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LIFE AND CONFESSION
OF
MARY JANE GORDON,
WHO WAS TRIED, CONDEMNED, AND HUNG,
ON THE
TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1849,
FOR THE
MURDER OF JANE ANDERSON,
A NATIVE OF COVINGTON, KENTUCKY.



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

CAREFULLY COLLECTED BY THE AUTHOR,
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P R E F A C E.

The object of this Edition is twofold: first, to lay before the World an entire Confession of an inhuman Murderer, whose cruel deeds no language can describe, nor mind conceive their atrocity, perpetrated in the midst of society; secondly, as a warning to all, both old and young, not to allow themselves to be drawn by the fair pretensions of such females, 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 to old and young, knowing it is a subject of the most momentous 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, Covington, Kentucky

J. S. C.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year of our Lord 1849, by J. S. CALHOUN, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Covington, Kentucky.

LIFE AND CONFESSION.

As time revolves, and with it brings before the world those momentous circumstances which the reader will perceive, to his astonishment, in the important pages of this production, a full, explicit, and satisfactory account of this unfortunate female, whose inhuman murders no language can describe, nor mind conceive their atrocity, perpetrated in the midst of society. As a citizen, and a friend of humanity and society, I feel myself bound by an impulse of duty to direct the attention of the solicitous reader to the narrative containing her infamous career, whose atrocious, cruel, and daring murders are of such a shocking nature that no mind can fathom their awful consequences, nor for one moment dwell upon the sad story of her life without being sensibly affected at the horror of the perpetration and of her guilt, without the least shade of remorse to accompany her disgraceful and deplorable end. Yes! for a female, whose sex, by the laws of morality and religion so inconsistent for her sex, we find her sink into the abyss of misfortune, and distinguished with every vice that can disgrace humanity, and 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 willful murder of Jane Anderson, a native of Covington, in the State of Kentucky, whose life she took on the morning of the 7th of October, 1848, which the reader will see, every thing being carefully collected to his satisfaction, as her life is so unparalleled for atrocious and inhuman murders, such as shock the mind on their reality, committed in those days when religion is penetrating the far distant climes of the earth; and, at the same time, contemplating with serious consideration 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 records 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 of time which are passed, and are to be no more; those days when religion and morality assumes so high a standing in all Christian lands. Indeed, I may truly assert, we ought not to be much surprised at those eventful transactions so inconsistent to feelings, had we lived in those days that are passed and are to be no more, when barbarity and cruelty overshadowed the face of nature. Yet crime, and vice, and murder are

every year increasing—perpetrated under the roof of seemingly apparent hospitality—and perpetrated, too, by a female, so inconsistent for her sex.

In order to proceed to the events of her life, for the satisfaction of the solicitous reader, he will perceive the murder which she was hung for was the least in comparison, when compared to the great and important ones which will appear in her confession; and, also, in a concise history of her life, carefully collected by the minister who attended her on the last brink of eternity before she suffered an ignominious death on the scaffold, exposed in the presence of thousands who came to witness her miserable and disgraceful end!—indulging in the hope, no matter what standing in life the reader may move in, he can, if he wishes, learn a lesson of useful knowledge from the important pages which record her fatal end. I have examined the hidden mysteries of her life with scrutiny, omitting nothing of interest to the reader; unraveled the cruel murders she has committed—the shrewd and treacherous designs ever modeled 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 exists and lives among the human family, and more especially in the larger cities and towns; for it is there vice and wickedness grows and increases without limit. In truth, they are a Sodom in themselves! The traveler, on his entering a city, should inquire and ascertain the character of the place he intends to stop at, and, in doing so, may avoid something more serious which has befallen many a traveler in his journey through this wicked world, and which will appear by the confession of this unfortunate female. When, for a moment, I think of those unfortunate people who have slept under the roof of seemingly apparent hospitality, never more in this world to rise, to become a victim to one so unrelenting, their remains lying mouldering in their mother earth, without a tomb or mark to point out to their friends they ever lived, their relatives believing they are making a home, perhaps, in the West, my blood chills with horror. As the responsibility of collecting the incidents of her life from the best authority—as undeniable as her shameful end—and pleasing myself by giving it the earliest publication to the community, hoping it will prove a subject of the highest importance to the community, and one of the most serious consideration in every respect, and one of the newest ever published.

Mary Jane Gordon was a native of Scotland, born in the year of our Lord, 1816, in the suburbs of the city of Edinburgh. Her father, George Gordon, was a native of Westchester county, in the State of New York; her mother, Maria Bruce, became very wealthy after the death of her father, she being the only heiress for his property. Her relations were all wealthy and respectable; so much cannot be said of her husband, George Gordon. After the breaking out of the American war of 1812 and 1813, he abandoned his country, and became a pirate on the Eastern coast, during which time he committed many outrages on humanity. But getting tired of the sea, he made up his

mind to retire for the remainder of his life to some strange city or village where he would not be known; at the same time well aware that he dare not return to his own native state. Finding he was compelled to abandon his native land, which grieved him much, he resolved to cross the Atlantic Ocean to some part of Europe. He started from St. John, New Brunswick, to Montreal, and from thence down the St. Lawrence River to Québec. A few days after his arrival, he shipped as an able seaman on a voyage to Glasgow, Scotland. He remained in that city for a few days, and from thence proceeded to Edinburgh, where he settled down, and got married to my mother. They had a family of two daughters, Mary Jane and Matilda, 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 bands of matrimony until she arrived at the age of twenty years, when she received the addresses of Charles How, an American, from the city of New York, who was captain of the barque Eliza Jane, trading to and from New York. After the lapse of some time, they got married, and lived in apparent friendship together; but, previous to her marriage, she reveled in all the enjoyments of a city life. Her husband's limited means not being able to meet her demands and extravagance, she became careless about him, and did not show him that respect he merited, which he very soon apprehended, jealousy becoming clear, and continued to grow by degrees in proportion as time advanced. His vessel being loaded and ready for sea, he had to prepare and go, expecting, long before his return, she would be confined. "One month," she says, "after my husband went to sea, I was delivered of a fine healthy male child; in truth, I felt much rejoiced to Providence who blessed me with such a gift. Shortly after the birth of my son, I became acquainted with Anna Gow, which the reader will hereafter see. After I recovered from my bed of sickness, I loved the infant for a little time; my mind became uneasy, and the thoughts of its father accusing me of bad conduct aroused my mind and feelings to revenge; and how to be revenged, that was the question to solve. I not being able, I applied to my adviser, Miss Gow: she proposed to destroy the infant, and that would be a victory gained over my husband. To be revenged on him, of course, that was every thing; and, in the moment of my passion, the mode in which I should accomplish it, in order to make the murder a secret for ever. I made a bag, the mouth-piece to close by a drawing-string, so as to keep it tight when cast into the water. When I had the bag completed, which I done in a short time, and as soon as night appeared, I immediately repaired to the bank of the River Clyde. I opened the mouth of the bag, and placing the child into it, I stooped down, and picking up some gravel, I

put it into the bag, and, drawing the string tight, I thought I heard a noise; and, casting my eyes around to see, I observed nothing. At that moment my flesh quivered and my frame trembled as if I were laboring under delirium tremens, at the thoughts of such a crime! But in a moment my husband appeared before my eyes, which strengthened my determination. I cast my eyes to look at the infant, and I thought it stared me in the face. My heart revolted at such an act; but the thought of returning home to my residence nerved my soul to the crime of murder!—And, on the moment, I cast the child from me into the mighty waters, where vanished all traces of its existence in this world. For a few minutes I stood motionless in thought. Being aroused by a noise, which I fancied I heard close by, I immediately regained my senses and repaired to the main road, unconscious of fear, and made my way home. On entering my own residence, Miss Gow met me first, and, of course, asked me how I had succeeded in my venturesome undertaking. As soon as I got seated, and my senses nearly recovered, I told her all; but, at the same time my feelings were sad. Miss Gow seemed to feel rejoiced at my good luck, and pictured to me, at the same time, the field of enterprize and speculation that was before us; pointing out the policy we could pursue, in order to be revenged on my husband. All those expressions sounded like music in my ears. The night wearing late, and, as I did not feel well—proceeding from the agitation of my mind in the accomplishment of such a dreadful act, which I, myself, perpetrated on my own infant—I felt like retiring to my bed, which I did in a few minutes. In the course of the night I was attacked with cramps which deprived me of my reason and senses, and which continued all night; and, as the physician remarked to me in the morning, I was in a critical state. Medicine seemed to have no effect on my system. After some time I felt a little better, and requested some drink, as I felt thirsty. Anna Gow handed me some, which quenched my thirst. I became restored again to my thoughts and judgment. She who partook and shared with me in all my joys and sorrows, we lived together many a long day, enjoying the pleasures of society. I looked, and saw my condition in life in a critical position, if my husband should cast me from him, knowing full well my conduct merited it from him.” The term of three months elapsed since he left the port of Glasgow; it is full time he returned. The following week he arrived; and in a short time, of course, proceeded to his residence. He was rejoiced to see her look so well and healthy in every respect; but, to his great astonishment, he could neither hear nor see any appearance of her having been confined. Still he looked complacent, and in good humor. Sometimes he thought she had concealed it in fun, in order to see how he would take it; but, after the lapse of some time, he determined to inquire into circumstances, and accordingly did so. In reply, she emphatically denied she was ever favored with such, and that it was some other disease she was laboring under at the time he was there, from which she recovered; and she reasoned with him on the solemnity of the fact. However, her logic

had but little weight on his mind, and he remained unconvinced of the ideas he had harbored; but respect for his character prevented him exposing her, from the fact that he could prove nothing; therefore, he had to remain as he was. 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 the law of the country, to compel him; and he exposed her conduct both publicly and privately. Proofs and, in fact, circumstances being so strong against her private character, the court could do nothing for her; consequently, she was deprived of a living from that source.

