

HELEN JEWETT

A GIRL OF THE TOWN.
NEW YORK - 1836

MURDERED APRIL-10-1836





Henry Thomas Griffith, B.A.
Smallburgh Rectory, Norwich.

W. E. Johnson

AS

AUTHENTIC BIOGRAPHY

OF THE LATE

HELEN JEWETT,

A GIRL OF THE TOWN,

WHO WAS

MURDERED ON THE 10TH OF APRIL, 1836 :

TOGETHER WITH A

FULL AND ACCURATE STATEMENT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES CON- NECTED WITH THAT EVENT.

BY A GENTLEMAN FULLY ACQUAINTED WITH HER HISTORY.

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AUTHENTIC BIOGRAPHY

PREFACE.

Public curiosity has been much abused by the numerous misrepresentations respecting the adventures and character of the late Helen Jewett. The object of this publication is to satisfy the public curiosity upon this subject, and rescue the character of an unfortunate girl from the odium which has been attempted to be cast upon it. It is true, she was a girl of the town ; but she was far removed from the degraded, ignorant, vicious beings generally known as such ; and the misrepresentations in a Boston paper, in which she is designated as a common thief, a girl naturally depraved from her childhood, deserve the severest reprobation of every honest member of the community.

LIFE OF HELEN JEWETT.

THE real name of Helen Jewett was Maria Benson. She was born in Hallowell, in the State of Maine, in January, 1812. Her father, at the time of her birth, was connected with a man by the name of Caleb Talbot, in the lumber business, and was supposed to be in good circumstances; but the elopement of his partner, with the proceeds of a large sale of lumber, and with some four or five thousand dollars belonging to the firm, which had been deposited in the State Bank at Boston, rendered him insolvent. He died about a year after the birth of Maria, leaving his wife and child in extremely indigent circumstances. For several years after this event, Mrs. Benson, who was a woman of extraordinary personal beauty, supported herself and child by teaching a country school. Notwithstanding her poverty, she bestowed the greatest attention upon the education of Maria, who attracted the attention of all her acquaintance by her beauty, vivacity, good temper, and quickness of apprehension. Indeed, so rapid was the development of her mental qualities, that at the age of five years, she had made more progress in the usual studies, than the generality of children at twice her age.

About this time, she attracted the attention of some of the members of Judge Western's family, who resided in Augusta, about two miles from Hallowell. They, like all others who knew her, were particularly pleased with her personal beauty, docility and acuteness. Through their interest, she enjoyed the advantages of attending a select school in Augusta, at which she made the most astonishing progress in her studies. When she was about six years of age, her mother died. She was then taken into Judge Western's family, and treated in every respect as a member of it. She was sent to the same schools and pursued the same studies and employments as his own children. She remained under his roof until the summer of 1826, when she, with a daughter of Judge Western, of the same age, was sent to Portland, to attend a female seminary, which was

under the charge of a Mrs. Watson, who by her talent and admirable management, had acquired for her school considerable celebrity.

To this departure from the immediate *surveillance* of her kind friends, may be traced her first misfortune, which resulted in her expulsion from society, a life of infamy and guilt, and her untimely and horrible end. No person could have been better qualified to take charge of females of her age, and to direct their minds in the paths of honor and usefulness, than Mrs. Watson. But, unfortunately, the building occupied by Mrs. W. as a seminary, was not sufficiently large to accommodate the whole of her numerous school as boarders. Many of her pupils from a distance, as well as those residing in the town, were compelled to board outside of the walls of the seminary, which they attended only as day scholars. Of course, she could not keep as strict a watch on their conduct as if they had resided in her family—a circumstance, which, in Maria's case, is much to be regretted.

At the house in which Maria boarded, (kept by a Mrs. Wilson) there were several other boarders, and among the rest, a man by the name of Lemuel Lawton, who was at that time studying law. He was tall, good-looking, and of an exceedingly insinuating address; but wholly destitute of principle or moral worth. At that period, however, he bore a very good character, but subsequent events, particularly some frauds in the mercantile business, to which he afterwards turned his attention, together with one or two other seduction cases, have proved his utter depravity. From his first acquaintance with Maria, he bestowed upon her the most assiduous attention. She was then particularly interesting, both to young and old. It was her fifteenth year, although in appearance she was somewhat older. With a form of the most perfect symmetry and beauty, her eyes brilliant and full of expression and intelligence,—her cheeks glowing with the richest hues of youth and health—her manners and conversation frank, fascinating and graceful, she excited the admiration of all who knew her.

Lawton's fancy was touched—as for *heart*, he had none,—and he resolved to sacrifice her in all her youthful purity, upon the altar of licentiousness. Though at that time, but nineteen years of age, he

was a veteran in vice ; he boasted among his companions, of the laurels he had won in the field of Venus. With Maria, however, he was aware that the ordinary measures of the seducer would not succeed ; and he acted upon the principle, " first debauch the mind and the person follows as a matter of course." He employed himself in instilling into her mind the poison of his own vicious principles, and in eradicating what he endeavored to convince her were the prejudices of education. Upon all occasions, he was her constant attendant. He rode with her, walked with her, and attended her at parties, the church, and at the sports of the neighborhood ; in addition to which, he had daily opportunities of seeing her at home, in private. The writer was on one occasion, at a party where Maria and Lawton were both present, and particularly noticed the attention which the latter bestowed upon her—she was then the most beautiful and fascinating girl he had ever seen. L. directed her taste for reading into new channels ; and, among other books of immoral tendency, he introduced to her notice the glowing and luscious pages of the noble bard, who, as poor Maria has been heard to say, has done more injury to female minds than all other authors of the same character combined. Don Juan, at length, under Lawton's direction, became her study. Its vivid images of the grossest licentiousness, half veiled in the charm of the poetry, worked upon her active imagination, excited her naturally ardent temperament, unsettled the principles of virtue, and disposed her, in an evil hour, to fall a prey to her seducer's arts. Let not the rigid moralist condemn her, until they have considered the peculiar circumstances of the case, and the improbability that almost any female could have resisted the temptations and deceitful illusions by which she was surrounded.

She had resided in Portland more than a year before Lawton succeeded in his purpose. It cost him all this time of the most strenuous exertions to attain that which, owing to the defective system of female education, is too often granted to the slightest solicitation ; and even then, it is supposed, he accomplished his object *by the employment of a medical preparation*. These facts speak strongly, considering her extreme youth, for her natural strength of mind.

The intercourse between Maria and Lawton had continued but a

short time, before Maria became aware of its consequences—she was *enciente*! In a few months more, it was evident to all observers; and Mrs. Watson, after ascertaining the facts, communicated her knowledge to Judge Western, who, upon the receipt of the intelligence, immediately hastened to Portland. In the mean time, the unfortunate Maria, overwhelmed with grief and shame, afraid to meet the guardian, whose confidence and kindness she had abused, and whose favor she had forfeited, threw herself into the arms of her seducer, in reckless defiance of public infamy, and clandestinely left Portland with him for Boston. Judge Western having arrived and found her gone, and ascertained the direction she had taken, commissioned a friend who was going on to Boston to find her out, and offer her a maintenance, in some country place where she was not known, provided she would return. This gentlemen, several weeks after her elopement, discovered her in a house of ill fame, where she had been placed by Lawton; she had been delivered of a child, which survived its birth but a few hours—Maria was still confined to her bed from the effects of her *accouchement*. He made the proposition of Judge Western to her, to which she gave the most decided negative. She stated that she did not consider herself worthy of the favor of any of her friends, and all she wished was for them to forget her. She wrote a few lines to Judge Western to the same effect—a copy of which the writer of this has seen,—and recollects the following expression: “I was dead to virtue—I am now dead to society, and it is my most earnest wish that I may be soon dead to nature.”

