A YANKEE CASANOVA
by Edmund Pearson
From *Queer Books*

Prepared by Daniel Allie
www.HenryTufts.com

A YANKEE CASANOVA

ALONG the roads and lanes of New England and New York there used to wander a tall fellow with a merry eye and affable manner. Sometimes he went mounted, but often a-foot, and his business, he might tell you, was that of an "Indian doctor."

With "yarbs" and decoctions, he would try to cure any disease. Some of his patients actually got well.

His name, he would say, if this happened to be one of the places where it was safe to use his real one, was Henry Tufts. I think that he and his neighbours sometimes pronouced the last name as if it were "Turf."

He might not be a doctor when you met him. One winter he travelled about with a "peep-show" on his back. This was a far-off, feeble ancestor of the moving-picture theatre: a contrivance for exhibiting pictures in a black box. It once formed an important feature of wayfaring life in America, and has now completely vanished.

The pictures were not naughty ones (as our suspicious generation is ready to imagine), but coloured views of foreign scenes and historic events. Not that Henry Tufts would have been at all reluctant to exhibit the improper kind, if he could have found them.

Tufts might be wandering from place to place neither healing the sick nor showing pictures, but always with some glib explanation of what he was doing. If you showed much curiosity, or looked as if you might be a constable or deputy sheriff, or if you asked any questions about his horse, and where he got such a fine one, Tufts would say that he had to pay a visit; he would turn up the next lane and ride off, leaving you alone.

To whatever profession he might pretend, Tufts had one calling which occupied him for thirty years. First and foremost, he was a thief. In many towns and villages of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont he was as welcome as the smallpox. He would burglarize a shop, or steal turkeys from a farmer. He raised

the theft of horses almost to the rank of a science: stealing a horse in one town, selling him another, and then stealing him again for another sale.

The townspeople did well to be careful of their wives, daughters, and maidservants when this robber was about; for he was a thief of virtue, a devil with the women, if his scandalous boastings were true.

This was in the years before, during, and immediately after the American Revolution, when the country roads had a fair supply of wandering rascals. Few of them were so notorious or so amusing as this fellow, whose mortal parts have been in the grave for almost a century, while his soul–unless the clergy of his day were grievously mistaken–has been undergoing especial and exquisite torment.

For, in addition to breaking all of the commandments, except (so far as we know) the one against murder, he added disrespect for religion, and one or two other sins, which even the most complacent person would call pretty black.

He betrayed the faith of man and woman, and possessed not even that honour which some trusting people believe to exist among thieves. Long after his disreputable old age had come to an end, his name was as a hissing and a by-word in the region where he was born and died. Within the memory of people recently living, it was an accepted simile to say that this man, or that, was "as big a thief" or "as bad a liar as old Hen Turf."

The chief source of information about this ancient is a book called *A Narrative of the Life, Adventures, Travels and Sufferings of Henry Tufts.* It is told throughout in the first person, but it is really the work of what we now call a "ghost writer." This appears from the title page, which says, clearly enough, that the book is "In substance, as compiled from his own mouth."

Only one edition is known, and copies of this are so rare that one or two persons, specialists in early Americana, to whom I made inquiry, were inclined to think the book non-existent, or to

dismiss it as a chap-book or pamphlet.[1]

It is, however, a veritable book of more than three hundred pages, and it was printed and published in Dover, New Hampshire, in 1807.

Probably some horrified townsfolk thought that the Divine wrath was exhibited in a manner singularly wholesome, when the office of the printer was burned down, and when, not long after, the printer himself succumbed to disease and melancholia.

Others may have held that the Heavenly Censor took a long time to come to a decision, since it was four years after publication of the book before the blow fell upon the printer and his press.

A considerable stock of books, by the way, was burned at that time, and this may account, in part, for the rarity of Henry Tufts' narrative. The book was not one to be bought and preserved by libraries at that time, because of the theory that chronicles of rascality are disreputable, unless the rascality is antique. If some graceless member of a family obtained a copy, there were, doubtless, others in the household, scandalized elders or righteous juniors, who would kindle a private bonfire of purification. For whatever reason it may have vanished, you will have to be at some pains to see the book.

Tufts was born–so he says–in Newmarket, New Hampshire, in 1748. He is not infallible with his dates. He claimed respectable ancestors, and plumed himself upon a grandfather, Thomas Tufts, who "finished his education at the university of Cambridge"–he means Harvard College–and was afterwards a minister in Boston, until his death in 1725.