These circumstances coming to the ears of her parents, they fled to St. Louis, in the State of Missouri, which is situated on the bank of the River Mississippi, with their only remaining daughter, Matilda, who, shortly after they settled in that city, got married to James Hamilton, who then kept in Green-street. After her marriage, her parents lived with her for the term of nine months, at the end of which time she took sick and died. The poor parents were left alone. Shortly after her mother also died, leaving the old man solitary and alone!

We shall now see the fate of Mary Jane; and, for the satisfaction of the reader, I shall hereafter show that her condition became precarious. Despised by her husband, and disowned and shunned by all her relations and friends; reduced to such an extremity, seeing her parents had fled on account of 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 her husband's life. And it being necessary to avail herself of every opportunity in her power to accomplish it, "many plans," she says, "I proposed; but one which struck me forcibly, if accomplished, 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 me in the darkness of the night, when he would be unperceived, under the peculiar circumstances which will appear in my letter. I knew of nothing that would do so well, understanding his character and reputation. I adopted the plan, and it failed me not. I sat down and wrote to him the following letter, to effect my design." The letter ran as follows:

"MY DEAR CHARLES,—Pardon my presumption for writing those few lines to you. I am solicitous to speak a few words to you, under the painful circumstances I am at present laboring. I am within a few days of my departure from my native land, the home of my childhood, the place of my nativity—a home so dear, notwithstanding my lamentable separation from you which has ensued, and for which I mourn so grievously. I pray you, as my departure is so near, and as I am so forlorn, dejected, and despised by all my relations and friends, you, who know the frailty of human nature, 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 well aware of your reputation; but favor me, I entreat you, when the clouds of darkness covers the universe; a few moments will ease a troubled mind—one, you know, forlorn and friendless. I conjure you to excuse my sentimental remarks. I fail to excuse myself yours, most respectfully,

“MARY JANE GORDON.”

“To CHARLES HOW, Captain of the Barque Eliza Jane.”

He received the letter and gazed upon it attentively, he perused it over and over as he passed the deck, becoming forgetful of their unhappy separation, his spirit softened into tenderness, and reflected on times that were gone, no more to return, and on the frailty of human nature, believing, as he did at one time, he had the best wife in the world, but alas he felt the change too soon which lessened his ambition, 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 everything, to visit her secretly, although no alternative could enter his mind which would cause the least symptom of forgiveness in his heart; at the same time grieving over her misfortune and that of his own, when he pictured to his imagination, his being united in the bonds of matrimony, that holy ordinance from which all love and comfort should emanate, but far different, nothing but scandal and misfortune was the produce. Oh! how happy should 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 will be unknown; I am deeply affected for her misfortune, nevertheless, I will go and see her before she leaves, and hear what she has to say, perhaps when in a strange land she might think me cruel. 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 that it became predominant, the reader will see the inhuman treachery of this unrelenting mortal. Oh, when I meditate on the conduct of this horrible creature with serious consideration, man, the most noble work of God, seduced into a snare and murdered by a female, a companion by nature, driven to her abode by a tempest of overwhelming sorrow for her misfortune and that of his own, 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 him she so much wronged, and so maneuvering as she was. As soon as evening came he repaired to her residence, he was admitted by herself, and welcomed most kindly, they entered into the proceedings of their lives, spoke with familiarity on the past and present, and in terms of friendship she related the youthful events of her life, and reasoned with him on the frailty of human nature, and at the same time he seemed heedless of her entreaties, and finding them of no avail, she addressed him in a low voice to the following effect, “Man was born in vain to listen to the in-

treaties of a female ; this night you fall a victim, unconscious of your approaching fate." In a moment's time she stepped into the kitchen, and seizing a carving knife she returned into the room where he was sitting, and struck him in the left breast, he fell senseless on the floor and expired in a few minutes. We dragged the body into the cellar, where we found a large box, in which we concealed it until our fancy man had dug a hole in the cellar large enough to contain it. When this transaction had been accomplished I thought my mind would be more at ease. In a few days my husband was missed, and handbills posted on the walls, offering a reward of fifty pounds for the recovery of the body of Charles How, Captain of the bark Eliza Jane. Fears rushed on my mind on account of my writing to him not knowing but some of the crew might have seen the letter or heard something of it, and the neighbours well aware of our separation. As these suspicions rushed into my mind it caused me to feel unhappy ; but it seems I had longer to live. At length the city authorities gave up the search, and the voice of the people subsided ; the citizens attributed his murder to some of the crew of his own ship, consequently his murder remained a secret to the present day ; this being the second murder I committed, my child being the first who fell a victim at my hands. I concluded that my sins were so numerous, that nothing could pardon them but the justice of God. Believing I was as bad as I could be, me and Maria resolved never to part in this world until death should separate us, and to have recourse to every means in our power to make ourselves a good living ; we resorted as usual to all licentiousness, which was not the least disagreeable to our feelings, which we continued for a long time. We kept what is called in that country a lodging house for the accommodation of travelers, which gave us a double opportunity to carry out our policy to perfection, and do our work smoothly, without being suspected, consequently we embraced every opportunity in our power to carry out our policy to a good advantage for our own interest. We had such good practice that we could hit our mark in one moment, and we succeeded in nearly every case we took in hand.

As my life is one unexceptionable for crime, I confess I have many times murdered young and old in my bed at night, the mode by which I did it, was by applying a plaster on their mouth when I found them sleeping, the object of the plaster when applied to the flesh it was impossible to get it off until the flesh came with it, consequently they could make no noise, and a well directed blow from my hand soon deprived them of life ; those who are acquainted with the history of the Burke and Hair family I am aware will not be much surprised on reading this dreadful account. This practice has been carried on to a great extent in that part of the country. To my mortification I cannot recollect their names as they were strangers to me. I have, I confess, murdered three by these means. I always found their bodies disposable to the physicians, as they were always ready to receive all I sent them, nor did they inquire from whence they came, as it was an easy way

to obtain them. In a short time suspicion began to grow in many quarters that our house was not of the best character, my custom became limited. Shortly after, as Miss Gow and I were walking one evening in the upper part of the city she observed a little girl on the side walk; she observed her for some time, and seeing no one with her at so late an hour in the evening, she said to me here's a chance, and coming up to her slipped the plaster on, and we took her home. On our arrival we immediately dispatched one of our men to the doctor with the body, which added a little to our pocket. Although I mention this murder I did not mean to commit it, but stood by and saw it done, and was an accessory to it. We were but a few minutes home when we observed Alexander Robinson and Samuel Smith standing opposite our door; they of course came in and sat down, and called for the best Scotch whiskey punch, drank hearty and treated freely, and paid liberally. Finding they had plenty of money we made up our minds to have it. We gave them as much as they requested in order to make the job more easy for us to accomplish, and that very night we murdered Alexander Robinson and Samuel Smith. We searched their pockets, and from their contents all the value we could find in them. After committing the murder and robbery we set the plan to convey their bodies out of town. With the assistance of our friends we conveyed them part of the way; night being far advanced we considered it dangerous to proceed much further, consequently we came to a determination to lay them down, and at the same time placing their remains in such a position as to cause a belief in the mind of the citizens that they were murdered in that neighbourhood; as soon as we had it completed we returned immediately to our residence, and after a short time repaired to bed. The following morning the bodies were found in the same position we left them, and an inquest held on their remains, a verdict was returned, that they came to their death by blows inflicted on the head by a person or persons unknown to the jury. In a few days after the city authorities offered a reward of one hundred pounds for the apprehension and conviction of the murderers. The following day John Lyons, and Charles Canning, were taken for the murder of the above named. A reward having been offered for the conviction of the murderers, I and Miss Gow came forward and swore it plump against them, that I saw the same party in company and drinking together the same evening which terminated in the loss of life. My object for doing this was, the same afternoon the marder was committed I saw John Lyons and Charles Canning, stand opposite my door, and as I feared suspicion from that quarter, I knew it was the best policy to prosecute them. Self-preservation is the first law of nature; I took an early stand against any such; the term approached for the assizes, this trial was the second on the book, in a few days the case was called, the prisoners were ready for trial, they were examined on both sides after the counsellors finished their summing up, which occupied the court for the space of three days. Able counsel were employed on both sides, the prisoners were found guilty on the

grounds of my testimony, it being so clear and undeviating. On the scaffold before their execution they addressed the crowd in a few and appropriate remarks, that they were innocent of the murder they were then about to suffer for; which took place on the second day of December, 1838, in the city of Glasgow.

