

Recovering from his fall, he observed as coolly as he could, "We must settle this with weapons."

"The sooner the better," I replied, "so if you will only name your time and place, and your weapons, I am ready; and settled indeed it shall be, before I close my eyes to sleep."

Swords were decided upon, and wrapping our cloaks about us, we proceeded, without farther arrangements than removing the buttons from our foils, to the spot selected.

It was near midnight ere we reached the place pitched upon for the arena of our combat. It was a skirt of wood, at the side of a hill, whose base was laved by a little rivulet, which wound its way through briars and furze, making a monotonous sound as it beat its tiny waves into melancholy murmurs. The moon shone out in her tranquil loveliness, and the stars, like volumes of bright poetry,* opened their gorgeous pages of living fire along the blue skies; kindling in any other heart than mine at that hour, thoughts of that better land, "where the wicked cease to trouble, and the weary are at rest."

Throwing off our cloaks, we made at each other with the fury that inflames the tiger and the alligator, when each strives for the mastery. I was an excellent swordsman—Harley only a tolerably good one. I suffered him to exhaust himself with ineffectual lunges, 'till his thrusts became more faint and irregular, and then making a feint as if to parry his attack, I plunged my sword into his bosom, and drew it reeking from his heart!

A wild and unnatural shriek rose upon the air, startling the bird from her briar, and waking echo into fearful response, as he fell dead! dead!

Never, never shall I forget that one wild cry of agony! Never, never shall I forget that glance which he gave me as his heart's blood spouted from his bosom! that shriek sounded in my ears like the wail of a baffled fiend, that look,—his features unnaturally distorted, upon whose ghastly lineaments the cold moon threw her solemn light,—seemed the picture of hate and despair!

I dropped my sword, and felt about his heart, but no pulse answered to the call. The blood came welling over my trembling fingers, and in the fit of the moment the awful stillness was again broken, as I howled forth my crime to the night winds. A thousand caverns seemed

to catch the sound, and run through it with the variation of echo.

"Murder, murder, murder!" and the welter rang with the cry! I heard the tramp of horses, yet there I stood, heedless of detection, by the corpse of Edward Harley, my mind dwelling alone on the horrid crime I had committed.

But I will not linger. I was discovered, dragged before the officers of justice, sent on to farther trial, tried and condemned.

The morning of the day on which I was to be executed, the sun rose with uncommon brightness. I looked from my prison window, the road was thronged with persons who were coming into town to witness the execution—even females had walked long and weary miles, to glut their curiosity in witnessing the last convulsive agony of the victim. To the present day, I have a distinct recollection of a boy,—a large, red-haired, freckled-faced boy in boots and a chip hat, with a red calico blouse on, and an orange colored waistcoat. The wretch had caught a little negro right under my window, and like Coleridge's unwilling wedding guest, the little descendant of Ham was trying to get away, but like the Ancient Mariner, the villain "held him with his glittering eye," and with his long, bony, freckled fingers while he enlightened him on the number of spasms I would have, before, as he expressed it, I should "finish pulling hemp, and standing upon nothing." I dropped a brick out of my window upon his dirty toes, and cut short his part of the ceremonies, by sending him away howling in pain.

The bell tolled one! I was carried by the soldiery to the place of execution, was placed on the platform, and preparatory to having my eyes bandaged, turned to bid a long farewell to nature. A tall man in a white hat, and green goggles, who was standing near the scaffold, told me he "didn't like to hurry me, but he had been waiting there several hours, and was getting hungry, and would be obliged to me to get through as soon as possible, as, if I didn't, he would be compelled to leave, and he didn't think it would be fair treatment." I made him no answer, the callous wretch!

Oh! never did sweet nature wear a lovelier face than on that day. Far off upon the smooth and tranquil water, lay the frolic boat, its sails lazily flapping the mast; while the dipping of an oar not far off, brought vividly before the mind's eye, the bright and happy scenes of innocent boyhood's happy hours.

I could not give up life without a struggle when all above and beneath looked so inviting.

* "Ye stars which are the poetry of Heaven!"—Byron.