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EDGAR HUNTY,

OR MEMOIRS OF A

SLEEP-WALKER.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

C. B. BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

Arthur Mervyn, Wieland, Ormond, &c.

VOL. II.

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WITH these determinations, I proceeded. The entrance was low, and compelled me to resort to hands as well as feet. At a few yards from the mouth the light disappeared, and I found myself immersed in the dunnest obscurity: had I not been persuaded that another had gone before me, I should have relinquished the attempt. I proceeded with the utmost
utmost caution, always ascertaining, by out-stretched arms, the height and breadth of the cavity before me. In a short time the dimensions expanded on all sides, and permitted me to resume my feet.

I walked upon a smooth and gentle declivity. Presently the wall, on one side, and the ceiling receded beyond my reach. I began to fear that I should be involved in a maze, and should be disabled from returning. To obviate this danger it was requisite to adhere to the nearest wall, and conform to the direction which it should take, without straying through the palpable obscurity. Whether the ceiling was lofty or low, whether the opposite wall of the passage was
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was distant or near, this I deemed no proper opportunity to investigate.

In a short time my progress was stopped by an abrupt descent. I set down the advancing foot with caution, being aware that I might, at the next step, encounter a bottomless pit. To the brink of such an one I seemed now to have arrived: I stooped, and stretched my hand forward and downward, but all was vacuity.

Here it was needful to pause. I had reached the brink of a cavity whose depth it was impossible to ascertain: it might be a few inches beyond my reach, or hundreds of feet; by leaping down I might incur no injury, or might plunge into a lake, or dash myself to pieces on the points of rocks.

I now
I now saw with new force the propriety of being furnished with a light. The first suggestion was to return upon my foot-steps, and resume my undertaking on the morrow: yet, having advanced thus far, I felt reluctance to recede without accomplishing my purposes: I reflected likewise that Clithero had boldly entered this recess, and had certainly come forth at a different avenue from that at which he entered.

At length it occurred to me, that though I could not go forward, yet I might proceed along the edge of this cavity: this edge would be as safe a guidance, and would serve as well for a clue by which I might return, as the wall which it was now necessary to forsake.
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Intense dark is always the parent of fears: impending injuries cannot in this state be descried, nor shunned, nor repelled. I began to feel some faltering of my courage, and seated myself for a few minutes on a stony mass which arose before me. My situation was new. The caverns I had hitherto met with in this desert, were chiefly formed of low-browed rocks: they were chambers, more or less spacious, into which twilight was at least admitted; but here it seemed as if I was surrounded by barriers that would for ever cut off my return to air and to light.

Presently I resumed my courage, and proceeded. My road appeared now to ascend, On one side I seemed still upon the verge of a precipice, and on the other
other all was empty and waste. I had gone no inconsiderable distance, and persuaded myself that my career would speedily terminate. In a short time the space on the left hand was again occupied, and I cautiously proceeded between the edge of the gulf and a rugged wall: as the space between them widened, I adhered to the wall.

I was not insensible that my path became more intricate, and more difficult to retread in proportion as I advanced: I endeavoured to preserve a vivid conception of the way which I had already passed, and to keep the images of the left and right-hand wall, and the gulf, in due succession in my memory.

The path which had hitherto been considerably
EDGAR HUNTLY.

considerably smooth, now became rugged and steep. Chilling damps, the secret trepidation which attended me, the length and difficulties of my way, enhanced by the ceaseless caution and the numerous expedients which the utter darkness obliged me to employ, began to overpower my strength; I was frequently compelled to stop and recruit myself by rest. These respite from toil were of use, but they could not enable me to prosecute an endless journey; and to return was scarcely a less arduous task than to proceed.

I looked anxiously forward in the hope of being comforted by some dim ray, which might assure me that my labours were approaching an end. At last this propitious token appeared, and I issued forth.
forth into a kind of chamber, one side of which was open to the air, and allowed me to catch a portion of the checkered sky. This spectacle never before excited such exquisite sensations in my bosom: the air, likewise, breathed into the cavern, was unspeakably delicious.

I now found myself on the projection of a rock: above and below, the hillside was nearly perpendicular. Opposite, and at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards, was a similar ascent: at the bottom was a glen, cold, narrow, and obscure. The projection, which served as a kind of vestibule to the cave, was connected with a ledge, by which, though not without peril and toil, I was conducted to the summit.

