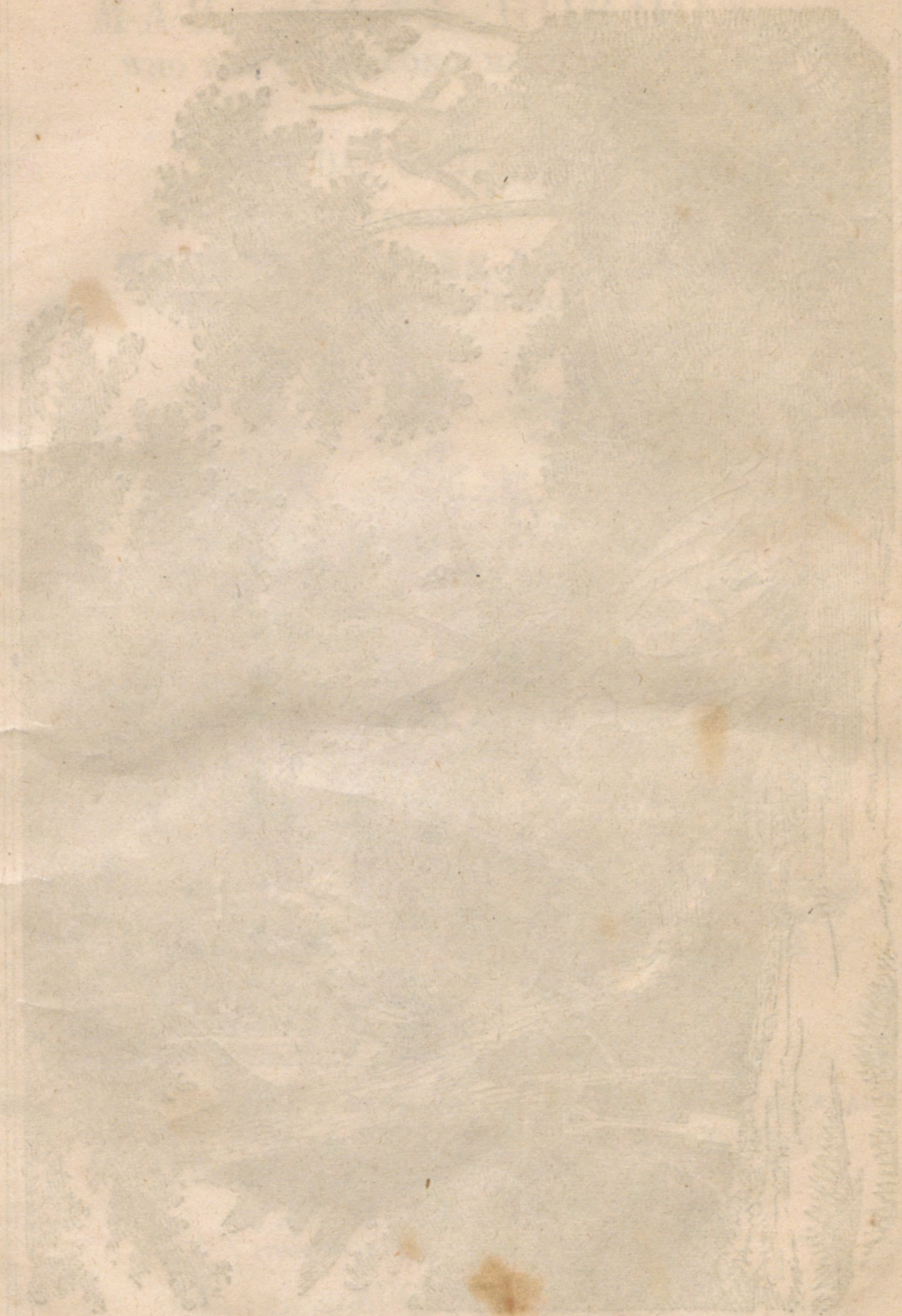


LIFE AND CONFESSION
OF
MADAME DE LA MOTTE





LIFE AND CONFESSION
OF
MARY JANE GORDON.

WHO WAS TRIED, CONDEMNED, AND HUNG,

ON THE

24TH DAY OF JUNE, 1847,

FOR THE

MURDER OF JANE ANDERSON,
A NATIVE OF VASSALBORO, MAINE.



HER TRIAL, COUNSELLORS' DEBATES, JUDGE'S CHARGE TO THE JURY, AND
FINAL SENTENCE, CONDEMNATION AND EXECUTION, ETC.

CAREFULLY COLLECTED BY THE AUTHOR,

J. S. CALHOUN,

ATTORNEY AT LAW, AUGUSTA, MAINE.

AUGUSTA:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1847.

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LIFE AND CONFESSION
OF
MARY JANE GORDON
WHO WAS THROWN FROM THE
CLIFFS OF JUNE 1847
BY
J. S. CALHOUN

PREFACE.

The object of this edition is two-fold: First, to lay before the world an entire confession of an inhuman murderer, whose cruel deeds no language can describe nor mind conceive, perpetrated in these very days in which we exist. Secondly, as a warning to all people, young and old, to not allow themselves to be drawn by the fair pretensions of woman, so that they may avoid the unmerciful grasp of delusion, lying in wait for them, and hoping a perusal of this may teach a lesson of instruction to old and young. Knowing it was a subject the most momentous and awful ever presented to the public from the mouth of a dying criminal, I have spared neither time nor trouble in collecting every incident of her life with exactness, together with her confession, from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Leman, pastoral minister, Augusta, Maine.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year of our Lord 1847, by J. S. Calhoun,
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LIFE AND CONFESSION.

As time revolves and with it brings before the world those momentous circumstances which will appear in the pages of this work, and as the attention of our readers is now to be directed to the narrative which contains the most cruel, unrelenting and unfortunate of women, a narrative containing the most extraordinary undertakings and murderous designs of a women, a sex distinguished in those days for every vice that can disgrace humanity, and at the same time the accomplishment of the most brutal murders ever recorded on the pages of crime, ancient or modern.

The origin of this work is Mary Jane Gordon, whose life has paid the penalty of the crime which she committed, for the wilful murder of Jane Anderson, a native of Vassalboro, in the State of Maine, whose life she took on the morning of the 16th day of February, which the reader will see, every thing being carefully collected to his satisfaction, as her life is one unparalleled for atrocious and inhuman murders, such as shock the mind to relate on their reality, committed in these days when religion is penetrating the far distant climes of the earth, and at the same time contemplating with serious considerations those unmerciful cruelties which cry to Heaven for vengeance. The transitory events which have rolled from generation to generation immemorial, written on the pages which record crime, are nothing in comparison when contrasted with the present inhuman murders committed in the enlightened age we now live to enjoy, when compared to the events that occurred in those remote periods which passed and are to be no more, those days when religion and morality assume so high a station among all Christian people. Indeed, I may truly assert, we might not be so much surprised at those eventful transactions, so inconsistent to feelings, had we lived in those days which have passed when barbarism overshadowed the face of nature. Yet crime and vice and murders the most sanguinary are increasing; still perpetrating under the roof of seemingly apparent hospitality—perpetrated by woman, so inconsistent to humanity and her sex.

In order to proceed to events of her life for the satisfaction of the reader, as he will perceive that the murder which she has committed and has been hung for, was the least in comparison when compared with the great and important ones which will appear in her confession and her life, collected carefully by the minister who attended her when on the last brink of eternity, before she suffered an ignominious death, exposed to the presence of thousands who came to witness her miserable and shameful end. And indulging in the hope that the reader, no matter what period of life he may

exist in, can, if he desires, learn a lesson of youthful instruction from its momentous and important pages, which record her fatal deeds and miserable end, I have examined the hidden mysteries of her life with scrutiny, omitting nothing of interest to the readers, unraveled the cruel murders she committed, the shrewd and treacherous designs ever modelled by woman. And I assure you, reader, I feel it a duty incumbent upon me as a friend of society, to expose to the world the vice and wickedness which is existing amongst us in these very days in which we live, when for a moment I think of those unfortunate people who have slept under the shade of hospitality never more in this world to rise, to become a victim to one so unrelenting. Their bodies lie mouldering in the marsh and mire, an inconsistent grave to the children of Christianity, notwithstanding their unfortunateness and profligacy. As the responsibility of collecting the incidents of her eventful life, from the authority as undeniable as her shameful end, and pleasing myself by giving it the earliest publication to the community, knowing it will prove a subject of the highest importance and one of the most serious consideration in every point of view, as well as the newest ever published.