As with nearly all of Henry Tufts's statements, there are dis-

[1]Colonel, the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson was one of the first discoverers of Henry Tufts, in our time. He read the copy in the Worcester Public Library, now in the American Antiquarian Society Library, and wrote "A New England Vagabond" in his book *"Travellers and Outlaws"* (1889). This is also in *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1888. Tufts' book is owned by some other public and private collections, but is missing from many important libraries.

crepancies here , which do not disprove the general truth of his narrative. There were two graduates of Harvard at this period, named Thomas Tufts, and the one who took his bachelor's degree in 1701 and died in 1733 seems to have the best chance of being the author's grandfather. He also had the good fortune to die before his grandson's rise to infamy.

Henry Tufts always felt that he had ancestral claims upon Harvard, and on one perilous occasion made use of this belief.

His parents were respectable; he lays no blame upon influences of heredity.

"My infantile years," he writes, "exhibited none of those characteristic marks of a depraved disposition which were so fully developed in my riper manhood. . . . The following account is little other than a detail of the crimes I have committed and of the frauds and impositions I have practiced upon others."

He showed no originality as a boy : he stole apples, pears, cucumbers, and "other fruits" from the neighbours. He stole a paper money bill from a woman; was made to confess the sin; and was in disgrace in the village. The theft of a sickle was more profitable, for after hiding it for a time, he was able to sell it.

At the age of twenty-one he applied to his father for a share of the estate, which was valued at $1,000. His father declined, saying that the estate was going to Henry's elder brother. The young man felt that this gave him a grievance; he had received no education, and no means of earning except by labour. To work on a farm or anywhere else was distasteful, so he stole his father's horse and sold him in Chester for $30.

With this money he wandered about for two months, leading a very congenial life. At last, however, he went home; gave his father what remained of the money, and received his forgiveness. It was the first of the many acts of forgiveness which were extended to Henry Tufts, constantly encouraging him to go on with his career.

He records his minor pranks with much satisfaction: how, on

two different occasions, he stole a beehive. How, on a "pedestrian expedition" through Vermont, he carried with him the small claw of a lobster, which he told people was "an enchanted horn" enabling him to predict future events. He added that he had once had another and larger horn, which made it possible for him to "foretell past events," and said that this greatly impressed the natives, but how it benefited him he does not relate.

Characteristic of his times is a piece of cruelty which he practised upon Deacon Tash of Newmarket, whom he was helping to load a wagon with hay. Tufts had concealed a nest of wasps, which he tossed up to the Deacon on the end of his fork. The poor Deacon, working in his shirt, was so violently attacked by the wasps that he fell from the load, and then ran or stumbled into a ditch, where he lay floundering in water and mud.

Tufts was at one time attracted by "a set of religionists stiled new-lights" at Lee, New Hampshire. He learned to imitate their conversation, and appeared as a preacher at Little Falls, Maine, clad in "a new suit of black, a large Scotch plaid gown and cocked up beaver." For a while he imposed on every member of the congregation except a girl named Peggy Cotton, who denounced him for his lewd manner of glancing at her. Peggy was right, but she was unable to convince the others that Tufts was not a saint.

Living in Canterbury, New Hampshire, Tufts constructed a musical instrument, or Pan's pipes, from pumpkin stalks, or, as he calls them, "three pompion vines." He could make, on this, a loud and penetrating note, which carried for a mile. Whether or not for mischievous purposes, he sounded this strange hooter, one still night, from the outskirts of the village, until the air seemed full of unearthly music. The inhabitants were much perturbed, and decided that it was a celestial warning. Straightway there was a revival of religion in Canterbury, and a great improvement in moral behaviour, which lasted for as long as three months.

Here is one of the pleasing incidents of his career as a thief, as he relates it. "Number fourn," it should be explained, is old Fort Number Four, now Charlestown, New Hampshire. Tufts Says:

"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 minuts, 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.

His travels carried him into all the New England states except Rhode Island; and often into New York. He made one trip through Pennsylvania and Delaware to Virginia–not greatly to the profit of the people of these states, although the worst that he records of his career in Virginia was one of his raids on a beehive. The sea did not appeal to him, and the longest voyage he mentions was to the Isles of Shoals. He underwent the perils od the deep on his short sail, and vowed to stick to the land.

his favourite jail was in Exeter; he seems to have been confined there eight times; but he was also twice in prison in Maine; often in Dover; in Newbury; and twice in Newburyport. One of his imprisonments in Newburyport was for desertion from the army.