This
This summit was higher than any of those which were interposed between itself and the river. A large part of this chaos of rocks and precipices was subjected at one view to the eye. The fertile lawns and vales which lay beyond this, the winding course of the river, and the slopes which rose on its farther side, were parts of this extensive scene. These objects were, at any time, fitted to inspire rapture: now my delight was enhanced by the contrast which this lightsome and serene element bore to the glooms from which I had lately emerged: my station also was higher, and the limits of my view consequently more ample than any which I had hitherto enjoyed.

I advanced to the outer verge of the hill, which I found to overlook a steep,
no less inaccessible, and a glen equally profound. I changed frequently my station in order to diversify the scenery. At length it became necessary to enquire by what means I should return. I traversed the edge of the hill; but on every side it was equally steep, and always too lofty to permit me to leap from it. As I kept along the verge, I perceived that it tended in a circular direction, and brought me back at last to the spot from which I had set out. From this inspection it seemed as if return was impossible by any other way than that through the cavern.

I now turned my attention to the interior space. If you imagine a cylindrical mass, with a cavity dug in the center, whose edge conforms to the exterior
exterior edge; and, if you place in this cavity another cylinder, higher than that which surrounds it, but so small as to leave between its sides and those of the cavity, a hollow space, you will gain as distinct an image of this hill as words can convey. The summit of the inner rock was rugged and covered with trees of unequal growth. To reach this summit would not render my return easier; but its greater elevation would extend my view, and perhaps furnish a spot from which the whole horizon was conspicuous.

As I had traversed the outer, I now explored the inner edge of this hill. At length I reached a spot where the chasm, separating the two rocks, was narrower than at any other part. At first view, it seemed
seemed as if it were possible to leap over it; but a nearer examination shewed me that the passage was impracticable. So far as my eye could estimate it, the breadth was thirty or forty feet. I could scarcely venture to look beneath; the height was dizzy, and the walls, which approached each other at top, receded at the bottom, so as to form the resemblance of an immense hall lighted from a rift, which some convulsion of nature had made in the roof. Where I stood there ascended a perpetual mist, occasioned by a torrent that dashed along the rugged pavement below.

From these objects I willingly turned my eye upon those before and above me, on the opposite ascent. A stream, rushing from above, fell into a cavity, which its own
own force seemed gradually to have made. The noise and the motion equally attracted my attention: there was a desolate and solitary grandeur in the scene, enhanced by the circumstances in which it was beheld, and by the perils through which I had recently passed, that had never before been witnessed by me.

A sort of sanctity and awe environed it, owing to the consciousness of absolute and utter loneliness. It was probable that human feet had never before gained this recess, that human eyes had never been fixed upon these gushing waters. The aboriginal inhabitants had no motives to lead them into caves like this, and ponder on the verge of such a precipice: their successors were still less likely to have wandered hither: since the
the birth of this continent. I was probably the first who had deviated thus remotely from the customary paths of men.

While musing upon these ideas, my eye was fixed upon the foaming current. At length I looked upon the rocks which confined and embarrassed its course—\(I\) admired their fantastic shapes and endless irregularities: passing from one to the other of these, my attention lighted, at length, as if by some magical transition, on—a human countenance!

My surprise was so abrupt, and my sensations so tumultuous, that I forgot for a moment the perilous nature of my situation: \(I\) loosened my hold of a pine branch, which had been hitherto one of my supports, and almost started from my seat:
seat: had my station been in a slight degree nearer the brink than it was, I should have fallen headlong into the abyss.

To meet a human creature, even on that side of the chasm which I occupied, would have been wholly adverse to my expectation; my station was accessible by no other road than that through which I had passed, and no motives were imaginable by which others could be prompted to explore this road: but he whom I now beheld, was seated where it seemed impossible for human efforts to have placed him.

This, however, affected me but little in comparison with other incidents: not only the countenance was human, but in spite of
of shaggy and tangled locks, and an air of melancholy wildness, I speedily recognised the features of the fugitive Clithero!

One glance was not sufficient to make me acquainted with this scene: I had come hither partly in pursuit of this man; but some casual appendage of his person, something which should indicate his past rather than his present existence, was all that I hoped to find: that he should be found alive in this desert—that he should have gained this summit, access to which was apparently impossible, were scarcely within the boundaries of belief.

His scanty and coarse garb had been nearly rent away by brambles and thorns; his arms, bosom, and cheek were overgrown
grown and half concealed by hair: there was somewhat in his attitude and looks denoting more than anarchy of thoughts and passions; his rueful, ghastly, and immovable eyes testified not only that his mind was ravaged by despair, but that he was pinched with famine.