Mary Jane Gordon was a native of Scotland, born in the year 1816, in the suburbs of the city of Edenboro. Her father, George Gordon, was a native of New-York, her mother a Scotch lady, who possessed an immense wealth, and after the breaking out of the Revolution, had to abandon his country, and became a pirate on the eastern coast. After which he went to Scotland and got married, having a family of two daughters, Mary Jane and Matilda Gordon, the former being the oldest. There she spent the first flower of her youth, a youth of personal beauty and attraction as ever the sun or dew of heaven descended on; she possessed an intelligent appearance, a perceptive eye, her personal formation in every respect commanded admiration in every society. Her parents were far above indigence, they indulged her too soon in the enjoyments of society, which laid the work of her future ruin. Her haughty disposition prevented her from uniting in the bond of marriage until she arrived to the years of eighteen, when she received the addresses of Charles How, an American, born of English parents, from the State of New-York, who was master of a bark trading to and from Glasgow. They lived in apparent friendship for some time. But previous to her marriage she revelled in almost all the enjoyments of a city life, resorted to balls, theatres, &c., and her husband's pay being not sufficient to support such a life of enjoyment, she became careless about him, and resorted to other means of supporting her career, which he very soon apprehended, jealousy becoming clear, and growing by degrees in proportion as time advanced. His vessel being ready and bound for sea, he had to prepare to go, expecting long before his return he would have a baby born to him; being absent two months, on his arrival he was alarmed to see her look so well in every respect, but to his astonishment he could neither hear nor see any appearance of such—still he looked complacent and in good humor, sometimes he thought perhaps she concealed it some way through fun. But after a considerable

time he determined to inquire into circumstances, and in accordance he did so ; she emphatically denied she was ever favored with such, and that it was some other disease she labored under, from which she recovered, and she expostulated with him on the certainty of the fact ; however, he remained unconvinced of the ideas he harbored, but shame and many other things overruled his passions from kicking up a fuss, because he could prove nothing, therefore he had to remain as he was. Therefore, he became more and more discontented every day, until at length he denied her as his wife, and withdrew his support from her, then she availed herself of every opportunity and means the country would afford to compel him, and he exposed her as much as he could, publicly and privately.

These circumstances coming to the ears of her parents, they fled to Nova Scotia with the only remaining daughter, Matilda, who became married—and for the satisfaction of the reader, I will hereafter show that her condition became precarious, despised by him, and disowned by all her friends. Reduced to such an extremity, seeing her parents had fled upon her misconduct, and having no resource under the canopy of heaven to resort to, unless to more licentiousness than usual, and to gratify her ambitious and revengeful desire, she contemplated upon some design to take his life, and to avail herself of every opportunity in her power to accomplish his death.

“Many plans I proposed, but one which struck me forcibly. If accomplished it would fulfil my desired motive. Therefore I resolved to give it a trial. It was to this effect—to induce him to come secretly to see me in the darkness of night, when he would be unperceived, under the peculiar circumstances which appear in my letter. I knew of nothing would do so well, understanding his reputation. *I adopted the plan, it failed me not.* I sat down and wrote to him the following letter to effect my design. It ran as follows :

“MY DEAR CHARLES—

“Pardon my presumption for writing these few lines to you. I am solicitous to speak a few words to you under the painful circumstances I now labor. I am just in a few hours of my departure from my native country, the home of my childhood, the place of my nativity, a home so dear. Notwithstanding my unfortnnate and lamentable separation from you which has ensued, and for which I mourn so grievously, I pray you, as my departure is so nigh, and as I am so forlorn, dejected, and despised by all my relations, you who know the frailty of woman, cannot think for one moment to deny me my last request, for the many happy hours we spent under the rural shades of bliss, untarnished by the thought of crime to cause our separation. I am aware of your reputation, but favor me, I entreat you, when the clouds of darkness cover the universe. A few moments will ease a troubled mind, one forlorn and friendless. I conjure you to excuse my sentimental remarks. I fail to subscribe myself your

Most respectful

MARY JANE GORDON.

To CH's Hows, Capt. of Bark Eliza Jane.”

He received the letter and gazed upon it attentively ; he perused it over and over as he paced the deck, becoming forgetful of the unhappy separation. His spirit became aroused into tenderness, and reflected on times that were gone no more to return, and on the frailty of woman ; he burst into tears and wept bitterly as he gazed over the letter on which her sentiments were written. Though glad, yet sorrowful for her departure, he determined, regardless of every thing, to visit her secretly, although no alternative could enter his mind that might cause the least symptom of forgiveness in his heart. At the same time weeping over her misfortune, and that of his own, when he pictured to his imagination to be united in the bands of matrimony, that holy ordinance from which such love and comfort should emanate—but far different, nothing but scandal and misfortune was the produce.

“ Oh, how happy would I have been had I never seen her ! but the frailty of human nature I must overlook. I will go and see her before she departs, perhaps when in a foreign land she may be unknown. I am deeply affected for her misfortune, nevertheless I will hear what she has to say. Perhaps when she is in a strange clime I might think it cruel. The love I bore her compels me to submit. Therefore I will see her on her departure.” The mantle of misfortune being cast around him, the veil of delusion suspended over his eyes which blinded his way, increasing with the delusion of woman, until it became so powerful that it predominated.

The reader will see the inhuman treachery, cold-blooded design of this unrelenting mortal. Oh, when I meditate on this horrible murder, with eagerness of contemplation, of man, the noblest work of creation, seduced by a woman, a companion by nature, driven to her abode by a tempest of overwhelming sorrow for her adverse fortune, after having wet his napkin with his bitter tears for her misfortune, and to comply with her last request to console, as it were, her dejected mind before she departed from her native land, the last tribute of thankfulness she requested, from one so undeserving as she was.

He repaired to her residence. She addressed him as he entered, they entered into the proceedings of their lives, spoke with familiarity and in terms of friendship. She rehearsed the youthful events of her life, and expostulated with him on the frailty of woman and human nature. He listened to her with sincerity, at the same time heedless of her entreaties. But finding them of no avail, she addressed him to the following effect :

“ Man was made in vain. Thou art so incensed against me and the frailty of woman, thou shalt fall this night a victim unconscious of his approaching doom ! ”

He remained unmoved, while she stepped behind a wooden partition, dividing her apartment into two, and snapped a sword out of its scabbard, which suspended from the wall, and drawing it she run him through ! He fell prostrate on the floor, and lay weltering in his gore in the dead of night, that hour when the human race are solemnly in silence.

“ I made my way unto a physician—I sold his body, for which I received £5 sterling.”

The reader will not allow himself to be surprised when he calls to his recollection this practice, well known in that quarter of the world by the name of kidnapping, a deplorable system, encouraged by that well-known body known as physicians. His disappearance for a long time became a subject of serious consideration among his friends and acquaintances, whose conjectures were numerous, some attributing his end to having been murdered by the crew, or some other serious accident to have befallen him.

“This being the second murder I committed, the profits of which relieved me from my present wants.”

All the important incidents of her life will be found in her confession to the minister who attended her in the cell before the day of her execution, from whose authority we quote the most important. And before you proceed any farther, weigh attentively the treachery of this monster of unrelenting passions. She invited him under all the allurements that the mind can imagine, then she butchered him in cold blood, this being the second murder she perpetrated.

In due time after her marriage, during her husband's absence, as I have already remarked, she brought forth a son, and to avoid the trouble of the little dear, the temptations of Satan ran so strong and powerful, she was tempted to sew it in a linen bag in which she carried it to the river Clyde ; when there she says :

“I took it out and looked at it—I felt reluctant of the crime I was about to commit—I thought again of the danger of delaying on the brink of that river under the act I was about to perform. I looked again at it, I thought it stared me in the face ; I turned around, not knowing what to do, when I resolved to complete the object of my journey. I lifted some sand and put into the bag—I drew the running string and made it fast, and cast it from me into the mighty waters, where vanished all trace of my conviction ! I stood for a little time with reluctant eye on the cruel deed I had done, watching. I lamented my grievous cruel crime—I did ; but, said I, ‘I have done it, now I am too late to repair the loss of the innocent ; I will smother sorrow and return home, although I give it to the finny tribe of the mighty waters of that river, my first-born.’”

I wish to remark that the reader may see this being the cruel end of the baby her husband expected to see after his return home.

“Now, said I to myself, I relent for my infant, but I am rejoiced for the victory over the father.” The laws which regulate that mutual love and unanimity, so ordained by nature, became trampled by the power of darkness, and as she advanced in infamy she accumulated more strength, forgetful of every human feeling given to woman. “I resorted to a'll licentiousness in the power of woman, with no other motive in my mind than the accomplishment of my undertaking. For love and respect for man I had none, a hatred for the human race I bore.”

I will, for the gratification of the reader, relate the vision she saw.

“As I sat one night, after the murder of my husband, in my parlor, looking at the fire, pausing on the events of my life with seriousness, and meditating on my unfortunate position, I lifted my head and looked behind me,

I saw the vision of a man standing inside the door. Catching my attention I looked more particularly, and perceived the handsome figure of a gentleman, with his hat in his hand. I gazed at him a few moments, and remembering I was in melancholy thought, knowing I did not hear him come in, when I spoke—‘Sir, pardon my silence; I have been pausing in a soliloquy on the events of a misspent life, and your coming I have not heard; but you are truly welcome.’ I stood consulting my mind, not knowing what more to say or think, when he addressed me: ‘Madam, you are entirely excusable. Think no more on those trifling events of your past life, they are no more in consequence than the sands of the sea in comparison with the loftiest mountain on the face of the earth. Ask of me whatsoever thou most desireth, and thou shalt obtain it; let thy difficulties be ever so hazardous or thy undertakings so important, you will find ease in extricating yourself.’ I listened with attention and replied—‘From whom proceedeth such requests of such magnitude and importance?’ ‘Madam, it is not for you to know. I tell you, under the solemn powers of an invisible world, from whence proceedeth such requests, I will grant you your requests.’ I became amazed at his majestic deportment, when he answered again—‘Remember, I promise you the protection of an invisible world, whose powers will predominate over all earthly laws that regulate this world. Therefore, persist, shrink not from fears that may seem to attend you, I am pledged to be thy protection because thou art desolate, I will extricate you from all your sorrows.’