Shortly after her recovery, Lawton left her and went to Alabama. His lust had been satiated by her ruin, and her support was a tax and trouble which his selfishness would not allow him to endure. He left her utterly destitute. Of course, she was compelled to take up the trade of the house, or be turned into the streets. She was induced to form a connection with a General C****n, who kept her in a very handsome style in Boston for some time. He came to reside in this city in 1829, and brought her with him, when she assumed the name of Helen Jewett. She lived with him here but a short time. He was exceedingly disagreeable in his manners, and she soon found an opportunity to form advantageous connection.

She made the acquaintance of J. C. a wholesale merchant, who was so much pleased with her beauty and conversational powers, that he made her the most liberal offers, which were accepted.

She was likewise kept for some time by a Mr. C*****, a wealthy Southern gentleman. It would be useless, and in fact impossible, to particularize her numerous paramours with whom she lived as a regular kept mistress. In addition to which, she did a very lucrative miscellaneous business, not confined to this city, but occasionally taking short trips to Philadelphia and Boston. The most prominent establishments at which she lived were Mrs. Post's, Ann Welden's, for whom she was housekeeper for some time, Rosina Townsend's, and a house in Franklin street.

It cannot be said that she was perfectly faithful to her different keepers. She most generally had some one upon whom she bestowed her favor *par amours*. As she was a girl of ardent temperament and strong passions, she took strong likes and dislikes to individuals of the male sex, but when she liked a person, she would spare no pains to secure for a while the object of her desire. The following is one of her letters written while she was kept by Mr. C. to a physician of this city, who was called to attend one of the girls of the house, and being struck with her evidences of intellect and education, had paid her a good deal of attention.

New York, Howard street, &c. &c.

My Dear Sir—

Allow me to say dear, for I assure you you are so to me. I think of nothing but you. You alone of all the creatures of your sex by whom I am surrounded, have evinced the least spark of real sympathy with my feelings, the least pity for my faults and misfortunes. You I think are willing to believe that a woman may cast away "the immediate jewel of her soul," without becoming wholly depraved, or entirely losing the feelings and characteristics of her sex. Think, then, how anxious I must be for your society, and if you have the least spark of compassion for me come and see me as often as you can. You do not know what a pleasure your acquaintance is to me; I shall always look upon it as the brightest spot in the latter years of my existence—a single oasis in the vast desert of wretchedness, shame, guilt, blighted prospects and perverted powers which I am compelled to call my life. Come and see me as soon as you can; I shall expect you every evening.

Yours, truly, and forever, if you please,

HELEN.

The next letter was written some time after the above. It is to the same person, but in a different style.

Dear T—,

What is the matter with you? are you getting tired of me? What can be the reason that you have not been to see me for six whole days—almost a week—perhaps you don't know that six days are almost a week. I assure you they are, and a long one too in love's almanac. I am almost disposed to punish you for your negligence. I have half a mind to bore you with a whole ocean of sentiment about my own love and misery, and your selfishness and coldness—but I forbear. I'll spare you till next time. Come up and see me this evening. *Don Alonzo has gone to Philadelphia. He wanted to take me with him. I was very much tempted to go but I thought of you and refused. Evince your gratitude, and let me behold the light of your countenance once more.

Adieu jusque les moments délicieux.

HELEN.

* A soubriquet for her keeper.

During all this time, it must not be supposed that Helen was solely engaged in scenes of debauchery. She found time to improve her mind in an intellectual way very much. She read a great deal, especially the light literature of the day. She was a subscriber to most of our literary periodicals. The works of Lord Byron were her study; she could repeat more than half of his writings by heart. Her memory not only retained the words, but her whole mind seemed to be imbued with the spirit of his poetry. She sometimes composed poetry herself. Some of her pieces were remarkable for their easy and correct versification. The following lines, although not her best, are a very creditable specimen of her powers. They were written in answer to the question, why she secluded herself so much from society. They are only a fragment.

I leave a noisy joyous crowd
Who will not dim one smile,
Nor bate a note of laughter loud,
Though I am gone the while.
Yet, am I lonely? No! to me,
My own sad thoughts are company.

'Tis lonelier far, than so to sit,
Away from human din;
To join a crowd, yet be of it,
A part; but not a kin.
Oh! it's not sweeter thus to be
Where my sad thoughts make company.

For a long time after Helen's arrival in this city, she resisted the demoralizing influence of the profession to which she had devoted

herself, with wonderful power. She carefully eschewed the use of spirituous liquors, profane swearing and obscene language, although it must be confessed, that in the last year or two of her life, her natural delicacy and cultivated taste had, in a great degree, succumbed to the influence of the circumstances by which she was surrounded. She had lost much of her personal beauty in the last years of her life; although her form still retained its full rounded and voluptuous proportions. She was endowed with extraordinary muscular strength, and a most fearless and independent spirit. Upon one occasion, at a house in this city where she was boarding, she had a quarrel with a foolish fellow who frequented the house. He got exceedingly angry, and drawing a pistol, presented it to her breast. Without being in the least agitated, she instantly struck the pistol from his hand, and with her bright eyes flashing fire, in tones calm and clear, indicative of the strongest contempt, she said to him, "You poor contemptible libel upon manhood! You have done what would disgrace the meanest coward that walks the street. You, must see therefore, the necessity of making an immediate apology for such brutal conduct." Her opponent declared he would do no such thing. "Then," said Helen, "You must see the necessity I am under of pulling your nose." Suiting the action to the word, she took the gentleman's proboscis in her fingers, and tweaked it in no gentle style.

She was particularly remarkable for her powers of bitter, biting sarcasm. The way she served up those who roused her ire was a caution to all her acquaintance, which they generally took care to attend. She appeared, upon one occasion, before the Police, to make a charge against a man by the name of Burk, an officer in the British army, who, out of revenge, had cut and destroyed her dresses. She walked into him at the examination in great style. "You," she said, "pretend to be an officer in the British army! What a calumny upon his Majesty's service. You, an officer! It is impossible. The men holding his Majesty's commissions have generally some pretensions to the character of gentlemen."

One evening, when she was housekeeper for Ann Weldon, the public parlour being full of company, a poor devil attempted to be particularly smart, by uttering the usual brothel witticisms, in the

course of which, he said something which offended Helen. "What did you say?" she asked. "I can't find ears and talk too," he replied. "Well," exclaimed Helen, "I never particularly examined your ears, but to judge from your conversation, I should think they ought to be large enough and long enough to supply the whole company. Your conversation is as silly as it is disgusting. There is the door, Sir, and I beg you to do me the favor never to call here again, as you will save me the trouble of ordering the servant to kick you into the street."

Upon another occasion, young H. B——, a dandified jackass, well known about town, was attempting to do the amiable to Helen in the most extravagant style. She made some retort to one of his observations, which cut him very severely. "Now really, Miss Helen," said he, "it is too bad in you to be so hard upon me—it is a shame, 'pon honor." "You are right," returned Helen; "it is wrong in me to be hard upon so soft a subject—we never use diamonds to carve geese."