Hurting himself badly with a knife, he suffered a great loss of blood, and his powerful constitution was weakened. It was then that he decided to consult the Indian physicians in Canada. He approached Canada "through the Pigwhacket country" and spent three years with the Indians. He sets down many details of their life. He was not only cured, but mastered their arts of medicine, and became qualified, in his own opinion, to practise them on others.

When he returned to New Hampshire the Revolution had bro-

ken out. Reflecting that there might be opportunities for plunder in the army, he served two or three short enlistments each of about three months.[2] He saw no action, but worked on fortifications and acted as cook. He was stationed at Portsmouth, and at Winter Hill, near Boston. Naturally he was in demand on foraging expeditions–like the soldier in Kipling's "Loot," he often stuffed a gander in his bloomin' haversack.

He declares that he was always honourably discharged, except from his last enlistment, which, unwisely, was for three years. He regretted this and deserted; but suffered no worse penalties than brief imprisonment.

Tufts was a shining example of the habitual criminal, who mocked the law so long as he could cheat and outwit it. When, at last, it really punished him, he radically altered his way of life, and if he did not reform altogether, took a decided turn for the better.

One of the first of his grave crimes was the burglary of a store in Saco. Together with James Dennis, "by nation a Hibernian," Tufts entered by night and robbed the store of a Mr. Pickard, from Ipswich. They stole two large bundles of goods, worth $200.

They carried their loot eight miles away to the house of a fence, one Richard Dutton, and there they remained while Dutton went out to sell the stuff. Dutton aroused suspicion by offering it at too low a price, and was himself arrested. Offering to turn King's evidence, and conduct the sheriff and his men to the hiding place of the thieves, the party arrived at the house at a moment very embarrassing to everyone, for Mr. Tufts was in bet with Mrs. Dutton.

This domestic tangle could not be adjusted, because Tufts and the Hibernian were carried away to Falmouth (now Portland) put in jail, and "confined in irons."

" It was late in autumn [1770]" he writes, "when it was our

[2]Here his statements may be checked with other records. Henry Tufts is mentioned as a private soldier on Seavey's Island, Portsmouth Harbour, November 5, 1775, in the *Provincial Papers*, 14:233.

mishap to become inmates of this horrid mansion, wherefore being destitute of fire and bedding, we suffered miserably during imprisonment."

This was the first time he had ever been in a real prison, and he thought the handcuffs "intolerable." Quite ruthless toward his victims, and usually so toward his fellow thieves, he had the lively self-pity which marks the criminal.

There is no doubt that the Falmouth jail was uncomfortable; and Tufts contrived to make it worse for everyone except himself. He and Dennis tried to burn the building down, and nearly smothered everybody in the smoke.

They were removed to the jail at Old York. Tufts was now celebrated as a malefactor and jail breaker. He was visited by Mr. Pickard, the Ipswich merchant, whom he had robbed. This gentleman made a proposal to the chief robber; nothing is said about the Hibernian, and it is improbable that Tufts bothered about him.

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

More than twnty years later, and after the close of the Revolution, Tufts had his most disastrous conflict with the law. Of course, he was quite innocent. He was living in Marvlehead, Mas-

sachusetts with his "wife" and children. The woman was Abigail Kennison, whom he called his "dear Nabby." It is probable that there had been a marriage ceremony; if so, it was fraudulent on his part. At all events, Nabby was his faithful, loving, and long-suffering companion for many years.

Early in 1793, as Tufts relates it, he had bought of one John Stewart, a silver tablespoon and five silver teaspoons. Stewart said he found them in cleaning out a cellar "as he came from Philadelphia." Tufts gave him in return "a fustian coat and a pair of stockings." After all Tufts's plundering, after riding away with droves of horses belonging to other men, it is ironical that he was finally put into jeopardy of his life for six spoons.

A young woman came into his house one day, saw the spoons, and notified the owner of them: Daniel Jacobs of Danvers. Tufts was arrested and brought before "Esq. Sewall." Stewart was found, and though his statement, as Tufts writes, "was hardly so explicit as I had wished" it almost amounted to a "confession" that he had sold the spoons to Henry Tufts. That cautious statement casts a doubt on Tufts's freedom from at least a guilty knowledge.

Before the trial, Stewart escaped, and Tufts began to dig his way out of the jail. These mining operations were discovered, and the prisoner removed to the jail at Ipswich. This one was strong, and his efforts were now useless. He was brought to trial in June.

