

“ that I, JAMES CROMPTON, am a coward and a sneak and a villain, and have lived a lie for forty years, hiding a secret I was too proud to divulge at first, and which grew harder and harder to tell as time went on and people held me so high as the soul of honor and rectitude. Honor! There isn't a hair of it on my head! I broke the heart of an innocent girl, and left her to die alone. AMY EUDORA SMITH is my own daughter, the lawful child of my marriage with EUDORA HARRIS, which took place December —, 18—, on the Hardy Plantation, Fulton County, in Georgia, several miles from Atlanta.”

Up to this point Howard had been standing, but now the floor seemed to rise up and strike him in the face. Sitting down in the nearest chair, he breathed hard for a moment, and then went on with what the Colonel called his CONFESSIO*N*, which he had not had courage to make verbally while living.

When in college he had for his room-mate Tom Hardy from Atlanta. The two were fast friends, and when the Colonel was invited to visit Georgia he did so gladly. Some miles from the town was the plantation owned by the Hardys. This the Colonel visited in company with his friend. A small log-house on a part of the farm was rented to a Mr. Brown, a perfectly respectable man, but ignorant and coarse. His family consisted of himself and wife and son, and daughter Mary, a pretty girl of twenty, and a cousin from Florida, Eudora Harris, a beautiful girl of sixteen, wholly uneducated and shy as a bird. There was about her a wonderful fascination for the Colonel, who went with his friend several times to the Brown's, and mixed with them familiarly for the sake of the girl whose eyes wel-