These proofs of his misery thrilled to my inmost heart; horror and shuddering invaded me as I stood gazing upon him, and for a time I was without the power of deliberating on the measures which it was my duty to adopt for his relief. The first suggestion was, by calling, to inform him of my presence: I knew not what counsel or comfort to offer; by what words to bespeak his attention, or by what topics to mollify his direful passions, I knew not: though so
near, the gulf by which we were separated was impassable:—all that I could do was to speak.

My surprise and my horror were still strong enough to give a shrill and piercing tone to my voice. The chasm and the rocks loudened and reverberated my accents while I exclaimed—"Man!—Clithero!"

My summons was effectual. He shook off his trance in a moment: he had been stretched upon his back, with his eyes fixed upon a craggy projection above, as if he were in momentary expectation of its fall and crushing him to atoms; now he started on his feet. He was conscious of the voice, but not of the quarter whence it came: he was looking anxiously around when I again spoke—
spoke—"Look aither—it is I who called!"

He looked. Astonishment was now mingled with every other dreadful meaning in his visage. He clasped his hands together and bent forward, as if to satisfy himself that his summoner was real: at the next moment he drew back, placed his hands upon his breast, and fixed his eyes on the ground.

This pause was not likely to be broken but by me. I was preparing again to speak: to be more distinctly heard, I advanced closer to the brink: during this action, my eye was necessarily withdrawn from him: having gained a somewhat nearer station, I looked again, but—he was gone!

The
The seat which he so lately occupied was empty. I was not forewarned of his disappearance, or directed to the course of his flight by any rustling among leaves: these indeed would have been overpowered by the noise of the cataract. The place where he sat was the bottom of a cavity, one side of which terminated in the verge of the abyss, but the other sides were perpendicular or overhanging: surely he had not leaped into this gulf; and yet that he had so speedily scaled the steep was impossible.

I looked into the gulf, but the depth and the gloom allowed me to see nothing with distinctness: his cries or groans could not be overheard amidst the uproar of the waters: this fall must have instantly destroyed him; and that he had fallen,
fallen, was the only conclusion I could draw.

My sensations on this incident cannot be easily described: the image of this man's despair, and of the sudden catastrophe to which my inauspicious interference had led, filled me with compunction and terror. Some of my fears were relieved by the new conjecture, that, behind the rock on which he had lain, there might be some aperture or pit into which he had descended, or in which he might be concealed.

I derived consolation from this conjecture. Not only the evil which I dreaded might not have happened, but some alleviation of his misery was possible; could I arrest his foot-steps and win.
win his attention, I might be able to insinuate the lessons of fortitude; but if words were impotent, and arguments were nugatory, yet to set by him in silence, to moisten his hand with tears, to sigh in unison, to offer him the spectacle of sympathy, the solace of believing that his demerits were not estimated by so rigid a standard by others as by himself, that one at least among his fellow men regarded him with love and pity, could not fail to be of benign influence.

These thoughts inspired me with new zeal. To effect my purpose it was requisite to reach the opposite steep. I was now convinced that this was not an impracticable undertaking, since Clithero had already performed it. I once more made
made the circuit of the hill. Every side was steep, and of enormous height, and the gulf was nowhere so narrow as at this spot: I therefore returned hither, and once more pondered on the means of passing this tremendous chasm in safety.

Casting my eyes upward, I noted the tree, at the root of which I was standing: I compared the breadth of the gulf with the length of the trunk of this tree, and it appeared very suitable for a bridge. Happily, it grew obliquely, and, if felled by an axe, would probably fall of itself in such a manner as to be suspended across the chasm: the stock was thick enough to afford me footing, and would enable me to reach the opposite declivity without danger or delay.
A more careful examination of the spot, the site of the tree, its dimensions, and the direction of its growth, convinced me fully of the practicability of this expedient, and I determined to carry it into immediate execution. For this end I must hasten home, procure an axe, and return with all expedition here. I took my former way, once more entered the subterranean avenue, and slowly re-emerged into day. Before I reached home the evening was at hand, and my tired limbs and jaded spirits obliged me to defer my undertaking till the morrow.

Though my limbs were at rest, my thoughts were active through the night. I carefully reviewed the situation of this hill, and was unable to conjecture by what means Clithero could place himself upon
upon it. Unless he occasionally returned to the habitable grounds, it was impossible for him to escape perishing by famine. He might intend to destroy himself by this means; and my first efforts were to be employed to overcome this fatal resolution. To persuade him to leave his desolate haunts might be a laborious and tedious task; meanwhile all my benevolent intentions would be frustrated by his want of sustenance; it was proper, therefore, to carry bread with me, and to place it before him: the sight of food, the urgencies of hunger, and my vehement entreaties might prevail on him to eat, though no expostulation might suffice to make him seek food at a distance.
CHAP. II.

