

LIFE
KING AND OWEN,

WRITTEN BY THEMSELVES,

REVISED AND PREPARED BY

REV. L. M. HORN,

EXPLAINING THE

RAILROAD ROBBERY

AND

MURDER OF HARVEY KING.

LOUISVILLE, KY.

PRINTED BY BRADLEY & GILBERT.

1867.

PREFACE.

In presenting this work to the public, the author begs leave to say, that it is by no means the result of his own choice. It will astonish many of his friends when they learn that he never saw Messrs. King and Owen, nor had any communication directly or indirectly with them, from the time of their arrest until after their conviction. Nor did he even seek or desire an interview then; nor was it until he had been repeatedly sent for by the prisoners themselves, the messages being borne by the sheriff, the jailer, and captain of the guard, that he consented to go.

The thought of preparing a small history for the benefit of their aged parents, designed, no doubt, to embrace a confession, was projected by Rev. Wesley Wright, who advised them to leave their writings in the hands of some competent and trusty friend. They were, accordingly, placed in the hands of the author for publication. But, finding it was highly displeasing to some of Capt. King's relations, the writings were presented to the prisoners, accompanied with the request that they would dispose of them in some other way. They both refused to do so, and confirmed their choice, by making a deed of trust, and having it placed upon record in the Clerk's office of Simpson county, Kentucky.

Since their execution, their writings have been arranged for the press, but not till after they were again presented to their disconsolate parents, who refused to take them, saying at the same time, "It was their choice, and your work is not done until they are published." "We have no one now to look to," continued they, "and you must publish them; duty as well as humanity demand it." The author again turned to several intelligent friends, with the hope of being excused; but nothing seemed to answer public demand but a completion of the work. Hence the publication. It is not presumed that all that is said will be believed, yet, so far as practicable, the original has been followed, both in the phrascology and selection of words. Therefore, we hold ourselves

FRANKLIN,
SIMPSON COUNTY, KY. }

J. BENJ. W. HALL, Clerk of the Simpson County Court, do certify that Capt. William C. King and Abraham Owen made a transfer or an assignment of the history of their lives to the Rev. L. M. Horn, of Simpson County, Kentucky, for the purposes therein expressed, and the same was signed and acknowledged by them in my presence, and before me as clerk of said Court, and which has been recorded in the office of the Simpson County Court.

Given under my hand and seal of said Court, this 16th day of July, 1867.

B. W. HALL,
Clerk Simpson Co. Court.

responsible for nothing these men may have written. It is for a sensible public to determine the value of its contents. If it be true, there are some things revealed that could never have been known otherwise. The author is aware of the seeming contradiction in one portion of the work, and sought to obviate the difficulty by getting the original writer to so alter or arrange it to harmony. But to no avail. He is aware, also, of his own imperfection, and offers the little work, *not* as a model of perfection, but as being, near as possible, just what the convicts wrote and said. Nor could he be faithful in the work entrusted to his care were he to do otherwise.

Hoping that these explanatory remarks will meet the approbation and forbearance of all good men, the work is, therefore, submitted to the world for perusal and determination.

AUTHOR.

CAPTURE AND ARREST OF THE ROBBERS.

Late in the night, on the 8th of November, 1866, a party of young men, mostly single, met by agreement in the county of Simpson, State of Kentucky, the homestead and birth-place of more than one-third of the gang, to prepare and settle a plan for robbing a train of cars that were to pass in one mile and a half of the assembled bandits. The plan was settled, and the coursers' feet went rumbling along to a point some four miles north of Franklin. A halt was made, and the inland buccaner, who held the piratical command, assigned the holding of the horses to the two most effeminate murderers, the remainder being at once engaged in tearing up, or placing obstructions on the road, in order to intercept the coming train.

Presently the train came with mien and might, striking with an ungovernable vengeance the obstruction, and bounded far from the track. The cars were boarded and robbed. No serious accident happened to any of the passengers, save a slight injury to the engineer, whom we learn died a short time since, probably from the above cause.

On the night of the robbery, after the robbers had left the scene of action, the Conductor, Elias Rice, went to Franklin, aroused several young men, and returned to the place where the train was robbed. Here they found one of the passengers, who had recognized one of the robbers. After searching a while they found where they held their horses, and, following the trail, led them to a place called the Finn Settlement, about eight miles from Franklin.

The noble and gallant young men of our town, Franklin, formed themselves into a company (fifteen), in order to hunt the robbers. Feeling assured that the whole party were in reach and accessible, provided the proper steps were taken, they affected the belief that the robbers had made good their escape, and in order to success in this bold and adventurous enterprise, employed a keen, shrewd fellow, who lives in the Finn Settlement, named Griff. Wright, to

ferret out the matter. Soon after, some eight or nine of the robbers were brought in, and on Tuesday following it was ascertained that one of the robbers had been killed by some one of their party, for threatening to divulge, &c. A search was made, and the body found in the woods, partly devoured by hogs. Mr. Wright then sent for Capt. King, and told him that his brother Harry had been killed by the robbers, and urged him to divulge the names of the men engaged in the affair. After some persuasion King gave the names of all the parties concerned in the robbery, stating that he had received the information from his brother. In a very short time all the whole party were captured and brought to justice. Nothing can be more novelous, nor more interesting, than the complete success in taking these robbers. Some twelve were tried for the murder of Harry King, and after a long and tedious trial, two were convicted, Wm. P. King, brother to the deceased King, and Abraham Owen. The remainder are in prison, or on bail, to be tried at the June term for the robbery.

It is not my province to state here, even if we had space, all the particulars connected with the arrest of these robbers.

The author is acquainted with all but two who were engaged in this ugly affair, and feels safe in saying, that he believes that this was the first *great crime* that some of the party were ever in. Countless have been the shedding tears, both in penitence and sympathy, since the aggression. Many of the men engaged in this ugly and disgraceful affair have weeping friends and relatives, who, in all probability, will never recover the shock. And as for the author's own experience, he knows and feels something of the troubles now filling the bosoms of the parents of the convicted. He entertains a good feeling towards each of them, and also to every one engaged in the affair, and although he has consented to furnish a history, giving the particulars of the whole trial and testimony, it is with the very best of feelings towards the court, the witnesses, the prisoners, and all their relations and friends. He feels confident that he will be compelled to write something that will be offensive to some and objectionable to others. Facts, stubborn facts, are to control him in this matter. While all that he

*NOTE.—The June term having arrived, the prisoners put off their trial. †It is proper to remark the prosecuting party withheld the trial.

writes may not be facts in their *origin*, you are to receive them as what actually occurred in court, in the form of testimony, &c. He thinks no undertaking so well suited to try the nerve of an honest man's heart, as to be the confident and friend of a convict, who is incarcerated for life, and *that* life to terminate in a *few hours*, for ever. We have fancied something of the stalled ox, and the fattening swine, that were hemmed in for a time, and deprived of liberty for a season, in order that they might be the better fitted for the slaughter pen, and felt at the same time a compulsive start of sympathy for the innocent and unsuspecting brute. But what of this, or even a sea of blood from the lower order of creation, compared with the life of a single man, who has *life, soul, and body* all at stake, together with a thousand other things to make life sweeter and dearer, as nearer the end approaches? Looks of inquiry shoot from the eye, covering the friend and visitor with impressions *never* to be forgotten, saying, "Can't you do me good?" "Can't you relieve me?" "Oh! for my liberty, my long lost liberty!" But, perhaps, I have said enough upon this point. For a more full and perfect account of this matter, the reader is referred to the history of Capt. W. P. King, appended to this work.

The author comes now to speak more directly of the families of the two convicts, Capt. King and Abraham Owen. The mother of the former (King) is a very old lady, is quite infirm, has five living daughters, one of whom is now in the last stage of consumption*—is in good standing, and a perfect lady, and as much may be said of her daughters—all good, clever girls, and above re-
Old Mr. and Mrs. Owen, the parents of Abc. Owen, are likewise good, clever people. Mrs. Owen is universally beloved by her neighbors, and is a woman of strong maternal affection. These mothers stand as living monuments of unmitigated sorrow. The Lord bless them, amid so many afflictions, is the prayer of the author.

*Since this writing, the daughter has died.

SENTENCE OF DEATH PASSED UPON THE PRISONERS BY JUDGE G. C. ROGERS.

The prisoners were brought into the Court-room, June 23d, and seated before the Judge's stand. They looked solemn and dejected, were certainly conscious of the fact that they were soon to receive the awful sentence of death. The Judge addressed them, saying: "Gentlemen, have you any good reason to show why the sentence of death should not be passed upon you?" The prisoners both protested against their guilt—said they were innocent of the murder, and, if they were hung, would die innocent men, and prayed for a new hearing. The Judge told them, "You have had a patient and impartial trial given you in this case; you have been found guilty of murder by a jury of your own county, who were sworn to give you justice, and I believe gave your case prayerful consideration almost unprecedented, and they say in their verdict you are guilty. It is now my painful duty to pass sentence upon you:

"Gentlemen—I am compelled by law to fix a day for the execution of the judgment of the Court. Courts on this earth are fallible, and it may be that your protestations of innocence are true; you certainly know yourselves, your innocence and your guilt; but there is another tribunal before which, in all probability, you will soon appear, which is unearthly in its judgment. It is not in my power to grant you the appeal desired, but one of the Judges of the Appellate Court will have that to do, if it is done at all, and whether this is done or not, I hope your thoughts will be turned to heaven and a reconciliation with God. I hope you will be prepared to meet the just decisions of an infallible Judge. This will be a great consolation to your friends and to yourselves—the greatest left in your power."

King said, "I have a hope beyond the grave."

"I hope you have," said the Judge, "and if you haven't now, I hope you will prepare to meet that Judge that never errs. This certainly will bring some comfort to an afflicted and widowed mother. I deeply sympathize with your families. I know something about your family, Capt. King. I know their afflictions have been great. I deeply sympathize with you both. I have felt

the responsibilities and importance of your case, which the trial has just ended. I have given much thought and investigation to the legal points involved. I have given no important decision in the trial, without giving the question prayerful consideration. As I have said before, it is now my painful duty to pass sentence upon you both:

"The guard will take you back to jail, where you will be safely kept until the 22d of March, and that day, between sunrise and sunset, the Sheriff shall take you both to the gallows, where you shall both be hanged by the neck until you are dead. May God have mercy on your souls."

THE PRISONERS OBTAIN A RESPITE.

It will be seen that the second respite was obtained for these unfortunate men, which brought their execution up to the 28th day of June. Their wits were then put to work, in order, if possible, to break jail. This was exceedingly perilous, as the jail was then guarded by a company of regular soldiers. Instruments were furnished them by some unknown hand, for the purpose of breaking through their confinement. The floor was torn up, with the hope of being able to tunnel out. But finding the cell underlaid with heavy stones, were compelled to abandon this for a more hazardous enterprise, viz: To break through the guards, and make off at angles, so, if possible, to escape death, both of the guards and the gallows.

After consulting the matter over, four of the prisoners covenanted together—confirming the same by a touch of the hand, to run the guards at supper. The awful moment came, and with it Abe. Owen, followed by one John Cabbert, and close at his heels Capt. King—leaving the fourth in prison. Terrible was the moment, and terrible the effort made by the guard. King being last to leave jail was in the greatest danger, consequently received two shots in his left arm, which brought him to a halt, but not till after he had cleared the guard, and ran over half a mile. Owen threw himself under a house, and, had it not been for a negro boy, would have made his escape. Cabbert was hotly pursued by the forces, and, in thirty minutes, all were again lodged in prison.

The clergy were allowed to visit the convicts daily, who endeavored to give them spiritual counsel, and whether or not they were benefitted no one can tell, though they seemed to be at peace with their Maker, and so professed hope.

On the evening of the 15th of May, just two days before their execution, as we supposed, a solemn scene was realized in prison, in the presence of several ministers and the Sheriff. The latter, after singing and prayer, spoke to the prisoners, and asked them if they had suitable clothing for a burial, and on receiving a negative answer, dropped their burial clothes in their laps. An awful silence prevailed. For a time all seemed ghostly. The Sheriff being first to speak, continued by saying, "Gentlemen, I wish to have an expression from you in the presence of these witnesses, whether or not you feel hurt at me as an officer? Have I not dealt kindly with you?" Whereas both assured him of their great respect, asking him never to harbor such a thought. Time wore away, and on the 28th of June their fate was sealed under the gallows, in the presence of six thousand persons.

LIFE OF WILLIAM P. KING,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

REVISED AND PREPARED BY REV. L. M. HORN.