However, for the gratification of the reader, to give him a full form of the proceedings at the trial; when the prisoners were arraigned at the bar, they assumed an undaunted appearance, and being asked by the court if they were ready for trial, replied that they were; after they were examined, and the counsellors summed up the case, the judge addressed the jury in a few brief remarks:—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 from such testimony that you must judge and at the same time examine it carefully and impartially. I must say that the evidence produced seems to me clear and undeviating. Under the painful circumstances in which I am placed as minister of the law, I am compelled to say the evidence is clear and unwavering, but as jurymen I trust to your good sense to do justice to the prisoners, and act in accordance to the dictates of your minds; let no selfish motive or prejudice sway your mind from doing justice to the prisoners; bear in mind the life of two of your fellow beings are in your hands; weigh the evidence impartially, and if you can be convinced of their innocence, the laws of the land and humanity claims an impartial verdict from you. The jury retired, and in a short time returned into court with a verdict of guilty. The crown prosecutor moved for the sentence of the law, upon which the court asked the prisoners if they had anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced against them, replied, nothing, but they were innocent; upon which the judge pronounced that they should be taken to the place of their confinement, there to remain until the second day of December, when they should be hung by the neck until their bodies were dead, between the hours of eight and four o'clock.

Thus terminated the existence of two innocent men. Let us imagine, for a moment, this cruel and unrelenting being—one which no language can describe, nor mind conceive—perpetrated by a female; and when he considers how long Providence permitted her to pursue such a course of life, we must consider him a just and bountiful Being. When we find the tempest blowing most hard, it is a sure sign that Providence shall visit us. Her days were nearly numbered in that land, previous to the following, as the reader will perceive. Still Anna Gow remained with her, as usual. They were paid the prosecuting money, which was very acceptable.

“After the lapse of some time,” she continues, “we were apprehended for the poisoning of Alice Hamilton, a young lady who visited my house. She noticed some of our doings. Slight reports coming to our ears, from her interfering with us, we determined to place her where she could tell no tales. We invited her to come and spend the

afternoon in our family, as she usually had done before. Not coming, we continued our invitation until she did. We prepared a decent refreshment for the evening, I sitting at the head of the table, of course. I made myself useful. I slipped the arsenic into her cup of tea; she got sick shortly afterwards. I immediately sent the waiter for a hack to take her home to her residence, which was some distance from my house. She was but a few hours home when she died. The physicians were immediately called in, in order to relieve her sickness; it was of no avail; the dose was fatal. The physicians took the poison 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, as I well knew I would be found guilty, and death would be my unavoidable fate, knowing well I deserved it, and it had appeared to me it had arrived. I had oftentimes 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, and at other times feeding my vanity. As I noticed there might—as I heard of one attempting it not many years previous to that time. I was aware it would be either life or death, and I resolved to give it a trial if such an opportunity offered. I resolved to keep my secrets even from my companion in crime. At this season of the year, being in the month of May, the streets and drains being dry, the thought struck me, if I could only work my way out of the jail-yard into some of the subterraneous passages or reservoirs, that I might make my way out underneath the walls in some direction, as I was aware such was necessary, in order to keep the prison clean and dry; and, on the 24th day of June, 1839, I went out of the prisoners' sitting-room, which led into the ward, and I saw as I entered a grating which covered one of the passages. I examined it, and found it was set on hinges, and also to my great surprise unlocked. The thought struck me that there were yet hopes. I found there was not a moment to be lost. I immediately lifted up the grating, laying it against the side of the wall, and girding my clothes tight about my legs, ventured down immediately. I turned around, and lowered it as easy as lay in my power, for fear of making the least noise; every criminal being at dinner, and the turnkeys generally, in the location of the prison, stood on a lofty height overlooking a great part of the town. I penetrated straight ahead, 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 air becoming fresh and good, I knew, to my inexpressible joy, that I was near the extremity of my journey; for previously I was compelled to proceed, though faint and hungry, as I knew not how to return. I passed fifteen hours in this unnatural retreat. At last I saw the light of day, which convinced me I had nearly fulfilled the greatest undertaking ever accomplished in any kingdom or clime. Though eager I was to depart, I remained a

few hours in the mouth of the drain, until the clouds of darkness came on, when I departed, and took my last and glorious farewell. I immediately repaired to the house of one of my trust-worthy friends, where the rites of hospitality were given me, and my wounds dressed. The turnkeys were searching for me all that evening, but to no effect; they could not trace my footsteps, the shores being so dry at the time. Next morning I was in the Hue and Cry, and a reward offered for my detection. I remained at my friend's house for nine weeks, during which time Anna Gow, my companion, was tried, found guilty, and executed. I disguised myself in men's clothing, and took shipping to Liverpool on board the *Jane Eliza*. On my arrival in Liverpool I took lodgings with a Mr. Kelly, in Kay-street, where I remained until I arranged my passage for New York. I shipped on board the *Talanta*, Captain Smith. We had a severe passage of six weeks, and arrived in the city of New York on the 15th of February, 1840.

"Being now arrived, as I thought, in the land of promise, the appearance of the country, and the manners and customs of the people were somewhat different from those I had left. The season being dull, there was no employment to be found. The first man I knew was William M'Manus, an Englishman, who swore against Lyons and Canning for the murder of Robinson and Smith, as I above remarked, and who fled the country a short time after. He seemed glad to see me, and directed me to the William-street Cottage. While remaining in New York we had a long discourse on circumstances. I boarded there nearly six weeks; and being pretty smart, I soon learned how to get along there, together with the manners and customs of the country. My money growing scarce, I intended to look for employment. As Mr. M'Manus and I were talking one day, it came around in the discourse that he was acquainted with a man in St. Louis who fled the country on account of a disgraceful daughter he had, who got married, a short time previous to his leaving the old country, to an American captain. The thought struck me on the instant, could it be my father? I inquired into every particular regarding the person, at the same time remarking to him that I knew the man, and felt the greatest rejoicement for the information which I received. He wrote a letter and gave it to me, with direction inclosed where I might find him. I immediately started for St. Louis, by way of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, and proceeded down the Ohio River and up the Mississippi, and landed in St. Louis some ten days after I left New York. I immediately repaired to his residence in Green-street, rapped at the door, and the servant came to see who was there. I inquired, 'Does Mr. Jones reside here?' She answered in the affirmative. I told her I wished to see the gentleman. I was shown into the sitting-room, and, to my surprise and great astonishment, I saw for the first time for years my poor father! He stood motionless, gazed at me, and recognized me as his child: he embraced me with tears, and inquired respecting my affairs. I told him I had just arrived, but said nothing of my eventful life. He told me the cause of his sorrow, that my sister

was married after the lapse of one year and died, as also his wife some time since. My father being a pirate, he changed his name under the British flag in the years 1812 and 1813, on the Eastern coast, to whose depredations and inhuman murders no parallel can be found but in those of my own. He had at that eventful period to abandon his country, and his property being confiscated he emigrated to Scotland, and got married to my mother, as was remarked.

