

THE
 TRAGICAL HISTORY
 OF
CRAZY JANE,
 AND
 YOUNG HENRY.

Giving an Account of their Birth, Parentage,
 Courtship, and melancholy End.

FOUNDED ON FACTS, BY SARAH WILKINSON.



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CRAZY JANE.

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THE unfortunate beauty, whose wanderings of imagination through an ill-fated attachment, had gained her the appellation of Crazy Jane, was the youngest daughter of Mr Arnold, a substantial farmer in Wiltshire. He had four children by Margaret, his excellent wife, (who was still living,) Lubin, Lucy, Annette, and the lovely Jane, who, from her earliest childhood, was remarkable for her superior beauty, and the elegance of her person; and justly bore away the palm of admiration from her juvenile companions. Her long hair, which was naturally formed into the most beautiful tresses, was of the lightest brown: her eyes were of the deepest blue; and at each glance shot forth a radiant lustrè beaming with expression. She was tall, slender, and

exquisitely formed. Her lips were coral, and her skin the unsullied mountain snow. Her voice was melodiously sweet; and an innocent, artless gaiety displayed itself in all her actions. Such was Jane at the age of seventeen. As yet her heart had been free from the enslaving power of love. Her beauty had indeed attracted many suitors; but none of them had succeeded in gaining the affections of the youthful mind. Lubin, her only brother, was in his twenty-fourth year, and was as much endowed with masculine as his sister was with feminine beauty. Lucy and Annetta might both be entitled to the denomination of pretty agreeable girls, but no farther.

About two miles distant from farmer Arnold, resided Mr Percival, who, having been many years a woollen-draper in the city of London and accumulated a decent fortune, retired with his daughter Rosetta, who after her mother's death had been his housekeeper, at the pleasant village of Rosewood, where they inhabited a small though neat mansion, built in the cottage style, and surrounded by a beautiful garden, bordered on the western side by a meandering rivulet, which flowered in gentle murmurs; while the distant clacking of the mill, and a deep sounding waterfall, added to the rural beauties of the scene.

Next to this fair Jane, Rosetta was esteemed the handsomest girl in that part of the country. She was in her nineteenth year, and her truly amiable manners soon gained her the esteem of the

surrounding families; and among the rest, farmer Arnold's Rosetta admired all the sisters, but particularly attached herself to Jane. Their sentiments were congenial; and their chief happiness seemed to be in each others society. Often with the permission of her parents, Jane would repair to Mr Percival's, and reside with her dear Rosetta for three or four days at a time. Together they would wander through the mazes of an adjacent wood, gather wild flowers or fruit, or visit the cottagers or their poor neighbours, and relieve their wants as far as their own ability would allow. Often as they roved, arm in arm, their discourse would turn to Henry, Rosetta's brother, whom she tenderly loved, and sincerely regretted his absence.

On their departure from London, Henry had refused to accompany his father and sister to Rosetwood; but accepted an advantageous offer, which was made him by a merchant, who was distantly related to the family, to remain with him in the capacity of his head clerk, which was a very lucrative employment. Mr Percival and his daughter had now been in Wiltshire two years, and as yet had received no visit from Henry, whom his sister represented as one of the finest youths of the age, both in mental and personal accomplishments.

One morning Jane was agreeably surpris'd by a very early and unexpected visit from Rosetta. Her young friend produced a letter, which she had received late the preceding night. It was

from Henry, and announced the pleasing intelligence, that he should be at Rosewood on the following Monday, where she meant to remain four times. His visit, he informed them, was owing to his relation's sudden determination of quitting England for the West Indies, in order to make a personal investigation of his property: and thither the youth felt no inclination to accompany him: but resolved to repair to Rosewood, and remain sometime with his father previous to his forming a new settlement for himself.

