

Introduction.

In October she was brought up to London by her husband to meet the Commissioners for taking the acknowledgments of married women. Louis had sold for £1100 the reversionary interest to which she was entitled under the will of her aunt, Lady Rivers,¹ and her formal consent was necessary. The deed of assignment was explained to her by her solicitor, Mr. Keene. He had seen her frequently on business both before and after her marriage, and he did not now notice any change in her condition or appearance.

From the 23rd of October, 1876, to the 12th of April, 1877, Harriet Staunton disappeared from the outer world. She was seen once or twice by chance visitors who came to the house, but the regular tradesmen who called for their bills had no idea of her existence. Nor could it be suspected that Mrs. Louis Staunton was on inmate at the Woodlands, in view of the fact that a young woman was living with Mr. Louis Staunton, as his wife, at Little Gays farm, barely half a mile away. That young woman was Alice Rhodes. Louis Staunton had taken and stocked Little Gays in October with the last vestige of his wife's fortune.

The nature of the treatment to which Harriet was subjected during these sad months was strongly disputed at the trial; but it is certain that she was kept in duress, and forbidden to go outside the door of the house. Whether she was starved and actively ill-treated is more questionable; as to the theory of starvation, I say nothing for the present, but Patrick Staunton was a man of violent temper, and there seems no reason to doubt that more than once he struck both his sister-in-law and her little child. This unfortunate infant, confined like its mother to the house, was gradually pining away, and on Sunday, the 8th of April, it was taken, a little wizened being, to Guy's Hospital by Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Staunton. It died the same evening, and the following day Patrick told the hospital authorities that the child's name was Henry Staunton; it was the son of a carpenter, he said, and the mother was a

¹ Horace Pitt, the sixth (and last) Baron Rivers of Sudley Castle, married, 10th April, 1845, Eleanor Suter, of Brighton, better known to her own generation as "Nettie Holmes"; they parted at the church door. She died 3rd September, 1872; Mrs. Butterfield was her reputed "niece," and Harriet Staunton her "great-niece."