Next morning I stored a small bag with meat and bread, and throwing an axe on my shoulder, set out, without informing any one of my intentions, for the hill. My passage was rendered more difficult by these encumbrances; but my perseverance surmounted every impediment, and I gained, in a few hours, the foot of the tree whose trunk was to serve me for a bridge. In this journey I saw no traces of the fugitive.

A new
A new survey of the tree confirmed my former conclusions, and I began my work with diligence. My strokes were repeated by a thousand echoes; and I paused at first, somewhat startled by reverberations, which made it appear as if not one, but a score of axes were employed at the same time on both sides of the gulf.

Quickly the tree fell, and exactly in the manner which I expected and desired. The wide-spread limbs occupied and choked up the channel of the torrent, and compelled it to seek a new outlet, and multiplied its murmurs. I dared not trust myself to cross it in an upright posture, but clung with hands and feet to its rugged bark. Having reached the opposite cliff, I proceeded to examine the spot where...
where Clithero had disappeared. My fondest hopes were realized; for a considerable cavity appeared, which, on a former day had been concealed from my distant view by the rock.

It was obvious to conclude that this was his present habitation, or that an avenue conducting hither and terminating in the unexplored sides of this pit, was that by which he had come hither, and by which he had retired. I could not hesitate long to slide into the pit: I found an entrance, through which I fearlessly penetrated. I was prepared to encounter obstacles and perils similar to those which I have already described, but was rescued from them by ascending, in a few minutes, into a kind of passage open above, but walled by a continued rock
rock on both sides. The sides of this passage conformed with the utmost exactness to each other: Nature, at some former period, had occasioned the solid mass to dispart at this place; and had thus afforded access to the summit of the hill. Loose stones and ragged points formed the flooring of this passage, which rapidly and circuitously ascended.

I was now within a few yards of the surface of the rock. The passage opened into a kind of chamber or pit, the sides of which were not difficult to climb: I rejoiced at the prospect of this termination of my journey. Here I paused, and throwing my weary limbs on the ground, began to examine the objects around me, and to meditate on the steps that were next to be taken.
My first glance lighted on the very being of whom I was in search. Stretched upon a bed of moss, at the distance of a few feet from my station, I beheld Cli-thero. He had not been roused by my approach, though my foot-steps were perpetually stumbling and sliding: this reflection gave birth to the fear that he was dead. A nearer inspection dispelled my apprehensions, and shewed me that he was merely buried in profound slumber. Those vigils must indeed have been long, which were at last succeeded by a sleep so oblivous.

This meeting was in the highest degree propitious; it not only assured me of his existence, but proved that his miseries were capable of being suspended. His slumber enabled me to pause, to ruminate on the
the manner by which his understanding might be most successfully addressed, to collect and arrange the topics fitted to rectify his gloomy and disastrous perceptions.

Thou knowest that I am qualified for such tasks neither by my education nor my genius: the headlong and ferocious energies of this man could not be repelled or diverted into better paths by efforts so undisciplined as mine; a despair so stormy and impetuous would drown my feeble accents. How should I attempt to reason with him? How should I out-root prepossessions so inveterate—the fruits of his earliest education, fostered and matured by the observation and experience of his whole life? How should I convince him that since the death of
Wiatte was not intended, the deed was without crime—that, if it had been deliberately concerted, it was still a virtue, since his own life could by no other means be preserved—that when he pointed a dagger at the bosom of his mistress, he was actuated not by avarice, or ambition, or revenge, or malice; he desired to confer on her the highest and the only benefit of which he believed her capable; he sought to rescue her from tormenting regrets and lingering agonies?

These positions were sufficiently just to my own view; but I was not called upon to reduce them to practice: I had not to struggle with the consciousness of having been rescued by some miraculous contingency, from imbruing my hands in the blood of her whom I adored; of having
Having drawn upon myself suspicions of ingratitude and murder too deep to be ever effaced; of having bereft myself of love, and honour, and friends, and spotless reputation; of having doomed myself to infamy and detestation, to hopeless exile, penury, and servile toil. These were the evils which his malignant destiny had made the unalterable portion of Clitheroe; and how should my imperfect eloquence annihilate their influence? Every man, not himself the victim of irretrievable disasters, perceives the folly of ruminating on the past, and of fostering a grief which cannot reverse or recall the decrees of an immutable necessity; but every man who suffers is unavoidably shackled by the errors which he censures in his neighbour, and his efforts to relieve himself
himself are as fruitless as those with which he attempted the relief of others.

