

**THE MIDNIGHT
CRY: A NOVEL**

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The Midnight Cry: A Novel by Jane Marsh Parker

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JANE MARSH PARKER

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A NOVEL

BY

JANE MARSH PARKER

AUTHOR OF "ROCHESTER—A STORY HISTORICAL."

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. PRISCILLA OTTOWAY, - - -	I
II. THE PROMISED LAND, - - -	11
III. NAN, - - - - -	19
IV. THE BOY PREACHER, - - -	33
V. COUSIN CHRISTOPHER, - - -	42
VI. THE BRECKINRIDGE TREE, - - -	49
VII. SIR VICTOR NEVANDELESS, - - -	60
VIII. THE HERMITAGE, - - - -	70
IX. MARS SAM, - - - - -	86
X. ELDER STIGGINS, - - - - -	96
XI. "EPOCHS FOCALIZE, - - - -	109
XII. AN OLD MASTER, - - - - -	123
XIII. THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY, - - -	136
XIV. AT THE DOOR, - - - - -	158
XV. ASHES OF ROSES, - - - - -	177
XVI. FROM THE DEAD, - - - - -	194
XVII. THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD, -	203

1592784

CHAPTER.	PAGE
XVIII. BEFOGGED, - - - - -	212
XIX. WINNING THE GAME, - - - - -	223
XX. WINDS OF DOCTRINE, - - - - -	236
XXI. HAPPY VALLEY, - - - - -	245
XXII. THE DAY AND THE HOUR, - - - - -	261
XXIII. AND IT CAME TO PASS, - - - - -	271
XXIV. AFTER ALL, - - - - -	282
XXV. ON SHARON'S PLAIN, - - - - -	291

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

CHAPTER I.

PRISCILLA OTTOWAY.

SOME fifty years ago the traveller through the Genesee Valley—and there were many seeking farms on its fertile flats in those days—might have seen from the highland stage road between Canawagas and Mount Morris, in the wide lowland stretching far to the westward, a big stone chimney and the broad gable of a house, which, as one caught a glimpse of them through the hoary old pine trees, showed in striking contrast with the homes of the most prosperous farmers, even those who had been among the first to take up land on “the Phelps and Gorham Purchase.” There was little to be seen of the house beside the great chimney, but the well cleared acres surrounding it—the stumpless meadows and cultivated fields—the winding avenue of elms, and the great barns,

were sure to awaken the curiosity of the traveller. The big chimney looked discontented and misanthropic, as if conscious that its wide throat had been made for naught as far as hospitality went, when its visible link with the world was nothing but that slender thread of a path, scarcely discernible to a tramping peddler—a foot-path opening upon an obscure cross road, while the gate—well padlocked—was a half mile from the highway, and fully that distance from the longest stretch of its afternoon shadow. Nor was the curiosity of the stranger lessened by the warning posted up conspicuously, in full sight of the highway—"Trespassers must look out for the dogs."

"You're right, stranger," Jerry Burns, the old Valley stage driver was pretty sure to be saying to some one among his passengers when that sullen looking chimney came in sight—"it is about as lunsum a house as you'll see in these parts. Queer place for buildin'—but queer kinder folks lives over there, as nigh as folks as don't know 'em, and nobody does, can find out.

"Barley Flats is the name it goes by—and they don't raise a ter'bul sight of barley nuther

—No, I was never over thar and never expecter be—not while them big dogs are runnin' on the place—English mastiffs—a half dozen nur more. Yis, it's stun—cobble stun—and was built by a Tory refergee not two years after Sullivan went through here and whipped the red-skins, whipped 'em so they stayed whipped. The man who built that house bought his land of the Injuns—but how he put up such a buildin' in those times is hard tellin'. Some say the old feller meant to set himself up as a kinder big baron out here and have things his own way with the Injuns and the British to help him. He hadn't a living soul for company but a half dozen slaves, men and wimin and two or three Mohawk boys. He'd some trouble in the Old Country—killed somebody most likely, or some girl most killed him—it's all the same 'bout—and he meant to live here in the woods and have it out with his niggers and Mohawks, when something took him back to England and there he died. Such a house full of old picturs and odds and ends of queer things you never see. He must have bought out no end of vandues, for I've hearn tell that there's piles of old chiny and Dutch