“I turned around, and to my surprise he had disappeared, I saw him no more. After which I found myself elevated with inconceivable joy for a time, but to my astonishment a shocking change ensued upon my system, my nerves shrunk with pressure, my bowels heaved, and the blood ran cold in my veins, the dew of heaven fell not more abundantly than the sweat from my body, from what cause I knew not, or from what cause it originated. The agony of my troubled mind far exceeded anything except the tortures of the d——d; all the difficulties of my life, even when I was on the last brink of eternity, formed nothing like unto this. Sleep had fled from my eyes, my mind was like unto the troubled ocean, undulating by every wind of heaven; I remained in this condition until aroused before the break of day by a flash of light which filled my chamber, it caught my attention and vanished.

“After a mature time, growing hungry, I arose from the floor on which I lay, and finding my hair torn out of my head, my frame otherwise abused, during which time Anne Gow, a young woman who was my every day and night companion, came in, and procuring me something to eat I became restored to my strength and judgment. She who partook and shared with me in all my joys and sorrows, we lived together many a long day when we enjoyed the pleasures of society. I looked, and saw my condition in life as deplorable in the worst degree, she soothed a troubled mind and an aching heart. We resolved never to part in this world until death should separate us, and to have recourse to every means to afford ourselves a liv-

ing; we resorted as usual to all licentiousness, which was not the least disagreeable to our feelings.

“As my life is one unexceptionable from crime, I must confess I have many a time murdered young and old men when in their sleep in my bed at night. The mode by which I did it was by applying a plaster on their mouths, it soon deprived them of existence, this being carried on to a great extent in that part of the world. To my mortification now, I cannot tell their names, as they were strangers. I have, I acknowledge, deprived five by this means. I always found their bodies disposable, as I remarked, but suspicions growing from certain quarters my custom became limited. Shortly after, as Miss Gow and I were walking one night, drawing late, she observed a little girl walking on the side-path, says she to me, ‘here is a chance,’ and coming up, it being in lonesome part of the city and street, we took hold and placed the mouth cover on her, we carried her into a neglected old building until we rolled her in one of our mantles.” Although I mention this murder she says she did not intend to commit that crime, but stood by and saw it done, and when about she assisted. “And after Miss Gow disposed of her body we came home, and when we arrived we found standing opposite our door Alexander Robinson and Samuel Smith; they of course came in with me, drank liberally, and on that very night I strangled, by her assistance, Robinson and Smith, and after doing the deed we brought them out and carried them a part of the way, but it drawing near day we were afraid to bother any more, and having conveyed them far enough, left them, their money we took, &c. Next morning they were found, and an inquest held returned a verdict of wilful murder. The following afternoon John Lyons and Charles Canning were taken on suspicion and bound in irons in solitude for the murder of the above named. A reward being offered for the conviction of the murderers, I came forward, myself and Gow and swore it plump against them, that I saw the same party drinking together, and also their dispute, which terminated in their loss of life. For on the same afternoon John Lyons and Canning saw Robinson and Samuel Smith standing opposite my door, and I feared some party would suspect and have me committed; but self-preservation being the first law of nature, I took an early stand against any such. They passed the usual examination on such occasions; the term arriving, watched with so much anxiety, they were tried, condemned and hung, for the very same murder I committed. When on the scaffold they addressed the crowd of spectators, relating that they were innocent, which took place on the 2d day of April, in Glasgow, 1838.”

However, for the gratification of the reader, to give him the full form and particulars: When the prisoners were arraigned they assumed an undaunted appearance, being asked, had they anything to say, replied, nothing, but they were innocent; after which the counsellors’ debates having subsided, the judge addressed the jury; “Gentlemen of the Jury, the prisoners, John Lyons and Charles Canning, now arraigned before you for the wilful murder of Robinson and Smith, you have heard the evidence produced, so clear and satisfactory. Under the painful circumstances in which I am

placed as minister of the law, I must say, I can harbor no other idea but that of their entire guilt ; it has been proved to my satisfaction. But as jurymen, I charge you under the solemnity of the canons of the living God, to do justice to the prisoners, and to act in accordance with the dictates of your minds. Let no motive or prejudice sway you from doing justice. Bear in mind the lives of two men are in your hands, and if you can be convinced of their guilt, the laws of humanity and religion require a verdict from you."

Shortly after the jury retired, and returned a verdict of guilty. The public prosecutor moved for the sentence of the law, upon which the judge pronounced, they should be taken to the place of their confinement, there to remain until the 2d day of April, when they should be hung by the neck until their bodies were dead.

This cruel and unmerciful action having passed away : one which no language can describe nor mind conceive, perpetrated by this murderous female, and when he seriously considers how long her footsteps were continued on this wicked world ; but when we find the tempest blowing and storm is flowing, sure indications of the vengeance of the Most High about to descend upon her wicked path, and crush her into forgetfulness. Her days are nearly numbered in that land, previous to the following, as the readers will perceive. Still Anne Gow remained with her as usual. They were paid the prosecuting money which was desirable. Her last unmerciful doing remained to her as of no consequence.

"We were appended for the poisoning of Alice Hamilton, a girl who noticed some of our doings, and interfering with us we determined to place her beyond the scenes of this world. We invited her to come and spend the day, but not coming, we continued our invitations until she did ; we prepared a decent refreshment, and I put arsenic in a bowl of soup, she became sick, and went home and died immediately. The physicians took the poison from out of her stomach, We were immediately taken and bound in irons to await our trial. The term fast approaching under the circumstances which I was to be tried, for I well knew I would be found guilty, and death would be my inevitable lot, knowing well I deserved it, and it had just arrived, I thought in my own mind could there be any possibility of escaping. As I knew the localities of the prison so well, sometimes thinking it impossible, at other times feeding my vanity there might, as I noticed one at the same time to attempt it, it would be either life or death, and I resolved to give a trial to the attempt secretly to my companion in crime. At this season of the year, being in the month of May, and water hard to obtain, I thought if I could work my way into some of the subteraneous passages or reservoirs, that I might make my way out underneath the walls in some direction, as I often heard people say they were spacious. And on the 24th day of May, 1838, I went out of the prisoners' sitting room which led into the ward, I saw, as I did many a time before, a grating which covered one of the tunnels, I lifted it, and found it rose upon hinges, I girted my clothes about me tight, and ventured down, by the weight of the bar I knew it would fall after me,

every criminal being at dinner, and turnkeys in general. This prison stood on a lofty site, overlooking a great part of the town. I penetrated, regardless of every thing, save death, that might present itself, though painful and disagreeable was my journey, becoming dry and spacious as I advanced, the smell and retreating of vermin was beyond expression or the reader's conception. After a little I found the smell began to abate, and the fresh air becoming good, I knew, to my inexpressible joy, I was near the extremity of my journey, for previously, I was compelled to proceed, though faint and hungry, for I began to know not how to return. I passed fifteen hours in this unnatural retreat. At last I saw the light of day, which in a few minutes convinced me I was at the fulfilment of the greatest undertaking ever accomplished by man in any kingdom or clime. Though eager I was to depart, I remained a few hours in the mouth of the opening until the clouds of night came on, when I departed, took my last and glorious farewell, and called with one of my trustworthy friends, where the rights of hospitality were given me and my wounds dressed. I remained for nine weeks, during which time Anne Gow was tried for the same from which I made my escape, and hung, so well known there. After I departed from there on board the bark Jane Eliza, to Liverpool, where I took my passage on board the ship Terrolenta, Captain Smith, for New-York, and arrived on the 15th day of February, 1840, after a severe passage of six weeks.

Being now landed, as I thought, in the land of promise, the appearance of the country, and manners, and customs somewhat different from those I left, the season being dull and no employment to be found. The first man I met, that I knew, was William McManus, an Englishman, who swore against Lyons and Canning for the murder of Robinson and Smith, as I above remarked, who fled the country a short time after. He seemed glad to see me, and he directed me to the William-street Cottage, (there meaning N. York.) We had a long discourse upon circumstances. I boarded there near six weeks, and being pretty sharp I soon learned how to get along there, together with the manners and customs of the country; but my money growing scarce, I intended to look for employment. As Mr. Manus and I were talking one day, it came around in the discourse, that he was acquainted with a man in Portland, Maine, who fled from the country on account of a disgraceful daughter he had, who was married a short time to an American captain, &c. My mind being struck at once on the subject, I inquired minutely as to every particular, at the same time saying I knew the man, and felt the greatest rejoicement as to the subject. He wrote a letter, and gave it to me; I proceeded to Portland, and called at his residence, the servant of the house called him and told him a lady was waiting to see him. I was shown into the sitting-room, and to my surprise I saw my father. He stood motionless and gazed at me, recognizing me as his child; he embraced me with tears, and inquired respecting me. I told him what I was after arriving, but nothing of the life so eventful. He told the cause of his sorrow, that my sister was married to a gentleman in Woodstock, on the St. John River, in the province of New-

Brunswick, and for adultery she was divorced, whose trial I will explain, and that my mother had died long since. My father being a pirate, he changed his name for fear of being known, under the British flag in the years 1812 and '13 on the eastern coast, to whose depredations and inhuman murders no parallel can be found but those of my own. He had at that eventful period to leave his country, and his property was confiscated, from whence he came and got married to my mother, as remarked."

For the gratification of the curious reader, I will omit nothing in his life nor of her sister Matilda's, which events will prove a matter of the highest information to the researcher.

"I thought now, as I did when I landed, I would conduct my life as smooth as possible. We remained together for some time, when we thought of taking and setting up a boarding house, convenient to the wharve, which we did; but I became mindful of his harshness to me, and as he was far advanced in years, I saw he was nothing more or less than a burthen to me, and I resolved sooner or later to let him go about his business."

