

NARRATIVE
OF
HENRY TUFTS.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Lo ! martial clarions, sounding from afar,
Excite the supine, and arouse to war.

DURING my Canadian adventures, the horrors of a civil war had burst forth between England and her colonies in America. In consequence of this, orders for the enlistment of troops to join our armies were frequent in most places. Being by nature volatile, and prone to novelty, I was strongly impelled to become acquainted with a military life. This my fancy pourtrayed, as the best method of supporting self and family, in a way consistent with beloved ease, and at the same time, as, certainly more honorable than thievish pursuits, though a soldier in fact, may be a thief.

Soon, therefore, I left home, and meeting with Captain Clarke, enlisted into his company for two months. We were marched directly to Portsmouth, and employed in the building and re-

pairing of forts, in the vicinity of that town. I served as cook to part of the company, and tarried the whole time of enlistment, without desertion.

One night, however, as I was travelling in the streets of Portsmouth, it was my ill luck to meet with two risslemen, one of whom accosted me with "*You are the devil, that served us so to day.*" Not knowing to what he alluded, I inadvertently replied "*Yes.*" At which without more ceremony, he knocked me down with a club; striking out two of my foreteeth, and leaving me for dead in the street. Soon, however, recovering some use of my senses, I made shift, with very great difficulty, to reach a neighboring house, where I tarried till morning. Being determined upon revenge, I loaded my gun at the moment I awaked, and issued forth in quest of the assassin. I found him at Tilton's tavern, and resolved to shoot him instantly. In the broad entry, I met Gen. Sullivan and Col. Cilley, who, having heard of the abusive treatment I had received, suspected my real motives, and demanded the surrender of my arms. Instead of immediate compliance, I shewed my wounds, related the whole adventure, and protested my determination to have recompence. The general said the villain deserved chastisement, and should receive it; still peremptorily ordering me to deliver up my weapons. Not daring to disobey the general, who was our commander in chief, I complied with his injunctions though with reluctance. At that moment, Col. Cilley approached the rascal who had thus maltreated me, belaboured him soundly with his sword, and ordered him under guard to the jail in Portsmouth. There he was confined

I know not how long, but my term of enlistment having expired, I returned home to Lee, and spent several weeks to little or no advantage. After this, being solicited by Capt. Denbo, I enlisted into his corps for two months more, and was directed to repair to Winter hill, near Boston. Here our troops fared, at times, so slenderly, that we had to atone for the dearth of allowance, by stealing pigs, poultry, and such like articles.

One night I went to Mystic, with two others, and stole a number of dunghill fowls. Just as we had caught and killed them, the owner happened to hear a disturbance among his poultry, and ran out to discover what the fracas might be. I happened to espy him, just as he was stepping out of doors; so to give my comrades a better chance to secrete the plunder, I marched up to the farmer, and made enquiry for some cider. He said he believed somebody had been stealing his poultry. "Nothing more likely, (quoth I) for just now I saw several fellows running down street." "Damn them, said he, I believe they have carried off some of my fowls." Uttering this, he invited us into the kitchen, and treated us plentifully with cider; we then bid him adieu, and marched off jovially with our feathered booty. On the way back to quarters we picked up a couple of geese more, and made a delicate feast on the whole the same evening; but, the next morning, the proprietor of the geese paid our commissary a visit, and complained to Capt. Denbo of his loss. The captain told him to search where he pleased, so the farmer made inquiry, till weary of the pursuit; but not being able to track his property, or fasten the theft upon any one, we had permission to drive

him out of the camp : this we exultingly put in execution, pelting him unmercifully with snow balls, and using him, in other respects, I must confess, extremely ill. At the expiration of the two months I was dismissed with the commendation of having behaved as a good soldier, and returned to Lee.

I staid at home but a short space, ere I once more enlisted, for other two months, under Capt. Folsom, and marched back to Winter Hill. In a few days our company was stationed at Cambridge college, and assisted in building the forts at Lechmore's point ; but, while engaged in this business, we were forced to submit to much hardship, and were extremely exposed to the fire of the enemy the whole time. Provisions being also scarce, we were reduced to half allowance, and obliged to spend part of our wages to prevent absolute starvation. Not relishing such short commons, I resolved to trick, if possible, something out of the commissary, whose name was Smith. Accordingly, with the connivance of several of the subaltern officers, I went and drew our company's quota of pork for the day, and conveyed it to the place of destination. In a few minutes I returned back to the commissary's quarters, who was yet dealing out provision, when spying on the head of a barrel, a large portion of the side of a hog, weighing about forty pounds, I called out in Mr. Smith's hearing, " You lazy devil, why don't you take away our meat. You expect me to do the whole drudgery, but I see you hang'd first." The commissary, who heard this rough greeting, turned about in a pet, exclaiming, " What's your meat here for ? If you do

take it out of my way in a twinkling, I'll lay an embargo on the transport." As I was to the full as anxious for the speedy removal of the nuisance, as the gentleman himself could be, I thrust the pork through with a stick, in which manner, Hall and I lugged it off very triumphantly, thus easing the unsuspecting commidary of the incumbrance in a trice.

As our wants had been pressing, the officers of the company were by no means offended at my successful stratagem, justly concluding we should need a moderate quantity of rum, while devouring this acquisition; I told them I would undertake to provide that desideratum likewise. So running out of doors with much alacrity, in order to find a suitable tool to dispatch upon the embassy; whom should I meet with but old Hall, the father of him abovenamed. Without preface, I requested him to go to the sutler's, and get us a gallon of rum, but he declined, unless I would furnish him with the money. As it happened I was destitute of the necessary evil, but knowing Hall to be an illiterate man and very ignorant, I drew from my pocket an old summons, which had been served on me for debt some time before. Presenting this, I told him it was a four dollar bill, and desired him to procure me the rum with all speed, and return the change. His scruples being now removed, he set off to execute his commission, while I, knowing the imposition must be detected by the Sutler, and wishing to make both ends of my project meet, dispatched after Hall another man (whom I let into the secret) with directions to bring away the rum at the moment of its delivery, and before Hall should present his old

summons to the tapster. My envoy arrived in the nick of time, and fulfilled articles to a punctilio; but scarce was his back turned, when Hall pulled out the supposed bill to make payment. The futler, not being familiarized to such odd kind of money, demanded its value. Hall replied it was a four dollar bill, and requested his change. At this the futler, who was an arch blade, had much ado to repress risibility, but being willing to carry on the joke, and knowing Hall to be a responsible man, told him he was unable to break the bill just then, but would charge the rum and take pay another time. With this answer, Hall went away entirely satisfied, and very honestly returned me the old summons, together with a history of his proceedings; and here the affair rested, for he never discovered the cheat, till called upon by the futler to make remittances.

We regaled ourselves like lords upon these goodly things, which we devoured with as keen avidity, as though they had been acquired ever so honestly, while I received the applause of every guest, as well for my zeal, as ingenious contrivance.

Much of a piece with the above was the rest of my conduct, till my discharge and return to Lee. Soon after my arrival at the place last mentioned, I went to Newmarket, where being bantered to wrestle, I accepted the challenge; but, some hours or other, my antagonist's knee was so badly sprained, by a fall I gave him, that he was wholly a cripple for six months, and had a stiff knee ever afterwards.

I was, at this time of life, both strong and athletic; valued myself much, as a wrestler, and

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to boot, quite fond of this exercise, which, however, is a pernicious one, and attended with evil consequences, as experience has proved. A few of the misfortunes, that, first and last, have befallen me, while pursuing these practices, I will here enumerate. At one time I had my wrist put out of place by wrestling; at another, one of my arms was broken; at a third my elbow joint was dislocated, after which my collar bone was broken, and again two of my ribs; all done, at different times, by wrestling.

About this period I went to Wallingford in Vermont, where at the raising of two buildings, was a great wrestling match. A certain mulatto man threw all out who had the *hardihood* to engage him. At his success he exulted immoderately, and continued calling out to the company to bring in their *traps*. I had been standing, as a quiet spectator the whole time, without a wish to intermeddle in the business. But at length a number of the bystanders requested me to enter the lists. I declined, to little purpose; they still absolutely insisted upon my taking a turn with the champion, who was yet in possession of the ring, and boasting of his prowess. At last, to gratify the company, I yielded to their persuasions, and approached the ring. My opponent, vaunted excessively, accosting me in terms none of the politest. We engaged with equal animosity, but I had the satisfaction to bring him upon his back, twice successively. He insisted upon a third trial; I complied, but now my antagonist was more unsuccessful than before, for finding himself likely to fall, he clapt out his hand to prevent it. At that moment I struck, his arm

with my foot, and swept it from off. This, for the present, cured my head of his athletic disposition, but I was seriously agrieved at his misfortune, and the more so, as I had been the unlucky cause of it. No surgeon being near, I undertook the office of setting the bone, and performed it adroitly; three months, however, elapsed, as I afterwards learn'd, before the fellow was capable of ordinary labour.

At another time I wrestled with a black fellow (belonging to Col. Smith, of Newmarket) who, unluckily, he was so much hurt by the receipt of a fall I gave him, that he died within the first ten night. I understood, that the poor fellow did not acquaint his master with the true state of the affair, but pretended to have fallen from a hay loft, yet the fact was, as here represented.

The above tragical incidents, though occurring at different periods, I have preferred bringing into one point of view, as better to illustrate the melancholy effects of wrestling, and as a caveat to others to avoid similar pursuits. In short so many were the mischiefs continually befalling myself and others in consequence of such pernicious exercise, that at length, though much in vogue, they bore my aversion and abhorrence.



CHAP. II.

With Mars I quarrel spurious grace and zeal,
And, Proteus like, a novel semblance steal.

SINCE my return from Canada, I had followed, occasionally, the practice of physic, more especially when absent from Lee; making use of Indian medicines, and observing their methods of cure. By such expedients I gained, now and then, a few shillings, and was eased of many itinerary expenses, to boot. But the era now commenced in which I was to appear on the theatre of action in a new character. This originated from a desire for novelty, and partly from a strange notion that took me of assuming the deportment of a religious convert. My new metamorphosis was quite sudden, and had its rise from the following circumstances. A set of religionists, stiled new-lights, who pretended to far greater sanctity than their neighbors, had arisen of late in divers places, especially in the town of Lee. The enthusiastic meetings of those zealots I had frequently attended from motives of curiosity, and to their manner of praying and exhorting had paid the minutest attention. As I was possessed of mimic powers, and had a tenacious memory from my cradle, I was quickly in capacity to imitate their canting tone, and to adopt the tenor of their discourses with precision. It was even thought by some of my cronies, that, in the gift of exhortation, I far surpassed all in the town

of Lee, or, indeed, elsewhere. I felt a degree of exultation at their encomiums, and having a mind to view the country, and try my skill as a preacher, I purchased me a new suit of black, a large Scotch plaid gown, and cocked up beaver, though, to tell truth, these articles squeezed my purse dry in the purchase. But I regretted nought, since I now fancied myself equipped to a T, and had moreover sanguine hopes of some lucky reimbursement. I believe my family admired at my strange conduct, and were desirous to find out what was going forward; but I kept my views the profoundest secret.

Not daring to exhibit any religious pretences near home, I set off, directly, in the ministerial habiliments abovementioned, for the Kennebec country, where I expected to be an entire stranger.

Advancing as far as a place called *Little Falls*, in the district of Maine, I made a stop, and attended a week-day lecture. Here one Mr. Gould was the officiating minister. Every person present, judging by my clerical dress, took me for a real priest also; and after the religious exercises were nearly finished, Mr. Gould observed, that there was room for any person to speak, who might see occasion. Thinking this a convenient opening in which to display my talent at exhortation, I arose, and, with much outward zeal, addressed the assembly in a speech of considerable length. When I had made an end of speaking, I resumed my chair, and the pious parson, rising in turn, averred, that I had preached as loud a sermon to his soul, as ever he had witnessed in his life, and that he verily believed I was a heaven born saint, if there were one

upon the footstool. In reply to this, a young woman, by name Peggy Cotton, who was a member of the same church, rose also, and exclaimed, "He a faint? so is the devil incarnate; for my own part I have no belief in his pretended sanctity, let him profess what he will." At this abrupt declaration, the ghostly priest was much astonished, and demanded the reason of her jealousy. "If I must explain myself further, added she, permit me to say, that my opinion of this man is derived from his conduct, as it is said a tree may be known by its fruit. I took notice, on his entrance into the meeting, that he first surveyed my face, then my feet, then my whole person, in such a carnal way and manner, that I perceived he had the devil in his heart." This accusation, which I confess was literally true, disordered my muscles not a little, though I could not but admire at the intuitive sagacity of the young gypsy, who was able to hit off, so adroitly, my real character. In short, I felt myself in an awkward situation, and knew not what reply to bestow upon her accusation, when, luckily, I was relieved, in some degree, from the perplexing hobble, by the well meaning parson, who, at this instant, took part in my defence. He reprimanded, in severe terms, my fair accuser, for harbouring an idea so greatly to my disadvantage, and on no better foundation than suspicion, which is frequently fallacious. Resuming courage at this diversion in my favour, I seconded the parson in a similar strain, and expatiated on the excellency of christian charity and forbearance. As two against one are odds at tennis, so poor Peggy, finding her ground untenable against both, prudently withdrew

from the meeting, and left me master of the field, as well as argument. This flurry having subsided, the people were about to depart; but the reverend priest invited my tarrying at his house all night; I accepted of the courtesy, and received the most polite treatment. The next morning, bidding my kind host adieu, I journeyed on still eastwardly; and now, taking a retrospect of the occurrences of yesterday, I thought I had succeeded tolerably well in this my first ministerial *coup d'essay*, notwithstanding the little rub I had met with from female observation. Accordingly I was bent on trying the event of a second experiment, if a suitable opportunity should occur. While such thoughts occupied my brain, I jogged on, and, as things happened, was present at another meeting the ensuing Sunday, where, at the close of service, I gave the auditory so pathetic an admonition, as drew tears from the eyes of several. In fine; exhorting and praying, either in public congregations or private families, was my daily practice during this whole tour, which as now appeared, I had spun out far beyond my original plan or intention. Therefore, after so long a time I returned to Lee, well satisfied with my novel adventures, and the more so, since what with preaching, and what with doctoring, I had made out to fare splendidly, and to bring home a seasonable relief for domestic exigencies.

In the course of a day or two, (it being now mid-winter 1777) I went to Greenland, and spying a bee-hive, (the property of Dr. Weeks) in a tangible predicament, I made a halt while evening, and then conveyed the prize to the house of a friend where we shared the contents between us. A few

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days after, being at Folsom's tavern in the same town, I was met by the Doctor, who not only charged me with stealing the hive, but threatened my commitment to prison. I found he watched my motions very critically, but, while he, with his adjutants were preparing to execute their menaces, I jumped out at a back window, fled to parson M'Clintock's garden, and there concealed myself in a cluster of bushes. The doctor, with his whole party, followed hot foot, but while they were eagerly exploring every cranny of the parson's precincts, I slipped off unnoticed, reached the great bay, crossed over on the ice, recovered safe home, and met with no further obstruction on the same score afterwards.

Subsequent to this, I ventured nocturnally to Portsmouth, in hopes of meeting with some wind-fall there; but discovering no prospect of that kind, I wheeled to the right about, and set off under shroud of darkness for Stratham, where I had several trusty associates. Not far from Portsmouth I drew near a certain gentleman's feat, which I had often visited before. Here I made a halt, when feeling a sharp desire for some kind of food, as I had been fasting for many hours together, it occurred, that I knew of a horde of apples and pears not far distant. Some of those I intended to obtain; so I groped about, till, as I thought, I had found the spot where they lay; but after all met with no small resistance in breaking into the deposit. At last, however, I effected that purpose, and entered a dark subterraneous cavity. Without delay I fell to searching about, in expectation of finding, among the rubbish, something to alluage

hunger; but, in a minute or two, I stumbled upon some old trumpery, that at first touch seemed to give a hollow, clattering sound. I pressed on, intending to explore the premises thoroughly, when in fumbling about I presently discovered, that I had got hold of a great coffin, which stood in one corner of the cell. The fact was, I had broken, thus heedlessly, into an old, crazy tomb, where lay interred a grandmother, and her daughter. It will be hardly possible to form an idea of my surprise, my utter astonishment, when I found myself environed with those frightful inhabitants of another world; for a few moments I was unable to move hand or foot; literally speaking "my hair stood on end, and my voice clave to my jaws." I feared to retreat, lest the old lady and her daughter should muster arms to obstruct my exit. At last, however, I recovered motion, and with a bound, evacuated the horrid domains, leaving those tenants of the tomb to enjoy henceforth their repose unmolested. With tremulous steps I reclaimed the highway, and without veering to the right or left, passed on, till I found a welcome asylum in the bosom of my own family.

During my present continuance about home, I perpetrated a variety of thefts of minor consequence; but being desirous of brighter achievements, I digested the scheme of journeying westwardly, in like manner as I had lately travelled east. Leaving Lee, in pursuance of this arrangement, I passed from place to place, appearing sometimes in the character of a physician, and sometimes of priest, as best suited my purposes; which practice I continued till I had strolled to Norwalk in Connecticut.

The science of deception, as my readers must suppose, had been ever my favorite study, and, among other acquirements, I had learnt to disguise a horse so artificially, by various methods, most frequently by the help of different paints, that the owner, to have known his property again, must have had uncommon sagacity. A trick of this kind I put in practice on the present occasion; for happening to meet, one evening, with a valuable horse belonging to one Johnson, I did not lose the propitious moment, but seized the prize, and rode him to a secluded place, where I so altered him, by painting his face white, spotting his feet and legs, and clipping his mane and tail, that he had altogether another appearance.

The next day I was overtaken on the road by Johnson himself, who, on missing the horse, had set out in quest of him and the thieves. He surveyed the nag repeatedly, but never recognized his property. We travelled in company several miles, and then parted without his entertaining the smallest suspicion of the deceit. The horse I kept but a day or two longer, for not daring to appear with him at Lee, I sold him for the money, and with it repaired thither.

Shortly after this, I was taken by one Cilley and Butler, who gave me to understand, that I must attend them to Andover. I requested to know on what emergency, and was shewn an advertisement purporting, that a man, named Henry Tufts, had enlisted as a soldier under Lieut. Frye (a recruiting officer, for the Ohio) but had absconded. The deserter was described as light haired, and having lost his foreteeth; a description completely applicable

to my person. Being conscious I had enlisted with no man breathing, since the two months service under Capt. Folsom, I was much at a loss to account for this strange coincidence, but was positive there must have been some mistake or other in the business. I told Cilley and Butler to that amount, and remonstrated against the measures they were taking, but giving no heed to my assertions, and wishing to obtain, forsooth, the reward offered for the deserter, they enforced my departure for Andover.

I was carried before Lieut. Frye, of that town, by whose papers it appeared, that some person, calling himself Henry Tufts, had enlisted for the Ohio, and had actually drawn his bounty money, blanket, &c. I informed Frye, that some impostor, allured by the bounty, had imposed upon him by the assumption of my name, but that I was entirely innocent. Frye was at a stand, but conceived it must be the identical person who had enlisted, yet would not be altogether positive. As it happened, another gentleman had been present, who being sent for and asked the question, replied that I was not the man who enlisted, which decided the controversy at once. I was discharged, and received from Cilley and Butler the sum of four dollars, which was some indemnification for my time and trouble, and the only reward they acquired for their officious conduct.

I posted home; but it seemed at this juncture, as if evil was indeed determined against me, for directly upon the back of my last misadventure, I met with further molestation, which was briefly as follows.

One afternoon, I set out with two others, for the purpose of catching fish, and, as it happened, we staid out all night. Early the next morning I arrived home, and presently after received a visit from one Ichabod Hilton of Newmarket, who, coming to my door, vociferated loudly, "It is you I am after." Supposing he intended I should help him on his farm at Lee, as was sometimes my practice, I made answer, "I can't help you to-day, for I was out all last night." "I know that," replied he; and without further ceremony, he burst into the house, with several followers; seized, instantly, my person, and carried me before Walter Bryant, jun. Esq. where I learnt, that while I was on my fishing excursion, some ill minded persons had broken into Hilton's cellar, and stolen thence nearly a barrel of pork, being all he possessed in the world. Hilton, as was natural enough, suspected me to be the thief, and such were the reasons for the strenuous measures he had then taken.

Justice Bryant gave me but a slight examination, for finding no *damning proof*, he rather advised my being forwarded to Exeter, to the end that some further council might be had on the trial. This expedient was adopted, and I was escorted to the complainant's house, where I was closely guarded while dinner was preparing. In the interim, I sent for one of my fishing adventurers, in order to prove an *alibi* (not an *alibi*;) my witness came and placed every circumstance in its proper point of view, so that Hilton; who was at length convinced of my innocence, waved further process, and gave me a cordial dismissal.

Three days after this, the stolen goods were discovered in an old cellar, in Horn's woods, so called,

by Hilton himself, who afterwards laid in wait near the spot, and was so lucky as to catch two of the thieves, the father and son. They were both cast into Exeter jail, and the old man was constrained to sacrifice a yoke of oxen, and receive nineteen lashes in the bargain, before obtaining his release.

No sooner did I escape from Hilton's clutches, than I made a cruise to the Isle of Shoals, distant from Portsmouth about nine miles; my purposes being twofold, the one, to catch a few fish, the other, to traffic a small matter with the inhabitants of those sterile rocks. Our crew, four in number, met with ample success, as well in the business of fishery, as in our other undertakings; but, on return homeward, it was our mishap to be suddenly overtaken by a cruel and distressing storm. It would be in vain to attempt a description of its fury, or of the fears and sufferings of our little company. Suffice it to say, that, at last, after every fatiguing exertion, we made shift to recover land, but were more dead than alive in consequence of the disastrous voyage. As this had been the first I resolved it should be the last time, of my trusting to so treacherous an element as the ocean, undriven thereto by imperious necessity; although well knew that he who was born to be *hanged* would never be drowned.

At this epoch, one Ephraim Clough, of L. made me a proposal to carry on his farm at Canterbury, on terms so advantageous, that I hesitated not to close with his offer, and to remove my family thither with all convenient brevity. My place of abode bidding fair to be productive of many advantages, I applied to business with

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assiduity, and amongst other pursuits, drove a pretty brisk traffic in buying and selling horses and neat cattle. One day I set out on a speculating tour, and journeyed on as far as New Concord. Here I met with one Eastman, who took a fancy to my horse, which indeed was an excellent one. After chaffering awhile, he bid me in exchange for him, an aged mare (on which he lavished many encomiums) and his note of hand for forty shillings, payable at a short day. With this proffer I closed; but, on my passage homeward, discovered, to my mortification, that my purchase was hardly worth picking up in the street, for she soon tired, and what was worse, had been wind broken, and otherwise essentially damaged. I was much chagrined at the loss of my horse, but well knowing that recantation was out of the question, I concluded to sit down easy, and make the best of a bad bargain. A while after, upon inspection of the note, I found it had been written for forty *dollars*, instead of forty *shillings*. This had been Eastman's mistake; but I meant to profit of the circumstance, so far, at least, as to bring him to an equitable compromise. With a view to this, I paid him a visit, acquainted him with the fact, and demanded payment, which he refused, being then quite intractable; but at length finding himself caught, he paid me twenty five dollars for the redemption of his note, which restored harmony between us, but concluded our dealings.

