

*The Autobiography
of a Criminal*

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CRIMINAL

HENRY TUFTS

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

EDMUND PEARSON



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Introduction

THIS is probably the first extensive American criminal biography. It heads a line of books which come down to our own time, including such works as *The Autobiography of a Thief* by Hutchins Hapgood, and the stories of bandits from Jesse James to Gerald Chapman. Like practically all of them, it is the work of a "ghost writer," and that fact is frankly admitted on the original title-page.

The first, and—so far as I know—only other edition, was printed in Dover, New Hampshire, by Samuel Bragg, Jr., in 1807. The original title was "A Narrative of the Life, Adventures, Travels and Sufferings of Henry Tufts, Now Residing at Lemington, in the District of Maine. In Substance, as Compiled from his Own Mouth."

Writers who mention Henry Tufts are few, and, for the most part, they follow his narrative and believe his assertions. One of them makes an original contribution, and it is important.

The Rev. James Hill Fitts, in his *History of Newfields, New Hampshire*, accepts Thomas Tufts, the clerical grandfather, the Bachelor of Arts of Harvard, who was born in Devonshire, and died as a preacher of the gospel in Boston, leaving a name free from reproach. He ac-

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cepts, also, the son of this man, the blameless tailor, who was the father of Henry. Only in one detail does he depart from the author's description of his own family, and it is in respect to the tailor's wife. Henry Tufts speaks of both his parents with filial piety, but the Rev. Mr. Fitts says of Mrs. Tufts, Henry's mother, that she was known, later in life, "as an old witch woman."

We need go no further, nor engage in other speculation. If the mother of Henry Tufts did, in truth, enter into a compact with the Father of Evil, everything is explained. We see at once how useless were the efforts of the army of constables, sheriffs, jailers, magistrates and attorneys—constituting the forces of righteousness—who, throughout his career, tried to bring over to the side of the angels this person who was so irrevocably enlisted as a follower of the Black Man.

An elder brother of Henry Tufts, in a literary sense, might be seen in the "Notorious Stephen Burroughs." Both Tufts and Burroughs were born in New Hampshire; both had dealings in counterfeit money; both had unhappy meetings with Judge Robert Treat Paine and Attorney-General Sullivan of Massachusetts. Both had unpleasant recollections of Castle Island and Major Perkins. Burroughs studied at Dartmouth College; Tufts gave it his blessing as he passed by.

It is unnecessary, however, to think of Burroughs as the inspirer of this book. Tufts was entreated by a publisher, from Newburyport, as early as 1794,—or four years

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prior to the first appearance of the *Memoirs* of Burroughs. The literary success of the notorious Stephen hung fire until 1810 (three years after Tufts had gone into print) when there appeared the second edition of Burroughs,—the beginning of the popularity which has called for editions down to 1924.

Tufts has had to wait one hundred and twenty-three years for this, his second edition, but it is possible that his first appearance, in 1807, led to the numerous early reprints of Burroughs in the State of New York, where they are notoriously more godless. New Hampshire promptly shut down upon Tufts: the printing office which issued this book was burned, three or four years later, and the printer died of a broken heart. A manifest judgment. Moreover, persons of the name of Tufts bought as many copies of this book as they could find, and destroyed them.

Henry Tufts had a successor, if not imitator, in Seth Wyman (1784-1843.) This man was another autobiographical burglar from New Hampshire, who wandered through some of Tufts' favorite towns, engaged in robbery and passing counterfeit money. His *Life and Adventures*, published in Manchester, N. H., in 1843, seems like a rather tame copy of the narrative of Tufts.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson was the discoverer of Tufts, in our time. His essay, "A New England Vagabond," in *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1888 (reprinted in his *Travellers and Outlaws*, 1889) is by far

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the best estimate of the book. Colonel Higginson chose Tufts' description of Indian life; his encounter with the dealer in Continental counterfeit money; his high-flown style, and use of odd slang; and his picture of the underworld of the Revolutionary period, as the strong points of the narrative.

"Of course," wrote Colonel Higginson, "it is easy to say that he lied; that probability must steadily be kept in view at every page: but the general atmosphere of a book is unmistakable, and here the coarse verisimilitude is very great."

To the remarkable features of the book, cited by Colonel Higginson, I should add its understanding of the criminal mind. Tufts' lively self-pity is characteristic; he was indignant at the discomfort of the jails,—although he did bear, with little complaint, the brutal floggings.

Nothing is more delicious than the wrath of Tufts at Dr. Rand, for stealing his best suit of clothes, after they had escaped from the jail at Newburyport. Contrast it with Tufts' satisfaction at the much dirtier trick which he had played, when he took Smith's *only* suit, and departed, leaving his fellow prisoner, deceived and stark naked, in "that most odious of tenements," Exeter jail.

The anecdote of the dog, stolen and re-stolen, and sold three times in one day; the religious awakening brought about in Canterbury by playing upon "three pompion vines"; and the devout lady pilgrim who expected, in some mysterious fashion, to earn a needed half-dollar at

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a "New Light" meeting, are among the lighter charms of the story.

For its darker side, there is his tale of cannibalism, as practiced at the Stone Tavern, near Poughkeepsie.

We have one description of the physical appearance of Henry Tufts. On August 26, 1793, at Dover, Theophilus Dame, Sheriff, gave notice that "the noted Henry Tufts broke out of gaol on the night of the 25th." He had been "confined for his old offence, that is teft" [sic] and is "about six feet high, and forty years of age, wears his own hair, short and dark colored, had on a long blue coat." Five dollars reward was offered for his arrest.*

Colonel Higginson's statement about the death of Tufts is this:

"He died, it is said, at Limington, Maine, January 31, 1831, in the eighty-third year of an uncommonly mis-spent life."

Mr. Wadleigh, in the book just quoted, writes that he "died in Maine, about the year 1825, under an assumed name."

Limington has almost completely forgotten Henry Tufts. It is a pretty village, although its many scattered and deserted farms make it seem a melancholy one. A few of the older residents, especially those of the name of Tufts, recall that they have heard their fathers speak of the author. They remember him as "the Doctor."

* George Wadleigh. *Notable Events in the History of Dover, N. H.* (Dover, 1913.)

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They have heard of a book (the first edition of this book) and may have heard of a man, "over in Gorham," or somewhere, who once owned a copy. But that is all.

For a few moments I thought that perhaps I was standing at the grave of the Doctor, himself, and in the presence of one of his direct descendants. But when the moss and mold were rubbed off the headstone, the Christian name was another's, and the descendant, as I had been told he was, made no claim to a literary ancestry. I did not venture to accuse him, directly.

Sheriff Dame's notice; the mention of Tufts in the New Hampshire *Provincial Papers* at the time of his military service (see note, p. 97) and one other entry, in the same records, are nearly all the contemporary references which I have found. In the *Provincial Papers* (30:82) Henry Tufts, and "henry Tufts junr" (our man) sign the "association paper" as of the town of Lee. This was an adherence to the Declaration of Independence.

His trial for burglary at Ipswich earned him three short notices in the *Salem Gazette*: June 24, July 1, and September 16, 1794. The Court, and other, records of this case are quoted in an extended note at the end of this edition. (Page 347.)

Tufts' book was strongly disapproved by one of Dover's historians: Miss Mary P. Thompson, in her *Landmarks in Ancient Dover*. It was Miss Thompson who wrote (in 1892) that, within her recollection, it was common, by way of expressing superlative wickedness, to say "as big a

liar (or thief, etc., etc.) as old Hen Turf." She added that the cellar of the house where Tufts had lived, between Durham and Lee, was still to be traced.

Miss Thompson doubted if Colonel Higginson's praise of the work was deserved, and uttered her condemnation, in vigorous language, of any who could enjoy it. She was careful to indicate that she had never even looked at it.

Such disapproval, from a lady who had been, I am told, a member of a sisterhood of the Church of Rome, left me somewhat abashed. It is not through any wish to hide behind the coats of clerical gentlemen, but simply to make proper acknowledgments, that I say that it was through two of the ministers of the First Religious Society (Unitarian), of Newburyport, that I was introduced to Henry Tufts. My friend, Laurence Hayward, it was, who first showed me the essay by Colonel Higginson. And the Colonel, the fighting parson of the Civil War, was Mr. Hayward's predecessor in the same pulpit, in my grandfather's time.

As to the actual author of the book, the "ghost writer," who is indicated on the title-page, one name and one anonymous person have been suggested. Mr. Wadleigh ascribes the writing to Major Thomas Tash of New Durham. A penciled note in the copy of the book, in The New York Public Library, quotes "David Murray in the News Letter" as saying that it was written "by _____ Tash of New Durham." Miss Thompson rejects the claims of Tash, and suggests "a clever young lawyer of

Dover." This sounds like the first line of a limerick, but is not otherwise helpful.

Allibone's *Critical Dictionary of English Literature* and Williamson's *Bibliography of Maine* mention the narrative; other bibliographies know it not. Even Professor F. W. Chandler's *Literature of Roguery* missed it. The copy in the Boston Public Library contains an inscription on a fly-leaf, which pretends to quote a notice from *The Critical Review* (London) for March, 1808. I shall be glad if some one can find that the *Review* did mention the book. I could not.

I have either seen or heard of nine copies, in various public or semi-public libraries. *American Book Prices Current* records the sale of a copy, in 1916 for \$8, but the price has advanced, and last year copies were quoted at from \$25 to \$35.

In this edition, titles for the chapters have been inserted, and the text has been cut to the extent of about forty pages. The original edition runs to 366 pages, with a preface. The preface, which adds nothing to our knowledge of Tufts or his book, has been omitted altogether. The other omissions are wholly in the interest of brevity. The book has not been bowdlerized in any place: Tufts is allowed to recite his crimes, and smugly describe his lechery without interference.

My acknowledgments for help in preparing this edition are due to my friend, Ernest Foss, Esq., who searched the legal records; to the librarians at the New York His-

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torical Society; and to Messrs. L. Nelson Nichols and John B. Elliott of The New York Public Library.

I am also indebted for information and assistance to Mr. Robert K. Shaw, librarian of the Public Library at Worcester, Mass., Mr. Charles Evans, of Chicago, author of *American Bibliography*; Mr. Clarence S. Brigham, librarian of the American Antiquarian Society; Miss Elizabeth R. Frost of Dover, N. H.; The Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Archives Division; Miss Evelyn McWhinnie, librarian of the Public Library of Newmarket, N. H.; Mr. E. F. Walbridge, librarian of the Harvard Club of New York; Mr. George Francis Dow; and Miss Ethel Wyatt Devin of the Public Library of Dover.

The early woodcuts appearing on the half-title pages are reproduced through the courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Edmund Pearson.
New York, 1930.

BOOK ONE

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CRIMINAL*

Chapter I

OF POOR BUT HONEST PARENTS

*Nor birth nor parentage, or mean, or great,
Confers protection from the stroke of fate.*

BEFORE proceeding with my own journal, it may be requisite to premise, for the sake of those personally acquainted with me, the little I know of my paternal ancestors, beginning with my grandfather, Thomas Tufts; for further than him my researches have never ascended. He was born, as I have been told, in Devonshire, in England; but whether he descended from honorable or mean parentage is the least of my concern, nor can I give any account. Certain, however, it is, he was a worthy and pious man; but not relishing his situation in England, he early availed of a transatlantic passage, bid farewell to his native shore, and emigrated to Boston in New England; his circumstances, however, I imagine, were not greatly advanced by the removal.

As nature had endowed him with a literary propensity, he now soon commenced, under the auspices of a few

* A few obvious misprints, in the original text, have been corrected. For the most part, the spelling, punctuation, etc., of the first edition has been followed.—E.P.

friends, an academical course of study, finishing his education at the university of Cambridge; whence he was dismissed with the honors of a bachelor's degree. In process of time he became an ordained minister in Boston, and continued in his vocation, as a preacher of the gospel in that town, till the time of his decease, which happened in the year 1725; leaving a good report behind, and a name free from reproach.*

Besides other issue, he left a son, named Henry, whom, under providence, I acknowledge as the author of my existence.

As my grandfather's condition in life was by no means affluent, the chief he had been able to do for his son Henry, my father, was to place him an apprentice to one Witcher, a tailor, living in Boston. This man he faithfully served till twenty-one years of age, when, becoming his own master, he tarried not long at Boston, but removed to Newmarket, in New Hampshire, where he married a woman, whose maiden name was Wedgwood. In the course of two or three years, he left Newmarket, and resided at Lee, an adjacent town, where finding himself more eligibly situated, he gave over the thoughts of further removal, and was shortly in a condition to purchase a small farm, by help of which, and his trade, as a tailor, he acquired no disreputable livelihood.

* Harvard Quinquennial Catalogue mentions two of the name Thomas Tufts. The B. A. of 1701, who died 1733, seems the candidate for the honor of being grandfather of Henry Tufts.—E.P.

He died in the seventy-sixth year of his age, two years subsequent to the death of my mother, and the testimony of a good conscience, (I make no doubt) followed them both to their graves. They left behind four children, to imitate, (if so inclined) the example of a life dedicated to religion and virtue. The above summary comprises such particulars respecting my pedigree, as I judge of sufficient consequence to be here inserted; I add, therefore, no more, but hasten to the recital of my own story.

I, was born at Newmarket, in the State of New Hampshire, on the 24th day of June, A. D. 1748. My infantile years exhibited none of those characteristic marks of a depraved disposition, which were so fully developed in my riper manhood. Seeing therefore the following account is little other than a detail of the crimes I have committed, and of the frauds and impositions I have practiced upon others, I shall pass over that period in silence, as requiring no especial notice in these memoirs.

Happy, doubtless I might have considered myself, had the whole term of my past existence been spent in equal innocency with the first fourteen years of it; for then, in all probability, I had never experienced those rugged trials, or those bitter sufferings, which have since checkered my unpleasant journey through life. But lasting happiness was not in store for me, but ills in succession, sufficient to embitter by far the greater number of my days.

When I was about the age just mentioned the bent of

my genius began to display itself; since at such an early stage, I exhibited numerous indications of that natural propensity to theft, for which I was so distinguished in after periods, that my name became proverbial.