As soon as Rosetta had imparted the contents of the letter, she intreated Mr Arnold to permit his three daughter to visit her on the day appointed for Henry's arrival, as her father intended to make it a kind of a festival. The farmer readily acquiesced; and it was agreed that the families should repair to Rosewood at an early hour of the forenoon, and that Lubin should join the gay party at the commencement of the evening share in their pleasures, and escort his sister home. Rosetta then departed; and the intervening time was spent by farmer Arnold's daughters in preparing their village sinery for the occasion. Monday arrived, and with it a serious disappointment. Annetta was seized with a sudden indisposition; and the attendance of Lubin was necessary. But in compliance with the desire of her parents, Jane kept her appointment as they were unwilling to deprive Rosetta of the company of her friend. She was dressed in a white robe; and a straw hat, ornamented with

wreath of fancy flowers, was tied under the chin by a lilac ribbon. Passing through a grove in her way to Mr Percival's, she was overtaken by a young gentleman of the most prepossessing appearance, who enquired of her the way to Rosewood. She immediately informed him; and a few moments conversation made it known, that it was Henry Percival who addressed her. Tempted by the fineness of the morning, he had discharged his chaise at the last town, and leaving his luggage at the inn, proceeded on foot.

Pleased with the society of each other, Henry and Jane proceeded on, arm in arm, to Rosewood, where they were affectionately welcomed by Mr Percival and Rosetta, who had from the windows of the parlour beheld the approach of the youthful pair.

The return of Henry to his family was celebrated with the utmost festivity. The company assembled on the occasion were plentifully regaled, and the young people danced on the grass-plot that adorned the front of Mr Percival's dwelling. Rosetta was Lubin's partner; and Jane was Henry's. Never did four persons appear so superlative happy. Joy beamed in their eyes, and the glow of delight flushed in their cheeks. When the hour of separation arrived, young Percival insisted on accompanying Lubin and Jane home to their parental dwelling; alledging, that, as the hour was very late, her brother's protection might not be sufficient to ensure the safety of the gentle maiden.

From the sprightly gaiety of Henry, which seemed to flow spontaneously from a pure unsophisticated heart, no one around him had suspected the traits of vice that lay lurking in his breast. His person and behaviour was formed to captivate, and he rarely failed to excite either friendship, or the more ardent passion love, in these objects that he laboured to inspire with them.

His being Jane's escort, introduced him to Mr Arnold and his wife, who pleased with the manners of their new visitor, and in consideration of his being the brother of the dear Rosette, gave him a general invitation to the farm, which he eagerly embraced; and availed himself of every opportunity that offered, to be in company with the innocent Jane, and whisper in her ears soft vows of love, and declare an affection never to end but with death. The heart of the youthful maiden was not proof against the seductive power of his tongue. Henry soon gained the entire possession of her affections; nor was he long ignorant of her sentiments in his favour. The pleasing consideration, instead of inspiring him with the wish of calling her his own by indissoluble ties, and sharing with her the inestimable blessing of domestic felicity, only prompted him to proceed in a base design he had formed against her honour, even at the first interview. A base ambition fired Henry's soul. Not content with the handsome competency which he would eventually derive from his father, and a handsome subsistence that he could earn himself, he had

pre-determined never to marry unless he could meet with some woman with an independent fortune in her own hands. Indeed, for no other purpose than gaining such an end, would he ever have bestowed a thought on marriage, but always treated the mention of that sacred ceremony with unhalloved ridicule. As yet no fair one, calculated to gratify his avaricious passions, had fell in his way; but many a hapless fair one had become the victim of his seductive arts. The beauty of the interesting Jane, and the dispositions of herself and family, who virtuous and benevolent in themselves, suspected no guile in others, appeared to this monster of deceit, as a fair opportunity of accomplishing his base designs, by luring her from a peaceful home.

This depraved youth felt no difficulty in persuading Jane that his father would be averse to his marriage with one that had so small a portion. Alas! this he knew to be a false assertion; for Mr Percival would have very readily consented, so great was his opinion of farmer Arnold's daughters, to have received any one of them into his family; more particularly Jane, who had ever been a great favourite with the old gentleman. Every one beheld a visible partiality between Henry and Jane, and concluded that it would lead to a lasting attachment. But none, no, not even Rosetta, or the brother and sisters of the maiden, ever supposed that their intercourse had proceeded to such lengths. Every night, when the rest of farmer Arnold's family had retired to

repose, Jane stole from her chamber to meet her lover in the grove, and wandered whole hours, guided by Cynthia's reflecting light; Henry, breathing all the vows of an impassioned lover, and Jane listening with delight. For some months did the dear delusion last; and the breast of Jane was the abode of love, innocence, and hope, till one fatal hour when the guardian angel of virtue slept, and the demon of vice reigned triumphant, the ill-fated Jane surrendered her virtue to the importunities of the deceitful Henry, and bade adieu to peace for ever—till she sunk to the narrow confines of the grave. Ah, ye fair daughters of the earth! Nature's choicest work, did you rightly consider the pre-eminence of virtue, and your own conscious dignity, how few, if any, would depart from the path pointed out by rectitude, religion, and honour!