In the course of six months, while residing at Canterbury, I bought and paid for fifty acres of wild land, though afterwards being offered a small farm much to my liking, I sold it, and every other

article I could spare, for paper money, intending to collect a sufficient sum for the purchase of the farm in view; yet, after all, the owner and I differing a mere trifle in the price, we never made out to finish the bargain. I kept the money on hand, as many wise people have done, for some time, during which it depreciated, at such a rate, that I eventually lost the major part of my little all. But why do I complain of this, since similar indeed has been the fate and issue of my every enterprise through life?

Being now reduced to pretty great straits to make out a subsistence, and meagre poverty staring me in the face, I went to Lee, and carried away, clandestinely, a notable quantity of flax, with several other articles. The owner suspecting that Tuffs must be the thief, followed *post haste*, and took me prisoner. I was arraigned before justice Batchelder of Loudon, where the proof being sufficient, I was driven to a compromise, which cost me in the end, a very good yoke of oxen.

I was not, however, so far discouraged by these reiterated misfortunes, as to remit any part of my exertions in the retrieval of them. On the contrary; I applied, with redoubled diligence, to my farming and healing business, alternately, just as occasion called; and fortune so far smiled upon my honest endeavors at agriculture, as to send me a plentiful crop the same year, which caused me to forget, in a manner, all former losses and inquietudes. But the present interval of seeming prosperity vanished more rapidly, than the morning dew before the solar beam, by the intervention of a disaster more destructive in its consequences,

any I had lately experienced. While I was absent on a journey, my house accidentally caught fire, and was burned to the ground. In it were consumed all my household furniture, meat, corn, and indeed, every article I possessed; it being in the autumn of the year 1778 (according to my chronology) when the conflagration took place, I lost a sufficient quantity of provisions to have sufficed my family the whole year. I had earned the little I then lost by industry; yea, by the sweat of my brow. It was my all. I must have been callous and devoid of feeling, to have been insensible to so bitter a calamity! feel it I did, with anguish and despondency of mind.

The above dismal catastrophe compelled me to move back to Lee, where I undertook to manage my father's farm for one year. But no long time elapsed, before I chanced to fix my eye upon a likely, young mare, that belonged to my townsman, James Davis. This beast struck my fancy so forcibly, that I coveted the conversion of her to my own use, though decidedly, a transgression of the tenth commandment. Without loss of time, I laid a stratagem to steal and ride her away to Norwalk in Connecticut, that town being upwards of two hundred miles distant. All this I executed successfully, and there swapped her for a light horse, which I bestrode, and trotted toward West Point, where lay a part of the American army. My only motive in this portion of the journey, was to visit my brother Eliphalet, who was a soldier in that quarter.

On the road I met a man riding express, who, having tired his horse, was importunate to exchange

him for mine, averring the urgency of doing the business in a minute, if at all. Thinking to take advantage of his necessity, I demanded as much boot, in cash, as my own horse was reasonably worth, which he, having no other resource, was obliged to sell down. Elated at so lucky a wind-fall, I jogged on slowly, (though in prime spirits,) till I alighted at a tavern in the town of Woodbury, where I put up for the night.

The landlord and his wife were absent from home, and the woman, who was left in charge of the house, being immoderately fond of a cherishing glass, she, with the other domestics, made so great a clatter all night, that I took very little repose. In the morning I ordered out my horse, and called for the reckoning, which being shewn by the hostess, I handed her a fifty dollar bill. She took it, but being much intoxicated with her morning draught, as well as evening debauch, she gave me back two hundred and fifteen dols. by way of change. I asked, if she had made no mistake. She damn'd me, and said I had better call her drunk; adding, I had not received my proper due by ten dollars; but, on account of my insolence she would pay me nothing more, till my return from the camps, nor even then, unless I asked her pardon. Hearing this, I begged forgiveness, and she, in token of reconciliation, presented me with a gill of rum; but said, for her word's sake, she must withhold the ten dollars till my homeward return. On this I left the house, and presently perceiving that my new horse was as good a nag as legs e'er cross'd, I soon reached a place call'd Soldiers' Fortune, near West Point, where I

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my brother Eliphalet, with whom I tarried one night. I had brought him a pair of shirts, but he would receive only one, having an ample supply already; the other I sold to serjeant Hodgdon, and took seventeen cartridges and a quarter of a pound of powder in part pay.

Betimes in the morning I quitted the camp, with intent to return to Newhampshire, but had been gone but a few minutes ere one Dockum, who had seen me purchase the cartridges, went and informed Col. Reid, that I had been buying up the soldiers' ammunition. On this information the Colonel dispatched one serjeant Fowler, with a file of men, in pursuit of the transgressor. They overtook me at a tavern, a few miles from the army, where I had stopped to take breakfast, and instantly ordered me to return back to camp. I remonstrated; but to no purpose; wherefore, knowing opposition to be useless, I made a virtue of necessity, and complied. They carried me before Col. Reid, who sternly enquired, if I had been purchasing the soldiers' ammunition. I answered affirmatively. "Were you not apprised (demanded he) that, by law martial, such a crime is capital, and may cost the offender's life." I replied that I had no such knowledge, but he affirmed that such was the case, and thereupon called in serjeant Hodgdon, who sold me the cartridges. The serjeant's story was, that he found them, as well as the powder in question, at Morrilstown, where they had been dropped by the British, when they abandoned that place. The Colonel not satisfied with this account, which he supposed fabulous, caused the long roll to be beaten, and three companies of foot were paraded

under arms. These solemn preparations filled me, I must confess, with terror and amazement, as I knew not in what manner they were to terminate. I expected nothing short of severe corporal punishment, if so fortunate as to escape death. Every man's cartridge box and other accoutrements were next examined; but, while this was doing I shook in my shoes, lest a deficiency should somewhere be found; however, I was at length eased of my fears on that head, for it turned out that each soldier had his just complement both of cartridges and other ammunition. Such being the case, the companies were dismissed, but I was still retained under a strong guard, because a court martial had been called, and was then in session. What their decision would be I knew not; nevertheless my suspense was of short continuance, for, in less than half an hour, the court broke up, and order arrived for my final dismissal.

Once more then I left the camp, happy at escaping this unforeseen difficulty with no greater detriment; but before leaving the neighborhood of the army I disposed of my horse, saddle and bridle, not daring to be seen with such appurtenances at or near Lee, where the people would have surmised that I obtained them fraudulently. On entering a wood five miles from the encampment, I was suddenly assailed by a French deserter, who presented his loaded musket, and demanded the surrender of my purse. I plead poverty, alledging that a trifling matter of change was all I possessed in the world. The robber grew impatient, and with horrible denunciations enjoined the immediate delivery of the little. To pacify him I promised compliance,

while I was rummaging my pockets under pretence of finding my purse, we heard the trampling of footsteps at no great distance. The highwayman wheeled about to descry the intruders, when instantly I cocked my fufee, and pointing at his breast, damn'd him, most vociferously, for a pig-tailed rascal, swearing I would dispatch him, as an oblation to Vulcan in a twinkling, if he attempted moving so much as an eye in his head. At this rough greeting my hero was much daunted, and called out for quarter. I bade him march, with his gun clubbed, or I would blow his brains out, on the least symptom of disobedience. Those menaces had the desired effect, for fearing their literal execution, he marched off to the tune of the "rogue's march," till quite out of sight.

Proceeding onward I presently discerned a parcel of soldiers, who were coming toward me. I turned out of the way to avoid them, but, at sight of me, they presented their guns, and commanded me to halt, under penalty of immediate death. On wheeling, they drew near, and told me, they had been out several days in pursuit of deserters, but had found none. I assured them I was not one of that description; they were convinced, and gave me a dismissal.

I met with no further impediments till evening, when I found myself near a tavern occupied by a young, Dutch widow. Feeling a degree of lassitude, I went in, and requested accommodations for the night, which were readily granted. By and by, the mistress of the inn, who was an arrant coquette, enquired if I had a mind to sit in a likely young widow's lap, and share a bowl of punch. I

answered, my reader may rest assured, affirmatively, and with much seeming gallantry, took possession of my seat. While we were romancing and drinking very lovingly, she took out her silver snuff box, made in the fashion of a heart, and vowed she would give any man a bowl of punch, who could produce another of equal curiosity. As it happened, I then carried in my pocket an elegant silver box, which had lately stood me nine crowns in the purchase. This I presented for the jolly widow's inspection, who could not but confess, that I had beaten her at her own weapons. This whole night was devoted to festivity, but seasonably the next morning I resumed my journey on foot, and having concluded to explore the country, as far as possible, it became a matter of indifference what route I should pursue. Consequently I made a circuitous peregrination, and passed on through many towns and places, both in Connecticut and Massachusetts, meeting, as usual, many little rubs and incidents by the way. Those, however, I shall forbear relating, except in one or two instances.

From the sale of my last horse I had received few dollars in silver, and while it lasted, met with no kind of difficulty in procuring necessaries; but no sooner did that resource fail, than I found some difference, since many people were scrupulous in taking paper money. Beside my stock of paper was quite inconsiderable, so that evils beginning to accumulate, I saw no remedy, save one, which was to shew some old curmudgeon a Rowland for Oliver. Abounding with such thoughts, I went near a shoemaker's shop, it being already half o'clock at night, and withal pretty dark.

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at this juncture, I had scarce a shoe to my foot, it appeared quite advisable to attempt a supply, I therefore, marched up to the shop window, but was somewhat alarmed, on hearing the joint and several snoring of two men within. Nevertheless I lifted up the sash, and with some trepidation, entered the room. The slumbers of the two men were as yet undisturbed, so I rummaged about, till I found a calf skin, and two pair of men's shoes, being the only articles of much importance in the whole shop. Those, however, I made sure of, and was so fortunate as to recover the main road without disturbing their nasal chorus.

Plodding onward, I digested affairs, so as to reach a certain dairy the next night, as I intended, at a late hour. This stood within two rods of a dwelling house, but with its situation I had previously been acquainted. If hunger, as says the adage, will break through stone walls, I supposed it might easily enable me to break through a milk house door. At any rate I resolved to try the experiment; I stepped up softly, and to my great joy, found the door upon latch. I went in, but it was so dismally dark, that I could distinguish no kind of object; however, I groped about, till I happened to put my hand upon the cock of a gun full bent. This gave me a terrible shock; I took her down, however, instantly. The gun had been placed there undoubtedly to pepper some intruder, and it appeared the greatest wonder in nature, that I had not crossed the line of demarkation, and thus ended my journey. If such had been the case, few people, I suppose, would have pitied my perverse fate; but, be that as it might, it was my intention

another tree. This met with his approbation, and the business being dispatched in a moment, he returned home; when my partner was relieved from his ticklish confinement, but as much swollen, to appearance, as a bladder with wind.

Knowing our landlord to be extremely forgetful we hazarded hauling away both the trees; and without doubt the whole vanished from his memory, since he never was heard to complain of the injury.

Meantime, James Davis, abovementioned, believing I had deprived him of his steed, made me a *domiciliary visit*, and challenged me with the theft. As usual, I denied the fact, but on his promising, most solemnly, to take no advantage, if I would only declare the truth, I at last frankly confessed, that I had ridden her to Norwalk, in Connecticut, and there sold her. I further consented to accompany him, or his son, thither, in order to reimburse him, if practicable, by stealing the beast a second time. Agreeably to this, young Davis and myself commenced the expedition, during which, I defrayed every expenditure by doctoring. As we went on foot, the journey was tedious, but maugre all impediments, we reached Norwalk in the course of a fortnight, timing matters so as to enter the town just in the edge of the evening. I conducted my partner, who was a mere novice in wickedness, to the stable, where I supposed the mare yet in keeping. He went in, with intent to lead her forth, but finding a dozen or more steeds, tied together in the same stall, he was incapable, in the dark, of distinguishing his own from the others. So being utterly averse from taking any other horse,

he returned empty handed. The night being obscure and cloudy, what measures to pursue we could not devise. He was very apprehensive, that his mare had been removed to some other quarter. In this dilemma, I offered, in turn, to make trial of my skill in obviating the difficulty, so, entering the stable, I led out a beast, and told Davis it was his own. He was incredulous, but upon my avouching her identity, we both mounted, and rode a few miles, when finding a horse, saddled and bridled, by the way side, I stript him of his trappings, and tried them upon ours, merely to see if they would fit; which finding to be particularly the case, I suffered them to remain, and remounting, with my associate, pushed on with much rapidity. We rode upwards of thirty miles before the appearance of the morning dawn; but no sooner did objects become visible, than Davis, much to his comfort, found himself, in fact, on the back of his own mare. Strange as it may seem, I distinguished her from the other horses in the stable, by the manner of her chewing hay.

Never hearing that any person pursued after the lost beast, we reached home without obstacle or annoyance.



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CHAP. III.

Still, adverse fortune, with increasing weight,
 Augments his sorrows and decides his fate ;
 Evincing that our various scenes of woe
 From our own vices and misconduct flow,

ABOUT this time, in pursuance of congressional orders, troops were enlisting in every quarter, for three years, or during the war ; to the end, that a more regular and permanent army, than heretofore, might be established for the defence of the country.

Without adverting to consequences, I went to Salisbury, and enlisted under Capt. True for three years. This step, as will be seen, turned out greatly to my disadvantage, and became, for a long while a source of continual persecution and embarrassment. Having enlisted, I had orders to repair to Andover by a certain day, there to pass muster, and receive bounty and accoutrements, which, indeed, had been my only inducement to the transaction. At time and place I appeared, and was furnished with some money and other articles, but not with the quantity stipulated. In a short time we were marched to Castle Island, in the harbor of Boston, there to remain, till ordered to join the regiment, under Col. Crane, at West Point. Our continuance at the Castle was four weeks, when directions arrived from head quarters for our proceeding to the place last mentioned. We were three hundred in number, and were marched first

to Roxbury, where we drew one week's provision, and then advanced seven miles further to Watertown. Here, evening approaching, every man was obliged, of necessity, to look out for his own lodging and accommodations. While others were engaged in this business, I was quite differently employed; for growing sick, at the thoughts of a three years' campaign, and having now a convenient opportunity for desertion, I made use of the privilege, and returned by unfrequented paths to my own dwelling.

Immediately, however, I found myself in a more critical situation than heretofore, since many stratagems were now devised for my speedy apprehension, insomuch that I durst not shew my head abroad for fear of apprehension.

By clandestine methods, then, I was constrained to procure the means of support, shooling poultry, sheep, and such other conveniencies, as chance threw in my path. In this occupation, by so long experience, I had acquired a masterly adroitness, so that now I should have yielded the palm to none of my competitors. However, being in continual danger of seizure, either for theft or desertion, I passed every moment in abject fear and perplexity. My farming business was wholly interrupted, and I durst not venture to hire out. To steal or starve, then, was the question; I wisely preferred the former, and drove a brisk stroke at the dangerous pursuit.

By such conduct I acquired many new enemies who were determined, at all hazards, to have me arrested and sent on to the army. The first who received for this purpose was from one John

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ter, and others, who, thinking to take me by surprise, surrounded my habitation, just as I had returned from a nocturnal excursion. My brother Eliphalet, at this critical instant, happened to be in my company; we therefore concluded to resist their attempts as manfully as possible. They ordered me to open the doors and surrender, *otherwise I must expect the storming of my castle.* My assistant, bade them keep their distance, swearing he would shoot the first man, who should offer to touch the door; still our assailants, regardless of his menaces, pressed on with vigour, and appeared obstinately bent upon breaking into the house. In this conjuncture I suggested to my second, that if he would open the door and flee, it was more than probable (seeing it was a dark night) they would pursue him instead of me, while, in the interim, I might chance to escape. This project meeting approbation, was put directly to the test, and the result was his being followed by the whole gang. I now had a favorable moment which to escape, so slipping out at a back door, with the utmost precipitancy, I fled to the deepest recesses of the forest.

Barter and his followers had a fatiguing chase of me, but, in the end, made out to overtake the fugitive, whom they escorted to the house of one Burleigh, where by the help of candle light, they discovered their mistake, and were egregiously ridiculed for the comical blunder they had committed. My brother afterwards complained of the assault, and several of the aggressors were fined as peace-breakers.

The foregoing incident alarmed me so greatly, that, for a fortnight, I durst not return to my dwell-

ling, unless, perhaps, in the dead of night. By degrees, however, I grew bolder, and began to lodge at home as usual; of which, some how or other, the same party gained intimation, and besieged my house in the gloom of night, a second time. They now rushed on with more impetuosity, if possible, than before, and bursting through the door, made me a prisoner, in spite of my utmost effort to the contrary. The next day they conducted me, under bonds, to Exeter jail, in which I was closely confined, for the purpose of being with other deserters conveyed to the army.

In this forlorn receptacle I continued five days oppressed with the most gloomy apprehensions of approaching punishment, when unexpectedly the sight of a screw auger and two compass saws, presented by a friend, gave me more heart felt joy, than the receipt of a purse of gold would have afforded. With those tools I quickly commenced operations, and bored nearly through the jail wall, just under the scuttle window, intending to drill a sufficient opening into the broad entry for my emancipation. The wall plaistering I was obliged to remove at each renewal of my toil; but, to prevent suspicion, was careful to replace it at the moment of quitting work. In this mode I proceeded, till the timbers were nearly cut through in two several places, so that I could remove the block at pleasure, and only waited for an opportune season, in which to break bulk. This presented at a time when Mr. Lobb, the jailer, and his wife were absent at a funeral. As he passed through the entry in his way to that solemnity, he enquired whether I was ready to break jail (for sometimes I had jeeringly threatened

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with so doing) I answered "yes." Ladd, however, whose head was never formed for the discovery of plots, supposed me only in jest, and therefore passed on. But soon after his exit my whole scheme had like to have been rendered abortive, through my over eagerness, to regain freedom. For, at the critical moment of my removing the block above mentioned, two or three female hoity toities, having a desire to peep behind the curtain of futurity, happened to be coming up stairs, to importune my telling their fortunes; so that I had scarce time to re-instate the block, ere they made their appearance. I was in momentary expectation of their espying the new fracture; and in truth they must have been blind, as the deity they were about consulting, not to have discerned it; but luckily for me they were too much engrossed with their own fiddle-faddle to notice the fissure, though so glaringly visible. As I deemed it more eligible to be rid of their importunance, than to enter into a prognosticating dialogue, as they desired, I fell to jesting with them in such unseemly language, as caused them to scamper down stairs with more than customary agility. Without a moment's delay I once more pushed out the wooden obstruction, and though it still wanted two full hours to sunset, stript of my apparel, and attempted to force myself through the breach. This had seemed an easy matter in theory, yet, as is common, proved hard in practice, for, obtaining this second birth (to liberty) I had a desperate struggle indeed. Nevertheless after suffering the most excruciating tortures, owing to the narrowness of the passage, I at last effected my purpose, and, to my great joy, found myself in the road entry.

There happened to be in the apartment I had just forsaken, a certain man named Whiting, who had also been imprisoned for desertion. This fellow seeing me thus far successful, was encouraged to attempt, likewise, his own escape in the same way. So stripping himself with all diligence, he essayed to croud, feet foremost, through the aperture, in the manner he had seen me, but, being a personage of some greater corpulency, he stuck fast in the passage. To aid his delivery, I continued pulling at his feet, till he, bruised to a mummy, could abide the extremity no longer, but roared out most vehemently, insomuch that I feared he would alarm the whole posse. Dreading lest my escape should be frustrated at last, I quitted Whiting, and sprung at the entry door, which I fastened with an awl, then running to my comrade, I used every exertion to extricate him from his uncomfortable birth; yet, after all, was obliged to leave him fast wedged in the passage, and how long he remained in that doleful posture is to me wholly unknown. Regardless now, of all things, save my own deliverance, I searched about, till I found an unfastened back window thro' which I descended into the jail yard, and, when running off with much agility, met a man a few rods from the jail, who cried out as I passed him, "*An inch is as good, as an ell, pull, Tufts, pull!*" I made no reply, but ran with all possible speed to a place, by the river side, called the roundabout, where, stripping a board fence, I constructed half a raft, crossed over to New-Market side, and with no further obstruction gained my own father's house.

The next day I met with James Smith, a worthy knight of the post aforementioned, in

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company I went to Berwick, where by the use of false keys, we opened Moses Purington's fulling mill, taking thence about fifty yards of fulled cloth. We conveyed the whole to Newmarket, and sold the greater part of it at half price, to people in creditable circumstances. Some of the purchasers, however, though duly apprized how and where we had procured the effects, were so improvident, as to leak out the whole affair, consequently Smith and I were forced to indemnify the injured owner.

On discovery of the foregoing scandalous exploit, my adversaries bestirred themselves so briskly, that I was again arrested, hurried to Exeter jail, and secured closely in an upper back room. The day after, a man looking in, advised me to beware how I meddled with the timbers fronting the entry, as the same were loose and unfastened. I assured him I should be careful to attempt no such thing. He then importuned me for the loan of a few dollars, but I handed him only a couple, which he gratefully received. Perhaps, if Capt. Ladd, or some others, equally sharp, had overheard this discourse, immediate measures had been taken to prevent all possibility of escape; but, luckily, every thing abode in statu quo till evening, when I made out to remove several pieces of the aforesaid timber, and thus found myself once more in the broad entry. I made bold to march down the front stairs, and when passing out of doors, heard the jailor and his family conversing unconcernedly over a cup of tea.

Gaining the open street, I made the best of my passage to Lee; but fearing to abide long there, went to Nottingham, and betook myself to the

woods. As I was now extremely apprehensive of being diligently pursued, I never ventured into any house, but encamped in the forests and subsisted upon dunghill fowls, vegetables and such other fare, as my nightly depredations afforded. In this manner, two or three weeks elapsed, when growing weary of such a miserable existence, I returned to Lee, and took shelter in my father's barn.

Disrelishing, however, even this mode of life, I came to the hasty conclusion of stealing the Long-fellow mare, the property of Ephraim Clough. I had entertained an opinion for some time, that this chap had jockeyed me out of a suit of clothes, and a barrel of rum, which articles I could never prevail with him to refund. On those accounts, I owed him an old grudge, and having no other way to be even with him, determined on making reprisals in the manner abovementioned. Whereupon, one night, I repaired to his pasture, and finding the object of my search, rode her to Gil-manton, and thence to Meredith; in which last place, though distant but forty miles from Lee, I had the effrontery to ride about doctoring. I had continued in this employment but a few days, before Clough gained some intimation of my route, and dispatched Capt. Joseph Thomas in quest of his mare, with directions to seize and convey me to Lee, at all events. Thomas procured the assistance of a Robert Bryant. They found me at the house of one Marston, (a blacksmith,) who had been just shoeing my horse. Thomas approached with a muffler over his visage, so that I suspected him not till he had made me his captive. As the men whose custody I now was, were both strong

active, I had little prospect, or indeed, hopes, of eluding their vigilance; so judged it most prudent to submit quietly to the indignity of being manacled; which office they exultingly executed, and then started with their prisoner for Lee.

