

**THE COTTON-TREE;  
OR, EMILY, THE  
LITTLE WEST INDIAN**

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The Cotton-Tree; Or, Emily, the Little West Indian by Mrs. Henry Lynch

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**MRS. HENRY LYNCH**

**THE COTTON-TREE;  
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THE COTTON-TREE;

OR,

EMILY,



THE LITTLE WEST INDIAN.

A TALE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

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BY MRS. HENRY LYNCH.

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JOHN HATCHARD & SON, 187, PICCADILLY.  
1847.

## THE COTTON-TREE.

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I WAS born in Jamaica, and my first recollections are those of a large shadowy house, a wide piazza, and kind black faces. Yes, little English reader, you may laugh ; but there are stars that cheer the traveller on the darkest heaven ; and there were smiles from these sable nurses that filled my infant heart with happiness.

For hours I would sit between the knees of my good "Nana," as she told me some wild African legend, or related, in a "Nan-

cy story," with animated gesture, the spectral performances of some wonderful sprite.

But there are yet dearer memories than these gleaming in beauty, like the distant landscape through the mist of time.

The morning kiss!—Oh! with what delight I gathered the blossom from the orange-tree, that I might give the pale flower to my dear mother! and as I took my seat on the bed, I would playfully dress her locks in the bridal wreath. "And who, my child," she would say, "bid those snowy blossoms shine amidst the dark

\* A "Nancy tale" is what may be termed a ghost story, and is generally a metrical account of some superhuman power, chanted by the negro in a wild, low strain.

leaves? Who painted the pomegranate with its beautiful crimson? and who upholds those delicate lilies in strength, with the scorching summer around them, refreshing them with the silent dews of night? Is it not He, my love, who took little children in his arms and blessed them?"

I did not see much of my father, for he was engaged throughout the day; but I remember, like a distant dream, my first indistinct idea that sorrow dwelt amongst us.

My infant brother died.\* And our

\* It is customary amongst the negroes to make noisy lamentations on the death of any member of the family. "My sister breathed her last," writes a lady, "and in an instant the room was crowded with people, some of whom I had never before seen; all were wringing their hands, assum-



negro servants made loud wailings ; and they changed his resting-place by my mother's side for a coffin, a narrow bed, and they strewed his infant form with flowers, and pressed his cold face with kisses. When I asked what sorrow was, my mother smiled sadly and said, "It is the friend of unbelief ; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, then we know that those who sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him."

" Shall we see my brother again ?" I inquired.

" Yes ! when this mortal shall put on immortality," replied my mother, " then shall be brought to pass the saying which is writing my sorrow as their own, and in frantic gestures and loud cries, mourning the departed."

ten, Death is swallowed up in victory ; ” and then they took our little one to a wild mountain grave, and we saw him no more.

I did not, at that time, fully understand all my mother’s observations ; yet I have reason to believe, that her pious instructions were not altogether lost upon me ; for, even at that early age, I had an indefinable idea of the *safety* of those who died in the Lord.

Another pleasant memory, that I have of that early time, is our long evening drive to a beautiful old Cotton-Tree, which had, for many years, stood there in its giant beauty, looking on man from generation to generation, as he journeyed from the cradle to the tomb ! Yes, it was under the evening shadows of this pleasant

tree, that my mother filled my infant mind with its first thoughts of our Saviour's love. What deep emotion I felt, as she told me, in simple language, the history of the holy Jesus! She dwelt much on the love of the Father in sending his Son to die for rebellious man. "And will you not, my child," she would say, "give the dew of the morning, your youth and strength, to one who has done so much for you?"

It is true that, during the day, I did not think much of these conversations; yet when the lengthening shades of evening reminded me that the hour for our drive was approaching, it was my custom to run into my mother's dressing-room, exclaiming, "O mamma, do go to the Cotton-tree, the beautiful Cotton-tree, and tell me some