"I thought now, as I did when I landed, that I would conduct myself as smoothly as possible. I advised my father to leave St. Louis and come to Cincinnati, and we could start business in that city, as no one would ever know me there. The old man consented, sold such property as he had in St. Louis, and we started for Cincinnati. We took a house on the wharf calculated for a boarding-house, 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 nor less than a burden to me, and I resolved sooner or later to let him go about his business." The next detestable crime she committed was upon a Canadian barber, who called late one evening at her house after coming up the river from New Orleans. "I made inquiries relative to his business and circumstances, and learning from him that he had some money, I put him to bed in my own small chamber, and, when he was sound asleep, I cut his throat from ear to ear. I told my father to go down to the wharf and procure a boat—in the mean time I was sowing him in a bag—he returned shortly after and told me the boat was ready. We took the body out with caution and carried it down to the wharf, and laid it carefully into the boat, taking with us in the boat a large stone, which we attached to the bag before heaving it out. We shoved cautiously from the bank, and getting out into the stream the boat required no pulling, the water being high in the river when we got down as far as the Licking River, so that the stream of the Licking would not wash the body on the opposite bank. We heaved it overboard; and we returned up the stream, keeping close to the bank until we got opposite to our own house. As soon as we landed, the owner of the boat was standing on the wharf, and inquired of my father what he was doing with the boat. The old man trembled; and supposing he knew the whole circumstance, confessed the whole transaction, asking him on the principle of honor not to divulge the secret—for which I had to give him over \$300. I took from the victim, I believe, \$650—the above \$300 almost broke my heart—to think I murdered a man for so small a sum, and had to part with so much of it by the simplicity of an old man. 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 of; and I murdered my husband, and several others. I will get rid of him.' I sat down and wrote a letter upon the matter to my old friend, William M. Manus, who was living in New York. He acknowledged the receipt of my letter, stating to me he wanted us to

come and see him. We prepared, and went on to New York on the 16th day of June, 1842. On our arrival in New York we called at his residence, when we were told he had gone to Philadelphia, and at the same time handing me a letter. I immediately opened it—its contents were, to follow him to Philadelphia, stating the direction where we could find him in the city. Having arrived in Philadelphia, we immediately called on him; he gave us a hearty welcome. After a few moments' conversation, he handed me a note, whispering, 'You are not to open this note until I tell you'—at the same time giving us an invitation to take a sail down the bay previous to supper. The invitation being accepted, we proceeded down Market-street to the wharf, where lay a boat that he had engaged for the excursion. We sailed down the bay a considerable distance; he thinking we were far enough, told me to open the note. I opened it, and in it was written, 'The way you shall make a harvest in England is to take thy old father and heave him overboard.' I sat for a moment in thought. The time had arrived to part with an ungrateful old man; and, for my own safety, I determined he should lie in the depth of the water, as many has done before. So saying, M·Manus caught him, and with my assistance we threw him overboard! We remained for some time out until it was wearing late, for fear the owner of the boat might be able to discover the absence of my father; taking good care at the same time to land one block from the ferry-boat. I proceeded up to Water-street, while he pulled the boat to the next pier. All having been settled to my satisfaction, we returned home to our boarding-house, one door from the corner of Second-street, in Walnut-street. The evening being far spent, and I much fatigued, he called for some refreshments. The kind hostess immediately complied with our request, and served up a good supper. After we had eaten hearty, the landlady in a few minutes had a good whisky-punch prepared, and we enjoyed a pleasant night. I remained here for ten days, and on the ninth day my father's body was found washed ashore on the Jersey side of the bay. Crowds of people came to see his remains, and recognize him. I saw and knew it to be my father by a mark on his breast—it was the rose and thistle from which suspended—I could know him no other way, as his body was all in a decayed state.

"After this transaction, M·Manus and I became very well acquainted with each other. He told me he wanted to go to New York upon particular business, and for me to remain until he would return; but not returning as soon as I expected, I made up my mind to go to New York. I accordingly did so. On my arrival I called at the William-street Cottage, and was informed he had gone a few days previous to Albany. The same afternoon I wrote a letter to him, requesting an answer immediately. Two days after I received an answer to my letter from him, stating he wanted to see me on important business. I proceeded the same afternoon in the 7 o'clock line to Albany, and on my arrival I found him in pursuit of a gentleman from Baltimore, who became a bankrupt in that city. He had seen him change sev-

eral checks in the city of New York—knowing he had plenty of money, he thought him a good mark. We were walking one evening in the suburbs of the city, on the Troy road, when we accidentally met him, and watched his footsteps until he arrived at his boarding-house in Market-street. We laid the plan. M'Manus returned home; and I went in and inquired for the gentleman. He received me politely. I asked him if he was not from Philadelphia; he replied that he never lived there in his life. 'Well,' I said, 'I board in a house near the new steam-boat landing; I am acquainted with a gentleman who is personally acquainted with you, and wishes to see you. Some four hours ago he was taken suddenly sick, and the physicians say they cannot remove the disease—and he requested me to come and tell you.' 'Madam,' he replied, 'do you know where the gentleman is from?' 'I believe,' said I, 'he is from the city of Washington, and has got many relatives in Baltimore; indeed, I thought it a charity, as I think he will not live no time; and perhaps his business may be of great importance.' I seemed to be alarmed, and in a hurry—I was returning as it were to go out, when he asked me, 'Will you be kind enough to wait a few moments, and I shall go with you?' I escorted him as it were to my residence, and conducted him into the sitting-room, where I handed him a seat, placing it in the proper place. He sat down—in a moment the trap-door was let go, and the unfortunate man fell down three stories into the cellar, where M'Manus was. He was struck senseless by the fall, and it was very easy to finish him. I took his pocket-book, the contents of which amounted to \$800 in bank bills, payable in the city of New York. We deposited his body that night in the cellar of the same house, and with much difficulty we dug the hole to bury him in. This place I cannot very well describe, as I was a stranger here.

"In a few days after I started for Baltimore, arrived there in a few days, and after some time obtained a situation in Saratoga-street. I had resided here nearly eight months, when I became acquainted with a young man from the State of Connecticut, to whom I got married. We took a room, and lived comfortably for some time; but getting drunk one night, he and a colored man disputed, for which he became a victim to the knife. This murder was well known in Baltimore; but in all my eventful life I never could lay hold of that colored man.

"I resolved to leave Baltimore, and return again to New York; in truth, 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 M'Manus, who was doing a smart business. I understood from him he was after making a great haul. Said I to myself, 'I will be your mark.' In the afternoon, at tea, I slipped some poison into his cup. The quantity being small, it only made him sick, and he requested me to attend on him. I immediately procured a physician, who ordered him some medicine; and in administering this medicine I slipped in a little more poison, which was the cause of his death. He willed me all he had; I think I got about \$350. After

his burial I started for Cincinnati, where I found but little sympathy. Some six months after, I became acquainted with a lady who kept a house of ill fame in Bank Alley, between Main and Walnut streets. I went to stop there—I did not like it much—there were too many rowdies attended; so much so, that I was greatly vexed at the impudence of a steam-boat man who called often and would pay nothing, for which I caused his death. This being a short time ago, the establishment was broken up.

“I took my way, Maria Mars and myself, to Terrahaute, in the State of Indiana, on the Wabash River—residing a little time with her aunt, Mrs. Hunt, who lived respectably, and accommodating her visitors decently. She was terribly annoyed by a countryman who visited the house often, and was in the habit of getting drunk and making a fuss; we gave him plenty of whisky to drink, until he became stupidly drunk; then we tied his legs and arms, and carried him to the bank of the river; we then untied the rope, threw him into the water, and left him to his fate. The following morning, we observed him hard by, lying close by the bank, his body being some six inches under water; and that night we took him out, dug a hole alongside of the river, and buried his remains;—and those who are acquainted there, or go that way, let them look upon a large beach-tree, one mile out of the town, on the Lafayette road, close by the bank of the river, and a wire suspended from one of the limbs of the tree will convince them of the fact. Some time after committing this murder, Maria and I thought we should go to Covington, in the State of Kentucky, where we might start in a new circle of life.

On my arrival there the appearance of the place presented to my mind that I might possibly spend the remainder of my days there, as I felt my health beginning to decline, and at the same time advancing in years, and my eventful life preying so much upon me, I began to part with that animating spirit which I once possessed. I intended to start some easy means to make a living for the remainder of my days. I started a temperance boarding house, I could not settle myself to any advantage in the lower part of the town, south west upon the Frankford turpike. I gave myself a new name and carried myself smooth, in a short time I received a considerable share of patronage from the cities of Cincinnati and Newport; I kept a proper distance from every one, Miss Mars still remained with me, and a young man from Fulton fell in love with her, and I seeing a great intimacy, more than the reader may for a moment imagine, I began to fear she might be induced to turn out contrary to my expectations, and by a union with him she might reveal some of my secrets, as she knew so many of them, aware of the frailty and deceit of my sex, and this young man, whose name was Little, I understood was a painter and glazier by trade, I resolved to murder in order to avoid any disclosures. I loved Maria Mars, and gave her everything she desired; I sent her to Terrahaute, to see her aunt, Mrs. Hunt, with my compliments to come on and see me as soon as possible. During which time I intended to

