

The Confession of Sarah Osborne

I, Sarah Osborne, having slaughtered my husband and two children, and wishing to make known the motives which led me to this deed, do come before you, on bended knees to confess. Neighbors and good Christians, open your ears to the dreadful misfortune that hath befallen me, and hearing my words let pity move your hearts. I shall now recount how I resolved to commit this crime, what my thoughts were, and what was my intention. I shall also tell what went on in my mind after doing this deed, and detail the miserable life I led.

At the age of fifteen, I began my career of wickedness by improper connection with my mother's husband, he not being my natural father. He was a wanton rascal, often drunken, and in this state did overpower me. I took to bedding him to avoid beatings.

Soon I too began to frequently find myself in the condition of intoxication, to which shameful vice I attribute my wretched slide into degenerate life. I confess that I have been very wild and ungrateful. After my cruel mother closed the door to me, I was forced to make my way on the streets.

Having become addicted to drink, living in open as a harlot, associating with abandoned characters, I became a person most hardened.

At this low time I did meet John Sadler, who did wed me and pimp for me. Now I see him as the cause of my overthrow, but when we met he seemed the only kind person I had encountered in my wretched life. With him I trifled away the hours, the days, the months and years.

We had two children.

Even while walking the streets I became warmer and softer, while John became colder and harder. The more tender I, the more cruel he became. He took to beating me, beating me, and sent me with more haste to the streets. This way I was cheated of my life.

My love for him turned to contempt and I did meditate the most dreadful revenge on the monster, and made the horrid resolution of murdering him. I did devise to make him drunken, although he always treated me abusively when in this state.

As he drank I added laudanum to his gin and soon he was overcome. I extinguished him by suffocation, once drunken I placed myself on his body and did hold a pillow over his mouth and nose. The deed done I looked up, only to spy my babes watching with wide eyes. I comforted them, put them back to bed and smothered each in turn.

That is the explanation of the crime. I await the fate which is destined for me. I doubt not that when the thread of life shall be cut, my soul will be received into that Glory which no tongue can express. The Lord hath wrought great works and been merciful, but if my Lord and Savior will be so cruel to me as men and women have been, I had better burn in the flames of Hell. Farewell to all present.