I, William Peter King, was born in Macon County, Tennessee, in the year of our Lord, 1836, February 17th. My father's name was Peter King. *I don't say it because he was my father,* but because I believe a more honest man never lived. He was a high-toned gentleman, and my mother as much of a lady as ever lived—a better and kinder woman is not to be found on earth. My father was accidentally killed some two years ago, which left my mother a widow with only one son at home, I being in the army at that time. She had five daughters with her then, and all grown. My parents had in all eleven children—three boys and eight girls. My oldest brother joined the rebel army. He lived in Missouri at that time. Sometime during the war he got a furlough, and returned home, and while there was captured by the Kansas Jayhawkers, and killed, which left my parents with only one son. On Nov. 13th, 1866, John Harvey King was murdered, leaving my poor old mother with only one son. As I have already stated, my parents were good and honorable people. I was raised honest, and brought up right. I was taught from my infancy to be truthful and clever to all mankind. I will say, that when I was a boy, a principle was implanted in my bosom to do right. It is my will to do right, if I know how. I have from my childhood tried to observe what my parents taught me. And when I grew up to manhood, I tried to live to be *something*. In September, 1857, my father moved from Tennessee to Simpson County, Kentucky, where I got the most of my education. At the commencement of the war, I received by appointment the office

of constable. June 12th, 1863, I joined the Federal army, and was the first man that enlisted in the 52d Kentucky Infantry. I was elected First Lieutenant in Company F, May 1st, 1864, and promoted to Captain in said Company. I was thought a great deal of in the army, and by Union men, but hated by rebels. I never wanted a fuss with any one, but always tried to avoid such things, and to keep out of mischief, as I had been taught. But I will right here remark that I was never a coward. When I had a thing to do, I done it, and done it well. Outside of the army I hurt no man, but when I was run upon by the enemy I done the thing up right. I always thought my life was as good as any man's, and when it came to the test, cowardice was ever a stranger to me. I made a good soldier, and while in the army laid several old "grey coats" in the shade, but did nothing contrary to duty. When I felt that my life was at stake, I worked like a man. I've no bad feelings about that—done just what every brave man would have done. I am a Union man of the strongest dye—have as many enemies as any one, but they belong to the rebel party. January 18th, 1865, I was mustered out of service, and have tried to be a good citizen ever since. I will here state that in 1853 I professed religion, and, in '59 following, joined the Baptist Church at Shady Grove. I think I enjoyed religion, but while in the army a *great deal* too much whisky did I drink. Consequently I did not live up in every respect to my Christian duties, but I always thought there was a spark left. On the 5th day of August, 1866, I was married, to Miss M. E. Reeder. I lived with her until my arrest. A better wife no man ever had one that is as dear to me as my own life. I am sorry for my and sorry for my *poor old mother* and sisters. As I said, there was still a spark of religion left. I think I am prepared to meet my God in peace. In November, 1866, the train on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was thrown from the track and robbed. Some four or five persons swear that I was one of the robbers, and that I was blacked. I have this to say to you, that you ought always to be *sure* to state the truth. But this is not what I am condemned for. The charge is that I *aided* in, and assisted in the killing of my brother, Harvey King. This is not true. I can face my God in making this statement. It is true.

I loaned my pistol to Abraham Owen on the Saturday previous to the murder, but did not loan it to kill my poor brother. I loaned my pistol to many persons, and whenever the Owens' boys wanted a pistol, they always came to me, and I generally let them have one. This is what I am condemned for, and what I have to state, I want the world to know, that I, Wm. P. King, of the county and State aforesaid, do, in the presence of Almighty God, affirm that I never aided nor assisted in the death of my brother, nor was I knowing to it in any way whatever. If I had known it, or anything about it, the murderer would have killed me, or I should have killed him, ere my brother died. I loved my brother as well as ever one brother loved another. He had one failing, and but one—he would occasionally drink too much whisky, and when drunk was troublesome to some extent, but when sober, was as good a boy as ever lived. He was murdered on the 13th day of November, 1866. It was Sunday morning, and as I was going to my farm to see if there was anything destroying my corn—my crop of corn—brother and I were together. The fence was bad, and cattle were getting in nearly every day. When we got down to the farm, I discovered that some cattle were in the corn then. I had my horse with me. Remember, I was living with my mother-in-law, Mrs. Reeder, and my brother with our mother. While I was laying up the fence, brother past me, and asked me where I was going to put the cattle out at? I told him I did not know—speaking rather short, for I was fretted. This was the amount of our conversation. Soon after my brother passed down the road, and this was the last time I ever saw him alive. After I got down the road a piece, there was a slant to go down, which hid him from me. I heard him speak to some one, calling him 'old fellow,' or something like that, in a friendly tone of voice. So, when I put the cattle out, I went on down to an old house, where I and my brother were manufacturing molasses. I had supposed him there, getting his horse. But when I arrived, there was no brother there. I halloed for him, but no one answered. I still thought him about there some place, probably drinking with the person he met on the way. I wanted him to go to Tennessee for me, on business pertaining to the estate of my father, the next day, consequently did not want him to get off on a drinking

frolic. So I rode down to the pond in the direction that I supposed he went, and when I got to the pond I saw nothing of him. I remember I heard a voice in a low tone which I thought I knew, the voice of him whom I thought my brother first met. But by this time old man Owen's cattle had got into our corn. I thought while I was at the pond I would go up to Owens', and tell him to keep his cattle out of my field. But, when I got there, Mr. Owen was not at home, and I told Abner, his son, to tell the old man to keep his cattle up. My brother was not there. I went back home, not thinking but what he had gone off on a spree. I hurried back home, to go with my wife to a baptizing, but we concluded not to go. This was near eight o'clock in the morning.

Lon. Reeder was there at the place where I was living. He swore in court that he heard the pistols or guns fire in the direction of where brother was killed, and that I was at home at that very time. So the day passed off. I heard no guns or pistols that day. Some time that morning I went after some wood to get dinner, and met Abraham Owen and John Prater, who said they were going to the baptizing. I and Abraham Owen had a conversation. I don't remember its purport, but he said, when starting off, he would send my pistol to me next morning by his brother Bill, which he did. Bill came by where I was working, on his way to school. I took the pistol in the house where I was making molasses. I did not examine it, for I did not think of anything wrong. This was Monday morning. The girls came to help me make molasses. I started into work after I got everything ready. I then went over the field to see if there was anything in it, or on our corn, and when I returned Griff. Wright was there. I and my sisters had been talking about brother that morning. When they first came, they asked me about him, but we all allowed he was off some where drinking. And while Griff. Wright was at the fence, some boys came up, and while they were all talking I went off to the back of the house about something. Wright and the boys were out at the fence. Mary and Louisa, my sisters, came out to me, and we talked about brother again, having become uneasy, knowing that this was unusual, and fearing he was off somewhere drunk. About this time a dog-fight commenced, which threw us all in disconcert. Soon after they all left. We

again resumed the conversation about our brother, each suspecting something had befallen him. I wished for him to come, for I wanted him to go to Tennessee, or work in my place. And, while we were still speaking of him, my sisters discovered two turkey buzzards flying around and around, and drawing my attention to them, spoke and said, 'If he has got drunk and is dead, probably he is there.' They then insisted that I should get my horse and go there and see. My horse was right by me. I got on him, and rode past the place where the buzzards were flying, and behold, I found my poor little brother there dead. He had been brutally murdered. He had been beaten on the head, and shot through the body three times. I raised the alarm—my sisters came to the place, and Mr. Wright also, where my poor brother lay mangled, bloody, and dead. We talked of moving his remains to my mother's, but Mr. Wright said we had better wait awhile. I afterwards went to my mother's and got a counterpane, and he was moved home. I never felt so awful bad in all my life. Never did I experience such a thing—to see my old mother and sisters weep over my brother—my heart was broken. The only brother I had on earth, murdered, brutally murdered. One I loved—that sucked at the same breast that nurtured me—raised by the same parents—sleeping in the same bed, and breathing the same air. I would have fought for him quicker than for myself, for I was older and stouter than he. I always felt it my duty to protect him. Dr. Vertrees, the Coroner, came and held an inquest over his body. I was called on to give in testimony before the coroner's jury, which I did. I stated that before I went to the cornfield, to see if anything had gotten in, that while I was laying down the fence to go into the field to drive some stock out, (this was at the end of the lane, belonging to Mr. Wright, and our fence), my brother past me, going down towards the old house, where his horse was—the molasses mill. I supposed that he was going to get his horse to go to the baptizing. After he passed me I heard him speak to some one, calling him 'old fellow,' or something like that. I stated before that jury that I did not know that voice. I could not swear point blank I did know it. So I had policy in the thing. I swore that I did not know it, but believed it was Abe Owen's voice. Now, Abe's father was one of

the jury, and if I had sworn to his voice, before I could have him arrested, probably, he might have sought an opportunity, and have killed me, or otherwise make his escape. Under the circumstances, what better could any honest man have done? Come out and tell it, or take the policy that I did? Now, ask yourself the question, reader. I thought I was doing right. I meant to do right. The negro boy I had hired took the pistol from the sugar-mill up to my mother's, and I did not see the pistol any more after I went to look for my brother until Tuesday morning.

I and Griff. Wright went down to the pond, where we previously saw some tracks, in order to make some discoveries, which we hoped would lead more into the secret. When we got down there I unbuckled my pistol from around me, and it slipped out of the scabbard, and I discovered blood upon it. I spoke to Mr. Wright, saying, look here, there is blood upon my pistol. On examination I found it sprung in the stock. I then told him whom I had loaned it to on the Saturday before. This was Tuesday morning, and my brother was buried that evening. I said I believed that was my brother's blood. I came to Franklin, in order to get out a writ for Abe. Owen, and then went back home the next morning, to mother's, and staid out there till evening, then started back, and on my way was arrested for robbing the cars. Griff. Wright was the man that arrested me. He never asked me to surrender, nor to give up my arms, but said if I wished he would let me off, would release me if I desired. But I told him I had done nothing, and was not guilty, that I had a *clean breast*, and did not intend to run. This was Wednesday evening. On Thursday morning I was sent to Louisville, and the night following lodged in the Louisville jail. On Friday I was taken to the Taylor Barracks, and there kept, without any cover except my shawl, for several days. About the first of December I was brought back to Franklin, and there had a writ served on me for the murder of my brother. When this was done, I thought my heart would break. Being arrested for robbing the train was bad enough, but when it came to being arrested for killing my brother, it had liked to have killed me. I wanted a trial, but I did not believe that Judge Stanford would give me justice, consequently put it off. Circuit Court commenced in December, and then I tried for bail, but did

not succeed. Then there was a call court, to commence in January, to try all criminal cases in Simpson county. My trial commenced, the evidence was taken, and the jury found me guilty, from what I had stated about Abe. Owen, his having my pistol, together with the false swearing Riley Tow done, others not excepted. I want the world to know, and find them all out. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad money—I have no doubt but that Riley Tow and son got something for what they swore, also Griff. Wright and Mort. Reeder. This is awful hard—think of it—one man swearing another's life away. Mort., I want you to think of this. You have helped to (swear) take my life—one of your best friends—*your brother-in-law*. All right—I hope, Mort., you may get to Heaven when you die. Tell Riley Tow he will find that jar of money there, if he can get John A. Finn to predict for him, and ten dollars for John Evans to kill him. On the 23d of January, 1867, I was taken before Judge G. C. Rogers, who passed the sentence of death upon me. The Judge is a nice man. He said, "On the 22d of March, 1867, between the rising and setting sun, the Sheriff of Simpson county would take me to the gallows, where he would hang me until I was dead." Oh! my soul, I can not tell how awful I felt, thus sentenced to death. For what? Aiding in the death of my brother. The most awful charge that could be brought against a man. Oh! my God, have mercy on them that swore falsely in court against an innocent man. I am not guilty of the murder of my brother. The charge is false. I am innocent, thank God. I think I am prepared to meet my God in peace. Mort. Reeder, you have helped to hang me, and take me from a kind and good wife—robbed my poor old mother of her last son. I hope the Lord will have mercy on your soul. You, Griff. Wright, ought to pray day and night. My prayer to God is, for all men to do right in all things. I can forgive you all for swearing falsely. My poor mother, unfortunately for you, your only, your *last* son has to die by hanging—hanging by the neck on the 22d of March. Oh Mother, I have been sold—money has taken my life. I think I am prepared to meet my God. I hope to meet you in Heaven, where parting will be no more, to walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. I want you all to do the best you can in this world—I can't help you any more.

Mother, I have been a dutiful son. I never gave you a cross-word in all my life. No man ever had a better mother than I. I love you as dearly as ever a son loved a mother. But one thing more I can say—that no brother ever loved his sisters better than myself. Oh! sisters, our happy days are o'er. I would to God that I was with you all once more, as I was before my arrest. I would be so happy. I want you all to treat my dear wife as a sister. Visit her and treat her in a becoming manner. I hope she will do the same. For God sake don't forget one another. My wife is as dear to me as my own life, and if you love me, love one another—don't mind Mort. Ellen—*dear wife*—it pains me awfully to think of leaving you, but if I am hung I can't help it. I know I am not guilty. I want you to meet me in Heaven. If I could only take you along with me, I could fix myself to be a heap better satisfied. Oh! my soul, how can I leave you—the one so dear to me. You know I have suffered awfully when I think of this. But, thank God, I will be better off. Then come home to me, dear. Oh! dear mother and sisters, I hate to give you up—to leave you all, but I can't help myself. Good-bye, dear wife, dear mother and sisters, good-bye! Bury me beside my brother. Farewell, friends! Farewell, foes! I leave my peace with thee. My love to those, mine enemies. You will never hear my voice again.