put him out of the way. I sent my servant to him with a note requesting him to come to my house the next day, as I wanted him particularly to do a small job; he came the following day, showed him a few panes of glass I wanted him to put in, and also a few shingles that was wanting on the roof of the house; he commenced putting in the glass in the window, being obliged to stand on the outside of the window, I made it my business to be present, and I gave him a shove and down he fell three stories into the yard, in the rear of the house, after a short time I looked down to see if any person had recognized his fall, finding no person had noticed the occurrence, I went out and dragged him into the wood house, where I very soon made a grave. That same day I sent my servant to Williamstown with a message to Mr. Anderson, as the reader will hereafter see. The servant arrived next day. The same week Maria came home, but being in the habit of frequently seeing Little, she began to wonder very much what was the matter with him, in a few days she saw one of his shopmates, and he informed that he came by my order to repair some work for me; she 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 she appeared very dejected. I thought she suspected me, because a guilty conscience always betrays itself; nevertheless, I carried myself as smoothly as possible, although she knew a great deal about me. In the course of a few months this not as I expected subsided, but only beginning to rage, as regarded his absence, I paid no attention to the matter but when his name was mentioned I wondered as much as any person. However, in six months after a gentleman called with me on his way from New Orleans, to the interior of the State; being quite sociable I made myself as much so as he, and we entered into a long conversation about places, and in a word, about the world in general, not forgetting to inquire a little about his business; so far as I could keep to supposition in his conversation, he seemed to be very much prejudiced against abolitionists, and in a word, all those opposed to the present system of slavery. After the expiration of some time he wished to retire for the night, I got him a light and showed him into my room. he requested me to call him early in the morning, as he was proceeding by stage to Georgetown. I replied I would see that he was called early enough, and breakfast ready in time for the stage. Returning from the room, I set the plan to murder him. I went to the room a considerable number of times, until everything was quiet, and he was asleep. I again visited his room and went close to him, and found he continued to sleep; I returned to the sitting room and told Maria we should not have much trouble in accomplishing it if she could only take courage; she consented to carry out the plan. I prepared for the contest, taking with me a good knife and a case of pistols, if the knife did not do its work the pistols would finish it; we proceeded easy, Maria holding the light, we entered the chamber where he slept, after an examination we found his pantaloons remained on him, in a few minutes 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 when warm and shoved him into a French packing case, we had great difficulty to get him down into it, we were obliged to break his legs and arms before we could nail down the cover, the box remained in the cellar of the wood house until the following night. Maria Mars and myself harnessed the horse, and with great difficulty we got the box into the waggon, we started about twelve o'clock at night, it was gray moonlight, we were getting along better than I anticipated ; we proceeded some six miles, then drove some distance into the wood for fear of being observed by travellers ; we there stopped and tied our horse to a tree, taking with us a spade ; we then dug a hole large enough to hold the box ; we then took it off the waggon and deposited it in the grave ; we lost no time in covering it up ; we speedily got into the waggon ; the deed of murder had been finally completed, we returned home, and arrived before the citizens were up. This undertaking occurred about the 10th of November, 1846. I adjusted everything, and examined the property which I got by this horrid murder ; it amounted to two thousand dollars ; I divided it with Miss Mars ; the acquisition of such an important sum, failed not to inspire her with courage, together with my advice. I became almost certain of her unshrinking fortitude, notwithstanding her youth, she being about nineteen or twenty years of age.

I wish to assure the reader I was about to change my life from such cruel acts on the human family, as I had plenty of money, all I wanted was a remote retreat for the remainder of my days, imagining I should some future day fall into the hands of Justice, although my success was beyond measure. I placed my mind on an old gentleman, who resided near Williamstown, in the same State, whose name was Anderson, having no person belonging to him but one sister, who was never married, and who was much attached to her brother, and he to her ; thinking in my own mind I would resign such depredation, 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 were married in the month of December, 1848, and lived with him after disposing of such property as I owned in Covington. I thought my happiness was complete, but found his sister Jane and I could not agree. I urged my husband to send her from the house and pay her board, as I was well aware my happiness would be limited as long as she remained. She wanted to have the sole management of everything as she had previous to my coming, at the same time giving neither me nor Maria any respect, backbiting us upon all occasions. I reasoned to myself, I have remedied many an evil in my life, and you are the worst I ever met, and she too an old maid, and now all my comforts are to be lost, I will finish you, and resolved in my own mind for it to be the last. My husband in a few days went to Cincinnati. I expected him to be absent some time. The following morning he started for the city, in a few days after I made up my mind to finish her. I arose next morning and went into her bed room.

I took hold of her and choked her before I let her go. The next thing was to bury her; I thought of an old tree with a decayed trunk in which the body could be buried. I took a spade and an axe with me and soon made a hole large enough to contain her remains. 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 to my misfortune it was seen, the grave being opened, the victim raised, the inquest held, and a verdict of wilful murder by blows inflicted on the deceased, returned, and on that very day, October 7th, I was bound in irons to await my trial.

The reader will perceive a man represented in the picture standing in the woods who saw me drag the body from her own residence, and cover it with earth; he remained unperceived until we returned to the house, when he went and opened the grave which was well filled up. And now I remember the old saying, "long runs the fox, but he is caught at last." I am bound in irons, no art or artifice of man or woman can extricate me, I will therefore prepare to die, to follow many to the brink of eternity when they disappear from this world forever. Oh, how happy should I be if I was about to die this very moment in any way but by being suspended by a rope. Oh lamentable fate! long have I deserved it, but alas it comes too soon; but I must endeavor to be resigned. When I contemplate all the inhuman murders I have committed, my soul asks the question, did not your victims possess the same feelings as you do? Oh! my heart has been hard! Happy should I have been had I never been born; my life is almost over now, what is the world with all its vice and vanity to me? I shall soon meet my doom. Grievously do I mourn that I did not die before I committed my first cruel 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 within the narrow limits of a prison cell, under the charge of murder, at the same time aware of my own guilt, and knowing I shall have to die for the same; but a mispent life is the sure reward of a miserable end; I see with sorrow the saying exemplified upon myself. Reader, whoever you are, think upon the sorrow which fills my soul, with the gates of eternity yawning to take it into the region of an invisible world, with the blackest crimes ever recorded on the pages of history. Picture to yourself those dreadful events, and perhaps my life has been one unequalled for murder. My remarks may teach a youthful lesson of instruction to all fathers and mothers to instruct their children in the way they should go, and by planting in their minds and hearts a proper course to pursue, and by attending strictly to this course they would have the pleasure in their old age to see their children pass from that stage of delusion which surrounds the youthful. Restrain their minds from the path of too much pleasure which is so inviting. In my early days I was indulged too much for my happiness; and growing up I became headstrong, which was the chief cause of my ruin; and now after passing the flower of my days I look back, if through a sandy region, and view my inhuman crimes rising up before me clearer than they did the moment I committed them, because the temptation of Satan bore me along, I thought no more of what I did then, than if I did not do it at all; in a word, it did not cost me a thought; but it is different now. I wish I was cast into the bottom of the river, or crumble into the dust from whence I came, the same as I was before the breath of life entered me. I hope the perusal of my

life may teach a lesson that will never be forgotten as long as the human family lives. My greatest grief is, that my suffering death on the scaffold cannot atone for my grievous crimes. I will turn from this meditation, and think of Maria, to whom I have determined to write my last request, as time might not permit it again, and bid her my last farewell.

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

MARY JANE GORDON."

The term of the sitting of the court approaching, her thoughts lay concentrated upon that time—the anguish of a troubled soul increased until the very day arrived she was arraigned before the judge and jury, and presented an air of carelessness, though deep the crime she was charged with. 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 counselors' debates, the judge's charge to the jury, her sentence, and death. The judge having taken his seat, the jury were called; and, after taking their seats, they were sworn by the clerk. The clerk then read the indictment found against the prisoner, Mary Jane Gordon, for the willful murder of Jane Anderson, of the town of Covington, in the State of Kentucky, whose life she took on the morning of the 7th of October, in the year 1848. She being asked by the court, if she was guilty or not guilty—she replied, "Not guilty!" By permission from the court, the prosecuting counsel called George Hubbard as one of the witnesses on the part of the prosecution. He was asked on his forward examination what he knew about this matter. He replied, that "on the morning of the 7th of October, 1848, I was out fowling, it being very early. As I was going along the outskirts of the woods, I saw a woman dragging something down the side of the fence; and as soon as she came to this tree she stopped, and commenced to dig and shovel. It appeared so strange to me, at so early an hour in the morning, that I stopped for some time, in order to ascertain all about it. She returned the same road she came, and went into Mr. Anderson's house. I remained for a few minutes after she departed, and then proceeded to the place I had seen her at work. I found the earth fresh, and I was led to believe there was something wrong. I immediately returned home with my gun on my shoulder, having but little game that morning. As soon as I entered I told my wife all I had seen, and asked her what was best to do. She said nothing to my question. I made up my mind I would know it all. I then took my spade, went to the spot, commenced digging the clay, and in a few minutes I saw a piece of white muslin. I continued a little longer until, finally, I raised the body of Jane Anderson. I left the remains there, and went and had this prisoner arrested."