My first efforts of this nature, were confined to the pilfering of apples, pears, cucumbers, and other fruits of the earth, indiscriminately, in which species of depredation I sometimes showed greater ingenuity, than was commonly to be met with in so juvenile a practitioner. After a while, growing more bold and hardened in the ways of misdoing, my thefts were of a different description and greater magnitude; as a specimen of which the following may here suffice in lieu of more examples.

Being at a neighbor's house, one day, I chanced to espy, in the hands of the mistress, a paper money bill, which was deposited anon in the corner of her cupboard, as a place of imagined security. The enticing appearance of the bill, and the beautiful pictures and flourishes that adorned it, had fixed my attention and captivated my childish fancy. I had heard, too, that the value of such money was equal to the like sum in silver. Enough this, to make me covet the treasure, and lay some little stratagem for its attainment. I did so; and was successful in its removal, unnoticed by the family. Soon, however, the woman missed her bill, when calling to mind, that none else had been present, she placed her suspicions upon me. To know the certainty of the matter, and recover her property, if possible, she repairs straightway to

my father's dwelling, who being informed of particulars, had the culprit forthcoming with a vengeance. At first I stiffly disclaimed all knowledge of the fact, but my accusers being strenuous, and myself unable to repel their arguments, I was brought, at last, to confess the fault, and restore the bill to its rightful owner.

At the unlucky termination of this my first *coup d'essay*, at genuine theft, my feelings were not a little mortified, since the untoward affair was soon blazed abroad, and brought me to open disgrace. Even my playmates, as well as others, at every little miff, would cast it full in my teeth. The former petty robberies, which I had committed, occasionally, upon the nuts, apples, or fruits of the neighboring farmers, had been passed over as a trick of youth, and as matters of trivial import, in comparison of this. But my last scandalous offense was construed to announce a vicious and depraved disposition, which, might ripen into an aptitude for the perpetration of the worst of crimes.

Observations of this sort I could hear resounding from different quarters, and was thereupon led into a series of reflections, upon the subject of theft and its consequences. My reveries were directed, however, to unprofitable objects, for instead of contemplating aright upon the doctrines of *meum* and *tuum*, as of age to have done in some measure; instead of considering the sanctity of individual property; weighing the vile and mercenary nature of my transgressions, or guarding against a further

repetition of them, my mind was principally employed in adjusting the degrees of impunity, which might, or might not attend, the commission of such deeds in future.

Ideas of this kind were my frequent concomitants; and such is the prevalency of habit, that it naturally begets a mental alliance in its favor; an inclination in the human breast to cherish familiar objects, whether their complexion be virtuous or vicious, beautiful or deformed. The above remarks were applicable to myself at this period, for the longer I digested the above subjects, the more I became attached to favorite irregularities, and more strongly inclined to provide means for their gratification.

Such being my case I gave into the indulgence of corrupt appetites, and commenced a career of filching such small articles, as chance flung in my way. Success and safety generally attended those clandestine enterprises, as I had learned already the necessity of caution, and used to secrete each article till it might be disposed of to proper advantage.

One affair took place about this time, which I recollect the more especially, as the tumult it made in the neighborhood, was a fruitful source of uneasiness to my feelings. Happening to pass, one day, through an adjacent field, in the season of reaping grain, I casually came across a sickle; the opportunity was inviting, and the temptation too strong for resistance. I took it; but having no immediate use for utensils of this stamp, concealed it, for the present, in a thick cluster of bushes. The

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owner, who had a suspicious temper of his own, soon wanting a sickle, and thinking me, of course the transgressor, came in a furious rage to my father's habitation, and charged me with the theft. I denied the accusation with assurance, insomuch that the old gentleman, after broaching many invectives, and chafing himself to no purpose, was obliged to forego the bootless pursuit, and submit, though against his *grain*, to my escaping with impunity. After the round of a year I reclaimed the sickle, and converted it to my own emolument. . . .

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Chapter II

EARLY IN SIN

*To my new optics novel scenes arise,
And furnish copious matter for surprise.*

WHEN I was about sixteen years of age an occurrence happened, which well might have ended my days, and so have prevented the further career, both of my follies and sufferings on this sublunary stage. While returning home one Sunday, from meeting, I chanced to be overtaken by an impetuous thunderstorm. No house being near, I ran, with several others, for shelter, under a tall spreading pine, situate by the wayside, on a Mr. Neal's land. The violence of the tempest soon increased, and the low hung clouds, surcharged with the watery element, poured down their torrents of rain, and emitted, in quick succession, horrid flashes of lightning, accompanied with loud peals of thunder. By and by, a sudden flash, falling with terrific glare, struck the tree under which we were standing, and split it into myriads of pieces. A wooden tempest of splinters, which in fact darkened the air, flew off from the tree, as its center, in every direction, and overspread the earth at considerable distance. With consternation and surprise we saw the lightning running in streams upon the drenched ground.

All were greatly dismayed at the severity of the shock; but as good fortune, or good providence would have it, none of us received the least corporal injury from the explosion.

Much about this time I went down into a deep, old well, for the purpose of cleaning it out; there tarrying full three hours, and, having completed the task, I ascended, and, horrible to relate! had freed myself from the dismal cavity scarcely a minute, when the loose rocks suddenly gave way, and, with a mighty crash, filled the whole void in an instant. At this astonishing spectacle my hair stood on end, to think how narrowly I had escaped destruction by being buried in the ruins. Thus is man obnoxious ever to the stroke of fate! thus is he liable to many latent, impending dangers, which human prudence can neither foresee nor prevent! ! !

A while after the happening of these accidents, which made indeed but a transient impression on my mind, I laid a scheme, in concert with two other young fellows of my own standing to steal some bread and cheese, and at the same time, to rob a cucumber yard, owned by one Stevens, a steady old farmer. My two accomplices, not being versant in exploits of this kind, were both extremely timid and doubtful, as to the issue of the enterprise, and, when the case came really in hand, one of them declined entering the yard at all, by reason it was contiguous to the mansion of the proprietor. To induce our dispensing with his farther attendance, he offered to procure the

bread and cheese, as he said he could take those articles from his own father's house. On condition of his so doing, we agreed to excuse him, and he set out for home accordingly. In the meantime the other youngster and myself (it being now late in the evening) ventured into the yard and stripped the vines of as many cucumbers as we could well carry away. We all three met again, the same evening, at a preconcerted place of rendezvous, when, to our transport, it appeared that our pusillanimous companion had made shift to acquire half a loaf of bread, and a large cheese weighing fourteen pounds. We all sat down in order to commence a pleasing repast; but the thought struck my fancy, that I should much rather have the whole plunder to myself, than to share it in partnerships with my associates. No sooner did the idea enter my imagination, than slyly I took up a small pebble, threw it at one of my messmates, and with it hit him on the back. He was much started at the stroke, as not knowing from what quarter it proceeded; while I also pretending to be panic-struck, jumped up, exclaiming, with affected surprise, "they are coming in pursuit of us." We all instantly took to our heels, myself in a different route from the other two, but they sped only a small distance; wherefore least they should find out the mistake, and return, I counterfeited a variety of strange voices; at the hearing of which the young novices were so sadly frightened, that they scampered away home as fast as their legs would carry them, adventuring no more

back for the night. In a few minutes I returned to the cheese and cucumbers, and conveyed the whole away to a place of better security. The next day, meeting with the two young chaps, I told them, that, in trying to escape the night before, I had been unluckily overtaken by old Stevens, who found also and took possession of our booty, and besides threatened me so harshly that I was obliged to promise him three days work to compromise the affair. The young lads readily swallowed this fictitious account, and were very well pleased that I had escaped so easily. Soon after they paid me a day's work apiece, as their due share of the common penalty. . . .

I would it were possible to pursue this history without repeating, so frequently, the pronoun I; but when the hero of the piece is the relator also, egotisms are unavoidable. I must therefore bespeak indulgence in that behalf.

Chapter III

A THIEF OF VIRTUE

*All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man, in his time plays many parts.*

SHAKESPEARE.

BUT now that the revolving wheel of time had rolled away twenty-one years of my existence, and admonished me, that I was, at length, my own man, and no longer subject to the mandates and authority of my parents, in the manner I had heretofore been, I began to think it high time to think of providing for myself. To this end I made application to my father desiring him to bestow on me some part of his property, as an encouragement to industry, and towards my obtaining a comfortable subsistence in the world, in proportion as he had done by my elder brother. My father, for some time, evaded all direct answers to my requests, while I continued both solicitations and complaints. After he had been sufficiently teased (as perhaps he thought) with my importunities, he finally rejected my suit, declaring it his intention, that his eldest son should possess the whole of his estate, which, might be worth (as I supposed) one thousand dollars.

Thus being disappointed in my hopes, and cut off from that, which had long been the ground of my only dependence, I grew angry and discontented, not well knowing what steps to pursue. The reflection that I had pretty diligently served my father during minority, (the whole term of which had been applied to the business of husbandry) and that my labor had contributed in a great measure to the support of the family, was constantly present to my indignant view. I considered, also, that little or no time had been allowed me to obtain knowledge, so that my education had been totally neglected, save the small pittance I had gleaned miscellaneously, by means of my own industry. My mind being continually agitated with considerations of this sort, I was induced to believe myself entitled to some share of my father's estate, and thought I was injured by his ill-timed parsimony. Whereupon I determined at all events to seek redress, and that too in some clandestine manner, if unable to persuade him to do me justice: accordingly, though with diminished hopes of success, I made one trial more, to obtain his paternal assistance; but his ideas upon the subject corresponding in no shape with my own, he remained inflexible, to my remonstrances and deaf to every entreaty. Irritated at *his* obstinacy and *my own* ill treatment, I resolved, without more hesitation, to appropriate to my use some portion of his personal property, as a partial indemnification for the labor and toil I had expended in his service.

It is written (as 'tis said) in the Hebrew annals, that the man, who gave his son, neither property, education nor trade, brought him up to be a thief. The truth of this was verified in me, for after ruminating a while in order to concert the most eligible method, in which to be even with my fire, I at last concluded (as the outset and beginning of what I had further in view) to take his horse; that being the most convenient article of his domestic inventory, and best suited to the dispatch, that seemed needful in my novel undertaking. Accordingly, at a convenient season, under pretense of riding but a few miles, I made my flight with the horse to Chester, in Hampshire, where I sold him for about thirty dollars, in ready money.

Never till now had I been in possession of so considerable a sum. It appeared, in my enraptured view, as a plentiful fund, and sure earnest of future riches and prosperity. Already was I as much swollen in imagination, as though I had been proprietor of the mines of Potofi or Peru, and enjoyed imaginary happiness, in long perspective, as my indubitable destiny. With such sanguine hopes of success I now commenced those first peregrinations, which fortune afterwards compelled me to continue for many a painful year.

Leaving Chester, I strolled from place to place, defraying itinerary expenses, in part by occasional labor, though principally with the contents of my purse. This mode of life continued for nearly two months. But mark the sequel of the present adventures; although on leaving

home I had seriously resolved to return no more, at least for a long while, yet now finding my pecuniary avails to be daily diminishing, and myself unable to glide through the world in silver slippers, as the warmth of fancy had portrayed in such glowing colors; and withal being too fickle and capricious to continue in the same mind long at a time, I began to repent that I had forsaken my paternal residence at all, and wished most ardently to return thither. But the effects of my father's displeasure I dreaded with peculiar awe; and blamed the folly, that had produced the present evils. Meantime the money, which, at first, I had contemplated with so much delight, continuing to dwindle, till scarce a moiety of its original sum remained; my dreams of happiness became wholly dispelled, and my expectations of felicity laid in the dust. In a word I found I had made a wrong estimate of human life, and resolved (however fearfully) to return home, like the prodigal son, and apologize for my misconduct in the best manner I could, hoping to pacify my parent, by paying him what money I had left, and which I thought might pretty well compensate for the loss of his horse.

With these views I set off on foot for Lee, and arrived thither in the course of a few days. When I approached the much dreaded presence of my father he appeared sorely displeased, and reprimanded me sharply for eloping with his horse, desiring to know where I had bestowed him. I replied, that I had sold him in Chester, and tak-

ing out the money I had left, presented it most respectfully, expressing, at the same time, great sorrow and contrition for all past offenses. He took the money, but complained that his horse was worth much more, and rebuked me sharply for my past bad conduct, which he predicted would bring me to the gallows in the end, if I persisted in such pernicious practices. But my father's displeasure subsided by degrees, and I continued to reside with him as formerly.

Awhile after our reconciliation, I repaired to Nottingham, a neighboring town, with intention to reside there for a season. In this place I contracted some acquaintance with a young woman, named Sally Hall. As lasciviousness I have every reason to suppose was an original ingredient in my composition, I made love to this damsel, and continued the courtship, with ardor, for a time; but at last her pregnancy was the result of our frequent intimacy. She gave me to understand her situation, and hinted expectations of my healing the transgression by marriage. This however I had no intention of doing. At present I was averse from all thoughts of matrimonial alliance, especially so with the young woman in question, of whose virtue and accomplishments I had not the most exalted opinion. Nevertheless I gave her flattering encouragement, that, I would in due season comply with her wishes, only our connection must be kept secret, 'till things should be arranged to our liking. In this she fully acquiesced—my discourse as the sugar plum was

pleasing to the credulous miss, and inasmuch, as her reliance was strong on my assurances, she remained confidently easy for several months. But after that, as I neglected the accustomed visits, she became fully convinced of my duplicity and intention to deceive her, and, being at this crisis, urged on by her friends, she went and entered a complaint before Esq. Butler, a neighboring magistrate, whose warrant for my arrestation was committed to one Dearborn, a constable, with directions to see me forthcoming with all speed.

This man dealt so craftily in the business, that, one day, he caught me by surprise, as I was walking in a bye crossway, without suspicion of his or any other person's being near. I was carried before Esquire Butler, and requested to find sureties for my personal appearance at the next Court of General Sessions of the peace, which then took cognizance of such matters. To be handled in this compulsory manner was to me, at that early period of life, an entire novelty, for which reason I was greatly intimidated, not knowing in what way the affair would terminate. But as my propitious stars ordained, I was at this juncture, pretty well furnished with cash, and, by a judicious distribution of seven dollars to one man, three to another, and so on, made a number of fast and able friends, who promised to stick by and see the matter through. They fulfilled articles to a tittle, for, through their management, the girl was brought to settle for ten dollars, receiving which, she signed the back of the war-

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rant satisfied, giving me a receipt too in full of all further demands.