W. P. KING.

PART II.

To all whom it may concern:

I, William P. King, do hereby certify that I had nothing to do with, nor any hand in robbing the train on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. It is true I was told that it was going to be done. But I am identified as one of the party. I believe the men that swore to me, believed I was one of the robbers. I think they were honest in their belief, but honestly mistaken. I was not the man. I was asked to take command of the party, and to go to the robbery, but I did not do it. I wished to keep the good will of all men, and told my brother not to have anything to do with the robbery, but he got drunk, and then they got him into it. The morning after the robbing of the train I took from my brother \$240, or near that, in money, one pair of boots, three knives,

and some other things. This was Thursday morning. Brother was drunk, at the widow Reeder's gate, where I lived. Now, when brother was killed, I told Griff. Wright what I knew about the robbery—what brother had told me, *except* about the goods, which I intended to tell at the proper time. They said when they arrested me, that they only wanted me for a witness. Wright promised me to go to Louisville. I told him I had the things to make my brother's word good. But when the time came he wouldn't go. So I was taken by Joe. Harris. After I got on the train, I saw what they intended. Stephen Cornwell, living son of a D—, too mean to say anything about him—why did he say I was along? Because I opened the secret on them, and he was told I said he was in the robbery, and now he says I was in, which is a lie. Now, I was arrested too, for robbing the train. Too late to say anything about the goods, until I got clear—this I intended to tell, and show all about it. On Friday, before brother was killed, I learned that he had some more goods in a shock of sugar corn, and I told Mort. Reeder about it. After brother was killed, I thought if anything was found, that Mort. Reeder would have honor enough to tell the truth about it. But alas! alas! Mort. Reeder, you come up and swear that the money and goods are mine. You knew better; you have come up and swore a lie against a friend—yes, against your brother-in-law—one that is innocent, and what for? Just to please Griff. Wright and W. C. Holland, and because Bill. Hays said you were to go along to help rob the train—by saying that I was one of the men, and by showing the goods, you thought you would not be arrested. Yes, you had rather swear my life away than to be arrested—rather swear a lie than to stand up like a man and tell the truth. I will here state that brother did not tell me anything about John W. Cabbert, John Evans, and Robbin Hay (colored man), being along. If they were, brother did not say anything about it. He told me there were some along that he did not know. I didn't want to tell that my brother was along and got a lot of things. I told my brother went to the place, but left before the train came. I did try to keep that as much of a secret as possible. So would any brother, if he loved him as he should. I can say that this is the first mean thing my brother was ever guilty of. He has ever been honest

and a good boy, except he drank too much whisky. I know he was raised right, and had he been sober, he would never have been in this affair. But, unfortunate for him, he left the world unexpected. The man that killed him, I have no doubt, but that brother thought him his friend. I am now called by all sorts of names, "a highway robber, a railroad robber, a thief, and a murderer." All this sprang up in a very short time—about three months. Who started this report? Why, I can tell you—Reeder, Wright, Tow and son.

Mort. Reeder has not only told lies, but swore to them. What for? Money and other things. My wife has had bad luck, and you all are the cause of it; and you had rather die than see me come out. You laid the plan to get out of it. Yes, you would swear my life away, and give me a bad name—would tell my wife lies to turn her against me. You have already told her that I would kill her if I got out. This is the way you are doing. Now, Riley Tow, when you came to where brother was laying a corpse, you said you were in the woods. You looked like you knew something about it from the way you acted. I took you to the log, and asked you if you saw any one pass, going or coming from this place? You said you did not. You, Riley Tow, came up and swore I had a different conversation, and that you told me what brother was killed for. Now, Riley, I had no conversation with you, only as above stated. You have sworn a *point blank* lie, and you know it. You have done this to aid Griff. Wright, Bill. Holland, and the Railroad Company. You know, Riley Tow, the neighbors in your neighborhood don't believe you an honest man. They say you steal all the chickens that you can get your hands on, or anything else. Your son John ought to be hung now, before he does more meanness. Now, about the *jar* of money. This is a big lie you have stumped. You know it is a lie. Yes, lying Riley. Oh! forsake your wicked ways—you and your son. May God help you to do it. Now, Robbing Griff, this is what I have to say about you: You would sell your father for money, or do anything else—there is nothing too mean for you. Mr. R. T. Hargis, you have said in court that you came to my mill, where I was making molasses, and that I said that I was going to get up some men, and rob a train. You got up the conversation

yourself. I didn't say a word, and can prove you a liar. You swore a lie, you know you did. I know what you done it for. Yes, Bill Hays, you have done a thing you did not want to do; you had to, because John Evans cleared you; and this thing had been fixed up with Evans. What for? Why, in order that you might appear against me. John Evans knows that you and him have sworn falsely—have perjured yourselves from the beginning. There never was a man treated as bad as I. Great God! what has this country come to? Take a man out and murder him! Then take up his brother, though he be innocent, and hang him! What has got into the people? Has our country come to this? Brother-in-law arrayed in court against me, to gratify others! O Lord, have mercy upon their souls.

I have understood, since my arrest, there was a report out that I had been trying to get up a crowd in order to rob old man Smith, my neighbor. This is an emphatic lie. I have sent for old man Smith to come to jail; I want to tell him that it is a lie. Mr. Smith, I have never thought of such a thing in my life. I have ever been a good friend to you and your family. I done all I could to protect you and your property during the war. Not only you, but my neighbors generally. But now, in this last stage of the game, where are my friends? Who reported falsely? Why, I can tell you, and you can see it, too. It was done to keep me from succeeding in my petitions, then before the people, for my release. The opposing party didn't want me to get out. They knew how badly they had treated my wife. No, they never intended me to be free again. This report was circulated by the enemy, in order to prejudice my neighbors more effectually against me, and thereby make my effort, in the form of a petition, before the Governor of our State, a failure. Old Griff and party started it; Griff. Wright, Riley Tow, W. C. Holland, John Tow, and Mort. Reeder, principals. This is the band that came up against me. May the Lord have mercy upon them. I think I have seen all the trouble that a man can see.

I thought, when I found my brother's murdered body in the woods, that it was the awfulest scene that I ever experienced. My poor heart was broken with grief and sorrow—the whole man filled with the most sad and dire reflections. Here my troubles

did not end, for I was arrested and carried to Louisville, put in prison, my friends *left at home* in trouble and mourning. I could not be there to comfort them. This did not satisfy the Railroad Company, but they must have (aided by Griff. Wright) *me* charged with the murder of my brother, swearing lies to convict me. You can see by their heinous actions my troubles were not at an end—I am sentenced to death! Trouble! trouble! The only brother on earth, and he decoyed off and murdered, and I charged as an accomplice. Oh! my heart has ached—have felt trouble enough to have killed ANY man. My folks at home grieving about me! Oh! my God, I have it to bear. I would to God I had died in the army; it would have been far better for me; I should have been spared this trouble, this reproach. My *character*, my *life*, my *all*, is gone! But there is one thing you can't get—you can't take my soul. You can't interfere with that; you can't bear false testimony against my soul. No, thank God, there will be no slanderers in the kingdom of heaven. I've prayed, I've *grieved* myself nearly to death. I have been like a wild animal in a cage—walking from one side to the other—*no satisfaction for me*. When I think of the past, and those whom I leave behind—a dear wife, a dear old mother, and sisters, those that I love dearer than my own life—how intolerable. Oh! my God, am I never to see them again? Yes, *there is* a world in which we can all meet again. I shall see father there, in that goodly land. Lord help me on to that land of bliss where there are no Griff. Wrights, no Mort. Reeder, no Tows, to swear falsely. Oh! my Heavenly Father, look down upon me with all the grace that one poor *inhabitant* of earth needs, or can ask. I would pray for mine enemies—Lord, have mercy upon them; steer their course aright.

Now, what am I to be hung for? I can't say; I have done nothing. Did I kill my brother? No, you didn't undertake to prove it. What then? "*aiding*," you say. I didn't do that, neither. Then, what are you going to hang me for? I want to know. You had as well go and hang my poor old mother, or any other woman. But, you take my words only to convict me. I said that "Abe Owen was the man that killed my brother." Now, I will give you the grounds why I believed he done it. My brother passed me, as I have stated; "I heard a voice." I was afraid to

say who it was, as before stated, or stated in another place. Another reason is, when I went to old man Owen's, Abner told me that Abe had gone over about the mill, or over that way. Then, after examining the pistol, found it bloody, sprung, &c. Brother was killed, and everything went to prove, to my mind, that Abe Owen *was the man that did it*. I told Griff. Wright this, but he puts a different light upon it to condemn me. I came to Franklin to get out a writ for Owen. Now, you are going to hang me for what I did in the way of prosecution towards the man whom I believe did the murder. But, thank God, I am innocent of the charge, am as innocent as an angel of heaven. Now, what else could any brother have done? Would he go to bed and say, kill, if you like, I won't say a word. I have no doubt but some of the party would have acted thus, but it was not my feelings. No, I intended to have revenge, or die. If Owen killed my brother, that he should pay the forfeit; if not, I didn't wish him punished. We have a law to go by, and it was but fair; let him clear himself. But you, Griff. Wright, came up and swore things that you knew were false. Have I done anything but what any brother would have done for another under similar circumstances? Had you a beloved brother murdered, and a train of circumstances went to point out the man that killed him, would you stand back and say nothing about it? Now, if I had been guilty, doubtless I would have been the last man to have said anything about it. But I was not guilty, therefore I could say what I thought about it. It was my duty to tell what I knew about it, and I done so, and feel that I did nothing but my duty before my God. In fact, I know I done right. Nobody but a mean man would have thought anything else.

So, this is enough. I will now close by saying, I hope to meet you in heaven, where parting will be no more. I hope you all will meet me in heaven. I can here say that I have ever been an honest man. I never took anything in the way of property during the war from any man, illegally, or used the same for my benefit. But I have captured property, and returned the same to the Government.

But here let me appeal once more to my friend Mort. Reeder. You know that I told you the truth. You swore that I told you that the robbers divided the money, and had eleven dollars apiece—

that I told you so the morning after the robbing was done. Now, Mort, you know that I told you that Harvey said "there was eleven dollars apiece divided among them." I told you this at the fence on Friday, after the robbing took place. He said he kept all the money he got, and that some of the rest did so, in his opinion. Now, when I showed you the money and goods, I told you not to say anything about it. I did not want it to get out that my brother was in the robbery. I took the money, and gave it to my wife to keep. She kept it until after my arrest; then you took it, Mort, and hid it in the yard. Yes, you was then willing to swear the truth. You knew there would probably be a search through the country, and you would hide it—yes, would put them (it) in the ground. You know, Mort, you have sworn falsely;—you know that I am innocent. And, if Bill Hays had not said you were to go and help Wright and Holland, you would probably have sworn the truth. But you are a coward—could not bear the idea of being arrested. You had rather swear my life away than be arrested. I had rather be a *dead* man and a gentleman, than be in your fix. No doubt you will dream about things as long as you live. If I was in your fix I would pray the God of heaven to wind up my career on this earth. I think you will grow lank, yes, soon dwindle away. Better go to the mountains, and there pray for them to fall on you, thus hiding you from the face of the Almighty. But I hope this will be a lesson for you. I hope you will grow better and wiser, and hereafter stick to the truth.

O my God! "hast thou forsaken me?" Is it Thy will that I should be executed upon false testimony? If so, "not my will but thine be done." Lord, I ask to forgive mine enemies; I pray for them. Lord save them. "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."

To the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company:

GENTLEMEN—I have been a good friend to you all. I did all I could for your road during the war—have went through cold and heat to protect your road; now you come against me. What for? Because I am represented as one of the railroad robbers; but I am innocent.

I learned from some of the prisoners, whom I overheard while in jail, that Wes. Finn was the man that had on the fox skin cap.

One gentleman swore that I was the man. The boys said that it was not fox skin, but was like a fox skin. They (the prisoners) said, "the man that swore that was mistaken. Though he swore he would know me were he to see me in Texas, *was* mistaken, for Bill Hays *was* the man, and the man that had his face blacked, and knew who had on the drab clothes." I leave this for the world; I *know* the facts in the case. I have been identified as one of the party, when in truth I was not. These men *ought* to have sworn facts; *ought* to have sworn the truth; *ought never* swear a thing unless they certainly knew it. As I have before said, I knew the robbery was going to be done, but I did not do it. This is the truth, as well as I can recollect.

O my God! why is it that such a charge comes against me? What have I done? Why am I treated so? Why persecuted? Why so treated? I can't tell unless it is money, the root of all evil. Like the man of God, I am ready to exclaim, "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man, for thou art the God of my strength. Why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? I send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God. Why art thou cast down O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Ps. 43.

Mother, dear mother, I want you all to do the best you can for yourselves. Wife, dear wife, I want you to meet me in heaven. We will never meet again on earth, so, farewell! Friends and foes, farewell;—my peace, my love, I leave with thee.

WM. P. KING.

[Written in jail, February 9th, 1867.]

NOTE.—He afterwards obtained a respite until May 22d.

REMARKS.