The counsel for the prisoner rose and asked the witness, "Where

was you that morning?" Mr. Hubbard replied, "In the woods." "You were in the woods?" "Yes, sir." "Did you ever see this woman before you saw her in this court?" "No, sir; but once after her marriage." "How far might you have been in the woods that morning?" "About fifty rods—on the outskirts of the woods." "Did you not say, on your forward examination, that you were in the woods?" "I said I was walking along the outskirts of the woods." "Well, at what hour of the day was it?" "I think it was about six o'clock in the morning." "Did you specify that hour on your forward examination?" "No, sir; I made use of the expression, 'very early.'" "What dress had she on at the time you saw her?" "I could not tell: I was not near enough to discover the color of her dress." "What color do you know?" "I know black from white, and red from blue."—(Laughter in the court.)—"You, sir, may sit down." Upon which Mrs. H. Hubbard was called, and being asked what she knew about the matter, said, "I know nothing, only what my husband told me: that on the morning of the 7th of October my husband went out to fowl, being early in the morning; he was absent about one hour and a half; when he returned, he told me he saw a woman covering something under the root of a large tree in Mr. Anderson's field, and she returned and went into Mr. Anderson's house." Counsel for the prisoner, "Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" "No, sir." "Do you think you ever saw her?" "Not to my knowledge." "Had your husband any understanding, previous to your coming into this court, as to your testimony in this case?" "No, sir." "Do you know any thing more?" "Nothing more: only that my husband returned and told me Jane Anderson was murdered by this woman, and buried underneath the large tree in Mr. Anderson's field, and was taken for the same." "You may sit down." Upon which the constable, Thomas Williams, was called, and said, "When I repaired to her residence to arrest her, I went to the house of Mr. Anderson and rapped, but no one answered; I went into the yard, and observed her in the cellar, with a spade in her hand, digging a hole; I went down and arrested her; there were some clothes lying alongside of the hole where she was digging; I made inquiries as to whom the clothes belonged, but she would not give me any satisfaction; she said the clothes were her own—I took the clothes with me."—(They were produced in court, and proven to be those of deceased.)—The counsel for the prisoner asked of the court the privilege to ask the witness, Mr. Hubbard, a few more questions, upon which Mr. H. was called, and her counsel asked him, "Did you know at the time it was a woman?" "I did." "How did you know?" "By one way: the awkwardness with which she handled the spade." "You know by that way; still you were so far off you could not distinguish her dress, and yet you say it was a woman; might it not have been a man?" "It might have been a man." "Will you swear it might have been a man?" "No, sir; but I will swear it was a woman: for as soon as I perceived the action I came as close as I could to see if I would 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 foot of the tree." Upon which Maria Mars, being called, said, "I saw Mrs. Anderson go to bed on the night previous; next morning I came down stairs, and saw Mrs. Anderson in the kitchen, with her night-cap on, lighting the fire; I knew no more until the constable came in and arrested the prisoner on suspicion for the murder of

Jane Anderson." The counsel for defence asked the last witness, "Do you know any more?" "I know no more." "Did you ever know this woman to commit murder?" "No, sir." "You can tell if you wish?" "Well, sir, I do not wish; I have told all I know about this matter." The counsel told her she might sit down.

Upon which the counsel on behalf of the prisoner arose, and said:—"May it please the Court—Gentlemen of the Jury—The prisoner at the bar, now arraigned before you for a crime, I must say, the most heinous ever recorded on the pages of history ancient or modern—and for a female to commit. Gentlemen—This female has a character to lose; since she came among us she has behaved herself respectably, like a female of good moral character. How, gentlemen, could she feel in her heart to have such antipathy against her sister-in-law—she who but a short time ago enjoyed the society of marriage festivities together, and whose acquaintance was for some time known previous to her marriage; and after such a welcome unanimity—how could she, I say, embroil her hands in the blood of her nearest friend? From the evidence produced in this trial, on the part of the prosecution, it does not, in my opinion, go on to show one solid proof or shade of her guilt. The only evidence adduced worthy of note is that of Mr. Hubbard's. He goes on to show, in my opinion, but very few facts in the case, which I mean to show the court. He goes on to say he was on his journey to fowl that morning, and he observed at a distance some person dragging something which they held in their arms: for the sake of argument, I shall admit this individual was the person who buried the body of the deceased; but I wish to show the court that it might as well be Miss Mars, or some other person, as the prisoner—from the fact that he, Mr. H., was so far off that he could not tell the color of the person's dress! And I ask the court, how could he prove it to be this individual? The evidence seems to me too preposterous to prove any thing so inconsistent as a thin-looking woman, at such an hour in the morning, to be strolling through the woods! He goes on farther to say, that she was taken, and sent to prison before 7 o'clock in the morning. Miss Mars wisely and judiciously asserts, that when she came down stairs, at 7 o'clock in the morning, Mrs. Anderson was lighting a fire in the kitchen, which contradicts Mr. Hubbard's statement altogether! I do not wish to detain the court much longer: but I think the court and jury are convinced that the evidence produced has but little weight, as it is merely circumstantial, and without one solid proof. Gentlemen of the Jury, so inconsistent a subject was never brought before this court! Recollect the life of a woman is in your hands! I only wish you to give the evidence such merit as it deserves; but bear in mind what a dreadful thing it is to die! In your hands rests the life of a female, the thought of which blanches the cheek, and sends the fearful blood running to the heart! Remember it is a solemn thing to break into the bloody house of life! Do not think for a moment that the life of this female is valueless—she is no driftwood on the ocean of life. There is in her bosom the same sympathies—the same special sympathies—that animates our own. Her nerves are made to feel pain—her heart is made to throb with human affection, even as ours does. Take her life, it is of no value; give it to her, it is far above the price of rubies! Some of you are advanced in years—some of you may have children: suppose one of you had a daughter, and 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

mother! Think of the shadow which has been cast over the home of her absence—think of her parents in the hour of their wretchedness, when anxiety and despair comes home to their bosoms! Let the supplication of the unfortunate criminal strike home, and touch your hearts. Let me once more entreat you to bear continually in mind that the life of a female is in your hands. Remember it is better that 'ninety-nine guilty persons should escape punishment, rather than one innocent person suffer!' And I hope and trust the court will instruct you on that point." Upon which the learned and eloquent gentlemen retired to his seat.

Upon which the district counsel for the prosecution arose, and in a brief statement remarked, he did not wish to detain the court much longer on the present case pending, although he looked upon it as of much importance, believing as he did, that the evidence produced on the trial was clear and satisfactory, and undeviating, but, gentlemen of the jury, as counsel for the prosecution, I wish to make a few remarks upon this important trial; not for the appearance, but the horror of the crime, and before I draw your attention to the case, I wish you to understand the history of the prisoner now arraigned before you; this woman is a fugitive from justice in her native land, she escaped the walls of a prison, and her companion in crime was hung for the same. Gentlemen, I refer you to the full particulars of her life written by herself, which I now hold in my hand, and which you will find in the Glasgow review, in the year 1838. I hold in my hand the statistics and history of her whole life. I challenge contradiction on the facts I now state, that after the most cruel murders in her native land she arrived in this country in the year of 1840, on board the ship Terolinta, Capt. Smith, commander; she sailed from Liverpool in the month of December, 1839, and arrived in the port of New York, February 15th 1840. You will find in her life the mode by which she murdered her child, her husband, her father, together with many others, those particulars are explained in full in her own handwriting. Gentlemen, I present those remarks to your consideration. I merely leave those records with you to inform you of the character of the prisoner, and to do justice to yourselves and the world. I shall cease relating any more of her horrible life; you are now in full possession of the character of this inhuman wretch now present before you, but as it does not become the court and jury to study her life, further than the believing her innocent, or if in their opinion she is guilty, of course we demand a verdict of that effect, I will now proceed to the particulars connected with the crime which she is charged with. Mary Jane Gordon, was married to Mr. Anderson a short time ago; he having no wife previous to his present marriage, his sister Jane kept house for him, they had lived very agreeable together, they were much attached to each other; she took as much care of him as if he had been gold dust: but after he got married his sister thinking her authority at an end in her brother's house and the residence of her father, caused a dispute and a bad feeling in the family; they of course led a discontented life; so much so that her life became a burden to her. You see, gentlemen, Mr. Hubbard is a man of standing in this country, he went out early on that fatal morning, at a distance he saw some individual working among the roots of an old decayed tree. At such an early hour in the morning it attracted his attention, and being eager to know the particulars, advanced nearer to the individual until he was near enough to perceive the person to be a woman, notwithstanding the distance from her at first, and being curious enough to

know the cause of her labor, and knowing a little about her as appears in his evidence, he watched her and saw her go into Mr. Anderson's house, at the same time he marked the fatal spot, in order to know it again on his return; he returned home and stating to his wife what he had seen, which appears from each of their evidences; he returned taking with him his spade, and on arriving at the fatal spot commenced digging and in a few minutes found deposited in this pit the body of the murdered female. What mind can contemplate on this inhuman scene—is it not enough to make humanity shudder to dwell upon this sad story, Mr. Hubbard wisely returned home and sent a constable and had her arrested; you also recollect the constable's statement; he said he found her burying the clothes of some female, which in my opinion goes on to prove much; yes, gentlemen of the jury, it seems to me as clear as noon day that she is guilty; you have heard the evidence produced, I deem it unnecessary to comment on it, from the fact that it is so clear and satisfactory, beyond a doubt. I see it to my satisfaction, if not to yours too. Gentlemen, you are called by your country to deal with impartiality the laws of God and society, the canons of the Living God demands and claims it of you; you therefore labor under the painful circumstances in which you are placed. Discharge the duties therefore intrusted to you: let no self-motive or prejudice under the canopy of heaven sway you from returning in my clients favor such a verdict as we merit. As I think the proofs are satisfactory, together with the strong circumstances that she committed the horrible crime, gentlemen, I therefore submit my claims to your good judgment. Upon which the learned gentlemen resigned.