In such Massachusetts newspapers for June, 1793, as I have been able to see, I find no account of the proceedings. Tuftss feeble memory for dates may be to blame, or it is possible that the topic was held too trivial to mention. That is entirely possible in the journals of that period. A rather more important capital trial had taken place a few months earlier in Paris, and the American newspapers were still devoting most of their columns to it. This was the condemnation of Louis XVI and its repercussions. Perhaps Henry Tufts was crowded out of the papers by the execution of His Most Christian Majesty.

Tufts applied to Theophilus Parsons, the most eminent lawyer

of the country, to defend him. Mr. Parsons declined and "Messrs Sewall and Dana" appeared for him.[3]

The Attorney General, James Sullivan, told Tufts that he was charged with burglary, and that the penalty was death. Tufts was impressed by the fairness of the prosecution. The Attorney General did not argue strongly against him, but warned the jury to be cautious. The Judge charged in his favour.

All that the State's witnesses, Jacobs and the girl, could say was that the spoons belonged to Jacobs, and that on a dark night, when the burglary was committed, they saw a man running from the house. Tufts had no witnesses to prove his property; and he had a bad reputation. In every town in which he lived, as he admits, all robberies were charged to him, and about all that he can say is that not *all* these charges were true.

Three times the jury reported a disagreement: a Mr. Thursten stood out alone for "not guilty." On being sent back a fourth time, they convicted him, and he was sentenced to be hanged on Thursday, August 14, 1793.

Mr. Thursten personally called upon Governor Samuel Adams in behalf of Tufts; and dear Nabby made her piteous appeal. Tufts sent a petition to the "students of Cambridge college" asking them to address the Governor, "and this they had the humanity to do." Tufts adds: "for which they have my sincere thanks." The ladies of Ipswich also made their plea to His Excellency, in pity for the poor convict.

During his dismal wait in jail he was cheered by a visit from a physician. Tufts says that "sunshine sat upon his countenance and honey distilled from his lips . . . he presented me with the grief dispelling goblet."

Whether this means that he gave Tufts a drink or read him some optimistic literature does not appear, but he presently spoiled everything by bluntly offering the prisoner two guineas for his

[3]Colonel Higginson suggests that these were James Sewall of Marblehead, afterwards a Member of Congress, and Francis Dana, afterwards Chief Justice.

skeleton, when he should have no further use for it. Tufts indignangly rejected this nasty proposal.

Next came the publishers: "a gentleman from Newburyport" who offered $70 "for license to publish a narrative of my adventures."

This, also, he declined, on advice from "Esq. Manning" as prejudicial to his chances for a pardon. An anonymous correspondent in Ipswich (perhaps a rival publisher) also advised him to stand firm, and resist all literary temptations.

Finally, the 14th of August arrived. His coffin was made; his grave dug; and the gallows was set up. Three thousand people arrived to witness his death. No reprieve came; but neither did any warrant for the execution. Four o'clock in the afternoon was the hour set: the time came and passed. The three thousand people went away, much disgusted, and Tufts remarks that their departure was witnessed by him with complete resignation.

A month later the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and Tufts was removed to the Castle in Boston Harbour. Here he spent five years, and was quite unhappy. He made attempts to escape–once, boldly, by swimming. He compiled a brief dictionary of the language of the underworld, which is printed in his book. He calls it "Nomenclature of the Flash Language" and it may well be the earliest of its kind in America.

Many of its terms also appear in similar dictionaries compiled in England. Thus "cove" means a man; a "flat" is a foolish man; "you're spotted" has the same meaning that it bears to-day; "to do him of his blowen" means to rob him of his wife; and "prad napping" is horse stealing.

His other literary work of his imprisonment was a poem to celebrate the Fourth of July, 1794, beginning:

> "Hail! heroes, patriots divine,
> On whom the rays of freedom shine."

Years later, on the death of Washington, he wrote ten stanzas of typical verse of the time. No one need put much faith in Tufts's

actual authorship of these poems.[4]

In 1798, Massachusetts ceded the Castle to the United States Government, and the prisoners were transferred. Tufts went to the Salem jail, where he was not desired. The jailer bade him behave himself, with respect to the walls, as they were very weak. This hint was enough to the old escaper, and he was on the road, a free man, in no time at all.

His only problem was whether he should return to dear Nabby or to his lawful wife, Lydia. Nabby was at Greenland, New Hampshire. Lydia, and some of his children, including grown sons, had moved to "Lemington in the District of Maine," where the sons were respected landowners.

