherto existed, regulating the mode of cutting, and the most destructive system is pursued in that respect—old trees and young are destroyed indiscriminately—others are barked and then left to decay; nor is there any regard had to an judicious selection of

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the serious consideration of the Legislature.

## No. 11.—CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

The Church Establishment of this Island, at present, consists of the Bishop of Nova Scotia (in whose diocese Newfoundland is placed), one Arch-deacon, nine clergymen, and 34 readers. The arch-deacon receives a salary from Government of £300, and five readers £13 each. There is one Episcopal church in St. John's, and there was one in Harbor Grace, which was most unfortunately burnt down in the recent conflagration that took place in that town.

## No. 12.—FINANCE.

It is necessary to explain that the system which has hitherto prevailed, with reference to the receipt and expenditure of the Colony, has been for the whole duties to be paid into the Military Chest on account of the Treasury of Great Britain, and for the Governor to draw on the Treasury for those sums he might, from time to time, require, without any reference to the amount of duties levied, and which, in fact, did not come within his cognizance.

The excess of amount so drawn, over the Revenue remitted, has, especially since the establishment of the new Judicature in 1826, been considerable—and the expenses of the Colony apparently increased, although not so in reality. On the contrary, the actual charge to the mother country has been con-

siderably decreased under this arrangement; as formerly those circuit duties now performed by two Assistant Judges for Newfoundland, and a Judge in Labrador, were then executed by Captains of men-of-war, whose ships, together with an expensive establishment to maintain them, were stationed at the Island expressly to do so; whereas the introduction of the present system, has admitted of the reduction of several vessels of war, as well as the Dock-yard Establishment at this port.

An average statement of the receipts for duties, &c. in the Island; and the expenditure for the last five years, is hereto annexed, together with the actual receipt and expenditure for the year 1831, and the Civil Establishment as it now stands.

The charge for the maintenance of the sick and poor of this town, forms a very material and disproportionate item of the whole expenditure of the Colony, and, in some respects, very unsatisfactory in its nature; as although, no doubt, very many deserving objects are constantly relieved, who must have suffered, but for the assistance thus extended to them; it is not to be denied that a premium has been held out to idleness, and great injury done to those independent feelings every man ought to possess, of relying upon his own exertions for his support. From the absence of adequate laws to compel work on the part of those equal to it, as well as to exact from them that protection to their families, which they were well able to give, and nature ought to have held them spontaneously to afford, it not unfrequently happens that whole families are left to public charity or Government support, who ought not to have fallen to one or the other: and it has not been one of the least onerous and difficult duties the magistrates had to perform—that of choosing between giving relief which ought not to have been required from them, or risking the health or lives of the supplicants by denying it. It will be desirable that the Legislature should take this subject into its early consideration and revise the mode of providing for the poor; as well as enact those laws which, while they will extend to the deserving indigent that relief they may with justice claim from their less necessitous brethren, will promptly punish those who prefer to eat the bread of idleness, to earning their own livelihood, and thus abuse that compassion, which the Government, as well as the community, have, at all times, evinced towards the destitute and distressed.

The Salary of £300 to the Colonial Agent, is, at present, nominal—Mr. Thomas Hyde Villiers, who holds that office, having offered to attend to the interests and concerns of Newfoundland gratuitously, so long as he holds his present appointment.

The British Parliament have provided for the Civil List of Newfoundland, until the first of April next, and have appropriated the Local Revenue to that date; and the Governor considers himself justified in providing for the ordinary contingencies of the Colony to the same period. From the first of April it will be for the Legislature to provide for the Civil List, as stated in the Schedule; and, after deducting the expense of collecting the Local Revenue, and the sum of £6550, the remainder will be at the disposal of the Legislature.

The Governor has advocated the cause of the Colony with His Majesty's Government for some assistance towards the inadequate funds, which are, at present, applicable to meet its expenses. And, although his Excellency is not warranted in naming any specific aid, as that which will be appropriated to this object, his Excellency has the pleasure to state his belief that His Majesty's Government purpose to ask from Parliament a Grant, upon as liberal and equitable a scale as circumstances, and a due regard to economy, will permit.

During the trial of a man who was capitally indicted for murder at an Irish Assizes, the chief witness on his examination detailed the leading incidents—his being awakened by cries for help—his rising, striking a light, opening his door, and finding a man dead upon the threshold. "And what did you do next, my friend?" interrogated the Crown lawyer. "Why," replied the witness with amazing sang froid I called out—"Are any ye there that kilt the boy?" By J—s, I'll give a thirteen to him who'll tell me who it was that had the impudence to murder a man at my door."

NICE DISTINCTION.—It has been related as a fact, by Voltaire, that in a controversy among the Muscovite doctors, where the question was, "whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin?" The respondent maintained, that it was lawful to get drunk on brandy, but not to smoke; because the holy Scripture saith, "That which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, but that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

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