At the next interview that took place between Henry and our unfortunate maiden; after the fatal triumph of the former, her swollen eyes, and altered countenance, declared the poignancy of her feelings, and that remorse had already taken possession of her soul. Henry exerted all his eloquence to soothe her griefs; even his callous heart received a pang at her altered appearance. His arguments renewed her smiles; and he promised to repair to London in a few weeks, and seek for a situation in some commercial house, that should enable him to maintain his lovely Jane, in case their father should be offended at their marriage, the solemnization of which was

take place at Henry's return at Rosewood. With such fallacious promises as these did he cure the youthful victim of credulity to further it; and lull the keenness of that sorrow he could not wholly dissipate.

Just at this period, Lubin Arnold made rather sudden overtures to Mr Percival for the hand of Rosetta; the declaration of his love being hastened by the knowledge that Squire Swinford had already made proposals highly advantageous to her. Mr Percival resolved to decide the question of his daughter's choice; the prospect of accumulating riches could not dazzle for a moment his understanding. Rosetta did not hesitate to declare her affection for Lubin, and an early day was appointed for their nuptials. The wedding was kept at Mr Arnold's, who gave the entertainment in the true style of English hospitality, and his daughters exerted themselves in welcoming their new sister to her future abode. It was agreed that Lubin, being in partnership with his father, with his bride should reside at the farm; and that Lucy should take upon herself the charge of Mr Percival's domestic affairs, and reside at Rosewood.

The happiness of Rosetta, and the modest cheerfulness that displayed itself in every look during their nuptial feast, gave many a bitter pang to the heart of the lovely Jane. Not that she wished to see her friend less happy; or indulged the baneful passion of envy; no, but it made her feel the horrors of her own situation. Instead

of a joyous bride, surrounded by approving friends she was a miserable dependant on the honour of a man, of whose veracity she had of late strong and painful doubts. In the course of the evening, Jane found an opportunity of conversing, unobserved, with Henry, and reposing her griefs in his bosom. How powerful is the language of persuasion from the lips of those we love! The youth called heaven to witness, that she was more dear to him than his own life; and that he would sooner suffer the most agonizing tortures that invention could devise or cruelly inflict, than allow the idol of his heart to become the theme of babbling tongues. In short, Jane soon felt a conviction, that she had wronged her lover by her suspicions of his faith, and was eager to obtain his pardon for an offence that she blamed herself for committing against their mutual love. Ere they returned to the company, Jane reminded Henry, that she thought the alliance that had taken place in their two families, would remove the bar of their own union: as she could not suppose Mr Percival would raise any objections to it, after he had so readily consented to join the hands of Lubin and Rosetta.

Master, as Henry was, of dissimulation, yet this reasonable suggestion of the fair victim of his deceit staggered him; he was (what rarely occurred to him) at a loss for an answer. At length he stammered forth a few sentences, almost incoherent from his agitation, that he

would inform his father of the attachment, if his dear Jane insisted on such a sacrifice, which he knew would be attended with fatal consequences to his future prospects. "Consider, that the situation and property of Labin are far superior to my sister's. He did not object to the alliance of the Arnolds with his daughter; but old age, my best love, will be avaricious; and he has far higher views for his son." "Which he will doubtless, (replied Jane, the tears starting from her expressive eyes,) comply with, and sacrifice his love to filial duty." Henry appeared hurt at this suggestion; but in a few moments recovering himself to his usual placidity, he strove to give confidence and composure to the breast of Jane, and at this time succeeded. At a late hour the company separated to the extreme relief of Jane, who was anxious to retire to the solitude of her chamber, and commune with her own thoughts. Of Henry's conduct she knew not what to think. She loved him, sincerely loved him; and she feared to lose him by ill-timed expressions, or dissatisfaction, or doubt; yet she knew herself to be in a situation that, ere long, must proclaim, to the gaze of every beholder, her loss of honour. This precluded delay, and added poignancy to her woes. At this moment she was miserable. Then she reflected on the oaths and protestations of Henry; his kind assurances at their last interview, in which he called on every holy power to witness his faith to her his *chosen wife*; and desired the