The next detestation of crime she committed was upon a Canadian barber, who called at her house and set up with her, as he was on the speculation.

"I made inquiries of his business and circumstances, and finding he possessed some money, when I got him asleep I cut his throat, and I told my father to go and get a boat, at which time I was employed sewing him in a coarse bag. He went and got a boat, but the owner saw him take it, and after he arrived with word the boat was ready, we took his body out with caution and laid it in the barge, and we rowed down the stream far enough so that his body might not be washed ashore, although I had a weight suspended to it. And on our arrival the owner met us, inquiring what we were about. My father told him the whole circumstance, and on the principle of honor to never divulge the secret, for which I had to give him over \$300. As I took from the victim, I believe, \$650, the above \$300 broke my heart. To think I murdered a man for the same sum and had to part with it by the simplicity of an old man, therefore ever after I became incensed against him; said I to myself, he is my father, yet when I was destitute he disowned me and fled the country on my account—what, then, should I return him, now he is in my power? I drowned my child, the only act I ever repented for, and I murdered my husband and several others—I will get rid of him! I took and wrote to my old friend, Wm. McManus, who was just living in Providence, R. I., upon the matter; he set the plan, and acknowledged the receipt of my letter, stating to me he wanted us both to come and see him. We prepared, and went on to Providence on the 16th day of July, 1842, arrived at his residence, when we were told he had gone to Plymouth, and at the same time handing me a letter, stating to follow him and call, when we arrived in Plymouth, by the directions of the letter. Having arrived, he gave us a hearty welcome; after a little, slipping me a note, he gave us an invitation to take a sail down the bay previous to supper. It being accepted, we sailed down the bay a consid-

erable distance, when he told me to open the note and read it, as it was endorsed, 'Thou art not to open this until I tell you.' I opened it, and in it was written: 'The way thou shalt make a harvest home in England, is to take thy old father and heave him overboard!' I stood for a moment in thought. Said I to my father, 'Thou art a traitor! and for my own safety, thou art destined to lie in the depth of the waters, as many have done before!' so saying, I caught him and heaved him overboard. We returned, thinking ourselves far enough. I drank a toast to Scotland bold, and enjoyed a pleasing night. I remained here for ten days, and on the ninth day his body was found washed ashore, crowds of people came to recognize him. I saw and knew it to be the body of my father by a mark on his breast, it was the Rose and Thistle, from which suspended a whip, I could know him no other way, as his body was all mangled.

"After this, McManus and I became very familiar to one another. He told me he wanted to go to New-York upon certain business, and for me to remain there until he would return; but not returning as I expected, I went on and called at the William-street Cottage, and found he had gone for a few days to Albany. The afternoon of the same day I received a letter from him, stating he wanted to see me on important business. I proceeded to Albany, and on my arrival I found him in pursuit of a man who became a bankrupt in Baltimore, and he was watching his footsteps. We were walking late one evening in the suburbs of the city, we met him, and followed him to his hotel. I inquired if he was in, I was shown to his room, he received me kindly. I asked him if he was from Boston; he replied he never was there in his life. Well, said I, 'I board in a house up town, and I am acquainted with a gentleman who knows you and wishes to see you. He desired me to come and tell you—but, sir, I thought myself I saw you in Boston. The gentleman is an entire stranger to me, he has taken some sudden disease, and could give me no more directions than your residence and name. I thought it a charity, as I think the man will live no time, and perhaps his business may be of importance.' I seemed to be alarmed and in a hurry. 'Wait a moment, madam, and I will be with you.' I escorted him to my residence, as it were, conducted him into the sitting-room, where I gave him a seat; the seat being placed he sat down, and in a moment the trap let go, he fell down almost three stories underneath, where McManus was. He was almost dead by the fall. I took his keys and pocket-book, the contents of which amounted to \$800, in bills. We deposited his body that night in an adjoining vault, which ran almost, or a considerable distance, under the street. This place I cannot much describe, as I was a stranger there.

In a few days after, I started for Baltimore. I arrived there, and after some time I got service, remained for nearly eight months, when I became acquainted with a young man and got married to him. We took a room and lived comfortably, until he got drunk and disputed with a colored man, for which he became a victim to the knife, this particular being well known. He was a native of a small village in Connecticut. In all my eventful life I never could get hold of this man.

"I resolved to stay no longer there, and to return again I considered myself to be the most unfortunate of women; but still I could not restrain my disposition. I arrived in New-York once more, where I met McManus, who was doing a smart business. I understood from him that he was after making a great haul—said I to myself, I will be your mark. I slipped some poison into his cabbage as I sat beside him, the quantity being small he became sick, and he requested me to attend him. I procured a doctor and got medicine, which I mixed with more—he died in a short time. He willed me all he had, I think I got about \$390. After his burial I started for Boston, where I found no great sympathy. I became acquainted with a lady who kept a house of ill fame in Commercial-street, corner of Charlton-street; I put up there, I did not like it much, there were too many rowdies attended, so much so that I was vexed so much by the impudence of a man, a war sailor, that I caused his death—this being a short time ago, for which the establishment was broken up.

"I took my way, Maria Mars and myself, to Bangor, Maine. Resided a little time with her aunt, Mrs. Hunt, who lived respectably, accommodating her visitors decently, but she was terribly annoyed by a countryman who was visiting often and would pay nothing. We took and gave him plenty to drink, and tied his legs and arms and carried him to the banks of the Penobscot river, we untied the rope and left him to his fate. Next day we found him floating amongst the shrubs, we took him out the following night and buried him in the very spot we laid him to his fate; and those who go there, let them look upon a thick elm tree which stands right opposite, a thin yellow wire suspended from a branch, of an oval form, such an emblem of commemorating victory."

Although her life has been one of the most inhuman and fluctuating, yet she possessed that spirit called honor, as I see by her confession. When she knew of the plot of the burning of the south end of N. Y. city, caused by the wilful ignition of powder, going about near two years ago, she retained the secret. But as all things in nature have their time, I may say her time is fast approaching, her days are nearly numbered.

Some little time after the completion of the murder of the countryman, named Hubbard, Maria and her thought they would go to Augusta, Maine, where they might start in a new circle of life.

"Arriving there, the appearance of the place presented to my idea that I might possibly spend my days for the remainder of my life, as I began to be growing far advanced, and my eventful and sorrowful life preyed so much upon me, I began to part that animating spirit which I once possessed. I intended to start some easy means of making a living for the remainder of my days. I started a temperance boarding house. I could settle myself no place to my advantage in the centre of the city, and took a house in that part of the city that is N. W. upon the Vassalboro road. Carrying every thing smooth, and not being known, in a short time I became known and received quite a share of public patronage from that city and vicinity. I kept a proper distance from every body. Miss Mars still remained with me, but some young men falling in conceit with her, and I seeing a great

intimacy, more than the reader may for a moment imagine, with one, I began to fear she might be induced to turn out contrary to my expectations, for fear she would reveal any of my secrets, as she understood some, particularly the murder of the countryman, knowing the frailty and deceit of woman. This young man, his name being Little, from Eastport as I understood, being a painter and glazier by trade, I set the plan once more to avoid perhaps something more serious. I loved Maria Mars and I gave her everything she desired ; I sent her to Bangor to see her aunt, with an order to give her an invitation to come and spend a while on a visit. During her absence I did not know well how to do with this fellow. I sent my servant to him with a letter, to come, I wanted him very particularly to do a small job, &c. He came, I showed him a few panes of glass I wanted him to put in, and a few slates that were moved off the roof. When I got him at the work, as he was standing outside, upon a board which held itself inside, a thing made use of by all painters, &c., I lifted the board and down he fell. I looked after a little to see what was his condition, and if any person recognized his fall, it being in the rear of the house ; but finding no person took notice thereof, I went out and hauled him into the wood-shed, where I very soon made a grave. That very night, Miss Mars being in Bangor, I sent my servant on a message to Vassalboro, to an old gentleman, as the reader will hereafter see. Next day the servant arrived. The day after Maria came home, but being in the habit of seeing Little very often, she began to wonder much what was the matter with him. She was one of his comrades, and being informed he came by my order to repair some work for me, asked me. I told her he did, but had gone off the same evening. I saw, as I supposed, a visible change in her mind, and her spirits much dejected. I thought she suspected me, because a guilty conscience always betrays itself; nevertheless, I carried myself on as well as possible, although she knew a great deal of and about me. In the course of a few months this having not, as I expected subsided, but only beginning to rage, as regarded his absence, I paid no attention to the matter, but when spoken of, wondered as much as anybody. However, in six months after, a gentleman called with me on his way from Kingston, Canada, to Boston ; being quite sociable, I made myself as much so as he, and we entered into a long discourse about places, and in a word, about the world, not forgetting to enquire a little about his business, so far as I could keep inside of suspicion. He seemed to be very prejudiced against persons of other denominations. After the elapse of supper he called for a light, to be shown to his bed. I procured one, and conveyed him to my own room, giving him to know that I would have him wakened and breakfast ready in the morning for his departure. Returning from his room, I set the plan to murder him. I visited his bedroom a considerable number of times, until everything was quiet and he asleep. After showing him to bed I was making a plaster to put on his mouth. I visited his room and found he continued asleep, I went into the hall of the room and brought the plaster and the knife ; Maria holding the light, I placed the plaster on, and in a little time he began to move and

become uneasy, I took the knife and made a deep but short cut, which ended his days ! I took him out while warm, placed him in a packing box by squeezing him in, broke his legs and bent his arms, and got him placed with a good deal of trouble. Next day I nailed on a cover, it being an old French box, and the following night Maria Mars and I prepared a horse and wagon, and started about twelve o'clock with the box ; it being gray moonlight, we travelled about six or seven miles on the banks of the Kennebeck river where we found a silent place, at the same time taking a spade, &c., those implements to make the grave. We got out and carried the box and laid it down beside the grave on the bank of the river, during which time I was employed digging the grave, while Maria was standing on the watch, the horse being tied all this time to a tree. The deed of murder being finally completed we returned home, and was just arrived quite early enough, because the sand being easy to penetrate I soon got through covering it up, and placed a rag of red on the bough of a weeping ash hard by. This undertaking occurred in the month of November, about the 10th, 1846. I adjusted everything, and examining the property, which I caused to be mine, it amounted to about £700 currency. I divided with Miss Mars, the love of gain of such importance ceased not to inspire her with courage, together with my advice. I became almost conscious of her unshrinking fortitude, notwithstanding her youth, she being about seventeen or eighteen years of age.