Riding a few miles we called in at Ray's tavern in Gilmanton, where I treated my keepers so profusely with spirits, that both became excessively mellow. The waiting maid observing their tipping propensity, advised my treating them freely; in which case she would warrant me out of their clutches before morning. I thought her advice apropos, and plied my conductors so warmly, that, before leaving the house, they both grew reeling ripe, and were scarce able to remount their horses. Bryant, soon losing his equilibrium, was incapable of farther progress; we dropped him on the road, and rode on to Gilman's tavern, in the town last mentioned. Here Thomas and I alighted just after sunsetting, and concluded to refresh ourselves and horses before renewing the journey. I called for more liquor, when my Argus, making free with the cup as before, was soon in as bad a pickle, to a trifle, as his colleague, Bryant.

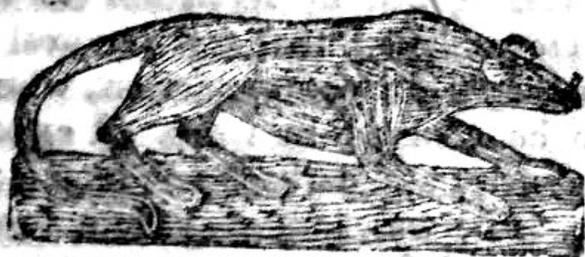
At this stage of the business, Thomas insisted upon remounting our horses, while I urged the necessity of tarrying all night, promising to be ready, as early in the morning, as he might wish. My remonstrances were ineffectual, but as I had no objection of travelling in the dark, I was bent on studying some scheme of prevention. So stepping to the door, under pretence of getting the horses in readiness, I fell purposely to the ground, roaring at the same time, most bitterly, that I had dis-

located my collar bone. This pretended disaster set aside all thoughts of removal, at least for the present; the company thought me exceedingly ill, and sent for a neighboring doctor, who pronounced my case extremely difficult. He assured the people, in a tone as wise as Cullen, that my removal any where, in less time than a fortnight, would be altogether impracticable. I was well pleased that my device had taken such complete effect; in which the dictator, Thomas, was constrained to acquiesce, though, by this time the liquor, which he had gorged, in such profuse quantities, began to operate so forcibly, that he was obliged to prostrate himself on the floor, before the kitchen fire, in order (as he said) to take a nap. He soon fell into the profoundest slumbers, out of which he did not experience a resuscitation, (as I afterwards learnt) till late the next morning. I also took a temporary lodging; but in the dead of night, (all being asleep) stole softly out of the house, and sped away with the Longfellow mare, leaving Thomas to discharge my reckoning in addition to his own. The next day, Thomas, having neither prison nor money, with which to clear out, was obliged to leave in pawn, his saddle, and ride home without that conveniency.

I made the best of my way to Canterbury, and there staid about a week, when news arrived, that I was a deserter from the army, and had moreover stolen Clough's mare. This report excited a small stir among the inhabitants; but, by means of a friendly hint, I discovered the danger just in season for elopement. Thus I left Canterbury, not daring to keep the road, was forced to about

the mare, which was taken up, and sent home to the owner.

Soon after this, my evil genius, Clough, was so pertinacious in his researches, that he succeeded in taking me with a warrant ; and, as preferable to imprisonment, I compounded with my adversary, by paying, and securing to him the payment of, one hundred dollars. At the instant of release, I set off for my father's dwelling ; but my bad luck was so predominant at this juncture, that, before reaching the intended asylum, I was again captured, and hurried away to Exeter jail.



CHAP. IV.

*Labor omnia vicit
Improbis, et duris urgens in rebus egestas.*

VIRGIL.

IN requital of my former vicious tricks and imprudent behaviour, I was now guarded with more suspicious vigilance, and treated with greater severity than usual. Moreover, from the aspect of affairs, it seemed to strike my imagination, that some greater mischief was yet in embryo. My suspicions were far from being visionary, for a day or two after my imprisonment, the compassionate Simeon Ladd, Esq. who had still the charge of the prison, made me an unwelcome visit and imparted a piece of intelligence in its nature the most ungrateful. He affirmed, that my removal into the dungeon was now in contemplation, where I was destined to be chained in irons. I expostulated against the cruelty and barbarity of such a procedure; yet he, as he was, indeed, callous to the feelings of humanity, left me, without consolation, repairing to Daniel Jones, a blacksmith, in Exeter, bespoke a set of massy irons or shackles, weighing with their appendages, twenty five pounds. Jones having prepared those trappings of cruelty, brought them in person, and having removed me to the dungeon, fixed a strong shackle round each of my ankles. Presently after, a large bolt, about two feet in length, was introduced red hot; the taper end of which were twisted about either shackle,

distending my feet to an uncomfortable distance asunder. To cool the bolt they poured on water, which, trickling down, boiling hot, scalded my feet and ankles so miserably, that I remained a cripple for three months after. While this process was on the anvil, those tiger hearted animals ridiculed my sufferings, and without regard to my tears and outcries, continued the effusion of water, till the bolt was sufficiently cooled. This tragedy ended, all was made fast with a chain, two feet in length, one end of which communicated with the bolt, the other being inserted into a staple, that was now driven through the flooring.

In such wretched state, incapable as I was, of stepping one foot before the other upon the floor, I was abandoned to my own reflections. My situation was now deplorable indeed; I was entirely destitute of wholesome food and lodging, and pent up in a loathsome dungeon, the windows whereof were kept for the most part closed. The mouth of the vault was open, hard by, but which for the brevity of the chain, I could scarcely reach; while the nauseous and disagreeable damps and stenches, that evaporated incessantly from the filth deposited therein, impregnated the cell with the most odious stercoria, and rendered my condition horrid in the extreme. Hence my health and strength visibly declined, and with them my intellectual faculties. Having no means of healing my scalded feet and ankles, the pains I endured at intervals were in a manner intolerable; while too, the benevolent powers refused to supply me with the smallest medicinal assistance. The above were a few of the multiple evils, which conspired to depress my spirits,

waste my corporeal powers, and sink me into despair. In the shocking circumstances above described, I continued for upwards of three months, without aid or assistance from either friend or foe, or so much as the expectation of relief! It seemed indeed, as if there had been no hand to help, no eye to pity me! Fain would I believe that very few were acquainted with the real state of my sufferings at that period; sufferings, of which I could foresee neither diminution nor end!!

Becoming daily more and more debilitated, I was at length convinced, that I must shortly fall a victim to this barbarous treatment, unless some speedy method of extrication could be contrived. Accordingly rendered outrageous by despair, I at last undertook the tedious and operose task of breaking jail, destitute as I was, of all needful implements, a task and labour it proved indeed.

To free myself from the chain, by which I was holden to the floor, was apparently the first thing necessary; for unless this were severed, I could move in no direction to any manner of purpose. Instruments I had none. However, one day, when served with my pittance of food, I contrived to bring back an old case knife, which I notched against the irons and so converted it into a kind of saw. With this miserable instrument I made shift to file one link of the chain, in so artificial a manner as to be able to close the fracture whenever I had occasion. I could now move conveniently to any part of the cell; but my strength wasting apace, it was clear that unless expeditious, I should reap no possible benefit from my operations.

My first step was to examine and pry into every portion of the apartment, if happily I might find any one part of slighter structure than the rest, or more obnoxious to attack. The whole however appeared firm and impervious, only I imagined that the timber composing the vault or drain to be of somewhat less stability, than the residue. Against this quarter, therefore I finally determined to direct my whole battery; but after the most critical research and multiplied exertions, I found it impossible to make the slightest impression, unless by sawing off the tenon of a joist four inches in thickness. This, obviously, was a task herculean, yet I set about it with much bravery; and, by the help of my knife, at last accomplished the undertaking, though it cost me three days and nights of painful toil. Whenever I expected a visit from those who brought my daily allowance, it was my care and practice to reinstate myself in chains; yet, maugre this precaution, it was a miracle that I escaped detection.

I had now rendered practicable my descent into the vault, yet still found to my grief, that all further progress was impeded, by the intervention of new obstacles. The fact was, every side of the subterraneous cavity was surrounded with impenetrable timbers, so strong that my utmost prowess was inadequate to the removal of a single piece, without the aid of more forcible implements. To remedy this, I resolved, if possible, to cut out the iron bar, or mantel piece, from the chimney, which was a difficult piece of business; yet I effected it, by scraping away the lime or mortar that cemented it to the bricks. With fresh animation, then, I fell

to work, and by the help of this able instrument, so loosened the opposing timbers, that I removed them out of the passage effectually. Fearing, however, lest some inauspicious event might yet occur, and prevent my escape, I went back, and with much sang froid, replaced the mantel piece in its original situation.

During the whole of this elaborate process, I had remained free from suspicion, though visited by sundry people, particularly the sagacious Mr. Ladd, that lynx-eyed gentleman, though constantly upon the lookout, never discovered the least part of my design; nor do I believe, had an opening been made in the floor, that Ladd would have noticed it, unless, unfortunately, he had fallen therein.

Being now ready for departure, and anxious to leave the domains of this horrid cavern, I descended, for the last time, into the vault, and to my great satisfaction, made out to creep, on all fours, into the jail yard, leaving the broken timbers supported with a prop in token of derision.

It was already past the hour of twelve at night, and some place of refuge must be sought out, before the light of the morning should betray my proceedings. Therefore, from the environs of the prison, I instantly commenced a singular mode of procession; loaded, as I was, with the ponderous iron trappings, which, by reason of the bolts, extended my legs to just such a distance as I pleased. Encumbered in this guise, I could advance but slowly, my feet describing the portion of a circle every step I advanced. The clattering sound emitted from the chains, disturbed the general silence of the night, and awakened, in my path,

ing bosom, ideas of horror and amazement; lest, unfortunately, I should be obstructed in my retreat at last, and reconveyed to that habitation of darkness, which I had, thus recently, abandoned; to that mansion of woe, which already had made such fearful ravages upon my constitution, and might well, ere now, have become my tomb.

Amid such reflections I continued the complex, orbicular kind of movement I was forced to adopt, till I had gotten clear of the compact part of Exeter, when I halted to listen; but the din of pursuers was as yet unheard, all seemed hushed, and still, as the house of death; only the noise of a distant cascade, trilled through the air in broken murmurs, and stole softly upon the listening ear. My agitations began to subside, and fatigued as I was, I marched, or rather hobbled slowly along, till I found myself in a small woody valley, situate a mile east of the jail.

In this sequestered spot I reclined upon the earth, exhausted with excessive toil, and lengthy abstinence. It was certain I could proceed no farther, for the present; I therefore made use of the little strength yet in my possession, to lop down some tall stakes, for the purpose of precluding the raw, piercing air, and of screening my retirement from the sight of pursuers; or at present, of eluding the inspection of those who might pass that way, ere my final retreat should be secured.

In this comfortless place, I endeavored to compose my agitated spirits; but the chilly damps of the (it being fall of the year) effectually baffled my efforts, and caused the solitary hours to linger in this passage.

Soon as ruddy Aurora had dispelled the nocturnal shades, and emblazoned, with new born light, the east, I could hear the busy race of mortals, with freshest activity, renewing their temporal employments, while I seemed banished, as it were, from society, a mere excrescence; an outcast from among men.

Bright Sol had scarcely gilded the lofty spires, in plain words, the steeple of the meeting house at Exeter, when I received a serious alarm, by a distant cry, which I supposed must have proceeded from those who were searching for the poor fugitive Tufts. I listened till the murmurs began to approximate, when I found I was not deceived in my conjectures. Unable to flee, I lay close to the ground, and presently discerned about sixty persons, old and young, with Capt. Ladd, like Falstaff with his ragged corps, at their head, marching in a direction toward the river, and exploring with hound-like sagacity, every hole and corner, as they proceeded. I trembled in every limb, expecting to be unavoidably detected, for they appeared determinedly, to bend their course towards my place of refuge. However, fortunately for poor Henry, they passed by, at a small distance, and pursued a track leading to the river side, where espying traces of my flight, they concluded I had broken the shackles, and, perhaps by swimming over the river, had effected my escape. This induced them to turn homeward, but on their way back, Philip Johnson, one of the troop, chanced to approach near to the place of my concealment, that, on turning his head, he espied my person, and drawing nearer, stared full in my face. Then it was, that

myself up entirely for lost, sounded no alarm as yet, cried out, "What's to be done?" "Nothing," Ladd, with his hand on his hip, said to him, "Then (say) 'No longer.'" "Nor will I be committed at his heels!"

No sooner were they out of sight, I fled along, till I reached some distance. Here I met a man, who, dressed with alimentary privacy, method of travelling, that I could not see an inch farther, till I divested myself of my garments. Nevertheless, a ray of hope had struck me, I thought first to lie down for a little repose. In this I was disappointed, the smallest sound vibrated through my uneasy slumbers. For refreshment from sleep, I quitted the man's pair of old scissors, bequeathed to me by a friend, I twisted the two pieces again into a couple of feet. With these poor utensils I struck the centre of the bolt; in three hours, by repeated blows, with the utmost agility, I had weakened the bolt.

myself up entirely for lost; Johnson, however, sounded no alarm as yet, but going toward Ladd cried out, "What's to be the premium for finding Tufts?" Ladd, with his usual ingenuity, replied "Nothing." "Then (says Johnson) I'll hunt for him no longer." "Nor will I," echoed Ladd; saying which, he steered homeward, with the whole *posse commitatus* at his heels.

No sooner were they out of hearing, than, for fear of another visit, I shifted my quarters; crippling along, till I reached a sequestered spot, at some distance. Here I made a halt, but so exhausted with alimentary privations, and my uncouth method of travelling, that I vowed to budge never an inch farther, till divested of my dangling accoutrements. Nevertheless as the bustle was now laid, and a ray of hope had moderated my anxiety, I thought first to lie down, and obtain, if possible, a little repose. In this I succeeded so far as to fall into a drowse; but sleep was of short continuance, the smallest sound vibrating on the ear, or the shaking of even a leaf, being amply sufficient to disturb my uneasy slumbers. Finding it chimerical to hope for refreshment from sleep, in my present circumstances, I quitted the mossy couch, and, having a pair of old scissors, bequeathed me a few days since, by a friend, I twisted them in twain, and by notching the two pieces against each other, converted them into a couple of saws.

With these poor utensils, I commenced dividing the centre of the bolt; and in the course of two or three hours, by repeating the flying touches, with the utmost agility, made a visible indentation. This so weakened the bolt, that upon my placing

the extremities upon two stones, and smiting it with a third, it parted afunder, and eased me of my irksome manacles without further resistance.

Being now exonerated, I hastily tied the iron fragments together, flung them to my back, and trudged away to a place of more safety, where I rested under covert for the residue of the day.

No sooner had the evening shades advanced, than I left my hiding place, and went to the river which separates Stratham from Newmarket. Here the first thing I earnestly undertook, was to wash away some of the filth, contracted by so lengthy a familiarity with Exeter vault. This done, I constructed a kind of raft with pine boards, of which I bereft a neighboring fence, on which I crossed the tide into Newmarket, so that late at night, I reached home, being, of a truth, almost famished for lack of sustenance.

The next day I sold my brother the disgraceful shackles, I had transported hither, which being converted into a pair of clevices, so termed, were esteemed the most durable and valuable utensils of the kind, in the town of Lee.

This last absence from home had been of so long duration, that my wife and family had suffered immoderately; and, on my arrival, were destitute of many of the comforts of life; wherefore I resorted, almost necessarily, to the old trade of pilfering, which, at this time, afforded us a temporary supply.

In obedience to a strict adherence to truth, I am here constrained to confess, though I am apprehensive this declaration may add, more essentially my manifold transgressions, than the mentioned numerous other miscarriages, that very frequen-

sometimes for several months together, I have left wife and children, wholly destitute of the conveniences of life, without previous notice, and without the least excuse for a conduct so inhuman.

The recollection of these enormities fills my mind with remorse and contrition, even to the present day. How excruciatingly painful are the goadings of an upbraiding conscience !



CHAP. V.

Omnia vincit amor ; et nos cedamus amori.

VIRGIL.

DESIROUS of portraying, as an admonition to others, the real picture of my life and manners, in their native, original colours ; I have advanced thus far, without contracting, or even shadowing a single feature, however, unnaturally prominent or disgusting, in the group. - *Wishing still to be influenced by the pencil of truth.* I shall proceed in my subsequent delineations with customary frankness, and I fondly hope, without fatiguing the curious observer.

At this period I digested a scheme, which had long been a favorite subject of contemplation ; viz. that of visiting some of the southerly states. The real inducements, for atchieving a journey of such prolixity, were, in the first place, curiosity ; and in the second, a desire of liberating myself from the persecution of industrious enemies, who ill brooked my abode at Lee, in any degree of tranquility. I, therefore, quitted home, a pedestrian, but, as we all aim at advancement, soon furnished myself with an excellent horse. Passing through Wilmington, I stole, in the day time, for myself, and a number of soldiers, a bee hive, from the end of a farmer's house ; the owner being nearly within reach at every moment. The prize I conveyed to a fine bridge, distant about one furlong, where we

voured as much of the honey as we could well gorge down, sweeter on account of the stealth, and then flung the residue, hive and all, into the river, remembering the injunction, "cast your bread upon the waters."

From Wilmington, I patrolled the country as far as Virginia, having daily recourse to customary artifices for a subsistence. I afterwards traversed a great part of that gigantic state, the land of presidents; but, because Virginia, however, colossal, was ill suited to my particular exigencies, I rode back to Newyork; where, one day, as I was jogging deliberately along the highway, I met a young woman of German extraction, with whom I entered into familiar converse. After some minutes whiled in this manner, I happened to enquire whither she might be travelling, and was told, that she was in pursuit of a husband. I observed, that she and I, then, might shake hands with propriety, for I also was in quest of a wife. Upon this, with a smile, she gave me an invitation to attend her home, to which, as may well be supposed, I assented most cheerfully.

On our arrival, she introduced me into her father's presence, who was an elderly widower, and very rich. The old gentleman, after a multiplicity of queries, told me he had a parcel of idle negroes, but was in want of a good overseer to keep them diligently at work. His fair daughter, seizing this opportunity, ventured to recommend me to her sire, as the fittest person he would meet with to discharge that office. Pleased at the intelligence, the old man bade me very handsome wages, provided I would consent to tarry in the family. This was

precisely what I desired; and if I exhibited the smallest reluctance in acceding to the flattering proposal, my conduct, certainly, did not correspond with my inclination; though, to tell truth, the personal charms of the young lady, rather than the old don's money, were my principal temptations in courting an alliance with the family.

The day following, I was invested with the superintendence of the negroes; an undertaking to me quite novel, and which presently became irksome; since the tardiness of the drones committed to my oversight, and their disinclination to labour, but ill accorded with the impatience of my temper.

However, my commission was executed in general, much to the satisfaction of my employer, who could not but observe with what rapidity his business progressed under my strenuous management.

The young lady, on whose account solely I lingered in her father's employ, was remarkably handsome; of easy access, and of a winning deportment; these fascinating qualities impelled me to pay her my devoirs with assiduity, which, at length, gained her affections so entirely, that her fortune, I make no question, as well as person, might have remained at my disposal. Meantime I fared like a prince for my enamourata supplied me abundantly with every gratification that imagination could suggest or heart desire. It seemed as if I had found, at last the horn of plenty, and that the cup of pleasure and prosperity was fondly presented to my lips. Yet it was not in the allotment of fate, that my felicity should be of long continuance; for another will be seen, that both horn and cup vanished as phantasma, or the fleeting image of a night-dream, leaving nought but regret behind.

I now learnt that my mistress was a young widow, who had been married to a young gentleman of some repute; but that her partner had died, (herself childless) within two years of their union. She now appeared desirous of a new husband; wherefore, as our intimacy increased, she shew the fondest desire that I should carry my end of the marriage yoke, and settle in that part of the country; but, as if controlled by some invisible power, I declined the (perhaps advantageous) proffer, and frankly acknowledged myself within the matrimonial pale already. This objection, she considered as trivial, and sought to allure me by holding up to view the prospect of future riches and happiness; averring that she was an only child, and sole heiress to her father's plentiful estate, who, she said, was too far advanced in years, to encourage the hope of his much longer survival. But, after all, her persuasions were ineffectual, since I had determined to quit the precincts, and that at no distant period.

Her aged sire being afflicted with a complication of infirmities, I acquainted him, that the practice of physic had been sometimes my favorite employment; making him a tender of my services, for that purpose. The information was agreeable, having long submitted to the care of the faculty, in him; he therefore employed me as a family physician, during my after residence at his house.

About two months after my first acquaintance with this family, I met with an unwelcome surprise, owing to one Lieut. Mooney's sudden arrival at the house. He was a waggoner to the army, and had known me from infancy, egg and bird. I

was in momentary expectation of his divulging something to my disadvantage, but as he did not, my fears on that score were unnecessary. Before his leaving the place, I had a private conference with him, and obtained his firm promise of inviolable secrecy, as to my situation and character. After the above incident, I tarried with my dulcinea a month longer, during which my felicity seemed incapable of further augmentation; but at the end of these delicious days, I acquainted her, that the critical posture of my affairs demanded a speedy return to Newhampshire. At this news, being infinitely averse to my departure, she was much affected; but I assured her the urgency was absolute; so I settled with her sire, and received the arrear of wages yet my due; which done, I took an affectionate, though reluctant farewell of the young lady, who, in all things, had proved my kind benefactress, as well as indulgent mistress. At parting she presented me with a handful of dollars, besides many other tokens of her affection, all which, save the money, I preserved for some time subsequent.

Having separated myself from the enchanted spot, in which the god of love had so held me in silken chains, I prosecuted a continuation of my journey, till it brought me to Lee; where I had the pleasure of finding my family in as deplorable a plight, at least, as at the commencement of my eccentric tour.

Tarrying but a few days at home, I set out on a pedestrian expedition to Vermont. But previous to departure, I had picked up, by chance, the claw of a lobster, which I informed the people I passed along, was an enchanted horn; by

of which I could predict future events ; but that, unfortunately, I had lost another horn, its counterpart, to which had been attached the rare property of enabling its possessor to *foretel* past events. This ridiculous tale was accredited by many ; I therefore, gained much celebrity, as a conjuror ; sometimes my fees amounting to eight shillings in an evening. In this journey I passed through a considerable portion of Vermont, going thence, in a circuitous route, through the Pigwacket country, and then directly home.