malice of the whole world to part them. Thus, in fluctuating hope and fear, the hapless girl passed away her melancholy hours, till the first dawn of the grey-eyed morn was announced by the shrill clarion of Chanticleer. Recollection flitted on her mind: she chided herself for giving way to such sorrowful retrospections; and fearful of being discovered by any of the family, not yet undressed, she hastily divested herself of her apparel, and retired to bed.—

Worn out by the fatigue of the proceeding day and the sorrows of her heart, she soon fell into a heavy slumber. But sleep did not calm the passions of her mind; her dreams were horrific; one while she was hurled from a precipice, then dashed into the foaming and tempestuous ocean, and sinking amidst the billows, calling in vain to Henry for aid. She awoke overwhelmed with terror. It was not yet time to rise—Again she slept: again the ocean presented itself to her view: a swift-sailing vessel appeared almost to fly before the wind: Henry was on the deck; his bosom streaming with gore, from a self-inflicted wound, as appeared by a poinard that he grasped in his right hand. Borne by an invisible guide, she flew towards him. A sudden storm arose; the ship was furiously combated by the elements. Henry gave a deep groan, and expired in her arms. The vessel now appeared to sink rapidly, and the horrors of death were around her. Just at the moment of this painful visionary trouble, her sister Annette entered the

chamber, and awoke the sleeping sufferer. But she was too much indisposed to rise, and readily acquiesced in her sister's desire of remaining in her bed.

Jane did not arise till the evening. Nor would she then have left her chamber, only to keep her appointment with Henry, whom she had promised to meet at the usual spot, in the well-known grove. In vain Annette persuaded her not to leave the house: Jane persisted that a walk would be of service to her; and obtained her sister's promise, not to mention her absence to her parents; and then hastened to the place where her perfidious lover was waiting. Henry, with seeming affection, embraced her; and then imparted his intention of leaving Rosewood, and repairing to the metropolis the next day. Jane, in tremulous accents, enquired the motive that led to such a sudden departure. He informed her, that he had that day received a letter from the metropolis, in which his friend had stated, that there was a post under government, which produced a considerable annuity; that he had no doubt, if he was present, of procuring for himself. Then, [continued Henry,] if I succeed, I shall no longer be dependant on my father; and our marriage shall take place immediately on my return, which I promise, my dear Jane, shall be within the next three weeks.' Jane was affected at the thoughts of parting; yet the solemn promises of her lover eased her mind of an oppressive burden, and her tears were mingled with emotions

of joy and grief. It was long ere any of them had fortitude to pronounce the small, but much importing word, Adieu.—Henry accompanied Jane to the end of the grove, and then left her for ever.

He pursued his journey to London, to which place, he informed his father and sister, that he was going to receive some money that a gentleman, to whom he had lent it about a twelvemonth before, had remitted to his banker. When the time elapsed for Henry's return, the youth came not, Jane's anguish was insupportable; her family was alarmed by her pallid looks. She was ill; she pleaded indisposition; and to her own family she expressed her fears that Henry was false to his vows. Yet they knew not the extent of her misery, she would sooner have died than related her loss of innocence. How could she overwhelm her aged parents with anguish, and bring a stain on a family whose virtue had been their boast! A letter came by the post to Mr Percival; its contents were like a thunder-clap to the old gentleman: Henry had embarked for the West Indies. The youth intreated his pardon, but assured him, that circumstances of an unpleasant nature, which he could not then explain, had obliged him to leave England, and repair to his relation abroad.