At this lucky escape from the noose, which had been spread for me so ingeniously, I felt completely happy, but at the precise moment of finishing the business with Sally, I received a fresh alarm, by the sudden appearance of a man named Peter Folsom, who, it seems, had procured a warrant against me for stealing his saddlebags. He had heard of my being in the custody of Dearborn, and thought this an opportune season for my apprehension, wherefore he came, with sundry adjutants, to execute that purpose. However, by the help of my new-made friends, who, by the bye, were well paid for their trouble, I received some intimation of his designs. They advised me to make a private escape, if feasible, but if this failed, they were to knock down all, who should oppose my retreat. Having gained assurance of their utmost exertions at the moment necessity should call, I sallied out of doors with intent to gain the woods, well knowing, when once there, I could baffle pursuit undoubtedly. But this attempt was frustrated in the bud, for unluckily I was seized by the adverse party within a few paces of the house. Still I manfully resisted their efforts, 'till, my confederates issuing forth, the rencountre became general, and was continued with undaunted heroism on both sides. Victory however remained no long time dubitable ere she declared herself decisively in our favor. We succeeded in knocking down several of our opponents, and

clearing my way from them all, I marched off triumphantly to the nearest thickets, where I lay concealed until evening. I then made the best of my way to Lee, inwardly exulting at the curious issue of those perplexing affairs.

I was now free it is true, from the apprehension of a jail, on my forsaken mistress's account, yet not so from the effects of our acquaintance, for the above fascinating amour had made a deep impression on my fancy, and rendered me more unstable than before. Being once initiated into the mysteries of the Cyprian Goddess, a natural warmth of temperament enrolled the name of *Tufts* among the number of her votaries ever afterwards. In fine my inclination always fervid, but now fired with new incentives, impelled me, more strongly than formerly, to sacrifice at the shrine of Venus, nor could I resist the impulses of so bewitching a deity. It was, rather, my coat of arms to pursue what was pleasing in my own eyes, for to the rigid graces of self-denial I was quite a stranger. From this period, therefore, I waxed more industrious in the pursuit of amorous adventures, and might, perhaps in this course of the narrative, boast of success in achievements of that kind, did it either become my intended gravity, or were it consistent with that taciturnity, which the delicacy of the fair sex has a right to impose. Disliking therefore all ambition of the foregoing cast, I mean not to plume myself on rehearsal of conquests in the fields of love, but, on the reverse, to abbreviate the

detail of my juvenile exploits, so far, at least, as to repress the names of my female favorites, whose connections with me are not already notorious.

I now continued to reside with my parents, for a considerable space, and assisted them, as usual, in the management of their farm. Having met with such miserable success in the transfer of my father's horse, I thought, contrary to former intentions, it would be the best policy to drop all ideas of seeking redress by stealth, in the hope he would one day relent and do me justice. In the interim I engaged in a variety of amours with sundry females, to whom I paid my addresses alternately, as best suited with my inclination or convenience. Nevertheless, when about twenty-two years of age, those temporary connections were all dissolved by an occurrence, which then took place, and which finally terminated in my junction in marriage with the object of my fondest vows. The maiden name of the young woman, who thus engrossed my affections and captivated my heart, was Lydia Bickford. She lived in Durham, a few miles distant from the place of my nativity. In one of my rambling excursions to which I was invincibly prone, I happened to meet with her in company, and was so highly charmed with her person and conversation, that I ardently coveted a more intimate acquaintance with so amiable an object. As her beauty in my partial views, appeared unrivaled—so, for other women, surely, I had never conceived such peculiar fancy. Unable to resist the fervency of passion, I made

her repeated visits, and had the happiness of a favorable reception. At the end of a few months I married and moved her home to the town of Lee.

If there be a propriety in denominating any portion of my adult life happy, the first summer of it subsequent to my marriage, is more especially entitled to that appellation, since with my pleasing wife, for whom I had a sincere affection, I lived in the utmost harmony and love. I met with no disturbance from *abroad* to allay the happiness I enjoyed at *home*, and seemed to have forgotten all former follies and *vagrances*. My vices lay listless and dormant, as though they had lost primeval energy, and were fast progressing towards oblivion, while each succeeding day wore a more serene aspect, and glided away in tranquillity and peace. In supplying the wants of my little family I took real delight, and my endeavors were not altogether successful.

Had those halcyon scenes continued but a few more years, while in the ardor of youth, and forming, as I then was, habits for life, the seeds of vice inherent in my constitution, might have been stifled, perhaps, and overcome, so that I might never have perpetrated the crimes of which I am chargeable, or have passed through the dismal tragedies, that have since occupied the greater portion of my days.

But this tranquil period was not designed for long continuance; for, in truth, six months, from my marriage, had scarcely elapsed, ere an untoward affair took place,

which involved me in greater difficulties and disquietudes than ever; the bare recollection of those broils is yet productive of painful emotions, and excites my indignation against the unjust author of them. The particulars shall be recounted briefly. I had a neighbor by the name of James Burleigh, a respectable farmer and man of account. Somehow or other, about the time I mention, he lost two bushels of rye from his garret; being well acquainted with my conduct from childhood, particularly so, with the manner in which I had taken my father's horse, his suspicions alighted upon me, so he had no hesitation in reporting that I had stolen his rye, for which it was reasonable I should make restitution. He came and charged me with the fact and threatened prosecution, in case of my refusal to make amends. I essayed to exculpate myself, by pleading ignorance of the matter in question; but he discredited my assertions, went post haste and procured a warrant, by which I was arrested and carried before George Frost, Esq., who making some inquiry into the business, and finding the proof insufficient for conviction, intimated to Burleigh (as I have reason to believe) something to that amount, for the latter, by not having the warrant returned in form, stopped all further proceedings and *permitted* my return home. But the complainant Burleigh, unsatisfied with this termination of the process, the writ was altered, as I supposed, or a new one procured, by virtue of which I was again taken into custody, and haled before Walter Bryant, jun. Esq.,

and there examined sufficiently. However, this magistrate, finding no color of proof to my disadvantage, censured Burleigh's whole management, and thereupon discharged me without day.

And now seriously I affirm, that I know nothing of the rye above mentioned, nor do I believe it ever went, unless with the privity of Burleigh's own family. I have been informed, that he laid himself open to an action, for this false and causeless accusation, and had I then known as much law, as I have since been obliged to learn, I should, positively, have made him smart for his imprudence and folly.

This transaction of Burleigh's, I have ever deemed the birthday and beginning of the many mischiefs and misfortunes, which, with few intermissions, have constantly attended me since that period. . . .

On the whole, I had no alternative but to remain at home, the butt of indignity and reviling, or else to leave family and friends, and seek a retreat in some distant quarter, where I should be an entire stranger. The latter was my determination.

Chapter IV

THIEVES FALL OUT

*On a sudden open fly, with impetuous recoil,
And jarring sound, th' infernal doors and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.* MILTON.

I RESOLVED to forsake Lee, but the reluctance with which I left my wife and tender child to the mercy of an unfeeling world, and perhaps forever, as I saw no probability of returning soon, exceeds all power of description. Suppressing, however, to the utmost, my feelings, on the distressful occasion, I bade adieu to my little family, and shaped my course eastwardly. Being but a troynovant in traveling, and quite unhackneyed in the ways of the world, I was put to many straits and difficulties in this new pilgrimage, but after visiting many places, I came at length to Saco, in the (then) province of Maine.

Here in quest of refreshment I chanced to call into a certain house, in which I found a man by the name of James Dennis, by nation a Hibernian. With this man I entered into discourse, and was anon much pleased with his vivacity and the manner of his conversation. In the formation of our minds there was something congenial, I believe, which, like loadstone and steel, attracted each other. To him I made known as much of my situation

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and circumstances, as I thought prudent to disclose, informing him, that my present intention was to hire out as a day laborer. He acquainted me that he had already done the same, with the proprietor of the present house, and that his employer wished to engage another hand. To me this intelligence was grateful; we went both together to the gentleman who, he said wanted to hire. I offered my services, and the conditions being agreed on, I went to work with Dennis the next day; our employment being husbandry and the clearing of new land.

Myself and fellow laborer soon contracted a very familiar acquaintance, nature had endowed him with convertible powers, and for me he had imbibed no small predilection. He had observed me, however, to be frequently thoughtful, or in a brown study as it were, and was solicitous to know the occasion. As he had gained my esteem as well as confidence, I recapitulated my misfortunes and the cause of the dejection, which, he said, was so visible in my countenance. He smiled at the rehearsal and seemed to make light of my mishaps, avering them to be merely ideal in comparison with the evils, that had fallen to his share. My uneasiness he imputed to youth and inexperience; nevertheless, with much fraternal tenderness, he endeavored to cheer my spirits with the hope of better days in embryo. This confabulation ended with a detail of some particulars of his own life, which I thought truly surprising.

A few days after the above, hearing me complain of in-

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ability to support self and family in the manner I desired, he started as from a reverie, and said, if I would be led by his counsels, he would put me in a way to acquire some considerable property. I requested an explanation, so he went on to say, that he knew of a store in Saco, (Mr. Pickard's of Ipswich) with every avenue to which he was perfectly acquainted, and out of which we might take goods to any amount whatever. The goods might be carried, without danger of discovery, into the country and be disposed of for ready money. This he observed would be a more expeditious method to acquire the *desiderata*, than was the dull employment to which we then submitted. In short, the scheme he had laid down far surpassed anything of the kind, which had ever entered my imagination. Being no adept in the art of appropriating to myself, in a genteel manner, the property of others, I was suspicious of ill consequences, and therefore made objections, not only as to the feasibility of his plan, but to the danger of detection in its execution. But my demurs were all overruled by his engaging to be accountable for our success ultimately, in case of my submission to his particular management. As I had no contemptible opinion of the man's capacity, I consented without more ado, and thereon, collecting my arrear of wages, accompanied him forthwith to Saco, the compact part of which lay only seven miles distant. Dennis was very confident of success, and strove to encourage his drooping companion,

but, to confess the truth, the fear of detection was a prevailing ingredient with me, pending the whole voyage.

We reached the village of Saco a little before nightfall, and entered a shop to procure the means of exhilarating our spirits, and of fitting us for the arduous enterprise. As the moments seemed precious we resolved on effecting our business that very evening. Wherefore, after tipping till near bedtime, we sallied forth, and drew near the store in question, concealing ourselves by the wayside, so as to observe all that passed. In this posture we waited till all was still, and the people in bed and asleep, as we presumed. Then we set forward, and coming up to the store, carefully reconnoitered every avenue. We were at some loss about matters, so withdrew to a small distance to hold consultation in what shape to commence the attack. My Irish friend began by observing that one end of the shop had been fitted up for a wash house, and he rather supposed this the most vulnerable quarter. In short, we agreed to make a first essay on the wash house door. To this end Dennis led the van, while I, staggered at the magnitude of the attempt, followed with trepidation.

On examination we found the door less strongly fastened, than we had imagined, for means were readily devised to force it open without disturbance. Instantly we entered the wash room, and waited a few minutes, in a listening attitude, to catch the smallest echo, that might float through the air; but no sounds vibrated on the ear;

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a profound silence prevailed, as the general pulse of life stood still.

It being tolerably dark we ventured, at length, to light a candle, which, by groping about, we found near the fireplace. The only obstruction that now remained, was the door communicating with the store room. This entrance we found to be fast locked, but Dennis drew out his knife and cut the hinges. This was not difficult, seeing they were made only of leather. Every impediment being thus removed, Dennis directed me to leave the house, and watch by the side of the outer door, while he should explore the premises; and since he knew me to be unversed, at that time, in the flash tongue, he desired me to preserve silence, and knock only against the door in case of alarm. I took post accordingly; meanwhile my file leader went into the store and proceeded with prosperity and dispatch. He found, however, but little money, for which reason it was needful to take the greater hold of other articles. Finally, he packed together two large bundles, consisting of English goods, and a few other commodities, to the value of about two hundred dollars, and brought them forth to the outer door. This whole business was completed in about thirty minutes, by which time we were ready for departure. But here I would just give a small piece of cautionary advice to shopkeepers in general: it is, to leave but little cash in such stores, as are remote from their dwelling houses, since the loss of goods may possibly be sustained with

less inconveniency, than that of ready money, which is an article to be spared not altogether so well.

With the booty we made our way through the compact part of the town, and then (veering) traveled westwardly six or eight miles, highly elated indeed with our fortunate acquisition. But now we arrived at the house of one Richard Dutton, an old acquaintance of Dennis's, where we proposed to make a stand, and deposit our booty for the present. We acquainted Dutton and wife with the manner in which we had acquired the articles, they engaging to secrete them effectually, and befriend us. After devoting ourselves to rest and refreshment, during the residue of the night and greater part of the next day, and regaling upon good cheer and agreeable drink, till we became as merry as so many Greeks, Dennis and Dutton, a little before the close of day, went out with a few trinkets to dispose of them for cash and such necessaries as our present inclination demanded. In transacting this business they took it into their heads, that, as the goods had been obtained at a cheap store, they might afford to sell cheap too, especially for cash in hand. In this, however, they overshot themselves, for their customers, supposing they sold at too low a rate to come by the things honestly, seized and detained both them and their lading. A magistrate and other officers being called in, the culprits were so hardly handled, and besieged withal to acknowledge how they came by the articles, that Dutton (the privilege of admission as King's evidence being

promised him) at last confessed all, informing, more particularly, of the commodities secreted at his own house. Dennis, too, was so closely pressed that he confessed every fact, and betrayed what he knew respecting his young proficient, Henry Tufts.