“I wish to assure the reader I was about to resign my life, I was happy enough, as I had plenty of money, all I wanted was a remote retreat for the end of my life, imagining I would fall some time or other into the law, although my success was beyond measure. I placed my mind on an old gentleman of Vassalboro, in the same State, whose name was Anderson, having no person belonging to him but a sister, who was never married and who was liked by her brother. Thinking in my own mind I would resign such depredations, and knowing Anderson to have a good settlement in the country, I thought it answered in every respect, but never intended to part with Maria. We got married in the month of December, about the 4th, and lived with him, after disposing of such property as I possessed in Augusta as I did not care to bring along with me. Having gone now to live with him, his sister Jane and I could not agree, and we led a life of discontent. She wanted to be the whole manager, at the same time giving neither me nor Maria any respect ; backbiting us upon all occasions. Growing worse, this conduct, I knew I never would enjoy any comfort so long as we should be together. Said I to myself, I have remedied many an evil in my time, and you are the worst of all I ever met, and an old maid, and now are all my comforts to be lost ? I will finish you, and make a resolution for it to be my last. My husband going in a day or two to Augusta, I expected him away a few days after he started ; but to make sure of the work in time, next morning I arose and went into her bed room, I took hold of her and choked her before I ever let her go. Said I to myself, where will I bury her ? I thought of an old tree whose trunk was decayed all away, and an old gripe in it underneath ; I took a spade and

axe with me and soon made it deep enough to contain her. I came back and told Maria to look out for fear of being seen. I carried her and laid her in the grave, covered her up, and returned home. But now, to my misfortune I have to say, I have been seen, the grave been opened, victim raised, and an immediate trial held, and a verdict returned of wilful murder. And on that very day, January 7th, I was bound in irons to await my trial."

The reader will perceive a man doing business in the woods, fowling, saw the deed, not knowing what she might be covering, he retraced his footsteps and opened the inconsistent sepulchre where I long intended her to lie. And now I remembered the well-known saying, "long runs the fox, but he is caught at last." I am now in iron bonds, no art nor artifice of man or woman can extricate me; therefore, I will prepare to die, to follow many a one to the last brink of eternity in which they are to disappear forever. Oh, how happy would I be if I were to die this moment, or by any other way than to breathe my last, ignominious death, tied and hung by the neck; oh, lamentable fate; long have I deserved it, it comes, alas, too soon; but to my fate I will resign. I contemplated on the inhuman murders I committed. Oh, I have been hard of heart; did they not possess feelings as well as me. Oh cruelty far beyond conception; if I never had been born; my life is almost over now; what is the world to me with all its vice and vanity. I will soon meet my sentence, grievously do I mourn that I did not die on the moment I committed my first and cruel youthful deed on the banks of the river Clyde. But, alas, there is no use in mourning now. My life has been one of misery. What an unhappy being I am, no one to console me, bound in irons, confined to the narrow walls of a dungeon under the crime of murder for which I am guilty, and knowing I will have to die for the same. But a misspent life is the sure reward of a miserable end, I see it with sorrow, the phrase exemplified upon myself. Reader, whoever thou art, take warning and think for a moment what sorrow does emanate from my troubled soul going to pass through the gates of eternity to the regions of an invisible world, with the deepest crimes that stain human nature. Picture to your mind those events, and perhaps, although my life has been one for murder unequalled, my sentiments may teach a youthful lesson of instruction to all fathers and mothers in training up their children in the way they should go, and by planting in their minds and hearts a proper course to tread, they would have the rejoicement in their old days, to see their children pass from that stage of delusion which surrounds the youthful. Restrain their minds from the paths of pleasure, so inviting; in my early days I was indulged in those amusements, and growing up I became too headstrong, which laid my future ruin; and now after passing the flower of my days, I look back and view as if across a sandy realm, my inhuman crime rising up before me, more transparent than the moment I committed them, because the temptations of Satan bore me along. I thought no more of what I did now than if I did not do it at all, in a word, they cost me not a thought. But quite different now, I wish I was cast into the bottom of the sea, or fall into dust from whence I came possessed of nothing, the same as I was before

the breath of life entered. I hope the perusal of my life may teach a lesson that shall never be forgotten as long as man exists. But what grieves me more, can an ignominious death be the penalty of crimes so grievous? No. I shall turn from this meditation. I thought of Maria, when I determined to write her my last request, and lest time might not permit again, and bid her my last farewell.

MY DEAR MARIA :

Under the circumstances I am surrounded, and which I am placed, confined to the narrow walls of a dungeon, bound in irons ; my last and most beloved companion, I entreat you, remember me with that affection I bore to you. Though the world has looked on me with disdain, never, I conjure you, discover those events I have disclosed to you, for in all my misfortunes I bore that honor even when the allurements of this world offered me, unless the unavoidable principles of self-preservation. Although between you and I, I am guilty, yet knowing I will die I entreat you once more, as my last injunction, never to discover. No more from your ever adorable,

M. A. GORDON.

The term approaching her thoughts lay concentrated upon that time, the anguish of a troubled soul increased, until the very day arrived that she was arraigned before the court and the jury, she came and appeared undaunted in the presence of the judge and jury, presented an air of carelessness, though deep the crime for which she was about to stand. The proceedings of the trial having been conducted upon the very same principle of any other, I will, for the gratification of the reader, state the evidence produced, the counsellors' debates and explanations upon the case, the judge's charge to the jury, together with his remarks upon the same, her sentence, and death. The Judge having taken his seat, and jury sworn, the court commenced to hear the case. The indictment found for the wilful murder of Jane Anderson, of Vassalboro, in the State of Maine, on the 7th day of June, in the present year of our Lord, 1847. She being asked was she guilty, replied, Not Guilty, upon which the prosecuting counsel called George Hubbard as witness. He was asked what did he know. He replied that on the morning of the seventh of May, he was out fowling, it being a very cold morning, he saw as he was walking along the outskirts of the woods, a woman covering with a spade something he could not tell, under the trunk of an old decayed tree, and being so unusual an hour he was surprised, and a thought struck him it was something important. I advanced towards the place as fast as I could, stepping into the wood that I might not be seen, and as I came nearly opposite I knew the woman was a stranger. I stood for some time until she completed what she was about ; she took her spade and axe when done and departed. I took particular notice of the place ; I watched her where she went, I saw her go into Mr. Anderson's ; I returned home and told my wife what I saw, and that I would go and see what she buried. I went and took my spade, and to my surprise, as I dug up, I came to where I saw a piece of white

calico, I scraped away a little longer, until finally, I raised the body of Jane Anderson, of Vassalboro. I left the corpse there, and went and had this woman arrested; an inquest being held before the body was removed to her brother's residence. Counsel for the prisoner rose and asked, Where were you that morning? he replied; in the woods. You were in the woods? Yes, sir. Did you ever see this woman before? No, sir, but once after her marriage. How far might you have been in the woods? He replied, he was about fifty rods on the outskirts of the woods. Did you not say you were in the woods? I said I was walking along the skirts of the woods. Well, at what hour in the day was it? It was about six o'clock in the morning. Did you specify that hour on your oath? No, sir, I made use of the expression, very early. What dress had she on? I could not tell. What color, do you know? I was not so near as to distinguish the color. You, sir, may sit down. Upon which Mrs. Hubbard was called on. She was asked what she knew about the matter. Said she knew nothing only that on the morning of the seventh of May, her husband went out to fowl as he told her, and as he was in the habit of doing, and having gone out about an hour and a half, he came back and told her he saw a woman covering something under the root of a tree, and said he felt strange about it; and that he saw the same woman go into Mr. Anderson's. Counsel for the prisoner, Do you know that lady in the bar? No, sir. Do you think you ever saw her? Not to my knowledge. Do you know anything more? Nothing more, only that my husband returned telling me that Jane Anderson was murdered and that it was her body that he saw the woman cover, who went into Mr. Anderson's, after covering it up. Well, Madam, that is something; you may sit down, if you please. Upon which the Constable was called. He said after he was authorized to commit her to prison, he caught her in the cellar burying the clothes of some woman, the constable made no inquiries to whom they belonged. Very good, sir; replied the counsel for prisoner. Mr. Hubbard being asked did he know at the time it was a woman, said he did. How did you know? By one way the awkwardness she handled the spade. You knew by that, still you were so far off you could not distinguish her dress in any form, and yet, you say it was a woman. Might it not be a man? It might be a man. Will you swear it might be a man. No, sir, but I will swear it was a woman. How did you know it was a woman. This, sir; as soon as I perceived the action I came close as I could to see would I know the person. What do you mean by the person, is it the man? No, sir, but the woman. What do you mean by the action, what action did you see? I saw the woman cover the hole at the trunk of a tree. You may sit down. Upon which Maria Mars being called, said she saw Mrs. Anderson go to bed the night previous, and Jane Anderson, as well as she; for Mr. Anderson had gone off; and that in the morning about seven o'clock she arose and saw Mrs. Anderson lighting a fire with her night-cap on; knowing no more until the constable came in and took Mrs. Anderson. Counsel; Do you know any more? Nothing more. Did you ever know this woman to commit murder? Did you ever, sir, show where she did,