I next visited Litchfield ; but a rumour prevailing, that I was a deserter from the army, caused sundry people to concert schemes of seizing me by surprise. Of this, a certain friend gave me, under the rose, a suitable item, and advised my immediate decampment, unless I preferred bondage. This seasonable hint, induced my speedy flight ; but, before making good my retreat, I discerned several men on horseback, riding at a smart rate. By their behaviour, it was clearly manifest, that poor I must be the object of their eager pursuit ; yet, to escape by flight, I knew to be difficult, if not impossible, as the troopers were already in plain sight. Which way to turn, on so sudden an emergency, or what measures to adopt, seemed no easy matter to devise. It happened that I was travelling, at the moment, by the side of a stone wall, enclosing an orchard ; so, the more effectually to deceive my pursuers I fell to patching up a part of the wall, which had been thrown down by people, who had passed that way after apples. Presently the horsemen drew near, but seeing me so busily engaged, they indulged no idea of my being the object of

search; they only made inquiry, whether I had seen a stranger pass by, within the last hour. I answered, as was my duty, not negatively; and affirmed that he had passed along a few minutes since, and had taken the road leading to the river bridge, which was distant about a mile. Without lingering to propound further interrogatories, they clapped spurs to their horses, and away they tilted, Jehu like, as if in the most pressing hurry, and certain of their object. Soon as their absence gave me leave, I quitted my assumed exercise, and cut through fields and pastures, woods and bogs, without stop or stay, till I found a retreat of greater personal security.

Afterwards I strolled from pillar to post; but was in perpetual fear of being apprehended and carried to the army, in the dangerous quality of a deserter. At this period, a gentleman offered me a suit of blazing red clothes, at a very cheap rate; they being, indeed, a little the worse for wear. In want of apparel, I inconsiderately closed the bargain, but soon found, as "red coat," carried terror in the sound, that the singularity of my dress excited great notice, wherever I ventured to appear. Still sheer necessity compelled my wearing the auspicious suit, because I had, at that time, no change of raiment, save an old frock and trowsers.

At length visiting Plastow, I was again recognized, and one Johnson, a military officer, undertook my apprehension. By this man, I was industriously tracked from house to house, and from place to place, and, more than once, had like to have been made the dupe of his artifices. To elude observation, I stripped off the red coat and tied it up

bundle, wearing the frock and trowsers over my other apparel. By this expedient I escaped much notice; yet was obliged to travel, principally, under the shroud of darkness, and to lodge in the woods and barns. But in spite of this precaution my active pursuer had like to have caught me at last; for hearing that I much frequented a certain obscure swamp in Plaftow, he was induced to explore it thoroughly. I lay concealed near its border, without knowledge of the search, till Johnson, with his adjutant, had drawn so near, as to render secret flight altogether impracticable. Before they espied me, I took out a jacknife, and fell to cutting withes, as if to repair an old fence near the environs of the wood. My pursuers saw me at work, and drew near; but as I was dressed in the frock and trowsers, and personally unknown to both, they had no suspicion of my being the delinquent. We conversed together, for some time, and talked much concerning Tufts, whom they pronounced a bad man, and a fellow whom they allotted to capture, at all events. After this they marched off; and I, instantly, also, quitted Plaftow, making no halt, except to refresh my body with food, and my weary limbs with occasional repose, till I reached my own castle.

But in Lee I found my exchange of quarters had been from bad to worse, for I was now more sedulously persecuted than ever, insomuch, that I was forced to take refuge, at last, in my brother Thomas Tufts' house.

At this era of the revolution, there existed the greatest exigency for men to recruit the army, which was the main reason, I presume, of my being treated with such obstinate pertinacity.

I had enjoyed my brother's hospitality but a short period, ere the people of Lee discovered the sanctuary I had chosen, and came, twenty or more, to arrest the obnoxious culprit. My brother espying them, directed me to flee to the woods with all speed, as the only possible means of eluding their vigilance. The band was formidable, being armed with every kind of weapon, and already within pistol shot; so that I was glad to flee with the utmost precipitancy. Luckily, I made out to escape through a back window; to reach unseen, the neighboring woods, and to conceal myself in the obscurity of a thicket.

After they had sufficiently ransacked the house, from top to bottom, to no purpose, they made toward the skirts of the wood, and two of the company, Tuttle and Frost, happened to steer directly to the place of my concealment. The rest of the party had taken a different circuit, and were removed from them, at least a quarter of a mile. Soon as I found myself discovered, I hastily arose, and pulling out a brace of pistols, which I was rarely without, cocked both, and told Tuttle and Frost, I would shoot the first man who attempted to stir, or give the least alarm. As they both were destitute of guns, and sadly intimidated at the outrageous menaces I uttered, they thought it prudent to comply with my injunctions. Detaching my guests, till the rest of the scout were a good distance ahead, I permitted their departure; no sooner were they out of sight, than I made best of my way to another coppice, near Pack falls, in the recesses of which I carefully concealed myself till evening.

Sequestered in this woody labyrinth, from all human intercourse, I had leisure to brood over former calamities, and the infelicity of my present situation. Whithersoever I turned my eyes, to the right hand or the left, I still beheld industrious adversaries ready to seize and deliver me into the hands of inexorable justice. I was conscious, that my person and flagrant misdemeanors were known and reprobated so generally, as to preclude the hope of my abiding in safety, near the place of my nativity. Even a reformation of life and manners could have little tendency, I supposed, after such a series of enormities, to re-establish my credit or reputation. All thoughts, therefore, of present amendment I cast away as useless, and as a task too unpromising, too arduous even to attempt, much less accomplish. Upon the whole, I felt a *disinclination* for every laudable pursuit, and a *disposition* to travel on in my former dissolute courses; for, really, my sufferings, though severe, had not cured my vicious propensities, nor had the school of adversity, though bitter, taught me the salutary doctrine of repentance.

Thus did I pass the hours, till the shades of night enveloped the face of things, and invested my person with a sort of invisibility. Whither, after all, to shape my course, I wist not; for horror and despondency had engrossed my imagination, and operated, as a deadly weight, to clog the wheels of useful enterprise; yea, to plunge me more deeply, more irreversibly, into the abyss of depravity and woe.

To abide longer in this wretched spot, without sustenance, I found physically impossible. Already

the calls of nature had become querulous, and pointed out the necessity of instant removal; I therefore left the thickets, and repaired to the house of a friend, where having quieted the cravings of appetite, I commenced a solitary journey toward the west.

Loaded with mental discouragements, I rambled from place to place; intending however, to gain subsistence without submission to the drudgery of labour. To effect this I travelled as an Indian Physician, and had recourse, also, to every other artifice and device within the sphere of my invention.

As I passed through Kennebunk, one of my quondam associates delivered me a bundle of clothes to carry a mile or two, and deposit in a certain house. Very innocently, I undertook the trust, but had discharged the freight scarcely a second, when I perceived a group of people, coming with *hue and cry*, in quest of the thief. The goods had been stolen, it seems, the very day I received them, and the owner, by some means or other, had gotten upon the right track. As I was particularly wishful of avoiding entanglements in this ill-boding conjuncture I slipped out of doors, took advantage of *leg-bail*, and sped to the deep coverts, eluding by which means those industrious thief-takers.

Quite disgusted with wandering thus on foot, I contrived to appropriate a horse, which I rode a number of miles, under the screen of darkness; but on the approach of day-light, thought it inadvisable to secrete him in the bushes, till the vent of the next evening should again favour

retreat. At a good distance from the road I found a station, in which it was presumable I might pass the day unmolested. I had also reclined at my ease upon a hillock, and was preparing to take a nap, when suddenly I was much startled at the sight of a man, running toward me with much velocity. Unable to hide, unwilling to flee, I sprang on end, and threw myself into a posture of defence; but it turned out in the sequel, that he was only in pursuit of a runaway cow. This was better than expectation; yet as the man had seen me with the horse, I thought my greater safety would be in flight; so, quitting all, I sped off with the greatest swiftness. What became of the horse I never knew, yet have little doubt of his being recovered by the legal owner.

After strolling a field a while longer, I even hazarded an approximation to Lee; and, when within about twenty miles of that town, accidentally fell in with a daughter of Love, whom I found propitious to my warmest wishes. The first three weeks I was rarely absent, night or day from her bewitching company, proving to my satisfaction in that interim, (if the thing needed proof) that,

“ In soft battles I could pass the night,
 And rise next morning, vig'rous for the fight,
 Fresh as the day, and active as the light.” }
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I had serious thoughts of pulling the matrimonial noose, with this young Doxy, to which she appeared most amorously inclined; but, at last, I formed an opinion, natural to every capacity, that, to enter Hymen's soft domains, within so short a distance of Lee, would be a procedure too perilous for experiment.

While engaged in this amour I casually contracted some little acquaintance with one Ebenezer Hubbard, a straggling adventurer, whom I perceived to be a bird of my own feather. Our meeting accelerated the dereliction of my new mistress; whose personal charms had otherwise, commanded the devoirs of her humble servant a longer period.

Hubbard and I agreed to commence a career of larceny, in concert and to share the profits jointly. Our first essay commenced at Durham, where we eased George Frost, of the trouble of a horse, and, when passing through a part of Vermont, disposed of him to one Daniel Eldridge, of Pownald. Frost, gathering some information of this circumstance, went to Vermont, and persuaded Eldridge to surrender the property. However I was detained by the latter to respond damages, and rather than controvert the affair, I engaged to pay thirty dollars and a yoke of oxen, as the mean of avoiding worse consequences.

Hubbard being unable to make remittances, and both being considered as holden by the law of *firms* and copartnership, the burden fell principally upon my shoulders, reducing me thereby to a painful strait; I was enabled, however, in the end, by one means or another, to clear the incumbrance, and thus obtained a dismissal.

Hubbard and I then resorted to Lee, where, on account of the late unlucky disaster, we were reduced to the very lowest ebb. I was in favour of dissolving partnership, but Hubbard opposed the idea. For whatever reasons he was averse to quitting my company, so I gave up the point, and set out with my auxiliary for the purpose of be-

ing open and robbing, in the neighborhood, a fulling-mill. This we accomplished, and acquired by the means a quantity of milled cloth, which we conveyed to Lee, and secreted in my father's field.

The losers naturally mistrusted *Hubbard & Tufts*, and, on instant search made, succeeded in securing us both. We were separated forthwith, when Hubbard, being threatened by some, and coaxed by others, had the simplicity to confess every fact, and to reveal where the cloth lay concealed. The owners, meeting with such brilliant success, both in finding their property, and in detecting the aggressors, conducted us triumphantly before a justice of the peace, who awarded our commitment to Exeter jail. The court happened to be then in session, we were tried out of hand, and sentenced to receive twenty lashes a piece, which order was executed, without mercy. The residue of our punishment was to lie in durance twenty days, and then to be sold for damages and in the event of non-payment, cost.

The penalty of imprisonment, we satisfied in its fullest extent; for, as no man in his senses would purchase such kind of trumpery, as were a brace of condemned malefactors; our dismissal was the consequence.

Luckily for my health, none of the officers of the Bay State, as Massachusetts was then called, (for there had been my three years' enlistment) nor any of their obsequious tools, happened to come along during my confinement. I say, luckily, since had their old master, the devil, sent any of them to Exeter, at this crisis, it is more than probable, that, in lieu of a dismissal, I had been taken

into custody, and forwarded to the army. It was not long, however, before I met with fresh disturbance on the score of desertion, in consequence of which I was obliged to leave house and home, and betake myself to precipitate flight.

The first place I halted at, for any length of time, was Canterbury; this being a country town, I felt here a reasonable degree of confidence.

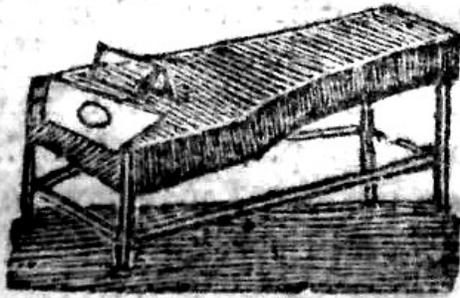
One day, being at work with a farmer in his field, I shewed him a method, recently invented by myself, of playing upon three pompion vines at a time, so as to make a kind of melody, not indeed music, though consisting of such a variety of strange, harmonious jargonic sounds, in combination, as might, at a distance, be thought to resemble harmony; the larger vine carrying a sort of bass, and the smaller ones, tenor and treble. Those sounds, in a still night, may be heard, very distinctly, at the distance of a mile or more.

As it happened, the night ensuing was pretty dark, so the man, to whom was imparted the above secret, and myself, out of sheer mischief, agreed to travel the rounds, in order to astonish the inhabitants, by blowing upon the vines. To this end we furnished ourselves with a suitable apparatus, and away we hied, "whistling as we went," and making such a wonderful chime, that the very woods rang again, and Orpheus himself might have listened. The inhabitants of Canterbury, naturally superstitious, were one and all, in a most dismal amazement, as appeared the following day. Some concluded the sounds must proceed from trumpets; others said it was warlike music in the air, betokening war and bloodshed; while a third class ver-

believed, that the great day of judgment was at hand.

After we had sounded a general alarm, and spent a deal of unnecessary breath, we returned to our quarters, sufficiently wearied, indeed, with the extraordinary exercise.

The next day the whole town was in a ferment, some running hither, some thither, till at length the greater part had assembled at one place, and a religious meeting was held on the gloomy occasion. From a taste for novelty I attended the curious scene, and hardly ever witnessed such a stir among a set of quaking enthusiasts, in my life. The tremor was universal, many crying out, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" In fine, there was a great reformation, as it was called, and it lasted for the space of six months.



CHAP. VI.

Tippies ! to your lovely lasses,
 Kindly pledge the brimming bowl;
 Naught pure love and wine surpasses ;
 Or so raps the jocund soul.
 Should tomorrow bring vile trouble,
 Look for comfort from your purse,
 Know content, makes pleasure double ;
 Banish care, life's foulest curse.

LEAVING Canterbury, I hastened to Old Wells, where I met with a jolly shoemaker. At the pressing instance of this laughing son of Crispin, I went home with him, to share, in his company, a bowl or two of grog. While at his house I scraped acquaintance with a tempting daughter of Venus, to whom I warmly paid my address, under a borrowed name.

Oft, ere this, had it been my fortune, to stoop to the dominion of the fair sex ; the fascinating charms of my new mistress again riveted her fickle captive in voluntary chains. Three weeks rolled away, in this courtship, and to complete the luxury of the scene, I fared most sumptuously, though at the expence of my own purse. I may say, in this place, with the greatest propriety,

With the joys of great Bacchus I quicken'd each sense,
 Till my guineas and pounds were transmuted to pence
 In the arms of my mistress, entranc'd ev'ry night,
 I pass'd the soft moments in am'rous delight.

At the end of these three weeks, it occurred my reflection, that I had far outstaid my time ;

what was worse, that my full purse had dwindled to the mere dwarf and skeleton of its former glory. This was no pleasing consideration, to be sure; yet I was loth to forego my delicious banquet. The pretty minx had entirely engrossed my affections, at least, for the moment; I therefore dreaded to sound a retreat from her tender embraces. Accordingly, I prolonged my stay till the end of a few more days, by which time the terrors of personal insecurity gained such entire ascendancy over the softer sensations, that I gave way to the dictates of prudence, and hastened my departure from Wells.

The thoughts of my late mistress were soon eradicated from my breast, by the intervention of new cares and new adventures, more especially, by my return to Lee, which took place within a fortnight after I had quitted her society.

At home, however, I was no better than a nuisance, since, fearful of being seen, I could earn nothing; I therefore, took an opportunity to obtain, without saying, "*by your leave,*" a complete mare from the enclosure of a neighbor, who must be nameless. I rode but a few furlongs before meeting with a man of my acquaintance, whom, though the night was gloomy, I recognized; but as he had not the slightest knowledge of me, I jogged securely on, intending to reach No. 4, then so called, in the first instance. On the way thither a suitable chance occurred of turning the mare for cash, which I seized, and then proceeded on foot.

At Fishersfield, fifteen miles northeast of No. 4, I put up at a tavern for the night; but, through my inadvertency, a glimpse of the well fraught purse (the fruits of my late adventure) was caught.

accidentally, by mine host of the garter, at the moment of my supplying him with a small matter of change.

In the evening I took notice, that he drank immoderately; infomuch, that it was quite late, ere we had permission to retire to rest. I had been in bed, as I conjectured, upwards of an hour, when I overheard people whispering in the adjoining room. Listening awhile, I imagined the conversation to be between the landlord and his spouse; it appeared they were in a kind of dispute about something, though I heard scarce enough of the subject to conjecture what. At length, elevating their tones to a more audible pitch, I heard the woman say distinctly, "That won't do, for such a thing can never be hid." "Hold your damn'd tongue (retorted the man) and let me alone." This uttered, they conversed again in so low a key, that it was impossible to guess at the purport; though the accents of the landlady resembled those of lamentation. Soon after I conceived her to be weeping. This made me conjecture, that I was the subject of altercation, and that the landlord had predetermined some scheme of robbery, or perhaps murder. Those thoughts weighed so powerfully on my imagination, that, instantly, I should have quitted the horrid mansion, if the thing had been morally practicable; but since it was not, I saw no remedy, but to lie still, and watch while morning; if, haply, I should remain undisturbed, till then. However, this dubious scene existed but a few minutes, when I overheard some one busy at the kitchen fire, in the act of raking up the embers; and, quick after, the landlord entered my apartment with

massy fire shovel in his fist, the weapon being held in a proper position to give a decisive blow. He advanced toward my bedside (for by the light of the moon through the casement, I could see distinctly) with cautious steps. My pistols, were also ready, at the moment; intending, therefore, to give my assailant the handsomest reception, I sprung on end, and aiming one of those speedy messengers of destruction toward his breast, bade him advance an inch further, and I would sacrifice him to Dagon. At this unexpected salute, he stopt short, which gave me time to convince him, that I was armed, and should certainly take his life, if he attempted the least mischief; but in case he preferred an armistice, and going to bed, it would be well, otherwise I should consider him an assassin, and deal with him accordingly. As the villain thought to have caught me napping, he was unprepared for opposition; and seeing little else than hard blows for his encouragement, he grew sick of the unpromising enterprize. Thus situated, he began to apologize, begging me to overlook his misconduct, or to impute it to the effects of strong drink, which he declared, had overwhelmed his natural reason. Being willing to admit of any excuses, however specious, to be once rid of the troublesome rascal, I told him I could pardon the whole, on condition of his using me with civility for the future. This he promised, protesting I should live like a king, without money or price, let my stay at his house be ever so lengthy.

Thus ending without bloodshed, this extraordinary affair, the landlord withdrew to his own lodging, making no further disturbance till morning;

but for my life I was unable to tranquillize my spirits, so as to obtain the least quiet repose.

This was a night prolific of terrors, for, in the course of it, I experienced another alarm, which turned out, in the end, to be nothing but an old horse, that came beating about the house in search after salt, or some such savoury article.

In the morning, early, I arose from my pillow of thorns, and the landlord, as a kind of compensation for his nocturnal disturbances, entertained me, not free, upon the very best his house afforded; but as soon as I had taken breakfast, and regaled sufficiently, I bade adieu to the detested spot, and resumed my circuitous rambles.

Having passed through Number four, I wheeled to the right about; came, in a short time to Nottingham, and soon arrived at Hampton-Falls. Here I wheedled away a large dog, and sold him near Newbury, for ten shillings; but had crossed the Ferry, scarce twenty minutes, when the dog returned to me by swimming. I ventured into a house in Newburyport, and sold him a second time for six shillings, good money; then taking the road to Bradford, I went on about two miles, when my faithful dog again overtook me. At Bradford I parted with him a third and last time, for about one dollar more; so that, on the whole, my trusty dog turned to a pretty good account. I halted at Bradford just long enough to replenish with food when my journey was renewed with increased ardor, adopting a sort of disguise, and altering my name, frequently, with a view to baffle pursuit.

One day I called into a gentleman's house who happened to know me, and who, had heard me

of my (ill) fame. This man was possessed of a valuable horse, which I examined with some attention. Noticing this, he enquired if I coveted the animal; my answer being in the positive, he proceeded in the following strain: "*This horse I keep closely locked up, and guarded by sentries every night: so, if you can make out to steal him, you shall be extremely welcome, and never be called to account for so doing.*" I could not but marvel as much at this declaration, as at the very prudent care the gentleman took of his horse; but, on further enquiry, I discovered that he had himself bought him of a thief, and that, being apprehensive of a clandestine visit from the primitive owner, he had taken the above precautions to secure his purchase. Feeling somewhat nettled, as a gentleman of my profession would, at being bantered thus, I resolved to execute some stratagem for the attainment of the horse: I went away, and procuring a quart bottle of rum, and adding a suitable quantity of opium, tarried till late in the evening: I then drew near the stable, where I knew the courser must be. Here I was hailed by a couple of servant men, who demanded my motives for travelling at that season of the night. I told them that the object of my pursuit was a thief, named *Henry Tufts*, who had stolen my horse; but that I believed I had gotten already in advance of him. They said they had frequently heard of that gentleman, and that he was accounted the greatest knave and most arrant horsec-bief in all that country.

Our dialogue growing familiar, I finally concluded to make a halt in this place, that Tufts might arrive. Meantime I expressed a desire to

purchase a little rum to cheer my spirits that cold evening; but being told that none could be attained in that quarter; without more ceremony I took out my bottle, and, tasting of the contents, offered it to my new acquaintance, who received the gratuity with cordiality. Upon the whole, making a quick dispatch of the liquid, I could but admire at its sudden effects, which were such, that immediately my *pot-companions* were both stretched on the ground, encircled in the arms of Morpheus. By searching their pockets I found the key of the stable, which I unlocked and directly had the pleasure of fixing myself on the back of a very fine horse.

Avoiding the glare of day, I rode him a night or two, till, being out of harm's way, I exchanged him for another horse, and received as boot, thirty-five dollars in ready cash. This last horse I sold for forty dollars more; and, with the property, made a speedy decampment. Thus, my late undertakings, however villainous, had been successful; but fickle fortune had now like to have turned the scale; for, at this juncture, I came within *an ace* of being detained, as a deserter by a certain Lieutenant belonging to the army; from whose fangs I luckily escaped.

Hitherto, I have been, perhaps, tediously minute in the description of this journey; to make amends, gentle reader, I will tell thee a story, I hope, more diverting, though connected with the foregoing events.