She was once up before one of our Courts as a witness in a case in which the woman with whom she boarded was a party. The counsel, Mr. F. J., who cross-examined her, asked her a number of impertinent and irrelevant questions, and among the rest, whether there were not many gentlemen in the habit of visiting the house.

"Yes."

"Well, what did they visit the house for?"

"To see the girls."

"But what did they want of the girls?"

"I believe there is no one better qualified than yourself to answer that question, as I have observed you frequently among our visitors: will you be so kind as to save me the trouble of answering the question, and communicate to the Court your own experience upon the subject."—The learned counsel concluded he had caught a Tartar, and backed out of the scrape, though with rather a bad grace.

Upon the whole, Helen Jewett was a most extraordinary individual. Under other and better circumstances, she would have proved an honor and an ornament to her sex. As it was, she can only be considered a brilliant and fascinating prostitute. How deeply is it to be regretted that a girl of her extraordinary mental

powers should not have had the watchful guardianship of a mother, at a time when the passions are bursting forth in their full strength—the judgment yet in abeyance, and the moral principle weak. Had she been saved from the first false step, no one who knew her will hesitate to believe, that with her clear, sound judgment, brilliant and glowing imagination, and her quick yet profound sensibility, she might have made an American *De Stael*.

ACCOUNT OF THE MURDER

(COMPILED FROM THE NEWSPAPERS)

There before us a transaction of the kind taken place which has excited half the sensation, half the excitement in the public mind, which has been produced by the murder of the unfortunate Helen Jewett. The peculiar circumstances of the case—the horrid manner in which the deed was perpetrated—the character, talents and celebrity of the deceased, and the youth and situation in life of the supposed murderer, have all conspired to produce this effect. The curiosity of the public has therefore been strongly excited to know every particular of the bloody transaction.

It was but a few days previous to her murder that Helen left the house in Franklin street, where she had been living, to reside with Maria Townsend, with whom she had formerly lived. The murder was committed between the hours of 12 and 3, on the morning of the 10th of April. A coroner's inquest was summoned as soon as possible. It appeared from the testimony of Helen and other witnesses examined before the coroner's jury, that about 9 o'clock on Saturday evening, a young man named Richard P. Robinson, a clerk for Mr. Joseph Hoxie, came to the door, where he was waiting, and enquired for Helen or Ellen Jewett, one of the girls of

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ACCOUNT OF THE MURDER,

(COMPILED FROM THE NEWSPAPERS.)

Never before has a transaction of the kind taken place which has caused half the sensation, half the excitement in the public mind, which has been produced by the murder of the unfortunate Helen Jewett. The peculiar circumstances of the case—the horrible manner in which the deed was perpetrated—the character, talents and celebrity of the deceased, and the youth and situation in life of the supposed murderer, have all conspired to produce this effect.—The curiosity of the public has therefore been strongly excited to know every particular of the bloody transaction.

It was but a few days previous to her murder that Helen left the house in Franklin street, where she had been living, to reside with Rosina Townsend, with whom she had formerly lived. The murder was committed between the hours of 12 and 3, on the morning of the 10th of April. A coroner's inquest was summoned as soon as possible. It appeared from the testimony of Rosina and other witnesses examined before the coroner's jury, that about 9 o'clock on Saturday evening, a young man named Richard P. Robinson, a clerk for Mr. Joseph Hoxie, came to the door, where he was met by Rosina, and enquired for Helen or Ellen Jewett, one of the girls of

the house, whom he had been in the habit of frequently visiting since 1834. Rosina called Ellen from the parlor, and she and Robinson went together up to her room; and nothing more was heard from them until 11 o'clock, when Helen came part way down stairs, and calling to Rosina, the landlady, desired her to bring a bottle of Champagne up to her room. The hostess did so; and at that time Robinson was in bed, undressed, and Helen, though undressed, had not yet retired to bed for the night. Neither he nor she, however, were again seen by any of the inmates of the house at the time it was closed by Rosina for the night, which was about 12 o'clock.

About three o'clock in the morning, Rosina was aroused by a knocking at her front door, and on looking out of her window, discovered the person at the door to be a young man who was in the habit of visiting one of the girls, and she went to the door and let him in. In doing this, she was surprised to find in her front parlor a lamp burning, which she knew from the fact that she had but two like it in the house, to belong to Helen, or the girl in the room adjoining. She accordingly took it up stairs; and first applying at the door adjoining Helen's found it fastened. She then took hold of the latch of Helen's door, and on opening it, she was almost suffocated by the great body of smoke which instantly rushed out, and from which she knew, of course that the room was on fire. She instantly alarmed those in the house with the cry that the house was on fire, and Helen smothering or dead; and running to the street door cried for watchmen, two or three of whom were soon on the spot.

On proceeding to Helen's room, and opening the doors and windows so as to suffer the smoke to escape, the bed and bedding was found almost wholly consumed, and Helen lying on it perfectly dead, her left side burned, from head to foot, almost black. At first it was not mistrusted that any thing more than the fire and smoke occasioned her death; but one of the watchmen happened to look more sharply, discovered that there was, on the right side of her head, a little above the temple, a large and deep cut, about three inches in length, which on inspection, was found to have been made with some sharp instrument in the shape of an axe or hatchet, which had penetrated her skull and entered the brain; and which undoubtedly instantly deprived her of life, almost without her being aware

that she had been struck. One or two other scratches were found near the wound, but it did not appear probable that she received more than one blow. The bottle, brought up a few hours previous by Rosina, was standing on the mantel-piece, nearly empty; and beside the beds, curtains, &c. much of the other furniture was more or less burned. Nothing, however, was found of Robinson, in the room or about the house.

On examining the premises in the rear, a hatchet, on the blade and handle of which was considerable fresh blood, and to which a string was attached, was found in the yard of the house; and a watchman, on climbing to the top of the fence, discovered lying in the second yard from it, a black cloth cloak, such as was worn by Robinson to the house on Saturday evening. On examining the cloak, a string, corresponding exactly in size and appearance with that attached to the hatchet, was found tied to one tassel of the cloak; the reasonable inferences from which, is that Robinson brought the hatchet to the house with him, with a premeditated design to use it for the diabolical purposes to which it had been put, and to screen it from observation had suspended it to the tassel of the cloak, inside; and that such was his perturbation and alarm, that in making his escape he dropped both hatchet and cloak, in different places, perhaps without being conscious of the loss of either.

On making these discoveries, the Coroner was sent for, who arrived at the scene of this horrid tragedy between five and six o'clock; and on hearing what had occurred, he sent a messenger for officer Brink, who lives a few squares above. Mr. Brink, on arriving, was despatched in pursuit of Robinson, and on going to the unfortunate young man's boarding house, in Dey street, he was shown to Robinson's room, where he found him in bed with his room mate, and apparently fast asleep. Brink awakened him, and informing him that he must up and go with him. Robinson proceeded to dress himself. It was noticed by Brink that there was a good deal of whitewash on one of the legs and the seat of Robinson's pantaloons; and it was also ascertained that one of the fences over which he must have climbed before dropping his cloak was whitewashed on one of the sides.

On being brought up to the scene of this melancholy affair, Robinson appeared to look upon the lifeless, burned and disfigured corpse of his paramour, with great composure, and declared he knew nothing of her murder or the attendant circumstances. He was, however, committed to Bridewell by the Coroner, to await a further investigation of this horrible affair.