What Henry could not explain, was soon explained for him. Lucy too abruptly communicated the intelligence at the farm, and in the presence of the unfortunate Jane. Violent hysterics

seized on her fragile form: an abortion succeeded. In frantic accents she confessed her guilt. What were the feelings of Arnold and his aged Margaretta! They tore their hair, and wept with bitterness of soul. But they did not upbraid their hapless daughter: they would not add to her misery. Great were her sufferings. They tried to calm her mind, and spake the language of peace and comfort to the mourner. Their efforts succeeded, and she fell into a calm slumber. At a late hour the family retired to their chambers, except Rosetta, who watched by the bed side of her beloved Jane. She still slept in apparent composure. About four in the morning Rosetta reclined her head on the back of the chair, and fell asleep. In less than an hour, she was awoken by hearing some footsteps hastily descending the stairs. She arose, and approached the bed, to look if her Jane's afflictions were still banished by the influence of Morpheus. *She was gone*; Rosetta looked around, it was evident that she had arose, and dressed herself. Terrified beyond description, Rosetta hastened to the chamber where her husband slept, and intreated him to join with her in the pursuit of Jane. Lubin instantly thought of the grove where he had oft seen her walking with her faithless Henry. Thither they ran as fast as their hearts would allow, and found the object of their search stretched on the cold ground, and making a piteous moan. Lubin raised and supported her in his arms; while he joined with Rosetta in calling her by

the most endearing appellations. As they led her home, they endeavoured to inspire her with fortitude and resignation. She answered only with heavy sighs, and some vague sentences, Alas! their gentle cares were vain: Reason had fled her brain: a melancholy despondence reigned there; and an oblivion of every transaction, but the source of her own irremediable woes. In vain were the physicians and all their medical attendants, summoned; human skill was vain. Jane was doomed to linger out her existence a hapless maniac. She was perfectly harmless and tractable; and for whole days would wander in those places where she had been used to walk with Henry. She would sing the most plaintive airs, and converse with those who addressed her about her lover. She would strew her head with willow, straw, and wild flowers, disposed in a fanciful style; and this seemed to be the only amusement that soothed her mind. From the villages she gained the appellation of Crazy Jane; and this title soon became familiar to her own ears. Regularly, at the close of day, she returned to her father's house; seldom she noticed any one in it, but retired to a small chamber, that was entirely appropriated to her own use. One of the family always, though unknown to her, sat up during the night, to watch over her, fearful lest any sudden phrenzy should lead to a rash act on her own person. Jane continued in this state above two years without any alteration in her mind, but a very alarming one

in her person. She was now reduced to a mere shadow of her former self; her eyes no longer sparkled with their former brilliancy; her lips were robbed of their coral hue, and her cheeks assumed an ashey pale. Though death might have been a consummation almost to be wished, that might translate the sufferer from this world to a state of eternal bliss, yet her parents could not endure the thought of parting with their dear, their youngest child; still more dear to their heart by her sufferings. Her sisters also felt a keen anguish; but not so much as the gentle Rosetta who was now the mother of two lovely infants. She never beheld Jane but she thought of Henry as her murderer; and the idea conveyed pangs of unutterable anguish to her feeling heart.

One morning, instead of laying till a late hour which for some months back had been her custom, and then repairing with her solitary meal to the grove, she joined her family at their breakfast table, and conversed on several subjects more rationally than she had done from the first day of her derangement. As soon as their repast was ended, Jane arose, and affectionately embraced every individual of the family, particularly her mother and Rosetta.

They were extremely affected, and prayed with fervour, that heaven would be pleased to restore the senses of their fair maniac. They then separated, to perform their several domestic duties; and Jane hastened to her usual haunts,

taking with her a little basket of provision, which her tender mother always prepared ready to put into her hands; or poor Jane would have thought not of food, till assailed by the calls of hunger. When evening arrived, and above an hour was spent in momentary expectation of her return, the family became greatly alarmed; and Lubin and his mother went forth to seek her. They were not many paces from the house, when they perceived a group of villagers approaching towards them, bearing a corpse. Alas! 'twas Jane. They had found her as they were passing through the grove on their return from their work, laying on the surf insipiate. She was cold; and life had left her fair form for ever. Her right hand reclined on her breast; and in her left was clasped a locket, which contained a fragment of Henry's hair, which he had given her on the day of Rosetta's nuptials. That day she had decked her head with willow only, and had omitted the straw and flowers. What a sight for a parent! Margaretta felt it in its full force, and fainted by the side of her departed daughter. It was some minutes ere they could recover her from the swoon; and Lubin, with difficulty, led her back to the house, while the villagers continued to bear their hapless burthen after the afflicted parent. The grief of the Arnold family could only be equalled by the aged Percival. He had wrote several times to India but received no answer, either from Henry or his relation. The sorrows of Jane greatly affect-

ed him; he despised the cruelty and injustice of Henry; and had frequently declared to the good farmer, that, had his son requested his consent to marry the beautiful Jane, he would have given it with unfeigned transport.