Feeling a degree of exultation at the sight of my pecuniary successes, I purchased an elegant suit of wearing apparel, a laced hat and embroidered waistcoat with other articles of equal value.

these I added rings of gold, to adorn my dainty fingers, and a costly watch to decorate my fob. In this splendid garb, I continued my travels as far as the town of Hudson, in New-York. Here, one night, I took shelter in a house, in which were two young ladies, the one as Rachel, very beautiful, the other as Leah, not only tender eyed, but, whose whole contour of physiognomy was irregular, uncouth and forbidding, to a proverb. I scraped some acquaintance with both; but felt the most irresistible inclination to make the more beautiful miss my companion for the night. As it fell out, we all three lodged in the second story of the house, though in separate apartments. Unable to conquer my insatiable desire, I even mustered courage, with silent steps, to invade the precincts of the handsomest damsel; and had the supreme felicity to find her so far from obstinacy, that at the first summons she surrendered the castle, and admitted a friendly parley, till morning. Even yet, O, memory, thou presentest to view, this feast of love, as of yesternight; how delighted, how transported was I, with the elegant person of my fine companion! The hours passed away in transports of ecstasy unutterable; nor was the potent charm dissolved till Phœbus shot his officious beams through the casement, and imparted to my, till now intoxicated senses, a view of surrounding objects. But paint now in imagination, who can, my surprise, my confusion, when I saw myself encircled in the arms of the ill-favoured, the rejected damsel, in close contact, with the same bundle of deformity, whom I had contemplated with such cold indifference, such killing disgust, the preceding evening.

The scene was truly farcical ; I was planet struck ; what surprise she noticed in my aspect, I pretend not to say ; but she demanded with a sarcastic sneer, whether I had been deceived in my partner. I answered that I had been confoundedly so.—“ See, cried she, *the force of imagination.*” Her logic was irrefragable ; but, as I wished, for cogent reasons, to wave further discussion, I quitted the house abruptly ; and upon revolving in my mind, as I paced the street, the ludicrous adventures of the night, came to the following resolution ; never to differ with a wife, much less a mistress, upon so light and trivial a consideration, as the want of external beauty.

The present journey was long and intricate. In the course of it I visited the high lands near West Point, and had the mortification to see a number of Pennsylvania riflemen receive one hundred lashes each, as a punishment for the rescue of some prisoners.

From West Point my rambles were vague and fortuitous, till I reached Vermont. Having, passed through a portion of that state, the whim took me to visit, in rotation, the town of Claremont, to gain sight, if possible, of Sally Judd, my former mistress and almost wife. The delightful scenes I had passed in her company, recurred afresh to my recollection, and induced a secret wish, that similar scenes might again occur ; but of this there was no present prospect, nor could I expect to renew connection, which had thus long been dissolved.

At Claremont I put up at Spencer's tavern, having money sufficient for present exigencies, allotted to tarry in the place several days. S

and her friends were the objects of my earliest inquisition. I learnt that she still remained unwedded, and resided, as formerly at her father's house. I had a peculiar fancy to see and converse with her; but, in truth, had not the effrontry to approach her father's dwelling, so that, should I meet her at all, it must be, I supposed, by mere accident.

The day after my arrival at Spencer's, came in a stranger, a genteel, well looking man, who, on committing his steed to the hostler, assumed a seat near mine; we entered into a familiar conversation. His deportment was affable and engaging, and his appearance that of a man of sense and information. He tarried in my company till near night, and then talked of the prosecution of his journey. I hinted, that, as the close of the day was so near at hand, to travel far must be out of the question; and that, consequently, he had better postpone his departure till morning. In return, he observed, that his absence from home had been tedious, and that still he had a lengthy journey to perform; that having but little money to defray expences, diligence, in his circumstances, became a matter of expediency. If that be the case, (said I) as you are a stranger, and must need be in want of refreshment, if you choose to stop here I will discharge your reckoning with pleasure. He finally concluded to tarry, and thanked me in handsome terms for my civility.

The hours passed agreeably till bed time, when the new guest proposed our sleeping in the same bed. I could have no objections, so having retired to rest, we resumed the theme of our former conversation. Our intimacy improving, he enquired,

whether he might venture to entrust me with a secret? I replied, that he might, without the least scruple, even if it concerned his life. This being settled, he told me "his name was Whiting; that he had long been an agent for the British, who had now employed him as an emissary to explore the country, and circulate counterfeit money. That, as Congress had issued a paper medium to raise armies, and pay off their troops, it imported their adversaries to discredit the currency as effectually as possible. And, as such large quantities of paper, had been emitted already, the speediest way to effect the entire dissolution of that system was to inundate the country with counterfeit bills. I have now with me, a large sum, of money, of that description, executed in a very masterly manner, and can supply you in the evening with a competent sum, if you think you can pass it to advantage." I thanked him for his liberality, and confessed I should be glad of a small quantity, which I had no scruple of putting off without difficulty.

This was the substance of our evening discourse, agreeably to which, the next morning, before leaving the chamber, he counted me out upwards of one thousand dollars. I expressed some anxiety, lest it might discommode him to part with so considerable a sum; but he replied; "No, no, I can spare it very well, as I have, now, fifty thousand dollars in my pocket. However, I should be glad of a little silver to discharge bills, at particular places, and if you could supply me with a trifle, should esteem it a great favour." As I was pleased at the opportunity of requiting, in the

measure, my benefactor, I handed him three dollars, for which I had his peculiar thanks.

This important business being adjusted, we descended into the parlour, and joined the rest of the company. Mr. Whiting staid to breakfast, and then took his leave; but never, since that morning, have I had the satisfaction to behold his face.

On the same day of my receiving the spurious bills, curiosity prompted me to make experiment of their currency. On trial, I found not the slightest difficulty in passing them. Indeed my bills were such an exact imitation of the genuine ones, that a man must have had more penetration than ordinary, to have discerned the slightest difference.

I now found that my new food of money would turn, doubtless, to good account; yet, as it daily depreciated, I supposed it my wisest course to lay out a considerable quantity of it the first opportunity. Accordingly I purchased a good horse, new suit of clothes, and materials for a complete suit of female apparel: the last I sent, as a present, to poor Sally, accompanied with a message, that I wished to see and converse with her before leaving the vicinity. She accepted the offer with gratitude. I intended this offering as some kind of atonement for the damage her character had sustained through my means.

A day or two after this, hearing that Sally was on a visit at a neighbour's house, I went to see her. Our interview was interesting; I attempted an apology for former transgressions, but my excuses did not obviate the severity of her censures. After a lengthy conference, in which were discussed our former concerns, I took leave, to present her at

parting with fifty of those very dollars which I had received of Whiting.

Thus, having negotiated at Claremont the business nearest my heart, I meditated a sudden removal; bidding, therefore, adieu to all, I mounted my nag, and departed from the neighbourhood. I had not travelled many miles before I had the address to traffick away my horse for money and goods; which articles I transported like an honest man, to my own family, well knowing they must be thrice welcome there.

Not daring to abide long at Lee; the dread I yet entertained of being seized and transmitted to the army, operated so forcibly, I hastened to Berwick, and was hospitably entertained by one Warren. This man was prodigiously in debt, and having to take every precaution to keep clear of executions, his house became the fittest receptacle I possibly could have chosen, in this region. As it fell out, my stay was protracted, at Warren's, twenty days together; this happened in consequence of a courtship I then managed with a young woman, resident at his house. In all probability I should have hazarded another Hymeneal tug, had not the proximity of my Sparrow's residence to Lee, prevented that measure. She, in fact, was marriage the *finè quâ non* of our longer intimacy. I therefore chose to decamp, and leave my amorous charmer to pick up a spark, less strongly trammeled for her husband.

From Berwick, I came to Dover, the land of alewives, lawyers and clay; where, being tempted to steal a horse, I improvidently conveyed me to Lee. Here a certain man (whose name was

repetition) who was always very busy in the important office of detecting thieves, transacting however, occasionally, himself a little of their appropriate business: this wiseacre, forsooth, blood-hound like, dogged me so narrowly, that he discovered the stolen horse, and wrested him forcibly from my hands. After which, the same puppy, not content, with his present success, and envious of my prosperity in the rule of Thumb, hunted me so perseveringly, that I was glad to abstain from doing worse.

In the course of my flight, I once more met my quondam associate James Smith; who being also, a deserter, and forced to play *hide and go seek*, we consoled together, and transacted the same business in co.

Our joint petit larcenies supplied the greater part of our sustenance at this season; remedy, however, any contingent deficiency with the money I had received of Whiting, which, by the time it had dwindled already, to a pretty diminutive sum.

It was late in the autumn 1780, when this accidental rencontre, with my fellow laborer, took place. We had been descried in company, repeatedly, and were of course put to our trumps out of harm's way, being forced to lodge in barns and sometimes even in the forests; although the earth was covered with snow, and the atmosphere extremely cold.

In this despicable manner, we rambled from one haunt to another, till we reached Allenstown, where hunger and necessity induced our abiding in the woods together. We had provided fireworks, however, with which we could kindle a flame, to scathe our

vians, and a hatchet, that sufficed to erect a shelter, to screen us from the inclement season.

As these woods were solitary, and rarely pressed by the foot of man, we had little apprehension of disturbance; and by traversing a few miles every second or third night, we made shift to procure such store of turkies, geese, pigs and other eatables, as precluded any pressing lack of food. One evening we took a beehive, from a Mr. Batchelder, and conveyed it, entire, to our place of resort. My companion and I were much tickled with this acquisition; and upon the honey, regaled more deliciously than we had for a long time before. After supper we reclined, as usual, by a small fire, and for a few hours, steeped our senses in the soft forgetfulness. Hardly had the rays of light streaked the chambers of the east, when we shook off the dew, and kindled the willing blaze to warm our benumbed limbs. We had begun also a few fragments of cold fowl, the relics of a former repast; and were musing in melancholy mood upon the cheerless aspect of our affairs, when suddenly to our great consternation, we were alarmed by a rustling noise hard at hand, among the bushes. Starting up, and looking whence the sounds vibrated, we saw the woods full of men, armed cap a pie. That they were in quest of us we could have no doubt; and on second view we readily discerned them to be the people of Allenstown; who, on account of our depredations on their property, had investigated the place of our retreat, and mustered en masse, to the tune of thirty or more to take prisoners.

With a sudden bound I leaped forward, and, crying out to Smith to flee with all speed, or it would be game up with him, we both took to our heels. Our pursuers, seeing us make off so briskly, set up a great shout, and pressed on with fury. They had received, it seems, strict orders to kill us upon the spot, in case we attempted to flee; consequently, having us in fair sight, and within pistol shot, they all discharged their pieces full in our rear. The balls whizzed about my ears, as thick, in my then multiplying imagination, as hailstones; yet, fortunately, I survived the leaden tempest unhurt. Smith too received no other damage than the loss of an earlock, which being separated by a musket ball, dropped down upon his shoulder. So rough a salute was enough to rouse to alertness the dullest of mortals;—it electrified us in an instant; and, in as little time, was our every nerve exerted to make good a retreat. Having sustained this heavy fire, thus ungenerously made by the enemy, I was determined never to be taken alive, by the dastardly villains, who occasioned it; and so peculiar was my reliance on my own dexterity, that I harboured little doubt of escaping in spite of them all. But for my messmate Smith I had somewhat, sincerely, to fear, since I found him quite unable to hold pace with me. My prognostications were realized, for, the next minute I had the mortification to see him overhauled and made captive.

By the time this was done, I was approaching a narrow but deep rivulet, the surface of which was incrustated with ice; though of insufficient thickness to bear me over. As I saw no remedy, but to sur-

render, or cross this stream, I made the hazardous attempt, and passed over at a single leap. The foremost pursuer was snug at my heels, who, thinking to do the like, gave a sudden bound, but, in lieu of gaining the opposite bank, as intended, he had the misfortune to miss stays, and alight midway the stream. A lucky hit this, for the ice, being thin, broke through, and plump went he to the bottom. His disaster gave me some advantage in the race; since, most of the company were forced to halt, and lend a hand in relief of the drowning person. The residue of the gang, however, pursued with vigour, and one of them, at this stage of the business, Johnson by name, a tall, crane-like fellow, with legs as long as maypoles, far outstript his rivals in the chase. This spindle shanked sneak, was, several times, upsides with me in the race; but being a gawkish, cowhearted chap, he could not muster resolution to seize upon his prey. Mean time was rescued, from his frigid bath, the unfortunate sufferer; when, once more, the chase became general, and continued with ardour, till Johnson, spying his colleagues too far in the rear, thought best to give up the fruitless pursuit, and leave me in possession of a well earned victory. Poor Smith, if I remember right, was conveyed to Exeter, and lodged in prison; but of his after-fortunes, or misfortunes, I can give no relation.

Allenstown being no longer the land of promise, I set out with diligence for the Kennebec country; to which, after shunning many perils, and submitting to much hunger and toil, I made out to attain.



CHAP. VII.

Behold the vagrant ! on he hies,
 While happiness before him flies :
 Attach'd to vice, to virtue blind,
 Misfortunes cannot cure his mind.
 The wicked, says a well known text,
 Like troubled seas, and oceans vex'd,
 Cast niry dirt, as on they sweep,
 From the low caverns of the deep.

IN this interesting tour I passed over a large portion of the eastern territory; but still dreading to return to my native State, went to Pig-wacket and thence to Saratoga, with full purpose of mind to leave my own country forever, and to reside somewhere in the settlements of Upper Canada.

From Saratoga, I advanced towards Quebec, and putting up, one night, at a humble cot, received of my entertainer the detail of a tragical event, which took place in that quarter a short time prior to my arrival. Without apology for the episode I shall give it a place here.

Three of our countrymen had been hunting, it seems, for several months in the wilderness, north of Saratoga; when, it happened that one of them, named Abbot, took it into his head, in the absence of his partners, to visit their traps. This was an imprudent step to be sure, because the woods were infested with hostile Indians, who kept the frontiers in consternation, and did no small mischief.— Abbot reached the traps unmolested; but while

buffed in securing the game, unhappily for him, he was discovered and taken captive by six Indians.

The savages soon formed the horrid conclusion of putting their prisoner to a painful and lingering death; and, in order to execute the infernal purpose, led him off to some distance, where having gagged and prostrated the wretched victim on his back, they cut holes through his wrists and heels, between the bones and tendons, in such a manner as to draw *metump* lines and green withes, through the apertures. Then extending his arms and legs to a degree exquisitely painful, they, with the ligatures above mentioned, lashed him fast to four small trees; which bloody exploit finished, those horrid hell-hounds left the writhing sacrifice, and withdrew to a cluster of bushes, with intent to make merry, and enjoy, in idea, the excruciating tortures of the sufferer. Mean while, as Abbot returned not to his anxious companions, they began to be solicitous for his welfare, and set out in quest of him accordingly.

Coming to the hunting ground, and not finding whom they sought, they were quite at a loss what route to pursue. But observing the dog, which they had led thus far in a string, to be very urgent for going in a particular direction; they knew not but something especial might be the cause of his earnestness.

They therefore gave him his own humour, and by following the sagacious animal, as he led the way, came in a few minutes upon their partner Abbot, stretched and bound in the above related manner. With trembling haste they released him from his horrible confinement; and, having two

well charged, agreed to venture up within shot of the Indians, whom they now heard at some distance in the height of their rejoicing. Advancing with much caution to a proper station, they made a halt, levelled their pieces, and, at a given signal, both fired at the same instant. To their great satisfaction they found that each shot had taken the best possible effect; four of the tawny rogues were killed outright, and a fifth so crippled, as to be incapable of flight. The sixth and only remaining Indian fled for his life. At this moment our hunters let loose their faithful dog, which overtook the fugitive in a trice, and before they could gain the spot, had destroyed his prey in a manner too shocking to relate. These savages reaped the reward of their cruelty, being killed to a man; but Abbot survived, and is now living, it is said, in the district of Maine.

I sojourned several days with the person, who made me this rehearsal; in which time he gave me such unfavourable accounts of the Canadian territories, and of the severity of their laws and customs, particularly, in the chastisement of offenders, that I grew skittish of consequences, and resolved to shun even the barriers of a country, so rigid in its internal police, as to destroy entirely my favorite schemes. Relinquishing therefore all present ideas of voluntary expatriation, I shifted my course, went down to number four (now Charlestown) and thence, after the respite of a few days, returned back to Lee. This was, indeed, a trying season; for as my last excursion had been attended with every loss and expenditure, I had brought home little or nothing to bear my own charges, much less to make glad the hearts of expecting relatives.

It was immediately famed abroad that Tufts had returned; and as former evils existed in abundance, I was obliged to be extremely circumspect to avoid surrounding difficulties. Many were officiously anxious that I should be caught and punished, regarding me as a pest to society, and my nefarious misdeeds as altogether insufferable. Their perseverance caused me unceasing solicitude; I still persisted, however, in my former practices, in defiance of public reprobation, or legal menaces.

At this juncture an adventurer arrived, John Sanborn by name, a droll, unlucky chap, very light-fingered, but unworthy even of my confidence. In a word: being a man pretty much of my own kidney; we associated together at all convenient seasons; my cottage being selected as the place of our common rendezvous. By robbing friends and foes indiscriminately, we became the scourges of the community, while our mischievous pranks, though a source of complaint far and near, afforded us (alas, the depravity of human minds) nought but exultation and triumph. Custom and habit gave ground imperceptibly; and I may declare from experience, that the farther a man travels in dissolute courses, the less will be his compunction when deviating from the paths of uprightnes. To this effect sings the poet:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

It will be necessary to pass over, in this place, many incidents, which, after so considerable a lapse of time, I recollect but indistinctly; and which, though

tained in memory, would be too trivial for recital. The following may claim some attention.

One evening, when my "boon companion," and myself had been out upon a customary expedition, and were returning homeward richly laden with booty; chancing to pass by Lieut. John Burleigh's house, we espied two shirts, as we supposed, suspended on a pole for the purpose of drying. Without so much as asking leave, however light, we made free to snatch both, and hastened to our usual retreat. The next morning, on review of the spoils, we found, that in lieu of two shirts, we had brought home a couple of (the ladies will pardon the-expression) elegant smocks. In want of a shirt each, the disappointment was a little mortifying; but being in the habit of making even *shirts*, upon emergency, we thought it not impossible to transform a couple of them into as many shirts; so we agreed to adjourn to the woods to accomplish that purpose. Having procured thread and needles, with other necessary apparatus, away we trudged; and after some research, finding a secluded spot, that promised complete security from intrusion, down we sat, and commenced the elaborate process. But the rays of the sun falling with a little more intensity, than accorded with my feelings, I stripped off coat and waistcoat, and to work we went. Sandborn being himself a piece of a taylor, (a small thing indeed) undertook to be foreman, and as my own father had been the ninth part of a man, by trade, I could sew a pretty tolerable seam; all which considered, we had little doubt of bringing the business to a fortunate conclusion. As a beginning, Sandborn cut off a large slice from the bell muzzie

of each, in order to eke out the sleeves, and fabricate a couple of delicate collars with their appendages. Those pieces were adjusted, after a queer fashion, to the uses designed; our work went on, to be sure, swimmingly, and was fast approximating to a close, when, suddenly the whole was interrupted by the unhopèd for appearance of some six or eight men, who had turned out that morning in search after the aggressors. They might be fifty paces distant, when I caught a first glance, as they crept silent, through the bushes; wishing, therefore, to take time by the forelock, remembering he was bald behind, I threw aside my unfinished shirt, and took instantly to my heels. Sandborn did the like; we ran through thick and thin, with the agility of a couple of mountain stags, and were out of sight and hearing in a twinkling. Thus were our sharp sighted neighbors disappointed of their aim, for the present. I was chagrined at the loss of the shirts (or rather shifts) as may be conjectured; but more so at that of my other garments. The spoils were gathered by the victors, who restored the two smerries, in their mutilated condition, to the primitive owners; who happened to be two young women, then on a visit at the lieutenant's. It is almost needless to add, that these pretty articles, by passing through our hands, had undergone such a strange metamorphosis, as to be quite useless to the young ladies, as far as it concerned their original destination. The foregoing incident was a matter of merriment to as many as heard of it, and the poor girls had to bear a load of railery, for indulging the licentious Tufts in an intimacy of such close converse.

One evening, after the above, as I was passing by Stratham meeting house, it occurred abruptly to my recollection, that I had seen a splendid cushion within, and that it might be of great utility in my forlorn condition; not reflecting that the horrid crime of sacrilege would then be annexed to the catalogue of my iniquities. I therefore, wheeled up to the church, and without deference to the sanctity of the place, made bold to enter through a ground window. Making prize of the cushion, I conveyed it, in the first instance to Exeter, and there sold the ticking and feathers to a confidential person. The exterior covering, which was green plush, I carried to Lee, and after giving it a different complexion, had it converted into a pair of small clothes, which lasted beyond calculation, and did me eminent service.

My next route was to Kingston, where time for refreshment was hardly afforded, before I was seized, and dragged before a justice's court, on suspicion of purloining a farmer's calf. The complainant averred, that the night before, hearing a disturbance at his barn, he repaired thither, and found a thief rummaging his possessions in quest of plunder; that he snatched the first weapon that came to hand, being a pitchfork; that with this he rushed forward, and had the luck to drive the prongs so forcibly against the rogue's forehead, that positively he must have left some bruise or wound; that the thief then eloped, and the next morning, on search made, one of his calves was missing and no where to be found. Such being the complainant's account the court ordered my face and head to be examined; the result was, that no mark, or even a scratch,

was any where discernible. Other witnesses were then questioned, but their testimonies not substantiating my guilt, a dismissal was the consequence.

Freed from this embarrassment, I posted away to Greenland, and in concert with another of my cronies, set out to break open a shoemaker's shop (one Pickering's.) We succeeded in the attempt, and took possession of half a side of sole, and a like quantity of upper leather, that being the whole we could find in the shop. Both articles we crammed into a sack, and were making off very leisurely, when it was our ill luck to meet with a man on horseback, whom by his speech we discerned to be a Pickering also, and the brother of the one just mentioned.

It was too dark for the traveller to know the physiognomy of either of us, and what sprite put it into his noddle, I won't say, but he roared out, "*Thieves! Thieves!*" so vociferously, that had he split his throat with the exertion it had been no miracle. I happened to be the Judas just then, and was lugging the bag; but fearing that his obnoxious bellowing might arouse the whole posse, I made neither better nor worse, but flung the sack, stuffed as it was, directly at the horse's fore leg. The affrighted animal fetched a huge leap, and stumbling, at the same time, pitched his rider head foremost to the ground; when, sad to relate! the bone of his arm was snapped short by the fall. He cried out that he was absolutely killed; yet I having no idea of the extent of the tragedy, did not stop to multiply queries, but fled with great precipitancy, leaving bag and baggage to the finder.

We travelled apace till coming to a river, which it was needful to cross, in one particular spot, or go a great way about to effect that purpose. Being in a hurry, we concluded to attempt the shortest cut, and therefore plunged abruptly into the current; but, lo! my partner sunk instantly to the bottom, for he could swim, it seems, no more than a stone. For my own part I was far from being expert at such kind of exercise, yet having practiced a little, and feeling much for the situation of my friend, I ventured to seize him by the arm, and by help of his own exertions, made out to convey him to the opposite bank.

This dangerous voyage surmounted, on retrospect of which my very blood congealed with horror, it was our next concern to provide some commodious shelter for the night. To obtain an object so desirable we took uncommon pains; yet, after all, were glad to be content, (wet, cold and hungry as we were,) with rolling up in a little hay or straw, that we found in a farmer's barn.