He joined his legal family. He was now over fifty years old, and it was suggested to him, by his sons, that they had no insuperable objection if he should try leading a decent life. He agreed; bought some land in Limington,[5] and set up once more as an Indian doctor. This profession had roving priveleges which strongly appealed to him.

He gave a liberal interpretation to his promise to live respectably, but he does seem to have abstained from theft. The terror of the gallows, and the effect of his five years in prison, had gone a long way toward keeping him from crime and only once is he accused of lifting the property of another.

The Shakers, at Alfred, were a community he loved to visit: they were kind and charitable to him, and once, when he was in danger of being cast into Dover jail, on accusation of horse stealing, they rescued him from undeserved imprisonment.

To compare Henry Tufts with that glittering sinner the Chevalier Jacopo Casanova de Seingalt, is strongly deplored by a friend of mine, who says that the New England thief is no more like the brilliant Italian adventurer than a bootlegger's vintage of Scotch whiskey is like the King's Own.

[4]Another notorious convict in Massachusetts, Jesse Pomeroy, does write bad poetry for the prison magazine.

[5]The present spelling of the name

Yet, allowing for the humble state of Colonial society in which Tufts moved, it seems to me that his athletic tendencies, his wandering life, his unblushing recital of his misdeeds, his practice of medicine and magic, his confinement and escape from prisons, his many amorous adventures, and his remarkable versatility constitute enough points of similarity to justify the title of this chapter.

A nearer comparison, perhaps, is with the "Notorious Stephen Burroughs" also of New Hampshire, whose Memoirs were published at Hanover in 1798. Possibly, these suggested the publication of Tufts's book. But, as we have seen, a publisher had approached Tufts as early as 1793.

Tufts is described, on one of his escapes, as "about six feet high, and forty years of age, wears his own hair, short and dark coloured, had on a long blue coat."

He was a wrestler and boxer and suffered at one time or another five fractures received in wrestling. He once broke a man's arm in a fight, and once wrestled for a stake with a Negro champion, inflicting such injuries that the Negro afterwards died.

Tufts twice received severe floggings, and seems to have borne them without much whimpering. He says that he once offered to take a fellow offender's flogging as well as his own; it is almost the only generous act he claims for himself. On another occasion he betrayed a convict who had planned to escape with him, and not only left the man behind, but stole his clothes, leaving the poor devil naked in his cell.

His love affairs are usually related with the smirk which seems inseparable from such confessions. The language is often heavily classical–as in this.

"I was now free it is true, from the apprehension of a jail, on my forsaken mistress's account, yet not so from the effects of our acquaintance, for the above fascinating amour had made a deep impression on my fancy, and rendered me more unstable than before. Being once initiated into the mysteries of the cyprian Goddess, a natural warmth of temperament enrolled the name of *Tufts* among the number of her votaries ever afterwards. In

fine my inclination always fervid, but now fired with new incentives, impelled me, more strongly than formerly, to sacrifice at the shrine of Venus, nor could I resist the impulses of so bewitching a deity. It was, rather, my coat of arms to pursue what was pleasing in my own eyes, for to the rigid graces of self denial I was a stranger. From this period, therefore, I waxed more industrious in the pursuit of amorous adventure. . . . " [6]

His career as a great lover seems to have begun in Nottingham, New Hampshire. A young lady named Sally Hall suggested to him a very good reason why she thought it was desirable for them to get married. He declined, as he "had not the most exalted opinion of her virtues and accomplishments."

Next year, when he was twenty-two, he married Lydia Bickford of Durham. They lived together for a year or two, and the first of their large family of children was born. An unfortunate circumstance–the fact that every theft in the town was imputed to Tufts–caused the husband to leave his wife and make his first trip into Maine, in company with Mr. Dennis of the Hibernian nation. We have seen how this expedition ended.

Later, at Claremont, New Hampshire, Enoch Judd, by whom Tufts was employed, suggested that he marry either of his two daughters. The young man agreed, and went with the maiden to Waterbury in Connecticut, where some odd kind of marriage ceremony was performed. Miss Judd, however, soon learned of his other marriage, and of the Saco burglary, so Tufts was again forced into flight.