There is one thing more I wish here to mention, viz: When I was in the greatest agony of mind, and *broken* in consequence of my brother's death, there was a man sneaking along after me, posing to be my friend, saying he would do anything to find out the murderer, promising to stand up to me like a brother, who also was a neighbor; and, after ingratiating himself into my confidence, came up in court, to tell the truth, as I had supposed—put a different light on things—swearing to statements that were never made; causing W. M. Reeder to swear lies, &c. I ask, what is it that this man wouldn't do? Would he not steal butter off of a sick negro's bread? Yes, he would rob a grave-yard, or do any mean thing for money. Who is that man? Why, it's Griff. Wright. He also caused Mort. Reeder, by seduction, to swear falsely, saying, on oath, that I acknowledged I was in the robbery. You knew, Griff, you lied wilfully and maliciously. Yes, Griff, you have played a worse part than the murderer—have perjured your own soul, have *murdered*, or caused the execution of an innocent man.

I can say that I descended from honorable parentage. My grandfather was a revolutionary soldier. There never was a call for men to protect this Government but what (I have the honor to know) was filled partly by my relations. I love my people and my country, and have been patriotic from a boy. I wished from a boy to be connected with an army. The reason why I was not in the first call of the last struggle, was owing to ill health. My health had been bad for several years, and my friends thought it advisable for me to keep out. I had rather be a soldier to-day, fighting for my country's rights, than anything else. When mounted on a good horse, and armed accordingly, I was never afraid. If I were out of this place and had my two big pistols, I could clean out this guard that now surround the jail. I would treat them as I did rebel Col. Hambleton's pickets, leaving four of them dead on post, making my escape to my horse, and mounting him, and waving my hat three times, feeling confident that I had done something truly great. Though the hour was dark and no

one saw me, I felt like a conqueror—felt like I had revenge, in part, for my having on one occasion to trot off to Columbia for protection. I never asked rebel authorities for protection but once, and that was when my brother was killed; and that appeal placed me in jail, placed me under the gallows. It is right for me to say that I never heard anything against any of my kinfolks in the way of crime. I am the first of my name to suffer reproach. I would not have said one word about the railroad robbers had I not believed they procured my brother's death. I will give it as my opinion, that Riley Tow belonged to the gang, and that is one reason why he swears falsely against me. I don't know know this, but I believe it. I have formed this opinion from hints that the arrested party let fall in my presence. I wish here to state that I sincerely regret one thing, viz: the letters I wrote while at Louisville. I tried to get my folks to swear falsely for me. The reason I did this was because I was in a close place, and I feared Mort. Reeder's evidence would not be strong enough. I was out on the night of the robbery until half past ten o'clock. Mort. asked me what time it was after I came in, and I told him. Wife said she hadn't gone to sleep; the remainder were all in bed. Oh, when I think of this, I sometimes forget where I am. And when my mind is called back to the place that confines me, I ask, what am I here for, what have I done? I can't say; no, I can't tell. Though my mind runs back over the past, it brings nothing to say, "you are guilty." Has Providence brought me to this? It may be that I strayed far from God, and am under the rod of chastisement; probably my soul will have been saved by it. If it be the will of God, I ought to be proud of it; my soul is worth more than all the world besides. So let the will of God be done, not mine. How true, "Man is of few days and full of trouble." This world is one of wicked character, and if we can get to a better country we are far better off. So be contented, wicked man, and trust in God, for He will save them that put their trust in Him.

It is on my mind, and here let me again allude to the murder of my brother. I have said that "I believed Abe Owen was the man," and gave the ground why I believed he killed him. I loaned Abe my pistol. He came to my sugar mill Saturday, before my bro-

ther was killed, and asked me for it, saying he was going to ride around some, and wanted it. I remarked that I might want it myself. Brother Harry spoke and said, "let him have it, you won't need it;" and I did so. It is proper for me to say that I don't believe Owen had any notion of killing him at that time, if, indeed, he killed him at all. I give it as my opinion, that he and others held a consultation Saturday night to do it. And, from what I have learned and overheard in prison, Stephen Cornwell is as deep in the murdering of my brother as any one of the robbers. I have heard he was passing around very early Sunday morning, and was probably out Saturday night before. From what I have learned in jail, Charley Smith is the man that first told that my brother was in the robbery. Riley Tow swears that he told me, "brother had told him all about it." I can say that is another lie, Riley. I had no such conversation with you, and you know it. The railroad robbers, in my opinion, have murdered my brother, and through the influence of the railroad money, have sworn my life away; yes, those that I have befriended. I say again, I have ever been a good friend to the Railroad Company, and have protected their interest as far as my duty allowed. I repeat it, "many a cold night have I laid on your road to protect it, and now you are going to pay me; yes, you intend paying me on the 22d of March. I wish to call your attention to a single fact: that on one occasion the train was attacked, and a small drummer boy was shot in the leg. The guerrillas would have gotten you and your money that time had it not been for me. They passed my father's and went on, waiting the train's arrival. I came Franklin, and dispatched to Gen. Paine, at Gallatin, to put on a heavy guard, which he did, and saved the train.

Reader, you might suppose I am not in candor, but I am. I don't suppose there was ever a man treated like myself. One would think we all got along well together in prison, but for four long months I have been cursed and abused, fists struck in my face, sticks of wood drawn over my head, threats made to burst out my brains, &c. I had as soon be in a lion's den. My life has not been secure even for the short time I am allowed to live. Then, my poor wife, mother, and sisters, broken hearted. Lord have mercy upon them; guide their footsteps through this world,

and save them in thy upper and better kingdom. There is no earthly chance for me. I look to God for help. On the 22d of March you will, in my opinion, hang one guilty man and one innocent man, but I can't help it.

HE OBTAINS A RESPITE.

MARCH 22d, 1867.

This will show that I have a respite of fifty-six days. My day of execution is fixed for the 17th of May next. I am under all the obligations to the Governor of our State that it is possible for one poor mortal to be. To be hung is an awful thing, especially if innocent of the charge alleged. I hope there is a step being taken for my relief. I don't wish to die yet, much less die like a dog. If I had murdered, or caused the murder of any one, I should not shrink from death. For had I been reduced to this extremity I should have left the country ere I had committed so great a crime. I do not know but that the whole affair is providential; for, had I run at large, and the condemned or accused party escape, I should have killed the last one of them. My brother was as dear to me as ever a brother was to any one, although there has been testimony brought to court to prove the contrary. Hence, it may be best as it is, for in the heat of passion I might have killed an innocent man, and thereby lost my own soul. I drank a little too much whisky sometimes, and when I got on a bender, foes might look out. Whisky made me a bold man, and I would have had them, or died in the attempt. I feared nothing when one started. When I found the body of my murdered brother I felt ruined forever. He was the last brother left, my father, and two other brothers having been killed. We loved each other dearly, having been reared up together. Did the world belong to me, I would give it all freely to have him restored, so that he could speak for himself. I have nothing to repent of as to myself, though I be ever so sorry for my people. I love my wife, and my dear old mother and sisters. I hate to leave them. I feel that I only done my duty in procuring the arrest of those whom I believed did the murder. But had I held my peace, I might have been at home to-day. Under circumstances of similar character

good men have acted, and so would I were I to pass over the same ground again. I think I did right, for had I kept this to myself how could I ever have been happy again. Thank God I have a heart in the right place. But, gentlemen of the Railroad Company come up in my rear, with robbers that have turned traitors to their party, and swear that I was one of their clique. And you, old Griff. Wright, to induce Mort. Reeder to swear falsely, offered a part of the reward, and menaced him also with threats.

It is both a shame and disgrace to the human family to know how I have been treated. Now, Mr. Cornwell, I want to give you your pedigree. You know, sir, I never kept your company. Would you inquire why? My answer is, simply because you were accused of the lowest down things in the world. You put yourself on a level with brutes, as has been proven; consequently I never allowed you to come about me. No, you are a fake, in every sense of the word; far more degraded than a thief. Reader, I hope you will pardon me, for I am bound to say it: Cornwell, hell is too good for you! Now, Thou. Evans, what about you? You are not a man of clean hands. You kept a woman about you that had a child, and you and others, in order to cover your shame, murdered it. Now, a man that would do that, would, of course, swear anything. Nothing too mean for you and Cornwell to do. Neither of you are respected now, and never have been. I told you, Griff. Wright, what my brother told me: you gathered up a party of men to arrest the robbers, and told them that I said to you, that my brother had disclosed the whole thing to me. Then Cornwell, for spite, or revenge, or hire, told you I was in the act. But, had I been one of the party, I should rather have died than told it. And had I not believed you murdered my brother, or caused his death, I should never have given his statements. It's well enough for you that you committed me, for had you not done so I should have sent the last one of you up. You, Cornwell, was out the morning of my brother's death. You, Railroad Company, have pitched in on the wrong man. I will give justice to whom justice belongs. From what I have learned in prison, I don't believe that the following, whose names I here give, are guilty of the murder of Harvey King, viz: Abner Owen, John Culbert, Thou. Evans, Bill Hays, Robbins Hay; nor do I believe

they had any hand in it. Charley Smith may be innocent, but I believe he was knowing to it. I have found out a great deal in jail. Where were you, busy Bill Finn, Saturday night before the murder took place? I learn from Owen that you were close to where West. Finn stayed. I learn, also, that you were up in the night, and seen soon next morning in the neighborhood of the place where Harvey was killed. You and West. Finn are guilty of the murder of my brother. Have I no friends that will look after this? Had I justice I would be out of this awful hole. And were I out, I would not leave a stone unturned, but would bring you hellish, *thieving* murderers to account for this. I believe Cornwell, West. Finn, Bill Finn, Bug. Wainscot, and Joe Paine are guilty of the murder. It's my honest opinion that Abner Owen got my brother to the point where he was killed. He was knocked down by one of them with my pistol, and with the pistol he (Harvey) had of mine, shot. I have seen too many holes in human hide, that my pistol, which Owen had, had made, to believe that he was shot with it.

I am very thankful to Mr. James Smith, who stated the truth, who I knew would not do otherwise. Mrs. Reeder, my mother-in-law, stated facts also. She is a good and kind lady, and has always treated me with great respect. I am awful sorry that I have had this bad luck. I married Ellen Reeder, her daughter, with whom I was ever happy. It is awful hard to leave one kind and good, and with whom I had only lived three short months. I have to say that, had I called on good men instead of Griff. Wright, to stand up to me, I would to-day have been free. I understand he says that I am "just where he has long wanted me." Griff, I will go to a place where you will never come, for I know you are a cold-hearted murderer, and your class of men "can never enter there." My blood be upon your head. You wanted those ten thousand dollars. But, first, you must get Mort. Reeder to swear to your profit. You know I told you "I had the strings to show, and to make my brother's statements good." But you used it as capital against me. You know, Griff, that I know what you are, and that you swore as black a lie as ever a man did; that's enough about you. Lon. Reeder made fair and manly statements before the Court as to my whereabouts on Sunday morning, and so did Mort., on this

particular point. I want one thing distinctly understood: that I am innocent of the murder. Nor can you prove it, i. e. the Court, by man, woman, or child, that I was in the robbery, or ever took anything from them and used the same for my benefit. I defy the world to do this. Had I been the man that the enemy represent, I should now have been able to buy several miles of your railroad. But, thank the Good One, I made no abuse of my power whilst in the army, and were I out of this place I would sacrifice no honor in bringing these perjured devils to taw.

It looks awful hard for me to be brought to this after defending both your road and the Government, by these fiendish murderers. For six long months have I been confined in the smoulderings of an earthly hell, far from my family and every worldly pleasure. Why so? Because of the testimony of perjured men. I never asked protection of the civil authorities but once, and that was to punish the man or set of men that destroyed my brother. And for this simple request have to be jailed, have to be hung!

Now, I want to show how things went on as my trial proceeded. John A. Finn and W. W. Bush, Attorneys at law, were against me; as also were Chas. Milliken and Judge Loving, of Bowling Green. Lawyer Finn made it his business to examine the witnesses upon the part of the Commonwealth; and if they were not likely to answer favorably to his cause, he would shake his head; and if an affirmative answer was desired, he gently bowed his head. By means of this sort he dictated for the witnesses, and had Evans, Cornwell, Riley Tow, and son John, Mort Reeder, and old Griff well posted. And if they were likely to blunder, he supported them with a pertinent question or wag of the head. These were the means employed, or resorted to, in order to thwart the efforts of an honest defendant.

Now, about being recognized as one of the robbers. When Cornwell stated that I was one of the party, I cared nothing for it, for I never dreamed of any one else swearing to or identifying me as one of the gang; but I was awfully fooled when they commenced swearing to me. I was pointed out by every one on the train.