Here our repose was small, and our reflections uncheering, for of the adventures of the evening we could have little to boast; we had undergone much fatigue and disquiet, without benefit to ourselves or others, and, spider like, had been worse than idly employed.

No sooner had the morning dawned, than I took leave of my companion, crossed over the great bay, in a float, and straight repaired to Lee, the place of my ancient resort.

On arrival home, whom should I see but my old accomplice, John Sandbern; who, like a bad penny, had returned, after an absence of some contin-

uance. He had gotten, however, thirty weight of flax, of which he had plundered a kinsman of his; this article being much needed in my family, I wished to invent some little stratagem for its attainment. With a view to this, I applied to one of my friends, (for of such I was rarely destitute) and acquainted him with my design; adding, it might easily be effected with a trifle of his assistance. All I, indeed, wanted of him was to mount his horse, repair to my house betimes the next evening, and enquire for Sandborn, the flax stealer; leaving the rest to my management. My friend agreed, and fulfilled articles to a nicety; for about the end of twilight he rode up to my threshold, and, with a loud rap, as if in haste, demanded whether one John Sandborn, the flax stealer, was within. I answered in the negative; but Sandborn, hearing the inquiry, and thinking to be dragged instantly to justice, whipped out at the back door, and fled to the woods, forgetting, in his great hurry to secure even an ounce, of the flax. Whither he sought refuge at that juncture, I wot not, but the flax was appropriated to family uses.

About this period was completed a collection of necessaries, that had cost me no small time and trouble in preparing. It consisted of a number of augers, with a compass and other saws of various descriptions, calculated to facilitate the breaking through strong holds; to which were added a variety of false and spring keys, so constructed, as to open almost any sort of lock. These instruments were deposited in several places, in order to have them ready upon special occasions. My inducement in providing this resource, resulted not only

past experience of their utility ; but from the probability, that yet existed, of my needing such implements in future ; unless eventually I should cultivate some emendation of morals, and forsake the illicit game of thieving, of which, at present, I did not see the most remote prospect. I imagine my keys must have been viewed, as a curiosity, by such as were unused to the sight of such rarities ; the construction of them, however, is so simple, as to easily be imitated or made by any smith of common ingenuity ; and when judiciously fashioned, are of such extensive application, that one key will fit a great variety of locks. I am positive, that, with this assortment of keys, I could have opened, without violence, almost any lock I ever saw ; this I am assured by experience, which is indeed the touchstone of truth.

While noticing these particulars, I would observe likewise, that I now kept on hand, or in suitable places of deposit, a variety of paints of different colours ; by means of which, I could so alter the looks of any horse, that the owner must be puzzled to know him again, while the disguise lasted, which was usually a week or more, unless the paint were sooner displaced by hard riding or rainy weather.

I also kept on hand, several sets of cork shoes, covered with sole leather ; these I used frequently, to fasten round my horses feet, to prevent the sound of his footsteps being heard : I have often surprised people, for favorite purposes, by this contrivance.

I also furnished myself with vitriol, aqua fortis, and other corrosive ingredients, to soften or eat away iron. Those liquids I sometimes, carried in

a phial, tied up in the club of my hair; while the blades of my compass-saws were frequently concealed, between the soles of my shoes. A number of the articles, above enumerated, I confided to the keeping of confidential friends, of whom I had now a connected string, reaching from Newyork, to the District of Maine; and from thence through Vermont to Canada line. But to return:

After passing upon Sandborn the imposition above noticed, I took up my abode at the house of one Doe, in Newmarket, and assisted him on hire. This man was in good worldly circumstances, but so distracted, at times, as to be quite incapable of transacting business. I had been more or less acquainted with him for a number of years, and had acquired a decent knack at managing his irregular fallies.

One day, we went to a pasture, three miles distant, for the purpose of docking a number of Steers; having made the purposed amputation, and feeling fatigued with the exercise, we called into a house, hard by, to rest ourselves. Here taking, in hand, one of the tails, I transformed it, so as to resemble an elegant false tail; then in fashion. On our way homeward we called into one Hilton's, who was absent; but to his son, a young man, who was at home, I proffered the false tail, for about a dollar. Want of money was his only objection to the purchase; I therefore offered to take corn, which, indeed, was at that time a scarce article. Accordingly the young fellow coveting the curiosity, measured me up a bushel and a half of this staff of life, which, throwing upon Doe's horse, and resigning the dear-bought bubble, I scoured off with imaginable industry.

Doe and I formed, that sent word in his brother I mention of the mischief he had ed to digest a requital of on aside, and, p that I had lea "What is it?" "I dont like secrecy, as I f for broaching shall, returned "Why, then, of tune, you his, that he, c be good in his he might co speak truth, medical abilit says your disc that emascula dy; he inten auxiliaries to tion." "Do he has any si cried I; then the question: rived that me circumstances shall see how said I, dont m

Doe and I on returning to his house, were informed, that a certain Physician, now nameless, had sent word in our absence, that he allotted visiting his brother Doe and family the next day. At the mention of the Doctor's name, remembering a mischief he had formerly done me; I now resolved to digest and execute some friendly scheme, in requital of old favors. Accordingly I drew Doe aside, and, practising on his credulity, told him, that I had learnt the object of the Doctor's visit. "What is it?" enquired he, with some earnestness. "I dont like to tell, answered I, unless you promise secrecy, as I have no mind to be called to quorum for broaching the mystery." "Oh! you never shall, returned he, you may rest easy as to that." "Why, then, quoth I, your head is sometimes out of tune, you know, and the Doctor has a whim in his, that he, can facilitate your cure." "That would be good in him, (cried Doe) and, for ought I know he might contribute to my recovery, though, to speak truth, I have but a scurvy opinion of his medical abilities." "But, continued I, the Doctor says your disorder is very difficult to eradicate, and that emasculation will be the only effectual remedy; he intends therefore, to come with suitable auxiliaries to perform on you that salutary operation." "Do you imagine queried he, that the Doctor has any such thing in view." "Most assuredly cried I; there has been a counsel of Doctors upon the question already, and nem. con. they have advised that measure as the only radical cure in your circumstances." "Damn him then, said Doe, you shall see how I will look out for him." "Pray, said I, dont mention that I gave you the least hint.

of this affair, as I wish above all things, to keep clear of blame." "Never fear, said he, your name shall be had in request neither pro nor con."

The next morning, Doe equipt himself, as I took notice, with a large ox-goad, which he laid by against time of need, and then kept a bright look out for the Doctor. At length espying him aloof, he flew out of doors with his trusty tickler, and took post in a spot the most convenient for his adversary's reception. Presently the Doctor, alighting from his steed, advanced without scruple, to give his kinsman a morning salutation. Doe, instead of returning the compliment, discharged three or four horrible wipes across the Doctors backsides and shoulders; which threw him into the habit of cutting more curious capers, than though he had felt the bite of the tarantula. The poor son of Esculapius unable to abide the outrageous attack, fled in amazement to his horse, and thinking, that, in the way of flight, four legs must have the advantage of two, attempted to remount, which, at last, he accomplished. But his horse, sad to relate! not feeling, in common with his master, the same powerful provocatives for quickening his pace, stood motionless, unwilling to move, in the least, notwithstanding the hearty kicks and curses of his impatient rider. At this unfavorable moment, Doe came up, and renewed the charge with pristine vigor; so that the luckless Doctor ere he could subdue the patient animals stupidity, or make him budge an inch ahead, was forced to abide another consoling flagellation, which assailant now administered with no less liberality than at the beginning of the onset. By this

however, the horse had acquired such a degree of mobility, as conveyed both himself and rider out of the reach of further injury; the Doctor exclaiming, as he jogged away, that Doe was stark mad to be sure, and himself bruised to a mummy. While I, who had been a tranquil spectator of the turbid scene, was inclined to suppose, that, in lieu of bootless complaints, he had more-cause to rejoice, escaping as he did, not indeed with his skin, but with bones unbroken.

Just after this, at the instance of several soldiers, who, on expiration of their furloughs, were about returning to the army, I was hunted from post to pillar; and, at last, surpris'd by one Frost and others, in a clump of bushes, where I had sought concealment from their researches. Their exultation at taking the atrocious offender, who had so long baffled pursuit, was superabundant; and so strong a guard was placed over my person that all attempts to escape must have been quixotic and chimerical. In this cautious manner they convey'd me to Exeter, and consign'd me to the custody of Lt. Boynton, who had directions to conduct his prisoner to the army. It was now toward the close of our revolutionary war; yet I dreaded to be returned as a deserter, and was, therefore, solicitous to prevent that evil; however, as the means of avoidance were not obvious, I acquiesced from pure necessity, and resolv'd to meet my destiny whatever it might be, with becoming fortitude.

Lt. Boynton escorted me as far as Newburyport; but instead of proceeding onward, as were my expectations, he had me secured in the jail in that place. This fell out much to my satisfaction, for

golden hope once more revived, that I should yet obtain the means of escape.

I continued in confinement three weeks, without attempting the smallest manœuvre to advance my enlargement; at which time, Richard Dennis, frequently introduced to the reader ere this, happened to arrive at the Port, in a coasting vessel. This notable *tanquam*, hearing of his old friend's misfortune, paid me a visit the first evening, and furnished me with a key saw, fixed in a bow, for the business of cutting iron. By way of requital I gave him a couple of crowns. But the very night I received the saw, Dennis broke open the public magazine, and took thence seven barrels of powder, conveying the whole on board his vessel. The next morning, exposing to sale, a parcel of the commodity to some hucklers, he was suspected of obliquity in its acquirement, and immediately taken into custody. At this moment discovery was made that the magazine had been opened; so that, his guilt becoming incontestible, he was honoured with residence in the same apartment of the prison with myself.

When all had withdrawn, and we were at liberty to converse freely, Dennis, after a momentary pause, broke silence in the following words: "Now every thing will come handy, and we shall be ready to break jail, I trust, very soon; let us go to work, my boy, with all diligence." To this proposal I was perfectly agreed, and to work we went. Our instruments were two old case knives, and the saw above mentioned. The knives were converted into a couple of saws also, by hacking them against each other, and in this way they served to

a crease in the grates, while the key-saw widened the notch. At the top of the jail was a weather cock, fixt on an iron spindle, which as often as the wind blew, emitted a creaking sound, that drowned entirely the noise of our saws. We deemed this a fortunate circumstance and never failed to take advantage of it, shaping our course according to the wind.

In this manner we finished cutting off, though of monstrous magnitude, all the grates belonging to a certain window, except one which held by the bigness of a six penny nail. Nothing more, than the removal of the grates, being requisite, we purposed to break jail, and depart, as soon as darkness should permit. I conceived myself quite secure of elopement, as every thing had succeeded, thus far, to the extent of our wishes. At this crisis, when hope was fairly fledged, and expectation on the wing, Dennis most preposterously overturned our whole system, by yielding to the dictates of his old master Silenus; or in other words, by quaffing his favourite brandy, so greedily, as to reach almost the end of his journey, complete inebriation. I remonstrated against the palpable impropriety of his conduct, but in vain: he grew noisy, and having drained the grief-subduing bowl, began to vociferate for more liquor. I interposed; but Dennis, as if actuated by some more evil spirit, than brandy itself, persisted in calling to the bar-keeper. His clamours, however, were disregarded: all seemed inattentive, but his impatience had grown too ardent for controul; regardless of consequences, therefore, he thrust his key-saw out of the scuttle, and gave a still more forcible rap. Precisely at

that instant, Mr. Ingals, the jailor, happening to pass by, observed the saw, which he struck with his hand, so forcibly, that it flew quite across the entry: he then left us in a condition to be envied by those only, who are just going to be hanged. Dennis well knew he had been the sole cause of this great mischief; he raved like a mad man, and turning to me, with confusion of countenance, complained bitterly of his loss. I reproached him severely for his extreme folly; protested he deserved hanging, and that probably such would be his destiny in a short time. To those invectives he courageously replied: "Never mind it, my son, we shall do well enough yet, I will fix a plaister for this sore, as sure as my name is Dennis." In this manner we conversed, till Mr. Ingals returned, with several followers, to discover what mischief had been effected. Unlocking the door, they entered with mattocks and axes; and soon discerned the fissures in the grates, all which, at a single blow dropped out. At this unpleasant spectacle the keeper was indignant; fire flashed from his eyes, and he gave us a reprimand so easily to be forgotten. Our removal into a lower cell, esteemed the firmest in the whole prison, was the immediate result of this ill fated discovery.

One Doctor Rand from Londonderry, was locked up in the same room with Dennis and myself; he had been recently, imprisoned for uttering counterfeit money. Never, perhaps, did a more illustrious trio meet together within the same walls. One Sawyer also, at this crisis, was a tenant of the prison. That hero had likewise been concerned (so said report) in making or passing counterfeit

skills; and, as Rand was the only witness against him, Sawyer offered me one hundred dollars, if I would contrive to set him at liberty.

The room, which had now the honour of our reception, had been lately repaired; and, whether by carelessness or accident, a crow bar and smith's hammer had been left behind. These tools we immediately seized; but expecting their momentary reclamation, we had the forecast to insure a timely use of them. With the bar we immediately ripped up a short plank and two pieces of iron setting. This exploit was achieved about the middle of the afternoon; and though many people were then passing and repassing, no one overheard or suspected our employment. I have frequently found the benefit of attempting these operations by day, in preference to the night; because when people are stirring, and occupied in their own concerns, less attention is paid to any noise or disturbance in prison, than in the silent hours of darkness.

As Dennis and I had already made a sufficient breach to admit of a free passage through the vault, we ceased all further examination till late in the evening. When hearing, in the outer rooms, a collection of young people busily engaged in dancing and making merry (Ingals and his wife being present) we imagined this the favourable moment, which to make an end of our business. To this end Dennis took the iron bar, and descended into the cavity to pry out a parcel of stones which made the underpinning of the building. He had begun to make some opening, when suddenly the ground gave way, and a cart load of rocks, at least, tumbled,

with great violence, into the vault. Dennis came within a hairs breadth of being overwhelmed in the ruins; by a sudden backward motion, however, he just escaped that dreadful catastrophe; still he was so miserably bespattered with filth, which entered both his mouth and throat, that I verily thought he must have suffocated, at last. At this critical juncture, Rand and I joined in a hurricane dance, to divert, if possible, the attention of the rabble from the thunder of the descending stones. Our expedient succeeded; for the noise, though heard in the adjacent rooms, and for nearly a quarter of a mile round, was yet mistaken generally, for the rattling of wheels over the stony pavements of the town; all therefore passed off, without particular notice.

The tumult subsiding, Rand and I descended to the spot, where Dennis was yet standing; we there found a convenient bridge spread over the bottom of the vault, by means of the stones which had precipitated therein. Their removal had also opened a spacious passage into the jail yard; into which we immediately passed in single file, and made good our retreat from the prison walls with halting strides. Within the first gun shot we met Ingham and wife returning from their evening excursion.

It was so very dark, that he distinguished us as his no longer prisoners, but bidding us good night passed on. Dennis, being in a dismal pickle, from his woeful familiarity with the vault, now left and steered directly for the river, to wash off the small portion of his recent plastering; but he returned to us no more.

Rand and I travelled directly to Bradford, a distance of seven miles, and repaired to the house

Sawyer, whom we had left in prison. Here we procured for sustenance, some bread and cheese, which was the only fraction of one hundred dollars, promised by Sawyer, that I ever obtained.

Quitting this place, though the night was obscure and chilly, we made toward the town of Palmer, using the utmost diligence in flight; for, in truth, our minds were not yet exempt from the terrors of pursuit. The first living object we met on the road was a horse saddled and bridled; him thus sent by fortune, we made bold to mount, and rode at a round trot, about twelve miles; when espying several men, making, as we supposed, towards us, we left the horse, and struck out of the beaten road. Here we had to traverse through many winding tracks and by-paths; notwithstanding which, we reached Palmer before sun-rise, and took shelter in the woods. This town is about twenty-five miles from Newburyport.

Here Rand had paid his devoirs to a young woman; but being at this time, wretchedly clad, and wishing to appear to better advantage, as he said, in the presence of his mistress, he was urgent that I should accommodate him with a suit of spare clothes, which I had hitherto preserved through all difficulties. I hesitated, but on his promising, faithfully to restore them the next morning; and in the interim to provide me some place of abidance in security, I delivered him the whole suit. To do him a more particular kindness, I lent him linen, shoes and stockings, to which I added six crowns in money; that sum being every penny I could call my own. Rand was now accommodated to his wish; but as he was perfectly known in these parts,

he durst not appear openly ; he, therefore, prevailed on me to go to the habitation of his mistress, and to intreat her (in his name) to favor him with a visit in his present retirement. The girl honored the invitation, taking with her a pot of hot coffee, beef steaks, and other ingredients for our morning repast. After Rand and I had made a plentiful meal, which, in our present exigent state, was indeed, epicurean ; he expressed a wish to withdraw further into the bushes, under pretext of enjoying with his mistress a more private conference. They were absent nearly an hour, when the girl returned, and to my inquiries after Rand, made answer, that he had gone whither I should see him no more ; she therefore advised me to shift for myself. What a thunderstroke was this intelligence to my feelings ! With what sincere grief did I receive it ! He had decamped with my best clothes, as well as all my money. I had, in truth, entertained but a slender opinion of this man's probity from our first acquaintance ; little dreaming, however, that he would shew me so scurvy a trick, at last ; more especially after having used him so handsomely at that period ; and after having, also, procured his deliverance from the horrors of a jail, I thought, at least, that the old adage, " honor among thieves," might have operated upon his feelings.

Destitute, as I now was, of friends and money, and scant of clothing, I knew not well which way to turn ; but as no time was to be lost, I formed the hasty conclusion of retracing the country toward Lee.

Taking leave of the young woman, I travelled the remainder of the day, as fast as my legs would

CHAP. VIII.

Life but rises to another stage,
The same dull journey still before us.

CISBER.

AT this moment, absorbed as I was, in unpleasing reflections, and tracing the lonely way in pensive mood, a glistening object caught my eye, in the path. I gave it a kick, and found it to be a large linen handkerchief. It seemed like a gift from heaven, in relief of my peculiar distresses; I seized the prize, and eagerly approached a humble cot, that now presented itself to view. In this abode of poverty, I saw no persons, except a woman, and several small children; but to her I offered my handkerchief for a morsel of food. The courteous dame bestirred herself, and quickly spread before me a tolerable supper; declining, however, all compensation. Having sated my appetite, and feeling much invigorated, with the fortunate supply, I pursued the way in solitude, till late in the evening; when happening to espy a strange glimmering light, at a little distance from the road, and wishing to unravel the phenomenon, I turned aside, and presently found, it was but a luminous vapour, ascending from a coal kiln. Groping about, I came across a man, found asleep, near whom was a bottle of rum, and jug of cider, of both which I drank profusely. On further research, I discovered a basin of victuals tied in a napkin, which I packed into my bundle, and, leaving the owner,

enjoy pleasant dreams, pursued the beaten track, till an ancient barn appeared in view. Feeling, by this time, an invincible propensity to sleep, I entered this old barrack, and obtained a comfortable litter, on which I reposed till morning. At dawn I set forward, and, after marching a few miles, approached a house into which I intended to hazard an entrance. Here as before, were none save females; but they supplied me with breakfast, and gave four shillings in cash for my bason and cloth. I pretended that I was returning home from a visit to a distant relation, living in the west. Leaving this house, I proceeded with more circumspection; but improved my time, so faithfully, as to reach Haverhill ferry about dark. With a number of others I crossed the river unquestioned, and repaired to the house of Mrs. Shepherd; where, finding myself an absolute stranger, I tarried a whole week, defraying all charges by doctoring, which, by the bye, was in great requisition in this vicinity.

Soon, however, as bad luck would have it, came to Mrs. Shepherd's, one Johnson; who, having seen me in times past, recognized my phiz directly, and notified the people of my being a deserter. Without more words, he advanced, and attempted to make me his prisoner. I repelled the assault with disdain; but persisting to pret forward, I knocked him down with a chair. This caused so great a ferment, that several people ran to his aid, and consequently all further resistance, on my part, proved futile and abortive.

Johnson, after this victory, informed the company, that I had enlisted at Exeter, and advised my

instant removal thither, tendering his own services, as one of the conductors.

Seeing Johnson was so erroneous, as to the place of my enlistment, I had the less repugnance to attend him; for, I rather preferred a tour to Exeter than elsewhere, supposing the chance at least equal, that I should be liberated on my arrival thither. However, to deceive Johnson and his adherents, I shewed much dislike at being carried to Exeter or elsewhere, in this compulsory manner. At last we got under way; but to avoid prolixity, at this time, I shall wave occurrences on the road, and suppose our journey at an end. When at Exeter, the first step was my arraignment before Col. Dearborn. He, being informed of the object of their visit, searched all his books and papers, but the name of Henry Tufts was not to be found; and no wonder indeed; for, I had enlisted as a soldier in the service of the Bay state. My conductors, thus baffled, were at a nonplus, and could think of nothing better than to give me a dismissal. In my turn, I threatened Johnson with a prosecution for the abuse and damage, I had received; to compound which, he paid me five *hard* dollars, this ending the whole business.

Passing, soon after, through Deerfield, I overtook one Hannah Rand, an old acquaintance, and undertook to transport her bundle of clothes to Lee. Before leaving the boundaries of Deerfield, I was unfortunately seen by a number of men, who had acquired a knowledge of my character. They were like hounds, in full chace after me, when I first observed them; I was consequently compelled to stir my stumps with all the celerity I possibly could.

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Perceiving they gained ground upon me, thus encumbered, I reluctantly dropped Miss Rand's bundle; we had, indeed, a tedious race for it; but, as "needs must go when the devil drives," I cleared them all, out of fight, and escaped entirely. The budget they secured; but Hannah, on their refusal to surrender it, brought her action, and recovered damages against one or more of the ring-leaders.

No further obstacles supervened, till I had the pleasure of seeing my friends in Lee; but, inasmuch, it was too cold and uncomfortable to lodge in the woods or barns, as customary, I remained incog. at my father's house. At the end of three weeks, (during which I received no molestation,) a number of fellows of the baser sort, happening to espy me through a lattice, came in a tumultuary manner, and surrounded the house; their pretence was, that I had stolen a piece of cloth, at Packer's falls. Being taken into custody, I was removed to Capt. Tuttle's, who took charge of me till the day following. Meantime a warrant was procured, in virtue of which, after usual formalities, I was committed to Dover jail, and locked up in the same room with one Ricker, who had been charged with the commission of a rape.

I had not lingered in this lorn receptacle over a week, when a friend of mine, furnished me with a spike gimblet, two saws, and an iron bolt, tools heretofore provided by myself, to meet such contingences as the present.