sir. You can if you wish. Well, sir, I don't wish: that is all I know about this. You may sit down, Miss. Upon which the Counsel in behalf of the prisoner rose, "Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner in the bar now arraigned before you, for a crime the most heinous and deplorable, so inconsistent for a woman. This lady is a stranger and newly married, whose character in this city previous to her marriage, she bore one irreproachable. How, gentlemen, could she become to have such an antipathy against her sister-in-law, they who but a short time ago enjoyed the society of marriage festivities together; and whose acquaintance was long known previous to her marriage, and after such a welcome unanimity, she has been, as it were, after embruing her hands in the blood of her sister-in-law, so inhuman. The evidences produced seem to me as if the act was committed at an early period. Mr. Hubbard acknowledges he was fowling so early in the morning, he says he could not discern her clothing nor dress, because it was not clear enough; yet he went to fowl; how could he see what to shoot? and what is more deplorable in my sight, he says it was a woman: might it not have been a man? a period in the morning more consistent for a man than for a poor, thin-looking woman, even admitting the crime. The evidence produced, say the woman was taken and every thing fulfilled by seven o'clock on a cold spring morning. Now after the grave had been covered by whoever it was, let it be he or she, Mr. H. says, walked away, still affirming it to be a woman, might it not be a man. Miss Mars wisely and judiciously asserts, Mrs. Anderson, when she rose, was lighting a fire, with her night-cap on, and in a few moments a constable stepped in and took this poor woman to prison; all these things at so early an hour, on a cold spring morning when a man would be almost chilled to death to look out, and he, Mr. Hubbard, was out fowling at this hour. Gentlemen of the jury, so inconsistent a subject never was brought before this court. Recollect the life of a woman is in your hands. Look to those evidences as they deserve; bear in mind what a fearful thing it is to die; and in your hands rest the life of a woman, the thought of which blanches the cheek, and sends the fearful blood running to the heart. It is a solemn thing to break into the "bloody house of life." Do not think for a moment that the life of this woman is valueless. There is no drift-weed on the ocean of life. There are in her bosom the same sympathies, the same social sympathies that animate our own. Her nerves are made to feel pain, her heart to throb with human affections even as yours. Take her life, it is of no value; give it to her, it is above the price of rubies. Some of you are advanced in years; you may have children; suppose you had a daughter and that the news had reached you that she was about to die, what would be your feelings? I cannot tell. Perhaps she has a father and a mother; think of the shadow that must have been cast over the home of her absence; think of her parents in the hours of her wretchedness, when anxiety and despair come home to their bosoms. Let the supplications of the unfortunate criminal come home and touch your hearts. Let me entreat you once more to bear continually in mind the life of a woman is in your hands, I know I need not ask a verdict from your

hands. Remember it is better to take the life of two guilty than one innocent. Upon which the learned gentleman resigned. Upon which the Prosecuting Counsel rose and addressed the judge and jury—"Gentlemen of the jury, as Counsel for the plaintiff, I rise to make a few remarks upon this momentous trial; not for the appearance but the horror of the crime, and before I draw your attention to the present case, I wish you to understand the character arraigned before you. This woman is a fugitive from her native country who escaped the walls of a prison, and whose companion in crime was hung for the same. I refer you for the full particulars of her life written by herself, and which you will find in the Glasgow Review. She after the most cruel murders arrived in this country in the year 1840, on board the ship *Terrolenta*, Captain Smith, from Liverpool. You will find in her life the mode by which she killed her father; those particulars are in full in her own handwriting. I present them, gentlemen, for your consideration. I only procure these events that you may have it in your power to do justice to the world, and to yourselves. I will cease rehearsing any more; you are now in possession of the inhuman wretch presented before you. But as it does not become the court and jury to study her life on this awful hearing, I will proceed to the particulars connected with the crime. Mary Jane Gordon was married to Mr. Anderson here present, a short time ago, having no person for many years previous but his beloved sister who took care of him as if he was gold, but when he got married, his sister thinking her authority over, was childish enough to dispute with his wife. They led a life of discontentment, so much so, as her life became a penalty of such. You see, gentlemen, Mr. Hubbard is a man of upright standing in this country, he went out to fowl on that ~~fine~~ morning, he saw an individual working under the trunk of a decayed tree, which attracted his attention, at so unusual an hour in the morning, but being eager to know the peculiarity, drew nearer and nearer, until he was near enough to perceive the individual to be a woman. Notwithstanding his distance at first, and being curious enough to know the substance, followed her and saw her go into Mr. Anderson's, at the same time marking the fatal spot as he would know it when he returned, and after giving his wife to know what he saw so surprising, he took his spade in his hand and opened the place of deposition situated in so unconsecrated a place, and to his impenetrable amazement raised the murdered body of Jane Anderson. What mind can contemplate on this inhuman scene—is it not enough to shake humanity to dwell upon the event. He, Mr. Hubbard returned wisely home, and sent a constable and had her arrested, after which they held an inquest on her body, a verdict returned of wilful murder, and nothing else. You gentlemen of the jury, will perceive that when the constable arrested her, he found her making a hole, about seven o'clock, in her wood-cellar, at the same time having a bundle of woman's clothes rolled up to bury them. Here they are as when found, when she was arrested. Here are the very clothes of the deceased. My learned friend has resigned; for what cause? because he has the feelings of humanity about him, he cannot stand in the face of the world to hold up the cause

of a murder so unparalleled ; whose bare and treacherous deeds have yawned from Europe's distant shores, and for that reason I drew your attention to my previous remarks. Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the evidences produced, I deem it unnecessary to comment on it, because they are so clear and satisfactory, beyond contention of her guilt. I see it to my satisfaction if not to yours too ; when, as now you are, called by your country to do justice, do it with impenetrability and impartiality ; the laws of the land, of society, of morality, and religion, the canons of the living God, demands it from you. You, therefore, laboring under the painful circumstance in which you are placed, discharge the duties intrusted to you ; let no motive, no prejudice under the canopy of heaven sway you from returning a verdict, if it has been proved to your satisfaction she committed the deed." Upon which the learned Counsel resigned. Upon which the prisoner being asked had she anything to say, replied : Nothing, but she was innocent. Upon which the Judge rose and addressed the jury—"Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner, Mary Jane Gordon, so married, has been indicted and arraigned before you, for the wilful murder of Jane Anderson. You have had the testimony produced in court, from that we must form our opinion. We must proceed upon testimony, ascertain facts by evidence of witnesses, on which we must inquire, judge, and determine as to guilt or innocence. Those evidences produced are so undeviating, from which no other idea can I entertain but one of convincing guilt in perpetrating this horrid crime. If peradventure, there was the slightest foundation for a doubt of your guilt in my mind the sentence of the court would be arrested, but I am sorry to say there is none. The court is persuaded of your atrocious crime, if it can form no other opinion by the testimony produced ; your case has been heard, and the court waited patiently to hear all you had to say and now you have been found guilty. You stand now for the last time before the earthly tribunal, and by the testimony produced, and verdict of the jury, you must receive the sentence of the law, and that sentence is death. When men are drawn in ordinary circumstances under the penalty of such, there is generally some palliation, something to warm the sympathy of court and jury. Human nature may be led astray by the influence of passion, laboring under some sympathy of smothered resentment suddenly awakened by the force of certain circumstances, depriving them of reason, and then they may take the life of an individual ; depriving of life under that kind of excitement may avail of some sympathy ; but this was not your case. You received no provocation ; you have slept and meditated on the crime coolly ; you have deliberately taken her life, so inhuman for woman ; you have been tempted and you yielded ; and you deprived her of her life so dear to her. You say you are innocent, but that is beyond the power of man to believe or credit. Notwithstanding all this, I cannot believe your heart is so hard that your own mind does not melt when you look back upon the cruel deed you committed, and in the perilous condition in which you are placed. I exhort you to repent for the enormous crimes you have committed, and think what an awful thing it is to die. To leave the world, and to appear