I want here to give a circumstance that occurred in January 1864. Col. Hamilton and Col. Hughes, of the rebel army, can

Capt. J. D. Gilliam, father of J. D. Gilliam,
H. Gilliam, grandfather of W. D. Gilliam,
and great-grandfather of Dr. Will D.
Gilliam, Jr., his story profession at the 33rd, 1865

to Scottsville, Ky., and captured the place, Capt. Gilliam, of the Fifty-second Kentucky, surrendering, &c. An order was sent to Franklin to pursue them, and I was ordered with my Company to take up march on the instant, which we did. I crossed the Cumberland river, and after several days riding in search of the enemy, and near a place called Butler's Landing, came upon them. I was in the rear of my command, when all at once a fire was opened in front. Not knowing what was up, I rushed forward, and was soon in a den of "bush whackers," who notified me of their hostile intentions by shooting the robes of my hat cords off, and also several holes through the leg of my boot, and wounding and killing some of my men. I looked up at the place from whence the firing came, and seeing a man from his shoulders up, took a good look at him, hoping that one day I might be able to identify him. I got his features, and knew them well. Sometime after I met with a man in our town, Franklin, whose name is Thomas Walker, whom I recognized as being the very man. I was determined to shoot him, but was prevented by the friends of Walker, who declared him to be a good Union man. It was hard for me to believe it. The Tennessee party never suited me. I was nearly cured of this belief on finding some photographs at a certain Union house, that rebels had lost on account of a defeat. The man that I mistook Walker for, left or lost his photograph, whose name is Bennett, a Rebel Captain. Now, had I shot Walker, my peace on earth would have been at an end. I have been in many close places, and always came out more than conqueror till now. Had I done right I should have left the country when I was told by Griff. Wright that Cornwell implicated me. But as I wished to revenge myself of the death of my brother, I remained. But I could not withstand the opposition of both parties, viz: the Railroad Company and robbers. No chance for me then; the above mentioned Company had the money.

I understand that one of the jury said on the trial, that I had his head in the halter at one time, but now, that he had mine, and would use it, &c. Had you injured me, sir, I should never think of revenge by disgracing the jury bench. But, upon the contrary, would have taken it out of your person. You are, sir, a well murderer, a law-thief, and worse than all, if possible, a coward.

Many of you seek to hang me because I was an officer in the Federal army. One of the jurymen, Mr. Isaiah Lewis, I understand, was in company with the guerrillas when my poor old mother was robbed. You roused up a parcel of innocent women at a late hour of the night, who never harmed any one, merely out of revenge to me; and, after all this, came up and put yourself in as a jurymen. I did not know it then, else you would not have been there. Bad as I am, I would not sit on a jury to try men's lives, with determined enmity at heart. No, thank God, I am too honest for that. This is not war on the rebels generally, for I know I have some good friends among them. Men that used to run to me for protection once, are now farthest from me. No, instead of "returning good for evil," will not so much as return good for good. Let old Griff and his Tow band run over me now, but you will repent it some day—will all be sorry enough.

I want you all to read my history and ask yourselves the question, if you are not ashamed of your course? You have never come to see me. Ah, you seem to have forgotten past favors, forgotten me. But now, you may kill me, and thanks be to Him who does all things well, you can't do any more—can't make me guilty of the murder of my poor brother. If I had my military career to go over again, it would be quite different; for I don't believe there are a hundred honest men in Simpson county. The question is not, how many men there are of your county that would swear a lie, but how many there are that would not, especially for pay. Griff Wright would swear a dozen before breakfast for a hundred dollars, and jump at the chance. Let me, Griff, call your attention to what father and I saw you do during his lifetime. You remember to have met a drunken boy in Widow Bell's lane, and pulled him off his horse and forced him to gamble at cards, and while there robbed him of his money, put it in your pocket and rode off, saying, "good bye." Doesn't everybody know that you would sooner swear for money than to go to the trouble of taking it by violence? Who ever heard of a man's being committed on testimony like this—i. e., by such characters? Some of you hellions think you have done well by plotting against me in this way, and no doubt tickle in your sleeve: but remember there is a judgment day not far off; then, He who never

errs will avenge me. You have the country turned against me but such will not be the case always; the truth is powerful and will prevail; the cloven foot will be seen. A wolf in sheep's clothing may do mischief, but it will wear off after a while, and the dog hair will again appear. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." Griff Wright will be overtaken yet, and then!!! If any one will follow Riley Tow and son a little while, they would soon see what they are—they can't quit it.

I may here allude to my childhood again. I have ever been of a positive temperament, consequently acted hastily. I never thought of letting any one run over me, though I avoided difficulties, and was naturally good humored and tender hearted until I joined the army. I was never destitute of mercy until I got mad. I used to fight when a boy, and none of my associates could whip me. There was a boy in my acquaintance by the name of Veach, who ventured to curse his mother in my presence, which so enraged me that I took him by the throttle and flogged him good, and went and told his mother why I did it. I guess he never did so any more. While in the army I had several rounds, but never struck a man but what I brought him. In the fall of '64 my regiment was brigaded in the Ninth Ohio Cavalry. We were ordered to Alabama under General Rousseau. Then I belonged to the 13th Army Corps. The command was after rebel General Forrest. After giving him chase we were ordered back to Nashville; and after turning up our saddles I went down to a saloon on the public square, and there I was met by a huge monster, a perfect Goliath, who ventured to call me "a d—d son of a b—h," which so enraged me that I determined to revenge myself. Seeing there were no soldiers present I thought of shooting him at once; and as I drew my pistol he struck at me, and at it we went. He caught me by the cape of my overcoat, and held it fast. This suited me, for I walked upon him with my feet, and brought him to the ground. Just then his comrade ran up, and turning myself a little, gave him such a kick about the pit of the stomach that settled him from all further interference, the big fellow all the while holding me by the cape, which gave me a double victory over him; for, with the aid of his strong arms I gave him both feet at once, until he was well nigh dead. The thought of the nick name he gave my mother

only served to increase my fury. Next morning I went back, intending to shoot him on sight, but the barkeeper told me he was bed fast. In a few days I left for Bowling Green, Ky. There I remained until about Christmas, and was then ordered to Franklin, Ky., to take command of the post. Soon after this we got a furlough of twenty days, after which we were to report at Bowling Green, Ky., again, and on the 18th day of January, 1865, we were mustered out of service. I should like to give all of my military history in connection, but having lost a little journal containing many important items, must necessarily give it over. On the 12th of June, 1863, I enlisted in the army of the United States, under Col. Sam. Johnson, of the Fifty-second Mounted Infantry. I was the first man that enlisted in the regiment as a private. I was soon elected first lieutenant, and afterwards promoted to Captain. I commenced recruiting, and after getting twelve men, commenced chasing guerrillas. On one occasion "the home guard" joined us and we put forty to flight. We found them at one Mr. Caldwell's, who, in order to save them, threw down the fence for them to pass out. After their passage he commenced laying up the fence, but was quickly ordered to lay it down again; and, on refusing to do so, was shot several times. We captured their goods, and also several Federal prisoners. On our way back we got no game, but made up for it next morning, for about daylight we were aroused by the enemy from an unexpected quarter, who was plundering our town, Franklin, for horses. We got after them, and they ran off south of this place, numbering in all about thirty-seven. Col. Johnson and I went out alone, in disorder, and as I was ahead of him, came in contact with one of their rear guards, and having but one pistol, shot at him five times, but failed to bring him off. Having but one load left, thought it high time to quit, the Colonel being still behind. I afterwards learned that the poor fellow died near Middleton, a village some ten miles distant. I rejoined the Colonel, and while in a chat another one of them came up and presented his gun at me; but having my pistol cocked, shot him through before he could fire. His horse wheeled right about and set off at full speed. My object was to get his horse by the bridle and knock him off with my pistol. But this was foolhardy; for had I caught his horse, how easily he could

have shot me. But the shot I made pierced his right arm and ranged through his body, consequently killed him. The poor fellow fell from his horse within about two miles of this city. I hope he has gone to rest. I have slain many a poor fellow, but I can't help it now. I made several scouts over in Tennessee, capturing a great many of Hamilton's men. I killed a great many in March, 1864. I was afterwards ordered to Lexington, Ky., and thence to Irvine, thence on a scout to the mountains. It was there I got to kill the guerrilla spy, noted for his having committed rape on some as good characters as Virginia affords. He operated in Western Virginia, and allowed his troops to commit, in like manner, the same crime, to an unheard of extent. My respect for the "fair sex" would have caused me to kill any man for a like offense, the President not excepted. The mountains are very rugged, and if you made a misstep on their sides and slopes you were gone, world without end. So destitute and backward is this region that old men live there who never saw a wagon. After fifteen days service we were marched back to Irvine, thence to Mt. Sterling, thence to the salt works in Virginia, to meet rebel John Morgan, who, coming into Kentucky, caused us to return, Col. Grider being ordered to Pound Gap. I defended our troops by taking the front, and was then afterwards placed in the rear during our march, thus doubling my danger. Col. Grider put more confidence in me just then than I was willing to claim. After forty days hard scouting returned to Mt. Sterling, thence to Lexington, thence to Bowling Green. This was on the 4th of July, and on the 7th was ordered to Greenville with a portion of the regiment. In a short time we went to Hopkinsville, and there got information of my father's death, which was occasioned by an accidental shot from the careless hand of a friend. Being very unwell at this time, thought proper to visit my mother; but finding it unsafe, went to Franklin and thence to Bowling Green, to join my command. Thus interchanging from place to place, went again soon, further west, to guard a bridge near Allensville, Ky. From thence to Elkton, thence to Russellville, thence to Franklin, Ky., thence to Nashville, thence to Franklin, Tenn., thence to Athens, Ala., thence to Florence, thence down the Tennessee river, thence to Huntsville, Ala., thence to Bowling Green, Ky. My time was

spent in ease after this, as long as I remained in the service. I remember that while I was in Alabama, W. C. Holland, accompanied by guerrillas, came to my mother's house and robbed them. He appeared in court against me. Isaiah Lewis also came at another time with the chief of guerrillas, Harper, at the hour of midnight, interrupting and robbing my defenceless mother and sisters, and afterwards is a jurymen, to sentence me to death. Had I been rightly at myself, things would have assumed a different aspect. I had no relative to advise me, and my friends totally forsook me. The first hint given me about the train robbery was from the mouth of John Thompson, who asked me if I did not want to make some money; and on receiving an affirmative answer, let me know that the train would be thrown off, and that if it was guarded, he being on board, would give the alarm; if unguarded, it would be robbed. My brother told me that he had had similar propositions made to him, and I advised him for God's sake not to have anything to do with it. I think that no one can but see Thompson guilty.

THE GREAT SECRET.

MARCH 23, 1867.

I've got the secret at last. On last night there was a general conversation among the prisoners. I affected sleep, and I heard Charley Smith say that Riley Tow told him, that Harvy King had told him (Tow) all about the train robbing, and that he (Smith) gave West Finn and Bill Finn a quart of whisky, and that they went to George Spears' on Saturday night, and there Abe Owen loaned them his pistol, or my pistol, which he had previously borrowed. Abe Owen decoyed him off, and the two Finns, accompanied by Cornwell, Bug Wainscott, and Joe Payne murdered my brother.

MY DREAM.

I dreamed last June of going up beside a muddy river, with several men following after me; and there was a nob near the river, even on the bank; and that I made my way to its summit, and, behold! it parted in two, or broke on my right side. At this instant I leaped from it into a field, and running off at angles,

made my escape; but losing sight of my attendants, never knew what became of them. How often have I had occasion to think of this during my trial. A literal interpretation of this dream would place me in a far better condition than I am to-day.

One of the meanest things Griff. did was to induce Mort. Reeder to swear falsely. Yet no one could expect better of him, as he led the way. A man that would do this would steal butter from a sick nigger's bread, or rob a grave yard. I always had war proclivities, but this puts them at once in motion. In order to revenge myself of an injury, I stole out at night and murdered four of Col. Hamilton's men. You may guess I felt good then, for I took off my hat and waved it over my head, exulting over my victory, though it were too dark for any one to see me, in order to share my glory. But now I am confined, can't help myself; and oh! how bad we get along in prison. I am menaced and threatened out of my life. Blocks of wood are drawn over me daily, accompanied by threats and cursing. Oh! I am so unhappy. Let me look back. I won't say that I know to a certainty that Tow was in the robbery, but will say he got part of the money.

Let me look back. Yes, I look back and regret having tried to induce my people to swear falsely. I was in a close place and thought it best, feeling fearful that Mort. Reeder's evidence would not be strong enough to save me.

Let me look back. Yes, on reflection, I see nothing to cause me to feel that my confinement and punishment are just. It may be that God intends it as a means to save me, to save my soul.

These are my last reflections, and they will accompany me to the grave.

W. P. KING.

LIFE OF ABRAHAM OWEN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

REVISED BY REV. L. M. HORN.

FRANKLIN, KY., March 1st, 1867.

I, Abraham Owen, was born in Macon County, Tennessee, October 22d, 1842. I was raised by honest, *truthful* parents. At the age of sixteen my parents moved to Simpson County, where they reside to this day. Oh! what a pity for me that I ever saw this, Simpson County. In about two years after my father settled here, the country got into an uproar, resulting as every one knows, in war. Soon after the declaration of war, the President, Lincoln, called for men to protect the good old Union and Constitution of the United States of America, for which our poor old fathers had fought and died, in years long gone by. In December, 1861, I enlisted to fight for the glorious old Union. I volunteered and joined the 5th Kentucky Cavalry, Company H, Captain Freeman commander of the company. Colonel Hodges commanded the regiment. I served three years and six months to a day, before I was permitted to return to my native home, or the home of my parents, in peace and pleasure. I was about eighteen years old when I volunteered to fight for my country. This I did with great grace and bravery.