Robinson's room-mate, a fine, intelligent young man, on being examined by the Coroner, testified that he went to bed about nine o'clock on Saturday evening, and, falling asleep, did not hear Robinson come in, nor know when he came to bed. He awoke during the night, and found Robinson in bed, though not asleep; and asking him how long he had been in bed, the latter replied that he came to bed about half past 11. The cloak found in the adjoining yard was not shown, by any proof adduced on the inquest, to belong to Robinson, who usually wore a camblet cloak, but his room-mate acknowledged he knew the cloak, and had known Robinson to wear it.

The verdict of the jury was that the deceased came to her death by a blow on her head with a hatchet, inflicted by the hand of Richard P. Robinson.

Although circumstantial evidence points so strongly to Robinson as the murderer, many persons find it impossible to believe that he did the deed.

If he be the murderer, the mind naturally reverts to the circumstances which led him to commit the horrid deed. Here, however, none of the common incentives to it are to be found. It is true the deceased had told the mistress of the house on Tuesday night "that Frank Rivers was going to be married, that he had returned to her the letters she had written to him, and wanted her to return to him the letters he had written to her." It is also said that he had sometimes expressed dissatisfaction at calling and finding her in the company of other men. But on the other hand, the deceased was said to be much attached to him, and was exhibiting his portrait to some of her companions on the day before she was murdered. This portrait was found at the prisoner's lodgings, as were also among the clothes of the deceased, the letters he had written to her, with those she had written to him. From these letters, it was ascertained who

Frank Rivers really was, they being addressed to Robinson outside, and inside to her "Dear Frank."

The absence of sufficient motives furnishes a strong presumption in Robinson's favor. In fact, we can only explain the possibility of a young man in his situation, of his age, committing the deed, but by supposing some cause of which as yet we are entirely ignorant, or a peculiar constitution of which an ordinary man can scarcely form a conception.

Robinson is a youth of about nineteen, of prepossessing appearance, and has hitherto borne an unimpeachable character. He was in the employ of Joseph Hoxie, Esq. as clerk, who speaks of his conduct, during the two years he resided with him in the most exalted terms. He has no relations in this city, except those bearing the same name. Those he has in Connecticut, his native State, are highly respectable.

Note.—The great discrepancies which appear in the accounts of her, which have been published, respecting her true name, arise from her own misrepresentations. Some time before assuming the name of Helen Mar, in Boston, she was known by her true name, which she afterwards was in the habit of asserting to be an assumed one.

The E. [unclear]

RHODE ISLAND, Oct 3d, 1836.

In laying this confidential letter from my school-fellow the unfortunate and persecuted Richard P. Robinson before, the public, I may be by the prejudiced part of the community censured as a busy meddling person who dare assert the prerogative of an American citizen to think and act as his judgment suggests in defiance of the body of Editors, who like a pack of bloodhounds have united to hunt a lad of nineteen years of age even unto the death ; merely, because the keeper of a brothel charged him with the perpetration of a crime they could not substantiate, and of which the judgment of twelve respectable citizens had pronounced him *innocent*. How those gentleman have been stigmatized since for not robbing an honorable family of a member is well known ; but let the *Sun* beware, a rod is suspended that may fall and cause an eclipse ere long. I say *nothing* at present, the inventor of the moon story is capable of any other tale or deception to serve his interest. I have no other object in view in publishing this letter from my youthful friend, who shared my sports in boyhoods happy days, than to dispose the charitable to think of him with Christian charity, and the liberal minded to judge for themselves of his faults. May my humble efforts prove successful, and time bring truth to light, is the sincere prayer of the

Public's Humble Servant,

THOMAS ARMSTRONG.

DEAR TOM,

That you among the many do not deem me guilty is amidst all my suffering an alleviation of which you can form no idea ; and by stating all my crimes, as I now do to you, I trust I shall confirm you in your confidence of my innocence of the heinous crime of which I am accused. Bad I have been, but thank God my hand is clear of blood, and my conscience of seduction ! Emma T. was the seducer, not the seduced : but she is married, sacred be her fame ; her name shall never pass my lips nor be marked by my pen. But I will now proceed to give you a clear unvarnished account of my every crime during my career in New York, that has terminated so fatally. I have now found a secure retreat, far from the persecution of the corps editorial who assailed me ; and here I will remain till circumstances bring the perpetrators of Ellen's death to light.

Your sincere friend,

RICHARD P. ROBINSON.

LETTER, &c.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the faults I see ;
That mercy I to others shew,
That mercy shew to me. *Pope.*

It has ever been the custom from the earliest ages of civilization, where moral laws are known and practised, that when an accused being, no matter what his crime, had passed the fiery ordeal of the laws and been by them pronounced guiltless, that their punishment in this life should cease—such is the tenor of our glorious constitution and a fair trial by jury, man's greatest privilege, which ought, like a halo to shield him after he had stood the test of a public investigation, and no proof appeared strong enough to convict him of the crime which chance, envy, contumely or necessity had brought against his life or reputation. Such has been the custom in all nations, till the present year, when my unfortunate case occurred ; that I could easily have accounted for where I had passed the fatal Saturday night the unfortunate Ellen was sacrificed to the vile and envenomed passion of jealousy, is a simple fact. But conscious of my own innocence in the cruel, base transaction, and half petrified with horror at the sight of a beautiful girl, whom I had loved with a wild boyish passion, lying a mangled corpse before me, sent unprepared to meet her Creator, without perhaps time to ask forgiveness, shocked at the sight and irritated at the unfounded charge brought against me, my spirit recoiled from the accusation and spurned the vile calumny from me, treating it and its inventors with the contempt they both merited. Indeed the only rational answer I condescended to give was to that vile devil incarnate Mrs. Gallagher, when I asked her in answer to her hypocritical sympathy for my dear, my beloved mother, what inducement I could possibly have to mar all my brilliant prospects by such an action, as would render all my family wretched for life. This rather seemed to stagger Mrs. Townsend, and for a time she was silent, and I said no more to them, but rested my hope on the equitable laws of my country and the sound judgment of my fellow citizens, who would constitute the jury. This silence offended the mass of the people, but to my friends I gave a clear and distinct history of how and where I had passed the fatal evening till eleven o'clock, when by appointment Ellen admitted me when she let our her first visitor, who Mrs. Townsend swore was me ; that I was in the house when the Champagne was brought up was true.

But I had not been there at that time fifteen minutes. Ellen informed me by a note, that she expected a rich and new admirer that evening, who was to take my fictitious name. That he would not stay late, and I could make my entrance as he made his exit; for this purpose she opened the front door for him herself and admitted me unseen, as she passed by any of the family. My intention was to break off my connection with Ellen and the rest of the vile sisterhood, as a holy, sincere love for an amiable girl had produced a total change in my feelings, and I looked back with horror on the paths of vice, infamy and degradation I had led from the time I came to New York. To account for the depravity of my early life, may in some measure atone for the injuries I have done my family and gratify the curiosity of the people, who so ardently thirsted for my life.

I was at that period of my life when the passions begin to assert their prerogative over the nature of every member of the human family; let any person then judge of the temptation that assailed me, scarcely more than fifteen years of age, ardent, tender and rather handsome—well dressed—with money at my command—I soon became an object of attraction to the young females who patrol the streets of New York seeking for admiration and fancying that every one looking at them is smitten with their charms, and ready to kneel and worship them.