No topic, therefore, could be properly employed by me on the present occasion: all that I could do was to offer him food, and, by pathetic supplications, to prevail on him to eat; famine, however obstinate, would scarcely refrain when bread was placed within sight and reach. When made to swerve from his resolution in one instance, it would be less difficult to conquer it a second time: the magic of sympathy, the perseverance of benevolence, though silent, might work a gradual and secret revolution, and better thoughts might insensibly displace those desperate suggestions which now governed him.

Having
EDGAR HUNTLEY.

Having revolved these ideas, I placed the food which I had brought, at his right hand, and seating myself at his feet, attentively surveyed his countenance. The emotions which were visible during wakefulness, had vanished during this cessation of remembrance and remorse, or were faintly discernible: they served to dignify and solemnize his features, and to embellish those immutable lines which betokened the spirit of his better days: lineaments were now observed which could never co-exist with folly, or associate with obdurate guilt.

I had no inclination to awaken him; this respite was too sweet to be needlessly abridged: I determined to await the operation of nature, and to prolong, by silence, and by keeping interruption at a distance.
distance, this salutary period of forgetfulness. This interval permitted new ideas to succeed in my mind.

Clithero believed his solitude to be unapproachable: what new expedients to escape enquiry and instruction might not my presence suggest! Might he not vanish, as he had done on the former day, and afford me no time to assail his constancy and tempt his hunger? If, however, I withdrew during his sleep, he would awake without disturbance, and be unconscious, for a time, that his secrecy had been violated; he would quickly perceive the victuals, and would need no foreign inducements to eat: a provision so unexpected and extraordinary might suggest new thoughts, and be construed into a kind of heavenly condemnation
condemnation of his purpose: he would not readily suspect the motives or person of his visitant—would take no precaution against the repetition of my visit, and, at the same time, our interview would not be attended with so much surprise. The more I revolved these reflections, the greater force they acquired. At length I determined to withdraw; and leaving the food where it could scarcely fail of attracting his notice: I returned by the way that I had come. I had scarcely reached home, when a messenger from Inglefield arrived, requesting me to spend the succeeding night at his house, as some engagement had occurred to draw him to the city.

I readily complied with this request. It was not necessary, however, to be early in
in my visit; I deferred going till the evening was far advanced. My way led under the branches of the elm which recent events had rendered so memorable: hence my reflections reverted to the circumstances which had lately occurred in connection with this tree.

I paused for some time under its shade: I marked the spot where Clithero had been discovered digging: it shewed marks of being unsettled; but the sod which had formerly covered it, and which had lately been removed, was now carefully replaced. This had not been done by him on that occasion in which I was a witness of his behaviour; the earth was then hastily removed, and as hastily thrown again into the hole from which it had been taken.

Some
Some curiosity was naturally excited by this appearance: either some other person, or Clithero, on a subsequent occasion, had been here. I was now likewise led to reflect on the possible motives that prompted the maniac to turn up this earth: there is always some significance in the actions of a sleeper: somewhat was, perhaps, buried in this spot connected with the history of Mrs. Lorimer, or of Clarice. Was it not possible to ascertain the truth in this respect?

There was but one method: by carefully uncovering this hole, and digging as deep as Clithero had already dug, it would quickly appear whether any thing was hidden. To do this publicly by daylight was evidently indiscreet: besides, a moment's delay was superfluous; the night
night had now fallen, and before it was past this new undertaking might be finished: an interview was, if possible, to be gained with Clithero-on the morrow; and for this interview the discoveries made on this spot might eminently qualify me. Influenced by these considerations, I resolved to dig; I was first, however, to converse an hour with the housekeeper, and then to withdraw to my chamber; when the family were all retired, and there was no fear of observation or interruption, I proposed to rise and hasten, with a proper implement, hither.

One chamber in Inglefield's house was usually reserved for visitants: in this chamber thy unfortunate brother died, and here it was that I was to sleep. The image of its last inhabitant could not fail
fail of being called up, and of banishing repose; but the scheme which I had meditated was an additional incitement to watchfulness. Ilither I repaired, at the due season, having previously furnished myself with candles, since I knew not what might occur to make a light necessary.

I did not go to bed, but either sat musing by a table, or walked across the room. The bed before me was that on which my friend breathed his last; to rest my head upon the same pillow, to lie on that pallet which sustained his cold and motionless limbs, were provocations to remembrance and grief that I desired to shun: I endeavoured to fill my mind with more recent incidents—with the disasters of Clithero, my subterranean adventures,
adventures, and the probable issue of the schemes which I now contemplated.