During the war I underwent every species of hardship and trial, almost amounting to inhumanity. I have faced the great battles and great guns, so deadly aimed at our country, but always came off victorious and safe. After the war had ceased, I was relieved near Goldsboro, North Carolina. We were upon the waters four days and nights before we returned to land, and, after landing, I walked up from the water, and looking around, found myself in Baltimore. There I boarded a train for Louisville, Kentucky, and

after arriving there, was sent to the barracks, where I remained for three weeks, after which I was mustered out of service. I was discharged honorably, and punctually paid off. I then started for Simpson, the old homestead, and after being at home a few days, set in to work for a living. I determined to make my living honest and honorably, without soldiering or stealing. But, alas! only two short years expired before I was accused of murdering my closest neighbor boy, which is too intolerable to think of. There was a train of cars thrown off the track, some three or four miles north of Franklin, our county seat, and passengers robbed. By who? By some fourteen men. It was on the night of November 8th, 1866. Of this I am accused. But, thank God, I was at home that night. Some few days following, there was a young man murdered, brutally murdered, near where I lived, by the name of Harvey King. By whom was he murdered? There was no one seen any ways near him—no person found to tell anything about it—to tell who killed Harvey King. But I had borrowed a pistol from W. P. King, the murdered man's brother, on Saturday before. The reason why I borrowed it was, because I had contemplated a visit to Tennessee, to see some connections, and thought I would like to have it with me, as it was some fifty miles over there, and having nothing of the sort, thought I might need it, (that is the pistol), to defend myself, as it was a long ways from home, and a strange place to me—consequently, I went to a man whom I had ever taken to be a good friend, and borrowed a pistol. On Saturday evening before the following Sabbath, (I aimed to start), I borrowed the pistol, but when Sunday morning came, I arose later than common, and when I got up my mother had breakfast ready. After which I and my youngest brother went and fed our stock as usual. Before we had returned to the house, a young man by the name of John Prater came, and had got in the house but a short time before W. P. King came in also. Mr. King asked for my brother, and wished to see my father too. His business with my father, he said, was to get him to keep up his stock, which were troubling him. But the gentleman only staid about five minutes; then, mounting his horse, rode away. I was coming from the stables, and went into the house, and when I got

into the house, who should I find but John Prater? He was an old acquaintance, and lived some ten or fifteen miles off. He had rode about five miles that morning, having come up within that distance the evening before. He said he had come purposely to go to a baptizing, and wished me to go with him. The baptizing was about four miles distant. Mr. Prater soon put at me to go with him. I replied that I could not go, adding at the same time, that my horse had been hard at work all the week, and was without shoes, &c. "Oh yes, you can go" said mother, "it will not hurt your horse to ride that distance," and if she was in my place, would go, adding at the same time that we "ought to be gettin' off, it was almost nine o'clock, and if you don't hurry you will not get there in time for the baptizing. I then concluded not to go to Tennessee until the following week, but went on with Mr. Prater, as my horse was in bad plight for the intended trip, as I have shown before. I sent a little negro for my horse, and was soon ready. We accordingly started out for the baptizing, but happened to go to the wrong place. However, I mentioned that we were on, but remember to have said to Prater, if he would as soon go by the Widow Kings to church, that we would go that way. Mr. Prater added "all right," and on we went. Now, he is a gentleman, and a young man that stands fair, and is respected by all, and was with me until Monday morning, and after my brother and sister started for school, he started for home. I then went on about my business in the usual way, and was at home all day, till nearly night. Then my little brother and sister returned from school, by the way of Mrs. Kings, and found Harvey King a murdered corpse, and came on by where I and my other brother were hauling. With this news came also a request from Mrs. King that our family would come over that night. So I dropped my work, and told a boy to unharness my horses, and started, going through the house, and asking my mother if she was not going over. "Yes," said she, "as soon as I get my business arranged, I am coming." So I then started for Mrs. Kings. After leaving the house a little ways I met John Finn and his son-in-law, and asked them if they came by, and if there were many persons there, &c. We then started on,

I and my brother, and when we got there, I went into the room where lay the corpse, and but few persons were present. Mr. Welty, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Riggsby, I believe, were all that were in the room. I remained with the corpse until my parents came, which was about dark. I then asked father if they were going to stay all night, and he replied affirmatively. I then remarked to my mother that I had better go back home. "Yes," said she, "you had, we have left your youngest brother and the little negro there, and they will probably be afraid. I and my brother then returned home, as we went, together. On Tuesday morning, soon after breakfast, I and my next oldest brother went to help dig the grave for the young man whom they say I murdered.

W. P. King is the man that first made this statement, though in all candor I never thought of such a thing in all my life; never thought of murdering one of my neighbor boys. If such had been my disposition—to murder any one—I certainly would have sought the lives of those men who robbed my poor old parents while I was in the army. They even took the last coverlid from my mother's bed—individuals who lived close by, and who would willingly have taken my life then, and who have been seeking it ever since I left the army. I am now forced to the conclusion that they concluded there was no chance to get me, unless it was by swearing falsely—by swearing my life away—in the presence of men and their God, who knows everything, knows that I knew nothing about the murder of Harvey King, nor did I even suspect his death until his body was found, and I and my people sent for. I affirm before God and man, that I never knew a single thing about the murder for which I am condemned. I am clear, and I thank God for it. After the burial was over, I returned home and lay down as usual, to take my rest, never dreaming of being suspected, much less accused of murder. But, alas for me. Late the following night, or at the hour of two o'clock, A. M., I was called by my father, whose voice I recognized, saying, "there is some one at the door." And, calling upon the intruder, asked "Who are you?" The answer was a friend. I raised up in my bed, and seized hold of a musket which set near me, thinking at first I would defend myself, but was forced to take a different course,

for I heard them call for me, adding that they intended to have him, and if resistance be made, "we will burn up these premises." I then thought I shouldn't show fight at all; consequently, set my gun aside, and called to my brother, saying, "Wake up, the guerrillas are here." But, finding him sound asleep, raised up the feather bed, and crawled into the straw tick, and pulled my brother upon me, hoping to escape unobserved. The intruding party then sent my father into the room after me. But feeling about some time, returned, saying, "Abraham is not there." Poking out my head to see who it was, I heard my father say, "Go in, gentlemen, and see for yourselves." They soon procured a light, and in they came. One of the party caught me by the head, and pulled me out, saying, "Come out here, you d—d murderer." Up to this time I thought them guerrillas, but they soon charged me with the murder of Harvey King. After taking me a little ways from home they began to threaten to hang me, and said I, "Gentlemen, if I am to be hung, I will go no farther; hang me here, and my body can be cared for," &c. I was placed on a bad horse, and carried to several places, and witnessed the arrest of other men. Thus unfeelingly and unsparingly was I rushed into prison. As

before stated, I was accused of robbing the train; consequently, was carried to Louisville, and held in custody by the military authorities. But on being tried for the murder of Harvey King, was accordingly brought to Franklin. The trial proceeded, and as I conceive, with much unfairness. Men of bad character were the principal witnesses, who affirmed and swore to many barefaced lies. Among the many that deposed against me were Griff. Wright, Riley Tow, Stephen Cornwell, and John Evans, all men of desperate character. Griff. Wright made statements to please himself, not so much out of hatred to me, though a most violent enemy, but done so in order to get the reward of the Railroad Company. Now, Griff, God is my Judge, you know this is so. If the testimony of these men be valid, then no man is safe in Simpson County. The passengers who seemed to identify me so well in the robbing were also deceived. My habit of dress was altogether different; consequently, their testimony false. I believe they were honestly mistaken. Now, if any one were to guess that I was

present and aided in the matter, I would say you guess very well; and if you were to state that Bill King was the deepest, or at least as deep in the matter as any one, you would guess well; and if a man was to tell me I was first on the train, and Bill King the last, I should ask him how he knew? But I deny having my foot crushed, and deny having on a hat, and if accused, should deny shooting with intent to kill—and if I am allowed to guess, I should guess that after a few breaths of more sober reflection, one of the party began to meditate upon the sacredness of a mother's love and advice, and, therefore, began to devise some means to obviate the horrible deed in order to save the lives of the passengers, consequently proposed having his own way, which was to jump the train on a smooth plain or portion of the road, and thereby spare the lives of the unsuspecting travelers, and to prevent, also, a general wreck of the train. But in this proposition, as in another which followed, was ruled down. It was stated also, on oath, that I had on a hat, and that I wore a moustache; this is also false, for I had on neither, but, on the contrary, wore a heavy pair of whiskers. But one great crime often leads to another. Harvey King was killed, but not so much out of malice as of a love of character. No one likes to be exposed, especially those of whom the people expect better things. King and I are both innocent of the murder, but it may be that we both deserve to die. We have been falsely condemned, and the jury knows that it was not, nor could it be proven that we did the murder. Captain King and I both tried to get the poor boy away. But, alas for him. He died a most cruel death. But why should I give the names of the individuals who committed the deed? They are my friends, and anything that would lead to their conviction would do me no good, but much harm to them, and worse than all, the enemy would exult. Two lives will soon have paid the forfeit; let that suffice.

I should guess that all the men engaged in this matter were arrested but two, and these two do not live in this State. But this is not all—allow me to guess a little further—that whisky prompted some of this party to action, and had they been sober, some of their bravest men would have shuddered at such a thought. But

this is all guess work, you understand. But I tell you Bill. King did not kill his brother, neither did he have it done. He was killed by one or more of a party, and the pistol I borrowed of King was loaned of me to another parcel of men to "spree upon," said they, but my impression was that they intended to kill Riley Tow, but it proved to be another man. Poor Harvey, things would have worked better for us had we went to Tennessee. We were to have gone the morning of his death, but he being drunk rushed madly into danger. Capt. King was notified of the danger that Harvey King was in, and he seemed to heed the notice, for he tried to get him off, but all to no avail. Poor fellow, he has left a good mother and good friends to mourn his loss, and had he suffered himself advised by them, he might have been here to-day. I said I didn't know who killed my neighbor boy, nor do I certainly know the very man that killed him. I think I could guess, but why should I even do this, since I nor no other being could be benefitted by it? I might be deceived. Were I in a room with a half-dozen other men, and my sight shut off with a blind, how could I tell who touched me first or last. Might not all touch me, or might not one touch me several times, and the remainder touch me never at all? I tell you more than one man was present when this thing took place. So, according to your testimony, some one is guilty, though he never be known. For in your court-house you proved that Capt. King was absent when the pistols fired. But, unfortunately for him, his tongue always was a little too long, and had he only held his peace, he, too, might have escaped. He knew I was a brave man, and, perhaps, believed me to be the boldest and most adventurous man of all his brother's acquaintances, and that if I killed him, it was done at the instance of other men, and not out of malice, consequently laid it to me. But more than that, Griff. Wright promised him in all about \$1,700 of the reward money (better pay than robbing cars), if he would ferret out the whole matter—hence his efforts to punish me. But "give the devil his dues," and after all, King is a better man than men are want to call him.

I know I have been a bad man—have done things out of amusement that were wrong, and if I were to tell all about my war

scrapes, some people would think me very mean. I have stated that I was a Federal soldier, and that I was in the service more than three years, consequently saw a great many things, and endured many hardships, and under circumstances so trying, no one could help but do wrong sometimes. When one is so far from home, so far from friends, and in a land of enemies, he has many promptings to evil. I have been thrown from my command, and left alone, without purse or scrip, and on one occasion I recollect to have taken a horse that came near costing me my life. I was afoot, and far from friends, wearied and tired nearly to death, set down to rest, and while there thought of my old homestead, parents and friends, and could but weep sorely. Feeling a little refreshed, I started again to hunt up my command, which at that time was at Chattanooga, and coming to a house stopped to beg a morsel to eat. A good lady gave me a lunch, and on I went. Passing by the stable I saw a fine horse, and, after reaching a thicket, made me a bridle of bark, and slipped back for my horse. After bridling him I was ordered by the good lady to let the horse be, but seeing no man present shoved on. I had about thirty-five miles to go before I could reach camp. After awhile I looked back, and saw half-dozen men coming, and discovering that they were right after me, put off at full speed. They soon drew near me, and I alighted and run off and hid, and thought myself safe as a book. But they soon hauled me out, and took me back. I felt sure that they intended to kill me, but for the good lady's sake turned me loose. At another time I got lost from my team, and was compelled to press a good mule from a rebel wagon. Indeed, I have been in many close places. At one time I was teamster, and meeting with the rebel General Wheeler, witnessed the loss of several pieces of artillery and many mules, and then they turned and fired on the rest, which caused a terrible flight among our mules and wagons. But this is only by the way. I would advise young men to keep out of armies. It is a bad place.

But where am I now? In jail, shut out from all the pleasures of this world. And what am I to be hung for? Why, for nothing. I expect to be hung, but will be innocent of the charge, thank God! I don't know what is to become of my poor old mother.