When those ministers of justice (or rather vengeance) had gathered the necessary information, they speedily set out for Dutton's abode, in quest of me and the other articles. Their arrival was excessively early in the morning, so that I, who happened to be quietly in bed with my friend Dutton's wife, dreaming, I protest, of no harm, till I heard them thundering at the door, had scarce time to retreat from the arms of my playmate, ere they entered the room and made me prisoner. Seeing but one bed in the cottage, they demanded where I had lodged the night preceding. I replied "on the floor." They charged me with fallacy, intimating, that from appearances, I must have bundled with Dutton's wife, but it being no part of my creed to criminate myself, where the facts could not be fairly proved, I positively denied their assertions. Dutton seemed to trouble his pate but little about the business, but, being requested to produce the residue of the goods, he did it alertly, to the satisfaction of the whole company. This over, they bade Dennis and me prepare for jail, and presently after hurried us to Saco, where having undergone another examination, we were escorted under a strong guard to Falmouth (now Portland) jail, and there confined in irons.

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It was late in autumn (1770) when it was our mishap to become inmates of this horrid mansion, wherefore, being destitute of fire and bedding, we suffered miserably during imprisonment. We continued in the most comfortless situation for fifteen days together, without making a single effort for effecting our escape. At length, growing uneasy, we thought it high time to devise some stratagem for that purpose. We concerted several, but on trial, the means proved inadequate to the undertaking. We had instruments of no sort to force a breach through the prison walls, so that in our desponding view, the obstacles to deliverance appeared insuperable.

This was the first time I had ever been immured within the walls of a prison, consequently I sustained my sufferings with less patience and fortitude than did Dennis. My handcuffs I thought intolerable, and bitterly regretted the part I had taken (thus unwarily) in breaking Pickard's store. But why do I mention the poignancy of my sensations at this season? How often, when under the pressure of affliction, have I repented of my crimes, and of my follies, yet have plunged precipitately into the like or greater miseries again? So inconsistent, so mutable a being is man! ! !—We remained awhile longer in the same gloomy situation, when Dennis, who was remarkably fertile in expedients, suggested, that if we could prevail with Mr. Modley, the prison keeper, to allow us a little fire, he did not scruple but we might burn a passage through the side of the jail, and so make our escape. Had

we been provided with implements of any kind, fire, undoubtedly had been our *dernier resort*, but destitute, as we were, of every requisite, we knew of nought else, of which to avail ourselves, so resolved, at all hazards, to try the event of that, if so lucky as to obtain the article.

Accordingly, the next day, we represented to the jailor how much we had suffered already from the severity of the cold and from nakedness, beseeching him, withal, to allow us a little fuel, to warm our benumbed limbs in this inclement season. The keeper was a benevolent man and truly pitied, I believe, our sufferings, wherefore, he granted our request, but had the precaution, to extinguish the fire with a bucket of water, every evening, lest we might compass some mischief. Yet we soon found a remedy for this evil, for having a large piece of a broken earthen milk pan, we contrived to place it crosswise in the funnel of the chimney, as far above the mantle piece, as we could well reach. In this vessel, one certain evening, we deposited a small brand of fire, a few minutes previous to the customary return of the jailor. Presently, coming in, he quenched the embers as usual, but, to our satisfaction had no suspicion of our plan.

On his leaving us, we reclaimed the hidden fire, and were careful not to lose it for lack of feeding. With some anxiety we watched the passing hours, till about eleven o'clock at night, when thinking it high time for all to be sound asleep, we set fire to the broadside of the jail, a few feet above the flooring, intending to burn a hole

through sufficiently large for our exit. The timbers, which composed the sides of the prison, were fourteen inches in thickness, being placed hard by one another, and sheathed on the inside with two inch oak plank, the outside was boarded and clapboarded. We attended the fire unremittingly by the space of two hours, and burned away the wood with an expedition that scarce seemed tedious to our eager wishes. By this time we had made an opening quite through the wall, as large in circumference, as the head of our gallon keg. "Courage, (said Dennis, whose eyes, I perceived, were nearly closed with smoke,) courage, my good lad, the game goes well; if we manage the fire rightly, there'll be no kind of danger." I thought so too, and, upon the whole, we both grew pretty confident of success, but presently a provoking accident occurred, which disconcerted the whole scheme; overturned our fond hopes, and rendered escape, in this way impracticable. The new disaster was this. The fire had been creeping, though very gradually, through the interstices of the timber, from the time of kindling it, yet we had made shift to control it by the help of a pail of water. But by the time we had burned through as above, our water was all expended, the fire then increased with surprising rapidity, and began blazing, inside and out, with much briskness. So that our room was immersed in such thick volumes of smoke, as to admit the fetching of scarce a single breath. One pailful of water more would have done the thing completely, as, by means of that, the flames

had been checked long enough for all purposes. But the room being thus filled with smoke and fire; water all spent; the flames spreading and our design impracticable further, we were constrained, at last, to shout for help. Our loud vociferations aroused, anon, the whole family, which drawing near, found us, poor devils, on the very point of suffocation. The whole posse were collected in a few minutes, who united their efforts to conquer the unruly element, which raged by this time, with ungovernable fury. Full three hours were expended in this disagreeable service, though water (not to mention crow bars and axes) was used in abundance. At last, however, they succeeded in arresting the progress of the fire, but the jail was nearly ruined, for the breach in the wall was sufficient for the admission of a team of oxen. I gazed on the fruits of our labor with some admiration, and wished my hands at liberty, that I might have escaped; but my sighs were in vain.

All this while we had been treated with civility by the bystanders, except that I received one stroke of the hand from the prison keeper at his first entrance.

The jail was now adjudged unsuitable for the retention of prisoners, so it was thought advisable to send us packing to Old York jail*; but Thanksgiving being near, we were kept under guard, in Mr. Modley's family, till that solemnity should be over. . . .

* Perhaps the sole survivor of Tufts' numerous jails.—E.P.

Chapter V

TAKEN FROM THE COUNTY JAIL

*Fresh troubles flow, in one unceasing course,
From various follies, as their fruitful source.*

THE day after Thanksgiving we were confided to the charge of Sheriff Bagley, and others, in order to be conveyed to Old York jail. When we had gotten as far as Wells, we all entered a tavern to rest a little and procure a small portion of refreshment. Our keepers leaving Dennis and me in irons, adjourned, for better accommodation, into another apartment, but, while they were regaling and feasting to a merry degree, my partner Dennis, broke his handcuffs in the crotch of the chimney crane, and betook himself to immediate flight. A few minutes after, our conductors coming out, demanded whither Dennis had withdrawn. "If he be the prudent man I think him, (said I) he's, by this time, three miles ahead at the least." "*At the least*, then, (replied they) we'll take care of you." Saying this they remounted their steeds, and proceeded with me to Mr. Row's, the jail keeper of Old York, where, instantly, I was thrust into confinement. The damages which Dennis and I had done Falmouth jail had been much rumored about the country, so that now I was strongly handcuffed and cast into the securest ward. Here I thought it best to remain inactive, as my

motions were very scrupulously observed. I continued in this prison nineteen days, when Pickard, the prosecutor, arrived from Ipswich, and made me a visit. He said if I would agree to ship with his brother at Newburyport, and sail on a three months' voyage to the West Indies, (he, Mr. Pickard, receiving my wages) that on such condition, he would have me liberated, and, as a further encouragement to behave well, would furnish me with two quintals of fish for a sea venture. To all this I agreed, so Mr. Pickard went and procured my enlargement, by paying, as I supposed, a small matter of cost. We then set out immediately for Ipswich, myself on foot, having no better mode of conveyance. When we had reached Newbury Old Town, he said he had a mind to call in at the next tavern, inviting me to do the like, but I declined. So he told me, if I would behave well, I might continue my journey, and he would overtake me shortly. I said yes, and set forward, but traveling about three-quarters of a mile, without company, was so unfortunate as to miss my way, and never came across my deliverer afterwards. . . .

The difficulties I had met with gave me a disrelish to adventures of a kindred species, so I concluded even to return home, and visit again my family and friends. This I did without loss of time, but my wife was surprised at my sudden appearance, for hearing of the imprisonment, she had cherished but little hopes of my so speedy acquittal.

I soon perceived that the people of Lee were in full possession of my late misadventures, and that the same had been a subject of animadversion through the neighborhood. My enemies had now a colorable pretext to treat me with indignity, and of this they were not dilatory in taking advantage. But my spirits naturally high set, ill brooked such humiliating usage. The people I disliked, but their invectives I abominated; for my conduct though injudicious, had not extinguished all sense of injury, nor annihilated my feelings as a man.

The people of Lee, for whatever reasons, were much embittered against me, so that none cared to employ me; but to live without means seemed altogether impossible, wherefore I resolved to abandon the place, and that as soon as family affairs would permit. My wife was greatly opposed to my leaving her in this manner, insomuch that I hesitated upon the subject, but my departure was accelerated by an accident here worth noticing.

A certain party of men belonging to Lee and Newmarket, who had been at Capt. Hill's training, passed necessarily near my house, on their return home, which was late in the evening. Among them was one Elisha Thomas, a desperate fellow, but who has since found his deserts. This man was the ringleader, it seems, of the whole mob. When they had gotten as far as my humble cot, they made a stand in the road, and Thomas communicated to the others his design of pulling my house in pieces before leaving the ground. As they were all

highly stimulated, I believe, with drink, they applauded the ingenious proposal, and approached in a body. Thomas being foremost, seized the end of a board, jutting a little beyond the residue, and pulled it off the house. By this time I thought it stood me in hand to make some exertion in defense of self and property. Having a good musket, charged with two balls, I snatched it in haste, and looking out, demanded the occasion of such treatment. Thomas, with terrible oaths, repeated his determination of tearing my house in pieces before quitting the spot. I bid him touch another stick at his peril, for I was an armed man, and would drop him certainly, if he did. He damned me for a rascal, and told me to fire if I dared, at the same instant, he again rushed forward, and catching hold of another board attempted to wrest it off. By this time I had become so exasperated, that for a few moments I was bereaved of reasoning powers; taking, therefore, good aim at my adversary's breast, I pulled trigger, but my gun, which I thought certain, only snapped in the pan. I made a second, and a third attempt, but my gun still refused fire. I was preparing to make the shot more certain, when Thomas, finding my resolution as desperate as his own, thought it most prudent to desist, and to march off with his whole party.

The next day not knowing the reason of my gun's failure, I tried her at a mark, and she gave fire without the smallest difficulty.

This furious attempt upon me, in my own castle, was

TAKEN FROM THE COUNTY JAIL

a convincing proof, that I could no longer abide at home in peace or safety. For that reason I took leave of my family, and quitted Lee, not knowing whither to shape my course.

Fortune directed my steps to Number four,* where I engaged in the service of John Spooner, and drove his sleigh for a month, but growing weary of this irksome employment, I left it, and proceeded to Claramont,† in Hampshire, (it being now early in the spring of 1771). Here I went to work with one Enoch Judd in clearing land. He was a man, as the saying is, well to pass in the world, so I continued at his house (as will be seen) a considerable time, and showed so much attention to business, that Judd was extremely well pleased with my assiduity. One day as we were at work in his field, he inquired whether I was a married man, my answer was in the negative, he asked the cause of my celibacy,—I intimated the fault was not mine. He said he had a couple of likely girls, and for that I was a good industrious lad, I might have my choice of them. I thanked him cordially for his obliging offer, but here our conversation closed on that topic. However his alluring overture wrought so powerfully upon my imagination, that, mauger present conjugal connections, I had no power to resist the pleasing idea, that prompted me to make courtship to Sally, the elder of the two girls above mentioned. Indeed for

* Old "Fort Number 4," now Charlestown, N. H.—*E.P.*

† Claremont.—*E.P.*

that pretty miss I had conceived no small liking, so, without delay I paid her my address, and had the happiness to find myself the object of her regard. . . .

My dulcinea had been long meditating upon a journey to Waterbury, in Connecticut, one hundred and sixty miles distant, where her brother-in-law resided, the same being also the place of her own nativity, and now was the time prefixed for her departure. Her father had a mind I should escort her thither, in which his desire I heartily acquiesced. We sat out well mounted, and arrived safely at Waterbury, without the least perverse occurrence. We repaired immediately to Mr. Brewster's her brother-in-law's house, who was a tailor by trade. I rode up to the door and knocked. He came out and asked if that man (meaning me) was her husband, she answered, "I don't know as you will own him"; he said, "walk in brother." We went in, and were treated with every mark of kindness and civility. Here we tarried about three weeks, and having made every necessary preparation for our intended marriage before leaving Claramont, we now sent for a priest, and by him were joined in the bands of wedlock. A few days subsequent to this, we bade adieu to our good friends in those parts, and returned to Claramont. As we approached her father's dwelling, the old lady, her mother, came out to meet and salute us, when surveying us with much complaisancy, she said, "walk in children," for she had heard of our union while absent. We were now very graciously received by both father and mother,

as well as by the residue of the family. They were all greatly rejoiced at our safe return, and must needs send for Mr. Faucett, the minister, to pay us a visit on the occasion. He honored the invitation, and the first words he spoke to my wife were. *Sally, Sally! I think you have used me very ill, in being married while abroad—I have married all the rest of the family in the church way, and you ought to have been married in the church way too.* Upon this, I gave her privately four dollars, desiring her to present them to the priest, and make also, some apology for our conduct. This duty she performed very gracefully, telling him as things *stood*, it was not in her power to prevent what had happened, but hoped he would esteem it the same as though she had been married by himself. He replied that it was the same, and wished we might live together in amity and the enjoyment of prosperity to the end of life. He then uttered the following sentence, which I thought singular. *You seem to be man and wife, but if you are not so, I pronounce you man and wife.* On this we arose and made obeisance, to signify our acknowledgment of the marriage. We spent the remainder of the evening in good humor, conversing upon various subjects, till a late hour, when Mr. Faucett returned home.

With my new spouse, (if I may so term her) for whose person I felt a most tender regard, I should now have lived very happily, had it not been for the continued inquietude that harassed my mind, lest my real condition in life

should somehow become known. I dreaded lest my wife or her friends might obtain information of my former marriage, and of the many disgraces I had met with in the world. Reflections of this sort had, from my first acquaintance with Sally, incessantly vexed and tormented my imagination, stretching it upon the rack of unpleasing expectancy. The consequences proved that my apprehensions were but too well founded, for I had consorted with my new spouse little more than a honeymoon, when that which I so much dreaded, came really to pass.

A certain man, named Abner Clough, who lived near the place of my nativity, and was well knowing to most of my concerns, happened, at this juncture, to pass through Claremont, when hearing of my new marriage with Sally, he informed the people that I had a prior wife and family in Lee, and was besides a very bad fellow, having behaved so ill at home, that I was forced to run away to prevent punishment.