The judge then rose and addressed the jury: Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner, Mary Jane Gordon, now arraigned before you, for the murder of Jane Anderson, you have heard the testimony produced, and of course from it you must draw your conclusions; in order to come to a proper determination in your own minds, whether to the guilt or innocence of the prisoner, is by weighing the evidence carefully and impartially, and by so doing you can come to a conclusion in your minds in a short time; if you consider the testimony sufficient to prove she has committed the deed, you have a right to give a verdict in favor of the prosecution; if you consider in your minds the evidence is not sufficiently clear, of course you have a right to return a verdict to that effect. It seems to me the evidence is undeviating, from which no other idea can be entertained by the court but one of convincing guilt in perpetrating this horrid crime. If, peradventure, there was the slightest foundation for a doubt of your innocence, in my opinion the charge of the court would be arrested; but I am sorry to say there is none; the court is persuaded of your atrocious crime; I can form no other opinion from the testimony produced. The jury retired, and in a few hours returned into court, with a verdict of guilty, in the first degree. The prosecuting counsel then rose and said, may it please the court, Mary Jane Gordon, prisoner at the bar, having being tried and found guilty, I now move for the sentence on that verdict by the court.

Mary Jane Gordon, have you anything to say why the sentence of the law should not be passed upon you? She replied, nothing, but I am innocent. Your case has been heard, and the court waited patiently to hear it. You have been found guilty; you stand now for the last time before an earthly tribunal, and by the testimony produced, and the verdict of the jury you must receive the sentence of the law, and that

sentence is death. When men are drawn into ordinary circumstances under the penalty of such, there is generally some palliation, something to attract the sympathy of the court and jury; human nature may be led astray by giving way to passion, laboring under those circumstances, depriving them of reason, and then they might be tempted to take the life of an individual. Depriving of life under that kind of excitement, might have some sympathy with the court. But this was not your case; as far as discovered by the testimony produced on the trial, you received no provocation to take that which you could not give; it appears to me that you slept and mediated on it deliberately, and when an opportunity offered, you embraced it so inhuman for your sex. You have been tempted, and have yielded—depriving her of that so dear to us all. You say you are innocent, that is beyond the power of the court to believe or credit. Notwithstanding all this, I cannot believe your heart is so hard that your conscience does not feel grieved when you look back on the path you have laid waste, and the many crimes you have committed, and the perilous condition you are placed in at present. I exhort you in the name of christianity to repent of the numerous cruelties and murders you have committed, and think seriously for one moment what an awful thing it is to die in such a state, to leave the world, and appear before him who rules the universe, to answer for the crimes you have committed on this earth, in imbruing your hands in blood of your fellow creatures. Your appearance and remarks have added sufficient proofs, in my mind, that you are more than ordinary intelligent; and after having enjoyed the advantage of a liberal education, a cultivated mind, and arrived to the years of mature womanhood, you are arraigned before this court as a murderess. Oh how shocking to relate, the sentence of the law is death; and it only remains for the minister of the law to pronounce the sentence of the law, which I do very reluctantly, and may God in his infinite mercy forgive you. You, Mary Jane Gordon, shall be taken to the place of your confinement, there to remain until the 24th day of February, 1849, when you shall be hung by the neck until your body is dead; between the hours of 8 and 4 o'clock. This time being granted by the court that some pious divine might visit her, in order to prepare her soul for eternity; to reflect and repent of her past misdeeds, that her soul might be in a better state to meet her Divine Redeemer. After receiving her sentence she seemed deeply affected, shedding tears, and in a few moments she was removed by the sheriff to her cell. She seemed forgetful of her approaching fate, and gazed with unwavering steadiness on those who came to visit her; no sign betrayed the least emotion of her heart. After her sentence her frame got feeble, and her face pale, her eyes sunk more than ordinary; yet she still entertained a hope of a reprieve from the governor. While in the narrow cell she seemed regardless of her coming doom, the reverend divine who attended her with that zeal and attention which inspired him with animating love of religion; he spoke to her about the important journey she was about to make; and also on her mispent life, a life of enormous cruelties, that she might be found prepared to leave this world and partake of the joys of heaven; and although the enormities of her crimes exceeded human imagination, yet she would obtain mercy if she only repented and believed in Christ. The day arrived when she was about to breathe her last. She was told to prepare; she seemed to be much affected, and before going out she confessed to me the many crimes she had committed, which she

wished published to the world after her death, which I shall state hereafter. When the sheriff, attended by me, went to the cell door to warn her of immediate preparation, I assure the reader, no matter how cruel she might have been, it was the most solemn scene I ever beheld, or my mind contemplated on; much more to see her dressing for an ignominious death. On the scaffold, her countenance changed as often as the moments passed. Just for a moment picture to your imagination the terrible scene of one of the human race dressed in the last garment of this world's texture, to pass away for ever from this world; to appear before the God of Justice with the mark of murder on her brow. At length the appointed moment arrived, and she appeared in the presence of those who came to witness her shameful end. She was asked by the sheriff, had she anything to say. She replied, nothing, but a miserable end is the sure reward of a mispent life. I acknowledge I am guilty of the murder I am about to die for. I hope I shall be the last of my sex that will be executed for such a crime. I hope my appearance on this scaffold will be a lesson of instruction to young and old. I bid adieu to this world, I now die. The rope being placed round her neck, the trap let go, she was launched into eternity. She hung suspended for nearly one hour, when her body was taken down and placed inside the prison walls, where she is now reposing in her last sleep of death; after a life the most inhuman; a life pregnant with deeds of atrocity which lives in the memory of all those who read the sad story of her life. When I take a cursory view of this unfortunate female, and draw before my mind those inhuman deeds which shock the mind on their reality, let us imagine we see the souls of those standing before the throne of him who rules the universe; and that we hear the dreadful sentence, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. Imagine you hear the lamentation of the souls in hell, it should be enough to melt your hearts were they as the rock of adamant, you would fall prostrate on your knees and plead for mercy as a famished child would plead for shelter, or a dying criminal would for pardon. I hope she has received a favorable judgment from the Supreme Ruler, and that the perusal of this may teach a lesson of useful instruction to the youth who are rising to the age of maturity, to avoid the path of dissipation and vice by which they are surrounded and, as a warning to all parents and guardians to instil and cultivate youthful instruction into the mind of their children as a preventative to their being led astray from the path of morality in their youth, which laid the foundation of her ignominious end. The early follies of her youth not being restrained until too late; she at length sank into desperation, and growing with her riper years brought her at last to an ignominious end on the scaffold.

CONFESSION OF MARY JANE GORDON,

NARRATED BY THE REV. MR. LEMAN, PASTORAL MINISTER OF THE TOWN
OF COVINGTON, STATE OF KENTUCKY.