I recalled the conversation which had just ended with the housekeeper: Clithero had been our theme; but she had dealt chiefly in repetitions of what had formerly been related by her or by Inglefield. I enquired what this man had left behind; and found that it consisted of a square box, put together by himself with uncommon strength, but of rugged workmanship: she proceeded to mention that she had advised her brother, Mr. Inglefield, to break open this box, and ascertain its contents; but this he did not think himself justified in doing: Clithero was guilty of no known crime, was responsible to no one for his actions, and might sometime return to claim his property:
property: this box contained nothing with which others had a right to meddle; somewhat might be found in it throwing light upon his past or present situation, but curiosity was not to be gratified by these means; what Clithero thought proper to conceal, it was criminal for us to extort from him.

The housekeeper was by no means convinced by these arguments, and at length obtained her brother's permission to try whether any of her own keys would unlock this chest. The keys were produced, but no lock nor key-hole was discoverable; the lid was fast, but by what means it was fastened, the most accurate inspection could not detect; hence she was compelled to lay aside her project.
project. This chest had always stood in the chamber which I now occupied.

These incidents were now remembered, and I felt disposed to profit by this opportunity of examining this box. It stood in a corner, and was easily distinguished by its form: I lifted it, and found its weight by no means extraordinary.

Its structure was remarkable: it consisted of six sides, square and of similar dimensions: these were joined, not by mortise and tenon, not by nails, not by hinges, but the junction was accurate: the means by which they were made to cohere were invisible. Appearance on every side were uniform; nor were there any
any marks by which the lid was distinguishable from its other surfaces.

During his residence with Inglefield, many specimens of mechanical ingenuity were given by his servant: this was the workmanship of his own hands. I looked at it for some time, till the desire insensibly arose of opening and examining its contents.

I had no more right to do this than the Inglefields: perhaps indeed this curiosity was more absurd, and the gratification more culpable in me than in them; I was acquainted with the history of Clithero’s past life, and with his present condition: respecting these, I had no new intelligence to gain, and no doubts to solve: what excuse could I make to the proprietor,
prietor, should he ever reappear to claim his own; or to Inglesfield, for breaking open a receptacle which all the maxims of society combine to render sacred?

But could not my end be gained without violence? The means of opening might present themselves on a patient scrutiny; the lid might be raised and shut down again without any tokens of my act; its contents might be examined, and all things restored to their former condition in a few minutes.

I intended not a theft; I intended to benefit myself without inflicting injury on others: nay, might not the discoveries I should make, throw light upon the conduct of this extraordinary man, which his own narrative had withheld? Was there
there reason to confide implicitly on the tale which I had heard?

In spite of the testimony of my own feelings, the miseries of Clithero appeared in some degree fantastic and groundless: a thousand conceivable motives might induce him to pervert or conceal the truth: if he were thoroughly known, his character might assume a new appearance, and what is now so difficult to reconcile to common maxims, might prove perfectly consistent with them. I desire to restore him to peace; but a thorough knowledge of his actions is necessary, both to shew that he is worthy of compassion, and to suggest the best means of extirpating his errors: it was possible that this box contained the means of this knowledge.

There
There were likewise other motives which, as they possessed some influence, however small, deserve to be mentioned. Thou knowest that I also am a mechanist: I had constructed a writing-desk and cabinet, in which I had endeavoured to combine the properties of secrecy, security, and strength in the highest possible degree: I looked upon this therefore with the eye of an artist, and was solicitous to know the principles on which it was formed: I determined to examine, and if possible to open it.
I surveyed it with the utmost attention; all its parts appeared equally solid and smooth. It could not be doubted that one of its sides served the purpose of a lid; and was possible to be raised: mere strength could not be applied to raise it, because there was no projection which might be firmly held by the hand, and by which force could be exerted; some spring, therefore, secretly existed, which
which might for ever elude the senses, but on which the hand, by being moved over it in all directions, might accidentally light.

This process was effectual: a touch, casually applied at an angle, drove back a bolt; and a spring at the same time was set in action, by which the lid was raised above half an inch. No event could be supposed more fortuitous than this: an hundred hands might have sought in vain for this spring; the spot in which a certain degree of pressure was sufficient to produce this effect, was of all the last likely to attract notice or awaken suspicion.

I opened the trunk with eagerness: the space within was divided into nombreux
numerous compartments, none of which contained any thing of moment. Tools of different and curious constructions, and remnants of minute machinery, were all that offered themselves to my notice.

My expectations being thus frustrated, I proceeded to restore things to their former state. I attempted to close the lid; but the spring which had raised it refused to bend. No measure that I could adopt, enabled me to place the lid in the same situation in which I had found it: in my efforts to press down the lid, which were augmented in proportion to the resistance that I met with, the spring was broken. This obstacle being removed, the lid resumed its proper place; but no means within the reach of my ingenuity to discover, enabled me to push
push forward the bolt, and thus restore the fastening.