This story was soon carried to Sally and her friends, and gave them a serious alarm. They sent directly to Clough, and received a full confirmation of the ungrateful intelligence, together with the particulars of my breaking Pickard's store, and subsequent imprisonment. By this black account they became exasperated to the last degree, and loaded me with reproaches of every kind. To those reproaches I could indeed make but little reply.

Not content with venting their spleen in this manner,

they threatened me with exemplary punishment, for treating thus my best benefactors. Such being the state of things, I thought it wisdom to decamp seasonably, so I left Claremont that very evening, without so much as bidding adieu to Sally, or any of her friends.

After a circuitous ramble I even ventured to revisit Lee, where my first wife yet held possession of the cattle. She had heard of my extraordinary marriage, during my late elopement, and therefore gave me an uncouth welcome; however I cohabited with the dame, as formerly.

Soon after this I hired out, as a day laborer, with one deacon Tash, of Newmarket. On a certain day, while mowing grass in his meadow, I accidentally came across a huge wasp's nest. Having a mind for a little sport with the honest deacon, who was indeed quite a worthy and zealous man, I slyly cut the twig, from which the nest was suspended, and, in a gentle manner, conveyed it to a cock of hay, where I concealed it for the present. All this I did without the smallest disturbance to the meddling race. In the afternoon the Deacon and I went out with the team to haul hay. He mounted the wheels, as usual, to make the load, leaving me behind to manage the team. At length I drove in course to the bunch containing the waspy tribe, when pushing my fork through the nest, so as to break it pretty well to pieces, I pitched it up, hay and all, to the unsuspecting deacon, who was stripped entirely to the shirt. An armed host of those mischievous insects now seized him conjunctly, and stung him so in-

tolerably, that not being able to keep his post he pitched head foremost to the ground. Being still surrounded with his troublesome assailants, he scrabbled up with what agility he could muster, in order to retreat to a more respectful distance, but scampering away with more speed than forecast, he again lost his center of gravity and had the fresh misfortune to plunge precipitately into the main ditch. This had lately been thrown up to drain the meadow, and was, moreover, full of water, so that the old gentleman lay floundering in both water and mud, 'till I seeing the catastrophe, and fearing he might be suffocated, ran up to his assistance. We had a fearful time of it, to be sure, for in trying to clear him, I was prodigiously stung by the wasps myself. The deacon was in a sweet pickle, but no sooner did he recover breath for articulation, than he accused me of doing him this piece of roguery intentionally, and desired I would instantly quit his service. I asserted my innocence with much gravity, protesting I was extremely sorry for his misfortune; so that on further reflection, the good-natured man imputed the whole to mere accident, and expressed his thankfulness at escaping with no greater injury.

Chapter VI

IN AGAIN, OUT AGAIN

*More grievous, than the ills of yore,
Are such as yet remain in store.*

ABOUT this period I met with one James Smith, a Dutchman, whose disposition, I perceived, was analogous to my own. As kindred souls naturally agree, we became intimately associated. I took some pains to cultivate an acquaintance with this convenient blade, and to acquire his confidence; in both of which I succeeded to my wishes. At length we entered into partnership, and agreed to stick close by each other, for the present; but, being both in want of the means of support, we were compelled to have recurrence to furtive pursuits, my usual resort on pressing occasions. Hens, turkeys, sheep and the like, became the victims of our rapacious industry, and supplied our wretched larder with just sufficient to enable us to continue the unlawful pursuit. Farmers had to regret the loss of their fleecy tribes, and wives of the poultry, which were immolated daily on the altars of our hungry deities. But the solicitude of the sufferers was unavailing, for Smith and I concealed our plunder so artificially, as to baffle all attempts at detection, though we had frequent visits from such as suspected us to be the demons, who had thus *spirited* away their substance. . . .

My partner and I not having accumulated property by such spoliations, but in lieu thereof becoming destitute of apparel and other conveniences, we saw the necessity of striking some more important blow than any we had hitherto attempted. And the way to affect this readily presented; for Smith was familiar with a man belonging to the *Newfields* (in Newmarket) who had hinted that a certain store, the property of Smith Gilman and Levi Chapman, might be opened without difficulty. Moreover (Smith my informant) was well assured, that the same man would lend some assistance, though he bore at the time, the character of a gentleman. In expectation of this, we set out for the *Newfields*, and repaired to the house of Smith's friend and confident. We communicated the secret of our embassy and requested his advice. The project we found was far from displeasing our entertainer, for with much volubility, he went on to digest the proper mode of procedure, advising us to enter the store through a particular casement, which he represented as slightly fastened. We followed punctually his prescriptions, and our efforts were crowned with brilliant success; we forced a passage through the window, as directed, and took out of the store, cloths to the value of about one hundred dollars, two guineas in money, sundry pieces of silver, with a large quantity of other articles.

The goods we carried directly to the gentleman's house, and presented him with a pail of sugar, several rolls of ribband, and a piece of gauze, as a recompense for his

trouble, and then took our leave. As we intended to steer southwestwardly with the booty, we took, under cover of darkness, the highway leading through Stratham. I was mounted on a horse I had picked up a day or two before, but Smith being destitute of such conveniency, we contrived to supply the defect, by stealing a horse from one Barker, as we passed through the town last mentioned. Being now whole footed, we pushed on, full tilt, till we gained Haverhill ferry. It was about dawn of day, when we arrived at this place; so that, nobody being stirring, we took a boat, and crossed over without observation; and then drove on, with our half-famished steeds, to Pepperell, in Massachusetts; ourselves and horses, by the time we had recovered this station, being sufficiently fatigued with a forced march of forty-five miles.

Here we made a final halt for the day, and exposed our goods to sale, the same afternoon. On the edge of the evening, Gilman and Chapman entered Pepperell in pursuit of the thieves, and, if possible, to recover their property. Their coming was so abrupt that they surprised us effectually, before we had opportunity to secrete the goods, or make the smallest arrangement for a personal escape. Thus were we suddenly arrested, and taken into custody; when to our no small surprise, we found that the man who had contrived so conveniently, the method of breaking the store, and who had received also his quota of the stolen commodities, had turned informant against us, and had revealed the probable route we had taken. Deceitful

and treacherous as this person proved, I am unwilling to reveal his name to the public, especially as he has since removed to a distance from Newmarket, and now supports the character of a better man.

The next day Smith and I were conveyed back as far as Exeter. He was shut up in the common prison; but my doom was close confinement in the dungeon.

As they expected I should try hard to give them the slip, every precaution was taken for its prevention. My feet were shackled together with a large iron bolt, of two feet in length, which, at either end, was fastened with rivets to the irons surrounding my ankles; a strong chain, of two feet only, proceeded from the bolt to the floor, and was there secured with a huge iron staple. These iron appendages kept my feet at just such a distance asunder, and rendered my stepping one foot before the other upon the floor, altogether impossible. It was with extreme difficulty I could reach the place of office, or stretch my limbs on a miserable couch of straw. In such deplorable condition I continued, ninety days and nights, or rather one continued night of so long duration. Judge then what were my sufferings, and what my sensations must have been at that distressing time; what trouble, anxiety, and gloomy apprehensions must have taken possession of my mind, and absorbed every comfort of life; sequestered from all intercourse with the rest of mankind, and accompanied only with pain, shame, remorse and darkness, in a mansion of *darkness*, with hardly suf-

ficient food and clothing to prevent me from perishing; and bearing, for so long an interval, what God only knows, or the heart of man, by experience alone, is able to conceive; think, I say what must have been my sufferings, both of body and mind, at that dismal period.

The dampness of the dungeon, the offensive effluvia of the prison vault, my want of necessary food and clothing, and the troublesome vermin, which are generally the undisturbed inhabitants of a jail, altogether, so much dispirited and afflicted me, that I could obtain none, or very little rest, night or day. The consequence was my health visibly declined, and my strength daily decayed. At length, after a lapse of ninety tedious days, which seemed an entire age, the superior court sat at Exeter, and I, with my accomplice, Smith, were brought forth for trial. The proof of the felony being full against us, we were adjudged *guilty*. Our sentence was to receive thirty-five lashes on the naked back, of which twenty were assigned to my peculiar share. The whole were to be inflicted on the Monday then next ensuing; receiving which, we were to be imprisoned thirty-one days longer, and to pay, moreover, a certain sum in damages with costs; but in default of payment to be sold to make good the same.

After hearing sentence, Smith was recommitted to the common prison, but I was immured in the dungeon and loaded with chains as before. On the Monday succeeding, we were carried out to receive the destined punishment. The stripes were laid on by one of the prisoners

of the yard, Jacob Hardy; who, thinking to gratify the spectators, labored hard in fulfilling his odd vocation, administering the strange medicine, with so lavish a hand, that one had been led to imagine he intended this potion should be our last. But had he known the minds of the people, he would have abated (I presume) somewhat of his exertions; for being afterwards blamed by several of the bystanders, for exceeding the bounds of his duty, and his conscience (I suppose) smiting him severely, for punishing, so greedily, two of his unfortunate fellow prisoners, and that without offense received at their hands, he offered to treat us with a dollar's worth of punch; and doubtless would have done us that favor, had he not been discouraged by the keeper of the prison. . . .

In a few days my friends supplied me with instruments, by which, with much toil, I drilled a hole through the wall, sufficiently capacious, when stripped to the skin, for my corporal exit. The process of cutting I had concealed so effectually, by filling up the cavities with bread, whenever I ceased work, that none mistrusted my undertaking; and before the thirty-one days were fully elapsed, I was prepared to evacuate that most odious of tenements, the jail at Exeter. During all this while, no chapman (I intend no pun) appeared for the purchase of either Smith or me, though exposed to sale every day. But being thus ready to leave my detested abode, I determined to improve the first convenient season for that purpose. This occurred the ensuing evening. Yet, previous to depart-

ure, I had a fancy for a small matter of merriment with my fellow prisoner; Smith, who was in the cell overhead.

With a view to this, I acquainted him with my intention of quitting the premises that very night. He was importunate to learn by what means. I replied, "By the help of the devil, who is now at my beck and call, whenever I need his assistance." Smith had heard it reported that I was a wizard, and, being always the dupe of his own credulity, had now the simplicity to credit my ridiculous tale. Anxious of deliverance from his tedious confinement, he begged me to extricate him in a similar way. "Yes, said I, provided you will follow, with exactitude, my directions." He assented: so waiting till I presumed the people of the house were sound asleep, I called again to Smith, in a low key, and told him it was time to be doing, and that the first thing necessary was to strip off all our clothes, turn them inside out, and fling them out at the window. This injunction Smith executed with alertness, and so did I (bating the inversion of apparel) from more substantial motives. Being both stripped to the buff, I told him I should break bulk first, ten minutes after which he might follow, by repeating the following distich, to wit:

"Come in old man, with that black ram,
And carry me out, as fast as you can."

After giving my fellow sufferer this lesson, I crept out at the partition fracture, and flipping on my clothes,

stepped into the yard, just under Smith's window, who was listening at the grates, with no small solicitude, to learn the issue of my experiment. I informed him of my success, bade him repeat his creed, as instructed, which would certainly procure his enlargement also. He promised a punctilious performance, while I, without more colloquy, gathered up Smith's apparel, which I expected in all likelihood to need, and with it, sped away precipitately, leaving the poor wight to mumble over his ceremony at leisure.

Breathing once more the free air of liberty, I looked back with horror upon the severe trials I had lately passed through, and found sufficient cause to congratulate myself on the present happy deliverance. Wishing to revisit Lee, I sat off for the place, but such was my enfeebled condition, in consequence of so long and rigid a confinement, that it was not till after great difficulty that I arrived thither. My wife was both surprised and concerned at seeing me, so nearly was I emaciated to a skeleton; yet she might have expected this as a consequence of my starving so long amid the impurities of a dungeon. Notwithstanding which the natural firmness of my constitution soon replaced both health and spirits in pristine vigor. . . .

About this time, chancing to call into the shop of Mr. Daniel Chapman, in Newmarket, I received from him a smart reprimand on the score of stealing. He also, in facetious mood, charged me never to embezzle his prop-

erty, and said, as an inducement to honesty, he would tap my shoes. This piece of service he performed; while I from motives of gratitude, promised never to meddle with his substance, and was ever as good as my word; for, in fact, I was so handsomely treated, in all respects, by this gentleman, that I never harbored a thought of doing him the least injury, although opportunities were frequent.

My name, ere this, had sounded far and near, and divers people, who had been in the habit of insulting me with impunity, began now to be more fearful for their own interest, and more cautious of giving me needless offense, than formerly, as thinking me very revengeful, and capable of attempting anything, but impossibilities; for my own part I was extremely well pleased with their apprehensions.

It is an old observation that, "*there are more thieves than one*"; and really, at the period I speak of, as well as before and after, I was charged with many thefts and misdemeanors, of which I can plead entire innocency; as an instance of this the following may be adduced.

While I was last confined in the dungeon at Exeter, a certain countryman entered the town, in quest of Henry Tufts, who, he said, had stolen a yoke of his oxen. A gentleman present asked if he did not mistake, as to the person of the thief. The relator said, "No; for he was very confident that Tufts was the rogue, since he knew him well, and had, by immediate pursuit, overtaken him with the oxen, and snapped a pistol at his breast; yet the

sturdy knave escaped with the booty, after all." Upon this the gentleman told his informer, that Tufts was then fast chained in the dungeon, and had been thus for more than a month, so that it was impossible *he* should be the thief. He then dismissed the accuser with this salutary admonition. "*To be careful in future how he brought an accusation against any person till well assured of his identity.*"

About this time I came across a man, who was in possession of a set of pictures, called *shows*, which were viewed by looking through magnifying glasses, artificially disposed for that purpose.* I was so much enamored with the sight of those rarities, that I purchased them of the showman, at the price of thirty dollars, although, to make out the sum, it swept away nearly the whole property of which I was master. I was greatly fascinated with my new acquirement, and the principal business I followed for one winter, was carrying about those insignificant trifles, which I exhibited with great ostentation, at about a groat a sight. But my pecuniary emoluments being in no wise answerable to my expectations, I began to regret not only the consumption of time, but the original purchase also. In consonance with my feelings and situation, at that season, are the following stanzas.

