

greatly affected the Squire. Once he said to me, very sorrowfully, a few days after her funeral 'Oh, Annie, my love for you has broken my poor wife's heart. I wish to God I had never seen you.'

"These words made me very unhappy, for I was too fond of the Squire, not to fear a diminution of his love, and I could not help feeling deep remorse for the share I had had in the untimely death of my beautiful young mistress.

"I grew sad and melancholy; and Mr. Carlos, who really loved me better than anything in the world, brought me down to his country residence, and gave me the porter's lodge. He was always guarded in his intercourse with me before strangers; but during the twenty years that I have lived in this parish, he has seldom, when in the country, suffered a day or night to pass without seeing me, and spending some hours in my company.

"You may now perceive, Noah, how great has been our loss in the death of the Squire. I have lost a kind friend and protector and you, an affectionate father. Do not urge me to leave this place. When I die, I wish my bones to lie in the same church-yard, although his rank hinders me from sharing his grave.'

My mother ceased speaking, and I sat glaring upon her for some time in silence. She appeared tranquil and composed, as if she had no idea of the crime she had committed. Was she not as much a murderess as I was a murderer? Had not her guilt brought her kind and excellent mistress to an early grave; and had not her sin been the parent of my own? Then I thought of her husband's terrible words. 'May that child live to be your punishment and your curse!' Was not the fearful prediction already fulfilled, although she was ignorant of it. I cannot say that I felt glad that she was no purer than myself, but it seemed a palliation of my own guilt.

My mother was annoyed at my long silence. "What are you thinking about Noah?"

"The shocking story you have just told me. I did not think it possible, mother, that you could be so bad."

"My son! What do you mean?"

"What I say. If this story does not lower you in your own eyes, it does in mine. I have always respected and venerated you, till this moment. I can do so no longer. Not that I am better than you. For mark me mother, as the tree is, so is the fruit. How can you expect me, the offspring of such guilt, ever to make a good man?"

"This is strange language, Noah, from you.

Thank God, you have not yet done aught to deserve reproach."

"You don't know what I have done. What this confession of yours may induce me to do. God knows, I would rather have been the son of the despised and injured man, whose name I bear, than of the silken reprobate, it was your shame to love."

"Oh, Noah, do not speak thus of your own father!"

"Curse him! he has already met with his reward, and your sin, mother, will yet find you out."

I sprang from my chair to leave the room. My mother laid her hand upon my arm, and raised her tearful eyes to my face.

"Noah, I have not deserved this treatment from you. Whatever my faults may have been, I have been a kind affectionate mother to you."

She looked so piteous through her tears, that savage as I felt, my heart reproached me for speaking so harshly to her. I kissed her pale cheek, and sighed deeply. "I forgive you, my poor mother. I would that God could as easily, pardon us both."

She looked enquiringly at me, but I lighted the candle, and strode up to bed.

EVIL THOUGHTS.

All day I toiled hard at my farm to drown evil thoughts. If I relaxed the least from my labor, the tempter was ever at hand, urging me to commit fresh crimes, and night brought with it horrors that I dared not remember in the light of day. I no longer cared for wealth, but industry always brings its reward, and in spite of myself money accumulated, and I grew rich.

My household expenses were so moderate, for I shunned all society, that every year I put by a large sum, little caring by whom it might hereafter be spent.

My mother sometimes urged me to marry, but I slighted the idea. The history of her wedded life was enough to make me eschew matrimony for ever.

My old craze for leaving the country was still strong upon me, but I had promised my mother that I would remain at F—— as long as she lived. Often as I sat opposite to her of an evening, I wished that it would please God to take her, for I never met her eye, but I was fearful lest she should read the dreadful secret in the guilt of mine. I had loved her so devotedly when a boy, that these sinful thoughts were little less than murder.