Thus attracted by the beauty of Emma T——, a girl poor, vain and selfish, who fancied me a gentleman's son of high expectations, and thought to entangle me in a secret marriage. Our acquaintance commenced in the street at night, but I had often met her in various places in daylight, whether by accident or design I know not, smiles of recognition had been exchanged between us, and I spoke to her, and she answered as familiarly as an old acquaintance would have done, accompanied me to a confectioner's shop where I spent my money liberally, well paid for it in the pleasure that it gave my fair companion.

From that time we met every evening. I escorted her to all the public gardens, lavished presents of clothing, trinkets and money on her. By her direction I attended a dancing school, in which she at my expense had become a scholar; here in the gay whirl of a ball room, I saw her the admiration of all the ladies who frequented it, and observed her flirting, gay and coquettish manner to all, I soon discerned that the pretty toy was as devoid of gratitude as she was of either feeling or prudence.

Time as it ripens the gay and smiling blossom into fruit, matured my mind, and I became conscious that my pretty Emma was angling for a husband and would in despite of her obligations to me, (and they were numerous) marry the first man that would have her. (This conduct on her part accelerated her ruin—for her I had committed depredations on my employer to no small amount. One crime is the parent of another, for her I had become a thief, and that made me her seducer; if seduction it can be called, when she was as willing as myself.

The effect of our intercourse in time became visible, and she took boarding in the house with Ellen Jewett, this was in a private boarding-house

where only young ladies who had good friends to support them were received; here I paid ten dollars a week for her board, exclusive of her other expenses which were extravagant. Oh! how I have shrunk from her and trembled, when she has commanded me to get her the most expensive clothing, rich trinkets, diamonds, pearls and jewellery of every kind. Nor dare I ever to refuse to obey her commands, for she threatened to betray me to my employers and instigate her family to prosecute me for her seduction. Let any one read the tragedy of George Barnwell, and they will see me personified. And never was the character of Millwood more fully verified than by this young virago before she was sixteen years of age. For a long time I used to steal up to her chamber and await her coming, but she soon grew tired of solitude and began to frequent the theatre, to which I was obliged to accompany her.

Our first visits were to the second tier of boxes, but she disliked the decorum requisite in decent society, and one evening when I was not with her, made her debut with Ellen in the third tier; here she was taken ill and conveyed home in a hack, and for some weeks her life was despaired of. During her illness the ill-fated Ellen watched her with all the tenderness of a kind hearted sister; soothed my apprehensions for her life by holding out hope of her recovery: the child I was informed was dead born, but this I believe was not true, nor do I know what became of it. During Emma's sickness I had become well acquainted with the frail sisterhood, and I was very liberal of my presents to them. Silks, velvets, clothes, were liberally distributed among them, and I was in high favor with the whole family; many a night have I passed with the cher amies of some of our grave citizens—men of families, fortune and business, whose ladies visited them at their offices, stores and boarding houses. Men who would pass judgment on vice as though a very saint was supporting the cause of chastity and virtue; both of which they violated daily.

Could the secret transactions of the city of New York be exposed, what a scene of depravity would be exhibited! Sodom and Gomorrah could be no worse! The servants are but the imitators of their employers, whose vices they copy, and laugh in their sleeves at morality, sobriety, honesty and industry: the property holder oppresses the tenant to support his extravagance, and his family's; and servants in return retaliate on him when opportunity offers; thus I was conscious of being no more guilty than others. Look at the case of young Onderdonk, a clergyman's son, living under the protection and surveillance of his father, whilst I was an unprotected boy, without female friends to introduce me to respectable society, sent into a boarding house where I could enter at what hour I pleased—subservient to no control after the business of the day was over, Mr. Hoxie never inquired how my nights were passed. It was enough for him that I did my duty at the store—sure as he thought of my fidelity there, he cared not what my misconduct was in other hours or places. Oh! may my melancholy fate be an example to parents in the country how they send their sons into the vortex of vice and dissipation.

without one friend to advise them, or a prudent master to control them—enquire into their habits—ascertain the hours they keep and suspect their accounts. Truly wete merchants' apprentices taken into their master's houses or placed under the authority of the mistress or master of the house they board in, such numbers of them would not fall from their high and honourable stations in society, nor become the inmates of a prison. But when a youth accustomed to the domestic comforts of his father's house, in the country, with all the family endearments of home, and scarcely allowed the command of a dollar unless on the condition of not spending it, finds himself transported as if by magic, from the bosom of his family and the attentions of an affectionate mother to the gay emporiums of folly, fua and fashion, and the cold comforts of a New York boarding-house, where he is not expected to spend more time in the dining-room than is requisite to eat his meals—and with plenty of loose cash at his command, a very low salary, scarcely adequate to pay his board and washing, what can be expected but that he will add to his income, if he can do it without detection. This was particularly my situation when I became acquainted with Ellen Jewell. Her manner was devoid of that pert flippancy so peculiar to the demi-reps of New York: nor did she either drink ardent spirits or use coarse vulgar language. Brought up in a genteel family in her native state, Maine, and associating as the New England girls do, with their master's daughters, her mind had been highly informed—her taste refined, she could really play the lady when she chose:—nor was she ever gross, though something of the kitchen virago would appear when she was very angry and off her guard. Ellen was also a neat needle-woman, very handy and industrious, kind-hearted, humane and feeling: these virtues combined with her taste for literature and the fine arts, gave Ellen, so decided a superiority over her companions, that none but a brute and a villain ever offered an insult and none but a damned spirit took her life.

It was during Emma's illness that my intimacy with Ellen commenced, when not an idea of any other intercourse entered either of our minds. She was to me the ministering angel of comfort, and when Emma recovered, Ellen took her to the country, where she personated her sister, and left her at board in a respectable private family. Emma's sickness, her extravagance, and more than all, her ignorance, had alienated all my affection for her: and others throwing out lures for me, I sunk deep into the sty of profligacy: it was first one girl and then another, till like the Grand Turk I had a harem, and only threw the handkerchief to the one I chose. From this state of debauchery I was aroused to a sense of my danger by the return of Ellen, who soon learned my career, and pointed out the physical injury my constitution would sustain, and the danger I ran of detection by being so lavish of my rich presents to those who would not hesitate to betray me to my employers if I offended them: this alarmed me, checked my mad career of passion, and awoke me to a sense of prudence hereafter in distributing the rich goods I purloined among the girls of the house. From this period I attached myself wholly to Ellen, who though she was five years older than myself, I really loved

as much as a youth such as I was, could love one of her class. Ellen made herself acquainted with all my private affairs, my family, and the expectations I had from my father; she was not a mean mercenary, nor a dishonest girl for one of her cast; but wealthy visitors lavished on her money in plenty, and this she used with prudence, and had saved as she frequently observed, a small fortune; of which I have not a doubt, as she speculated deeply in counterfeit money and generally won largely at cards. As I was her favorite love gallant, I knew all her private transactions, and have seen her with large sums of money which she told me she put out at interest, through the agency of a broker in the city of New York. But what became of Emma? Ah! thereby hangs a tale which I cannot relate, lest I injure the peace of a family. Ellen used all her powers of mind and person to keep us apart, and succeeded; whether she ever had an idea I would marry her or not, I do not know, but she certainly used every art she was mistress of, to gain a hold on my affections; but there she did not succeed, as I was too conscious of the respect I owed to my family to entangle myself further than I could shake off at pleasure; for her favors I ever paid her. But my connection with Emma had steeled my heart against all Ellen's allurements; that I was in her power I was conscious, for she had initiated me into a species of defrauding by which I gained money largely and Mr. Hoxie lost nothing; thus far I knew she had the power to blast my reputation, and I feared to offend her seriously. I knew she had a powerful mind, but a generous noble spirit. She detested the mode of life into which she had been seduced, by a villain who is now a married man and has a family; towards him she cherished a decided hatred, and her soul thirsted for revenge. She frequently wrote to him threatening letters, vowing vengeance against him and his family, nor should I be surprised if time and circumstances should prove him the author of her death. Money and jealousy are powerful impulses to crime amongst the girls. Ellen and me frequently quarrelled, and then we wrote to each other; she often endeavored to intimidate me to submission by threatening to expose me to the world. This mode at first succeeded, but as I became better acquainted with her disposition, I acquired courage to brave her anger and set her at defiance: thus passed over two years of crime, infamy and misery.