before the tribunal of Him who rules the universe, to answer for the crimes you have committed in imbruing your hands in the blood of your fellow-woman. Your appearance and remarks have added sufficient evidence you are more than ordinarily intelligent, and now after having participated in the advantages of a cultivated mind and arriving to the years of settled womanhood, you stand as a murderer. Oh ! how shocking to relate. The sentence of the law is death ; and now it remains for the minister of the law to pass the sentence of the law. And in a few moments after that hour, the Prosecuting Counsel rose and said : “ May it please the court, Mary Jane Gordon, the prisoner at the bar, having been tried by a jury of the county and found guilty of the murder of Jane Anderson, I now move that the sentence of the court be pronounced upon that verdict.” By the court—“ Mary Jane Gordon, you have heard what has been said by the Prosecuting Counsel, you have been arraigned for the wilful murder of Jane Anderson ; you have been put upon your trial, and after a painful and impartial hearing, you have been found guilty. As minister of the law, I pronounce the sentence. You, Mary Jane Gordon, shall be taken to the place of your confinement, there to remain until the 25th day of June, in the present year of our Lord, when you shall be hung by the neck until your body is dead, between the hours of seven and twelve o’clock.” This time being granted her for the purpose of preparing for her coming doom ; to reflect and repent on her past time, that she might be visited by some pious persons. After receiving her sentence she seemed deeply affected, shedding tears with bitterness : being removed by the sheriff to her cell, she seemed forgetful of her approaching doom, and gazed with unwavering steadiness on those who came to visit her ; no sign betrayed the least emotion of her heart. After her condemnation her frame grew feeble and her face grew pale, her eyes sunk more than ordinary : yet still retaining that enterprising and desperate appearance. When in her narrow cell she seemed regardless of her coming doom. The Divine attended her with that zeal and attention which inspired him with animating cause of religion. He expostulated with her upon the important journey she was about to travel, to reflect upon a mispent life, a life of enormous cruelties, that she might be found to be prepared to pass from the transient scenes of this world, to partake of the joys of heaven, and although the enormities of her crimes exceeded human imagination, yet she would obtain mercy. The day arrived on which she was to breathe her last, being told to be prepared, she seemed inconsolably affected, and confessed to me the crimes of her life, which I will give for the gratification of the reader. When the sheriff came attended by me to her prison door, to warn her of immediate preparation ; I assure you gentle reader no matter how cruel her life or unfortunate, it was the most solemn scene I ever contemplated on much more to see, to see her dressing for an ignominious end, her appearance changed as often as the minutes rolled away. Just for a moment picture to your imagination, the terrible scene of one of the human race dressing in the last garment of this world’s texture, to pass away never more to rise in this life, through the gates of death to sink into forgetfulness. At length

the appointed moment arrived, and she appeared in the presence of thousands, dressed in the usual attire, who came to witness her shameful end.

She was asked had she anything to say? Reply, "Nothing, but a misspent life is the sure reward of a miserable end. I acknowledge I am guilty of the crime I am about to die for. I hope I am the last of women who shall ever be hung. Let my appearance upon this woful spot be a lesson of instruction. I bid adieu to this world. I am done." Upon which the rope being placed about her neck, she was launched into eternity. She hung suspended for nearly one hour, when her body was taken down and deposited inside of the prison walls. She is now reposing in her last, after a life the most inhuman, a life pregnant with deeds of atrocity, which has vanished, but still lives in the remembrance of all. Oh! when I take a cursory view of this unfortunate woman, and draw before my mind her inhuman deeds, what can I think? Let us for a moment imagine we see the souls of those standing before the awful tribunal of Him, and that we hear the dreadful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into eternal fire!" Imagine you hear the lamentations of a soul in Hell, it would be enough, and more, to melt your hearts, were they as hard as the rock of adamant. You would fall prostrate upon your knees and plead for mercy, as a famished child would plead for food, or a dying criminal would for pardon. Her name, but not her deeds, has been shut out from the records of the living, and enrolled in the vast catalogues of the dead. I hope she has received a favorable judgment from the Supreme Ruler of the universe; and that the perusal of this may teach a lesson of useful instruction to the youth who are rising in the stage of perfection, to avoid the paths of dissipation with which they are surrounded, and as a warning to all parents to instil and cultivate youthful instruction to their children, as a preventative from their being led astray from the paths of virtue in their early days, which laid the foundation of her ignominious end. The early liberties of her youth not being restrained until too late, she sank into dissipation, and growing with her riper years, brought her at last to the gallows.

CONFESSION OF MARY JANE GORDON,

NARRATED BY THE REV. MR. LEMAN, PASTORAL MINISTER, AUGUSTA.

I was born in the year of our Lord 1816, on the 21st day of February, in the city of Edenboro, Scotland. My father was an American, a native of Westchester county, State of New York, who fled his country, his property being confiscated, and became a pirate on the eastern coast, during the late war of 1812 and '13. He came to Scotland and married my mother, who was very rich, but shortly died after leaving there on account of my misfortune, so disgraceful to them. I got married to a captain named How, from New York, but born there of English parents. Previous to my marriage, in my youth, I revelled in all the enjoyments of a city life; his pay not being sufficient to support me, I took a hatred to him—our

jealousies increasing from time to time, causing a most deplorable life, I intended to part from him, as I could get others I liked better. After due time I was delivered of a child, in his absence while at sea. I was tempted to destroy the life of the innocent, which I did ; I carried it to the banks of the river Clyde, rolled in a coarse linen bag, after being eight days old, when I took it out and looked at it, I felt reluctant of the crime I was about to commit, I put it in and took it out again, I thought it stared me in the face—I stood not knowing what to do, and the danger of delaying on the bank of that river on the crime I was about to commit, when I turned around to fulfil the object of my journey ; I lifted some sand and putting it into the bag, I took and cast it from me into the mighty waters. I felt sorrowful for the crime, but said I to myself, I am now too late to repair the loss of the innocent. I returned home, and in a short time after my husband returned. He inquired about it, I denied I ever had a child, after which he withdrew his support from me. I done my endeavor to compel him, but to no effect—he exposed me publicly and privately. I resolved to take his life. I sent him a letter to delude him to come and see me (which the reader can see on page 7); he came, and before I let him depart I ran a sword through him. I sold his body that very night for £5 to a physician. I took up with a young girl named Gow and lived together a life of licentiousness. As she and I were walking one afternoon, she met a little girl and murdered her—I stood by and saw the deed. We carried her body into an old decayed building, and after selling her body, we were returning, and having arrived at our own door, we saw Alexander Robinson and Samuel Smith, of course they came in with us. We all drank freely, and that very night, by the assistance of Gow, I strangled them. After taking all they had in money, we carried their bodies far enough, fearing, as day was fast approaching, we might be seen. Their bodies being found in the morning, and a verdict returned, and a reward offered for the prosecution of the murderers. John Lyons and Charles Canning were taken the same afternoon, and underwent the usual course of law. I went forward and Miss Gow, and some others of whom I will remark, and I swore I saw Lyons and Canning murder Robinson and Smith. Each of the evidences were the same, and they were hung on the 2d day of April, 1838. Afterwards McManus fled the country. Miss Gow and I having plenty of money, we carried on most inhumanly, until we poisoned Alice Hamilton because she noticed some of our doings, for which we were taken on the 2d day of May, and bound in gaol, from which I escaped, as the reader will find in my life. After the murder of my husband, which was the second, I took the life of five persons, their names I never knew. by the well known practice of kidnapping, as I sold their bodies to physicians. After my escape from prison Miss Gow was hung. I embarked in a small craft for Liverpool, where I took my passage on board the ship Terrolenta, Captain Smith, and arrived in N. York on the 15th of February, 1840. After my arrival the first man I met was McManus, who fled after swearing against Lyons and Canning; he was glad to see me, and we had a long discourse upon many things about home.

He told me one day in our discourse, in our boarding house, William-street Cottage, that he became acquainted with a man from there who fled the country on account of a disgraceful daughter. It struck my mind, and I inquired the particulars of him. He gave me his address, and off I started, and arriving at his boarding house in Portland, Maine, inquired about him; I was immediately shown into his room, and to my surprise it was my father! He stood for a moment, recognizing me as his daughter, when he embraced me with tears, inquiring every thing about me. I told nothing of my eventful life. He told me the cause of all his sorrow; that my sister got married to a gentleman in Woodstock, on the St. John's river, N. B., and she was tried for adultery and divorced, and that my mother died long since. We remained a little time together, when we took a notion of setting up a boarding house, as we did, near the wharve. Not long after a Canadian barber called and put up with me, as he was on the speculation, I understood by him his trade prospered with him. I took that night and cut his throat, and ordered my father to go and get a boat, during which time I was employed sewing him in a bag; he came back and told me the boat was ready, when we carried him with caution and laid him in it, and rowed down the stream and threw him overboard. At our return the owner met us, asking us what we were about with his boat. My father told him the secret, and on the point of honor to not divulge it. I had to give 350 dollars to him. I took about \$650, or so. I resolved to part my father—I began to remember the days when I was disowned, and his harshness to me. I wrote to McManus about him. He acknowledged the receipt of my letter, and gave me and my father an invitation to pay him a visit at Plymouth; we arrived, and he gave us a hearty welcome. A little after slipping me a note, endorsed as you will see in my life, he asked us to take a sail down the bay before supper; when we were far enough down he told me to open the note which I did. I examined it and saw the plan—I took my father and threw him overboard! We returned back, and I spent a pleasant night. Afterwards I went to Albany, and met McManus. We murdered a gentleman there, as appears in my life. From there I went to Baltimore, and in some time after returned to New York, where I met McManus. I understood from him he had made a haul. As I was sitting beside him one day at dinner, I slipped some poison in his cabbage while his back was turned; he became sick, and ordered me to procure a doctor, which I did. I gave him some poison in the medicine ordered, he soon died, and left me all he had. After his burial I remained in N. York, when I was bribed to murder J. Corles, who kept a saloon next door to the American Museum, Broadway. I shot him as I passed by him—I think he fell in Leonard street. Afterwards a long and hard trial ensued. His murder put some money in my pocket from a quarter not far off—(meaning that city.) Afterwards I left and came to Boston, and remained in Boston. Arriving in Boston, I took up with a lady who kept a house of ill-fame, where loafers and such like attended. I killed a sailor there, caused by drinking and impudence; this occurred in Commercial street, for which the house was broken up, and