I believe it will kill her. Tell her not to grieve for me; I will be better off. Father, you gave me good advice, and tried to raise me right. You know I am innocent of the murder of Harvey King—that's a comfort to me. But I am gone—I am ruined, world without end! Farewell, dear mother, farewell—comfort yourself in the belief that I am going to Heaven. Farewell, father. I had hoped to stand by you in your old age, but I soon will have been done with this world. Farewell, brothers; farewell, sisters—farewell, forever! Tell all my friends good-bye. Tell them to meet me in Heaven.

ABRAHAM OWEN.

THE EXECUTION.

The following, which is from the Nashville Union and Dispatch, is very nearly correct:

THE DAY.

Yesterday expired the respite from the sentence of death passed upon the railroad robbers, William P. King and Abraham Owen, by the Circuit Court of Simpson County, Kentucky, for the murder of Harvey King, a member of the band, and brother of the chief, one of the prisoners. The morning broke clear and cloudless above the beautiful little town of Franklin, where the death sentence was to be executed. The birds were sweetly warbling in the trees, and a cool breeze swept over the broad green landscape, giving promise of a lovely day, scarce in keeping with the terrible events which were to transpire before the setting of the sun, and which were to seal forever the fate of two erring human beings who had dared to tread the path of death in defiance of inevitable consequences.

The prisoners were, on Thursday, removed from the dungeon in which they had been confined, on the lower floor of the jail building, their new quarters being much neater and cooler, and better adapted to the reception of visitors and friends. The wife of King, to whom he had been married only three months before his arrest, and his mother and two sisters, who reside some four miles from Franklin, visited the prisoners on that day, in company with the mother, sister, and brother of Owen. They remained with the prisoners nearly all day, bidding a last farewell as they parted from them toward its close.

The approach of the terrible day seemed to affect them very little, and they doubtless expected at least a commutation of their sentence to imprisonment for life. Every effort had been made to save them. The wife of King and his mother, soon after the pas-

sage of sentence, went to Gov. Bramlette, in company with Rev. L. M. Horn, and by representing that the spiritual condition of the prisoners was such as to demand a respite, that they might prepare for the fate which awaited them, secured a fifty-six days postponement of the execution, which was to have taken place on the 17th of May.

On the approach of that day, another expedient to gain time was resorted to. It was represented to Gov. Bramlette that the wife of King would be able to produce, at the June session of the Circuit Court, such evidence as would clear the prisoners. The Governor, wishing to give them ample opportunity to prove themselves guiltless, again respited them to June 28th. When the Court convened, no attempt whatever was made to prove anything by Mrs. King, and as the time wore on, still another experiment was tried. This was the arrest of an old man named Riley Tow, who had moved from Simpson to Allen County, on a charge of having murdered Harvey King. The scheme, however, like the others, failed in its ultimate object.

Meanwhile, the robbers had been planning an escape. They at one time succeeded in cutting a hole through the floor of the cell, but coming to a large bed of rocks beneath, were compelled to give up this method of egress.

At another time they outwitted the jailer, ran the guard, and very nearly effected their escape, a bullet in the arm of King only stopping his flight, and Owens being found beneath the floor of a kitchen.

Even up to yesterday morning they had not given up hope of relief from some quarter, and constantly asserted their innocence.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE.

Though Simpson County has perhaps been the scene of as many bloody murders and outrages as any other in Kentucky, no public execution had ever before taken place within its borders. The death penalty had never before been paid by any violator of law, and the novelty of such a revolting exhibition could not but lead thousands to throw aside business for the day to witness it.

At seven o'clock all the saloons and other establishments for the sale of intoxicating liquors were closed, and when, at nine o'clock, the bell at the court-house rang out the ominous signal for the gathering of the guard, the crowd had gathered at various points on the Square, eagerly watching for the first movement toward the jail. In a few moments, they moved toward the head of the street, leading from the Square to the prison, but here the dense mass which quickly came together, were stopped and kept back by the soldiery.

AT THE JAIL.

It was not long ere Sheriff Bogan and Captain R. P. Finn, at the head of a company of twenty-two armed citizens, broke through the crowd and marched to the jail, where, upon their arrival, the detachment of twelve guards from the Second United States Infantry filed off, leaving the prisoners in the hands of the civil authorities and the citizen guards.

While these movements were going on outside, Rev. Samuel Borthwick, Rev. W. F. Harwell, Rev. J. F. Redford, Rev. O. H. Morrow, and Rev. L. M. Horn were closeted with the prisoners, singing and praying with them, they joining in the services, but still stubbornly asserting their innocence and the unjustness of their prospective punishment.

At twenty minutes to eleven the prisoners were brought down into the hall leading to the cell they had at first occupied, and were there dressed in a suit of black alpaca, the coats reaching below the knees. Black cloth shoes were placed upon their feet, white gloves upon their hands, and narrow-brimmed straw hats upon their heads. When dressed the ropes were placed around their necks and their hands bound together with stout leather strips, secured by buckles.

While they were being thus prepared for the dreadful fate that awaited them, they appeared perfectly cool and self-possessed, King complaining that he was so bound that he could not even reach his mouth with his hands.

The Sheriff asked Owens if he wished the collar of his coat turned so as to conceal the rope, but the latter answered that he

was proud to wear the rope, and desired that it should remain exposed to view.

They shook hands with a number of officials, bidding them good-bye, and expressing the hope to meet them in a better world.

By the time the prisoners were ready, Company F, 2d U. S. Infantry, in command of Lieut. Maize, and headed by the Franklin Cornet band, which King and Owens had both requested to be in attendance, marched up to the jail. Soon after, two wagons were also stationed there, one of them containing seats for the prisoners, sheriff, clergy and physicians, while in the other were placed two plain walnut coffins, over which a quilt was thrown.

King and Owen were then brought out, the latter with his hat set jauntily upon his head, and with a lighted cigar in his mouth. Some more shaking of hands and hearty farewells were exchanged, the prisoners invariably asserting their innocence, and everything was ready for a march.

TO THE GALLOWS.

These were about half a mile south of the town, and built within three feet of the railroad track, with broad, unfenced fields extending to the right and left. As none of the citizens were willing that the execution should take place on their premises, the instrument of death had been raised upon the property of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company.

It was a little after eleven o'clock when the solemn procession started from the jail. The band took the lead, followed by the infantry under Lieut. Maize. Then came the wagon with the prisoners, followed by the one containing the coffins, and the rear was brought up by the citizen guards. As it moved on, the masses who had collected in various places fell in and marched with it toward its terrible destination.

Many, in their haste to reach the place where the gallows stood, made short cuts and saved ground, arriving some time in advance of the prisoners. When the guards and prisoners arrived, the military were compelled to drive back the crowd and clear the way to

THE SCAFFOLD,

which the prisoners ascended, followed by the Sheriff, clergy, and reporters. About six thousand people, from all parts of the country, many of them, strange to say, ladies, composed the assemblage surrounding the gallows.

At the request of the prisoners, "We're going home to die no more" was sung, both joining in the singing, and after a prayer from Rev. Mr. Morrow, they were notified that they would be allowed twenty minutes each to address the people.

Capt. King was the first to speak. His utterance, though sometimes a little husky and choked, was generally clear. He said:

CAPTAIN KING'S SPEECH.

MY DYING FRIENDS: I see heré to-day many of my old acquaintances and friends. We never before met on such an occasion as this. Eight months ago, my dying friends, I was as free as any man now standing before me. I have only a few minutes to live, and then I will be called upon to die the most horrible death that a man can die. But I can die with as good grace as any man. God witnesses my innocence, and though I am on the gallows, I could take my bitterest enemy, who swore against me, and love him. Thank God, I have a hope beyond the gallows, of a home in heaven. I would like to talk a good deal, but my health will not permit. I have been buffeted from one place to another, but I hope now to be for once a free man. I am here with you now, but I hope that in a few hours I shall be with my father in Paradise.

Peace within a man's heart is the greatest consolation that can be afforded. He can lay down and sleep at night, and nothing crosses his breast. I mean by that, the man who sets the example of a Christian. Do that, and you can lay down in the most humble place, if you have the Savior's love and peace.

Since I have been in jail, I have been like a wild animal in the forest. My mind has been directed to my dear mother, my loved sisters, and my darling wife. Since I was taken from them, I have never been able to be a free man. I have done all I could to be a free man.

Oh, if I could only be at home once more! it would be the happiest moment of my life. But if it is the will of the great Jehovah that I should die, I'm the happiest man in the world. I'm bound to go to heaven. You may swear this on me, and take away my life, but you can't take away my soul. Thank God, I have a friend and redeemer in heaven!

I have not studied to make this speech, and don't want to weary your patience. If I had the strength and voice I once had, I could talk to this crowd. I want you to forsake your sins and meet me in heaven. Tell Griff. Wright I want to meet him in heaven. Yes, Griff, you promised to stand to me, and to be true and faithful; but you forsook me, and plunged me as deep as you could. You hunted all the testimony in the courts of Simpson County.

I'm as innocent of my brother's death as any man here. I said Abe Owen done it, and you hang me with what testimony you get against me. I'll never stand before you again, and all I can say is, meet me in heaven, where no trials, no troubles, no sorrows ever reach.

I am to-day a poor worm of the dust. I am here only a few minutes, and you will see me no more. I want to leave the world, and leave it happy, and in glory and honor; and I want you to tell your children that I died like a man. It may be the Lord's will for me to hang to-day. It may put an end to murder in your county. Why should I say so? The little boys are growing up, and they can say a man was hung because he was a murderer. It has been said and sung, that I've been one of the bloodiest men that ever lived. While in the service I have killed men in self-defense, but never in cold blood. If I've said anything to hurt the feelings of any one here, I wish to be pardoned, but I can not take it back.

I'm to go up before my God, and I would not stand on this scaffold and tell you a lie. If I was guilty I'd tell it, but I'm as innocent of the death of my brother as any man can be. Great love existed between me and my brother. There is not a person within the sound of my voice who loves his brother better than I did mine; and had I known who killed him, I should have avenged

his death. I would rather have left the continent of America than to do it. If I'd been guilty of the death of my brother, I wouldn't have been hung here to-day; I'd have been too sharp for that. I knew not till I saw my brother's body that he was dead. I'm proud to say that I would have killed the man who did it. I loved my brother, and would have fought for him to the death. I never knew him to have a fuss with any one without looking to me for protection. I'm as innocent as Tobe Proctor or Art. Wilson over there. I'll tell you why I said Abe Owen had done it: I had seen the blood on his pistol, and I am proud that I said it.

It is better for a man to die guilty than innocent. A guilty man can say he deserved to die, but it is a hard thing to take an innocent man from his family forever.

I would to God that, in the hour I found my brother, he could have told me who killed him. I wouldn't have asked civil law to prove it. I said I believed Abe Owen was guilty of my brother's death, and let him defend himself if he can. But Mr. Owen says he is not guilty, and I don't know to-day who did it.

I have to die, and will never meet you on earth again. I don't want to say any thing against you, but if I'm going to the place I hope to, I'd rather do it than stay here with you. I would to God I had died when I was an infant, or at some other time before this thing commenced. Eight months ago I had as little idea of being hung as you. It's only a momentary pang to be hung; it's soon over with. But, thank God, I have a hope beyond the gallows and the grave.

I've been like the balance of you, and done wrong as well. I know I have, and confess it; but let him who is without sin throw the first stone. The best happiness is the life of a Christian; if you call him a thief, or a murderer, it does not make it so. I have confessed my sins, and now look to God for glory and a crown in the happy home I will soon reach. I'm sure to go to heaven. I feel that I am on my way to glory. I love you, and would to God you could feel as I do.

I want to meet you all in heaven. Tell my neighbors and friends that the last words of Bill King were, that they should meet him in heaven. Go home and reflect upon your sins, for you don't

know how soon you may share Bill King's fate. Go home and read your Bibles. Be good Christians. I love you all, and would not hurt a hair of your heads. I give you this advice, as you must one day appear before the Great Judge. I hope to meet you in heaven. Good-bye.

SPEECH OF ABE OWEN.