* The peep-show, a feeble ancestor of the moving-picture theater has almost vanished from knowledge. It was once an important feature of way-faring life. See Richardson Wright: *Hawkers and Walkers in Early America*. p. 180. Also, an article by F. Weitenkampf in the *Bulletin* of the New York Public Library, June 1921: 25:359-66.—E.P.

IN AGAIN, OUT AGAIN

Now to and fro, thro' snow, lo how I go,
On hope some ore to cope for jocund show,
Tho' soon (so sorry for old folly grown)
I would, whole tote for good, to demon thrown.

Or thus:

Away at dawn, at dark afar and near,
At back a pack (a bauble rare and dear)
I wayward rake and take, each weary day,
Great pains, which gain a lazy lad may pay
At saddle bad, made sad, and cast at last,
At jailor L-dd (say glad) I had all cast.

Did the foregoing rhymes require explanation or glossary, I'd furnish the desideratum, but as whoever can supply the elipsis may comprehend the text, and whoso cannot, may pass it over, I shall close this article by observing, that after the consumption of much time on the aforesaid puerile toys, to the no small detriment of myself and others, the people in general, took it into their heads to rally me so immoderately, on the score of my indolence and vagrancy, that, at last, from conviction of its inutility, I grew quite ashamed of my trifling employment, and so gladly parted with the shows for ten dollars, making a losing go, every way, by this execrable business.

Some time posterior to all this, being on a visit at Ephraim Clough's in Lee, the company present started a novel diversion; namely, each in turn essayed to force open, with a strong and quick jerk, a sharp, half bent jackknife, without touching the blade. Some could do

this, others not, I tried the experiment among the rest, but, unhappily for me, had the ill luck to strike the knife into the thick of my thigh, where it stopped only by lodging against the bone. The wound was three inches deep, and came within an ace of costing my life. I continued bleeding so long, that my blood lost its usual color, and I had no strength remaining. I lay ill, with this dreadful wound, three months, before recovery of power to walk abroad, and even then was so weak and pale, that I more resembled a ghost, than a living person. In a word, everyone supposed the malady would terminate in a consumption and so end my days. Judging from my own feelings, I thought it time to set my house in order, and make some kind of preparations for departure hence. At this discouraging crisis I happened to meet with Capt. Josiah Miles, the great Indian hunter, who strongly advised my visiting the Indians of Sudbury, Canada,* who, he affirmed, would cure me, if the thing were morally possible. Upon due consideration I thought best to close with his advice, if perchance, I might surmount the long and tedious voyage. At present I was too well conscious of my inability to attempt it, and for that reason, concluded to abide at home a month longer, in which interim to make all needful preparations for the journey.

* Not the present Sudbury, in the Province of Ontario, but according to Col. Higginson, a township in Maine.—E.P.

Chapter VII

LIFE WITH THE INDIANS

*I far prefer a savage life
To gloomy cares or vexing strife.*

By the time prefixed I was equipped for departure, and had gathered (in my opinion) such a portion of health and strength, as might enable me to travel a few miles a day. So bidding adieu to family and friends, I set out on the precarious enterprise, but the most gloomy doubts of success and uncertainty of return, were my constant attendants on the way. I proceeded by short and slow marches, traveling sometimes not more than a mile or two in a day. The people, whom I visited on the road, used me, for the most part, with much kindness, otherwise, of necessity, I must have abandoned the expedition.

I shall not here attempt to decipher the multiplicity of difficulties and discouragements, arising from pain, sickness, want, and sometimes almost despair, which I encountered during this long and tedious pilgrimage. To render an adequate description of my sufferings and trials would far exceed my feeble ability; suffice it to say, that, after many and repeated efforts, I reached the Pigwacket country,* where I suspended my travels a few days, to

* Something about the Pigwacket country, probably its euphonious name, fascinated travelers as well as poets and prose-writers for more than a cen-

recruit, in some degree, my exhausted strength and spirits. Obtaining by this delay some renovation of vigor, I proceeded to collect a few necessaries, and then prosecuted the tardy way, till I had passed the English settlements. But now was I frequently put to my trumps to trace the most direct course toward the Indian encampments, which, as yet, were thirty miles distant. And to complete my distresses, I was necessitated to pass several uncomfortable nights in the howling wilderness, where the frequent yellings of the wild beasts inspired ideas of horror and amazement. However, after surmounting many obstacles, I had the good fortune to procure the company of some English hunters a small part of the remaining way.

Thus I pursued my course, 'till certain footsteps, and other vestiges, indicated my proximity to the frontiers of the Indian settlements. No long time supervened, ere ascending a great hill, I had a view, for the first time, of their camps and wigwams in Sudbury, Canada. But the uncouth appearance of those wretched habitations inspired my imagination with a kind of awe, not knowing what sort of reception I should find among the rude and uncultivated sons of nature, their inmates. . . .

tury. Its limits are hard to determine; it is usually said to have been in Maine, although a contemporary map applies the name to places in New Hampshire. O. W. Holmes, in *Elsie Venner*, Chapter III, invents a town called Pigwacket Centre. "Lovewell's Fight," in the old ballad, took place (1725) on Saco Pond, and the balladist sings:

"'Twas nigh unto Pigwacket, on the eighth day of May,
They spied a rebel Indian soon after break of day."—E.P.

It was now the beginning of June, 1772, the trees had assumed a rich foliage, nature wore a most pleasing aspect, and the voice of the nightingale was melodious through the groves. The mildness of the present evening had been joyous to me in health, but now I was unable to relish its comforts. The whole scene was in contrast with my feelings, since weakness and lassitude had produced a general apathy with regard to every surrounding object.

On my arrival near the entrance of one of the wigwams, I was descried by several of the savages, who came out, with uncouth signs and gestures, to welcome me into their homely cabins. Being quite unacquainted, at that time, with the Indian language, I was unable to comprehend a single particle of their discourse; but they presently brought several others, who could speak English, though broken yet intelligible. With these people I conversed several hours, informing them of my indisposition, and how I had taken a long and tiresome journey, on purpose to reside among them. That my motives were founded on the hopes I had entertained of regaining my health through their assistance. They expressed great willingness to receive me, provided their leading men, into whose presence I was to be introduced the next day, should have no objections.

During the first night I was treated in a friendly and obliging manner, but the supper, which was prepared principally, as I imagined, for me, I by no means relished;

though out of complaisance to my host, I endeavored to partake of it freely, knowing that they would of course, be offended at the omission. The repast consisted of smoked venison only, fried a little in fat, but without salt, bread and every kind of sauce whatever. A considerable time elapsed before I could accommodate my palate to such uninviting fare. The friendly behavior of the Indians, however, so far dispelled all apprehensions of uncivil usage, which I had entertained so unjustly to their prejudice, that I slept the first night with tolerable composure. My bed was composed entirely of bear skins, that were spread on the floor for my better accommodation.

The next day I was escorted to the chieftain's wigwam; this was built in a style superior to that of the others. It was a structure of some curiosity, being ornamented with many rude drafts and pictures of men, various other animals and implements of war. These devices appeared (as was obvious) extremely magnificent in the eyes of this unpolished people.

On my approach, their chief, whose name was Swanson, gave me a very cordial reception, and presently ordered his domestics to prepare dinner. Meanwhile we commenced a prolix confabulation, in the course of which I acquainted him with my circumstances, and the design I had formed of residing in Canada for a season. He seemed pleased with my intentions, and gave me free toleration to abide in his tribe during pleasure. To these

instances of benignity he superadded another, which was to enjoin Molly Occut, at that time the great Indian doctress, to superintend the recovery of my health. At my departure he gave me a general invitation to visit his house whenever I saw fit, or might stand in need of his assistance, and this I assured him I should never fail to do.

Those formalities over, I felt myself at liberty to shape my conduct, as inclination or convenience might dictate. Recovery of health was my first and earliest concern, so I made direct application to the lady for such medicines as might be suitable to my complaints. She was alert in her devoirs, and supplied me for present consumption, with a large variety of roots, herbs, barks and other materials. I did not much like even the looks of them; for to have contemplated an encounter with the formidable forrage might have staggered the resolution, doubtless, of a much greater hero than myself. However I took the budget with particular directions for the use of each ingredient.

My kind doctress visited me daily, bringing new medicinal supplies, but my palate was far from being gratified with some of her doses, in fact they but ill accorded with the gust of an Englishman. Nevertheless having much faith in the skill of my physician, I continued to swallow with becoming submission, every potion she prescribed.

Her means had a timely and beneficial effect, since,

from the use of them, I gathered strength so rapidly, that in two months, I could visit about with comfort.

Returning health inspired my breast with new-born hope, and was a source of lasting consolation. And now curiosity prompting me to visit the Indian settlements in this department, in order to become more intimately acquainted with their customs and modes of life, I followed the daily practice of traveling from place to place, until I had visited the whole encampment, and from the best conjectures I could frame on the subject, found there might be about three hundred inhabitants in this quarter. The entire tribe, of which these people made a part, was in number about seven hundred of both sexes, and extended their settlements, in a scattering, desultory manner, from lake Memphremagog to lake Umbagog, covering an extent of some eighty miles. Finding traveling to agree with my feelings I continued the salutary exercise, every day, for several months, until my health was restored in as full and perfect a manner, as I had possessed that blessing at any former period. This happy restoration to pristine ability I attributed principally to the good offices of my doctress, who during my convalescence, was indefatigable in her care and attention. Her character was, indeed, that of a kind and charitable woman. As a specimen of this I will relate an incident, that took place a short time subsequent to my arrival.

There was a certain poor, white man, who lived in Pig-wacket, and had a large family, which by reason of his

indigence and the dearth of provisions, he was quite unable to supply with food. So great was the scarcity at that time of bread-corn, the staff of life, that no pay would procure it except money. Of this he was wholly destitute, so that himself and family were reduced to great straits, and literally in danger of starving. This man had used sometimes to visit the Indians for the benefit of hunting, trading, etc., by which means he had contracted some acquaintance with them, and had heard that Molly Occut always kept on hand a considerable quantity of money. As he knew not, in this his extremity, what other means to pursue, he took a journey into the Indian country, and straightway applied to Molly to obtain a loan of about twenty dollars, while the ensuing winter. She rallied him on the score of his coming to borrow of the poor Indians, who (she said) were generally despised by the white people. Nevertheless she loaned him the money, but charged him to come the next winter and hunt furs to refund her the sum. This he promised, and performed very exactly, for the winter following, he came sure enough, and was so lucky as to collect a sufficient quantity of furs to repay his benefactress, and had remaining some overplus for the relief of his own family. But to quit digression: I had now been in these northern regions nearly half a year, and the warmth of summer had receded to make way for winter's unrelenting reign. The severity of the weather had already become intolerable; yet the savages seemed to pay so little regard to the

cold piercing blast, that one would have been tempted to consider them as insensible of feeling as their native oaks and pines. For my own part I was inclined to keep pretty much within doors, wishing to render life as agreeable as possible. My food which was chiefly smoked venison, had given me for a while much horror and disgust, but by use and habit it had grown, at length, more savory, insomuch that I now thought it preferable to salted provision. I procured, notwithstanding, from time to time, a small supply of salt, corn, potatoes and other vegetables from one or other of the natives, who were so friendly as to bestow on me, not unfrequently, even what they needed for their own subsistence. They thought me, perhaps, less able than themselves to dispense with such requisites.

Since beginning to amend in health under the auspices of madam Molly, I had formed a design of studying the Indian practice of physic, though my intention had hitherto remained a profound secret. Indeed I had paid strict attention to everything of a medical nature, which had fallen within the sphere of my notice. Frequently was I inquisitive with Molly Occut, old Plilips, Sabattus and other professed doctors to learn the names and virtues of their medicines. In general they were explicit in communication, still I thought them in possession of secrets they cared not to reveal.

Knowing them to be extravagantly fond of rum, of which I had seen flagrant specimens, it struck my mind,

that if I could procure a quantity of that liquor with which to treat them occasionally, I should doubtless obtain their favor more effectually than by any other method. But I had no way to procure [sic] money for the purchase, except by hunting with the Indians or setting traps, wherefore to such expeditions I resolved to have recourse. Already had I received pressing invitations to accompany their hunting parties, so that (though hitherto had I declined such proposals) I anticipated no obstacle to the accomplishment of my design. The rigor of the winter was yet too severe for my feelings, but as I had often found profit from being in a state of readiness, I took care to provide a fusée, with good store of ammunition. And no sooner had the inclemency of the atmosphere abated in some degree, than I joined a number of the hunters, who were about setting out in quest of moose, deer and such other game, as might come to hand. We stayed out upwards of a week; our custom being to traverse the woods in almost every direction, during the day, and at the approach of night, to strike up a large fire, and lie down upon hemlock boughs, with each man a blanket, but no other covering, than such as the canopy of heaven afforded. To me these hardships were quite irksome; I wished them at an end, although we had very good success in our business, for beside killing several moose and deer, we acquired a variety of fur animals. On return to the camps the booty was equalized, in usual manner, among the hunting adventurers.

After this I continued the same pursuits throughout the remainder of the season, which ends usually in April or May, and my dividend of the furs sold for about thirty dollars.

As divers English people used occasionally to visit us to purchase furs and the like, I disposed of my share to those visitants; and among other articles procured ten gallons of rum, with which I regaled a number of my Indian friends, as long as it lasted. By this exploit I so far engaged their good will and gratitude, that no sooner did I acquaint them with my desire to learn the healing art, than they promised me every instruction in their power, which, subsequent to this I ever found them ready to afford.

Having thus far succeeded in my favorite scheme, I henceforth devoted the greater part of my time to the study of Indian botany and physic, and being naturally possessed of a strong retentive memory, I made rapid proficiency under such skillful guides. My studies were rarely interrupted, except when I was obliged to hunt or attend to my traps; but to such kind of drudgeries I was forced sometimes to submit, in order to procure furs to purchase necessaries, the use of which I was unable or unwilling to forego.