"I was born on the 21st day of February, in the year of our Lord 1816, in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland. My father was an American, born in Westchester county, in the State of New York, who fled his country. His property being confiscated, he became a pirate on the Eastern coast during the late war of 1812 and 1813. He came to Scotland and got married to my mother, her name being Maria Bruce, and she was heiress to my grand-father's estate, which was the means to make me what I am. I got married to Charles How, captain of the barque Eliza Jane, who was trading to and from New York. In my youth, previous to my marriage, I reveled in all the enjoyments of a city life, resorted to balls, theatres, and, in a word, every public amusement. Romance and novel reading were my drawing-room companions. My husband's pay not being sufficient to give me all those amusements I had been used to, I became disgusted with a married life, and I took a hatred to my husband. Our jealousies increased from time to time, causing a most deplorable life. I resolved to separate from him for ever, as I could get others much wealthier than he. After due time I was confined in his absence while at sea. I was tempted to destroy the life of the innocent, which I did, in order to give me a better opportunity to carry out my policy. I carried it to the bank of the River Clyde, rolling it in a coarse

linen bag, after being eight days old. When I took it out and looked at it, I felt reluctance at 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 for a moment, not knowing what to do, and the danger of delaying on the bank of the river: at last I turned around to fulfill the object of my journey. I lifted some gravel, put it into the bag, and then I cast it into the mighty waters! I felt sorrowful for the crime; but I said to myself, 'It is now too late to repair the loss of the innocent.' I returned home; and in one month after that time my husband arrived from his voyage. He inquired about my child; I denied I ever had a child: after which he withdrew his support from me. I used my best endeavors to compel him; but to no effect. He exposed me publicly and privately; I resolved to take his life; I sent him a letter for the purpose of inducing him to come and see me," (which the reader will see in pages 9 and 10.) "The letter having the effect I desired, before I let him depart I accomplished my task. Shortly after, I took up with a young girl by the name of Gow, who was executed afterwards for murder. We lived a life of licentiousness. As she and I were walking one afternoon, we observed a little girl on the side-walk, whom we murdered. We carried her into an old building, where we consummated the deed. After returning to our own residence, we saw Alexander Robinson and Samuel Smith standing opposite our door; of course, they came in. We all drank freely: and that very night, with the assistance of Gow, I strangled them. After taking all their money, we carried their bodies far enough, fearing, as day was approaching, we might be seen. Their bodies being found next morning, an inquest was held, and a verdict returned of willful murder, from blows inflicted by some person or persons unknown to the jury. The mayor offered a reward for the apprehension of the murderers. John Lyons and Charles Canning were taken the same afternoon, and were tried, condemned, and hung. I and Miss Gow went forward and swore it plump against them. I swore I saw Lyons and Canning murder Robinson and Smith. Each of our evidences were the same; and they were executed on the 2d day of December, 1838. Afterwards William M. Manus fled the country. Miss Gow 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 10th day of April, and bound in jail, from which I escaped, as the reader will find in the preceding pages of my life. I took the lives of three persons—their names I never knew—by the well known practice of kidnapping, as I found their bodies disposable to physicians. After my escape from prison, I immediately started for Liverpool, where I took shipping for New York, on board of the ship Tarolinta, Captain Smith. We arrived on the 15th day of February, 1840. A few days after my arrival, the first man I knew in the city was Mr. M. Manus, who fled from Scotland after swearing against Lyons and Canning. He was glad to see me; and we had a long discourse on matters relative of home. He told me, in our discourse at our boarding-house, the William-street Cottage, that he got acquainted with an old gentleman from Scotland, who had 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. The following week I started for St. Louis, and arrived at the old gentleman's residence. 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, and inquired every

thing about me. I told him nothing of my eventful life. He told me the cause of all his lonesomeness: that my sister got married some two years since, and died; as also my mother. I remained a little time in St. Louis with my father, but made up my mind to leave that city for Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio. With my advice, my father sold such property as he owned in that city, and started with me to Cincinnati. On our arrival, we stopped at the Cincinnati Hotel, in Front-street. We remained but one week at that hotel, when we took a house on the wharf, intending to keep boarders and sell liquor, thinking it would pay. Not long after, a barber from the south came to board a few days, he being on his way home, as I understood. He had plenty of money. I waited on him with every attention, and he seemed much pleased. In a short time after he wished to go to bed. I procured a light, and showed him into my own chamber. When I found he was asleep I cut his throat: and my father and I threw his body into the river the same night. On our return from executing our task, the owner of the boat (which my father had taken) asked my father what he was doing with his boat. My father told him the secret, and on the point of honor not to divulge it. I had to give \$300 to him; I took from the deceased about \$650. From that moment I resolved to part with my father. I began to remember the days when I was disowned, and his harshness to me. I wrote to M. Manus to assist me to accomplish his death, which appears in my life. And now, 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 thoughts of eternity shakes my very soul! and the dread of the melancholy scenes opening before me on my way through the gates of death, when I am going to appear before a just God, who requires of sinners that which I have never tried to practice. Yet I have one consolation: I believe he is just! When that awful moment arrives, in which I must appear before the throne of Heaven to receive the reward of a misspent life, with my soul stained with the deepest crimes that could be committed, alas! my sorrow is inconsolable. Oh! that I never had been born! The more I meditate, the more my sorrows increase. I think every moment that death is before my eyes with all its terrific scenes and sufferings! AMEN!

M. J. GORDON."

"Remember, gentle reader, I listened with attention, in the gloomy walls of a prison, while this victim delivered to me the history of her sad life, related by herself, part of which I omit, as it will be found entire in her life in the preceding pages of this book, together with the evidence produced in court on her trial, and the reader will recollect the effect it had on the court and jury. What my feelings were I cannot at this moment describe. They were beyond description or conception. But it was as solemn a scene as ever my eyes beheld. The like of which I never wish to hear of, much less to see again. It rent my very soul! and I am far from having recovered from the melancholy effect it had upon me. Before I conclude, I conjure all the members of the human race to keep this deplorable scene constantly before them; and to remember, that a misspent life has its sure reward: a shameful and miserable death!

Rev. A. LEMAN,

Covington, Kentucky."

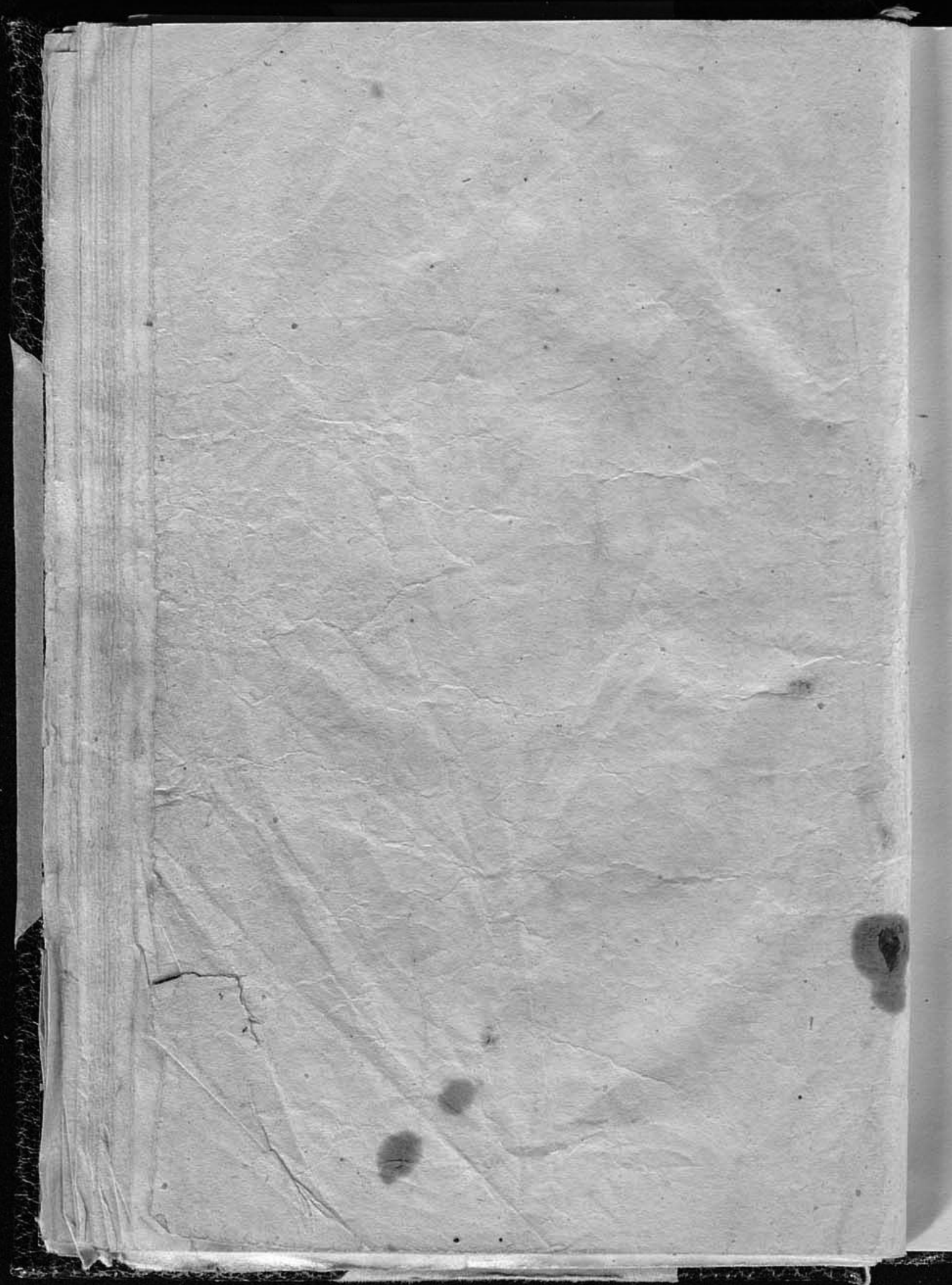
THE END.

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