My connection with Gray, grew out of my pecuniary transactions with Ellen. He became an agent for me, and to carry on our business we occupied a room which we rented. Oh! what dark deeds are done when single gentlemen hire private rooms, sometimes particularly when they follow no apparent business. At length my guardian angel seemed as if he had not entirely forsaken his charge. Love, a pure and holy love filled my heart; a feeling so sacred, so holy, warmed my bosom for a young lady, my equal in all respects as far as family and fortune, but oh! how much my superior in virtue; yet to this lovely girl I looked up with hope, as the being who would guide my footsteps to the paths of peace and calm domestic happiness. I was still young in years, scarcely past the days of boyhood, but how old in vice! yet I had perhaps a long life

before me, but to make atonement too short. How far my first employer had suspected me I knew not, but Mr. Hoxie I was confident was unconscious of any loss he had sustained by me.

My first step in reformation was to break off my intercourse with Gray; this I easily effected, his marriage being a sufficient reason for cutting him, as the phrase goes. This action alarmed Ellen, and she became suspicious of my dereliction from her supremacy. I pleaded suspicion that my visits to her house were suspected at the store; she changed her residence to Mrs. Townsend's. I objected to the house as too public; she accused me of desertion. I did not deny the charge, and demanded my miniature which had been painted for Emma. How Ellen got it I know not, nor how long she had had it; she refused it, and several letters passed between us—she threatened me, I retaliated, and in return I threatened her as party concerned, avowing my independence, and the war ended. We generally met at the theatre, there I informed her of my affection for the gentle Sophia, and my determination to quit all my nefarious practices, to marry when I was able: aye, and become a good citizen. What Frank said she, good like the rest of mankind! No Ellen, I have played the hypocrite too long, I will drop the hateful mask, and be what I appear. Will you, said she, shedding tears, I will not drag you down to hell; if I am bad myself, Frank, I respect goodness in others: for instance your Emma, she now appears a highly respectable young woman, and may continue so; would that some friendly hand had been held out to me, ere I had plunged so deeply in sin, and infamy, but now it is too late; nothing remains but to live on, get rich, and endow a convent with my money; then I may stand a chance of being canonized as a saint. But do Frank, look at that ugly old gray bearded fool, staring at us. He is like Othello dying with jealousy. Who is he? replied I. Ah! said she, my friend at present; Mrs. Townsend introduced him, he is a rich merchant from New Orleans, I intend to fleece him well—if old rats will have dainties they must pay well for them. I put her into a coach and promised to call on her; this was two weeks before her death.

From this night letters passed between us as various in their style as her temper was capricious, veered from one extreme of passion to another; disappointed in her expectations of having me in her chains, she maddened with jealousy: she then threatened me with a woman's vengeance; to these I returned answers in her own style of defiance, these letters were carefully preserved by my enemies to answer their own purposes. At length the storm of passion subsided, we met by her own invitation and exchanged forgiveness. Ellen wept long and tenderly on my bosom. Oh Frank! said she, sobbing, how salubrious are tears; they are the preservers of woman's life and reason; but for them my heart would break and I should wander forth a raving maniac, but that solace has cooled the fever of my brain and relieved my heart. Yes, Frank! step back before you are hurled down the whirlpool of destruction. Lost to your family and society, or worse, a curse to the first and a deprecator on the last. Passion has been the rock on which you sunk into vice,

10
may it now exalt you to the path of virtue and moral rectitude; but do not Frank, forsake the unfortunate girl that loves you tenderly, but visit me sometimes and tell me of your Sophia. I shall not live long Frank! I feel a presentiment that my life will be short. Eliza S. hates me with a deadly hatred, and like the snake when charming the bird, smiles on me and openly professes the warmest friendship for me; the others envy and dislike me, but her hatred is deadly. Why Ellen, said I, do you not take a cheap house to yourself, and seek in solitude that reflection that may awake repentance. Alas! I reflect every hour; but what am I? an outcast—a common prostitute! What but a brothel will any house be that I inhabit? and I dread solitude. Reflection is hell to me, and worse than all, I cannot petrify my feelings by intoxication; and thus I go on from day to day—

“Repenting still and still offending,
Abuser of the gifts of nature,
A wretched self-condemning creature.”

I shall die Frank in youth, and leave all my soul-condemning gains to those who will treat my name with contempt.—she then mentioned the person who managed her money for her, told me how much she had saved and where placed. But Frank, this is all dross to me. Why Ellen, replied I, do you not purchase a farm, far from New York, where the duties of your situation would keep you busy? Yes, and be murdered by my servants;—no, no, Frank, the cities are my only places of safety, where I am known and would be missed. No! they dare not kill me;—you Frank would revenge my death, and Bill Easy too, and so would Frank Rivers the second. This conversation took place on the Monday before her death. I promised to call and pass Wednesday evening with her. And Frank, said she, bring me a small hatchet, if I send a servant my wood small with it, to make my fire burn quick; if I send a servant to buy one, the rest will borrow it and I shall be plagued to keep it; but if you bring it, they will not know I have one. Accordingly on Wednesday evening, I took the store hatchet up with me, as I had forgot to buy one for her. My face and figure was disguised, but I heard E. S. exclaim, that is Frank Rivers, I know his air and step! Ellen met me at the door and conducted me to her apartment: this was the second time I had ever been in that den of iniquity. Ellen and me passed a pleasant evening; several visitors called on her, but she was engaged. To her I opened my whole heart, and she confirmed me in my resolution of changing all my habits. But do this gradually Frank, said she, or it may create suspicion on the part; keep all your papers yourself secure in your bureau. Call to see me sometimes as you would a male acquaintance, and on Saturday night I will give you all your letter and the miniature;—at eleven o'clock we parted to meet on Saturday night—fatal night, what have you not lost me? Life alone is of no importance when reputation is lost; my aged father's fortune injured, his feelings tortured to agony—my affectionate mother's life endangered: sisters, uncles, every relative drenched with the obloquy attached to the name of R. P. Robinson: would to God I had died in my infancy!