Thus armed, I extracted the spikes, surrounding the grates, of a window; and by sawing off one

grate, took them out every one; but after all, found, to my grief, that the outlet was too narrow to accommodate me with a passage, though I stripped clean to the buff. Three successive trials past, I viewed the window as impervious, and my labour as entirely frustrated. Ricker, who was a more slender man than myself, made the next trial, and with much ado, succeeded in squeezing through the window, thereby regaining his own freedom; but leaving me in trouble and perplexity.

Quite disheartened, at my cruel disappointment, I reclined on a bench, remaining in a pensive condition for three hours, at least, and entertaining, in the meantime, no other thoughts than the entire abandonment of my scheme. By this time, the night was far advanced; but, at last, it popped into my mind, that I had in my possession, a piece of pork, and some soap, and that it might be profitable to lubricate the passage with those slippery ingredients.

Little time was left for consideration, so I fell to work, and besmeared the window to some purpose. Next I greased myself notably, and approached, with trembling steps, the much dreaded opening, intending to make this a last final effort.

On trial, my new expedient seemed likely to succeed beyond expectation, for the grease and soap made such material difference, that I could now slide back and forth, by degrees, whereas, before, I stuck fast in the passage. However, I had to struggle, most intolerably, to gain ground, inch by inch only; and it was not till after many strenuous and desperate exertions, which even now, I remember with horror, that I succeeded in forcing myself

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feet foremost, into the street; receiving, in my descent to the ground, a most violent concussion, by a fall of twelve or more feet.

I had been so wretchedly bruised and compressed in the scanty passage, that with the addition of the fall, I had great difficulty to stand or go, on reaching terra firma. To cap the whole, my apparel was yet within the prison walls; for fling it out I durst not, till I should ensure my own personal egress. Thus circumstanced, I saw no way of reclaiming the lost goods, but by bringing a small ladder, which I had observed to lean against a neighboring barn. This, naked and shivering with cold, I effected, and by its assistance made out to recover a part of the clothing; but, after all, was constrained to leave my hat; and what, in this frosty night, was still more distressing, my shoes and stockings also. Finding those articles irrecoverable, without the greatest pains, and the sacrifice of more time than could be spared, I left the prison walls, bare-foot and bare legged, and in that grotesque dishabille, set off for Lee. But how I performed, in this wretched predicament, over hubbly, frosty ground, with bare feet, a journey of nine miles, is almost impossible, even for myself to conceive. On arrival at Lee, sheer necessity compelled me to have recourse to the generosity of a friend, who supplied me with shoes, stockings, and half a dollar in money. This enabled me to turn my back, once more, upon home, perceiving that persecution still waved her hideous banner. I wandered on foot, and alone, with much uneasiness, though without cessation, till I arrived at the town of Chester. While in this place, where I made but a short resi-

dence, folly induced me to join a company of people, who were displaying their prowess at athletic exercises. They had been raising a saw mill that day, which occasioned the collection. For my own part, I remained a mute spectator, till several people insisted upon my entering the ring. I declined, wishing to remain unnoticed; however, pleas and excuses being useless, I yielded to necessity, and had the address to throw out every competitor.

As I was a stranger, the victory was taken in great dudgeon, by several of the wrestlers, who now attempted to foment a quarrel. To avoid that mischief, I withdrew to the house; but, in the evening, had a hint from an Irish girl, that they were concerting some plan to my damage; on this I privately absconded; travelled three miles to Moses Underhill's tavern, and there put up for the night.

My lodging was in a chamber, and weariness soon threw me, though a wandering exile, into a sound, delicious slumber; but awaking in the dead of night, I was not a little astonished at feeling by my side, unstript of his garniture, a rough bedfellow. Unable to english this strange rencontre, I gave him a jog, and demanded his name; but, in hoarse, masculine accents, he deigned no other reply, than, "No matter, lie still." In the morning, on my attempting to rise, he swore bitterly I should never quit the soil, till he had given me, what he termed a dressing; he declared he had followed me three miles for that purpose; and added, that although I had flung out the whole town, he meant to shew me it afforded men still, who could give me a flogging. I was somewhat nettled at this blustering harangue; however, I dressed, and de-

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ascended, with the bully, cheek by jowl, into the kitchen, he discharging, the whole time, a volley of oaths and menaces. Wishing to prevent consequences, I desired the interposition of the landlord, who was a great, black, thickset Irishman, to no purpose; he only enquired, in round Irish, if I feared the fellow; I replied in the negative; but that being a stranger, it was my wish to avoid contention. At the instant I made this reply, in came John Wendal, Esq. of Portsmouth; regardless of which, my antagonist was inflexible in urging on the dispute. He now made at me with fire and fury in his aspect. We exchanged a number of blows; I had, however, the good fortune to bring him by the board; while, in falling, he upset a table, that stood in the floor completely furnished for breakfast. Still the combat held with redoubled ardour, and ended only from the intervention of the company; whose opinion was, that ample harm had been done already. My opponent had been so roughly handled, in this squabble, that he mentioned not a syllable more of renewing the contest; I therefore, left the town, but not my thanks, for the hospitality of its inhabitants.

Not choosing to revisit the subjacent parts of New-Hampshire, I journeyed to Connecticut, and thence to a part of New-York, few novelties occurring during the passage. Here I made acquaintance with one Thomas Law, a Dutchman, and took lodgings at his house, calling myself by the name of Thomas Harrington. Law and I agreed shortly, to make a tour to some part of Massachusetts, for the benevolent purpose of stealing a couple of good horses. We travelled as far as Lenox, ere

an opportunity presented that pleased us. Here we took a horse of six years old, and a mare of four. We rode them to New-Lebanon, and there sold them, taking security, by notes of hand, for the pay. We then proceeded to Hudson, where I was overtaken by one Wright, from New-Lebanon, who charged me with stealing two of his horses. He had brought with him, a man, who was not only ready but willing to swear that he had seen me on the back of one of them. I denied the assertion, and that with the strictest truth; but my declaration meeting no credit, I was carried before a magistrate, and by him committed to prison in the next town. Though I knew myself innocent in respect of Wright's process; yet being sensible, that other accusations might be brought against me with more propriety, I was very desirous of gaining my liberty, prior to the day of trial. To do this, I set fire, one night, to a scuttle window, blowing up the coals with an onion stalk; but, having done my best, the passage still remained too small for my exit, so that, reluctantly, I gave up the project.

Next morning, the High Sheriff, who was a Dutchman, discovered the bold attempt, and removed me into another cell of more stability than the former; here he continued to guard my person with extreme rigidity. Trial soon came on, in the course of which, the aforefaid witness shuffled and prevaricated so dismally, that my attorney, taking the proper advantages, overthrew the whole testimony, and procured my discharge.

Lest fresh difficulties should arise, I proceeded straight to New Lebanon to obtain payment of

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note, I yet held, for the horse. The purchaser, mean time, had heard so many reports against my character, that he plumply denied paying a single stiver. On the reverse, he carried me before a justice, who induced me to confess, that the horses sold by Law and myself, as aforesaid, had been previously stolen; upon which the note was given up by my own consent, and Mr. Justice took both horses into his own possession.

The magistrate had a son, who never possessed, to say no worse, too large a share of common probity. This young man, went immediately, to the town of Lenox with two false advertisements, purporting that he himself had lost two horses; at Lenox he found those from whom Law and I had taken the horses first mentioned, and which were now in his father's custody. To those men, therefore, he offered to dispose of his property in the steeds he himself pretended to have lost; assigning as a reason for his wishing to sell, that he was weary of further search. They affirmed, that themselves had met with a similar loss, and of the two, had rather sell than buy. Upon that, the young fellow proffered his silver watch, for their right, at a venture, which, as they had given up all thoughts of recovering their property, they consented to take it: Mr. G. then returned home, exulting, no doubt, in his ingenious artifice. Not long after, the same jockey being so inadvertent as to divulge the trick he had been playing; the right of the matter came to the ears of the men, on whom the cheat had been practised; they, therefore, purchased a writ against him, by means of which he was compelled to restore the horses, and refund damages; while

Law and myself, the original aggressors, escaped without molestation.

At New Lebanon, I purchased a small house, with one acre of land; but, some of my crooked pranks coming to light, I was compelled to abandon the premises; for which I never obtained a single dollar. At Partridge-town, I made a halt, and the day following; was arrested for breaking a Goldsmith's shop; but the prosecutor finding me dauntless, and being himself unable to make suitable proof, relinquished further process.

On this event I determined to quit the state of New York, entirely; my real name beginning to be trumpeted abroad, I was viewed with an eye of suspicion, wherever I set foot. In pursuance of this resolution I came to Poplin, in New Hampshire; here the people suiting my turn to a shaving, I tarried a considerable season.

In this place, I had no lack of employment, my time being devoted to physic, fortune telling and card playing, in which last branch I fancied myself no light proficient. I met, however, with an unlucky rub, one evening; for happening to engage with a gambler of some eminence, he stripped me of both watch and money; this loss gave me uneasiness, till, recollecting a certain goldsmith's shop, I resolved to regret the mischance no longer; remembering the old adage, "light come, light go."

At Poplin, as a palmist and fortuneteller, I cut no contemptible figure; the people supposing me deeply skilled in the occult mysteries of fate, and future destinies. Previous inquiries into every body's reputation, habits and business, was the great talisman, by which I was enabled to relate things

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But my chief reliance, for support, was the practice of physic, in which I was thought to have forwarded a number of notable cures; I restored to health, in particular, one woman, affected with an odious disease that she contracted by her familiar intercourse with a certain trader; for which service I was richly rewarded. On the whole, I am at a loss to say, whether, the excess was on the side of my gains or my expenditures while at Poplin. A little before my departure, I spent an agreeable evening with a certain young woman, at a game of cards. After playing some time, we concluded to try a rubber for a night's lodging, and as it happened, she was the winner; on which, I observed, that she had worsted me. "Yes, (replied she) but I've as good a right to demand the lodgings, as yourself." I acknowledged the propriety of her remark, and discharged my forfeit, with interest, the same night.

I now left Poplin, but roamed to no great distance, ere I purchased a horse; having this acquisition, I set up for horse jockeying, and made several profitable turns. In the end, however, I was very much cheated, in a gay, sprightly looking horse, that proved, eventually, not only wind-broken, but subject to a disorder called the spring-halt, which frequently seized his limbs so powerfully, that he would drop down suddenly, as though shot in the head. In short, I found my new purchase no better than a cypher, and therefore resolved to be rid of him at any rate. Next day, meeting a man, who took a fancy to my fine horse, as

was, in fact, his general appearance, we made a swap in which I received thirty dollars in exchange. We parted extremely well suited; but before my chap had ridden twenty rods, his new horse tumbled down, and gave the rider a most desperate fall. I happened to see the same man, not long after, when he threatened me strenuously, with a prosecution, unless I consented to repair his loss. I wisely refused, and afterwards heard no more of the grievance.

Being anxious to see my family, I returned to Lee; but finding it in extreme indigent circumstances, I commenced a routine of pilfering for its relief. My race, however, at this time, was short, for a number of people, owing me an inveterate grudge, on account of former misdemeanors, assembled in a body, and succeeded in making me a prisoner, by surprise. Being captured, I was sent according to military law, under guard, to Exeter, in order to be transmitted to the army. It was in the year 1781, if I mistake not, when this transaction took place.

From Exeter I was removed to Newbury, and locked up in prison, till further orders. Here every device, to effect an escape, was wholly preposterous, since the prisoners for debt invariably betrayed my counsel; in addition to which I was vigilantly guarded, day and night, by sentries without. After nineteen days' confinement, I was taken out of jail, with ten others, called deserters, and with them, conducted toward West Point, where, at that time, a part of the American troops was quartered. Capt. Dodge had the care and command of the prisoners; two of whom, Mark White

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and James Atkins, had deserted from the army, fundry times before ; on this account, they were handcuffed fast together, and obliged to march in that uneasy condition. Many prophesied, that on their arrival at camp, they would certainly be shot ; but it was their wish, and my expectation, to escape, by all means, before we reached that place.

Preparatory to this, I contrived to saw off the iron keys belonging to their handcuffs, and to replace them with leaden ones made of bullets, by which they could disencumber themselves at pleasure.

At Worcester, we halted for the night, and were guarded by an Englishman as centinel. Finding this man inclinable to desert, as well as the prisoners ; I concerted, with him, a plan to spike the small arms, and then to march off, one and all, in a body. The first part of our design was executed successfully, by decent bed time ; but, when on the point of leaving the house, we had the mischance to be betrayed by a camp woman, who belonged to one of the prisoners, and who was unwilling to be forsaken by her partner. This untoward accident disconcerted the whole affair, and obliged us to retract all further thoughts of escape, for the present.

On the following morning, we renewed our march for West Point ; but no possible chance of escape intervened, till our arrival at Fishkirk, where it was allotted to take quarters for the night. Several inhabitants of this village being sick, the prisoners were obliged to lodge in a corn house ; at the door of which were posted two negro men, as sentries. It was Dodge's intention to return us into

camp in the course of the day following; it seemed therefore necessary to effectuate our escape this evening, if at all.

Amongst the prisoners was a Frenchman, who could speak English tolerably well, and who, besides, was a very intelligent person. With this man I digested a scheme to break through the side of the corn house, in the dead of night, and then to decamp, with the prisoners, in a body. I engaged, as my part of the duty, to divert the attention of the negroes, our guard, while he, with several others, should pry off a few of the bars or flats. Having fully determined, in what manner to proceed, I took my station, at the outer door; and, when every light in the village had become extinct, introduced myself to the negro guard, by giving them a feigned history of the black people in my own country, whom I extolled as creditable men, and most excellent preachers. These encomiums excited wonderful attention, as I perceived, and were extremely gratifying to my hearers. The better, however, to keep them in play, I arose, and having, as the reader must suppose, a tolerable knack at preaching, myself, made them a lengthy harangue, after the manner, as I told them, of their own countrymen; dashing my discourse with the most romantic gestures and expressions, and stamping, with great force, upon the floor, the whole time. This I did to drown the noise of my accomplices, who were now busily engaged in prying off the flats, which it seemed was a difficult task; because they were not only composed of oak, but were also large, and well spiked to the building. My discourse lasted till the Frenchman had made a suffi-

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cient opening ; but on this notice, was wound up, by telling the deluded Africans, it had grown late and high time to still the noise of the prisoners, in which sentiment they fully accorded. Bidding my black acquaintance, therefore, good night and returning to the prisoners, I caused each individual quietly to lie down : one hour after which, every thing remaining in *propria que maribus*, we arose, passed out at the breach individually, and paraded in unison under the eyes.

The night was obscure and foggy, circumstances propitious to our enterprize. The Frenchman undertook the direction of the whole party ;—he instructed us to move off slowly, and to keep a good look out in the rear ; for in so dark a night, no danger was apprehended in front. We followed his directions, and marching off in single file, two miles, made a halt ; we here agreed to separate for fear of cross accidents. I parted from the rest of the gang, with intent to shape my course for the eastward, conceiving it likely that I could reside there in some tolerable security.



CHAP. IX.

The buzzing beetle
shall tell a deed
Of dreadful note.

THIS being the concluding chapter of the second book, it shall be pursued with our accustomed brevity; intreating, however, the pause of a moment, in which, by way of taking breath, I shall make one or two necessary, and I hope, not unwelcome observations. It may possibly be requisite, once more, to suggest, that egotism, even to a Ciceronian fault, is inseparable from that species of writing, which we have seen fit to adopt in the present narrative. The reader, is no doubt, fatigued and disgusted at the continual repetition of those intrusive little pronouns, *I, me and my*, which may be seen so plentifully scattered, through almost every page of this *interesting work*. They return, at stated intervals, with the pertinacity of a circulating decimal, and continue upon our hands, like a rent charge, incapable of extinction. Very cheerfully would we dispense with all further attendance of those little officious gentlemen, were it not that no substitute can be found decently to supply their places, such is the poverty of language. Thus possessed, we must necessarily, retain them, while we narrate our own adventures; and while we continue the important hero of the story. This we prefer to the affected phraseology of Briggs in the history of his Cecilia. This author adopts a conciseness the most elliptic; and is sure to reject almost

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tirely, from his vocabulary, the little reprobated monosyllables above mentioned. His diction, after all is abrupt, rude and ambiguous; ours has egotism and dearth of variety in the expression, on which the snarling critic may easily starve. His, an offence against the rules of grammar, ours, against those of rhetoric; both are uncourtly, and untuneful to a refined ear. From this short comparison, it will appear, that author like, we prefer our own diction to that of Mr. Briggs, or any body's else, declaring, at the same time, that no modification of language, no circumlocation whatever, could possibly atone for the sacrifice of our little pronominal auxiliaries. We shall, therefore, in future, as on past occasions, continue their assistance, whenever fancy may impel or conveniency require. We now, with Corporal Trim, make our usual bow, and return to the subject.

The second night, after separation from my brother deserters, I passed through Simsbury; and, seeing a horse standing saddled and bridled, made bold to mount and ride him away; but felt in extreme jeopardy, every twinkling, lest I should be followed and caught, either as a thief or deserter. Fear stimulated to the most vigorous efforts. I wished to cross Springfield ferry before morning, knowing, that, to be seen riding, by day, in these parts would be a risque, by far, too hazardous. It was past midnight ere I reached the ferry, and, when there, saw no boat, in which, to pass the river; this was the more unlucky, because it was necessary to cross in this place, or go a vast way about to effect that purpose.

After a long search up and down the shore, I discovered a mud-skow, every way, indeed, impro-

per for my enterprize, being large enough to have transported six oxen with their cargo at a time. The stream I knew to be rapid; and, a short distance below, was a place where the water fell abruptly, twenty feet at least; I was, therefore, at a stand, whether to venture or not, in this unwieldy machine, to manage which must require three or four able men. But a strong desire for personal safety impelled me to the attempt; wherefore, without further reflection, I stepped my horse into the skow, and pushed her from the shore. Seizing a sculling oar, I made every exertion to get across, ere the current should tumble me headlong over the falls. I strained each nerve, but my progress was small; yet I continued struggling, till I got within five or six rods of the opposite bank; by which time, I had drawn so near the cataract, that into it, Oh horrid, I must undoubtedly be precipitated! The gulph of destruction was yawning wide, for my reception; and instant death seemed inevitable, unless the killock should serve as a preventative. Wherefore, springing ahead, I flung toward land, as far as my strength would enable me, that utensil; with the hope that it might catch in to some crag or hard bottom, and so bite up the vessel. I had the felicity to see this take effect, for the skow, after stretching the painter, ceased to fall down stream, swinging, gently round toward shore. I stood ready, with my horse, holding by his mane, and when nearest the bank, compelled him to take a sudden leap; by which mean, after some scrabble, we reached land, though much overcome with the exercise. This dangerous voyage surmounted, I pushed on; but still met with none-

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rous impediments in my passage, on account of the post and rail fences which abounded in this part of the country. I crossed hedge and ditch with the dexterity of a hunter, till I found myself enclosed in a garden; groping about, however, I hit upon a gate that led me into the open street.

Several companies of the American troops were yet posted in the town of Springfield; and the dilemma arose, in what manner to pass by the sentries, unnoticed. Eight or ten days prior to this, when conducted through the town, I had the precaution to take special good notice, how and where they were stationed. So that drawing near, the night being hazy, I squat snug to the side of my beast, and ventured forwards. Presently one of the foldiers, spying him, roared out, "There comes uncle Mills' mare; stop her." To this another made answer, "Damn her, I wont, she is a cross old bitch, let her go": I thus passed through the midst of them, and went clear. Having nothing more to fear from the soldiery, I spurred on but a few miles further, before I took shelter with an old acquaintance, in whose society I felt a degree of confidence.

Within a few days, I learnt, that the owner of my stolen horse, suspecting the eastern deserters, had made the best of his way to Springfield; where seeing the skow in the plight I had left her, he became convinced that his horse had passed that way; so crossing over, and hearing of Henry Tufts at Springfield, he rightly conjectured my being the thief, and therefore continued his journey toward Lee. After a troublesome tour, meeting and acquainting a friend of mine with the story, he was

counsell'd to pursue Tufts no longer; for as well might he catch a blue Hawk as him; and, as to the horse, it was a clear case, he would see him no more. This account dishearten'd my poor pursuer, so entirely, that he wheel'd about and return'd home.

If any should be curious to know in what manner I dispos'd of my horse, I shall inform him, that I swapp'd him at Pepperel, in Massachusetts, and had three crowns to boot. Soon after this I repair'd to Lee, and suppli'd my dependents with a little money, and such other articles, as the less state of my finances afforded.

Making but a short stay with my friends, for fear of new trouble, I journey'd in a south westerly direction, till crossing Connecticut river, I bent my course more southerly, strolling on to the Jerseys, and in this, as in former voyages, obtain'd the desiderata by medicinal employments, or by purchasing such articles as fell handily in my way.

Passing through Morristown, in which was cantoned a part of the army, I stol'd a horse; but, finding it impossible to get off with him, except by passing betwixt two ponds, where stood a sentry, I was in no small fear of being stopp'd in that place, unless I could hit on some curious means of prevention. Preparatory to this, I hurried to a butcher's stall, and bought the leg and foot of an ox, pretending to need the oil for my horses feet, as it was hoof-bound. About sunset I drew near the defile, in which was the sentry; when alighting, I tied up one of my legs snug, under my loose coat, bringing my heel as near my back as possible. I then splinter'd to my knee the ox's leg and foot

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covering the raw parts with old rags, so that my cloven foot might fairly appear, it being my intention to personate him whom I had so long served, viz. the Devil. Thus metamorphosed, I remounted, and rode up, with great resolution, to the gate, requesting in a hollow tone, the centinels to open it, and let me pass. To this they made no reply, but continued gazing at my cloven foot; at sight of which, it was obvious, they were much startled. Without giving them time for reflection, I insisted that the gates should be opened instantly, urging as the cause of my haste, that I had a great way to ride before morning, and promising any recompence they might ask, only they must receipt for the money. At length one of them, without uttering a syllable, stepped forward, and opened the gang way, through which I glided, but not a penny, fearing the Devil's money, could I prevail with either to receive for his pains. I did not stop to multiply intreaties, but, clapping spurs to my horse, was quit of the bray of Morristown in a jiffy. The next day, it was currently reported, that the Devil had passed through the pond-gate, and had been seen to fly away in a flame of fire. This occurred about the close of the war.

With my new horse I journeyed to North-river, and embraced the first opportunity to dispose of him for such commodities as I mostly needed; having negotiated that necessary business, I continued my rambles on foot, till the town of Poughkeepsie had the honour of my reception. Here I sat up as a physician, and considering my short stay in the place, which was only six weeks, obtained a round sum in ready money. At length, quitting the

town, I touched at divers other places, but meeting with no peculiar temptations to induce a longer tarrance, I set affairs in order for a journey homeward.