During his stay in Canada, and as an aid in his studies, Tufts contracted the connection that a high-minded lady once described to her children as a "morganatic" marriage. This was with an Indian damsel, Polly Susap. Her station was regal, since she was "the niece of old King Tumkin Hagen," and she was, moreover, very beautiful. When Tufts deserted her, it was with many

[6] This is probably the language of the "clever young lawyer of Dover" who is the reputed author of the book. His name is not known to me. Another alleged author is Major of Colonel Thomas Tash of New Durham.

promises to return.

His wayside adventures included the conquest of "a young Dutch widow" who kept a tavern somewhere in New York and two girls at Hudson in the same State. The latter lived in a house where Tufts put up for the night: one of them was fair of face and the other very ill-favoured. In the darkness, Tufts made his way, as he thought, to the room of the good-looking one, but found–at the dawning of the day–that he had chosen the other.

He sets down his philosophic reflections to the effect that ignorance is sometimes bliss: and then moralizes, in Dr. Franklin's vein, on the theme that a beautiful countenance is not the first requisite in wife or mistress.

On his Southern trip he encountered–apparently somewhere in Pennsylvania–"a young woman of German extraction" who was riding along the highway, and ready to converse with an agreeable young man. She was a widow, and frankly confessed that she was looking for another husband, and manager of her plantation. Tufts was received by the lady's father as prospective son-in-law and heir. He settled down as overseer of the slaves.

Unluckily, a Lieutenant Mooney came along, and he, says Tufts, "had known me from infancy, egg and bird." So Pennsylvania lost Henry Tufts.

The affair with Abigail Kennison, his dear Nabby, began at Greenland, New Hampshire. He presented himself to her under the pleasing name of Gideon Garland. Subsequently Abigail "swore her child on him," and Tufts was arrested on charge of bastardy. He managed to defraud everybody and to escape. Next spring, however, he came back to Nabby and they fled together, with their child.

She was his companion for years, and for a time they lived in Wallingford, Vermont, where he passed as a doctor. After his desertion of her, on his final escape from Salem jail, she returned to Vermont and was there "respectably married."

After Tufts settled at Limington, he resolved to master his

"juvenile eccentricities." There did occur incidents to show that, as with Casanova, his philanderings continued beyond middle age. One of these was the encounter with the young religious devotee who wished to borrow a horse. Here is his account of it:

"A certain young woman, of religious deportment, I must conceal her name, called at my house, one day, in the absence of my family, to borrow my horse, to ride a few miles, to a newlight meeting, and for the favour she engaged to pay half a dollar on her return.

"'The horse, young woman,' said I, 'is at your service, only the money must be paid first, for, you know it is ticklish trusting these hard times.'

"She hesitated, since, horse or no horse, half a dollar, prompt payment, was more than she could advance. What then to do, she knew not, for positively, some horse she must have, and none other could be obtained. Her perplexity was obvious, my inflexibility unshaken; she intreated, allured, flattered, but to little purpose; I was as prompt in refusal as she in importunity.

"At length to promote a compromise: I suggested, that payment might be made easy, without the aid of a capital, since I was not absolutely disinclined to take personal services, in lieu of all other requital. In fine I named the conditions that should, alone entitle her to the loan of the horse, though for modesty's sake, I choose not to repeat them here.

"This was enough to excite those blushes, which I then saw redden on her cheek; I, too, was prepared for the mortification of a rebuff; but the young religionist, after a little hesitation, and a few female negatives, which often carry a far different meaning, gesticulated her assent. Articles of agreement having been fulfilled to a punctilio, she mounted her steed with agility, and rode away with the air and gravity of a vestal of three score."

At another time, during this period, while following the career of a wandering doctor, he mentions "a brisk young widow at Old Wells." His courtship of her "equalled in duration Jonah's continuance in the whale's belly, that is, three days and nights."

His final escapade was forced upon him. He had restored to health, after long illness, a farmer's daughter, a girl of eighteen. As a mark of gratitude she insisted on eloping with him, and they journeyed together on horseback, still farther into Maine.

It was disastrous for Tufts. The girl proved a wanton jade, and treated her companion to one humiliation after another. Of course, Tufts was highly indignant; he could not have been vexed when the girl's father overtook them, and dragged her back to her own place.

Tufts returned to Lydia, to Limington, and to respectability. Nobody can think that it was a drab and stodgy respectability. He was actually reformed–that is, he died–on January 31, 1831, in what Colonel Higginson called "the eighty-third year of an uncommonly misspent life."

The discrepancies in names and dates, throughout the book, are not fatal to a belief that his story is substantially true. It has both embroideries and suppressions, but these occur in the biographies of far more honest men.