But let me proceed methodically. On the fatal Saturday evening I had agreed to visit Ellen, to receive from her my picture and letters, burn here and end all personal intercourse between us: this was my first step in reformation, and my heart beat freely in my bosom with renovated hope, that I might regain the path of moral rectitude, from which I had estrayed; and that by fulfilling my duties in nature life to God and man, I might obtain pardon from my Creator for the sins of my youth, and yet know peace and happiness. Thus flattering myself with the hope of an emancipation from the slavery in which Ellen had held me for so long years, I exultingly took tea and formed the engagement to ride out the ensuing morning with some of the other boarders. After tea I equipped myself for my visit in the cloth cloak, that I kept for masquerading, and would have proceeded to Ellen's in the early part of the evening, but did not wish my visit to continue long, and left my companion (as he stated on the trial,) took the way towards Clinton Hall; but instead of going where I might be recognized in my ill-acquired finery, I went into an Oyster Cellar near the Park; here I whiled away the time, looking at the engagements of the various parties, "alike unknowing and unknown," till the clock struck nine. I then bent my steps towards Thomas street, and saw a man closely muffled, knocking at the door. I stopped to take an observation, heard the name of Frank Rivers called—the stranger entered—the door closed—I heard no more. Ellen I now knew would be invisible for some time, so I turned to the business part of the city and carelessly entered Mr. ——— store, where we beguiled the lagging hours with social chat; now talked of this and then of that, till the clock struck ten, and they began to talk of closing for the night. I took leave of them and again set out for Thomas street.

By passing through the hall of a house in Chapel street, occupied by decent coloured people, I could see the light in Ellen's chamber window, and discern the shadows on the wall through the curtains: there were two persons apparently moving about; Ellen was one, the other her visitor going away. I tript lightly out and gained Mrs. Townsend's porch just as the door opened. Ellen's figure concealed me from observation, and I glided in behind her and lightly tripped up on tip-toe unseen by all but one of the fiends. On her entrance Ellen laughed at my Harlequin-like agility, saying, Frank you would do to steal an heiress. We then spoke of the cause of my visit; she gave me the picture but refused the letters, saying that I must come for them again. Her face was clouded when I objected to this. I tried to soothe her and to prevent high words; I requested her to get a bottle of Champaign, took up a book that lay on the toilet table, and to conceal my face, lay down on the bed with my back to the door.

Ellen returned without the wine, which Mrs. Townsend brought up; impelled by curiosity to see who Ellen had there; but she took the wine from her, ere she entered, and abruptly shut the door: therefore, Mrs. Townsend could only have caught a glimpse of the back part of my head, and swore to my person by report.

Ellen and I drank a glass of wine between us, then sat down by the fire, which was nearly out, and I wrapped my cloak around her. We sat conversing in whispers till after 12 o'clock, when Ellen lighted a candle, and I took the lamp to light me down stairs. At Mrs. Townsend's door, I knocked, and received a refusal, when I demanded my liberty. I then set down the lamp in the hall, slipt into the yard, climbed over three fences, and finding a door open, passed through a hall into Chapel-street, from thence home: the Hall clock struck one, just as I entered my boarding house.

Cheerfully I entered my bed-chamber, put the miniature into my bureau, and calmly consigning my cares to oblivion, sunk into a sound sleep, from which my bed-fellow awoke me, to enquire when I came to bed: half asleep I answered him, and sunk again into the happy state of unconsciousness, from which I was aroused by the harpies of the law.

When Mr. Brink awoko me, the first idea that occurred to my mind, was, that my pecculations had been discovered by Mr. Hoxie; and, that Ellen had betrayed me to the punishment of the civil law. Thus terrified by actual guilt, I became passive, and obeyed all orders silently, till I heard the cruel charge brought against me; then the calm pride of innocence soothed all fears from my kind employer, and gave me a hope for the future.

This is all I have to confess of my past life. A youth in years, experience had matured me in wisdom: henceforth, and forever, the crooked ways of the world shall have no power over my mind. Nor shall the wiles or blandishments of a wanton woman, betray me to her dwelling. Had I not gone to Ellen's that fatal night, another object must have been selected, on whom to lay the crime. Whose voice denounced me as a murderer, I have never understood—the blame was general when Mr. Brink came; at least so the watchmen testify. Mrs. Townsend's words were, "they have killed the girl, and set fire to the house!"

Who are THEY? That is in the *plural*—I was only a *singular*—till some of Mrs. Townsend's wise counsellors, changed the plural to the personal Frank Rivers. My cloak, which was wrapped around Ellen, when I left the house, was rendered one of the presumptive proofs against me; and it was asserted I had brought the hatchet with me, tied to my cloak; when the porter proved that the hatchet had been lost on the Wednesday before. Thus I must have planned the murder four days previous to its execution. Yet it was proved that I had passed Wednesday night with Ellen, the time I gave her the fatal hatchet.

Had I been disposed to injure Ellen, what had I to do, but to indict the house, and place its inmates in Bellevue? Had I been the hardened and cold-blooded murderer, the press has denounced me, would I have left my cloak and hatchet behind me, to betray me to the world? No! no! And had I set fire to the house when I left it, would I have awakened Mrs. Townsend, to require her to open the door for me, as the draft would have fanned the flame to a blaze? Or, would a fire-light, between twelve and one o'clock, have lain smothering till past three, at least two hours? And

when discovered, why was not their first efforts made, to alarm the sleeping girl? But no, Ellen was left dying amidst the flames, till the watchmen came, and discovered her situation: then, the crime must be laid on one individual, or the whole inmates were liable to suspicion and arrest.

I was young, and known to be poor—fancied friendless; the game was a deep one, but all was thrown on the hazard of chance. So that they escaped, they cared not who fell. Their purpose was answered—they escaped, while I was made the scape goat. Thank my Creator, and the jury, who possessed sense and discernment sufficient, to penetrate through the horrid plot, my life is spared. But how spared? To be pursued by the execrations of my fellow citizens, for a crime, of which, I call God to judge, I am not guilty of; and of which, none accused me, but one of the most base and degraded of *her sex*.—Her, and her satellites, were the accusers and witnesses.

The press has generally censured Mr. Phoenix, for not bringing the men forward, that were in the house; there was, also, two women, inmates of the house, why were not they called? The fact was, the State's Attorney knew, that no person, in a large house like that, could know what was passing in another apartment, where doors are locked; and that their testimony could be of no use, only to prolong the trial. Mr. Phoenix was conscious, like the jury, of my innocence; and that the testimony, unless positive, was of no use. And the watchmen all opposed her assertion of my guilt, which, thank Heaven, I am clear of.

To time and circumstances, I leave my reputation; and shall wander far, far from the temptation of refined society, where woman smile but to betray. From henceforth, the world will hear no more of Richard P. Robinson.

I cannot, like Ephraim K. Avery, brave the scorn and contempt of those who fancy me the guilty being, a brothel keeper endeavor to make me; nor can I see my father's home sold to pay my lawyer's fees. To those gentlemen my gratitude will ever be due; but for Mr. Hoxie, that kind, good man—may health, peace, and happiness be ever his—the mild forbearance, he evinced, when my frauds on him were detected, prove him the true Christian—bless him Heaven!—forever bless him.

To the young men who may peruse this, I can only say,—

Be warn'd, ye youth, who see my sad despair,
Avoid loose women, false as they are fair;
By my example, learn to shun my fate,
How wretched is the man that's wise too late.
Ere innocence and fame, and life be lost
Here, purchase wisdom, cheaply, at my cost.

To my unrelenting persecutors, who would have taken my life, I only hope that they may have no more unrepented crimes on their consciences than I have. As for the foolish letters, published in the papers, found in Gray's pocket, they are base calumnies; and were never written by me. I well knew, that if my life was saved, the tide of popular prejudice was too strong, for me to remain in New York; nor could my father have

permitted it. Mr. Hoxie of course could not retain me in his employ; and where could I find an asylum, but with my parents, whose gray hairs I have bowed to the earth; but they forgive me—they who I injured; and will not society at large, who I never offended, withhold their persecution from a being scarcely worth the trouble the petty editors have been at, to drive to madness or worse depredation on the public.