The first day's travel, in prosecution of this purpose, brought me to an inn called the Stone-Tavern, near which I arrived at the close of the evening. This tavern noted for the misdemeanors of its occupants, who were then utter strangers to me, was situate not many miles from Poughkeepsie. Feeling already somewhat fatigued, and the night being too dark to invite farther progress, I resolved to put up while morning, if I could procure entertainment. Accordingly, I entered the house, and seating myself in a chair, called for some spirit, and was waited upon by a middle aged woman, who appeared to be the mistress of the inn. Having regaled upon the joys of Bacchus, I desired the landlady to prepare supper, about which she bestirred herself with more than common alacrity. But while this was doing, I was much surpris'd at the conduct of the landlord, who as I took notice was extremely busy in securing the outer doors of the house. Thinking there must need be some mystery in this, I looked round, and observed, that all the windows had been strongly fastened previous to my arrival. This discovery increased my perplexity. I imagined that some mischief must be, certainly, in agitation, though what, I could not devise, unless robbery was premeditated.

The only persons, at present in the room, were the landlady, and another woman, whom I concluded to be a guest, as well as myself. Toward this woman, I repeatedly turned my eyes, to see if she

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traces of fear were discoverable in her countenance ; but she betrayed none, appearing quite inattentive to the strange transactions, that were passing in her view, and which had excited, in my breast, such peculiar alarms. Supper, by this time was in great forwardness, but feeling very uneasy, I left my seat, and traversed the room with much anxiety. While I was walking back and forth, I cast my eyes through the opening of a door, that had been left a little ajar, and, to my utter astonishment, discerned, in another apartment, two white men and a negro, loading their guns. I looked about, and saw every avenue by which it was possible to escape securely barricadoed ; flight, then, imagined I, must be out of the question. In a minute or two more, the landlord came and stood in the entry, with an ax in his hand, and with a countenance, which I thought, wore the marks of evident ferocity. Those extraordinary movements bespoke daggers to my soul, and indicated clearly, that not only robbery, but murder also, must be the objects in view. No scruple remained but that the female stranger, above mentioned and myself, were the intended victims.

Who is able to paint the awful situation of my mind, the terrors of my imagination at that trying period ? How willingly had I parted with everything the most dear, to have been absent from the fatal spot ! but the desirable boon was denied me ! On the contrary, I saw myself encircled with death-dealing friends, four in number, and all armed ; with a tigress at their head, to prompt her obsequious troop to the commission of the blackest of deeds ! !

In vain were the thoughts of escape; no method of extrication was perceptible, unless by cutting a passage through them all. But how can so hazardous an achievement be accomplished, thought I, by the help of my pistols only? What a miserable defence would such weapons make, when opposed to four men, armed with guns and axes?

The enterprize was too arduous, too desperate for my feeble undertaking; its execution quite impossible!!!

Such were my fears, and such my reflections. On the whole, I saw no possibility of eluding their infernal grasp; therefore, deemed it the height of madness to exasperate them, by premature attempts of my own, which could but hasten the fatal moment. Ideas of this sort crowded my imagination, and determined me to wait the issue of the horrid scene in silence; to abide the dreaded event without the smallest exertion, till the last fearful extremity should render it indispensable!

I therefore, resumed my chair, and waited with seeming composure till supper was laid on the tapis, when the landlady, whose visage pronounced her the worst of the whole club, invited me to the table. I complied, not well knowing what else to do; but such, at that moment, was my perturbation, that not a morsel could I have eaten, to have gained a princely diadem! The Bacchanalian may revel in his cups, the Epicure delight in his nice dainties; but, to a man in my predicament, even nectar and ambrosia must have lost their attractive charms.

The woman, who was a guest, and, as I supposed, in the same perilous situation with myself,

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company with me at supper, and began to help herself, as I took notice, in the most unconcerned manner. Our viands were cold meat, and had an appearance, so extremely odd, as to impress me with a belief, (nor was I out in my conjectures) that they were human flesh, I sat, therefore, in silent astonishment, viewing the horrid banquet, but without attempting to swallow a single mouthful.

The hag of a hostess, observing my remissness, demanded if the food was disagreeable; and, on my hesitating in reply, she took it away, and presented another dish, which I knew to be cold beef, but, for my life, I could not taste of it, expecting as I did, to be shot, or knocked on the head, every instant.

Whilst those formalities were passing at the table, I had been alarmed once or twice by noises issuing from the adjacent rooms; though, as yet, no one of the monsters, I dreaded, had offered to approach. I was nevertheless in momentary expectation of a visit from one or all of them, as the landlord yet maintained his post in the entry.

My stupid, female associate was still eating, with fancied security; but to awaken her to a sense of the danger, I trod softly upon her toe. She resented my freedom, as she termed it, with much asperity, and grew so frantic with passion, as made me shudder, lest fatal consequences should be accelerated by her clamours. In order to pacify her I made the handsomest apologies I could, attributing my offence to mere inadvertency, which I hoped her lenity would vouchsafe to pardon. Soothed by these concessions, her resentment subsided.

and she resumed anon, what seemed to be her favourite employment, eating. At this moment, I heard people in the other rooms, passing very briskly to and fro; at the sound of whose footsteps my apprehensions were wrought up to the highest pitch of fearful expectation; inasmuch that I hastily left the table, and crossed the room to a window facing the street.

At this eventful crisis, when hope had taken its flight; I heard, at a distance in the road, several people talking quite loudly. I had good hopes they might be drawing toward the house, as I had heard no footsteps pass by, as yet. So unexpected, yet so fortunate an occurrence, as that christian people, should be approaching, at the juncture I had resigned myself entirely for lost, revived my funkent spirits, in a twinkling; and lest they should omit calling, I resolved, without a moment's delay, to make one effort toward my deliverance. With this intent, I stepped up to the landlady, who yet continued in the room, and addressed her in the following strain, it being the offspring of my immediate invention. "Madam, I had like to have forgotten my errand; I was requested by a serjeant with seven or eight men, whom I left drinking a mile back, to desire you to prepare them supper immediately. They wish not to be detained, as they are in quest of a deserter, whom they have tracked this way, and are resolved to have dead or alive, before morning." The woman, hearing this, requested to know how soon I expected them. "Every minute, madam, (replied I) indeed I heard them coming just now." "Did you so, said she, then its time to be tarring." With that

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ran as far as the door, leading to the next room, and cried out to her myrmidons," "What are you about there; who, the plague, fastened up the doors? What's the reason you are not down cellar about your business? Husband! you must help me provide supper for seven or eight men!!! This incongruous, but sudden harangue gave them all, I believe a rude shock; for the doors were set open instantly, and several men hurried down cellar, I knew not for what purpose. No sooner was a passage cleared, than I leapt out of the house, and looking toward the road, espied a traveller, then passing by, I called out to know if my people were coming along soon, "Yes, said he, a number of soldiers are just at hand; They will be here directly." I thought this a fortunate circumstance, for I feared lest nobody had been near, when I told the landlady to that purpose. But now thinking myself pretty secure and wishing to terrify the wretches, who had used me so villainously, especially the landlady, whom I took to be a she Devil, I drew out one of my pistols, and told her, as she was sitting in the entry way, where now she had posted herself, that I was armed as well as her own crew, and would know, before quitting the spot, their motives for barring up the doors. As she made no return to this, I told her it was manifest, they had meant murder by that stratagem. She attempted to apologise, but I swore by Jupiter, that on arrival of my comrades, who were hard by, they should all pay dear for their villainy; and that she herself, as being the ringleader, should fall the first victim. At these menaces she was vastly agitated, and had much ado to support herself in the chair,

whilst the sight of her distresses afforded pleasure to my heart.

Thus, having given the wicked woman a sufficient alarm, and not caring to wait longer, I ran out to the road, where spying no soldiers near, I made off, the homeward way, with all the dispatch imaginable.

I had gotten from the Stone Tavern, perhaps half a mile, when suddenly a man sprung up from the way-side, just in front of me. It was so dark a night I could not distinguish whether he was armed or not; but having met with such a late, severe shock, the sight of this unexpected guest gave me another uncommon surprize. The first thought which occurred was, that he probably belonged to the Stone Tavern, and had come thus far on purpose to way-lay me. I therefore instantly drew out my pistol, told him I was armed at all points, and bid him approach nearer at his peril, swearing I would blow him into ribbands in a breath, if he advanced one inch further. At these threats he was dismally affrighted, and began to retreat, protesting he meant no harm, in the least, for he was a labouring man, and had been out that day swingling flax. I bid him keep distance, as he valued his safety, for I had been startled too much that evening to stand upon ceremony with any body. The stranger waited not for further remonstrances, but wheeling about, took to his heels, with the utmost precipitancy, crying out, as he sped away, "if you have been frightened, I suppose it must be at the stone tavern."

After this flurry, I continued plodding on late in the evening, when, drawing near a house

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yet illuminated, I went in, and tarried the remainder of the night. The next day I questioned my host respecting the people of the stone tavern, and was informed of their being Tories, receiving otherwise a very black description of their ill behaviour.

Before resumption of my journey, news arrived, that the same vile miscreants had taken advantage of the evening gloom, and had decamped, bag and baggage, with intention, as was thought, of joining the British on Long Island. That sundry people, hearing of their elopement, had searched the stone house and cellar, that same morning, and had seen appearances indicative of the recent murder of a number of persons.

On comparison of circumstances, there could be no doubt, but their sudden flight was attributable to the alarm I had given them, and my blood ran cold to think how narrowly I had escaped death by the hands of bloody assassins. The female guest, whom I mentioned as having been my companion, at that house, was reported no where to have been found afterwards; so that little question remained, but that, she had fallen a sacrifice to the barbarity of its inmates.

On the receipt of the foregoing intelligence, I left my entertainer, and, with due diligence, went directly to Lee, where I arrived without mishap on the passage. On my arrival, I found all well as usual, and, though I had so often played truant, my wife and children (of which latter I had now a competent number) received me with joy and cheerfulness. The sight of those objects revived in my breast, at this time, the thoughts of former

days, moved my paternal feelings, and drew tears from my eyes. They were the tears of compassion, of tenderness; and such are sometimes, the harbingers of happiness and delight. Why are not those tender effusions, those philanthropic emotions permanent and unfading? Alas! with man this were inexpedient. The continuance of such exquisite sensations would overpower human nature; their intensity would be too sublime, too delicately refined for the weakness of mortality; they would absorb the economical virtues, and disqualify their votary for the performance of ordinary duties!

I continued at home longer, at this season, than usual; leading, for the most part a steady life, providing for my family, by the sweat of my brow, and meeting with satisfactory encouragement in all my honest undertakings. The war, by this time, was nearly over; little or no want of men, to recruit the army, existed; of course, I was sought after, in character of deserter, with an avidity less tenacious; in consequence of which, I enjoyed some comparative tranquility and peace. However, in very deed, the present respite from vice, may be considered, as resulting from my desire for ease, or my wishes for a temporary rescue from those tumultuous and distressing scenes, which latterly had fallen unaccountably, to my share; scenes, sufficient to discourage the most resolute mind, and make the hardiest mortal weary of existence.

This cessation from the ways of iniquity lasted four months, during which, I remained quiet at home. All thoughts of forsaking my family were now, quite foreign from my views; but, at the close of this tranquil period, occurrences took place

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which altered essentially, my wisest determinations. These happened, very unfortunately, not only because, in themselves unjustifiable, but because, they once more deranged my expectations, and rendered me, if possible, more unstable and capricious than ever. I shall give them a brief recital.

I chanced, one day, to meet with a man at Newmarket, named Durell; some how or other a difference arising between us, on matters of trivial import, the hotspur of a blade, without previous notice, gave me so heavy a blow, that I fell quite senseless to the floor. Soon as I recovered life and motion, I arose, and demanded who struck me; for, a company being present I did not know the aggressor. Durell made answer, with a terrible oath, that he was the man. I challenged him to see me to the door; where, a ring being formed, a most severe combat ensued. But my abusive antagonist, however, soon sunk beneath the fury of my blows; and being taken up by the spectators, was carried into Folsom's tavern, where he remained in a dangerous situation for a fortnight. I was in much perplexity for fear of his death; and, therefore, kept snugly concealed, and in preparation to flee at a moment's warning; but, at last, much to my joy and satisfaction, he recovered.

Soon after this I met, by accident, with several fellows, among whom was one who owed me an unmerciful grudge; but, to prevent future mischief, I shall not mention his name. This man, wishing to requite me for former supposed injuries, assaulted me, without mercy; and being seconded by the rest of his party, they altogether gave me a most intolerable beating. As this abuse had been un-

provoked, on my side, I was fully determined on revenge. Meeting, the same villain therefore, alone, a short time after, we pitched battle; fortune declared in my favor, and he received his deserts; for this he has owed me, without doubt, an ill turn ever since. Sundry other cross accidents supervening, at this epoch, it became as plain as a pike staff, that a train of consequences must ensue. Being thus oppressed with fearful apprehensions, I thought best to abandon Lee for the present; so, bidding adieu to my kindred, I set off, in proper haste, for the eastern territories.

Destitute of a single shilling, in the world, it was requisite to levy contributions on the public, so that I might elude, "haggard poverty's cruel gripe." In some places, therefore, I practiced physic; in others told fortunes, and in others again, I discharged the sacerdotal office. I could turn my hand with equal facility to either of those scientific branches, and acquired some celebrity in them all. In the business of fortune telling, I prophesied with the acumen of a sybil; obtaining, thereby, the appellation of a Salem wizard. That the rabble should believe this, was much to my advantage, as every craft exists on the strength of public opinion. However I had not the hardiess to undertake the sacred functions, except where unknown. My good fortune, however, was such, that, whether I held forth in public assemblies, or in private families, I generally received the approbation of my auditors, many of whom thought me a saint, and worthy of canonization.

I made a long abode in the eastern department, and kept in fact, so many strings to my bow,

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for the most part, I fared sumptuously, and even replenished my purse, which had of late been in a galloping consumption.

Toward the close of this tour, I recollect, among other particulars, of my attending at a certain religious afternoon meeting. Here, when the minister had finished his last prayer, I addressed the people, by way of exhortation; my discourse had the desired effect; the whole audience was very deeply impressed; but the deacon, beyond the rest, was so extremely gratified, that following me into the street, he would take no refusal, to his invitation to accompany him to the parson's house; to gratify the old zeal, I complied and found, assembled, a number of people, among whom was a justice of the peace. I had an invitation to tarry all night, which I accepted; but, previously to the separation of the company, it was urged upon me to make the evening prayer. Although they used great importunity, particularly the deacon, who would brook no denial, I still declined. At last, however, to please my new friends, and support the ghostly character, with propriety, I conceded, and made a prayer, highly relished indeed, by every hearer, but more especially by the deacon, who was so elevated, that he expressed his admiration in the warmest terms. After this I was much cared for, while I tarried in the neighborhood; soon leaving the place, however, I set my face towards Lee, and arrived thither in health and safety.

Not to remain altogether inactive, while at home, I hired out, occasionally, as a day labourer, and amongst my employers was deacon Tash, several anecdotes of whom, have been already related.

While in his employ, at this time, I drove his team, loaded with hay, to Portsmouth, in company with several other teams in the same service. — Just as my hay had been weighed in the market, a gentleman, a late emigrant from sweet Ireland, wanting to buy, stepped up for the purpose of viewing my load. Being unacquainted with this commodity, he enquired if it were good. I knew too well that my load was very mean, being made up of that kind, which growing in swamps, is called haffocky hay; and that any beast must be in the last extremity of starvation to swallow a straw of it. However I assured this son of Erin, it was very durable hay, and would stick by a creature, longer than any other kind I knew of. He turned to one of my fellow teamsters, to know if I spoke truth, from whom receiving a full confirmation of my doctrine, he concluded to purchase, provided we could agree on the price. I told him that although the common run of English hay sold for six dollars a ton, I was willing to take at the rate of seven for mine. This, he thought a little extravagant, supposing I might well drop half a dollar; to which, after promise of a good treat in the bargain, I assented, then threw the hay into the stable, ate dinner with the gentleman, received my money, and, last of all hurried out of town for fear of a new reckoning. On return to deacon Tashe's, I paid him his just due but appropriated the overplus money to my own use.

After this, my laborious occupation was continued (though with casual intermissions) for several months together; during which time I committed a series of petty thefts, among which was a

flock of Turkeys belonging to one of my honest neighbours. By methods of my contrivance, a bundle of wearing apparel, also, fell into my clutches, being the property of a man residing at some distance. This I conveyed to a private spring of water in Tashe's pasture, where I reclined on its margin, to rest myself, and while away the hours, till evening advent should warrant some further removal. While in the midst of this imagined security, not dreaming of ill, I saw myself encircled, on a sudden, by a number of armed men, among whom was one Frost. Cloathing, it seems, had been lost by somebody, and those people had turned out in quest of me, as the only confirmed thief in the vicinity. Their coming was so very unexpected, that every possibility of absconding was out of the question; on promise of good usage, therefore, I tamely surrendered both myself and cargo. Being brought before a magistrate, the affair was investigated; but the person aggrieved refusing to swear to the goods, I was acquitted with honour. Nevertheless Frost retained my bundle under colour of restoring it to the primitive owner; but I learnt, afterwards, that he converted the contents to his own private use. As is my duty, I forgive this injury; although I had often before that time received from the same man, many instances of similar treatment; if he feel inwardly justified, I wish not to disturb his quiet, if otherwise, still I leave him to his own reflections. This I assert, however, that, if I frequently deserved chastisement, it was never for harming Frost or his property.

Except the above, I met with little disturbance, on the score of theft, for the major part of a year.

though, it must be allowed, that I drove a smart stick at such kind of business during that period. At last my old confederate, Ebenezer Hubbard, coming to Lee, we agreed to set out in Co. and try our luck at theft, as heretofore; this determination was made, I think, in the year 1785.

We travelled westerly, drawing but few prizes from fortune's wheel, till we advanced as far as Number four; here, we succeeded in stealing a couple of horses. We fled precipitately with the booty to Amherst, where thinking ourselves out of danger, we took lodgings, and gave a loose to every indulgence. Judge then of our surprise and chagrin, when bounce into our apartment, came the owners of the stolen horses, with a sheriff at their heels, who made us both prisoners. On consultation it was deemed advisable to carry us back to Number four; but, when ready to embark, a trifling altercation took place respecting the horses. Finally, it was judged unsafe, that I should be trusted with the horse I had stolen, I must mount, therefore, another, their late purchase. This important business adjusted, we began the procession, myself and Hubbard in the centre; but had gone very few furlongs, ere I imagined that the horse assigned to my share was decidedly the fleetest in the whole troop. Having handled so many, I thought myself a competent judge; therefore, intended, at all hazards, to outride my keepers, before our arrival at the place of destination.

A few miles short of Number four was a level plain, four miles across. Coming to this place, I hardly supposed we should find a more convenient spot, in which to try our dexterity, at horse-

ship. According and, Jehu like, flying with much haste every instant, the plain, had repaired to Lee numerous perils: I still felt a powerful state of Hubbard ber four, but, a suddenly dismissed! Soon after this (who, in all corners a valuable horse mount, and sold on my return back, with his loss. I advantage, I could attend him to the horse, he became path. The next four days, traced and twenty pains, my neighbor to be found, having one could tell who the worthy man

ship. Accordingly I stepped my nag into the van, and, Jehu like, set out, full tilt; the guard pursuing with much heroism; but seeing me gain ground every instant, they made a huge outcry for my halting. I turned a deaf ear, and before I was over the plain, had run my tardy followers quite out of sight. This achieved, I wheeled behind a scone of bushes, aloof from the road, and no sooner had the troopers shot by, than I gave once more full reins to my steed, and thus got off, with flying colours, to Pepperel in Massachusetts. Here I turned my horse to good account, and with the avails repaired to Lee; to which place, in spite of the numerous perils and indignities I had suffered there, I still felt a powerful attachment. I soon learnt the fate of Hubbard; he was escorted back to Number four, but, after a short detention, was generously dismissed by the captors.

Soon after this, from one of my good neighbors, (who, in all conscience should be nameless) I took a valuable horse, rode him to Rockingham, in Vermont, and sold him for about fifty one dollars. On my return back, the injured man upbraided me with his loss. But, on his promising to take no advantage, I confessed the "foul fact," and agreed to attend him to Rockingham, in order to shew him the horse, he becoming sponsor for expenses on the path. The next morning, we set out on foot, and in four days, travelled to Rockingham, one hundred and twenty miles. After taking all these pains, my neighbor's horse was, unfortunately, not to be found, having been sold, and carried off, no one could tell whither. This was a blank joke to the worthy man, who was loth to return home

without accomplishing his errand. I told him, that seeing we were thus baulked, it could be no harm, in compensation of his misfortune, to take another horse; he considered this a dangerous expedient; in fact, he hardly knew what to think of it, although he was clear he ought to be made whole in some shape or other. However, at Number four, we made bold, as a single animal is lonesome, to take a horse each, the one from John Marsh, and the other from Capt. Weatherby. We proceeded with our acquisition to Amherst, eighty miles, where my partner, supposing himself out of harm's way, proposed our alighting at a tavern; but, while we were tipping very bountifully, in came Marsh with a sheriff, (one Grout,) who, very courteously conducted us back to Number four. Here a court was called, consisting of two justices, and our sentence was to pay about three hundred dollars, which fell entirely on my partner to discharge. This was not all; we were ordered likewise to receive thirty lashes apiece, which, I found, were to be inflicted with a cat o' nine tails. I received my share first; when in consideration that I had led my accomplice into this abominable scrape, I offered repeatedly, to take his share of the punishment, also. But this being disallowed by the court, my honest partner was himself triced up. Never, I protest, did I see a man so unmercifully scared in my life. After receiving the flagellation, however, and giving proper security for the payment of damages, we were dismissed, and suffered to return home, though indeed, with sore hides, the result of *cutting* a calamity. My concern was, in truth, far greater for my fellow sufferer, than myself; and

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only because he had the whole money to advance, but, because my mischievous counsel and behaviour had caused his deplorable misfortune.

Nothing memorable befel me, after this, till the winter ensuing, when the store of Mr. Jacob Sheafe, of Portsmouth, was broken open, and robbed of goods and money to some amount. One Jones informed, that he saw me conveying a large bundle through Portsmouth streets, that same night. This was enough to fix a suspicion upon me. An officer was therefore dispatched, who seized and conveyed me to Portsmouth, where the superior court was then in session. Jones swore as above, which caused an order for my confinement in Exeter jail. I was not a little discomposed at this treatment, because I knew myself to be perfectly innocent of the charge. However, as good luck would have it, some days after, my accuser, Jones, being snugly observed, a part of the stolen goods were found in his keeping; in consequence of which he was taken up, and whipped, while I was liberated, and reimbursed by Mr. Sheafe, after the rate of one dollar per day.

The same winter, the store of Mr. Eliphalet Smith, of Newmarket, being opened and plundered of a parcel of goods. I was arrested on suspicion, as in the case of Mr. Sheafe, and lodged without other inquiry, in Exeter jail. I had been in custody about a week, when the real thief was detected, with sundry of the articles in his possession; this served as a clear manifestation of my innocence, and as the medium of my speedy enlargement.

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