

was always brooding over schemes of vengeance, and laying plans for his destruction.

One day, in going through the plantations, I picked up a large American bowie knife, with Bill Martin engraved upon the handle; this I carefully laid by, hoping that it might prove useful on some future occasion—meanwhile the game was nightly, thinned, and the caution and dexterity with which the poachers acted, baffled me and my colleagues in all our endeavors to find them in the act.

"That Bill Martin is a desperate fellow," said Mr. Carlos to me, one morning after we had discovered traces of the marauders, "I have no doubt that he is the criminal, but we want sufficient proof for his apprehension."

"Give him rope enough and he will hang himself," I replied. "I will relax a little from our vigilance, and he will be off his guard. It won't be long, depend upon it, before we have him in jail or out of the country."

"By the by, Noah," said Mr. Carlos, "I am going to Ipswich to receive payment from my lawyer for Crowford's farm which I sold a few months ago. It may be late when I return to-morrow night. I should not like to meet master Bill and his gang after night in a lonely part of the park, with a large sum of money in my pocket. I wish you would bring your gun, and wait for me about ten o'clock, at the second gate in the avenue—"I should feel perfectly safe in your company."

"That I shall," I cried, "with the greatest pleasure—I am not afraid of twenty Bill Martins!"

At that moment I had not the most distant idea of raising my own hand against his life.

I walked on after we parted, in a sort of dreaming state; the thought uppermost in my mind, was a vague wish to know how much money Mr. Carlos expected to receive for the sale of Crowford's farm. "It will most likely be paid in instalments of four, or five hundred pounds. In all probability, he will return with one of these sums in his pocket." Then the busy fiend whispered how much could be done with that sum. Five hundred pounds, is an immense sum in the estimation of a poor man. It would buy a commission in the army and make a gentleman of you at once. But then, people would suspect how I came by it. It would enable you to emigrate to America or Australia, and become the purchaser of a tract of land, that should make your fortune. Yes, I would change the odious name of Noah Cotton, and return, and marry my adored, but cruel Elsa.

After having indulged for some time in this species of castle building, I began to consider

whether it would be a matter of such difficulty to obtain the money, and realize the latter of these dreams.

I did not wish to take the life of Mr. Carlos, for he had always been very kind to me and my mother, yet, for all that, I did not respect him. His language was free, and beneath the dignity of a gentleman, and often coarse and immoral. I had frequently seen him intoxicated, and while in that state, I had assisted him many times in walking up to the Hall.

I had often remarked to my mother, when such an event had filled me with deep disgust. "Had Mr. Carlos been a poor man, he would have been a great blackguard." And she would grow very angry, and say "that it was not for the like of us to make remarks upon the conduct of our betters. That it was very unbecoming, especially in me, on whom the Squire had conferred so many favors. That I should shut my eyes and ears, and let on to no one, what I saw or heard."

I did neither the one thing nor the other. I was keenly alive to the low pursuits of my superior, whom I could only consider as such, as far as his wealth was concerned, for hitherto, I had led a more moral life than he had. I neither gambled, nor drank, nor swore, had never seduced a poor girl to her ruin, and then boasted of my guilt. If the truth must be spoken, I regarded the Squire with feelings of indifference and contempt, which all my sense of past favors could not overcome.

"Oh, if these spoilt children of fortune, did but know the light in which such deeds are regarded by the poor, and the evils which arise from their bad example, they would either strive to deserve their respect; or at least endeavor to keep their immoralities out of sight.

It is no excuse for my crime, to say, had Mr. Carlos been a good man, I should never have taken his life, yet I feel certain, that had had that been the case, I should have been a better man. I should have shown my gratitude to him by endeavoring to deserve his esteem, as it was, I felt that his good opinion was of little worth, that he could not prize qualities in me, to which he was himself a stranger. The only tie which bound me to him, was the sordid one of interest. He paid me well, and for the sake of that pay, I had, up to this period been a diligent servant.

But what has all this to do with my temptation and fall. Much, oh, how much, these convictions of the unworthiness of my master's character, and the little loss that his death would be to the community at large, hastened me far on the road to crime.