Chapter VIII

THE DAUGHTER OF KING TUMKIN

*Venus presents me with a miss,
Who proves a source of present bliss;
Yet, tho' in manners wild and rude,
Know, pretty belles, she was no prude.*

Now had the more vertical rays of propitious Phœbus subdued the rigors of the inclement year, and transformed the surly, hiemal blasts into pleasing zephyrus gales. Already had he renewed the beauties of the vernal bloom, and restored to the animate world the festive joys of a mild atmosphere. These were circumstances most congenial to my feelings. Already had I acquired such competent skill in the Indian dialect, as to be able to converse freely with the natives, and had moreover formed a personal acquaintance with most of them belonging to the vicinity, particularly so with Polly Susap, the niece of old king Tumkin Hagen, who inhabited near the borders of lake Umbagog. Upon this young squaw, who appeared more beautiful in my eyes, than any other female of her whole tribe, I had placed all my desires, and bestowed much of my attention. From time to time I had presented her with many little tokens of my love and esteem, till, by such assiduities, I attracted her notice, and capti-

vated her fondest affections. From that time forth, she was always desirous of my company, and I was much in hers. As I was a frequent visitor at her father's hut, we had many opportunities of conversing together, and when I went into the forest, with Molly Occut or others, to collect vegetables, or for whatever purpose, she was generally a sure attendant in the train.

Her parents observed our growing partiality with much complacency, and fondly looked forward to that epoch, when they hoped to see us joined in the bands of wedlock. But to concur with propositions of that nature was foreign from my wishes, since I allotted to make no permanent residence in the society of this people.

My principal and indeed sole inducement in cultivating the friendship of this young woman, or if you please, savage, was to remedy the want of a female companion, while in these rude regions. It is the nature of man to need such helps and conveniences, as smooth the asperities and soften the rugged condition of life, and intercourse with the sex is not the smallest of those advantages. I have often heard it observed of a sailor, that he has a wife in every port, and indeed, at the time here spoken of, I supposed myself entitled to a like privilege, though belonging to a different element. However this might be, I successfully prosecuted my amour with the aforesaid beautiful savage, who now supplied to me the place of a wife, though without the fashionable appellation. By her unwearied condescension she rendered my abode, in this

unpleasant wilderness, much more tolerable, furnishing me with many of the comforts and necessaries of life. My frequent rambles abroad and tedious hours at home were enlivened with her social company. Whether my employment happened to be hunting, or visiting traps, she was a careful follower of my footsteps, or faithful attendant at my side. . . .

Amid the pursuits I have been describing, the second summer, since my arrival here, had taken its flight, and dreary winter, robed in snow, had again displayed its forbidding form.

It being altogether problematical how much longer I should abide in these parts, and my desire being ardent to acquire some further acquaintance with the situation of this extensive country, before taking a final leave of it, I purposed availing of the very first opportunities to explore it east and west.

Early in February, which is the commencement of the main hunting season, I was positive several parties would set out in quest of moose and deer, because on the improvement of this season, depends, in good measure, their livelihood for the whole year. With a view of joining some or other of those hunters, I carefully provided myself with whatever necessaries might be had, and when the time for departure arrived, we set out loaded with steel and squat-traps, guns, hatchets, ammunition and snowshoes; those accoutrements making up the bigger part of our luggage; since with itinerary provisions we

were very little incommoded, our whole viaticum consisting of only a morsel of salt, and a mere trifle of smoked or frozen venison. But, though our dependence for sustenance was altogether on the fruits of the chase, yet were we in no great jeopardy of famishing, for the sagacity of the hunters in starting game, and their dexterity in running it down with their dogs, far exceeds anything of the kind known among civilized people. Our daily stages were from twelve to twenty miles only, except when the heat of the chase tempted us to exceed those limits, as was sometimes the case.

What I disliked most of all, was our cold, uncomfortable mode of lodging, which absolutely forbade the reception of much repose. Our only accommodation of this sort was a parcel of hemlock or spruce twigs thrown upon the snow, on which we lay down, before a large fire, rolled up in our blankets. In this expedition, however, we met with extraordinary good fortune, killing a variety of moose, deer, bears, sable, minks, raccoons, wolverines, etc., and in the course of it visiting lake Memphremagog, and the Indians residing in that department.

After we had collected, as we supposed, a sufficient quantity of meat and skins to serve present exigencies, and had secured, Indian like, such materials, as were more cumbersome, we returned home, loaded with as many of the most valuable and portable articles, as we could well carry; leaving moreover in bass and pine troughs (for the purpose of freezing) several large par-

cels of moose and other wild meat, which we allotted to convey home at a more convenient season.

This winter, also, I took another excursion eastwardly, visited lake Umbagog, and made some acquaintance with old king Tumkin Hagen, who was at the head of the whole tribe. The dress of his family was somewhat gaudy, especially that of his wife, who was adorned with nose and ear jewels, and bracelets on her arms; besides a variety of trinkets and gewgaws decorating the other parts of her body. I tarried here several days, and received, during my stay, the politest attention, both from the king and his household. . . .

On a certain day, in the beginning of April, 1774, having sojourned in this place almost two years, I went out towards Androscoggin river, in company with one Indian only. We carried a number of steel and squat-traps to set for saple, and other furred animals. When placing the machinery, I asked the Indian if he was willing to go shares with me in the game. He shook his head, and said, "No." We returned home, and the next day went out, as before, to visit the traps. On arrival it appeared that my success had been greater than his; but he wanted to share stakes, though he had refused my proposal to that purpose but the day before. I reminded him of his refusal then, and told him, on that account, I should decline doing the like now. Not satisfied with my reasoning, he insisted on an equal division of the game, while I as strongly remonstrated against the impropriety of his re-

quest. At length finding himself unable to gain my compliance, he grew infuriate, and holding up his tomahawk, made motions, as if in the act of hurling it at my head. At this moment I had no weapon of defense, having laid aside my fusee to unload the traps. I was fully sensible of the imminent danger I was in from the deadly weapon of so dextrous an adversary, and despaired of being able to evade the blow, in case he should let fly the fatal instrument. I had now no means of safety, but in my endeavors to assuage his turbulence, at least till I could recover my gun. This device I essayed to practice, by accosting him in the most soothing terms, intreating him to do me no violence, and I would comply with his wishes. Pacified, in some measure, by those concessions, he dropped his menacing attitude, and stepped up, as if to divide the spoil. This afforded me time to recover my fusee, seizing which, I hastily cocked and presented it at his breast, bidding him drop his tomahawk instantly, or I would finish him upon the spot. Seeing my resolution the savage was appalled, and threw away his offensive weapon, which I gathered up speedily, and then drove him, as a prisoner, into the camps.

Each of us carried his own game, but at the moment of return, the offended savage repaired to the rulers, and entered a complaint against me. Whereupon, a counsel of inquiry being called, my antagonist came forward, and accused me of maltreatment and abuse, to wit, of defrauding him in the division of the game, of menacing

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his life, and of disarming and driving him, prisoner like, into the camps. Soon as I had permission to speak, I made my defense by stating the particulars, just as they occurred. The assembly was attentive, and after a patient hearing of all we had to say, the senior Indians held a sort of consultation, which over, one of them, addressing the complainant, delivered a long harangue, in substance, though not precisely, in the terms following.

At the first coming of this white man to reside among us, we received him with open arms, adopted him as a brother, and promised him hospitality and good usage, during his sojournment in our land. You, in particular, were not remiss in showing him offices of kindness and humanity. Encouraged by such tokens of our friendship, he has abode here a long time, and we hoped his confidence in us would never be shaken, especially by the ill treatment he should receive from any of our nation. But we are sorry to learn, that our hopes in this have been wholly defeated, by the late contention that has arisen betwixt you. We have heard all you had to say (respectively) in vindication of your conduct, and now we desire to render you both due justice, yet without partiality to either.

It has long been the privilege of our hunters to enjoy unmolested the fruits and effects of their individual exertions, whether acquired by successful stratagem, or the more arduous toils of the chase. That our English brother is entitled to like advantages none will deny. With what

view, then, did you require partition of *his spoils*? That a prior agreement, for that purpose, existed between you, we have no evidence, save your own assertion, which is inadmissible, in cases of this kind. For those reasons we consider you culpable, not only for requesting a part of his game, but for threatening his life and safety, seeing it was your duty to protect both.

But now listen to that part of our discourse, which more especially challenges your attention. We, the elders and chiefs of our nation, wishing to prevent a repetition of such disorderly conduct, and resolving to punish its perpetration in future, do strictly prohibit your further attempts to the prejudice of this stranger; for in case you be known, henceforth, to do him the least injury, we assure you beforehand, that we will bend down a young sapling, lash your legs fast to the top of it, and then, suffering the tree to recover its former position, will leave you hanging by the heels, as a spectacle of wretchedness, till death.

Such was the sentence they pronounced against the offender, and I firmly believe they would have put it in execution, had he afterwards rendered me the least essential mischief. This, however he attempted not, yet I perceived his secret enmity, and was fully convinced of his desires to obtain a bloody revenge. For that reason I was obliged to be very circumspect in my conduct for fear of some personal damage. Though here I would mention, that several months after, happening to have

spirituous liquor, I sent for the same Indian, and gave him a good portion, at which mark of civility he was so highly pleased, that he told me, he should be glad to drop the animosity, and drink with me in friendship, which being as ready to do as himself, we agreed to bury the hatchet, and live in amity for the future. From the time of this settlement he appeared an altered man, and his behavior toward me was quite different.

This same spring I was out upon a hunting match with another Indian, when, happening to espy a female deer at some small distance, I leveled my piece, and dropped her dead upon the spot. The Indian ran toward the game, but presently called aloud for my approach. Drawing near, I discerned, in the bushes, about a rod from the deer, a large buck lying dead also. On examination it appeared, that I had killed both of them at the same shot, though the buck had been invisible at the time of fire.

All this while I had pursued my courtship with pretty Polly, but her parents began now to be importunate for our union. They urged the unusual length of our courtship, and said it was high time to think of marrying, if we intended to follow the worthy example of their ancestors. I excused the matter by saying I wished to procure, first, a better Indian habit; but Polly's mother thought my dress good enough, and insisted upon a speedy consummation of the nuptials. This pertinacity of theirs put me to numerous shifts, but at last it was

agreed to let the affair rest, till such time, as I should procure a more fashionable apparel, corresponding with the etiquette of the country. But here I leave my fond companion to speak of other particulars.

It had long been an approved custom, among the savages of Sudbury, to visit Quebec, every spring of the year. All who had ability were desirous of performing this necessary duty. The principal motives of such journeys were the purchase of absolution of sin, and to have the souls of deceased friends prayed out of purgatory. Those spiritual benefits the Roman catholic priests and friars had taught the Indians to consider, as of very essential consequence, but for favors of this kind they had to pay in furs or money, and sometimes at a very dear rate. Many were the egregious frauds and impositions practiced by those selfish, hypocritical beings upon the poor, ignorant Indians, as I have heard them frequently complain, notwithstanding which they still continued their visits every spring, though the travel was one hundred and sixty miles.

However the Indians had other purposes to subserve, (beside the spiritual ones above mentioned) by those vernal expeditions to Quebec; for thither, at such season of the year, they practiced the conveyance of their winter hunt of furs, with which they purchased blankets, muskets, ammunition, and other warlike implements; the rest of their conveniences being obtained from the New England settlements. About the beginning of May, this year,

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a considerable party, laden with furs, as customary, set out for Quebec, but now Molly Occut herself made one of the itinerants. Her motives, in undertaking so troublesome an expedition, were the pardon of her own sins, and the strong desire she had that the soul of her deceased husband should be prayed out of purgatory. He had been dead several years, and she had hitherto neglected to discharge this pious duty. Resolving to atone now for former remissness, she set out, as above, with the rest of the company, and with a valuable pack of furs at her back. After an absence of two weeks they returned, bringing home divers articles, which they had in exchange for their furs. On arrival several of the adventurers recounted, in my hearing, a pretty ludicrous anecdote of the worthy doctress. It related to a transaction that took place between her and a certain Catholic priest, at the time of his praying her husband out of purgatory. On account of the drollery of the incident I will here insert it.

Molly having disposed of her furs for cash, about forty dollars, was not forgetful of the pious purposes of her journey, so with several others, she went directly to a priest, and acquainted him with her wishes, requesting to know the sum he should ask for performing the godly services. The crafty priest, knowing the sum she had recently received, demanded the whole forty dollars, and insisted on the money being told down, previous to his entrance on the sacred duties. With this unreasonable

request she complied, though with some reluctance, and then the treacherous old Levite, with much pretended sanctity, began the solemn farce. In the first instance he gave her pardon and absolution, and next undertook to petition for the departed soul of her late husband. At length making a finish of his foolish ceremony, he informed her that the business was happily completed, and that her husband's soul was safely delivered from the bonds of purgatory. She, however, was very particular in her inquiries, whether he were certainly clear or not. The old priest asseverated repeatedly that he was absolutely free. On this she scraped the money off the table into the corner of her blanket, and tying it up was about to depart. The priest somewhat nettled, demanded the meaning of her maneuver, and threatened to remand her husband back to purgatory, unless she gave him the money. Her reply was that she knew her husband too well to believe it in a priest's power to do that, for (added she) my husband was always a very prudent man. I have often observed, when we used to traverse the woods together, if he chanced to fall into a bad place, he always stuck up a stake, that he might never be caught there any more. Without further ado, she made the best of her way off, leaving the poor ecclesiastic to console himself for the loss of the money in the best manner he could.

But to continue my own story—The late expeditions I had accomplished had impeded for a spell, my medical improvements; though I was far from losing sight of that

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favorite object, and now when Molly had returned from Quebec, and I was more at leisure, I renewed my intense application to medicinal inquiries; generally attending my patroness, when she visited her patients, gaining, by those means, a much better insight into the Indian methods of cure than had otherwise been possible.

I fondly hoped to reap the benefit of all my acquirements at some future period, and my expectations have not been wholly abortive. Indeed, frequently since, has the little medical skill I possessed procured me a night's lodging, or a morsel of bread, which otherwise I had dearly wanted.

The third summer since my residence in these barbarous regions now came on apace, moderating the intemperature of the cold northern latitudes and dissipating the huge masses of snow; these to me were no unjoyous circumstances, for not being so well inured to excessive hardships, as the Indians, I frequently suffered much in their company, not only from the inclemency of the weather, but also from the want of suitable apparel.

