

If I had had my piano, I should have cared little; but I had not a single book except one—and what do you think that was? An odd volume of the Newgate Calendar. I need hardly say that it had not the effect on me which it is said to have on some of its students: it moved me, indeed, to the profoundest sympathy, not with the crimes of the malefactors—only with the malefactors themselves and their mental condition after the deed was actually done. But it was with the fascination of a hopeless horror, making me feel almost as if I had committed every crime as I perused its tale, that I regarded them. They were to me like living crimes. It was not until long afterwards that I was able to understand that a man's actions are not the man, but may be separated from him; that his character even is not the man, but may be changed, while he yet holds the same individuality—is the man who was blind though he now sees; whence it comes that, the deeds continuing his, all stain of them may yet be washed out of him. I did not, I say, understand all this until afterwards, but I believe, odd as it may seem, that volume of the Newgate Calendar threw down the first deposit of soil from which afterwards sprang what grew to be almost a passion in me for getting the people about me clean—a passion which might have done as much harm as good if its companion patience had not been sent me to guide and restrain it. In a word, I came at length to understand in some measure the last prayer of our Lord for those that crucified Him, and the ground on which He begged from His Father their forgiveness—that they knew not what they did. If the Newgate Calendar was indeed the beginning of this course of education, I need not regret having lost my piano, and having that volume for a while as my only Aid to Reflection.

"My father had never talked much to me about religion, but when he did, it was with such evident awe in his spirit and reverence in his demeanour, as had more effect on me, I am certain, from the very paucity of the words in which his meaning found utterance. Another thing which had still more influence upon me was, that, waking one night after I had been asleep for some time, I saw him on his knees by my bedside. I did not move or speak, for fear of disturbing him; and, indeed, such an awe came over me, that it would have required a considerable effort of the will for any bodily movement whatever. When he lifted his head, I caught a glimpse of a pale, tearful face; and it is no wonder that the virtue of the sight should never have passed away.

"On Sundays we went to church in the morning, and in the afternoon, in fine weather, went

out for a walk; or, if it were raining or cold, I played to him till he fell asleep on the sofa. Then, in the evening, after tea, we had more music, some poetry, which we read alternately, and a chapter of the New Testament, which he always read to me. I mention this, to show you that I did not come all unprepared to the study of the Newgate Calendar. Still, I cannot think that, under any circumstances, it could have done an innocent child harm. Even familiarity with vice is not necessarily pollution. There cannot be many women of my age as familiar with it in every shape as I am; and I do not find that I grow to regard it with one atom less of absolute abhorrence, although I neither shudder at the mention of it, nor turn with disgust from the person in whom it dwells. But the consolations of religion were not yet consciously mine. I had not yet begun to think of God in any relation to myself.

"The house was in an old square, built, I believe, in the reign of Queen Anne, which, although many of the houses were occupied by well-to-do people, had fallen far from its first high estate. No one would believe, to look at it from the outside, what a great place it was. The whole of the space behind it, corresponding to the small gardens of the other houses, was occupied by a

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