Miss Mars and I took our way to Bangor, where we remained with her aunt, Mrs. Hunt. A countryman calling very often, giving annoyance and would pay nothing, we three unanimously consented that he should visit no more ; we gave him plenty to drink, when we took all he had in cash, and tied his arms and legs, and carried him down from the house and laid him to his fate on the bank of Penobscot river. Next day we went down and saw him lying in shrubs, &c., drowned, when that afternoon we took him out and buried him on the bank of that river, where now stands a large elm tree opposite, where the traveller can see a piece of yellow wire tied round a strong branch. Shortly after, Miss Mars and I went to Augusta, where we intended to start in a new society. We started a temperance house in the N. W. of the city, and carried on smoothly, so much so that we became known and respected, and received patronage from the city and country, and a young man named Little fell in love with Miss Mars. I saw she became attached to him, and fearing that she might divulge something to him I was uneasy. I sent her to Bangor to pay her aunt a visit, Mrs. Hunt, and to give her an invitation to come and see me. I sent my servant with a note of message to Vassalboro, after sending her with a letter to Little. He came, and I took him up stairs to glaze the garret window, and nail some boards on where the wet was penetrating. As he was standing on a board outside, which held itself inside, I lifted it, and down he went ! I looked a while to see if any person noticed the fall, but seeing no person did, I went out and buried him in the cellar where I kept wood. After this, a gentleman from Canada, on his way to Boston, called with me. He was pleasant, and I made myself as pleasant as he ; after supper he desired to go to bed, I procured a light and directed him into my own room. I set the plan to murder him, which I did ; I prepared a plaster for his mouth, I visited often until I got him asleep, when I carried the plaster and the knife, and placed it on, in a little time he became uneasy, I took the knife and made a deep short cut, when he soon gave over ; then I took and put him into a French packing box, and the following night Miss Mars and I conveyed him with our horse and wagon about six or seven miles on the banks of the Kennebec river, where I took and made his grave in the sand. We tied the horse to the tree, while she watched in the fork of a tree until I was ready, we laid the box down and covered it up, and returned home. A little after I married Anderson, and hating his sister so much, I was tempted to take her life. I choked her, and buried her under the very same tree, and now I am going to be hung for the very same. I acknowledge I am guilty of all the murders I have related.

And after all my inhuman actions, I am going to be hung for one the least in comparison to all the rest. Oh ! when I think of my life, and look back on my former days, what anguish is like unto mine ! the thought of eternity shudders my soul ! The melancholy scenes that are opening before me on my way through the gates of eternity, when I think I am about to appear before the throne of Heaven to receive the reward of a misspent life, and my soul stained with the deepest crimes that could be

committed, alas ! sorrow inconsolable ! Oh, that I never had been born ! The more I meditate my sorrows increase. I think every moment the grave is opening before me, with its scenes so shuddering !

Remember, gentle reader, I listened with attention, in the gloomy walls of a prison, while this victim delivered me a confession of her life. What were my feelings I cannot describe, they were beyond description or conception. I say it was a solemn and affecting scene, I never wish to hear, much more to see. It rent my very soul, and I am far from being recovered from its effects. Before I conclude, I will conjure all members of the human race to weigh this scene before them, and to remember, a misspent life is the sure reward of a miserable end.

REV. A. LEMAN, Augusta.

For the information of the reader, I wish to remark, before I dismiss this subject, that her long and trustworthy companion in crime deceived her at the end. She gave her life and letters, as appear written by herself, which was produced upon her trial, &c. Let this be a warning to all to never place confidence in any, for the very one whom you will and whom you most adore, will perhaps be the very one who will deceive you when the day of trial, or some pecuniary advancement, offers. This traitor Mars has disappeared, and nothing is known of her. It is suspected she has gone to Montreal, or some place else.

The right to this production is confined to one of his agents, therefore, none has authority to sell under the penalty of the law.

JOHN S. CALHOUN.

To the solicitous reader I wish to remark, for *his* gratification and information, the following momentous particulars, as they are so intimately connected with the present case, and occupying so prominent a part of excitement interwoven with the life of this cruel and miserable mortal, and on whose sole betraying manoeuvres proved her future and ignominious end—those momentous and important facts productive of so much excitement, and concluding the subject with gratification to the researcher and respect to the author. Knowing conscientiously, and weighing the subject deliberately, under those particulars, I have made the following particulars to be inserted in the concluding part of this work, knowing well they will prove a subject of great excitement and gratification to those who will avail themselves of the pleasure of reading its important pages on the miserable and unfortunate end of an unrelenting, atrocious, cold-blooded mortal, together with the fatal end of her companion in guilt and who betrayed her, the subject of this production in the last struggle for life before the bar of justice. Nevertheless, I presume to proceed to the particulars. First, after, as I have already remarked in the preceding part of this work, that Miss Mars, after the sentence of Mary Jane Gordon, took her way to Montreal, as suspicion indicated, of which I am happy to say we inserted truly. Therefore, to omit this would be an injustice to myself and the community particularly, for which I availed myself of the opportunity, as the work not

being entirely finished, and as I had the pleasure a few days ago to receive a communication from a gentleman from St. John, N. B., on the subject, whose veracity I could well depend upon, who informed me of these facts. I will state, without the least exaggeration, as I had the pleasure of reading the very same in the N. B. papers a few days after ; and as those events are beyond any doubt or suspicion to any individual, if any should exist, they can satisfy themselves by looking in the N. B. Herald, June 27, 1847. After Miss Mars arrived in Montreal, she remained for some little time, and at length took her departure for St. John. Arriving there, she put up in that part of the city called York Point, so well known ; learning, however, that a trial of importance was about to be pending in court, becoming acquainted with every thing connecting the matter, so much so that she introduced herself to the plaintiff and became an evidence, and on whose evidence was the principal means of turning the trial in behalf of the plaintiff, whose wife, she learned, was a sister of Mary Jane Gordon, of whom you are aware of as Matilda, who was about to be tried for adultery in the court, which exasperated her a little, as she understood every thing particular of the family. The reader will not be surprised when he is told she was well rewarded when he notices the verdict as returned against the defendant in the sum of £15,00, which defendant, Mr. R. Smith, had to pay over immediately. At the same time plaintiff receiving a bill of divorce which separated for ever a wife from an affectionate and loving husband and a dear family, heartrending to one who was robbed of his comfort and respectability, and an eternal stain laid on his young innocent, rising in the bloom of beauty. After this she partook of every sort of dissipation and licentiousness, which proved her unhappy end. She became dejected and despised by every one, and after the lapse of a little she was found dead in an old wooden shanty on the brink of the wharve. Her body being found, a verdict being returned, wilful death by intoxication. During which time Miss Mars remained in the city indulging in the pleasures of society so congenial to her feelings, at length becoming poor, she took up with a dissipated character, who left his lawful wife ; they lived for a little time plundering together, until they were caught shop-lifting, then they were bound in prison. The term just arrived, he received his sentence for seven years penitentiary, and she four years. At length, no longer permitted of each other's society, she became lowly and dispirited in mind, until a few days previous to her death. However, on the morning of the tenth of February, the turnkey was surprised, when he opened the prison door, to find her prostrate on the floor. Of course it was immediately reported, and a verdict returned of death by apoplexy. This being the end of the unfortunate Miss Mars, of whom I was obliged to speak so often, whose shocking appearance would terrify any human being of rational feelings, when he would behold the human form in the appearance it presented in the cell, this being the end of a den of unrelenting, atrocious, and cold-blooded murderers, of which the world never presented any to equal those cursed of Almighty God, for whose sake they held not the least adoration, for his sacred commands they trampled under foot with vice of all kinds of

which human nature is guilty. To such mortals the curse of Providence will light upon one day or other as sure as the sun shines in the firmament of heaven—a thing so certain as to be in the power of any ordinary mind to comprehend. We have received nothing more of importance connected with this unfortunate female during her sojourn in that city, and very probably we will receive no more. This much is given for the gratification of those who will avail themselves of the opportunity of reading its pages, and in the meantime he can view as he has moved along, take a survey of past events, of the incidents connected with these unhappy mortals, particularly that of Mary Jane Gordon, in itself so extremely deplorable for the many cruel acts of murder and depredation she committed in every place she sojourned. Indeed, the eye moves along a dreary scene of desolation, without one good act to be remembered in her treacherous and eventful life. No parallel can be found in the annals which record crime, and what is more astonishing, to see the end of her unfortunate sister, that of Matilda, whose fate I have already noticed briefly to complete the object of my work, so that the observer will be convinced of my assiduity in collecting the most important transactions of those miserable sisters. Indeed, we find if we were to take a cursory view itself of their traitorous father, whose end you have seen explained, of his piratical depredations on the eastern coast during the late war of 1812 as a pirate, whose blood-stained hand under the British Government caused many a brave man to lie in the deep, not mentioning his depredations any other way. But as the object of this work don't involve me to a recital of these facts, I will defer the subject, and return to Miss Mars, whose unhappy end we need not question. Suffice to say, she met a deplorable end in her youthful days, being not more than twenty-one years of age. This I lay before the world, as it may teach a lesson of instruction to those foolish characters, that a sentiment of remorse may strike them, and that they may return from the paths of vice, so that the blessing of God may attend and keep them from the abyss of sorrow and desolation which is the attendant of such proceedings.