On the fourth day after her decease, her funeral took place in the village church yard. Her coffin was borne by young maidens in white robes; on their heads they wore chaplets of cypress for Percival, and the weeping relations of Jane, witnessed the mournful procession. There was not a dry eye among the villagers: The deep tolling bell was accompanied by sighs and heart-felt groans; while the aged parents, as the funeral passed their doors, bade their sons beware of the fatal crime of seducing credulous innocence; and their daughters to avoid the fate of the broken-hearted Jane, by scorning the villain who would dare to make them a dishonourable offer.

The remains of Crazy Jane were deposited under the shade of an aged yew; and on a rough-hewn stone, was placed the following artless epitaph:

Traveller, stop, whos'er thou art,
Shed a tear ere thou depart;
For here, releas'd from care and pain,
Lies Love's sad victim, Crazy Jane.

A few short weeks from the burial of the distressed fair one, saw the remains of Mr Percival and the woe-worn Margaretta, committed to

their native dust. The former, by his will, had disinherited his son. He bequeathed considerable legacies to farmer Arnold, and his two surviving daughters, Lucy and Annette. The rest of his property (which was very considerable) he awarded to Rosetta and her affectionate husband.

Mr Percival had not long departed from this transitory world, when, to the great surprise of the inhabitants, Henry arrived at Rosewood; pale and emaciated, a living skeleton. The first intimation he received of Jane and his father's death's, was from the mistress of the inn; and the intelligence appeared greatly to affect him.

With a palpitating heart he repaired to the farm; and prostrating himself at Mr Arnold's feet, besought him to pardon the seducer and murderer of his daughter, who was impatient to join her in the silent grave. The anger and indignation that the old gentleman felt at the first appearance of Percival, soon gave way to pity. After their first emotions had subsided, and they were tranquil enough to converse, Mr Arnold learnt from Henry, that for a length of time after he arrived in India, he had formed the resolution of becoming an alien to his family. His affairs were so prosperous, as to render it next to an impossibility that he should ever want any pecuniary assistance from them; and, for the purpose of estranging himself from them, he never answered any of the letters he received from England. Indeed, the reproaches wh

which those from his father and Rosetta were filled, and which he knew not how to defend, made him adhere more and more strictly to the plan he had marked out for himself. But at length, remorse seized on his soul. The image of Jane haunted his nightly dreams, and his waking thoughts. His behaviour to her, and his aged father, now appeared to him in the most culpable light. He became a sincere penitent, and resolved to return to England, and make what reparation was in his power to those he had so deeply wronged. He had not been embarked above a fortnight on his homeward passage, when one evening, as he was standing on the deck, absorbed by his own reflections, a female figure glided by him, and pronounced his name in an awe-inspiring voice. He started, and looked around; the figure stood at some small distance from him.—'Twas Jane. Again she repeated his name, and with a heavy sigh vanished from his view. He explained the hour that this event occurred: and Mr Arnold had every reason to suppose, that it was the one in which the hapless fair one died; as it was on the same day in which she was found a lifeless corpse in her much-loved grove.

The loss of his father's fortune did not in the least affect the youth: nor would he accept that part of it which Mr Arnold and the husband of Rosetta, generously offered him. No, money he valued not. The death of Jane through his cruelty lay heavy at his heart; also his fa-

ther's dying in displeasure with him. He frequently declared that he had brought with him more money from India, than would last the remaining term of his life: He hired a small cottage in the vicinity of Rosewood, where he resided in a manner not far removed from the life of an hermit. Every night, at the dreary hour of twelve, he wandered round a moss-grown tower, where the ghost of Crazy Jane was said to appear, and tell to the moon a tale of woe. After pursuing this course of life for several months, Henry imbibed a dangerous melancholy, that prompted the arm to act suicide. On the grave of his Jane, the youth shed his heart's blood, and rushed unbidden unto the presence of his Maker. The coroner and his Jury declared him a maniac; and he was buried beneath the same yew that hung over the fair but ill-fated heroine of our tale.

F I N I S.