MY FRIENDS: I am here to-day to make you a speech. It is a thing I never did before. I have no education, and can barely read and write. I am, and always *was* a little bashful, especially before ladies. I would like to know why I am here? Is there a man on the ground who can say I am to-day to be executed for murder. I have fought for my country, and now have to die with the name of traitor. I am a Union man. I am no rebel, nor Abolitionist. I fought to free the negroes, but didn't know it at the time. I am a *Union* and constitutional man, and expect to die one. I am accused of robbing railroads, and murdering a neighbor boy. Have you brought any proof that I am a murderer? Can you produce a single particle of proof? Thank God, I was not here when the war was going on, and never troubled any one in this country. I was in the service three years and six months, and *done* as good duty as any man, and can say before God that if ever I shot or murdered a man I don't know it. So far as the statement is, that Billy King had come and told me to kill his brother, and that I went and told him where to find his brother, it is not so, gentlemen. If I had intened to kill him, I would never have had such a conversation. I never knew Harvey King was dead till Monday evening. How did I hear it? My little brother and sister came from school and told me he was dead. They proved that I never went near the corpse. When I went, my mother said to go back home and come to-morrow. I did come next morning, and stayed till he was buried. I borrowed a pistol from Billy King, to go and visit some friends in Tennessee. When Sunday came I was late getting up, and Billy King came over to see my father about cattle getting in his corn. About this

time, a young man by the name of Prater came up, and put at me to go to meeting with him, and I went, though I had intended to go to Tennessee—but my horse being rushed behind, made me the more willing to give it up. Did I have a pistol on Sunday? No—you can't prove it. It is a money speculation in human blood that now takes my life. What is one thousand dollars? Why one thousand dollars will buy two men's lives now a days. The pistol went home on Monday morning. Had it ever been shot? My brother started to school, and went by the evaporator. He there met Billy King, who took the pistol, and when he started away the negro boy took it home. How many hands did the pistol pass through, though the stock was sprung, and blood upon the barrel? I can suffer with the greatest grace. It is better for me to die innocent than guilty. After you have hung me, there is no more that you can do, unless it is to leave my body here. No, you may hang me, and leave my flesh a prey for the birds of the air and the beasts of the land, still you can't make me guilty. I say you can do me no farther injury, though the birds devour my flesh, and even build nests in my skull, I am innocent of the murder of which I am charged. You may say to-day that Abe Owen has told a lie upon the scaffold. Believe it not. I say before man and God I did not know ~~Harvey King was dead~~ have had no counsel, or good as none. The jury too, was partial, to some extent, and it can be proven that some of them went to my father's as a pilot for the guerrillas, to rob him. And there is Mr. John A. Finn and W. W. Bush, prosecuting attorneys. Let me tell you how Mr. Finn acted. He had his witnesses well posted. He had an instrument of writing, embodying the statements he wanted them to make, and when he wished them to say yes, he would nod his head, and when he wished them to say no, he would shake his head. He also tried to make it appear that my mother swore a lie. Now, you may go to where she was raised, and even where she now lives, to get her general character, and you will find that she is a lady remarkable for sincerity and truthfulness. Now, he* is the last man that ought to accuse a

*It is proper to remark that Mr. Finn gave no libel.

lady of perjury, since he has not only been guilty, but actually tried for the same offense, and afterwards gave a libel.

A report came to our cell that Billy King, on one occasion, cut the head of a man off, and threw it in his wife's lap. Now, I think I am as brave a man as Capt. King, and I never saw the day I could do that.

I admit I have been a gambler, a sinner, and a very bad man, but I think I have forgiveness of my sins, and think I am better off to-day than some present who swore a lie.

I say before God and man, that Griff. Wright swore to a lie. When two good witnesses, besides a man's friends, will not be taken, I'd rather die. Capt. Finn, say to Griff. Wright that he swore a lie, but I forgive him. Where is he? [Response—"Not here."] He was the first man that tried to get me to robbing.

He tried to get Billy King and I to go and rob and kill a man between Franklin and Gallatin. Ask Mr. Simpson* if he did not come across Griff. Wright, Billy King, and myself, at the end of a certain lane, sitting on a log, about last May one year ago? Ask him, and he will tell you it is so. That was the very time that Mr. Wright tried to get us to go with him, and said it ought to be done, he ought to be killed. There's Cornwell, who turned

traitor, who swore my foot was crushed, and that I was disabled. Now, ask Mr. and Mrs. Spears, my neighbors, if I was not at their house next morning, all right? But let me be as bad a man as you are wont to call me, I can say I am no traitor. No, gentlemen, I am no traitor to my party if I have any. I had rather die than be that. You swore that I had on a hat, and I can say

here to-day under the gallows, that I had on no hat that day nor night, while awake. John Evans says that I was the second man on the train. Such are your witnesses, and such your testimony.

I have written a little history, and don't think it necessary to explain the railroad robbery any further.

*Mr. Sam. Simpson is an officer, and was out on duty—is a perfect gentleman, and above reproach.

THE FATAL MOMENT

having arrived, King and Owen shook hands with those around them, and with each other, still declaring their innocence. The white caps were drawn over their heads, but they still maintained their firmness and encouraged each other. "Hold up your head, Billy," said Owens; but this injunction was unnecessary, for King was standing straight as an arrow. They only requested the sheriff to see that they should not fall too far.

Deep sobbing was heard among the ladies as the sheriff bade good-bye to the prisoners, and notified them that the time had come for him to perform his last sad duty, and one lady prayed loudly and fervently. The band, at the request of the doomed men, struck up the Dead March.

Sheriff Bogan appeared cool and collected, terrible as was his duty. After adjusting the ropes; "I will count five," said he, "now be ready. One—two—three—four—five." The trap door fell with a loud slam, and William P. King and Abraham Owen were rapidly passing to eternity.

The neck of Owens was broken, and only a few convulsive twitches followed his fall. The struggle with King was terrible, and he appeared to be slowly strangling. His whole body was convulsed, and he seemed trying to spring from his bonds. In five minutes, however, all was over, and both the bodies were motionless. The traps were sprung at precisely two o'clock, and as soon as the bodies were pronounced dead, they were removed for burial.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

William P. King was the eldest son of Peter King, who intermarried with Elizabeth Newman, and was born in Macon County, Tennessee, on the 27th day of February, 1833. His father was a brother-in-law of Z. Casey, who was Governor of Illinois, and filled many public offices of trust and honor, not only in that State, but was also elected to Congress on several occasions. Peter King emigrated from Macon County, Tennessee, and settled in Simpson County, Kentucky, in the year 1857. He has the reputation of having been a peaceable and quiet citizen, and was killed by the accidental discharge of a pistol in the hands of a

gentleman in Franklin, some three years ago. His son, William P. King, who is the subject of this notice, joined the Federal army May 1st, 1862, and was Captain of Company F, 52d Regiment Kentucky Volunteers, which was commanded by Col. John Grider and Lieut. Col. Sam Johnson, and was mustered out January 17, 1865. He was five feet seven inches high, sandy colored beard, auburn hair, with cold, sinister gray eyes, and weighed 145 pounds.

Abraham Owen was born in October, 1842, in the county of Macon, State of Tennessee. His father, William Owen, moved to this county and State in the year 1853. He has the reputation of being an industrious and honest farmer. Abraham is his third son, and he joined the Federal Army as private in Company H, 5th Kentucky Cavalry, December, 1861, where he served till the war closed, in 1865. His military career was not marked by anything deserving of particular notice, but he was generally regarded as a brave man and reliable soldier. He was decidedly good looking, has very fair, smooth, and soft skin, gentle blue eyes, auburn colored hair and mustache; was five feet nine inches high, and weighed 160 pounds.

CONCLUSION.

In the conclusion of this little work, the author feels confident that the world would like to know his sentiments as to the guilt of and innocence of these unfortunate men. In reply to which he would respectfully say, that an expression of this sort would be entirely gratuitous. Their writings virtually acknowledge their guilt in the robbery—but as no confession was made from the time of their arrest up to the hour of execution, and not then publicly, the question naturally arises, are we to believe anything they said, wrote, or otherwise revealed, relative to the Railroad Robbery and murder of Harvey King? Some persons are so incredulous as not to believe anything that doesn't correspond with their preconceived opinions. But to practice a deception for eight long months, and then die a death almost supernatural to confirm it, makes them the most remarkable men of this or any other age. To throw off every sense of honor, both of dignity and parental restraint, is very hard for one to do, especially if their early training has been of a truly moral character. It is said that a dutiful son will love and reverence his mother, even to old age. Byron, himself, though the greatest prodigy of learning, literature, and lore, said, on hearing of the death of his mother, that his last and only friend had left him. Washington, when called to the high and responsible office of Presidency, the highest and greatest in the gift of the American people, would not forget his aged and infirm mother, but, upon the contrary, paid her the last tribute of respect then in his power, which was to take her by the hand, call her by that dearest and best of all names, "Mother!" "Mother, the people have called me,"—here he burst into a flood of tears, which, though falling from 'neath a patriot's brow, touched her heaving bosom with all the softness and sweetness of the morning dew. Hence, if a mother's influence be so deservedly felt and so wonderfully rewarded by the

undeniable touch-stone of affection, as manifested by these distinguished gentlemen, *may* we not presume that some sparks of parental love and regard still glowed in the bosom of these unfortunate sons, though they did seem to some extent hardened in crime?

We are told that they were very tender and dutiful toward their mothers, and especially Mr. Owen, and, if we were to tell you, it was owing to this fact that no confession even of a part or any part of the charge was not made, you, perhaps, would not believe it. But here it is, just as we have it from the mouth of one of the criminals while in prison: "Sir, my great trouble is my mother; I would sooner die than have her know I am guilty of the robbery—as for the murder, she knows I did not do that, and this confirms her in the belief of my innocence in the whole matter. How it would wring her heart even to suspect me, much less for me to own it. Oh! that I had never been born, that I had never been drunk." Here then he recounts for a moment, as if half-silloguizing: "To own it can do me no good. I am hopeful of a pardon, and a confession, therefore, would place it beyond the possibility of hope. I know I am innocent of the murder, and to acknowledge my complicity in the robbery, would only give triumph to the enemy, and all my friends would suspect me guilty of the whole. But God knows my innocence."

It is said that they "denied too much." And this is a matter of fact, religiously and *morally true*. The people, or multitude that heard them speak under the gallows, differ widely as to the *intended* impression of the speakers. Mr. Owen denied any complicity with the murder whatever, but in referring to the robbery, labored to show that contradictory statements were made as to how the train robbing was executed, and affirmed that they failed to prove it on him, as his habit of dress did *not* answer at all to the description, and assured them that he and his brother were both at home that night. The author, at this point, entertained fears that he would deny in *flat* terms his connection with the robbery. But this he did not do, but so mystified the subject as to have the credulous believe, if possible, him innocent. Our association in the prison was such as would lead them to respect the truth, or a statement of any kind told, or previously made in the

author's presence, even under the gallows; therefore, we may infer that a willful lie was not intended.

Captain King discourses largely in the first part of his history, aiming to conceal his guilt, or rather to establish his innocence. But, as before remarked, it would *ill* become the author to give an opinion here, as he is only employed to write over their lives, as before explained. But for fear that an undue impression be made, he here declares his high respect for the jury that convicted these men. As stated in another place, he did not witness the trial, consequently knew but little about the proceedings, though in a few paces of the court-room every day. His mission afterward was to *attend* to the spiritual wants, as far as possible, of the convicts. Nor was he alone in this matter. Revs. Carter, Redford, and Harwell continued their visit to the last moment, giving all the aid and comfort in their power, both by prayer and advisement. Each of these devout men felt to believe that their spiritual condition was *far* from being good, and as they thought them guilty in part, if not altogether, urged them to a confession. But to them they affirmed their innocence of the murder. But, on one occasion, Rev. Redford put the question in unmistakable terms. Addressing Captain King, "Do you deny the whole matter, friend?"—to which he replied, "My history will show." Another time, Rev. Harwell assured them "that he had been praying that God would direct him how to approach them, and that he felt confident it was his duty to *tell* them, that if they did not make a confession of their guilt before men, that they could never see their God in peace, urged them to make a clean breast, but all to no avail. And this has been the course of each minister, whenever that subject was brought up.

Many and varied the scenes witnessed in the Franklin jail since the conviction of these men. Nor do we recollect at this time, that King ever did make any part of a confession. His writings seem to contradict everything of the sort, except it be in a place or two, and whether he intended it as an acknowledgment in part, is left for the public to determine; for to say he is or was innocent of all the crime, is more than we can presume to say. If any merit can be attached to the statement of Owen, then, doubtless, both

CONCLUSION.

were in the robbery, and we are to infer that no untrue statement would be made by anyone that would lead to their conviction, unless guilty. It is human to err, and one crime often leads to another, as in the case of David and Uriah. It is believed that the robbery led to the murder.

In conclusion, our minds are directed to the families of these unfortunate men. Both have left good families. The mother of Captain King is an aged lady, withered and care-worn, shorn of all her earthly hope, save some four dutiful daughters, who live now almost in obscurity. We feel sorry for them, and indulge the hope that their friends will not forsake them. His wife is a beautiful young woman, and stands deservedly high. The author can never forget the last meeting of this couple, which took place on the 27th June, just the evening before the execution.

By promise, we were to have one more interview on this day, and on entering the prison found that the convicts were in converse with their friends up stairs. King and Owen were chained together, and the latter lying flat on his back, whilst the former seems to have been pulled from his chair to the lap of his wife, whose arms were entwined around her husband in the most endearing manner. The sisters, who seemed silent and sobbing, held each an arm of their brother, whose bosom was bare and heaving. Owen seemed calm and undisturbed, saying, his "time had nearly arrived, and he was glad of it, that his troubles would soon be at an end." We soon bade adieu to them. Each gave a pressure of the hand, and insisted that we meet them early next morning, and accompany them to the gallows, which of course we did. For the particulars of that day and execution, the reader is referred to the report of the Nashville Union Dispatch, which is inserted a few pages back.

Thus ends one of the most mysterious, as well as the most complicated stories the world ever knew.