During this summer my pursuits were much of the same tenor, as those above related. However, in the course of it, one occurrence happened that requires a more particular recital because it affected my feelings so greatly at the time, and my health so considerably afterwards, that scarce ever can it be erased from my memory.

On a certain day, about midsummer, I went a distance into the forest, with several other hunters, in quest of a

little venison. In the course of our travels I separated from the rest of the company, intending to join it again upon occasion. Not being acquainted sufficiently with the country, and the atmosphere becoming cloudy, I mistook the way, and wandered about (unconscious whither) till approach of night. When not hearing any tidings of the Indians, I struck up a fire and lay myself down before it, in hopes to take some little repose. But in this I was disappointed, for not being used to encamp alone in such a dismal wilderness, I was in constant dread of being torn in pieces by the wild beasts of prey. Their terrific notes and echoing responses, forming altogether a most horrid melody, which assailed me from all points of the compass, and sometimes within a stone's throw of my encampment. The night seemed almost an age, and when morning appeared, I knew not which way to shape my course, as it still continued cloudy and rainy. What added to my distress was, I had no sort of provision to satisfy the craving of appetite, for by traveling and fasting for twenty-four hours together, I already began to feel quite feeble.

Conscious it could answer no good end to remain in my camp, I set out, early in the morning and traveled the whole day, greatly fatigued, without finding food, other than leaves and a few wild berries. When night overtook me, a second time, I was still utterly at a loss to know where I was, or which way to proceed on the morrow. With those gloomy prospects before my eyes, I kindled

up a fire to warm and dry my weary limbs; but hunger and anxiety became so poignant, and the howling of the savage beasts so dismally terrifying, that I received very little refreshment from sleep. Next morning the sun rose clear, and I trusted in being fortunate enough, in the course of the day, to find some settlement, where possibly the means of preserving me from famishing might be procured. With fainting hopes indeed, but with the utmost exertion, I took the direction most likely to answer my purpose, but my expectations were again foiled, for the third night arrived without bringing the smallest prospect of relief.

By this time the reader may well suppose, I was so far debilitated with hunger and fatigue as seriously to apprehend inevitable death in this woody labyrinth. The greater part of this night was spent in considering what steps I should pursue on the approaching dawn. At last I came to a resolution to steer a southerly course, which, of necessity, must conduct me to some English settlements, before I should have traveled, at farthest, one hundred miles. But how to accomplish a journey of such extent, under present disadvantages, was the fearful question. The very thought of it seemed to stagger my utmost resolution and dishearten my wishes. Yet I thought it more eligible to proceed, than to lie down without a struggle, and await the hour of dissolution. Accordingly, the next morning I prosecuted my travels southwardly, guiding my steps, by the help of the sun, in

the best manner possible. I proceeded this day, as far as I found myself in any capacity of traveling, being convinced, that of consequence I must grow weaker, every day, upon such miserable ailments, as the wilderness afforded; for, as yet I had caught no living thing, not even a squirrel.

As soon as night, for the fourth time, overtook me, I struck up a fire, as usual, by the help of my gun, which as yet though with great difficulty, I had made shift to carry. This night was more painful to me, than any of the preceding, for although the raging keenness of hunger had in some measure abated, without being satisfied, yet a faint, listless weakness, with incessant griping pains, had succeeded. The ensuing day I renewed my journey with scarcely surviving strength to enable me to drag along my debilitated limbs. Having traveled two or three miles, as near as I could guess, to my great joy, I was so fortunate as to strike into a hunting path, following which, I found the Indian encampment from whence I had wandered.

My arrival was about evening twilight. Thus after having wandered in the lonely deserts, without food, for five whole days and four nights, did fortune conduct me to my kind Indian friends; an event much to their satisfaction, as well as my own. Upon reflection it appeared, that my distance from the settlements had not been so remote, as my apprehensions had painted, and that, in all probability, the different circuitous direction, I had mean-

dered, during the overcast weather, had consumed the above period, as no other hypothesis would account for my arrival at the time above noted. However this misfortune gave me a distaste against hunting in future, and it was several months, ere I gained the entire re-establishment of my health.

After the above, nothing memorable befell me during the residue of that summer, but, in the winter ensuing, I began to harbor serious thoughts of leaving this rude, though hospitable people, and of returning to the land of my nativity. I had already seen as much of the manners and customs of the Canadians, as I wished; had become acquainted with their language, and had acquired (as I conceived) such a competent share of medical knowledge, as might enable me to practice physic with some prospect of success. For those reasons I formed a design of quitting the country sometime in the spring ensuing, or whenever the weather and traveling should permit.

Chapter IX

CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY

*To ridicule we're strongly prone,
All other customs, save our own.—*

MEANWHILE, before taking leave of a people, among whom I had continued so long, and from whom I had received, generally speaking, much hospitality, I do not think it amiss to give a brief account of some few of their more singular and remarkable customs, in addition to those already noticed. In doing this I shall confine myself to the mention of such particulars only, as ocular demonstration will enable me to avouch.

The Indians of lower Canada are straight in stature, but of a slender make. Their eyes are black, quick and piercing, and their features regularly shaped. The color of their skin is reddish, similar to that of tanned leather. Their motions are deliberate and their dispositions, the general affect of ignorance, prone to suspicion. They are always on the lookout, as though apprehensive of danger; are generally hospitable to strangers, from whom they have received no offense; but their thirst of revenge, when they have experienced the least injury, is insatiable beyond comparison. In fine, being unpolished and naturally capricious, they are ticklish, uncertain friends, as well as dangerous enemies.

In the article of dress they are proud and gaudy, when of ability to procure finery. Their garb is thin and loose, and various parts of the body are suffered to remain quite naked, even in winter. Their principal clothing however, is a small coarse blanket thrown over the shoulders, and tied about the waist with a wampum girdle. On their head they usually wear, in cold weather, a fur cap, and frequently a small strip of sable or other skin round the neck. They have a sort of buskins that reach above the knee, with moccasins on their feet; and lastly, a small piece of cloth, called a band, fastened round the middle. The particulars above enumerated constitute their ordinary dress, their arms and thighs being bare at all seasons.

They are so inured to cold and hardships, that they will lie down in deep snows, before a fire, each rolled up in a small blanket, sleeping comfortably all night; their diet being whatever they may chance to catch during their rambles.

As their reliance is principally upon hunting and fishing, the plenty or scarcity of food among them is altogether a matter of uncertainty, depending pretty much upon the fortunate successes of the chase.

When provisions are scarce, they are sometimes, from necessity abstemious and sparing, but, on the contrary, in times of plenty, they are constitutionally profuse and excessive, both in eating and drinking, devouring, at such seasons, as much at once, as might have sufficed for several days.

In winter they preserve their meat by freezing it in bass or pine troughs. Their method of seasoning it in summer is the following: they cut it into quarters or joints, and hang it upon poles, three or four feet above the surface of the earth. When collecting a mixture of old withered leaves, dry rubbish and green boughs of pine or hemlock, they set fire to the mass, and continue the fumigation till it has thoroughly penetrated the meat, and the outside becomes hard and seared. This process requires usually two or three days and nights; after which their venison will keep, without putrefaction, a whole year. When I had become familiarized to the use of smoked meat, I esteemed it more savory, than that which had been preserved by freezing; as the latter, when destitute of salt, became excessively nauseating and disgusting to the palate.

One pernicious practice to which those poor people were miserably addicted, as I had frequent opportunities of witnessing, and which was one great cause of their wretchedness, was their excessive fondness for spirituous liquors; with which they were supplied, for the most part, by the New England traders. Such was their insatiable thirst for the fatally intoxicating potion, that they would cheerfully barter away, in purchase of it, their most valuable furs, even after encountering every incredible hardship, of cold, hunger and fatigue, in their acquirement. Frequently have I remonstrated with them on the folly and impropriety of this conduct, but without making any lasting impression upon their minds. Whenever they

CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY

happened to procure a supply of rum, from that moment, while it lasted, all business was wholly laid aside, and the most horrible and alarming scenes immediately took place. At such intervals I was obliged to be extremely cautious for fear of being assassinated, or at least wounded in the fury of their bacchanalian revels; dancing, whooping, singing, fighting and drinking, making up, alternately, the circle of their phrenzical amusements.

The slightest affront, on those occasions, was sufficient to throw them into a state of perfect madness, in which were spared neither friends nor foes. It was not uncommon for those demons, when enraged, to draw their long knives, with which they went usually armed, and with those dangerous weapons to cut and slash one another in the most horrid manner. This I have frequently witnessed, though I never knew anyone actually slain in any of their infernal frays. Once, however, upon a sudden uproar, which arose about the division of some rum, one Indian was so miserably lacerated, that he came near death in consequence. One long gash, in particular, he received below the breast, but luckily for him, the wound was hardly deep enough to let out his intestines. Through the unwearied care of the Indian doctors, his wounds were in time healed.

After those infuriate orgies had subsided, which was never the case till the liquor failed that inspired them, it was not unusual for those votaries of Bacchus to recline indolently in their cabins, for several days upon a stretch,

ere they could assume prowess to shake off the effects of their pernicious surfeit.

Respecting their religious tenets it is difficult to frame suitable conclusions. It appeared on the whole, that they entertained some belief of a supreme Being, but were pretty indifferent as to rendering him any kind of worship. What little they knew of the Christian religion, they had learned (I presume) of the Roman Catholic friars, but their notions, relative to such matters, were a confused jumble of crude, incoherent ideas, about which they seemed to trouble their heads very little, but would notwithstanding, now and then mention. In a word; it appeared in my view, that their religious system was worth very little, and their modes of worship not much removed from a farce.

Their nuptial rites were few and simple, being only the following. As soon as the parties are fully concluded upon the match, and relation had accorded their consent, it was customary for the bridegroom to go and throw a deer's leg into the bride's tent, after which she was wont to throw an ear of corn into his. Those solemnities were intended as symbolical of the appropriate duties of each, and, when duly performed, the marriage was legally consummated. Although I have frequently been told of the many ceremonies practiced by the Indians on such occasions, yet the above were the only material ones occurring within my notice. After marriage they generally hold their festivals and days of visiting and rejoicing. When

they sleep together the man's head is placed at the woman's feet, and vice versa. This position, however, I presume, is not always the same. Before marriage they are a *little* prone to incontinence; but very few instances of matrimonial infidelity are to be found among them, as they entertain a peculiar veneration for the sanctity of the nuptial covenant, and severely punish its violation by their laws, which require that the end of the culprit's nose shall be amputated.

When they lose a friend or relative, by death, their grief and lamentations are great and unfeigned. They spare neither cost nor pains to celebrate the funeral obsequies of the defunct with all possible pomp and solemnity. I have, a number of times, partly out of curiosity, been present at those solemn spectacles, and have observed them with some attention. There is scarce any end to the multiplex ceremonies they think necessary to perform at the time of interment. The most material of which are the following. Having carried the corpse to the grave, they lament over it a while with loud complaints and bitter howlings, which are accompanied, also, with extraordinary gestures and violent contortions of body. This over, they place, in the grave, the deceased, with his body in an erect posture, wrapped up in a blanket, and dressed out as usual. They then put his fusil into his arms, his pipe into his mouth, and deposit, by his side, a sufficient quantity of tobacco, powder, balls, steel, tinder and provisions; these were undoubtedly designed to enable him

to perform the long and tedious journey he had to encounter. Having done everything which they suppose might contribute, in the least, to his benefit or comfort, they cover him up, in an artificial manner, with wood, stones and earth, taking care, that the body be incommoded with none of the materials. In this manner are the rites of sepulture executed.

After performance of the above and other ceremonies (all being deemed indispensable) the spectators are allowed to return back, and partake of a feast provided on this solemn occasion. . . .

It being my conclusion, as already stated, to quit these territories, and return to New Hampshire, as soon as the traveling should become good, which I supposed would be the case, sometime in the month of May, ensuing; and that time drawing near, I began to make preparations for departure. Calling to mind, however, the many kindnesses I had received from these uncultivated people, I had a desire before bidding a final farewell to the country, to treat for the last time, such of them, as had conferred on me the greater obligations.

To this end I purchased five gallons of rum; when, inviting a round number to my hut, I gave it to them to drink, with which token of civility they were extravagantly gratified.

I also acquainted Polly Susap, (my marriage with whom I had by various devices procrastinated to this period) that I was under an indispensable necessity of re-

turning to my native land, for the purpose of settling business of importance to myself there. At these tidings she appeared greatly afflicted; and, to console her I was compelled to make reiterated assurances, that I would return to her embraces, on the wings of love, the first favorable moment.

Thus having made every necessary arrangement, I was ready for the prosecution of my journey. Wasting no time therefore, as the footing was already tolerable, I took leave of my old friends, and departed from Sudbury, Canada, on the way towards Lee, the place of my ancient abode. This occurrence took place about the last of May, 1775, after a residence with the Canadians of nearly three years. Several of them escorted me about fifty miles, that is to say, as far as Pigwacket, where, with some fur skins, I purchased two gallons of rum, and a large roll of tobacco, both of which articles I presented my Indian guides, and accepted their hearty thanks in return.

And now having been so long absent from my family, and friends at Lee, I felt an ardent desire to visit them without longer procrastination. Accordingly, being in good health and spirits, I pursued my way so briskly, as soon to reach that town, where I had the satisfaction of finding all my concerns well.

As my friends had received no certain intelligence respecting me, during my long absence, they had begun to foster doubts of my welfare; so that my sudden appearance, at this time, was a matter of surprise to them all;

nor was it diminished by the account I gave them of the various scenes I had passed through, while resident in Canada.

Upon inquiry I now learned, that, for the greater part of her three years abandonment, my wife had been reduced to many difficulties to sustain herself and children, in any tolerable manner. At hearing those things I was exceedingly chagrined, though there seemed little probability that her condition would be meliorated by my present return. In fact, the wilds of Canada were but a scurvy place, in which to gather riches; so that I had come home, save a store of health, as empty handed, as I went. To this may be added, that by so long an abidance among the slothful Indians, I had contracted (it was obvious) a habit of indolence, that unfitted me for laborious employments, and this at a time when unwearied efforts were necessary for the support of myself and family.