I now perceived that Clithero had provided not only against the opening of his cabinet, but likewise against the possibility of concealing that it had been opened. This discovery threw me into some confusion: I had been tempted thus far by the belief, that my action was without witnesses, and might be for ever concealed; this opinion was now confuted: if Clithero should ever reclaim his property, he would not fail to detect the violence of which I had been guilty; Inglefield would disapprove, in another what he had not permitted to himself, and the unauthorized, and clandestine manner in which I had behaved, would aggravate.
aggravate in his eyes the heinousness of my offence.

But now there was no remedy; all that remained was to hinder suspicion from lighting on the innocent, and to confess to my friend the offence which I had committed. Meanwhile my first project was resumed, and the family being now wrapt in profound sleep, I left my chamber, and proceeded to the elm. The moon was extremely brilliant; but I hoped that this unfrequented road and unseasonable hour would hinder me from being observed. My chamber was above the kitchen, with which it communicated by a small staircase, and the building to which it belonged was connected with the dwelling by a gallery. I extinguished the light, and left it in the kitchen, intending to relight
relight it by the embers that still glowed on the hearth, on my return.

I began to remove the sod, and cast out the earth, with little confidence in the success of my project; the issue of my examination of the box humbled and disheartened me: for some time I found nothing that tended to invigorate my hopes: I determined, however, to descend, as long as the unsettled condition of the earth shewed me that some one had preceded me. Small masses of stone were occasionally met with, which served only to perplex me with groundless expectations: at length my spade struck upon something which emitted a very different sound; I quickly drew it forth, and found it to be wood. Its regular form, and the crevices which were faintly discernible,
cernible, persuaded me that it was human workmanship, and that there was a cavity within. The place in which it was found easily suggested some connection between this and the destiny of Clithero. Covering up the hole with speed, I hastened with my prize to the house. The door by which the kitchen was entered was not to be seen from the road: it opened on a field, the farther limit of which was a ledge of rocks, which formed on this side the boundary of Inglefield's estate, and the westernmost barrier of Norwalk.

As I turned the angle of the house, and came in view of this door, methought I saw a figure issue from it: I was startled at this incident, and stopping, crouched close to the wall, that I might not be discovered. As soon as the figure passed beyond
beyond the verge of the shade, it was easily distinguished to be that of Clitheroe. He crossed the field with a rapid pace, and quickly passed beyond the reach of my eye.

This appearance was mysterious; for what end he should visit this habitation could not be guessed. Was the contingency to be lamented, in consequence of which an interview had been avoided? Would it have compelled me to explain the broken condition of his trunk? I knew not whether to rejoice at having avoided this interview, or to deplore it.

These thoughts did not divert me from examining the nature of the prize which I had gained: I relighted my candle and hied once more to the chamber. The first object
object which, on entering it, attracted my attention, was the cabinet broken into twenty fragments on the hearth. I had left it on a low table at a distant corner of the room.

No conclusion could be formed but that Clithero had been here, had discovered the violence which had been committed on his property, and, in the first transport of his indignation, had shattered it to pieces: I shuddered on reflecting how near I had been to being detected by him in the very act, and by how small an interval I had escaped that resentment which, in that case, would have probably been wreaked upon me.

My attention was withdrawn at length from this object, and fixed upon the contents
contents of the box which I had dug up. This was equally inaccessible with the other: I had not the same motives for caution and forbearance; I was somewhat desperate, as the consequences of my indiscretion could not be aggravated, and my curiosity was more impetuous with regard to the smaller than to the larger cabinet: I placed it on the ground, and crushed it to pieces with my heel.

Something was within: I brought it to the light, and after loosing numerous folds, at length drew forth a volume: no object in the circle of nature was more adapted than this to rouse up all my faculties: my feelings were anew excited on observing that it was a manuscript. I bolted the door, and drawing near the light, opened and began to read.

A few
A few pages were sufficient to explain the nature of the work: Clithero had mentioned that his Lady had composed a vindication of her conduct towards her brother when her intercession in his favour was solicited and refused; this performance had never been published, but had been read by many, and was preserved by her friends as a precious monument of her genius and her virtue: this manuscript was now before me.