But, thanks to the liberality of a mind too powerful to be biassed by the yelping of the pack of curs, that pursued me with their malice, I have found a safe harbor; where industry and integrity may, at a future period of my life, enable me to prove to the world at large, I am not that hardened, cold-blooded villain, which I have been represented by those who persecute me in their papers, merely because they had no other subject, on which to expend the malignancy of their own hearts, or fill the columns of their paper.

Resting on this hope, and confiding implicitly in the protection of that great Omnipotent Power, who rules the fates of all his creatures; and who brings light out of darkness—that the black transaction which has banished me from friends, home, and country, will yet be brought to light; and my innocence, of Ellen's death, be clearly proved.

I have ventured to write to you—and for your satisfaction only, have I undertaken a task I shrunk from to gratify my enemies. But, knowing from experience, that with you—

Friendship is not a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep;
A shade that follows wealth and fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep.

This knowledge it was, that after such a lapse of time, induced me to commit these events to paper; and declare my innocence of the crime, for which I am, by the public voice, condemned; although cleared by the laws of my country.

This, dear Tom, is the last you may ever hear of your ill-fated, but

Sincere friend,

To Thomas Armstrong, Esq.

RICHARD P. ROBINSON.

DEFENCE OF THE JURY:

MR. ARMSTONG, TO THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL.

After a careful perusal of Mr. Robinson's statement of the foregoing facts, I wrote to New York, for a printed copy of the trial, to read, and judge for myself—the reason on which the public prints based their outcry against so young a man as Richard is; as also, why they blame both Jury and State's Attorney, and all the numerous hosts of witnesses that appeared in his favor.

Richard, and marked every event, there sworn to, by all parties; and do now solemnly declare, that there does not appear to my judgment, one point on which to hang a charge. The only thing Mrs. Townsend's testimony proves, was that he, or some one like him, was in Ellen's room, reading at half past ten o'clock at night; and that, between two and three o'clock, the lamp belonging to that room, was found extinguished in the hall, and Ellen's bed clothes on fire. That, instead of awakening the sleeping girl, she called for the city watch to extinguish the flames and save her property. This is the sum and substance of the principle witness's testimony.

The first watchman that entered the abode of infamy, swears he met one man and two women, at Ellen's room door, who were permitted to escape unsearched, nay almost unnoticed. That on his discovering Ellen with a wound on her head, lying dead amidst the flames, Mrs. Townsend began to cry out, "Oh! they have murdered the girl, and set fire to the house!" Who were the ruff, Mrs. Townsend meant? Was it the man and the women that escaped in the general confusion? He also swears, that one of the girls exclaimed, "she knew who the murderer was, and would tell at the proper time and place!" But she was said to be dead, when called for at the trial; and one man poisoned himself soon after Ellen's death, that was proved to have been in the house that night. But before his death, he, it was rumored, had made a trip to Boston first. In short, all combining circumstances tends to criminate somebody, but who? Not Richard P. Robinson! The Jury could not, if they abided by their oath, convict him; for they were sworn to judge by the testimony set before them; and there was not one single act that tended to his conviction; or even justly to an accusation.

Mrs. Townsend's house was large, and occupied by the most depraved members, society can boast of; and who will not suppose that the property Ellen Jewett had in her chamber, was of sufficient value to tempt one of the fiendish inmates, or visitors, to perpetrate the nefarious deed, where suspicion has never yet fallen.

One of the witnesses on the trial, stated to the Court, that Ellen Jewett was one of the richest dressed women that frequented the third tier of boxes in the Park Theatre. Report says that she had a gold watch, with a variety of trinkets attached to it; as also, a rich cameo buckle for her waist, with diamonds, rings, broaches, and other trinkets.

Here, then, was booty sufficient to tempt an inhabitant or frequenter of a brothel, to perpetrate such a crime, and to save themselves; attempt to fix the stigma of the crime, on any member of the respectable part of the community; towards whom the notorious community harbor a decided hatred. And, it is well known, that they spare no pains, first to vitiate the morals of those they can attract to their dens of infamy, and then betray them; thus gratifying their malignancy, and adding a new member to the *free cloth*, as they call themselves.

Now how many of these motives may have influenced the accusation of Richard, I am not prepared to say, or if any. Plunder alone, or jealousy,

permitted it. Mr. I
and where could I fi
I have howed to the
will not society at la
from a being scarce
drive to madness or

But, thanks to the
yelping of the pack
found a safe harbor ;
of my life, enable me
ened, cold-blooded vi
persecute me in their
which to expend the
of their paper.

Resting on this hop
great Omnipotent Pow
brings light out of dar
ed me from friends, I
my innocence, of Effe

I have ventured to
undertaken a task I s
from experience, that

A
A
Be

This knowledge it
commit these events to
which I am, by the pu
laws of my country.

This, dear Tom, is all

To Thomas Armstrong,

DEFER

MR. ARMSTON

After a careful perus
facts, I wrote to New
judge for myself—the r
cry against so young a
Jury and State's Attorn
appeared in his favor.

may have been the actuating spirit of the murderer ; and self-defer, the
cause, or perhaps suspicion ; for it is not probable Mrs Townsend would
deprive her house of so attractive an inmate, by whose residence, he was
sure of filling her coffers.

But where was Ellen's valuables ? her watch, trinkets, clothe and
money ? Were they found, or accounted for ? If she had no relations,
the State or city became her heir ; and they ought to be satisfac
orily accounted for to the public.

A loud clamour, or rather hue and cry, has been raised against Mr
nix, for not bringing all the inmates of the house into Court ; but where
was he to find them ? They fled ere morning dawned ; and had they been
called on, how would their testimony have affected the trial ; for who can
know in so large a house, what is transpiring in the adjoining room. The
blow was silently given, and no doubt proved instantly fatal ; perhaps not
even a groan escaped the lips of the dying girl—then how would the visit
ers' testimony have availed, or been of any importance.

Besides, Mr. Furlough's evidence mainly proved Richard was not in the
house at the hour Mrs. Townsend swore to ; and it is a jurymen's duty to
attend to the testimony of the respectable part of the community first.—
And who will dare to assert, or what reasonable man believe, that so re
spectable a citizen as Mr. Furlough, would perjure himself for a strange
lad—a mere visitant in his store ; or that such honorable men as Mr. Hoxie,
or Richard's counsel would tempt a man to such an action. Mr. Fur
lough is wealthy ; so that money could not be a temptation to him. Nor
how could either Mr. Hoxie, or the lawyers know, that Richard had been
at his store ? Or with what plea could one man ask another to swear a
false oath ? The idea is as base as the whole of the proceedings, which
has apparently ruined the character of a young man, just entering life,
and destroyed the peace and comfort of his parents in this life. That he
is far removed from his persecutors is all we know ; and probable, if not
driven to desperation by the persecution of the press, may regain the
estimation of the community, among whom he has fixed his residence.

That such may be the result of the persecution of a lad, all good persons
particularly parents, and the jury that saved his life, will unite with me in
praying for ; and, with this hope, I subscribe myself,

The Public's very humble Servant,

THOMAS ARMSTRONG.

N. B. If Jurymen are not permitted to abide by their oaths, for fear of
the anathemas of the press, I fear trial by Jury must cease ; courts of
judicature be abolished, and the penny Editors become the arbitrators of
our lives, liberty, character, and property—as no conscientious citizen will
condemn himself to perdition to please them.