That Clithero should preserve this manuscript amidst the wreck of his hopes and fortunes, was apparently conformable to his temper; that having formed the resolution to die, he should seek to hide this volume from the profane curiosity of of survivors, was a natural proceeding: to bury it, rather than to burn or disperse it.
it into fragments, would be suggested by the wish to conceal, without committing what his heated fancy would regard as sacrilege: to bury it beneath the elm was dictated by no fortuitous or inexplicable caprice: this event could scarcely fail of exercising some influence on the perturbations of his sleep; and thus, in addition to other causes, might his hovering near this trunk, and throwing up this earth, in the intervals of slumber, be accounted for. Clithero, indeed, had not mentioned this proceeding in the course of his narrative; but that would have contravened the end for which he had provided a grave for this book.

I read this copious tale with unspeakable eagerness: it essentially agreed with that
that which had been told by Clithero: by drawing forth events into all their circumstances, more distinct impressions were produced on the mind, and proofs of fortitude and equanimity were here given to which I had hitherto known no parallel. No wonder that a soul like Clithero's, prevaded by these proofs of inimitable excellence, and thrillingly alive to the passion of virtuous fame, and the value of that existence which he had destroyed, should be overborne by horror at the view of the past.

The instability of life and happiness was forcibly illustrated, as well as the perniciousness of error: exempt as this lady was from almost every defect, she was indebted for her ruin to absurd opinions of the sacredness of consanguinity,
to her anxiety for the preservation of a Russian, because that Russian was her brother. The spirit of Clithero was enlightened and erect, but he weakly suffered the dictates of eternal justice to be swallowed up by gratitude: the dread of unjust upbraiding hurried him to murder and to suicide, and the imputation of imaginary guilt impelled him to the perpetration of genuine and enormous crimes.

The perusal of this volume ended not but with the night. Contrary to my hopes, the next day was stormy and wet: this did not deter me from visiting the mountain; slippery paths and muddy torrents were no obstacles to the purposes which I had adopted. I wrapped myself and a bag of provisions in a cloak of painted canvas,
canvas, and speeded to the dwelling of Clithero.

I passed through the cave, and reached the bridge which my own ingenuity had formed. At that moment torrents of rain poured from above, and stronger blasts thundered amidst these desolate recesses and profound chasms: instead of lamenting the prevalence of this tempest, I now began to regard it with pleasure: it conferred new forms of sublimity and grandeur on this scene.

As I crept with hands and feet along my imperfect bridge, a sudden gust had nearly whirled me into the frightful abyss below. To preserve myself, I was obliged to loose my hold of my burden, and it fell into the gulf: this incident disconcerted
certed and distressed me. As soon as I had effected my dangerous passage, I screened myself behind a cliff, and gave myself up to reflection.

The purpose of this arduous journey was defeated by the loss of the provisions I had brought: I despaired of winning the attention of the fugitive to supplications, or arguments tending to smother remorse, or revive his fortitude: the scope of my efforts was to consist in vanquishing his aversion to food; but these efforts would now be useless, since I had no power to supply his cravings.

This deficiency, however, was easily supplied; I had only to return home, and supply myself anew. No time was to be lost in doing this; but I was willing to remain
remain under this shelter till the fury of the tempest had subsided: besides, I was not certain that Clithero had again retreated hither; it was requisite to explore the summit of this hill, and ascertain whether it had any inhabitant: I might likewise discover what had been the success of my former experiment, and whether the food which had been left here on the foregoing day, was consumed or neglected.

While occupied with these reflections my eyes were fixed upon the opposite steeps: the tops of the trees, waving to and fro in the wildest commotion, and their trunks occasionally bending to the blast, which in these lofty regions blew with a violence unknown in the tracts below, exhibited an awful spectacle. At length my attention was attracted by the trunk
trunk which lay across the gulf, and which I had converted into a bridge: I perceived that it had already somewhat swerved from its original position, that every blast broke or loosened some of the fibres by which its root was connected with the opposite bank, and that, if the storm did not speedily abate, there was imminent danger of its being torn from the rock, and precipitated into the chasm: thus my retreat would be cut off, and the evils from which I was endeavouring to rescue another would be experienced by myself.

I did not just then reflect that Clithero had found access to this hill by other means, and that the avenue by which he came would be equally commodious to me; I believed my destiny to hang upon the
the expedition with which I should recross this gulf. The moments that were spent in these deliberations were critical, and I shuddered to observe that the trunk was held in its place by one or two fibres which were already stretched almost to breaking.

To pass along the trunk, rendered slippery by the wet, and unsteadfast by the wind, was eminently dangerous. To maintain my hold in passing, in defiance of the whirlwind, required the most vigorous exertions: for this end it was necessary to discommodate myself of my cloak, and of my volume, which I carried in the pocket of my cloak: I believed there was no reason to dread their being destroyed or purloined, if left for a few hours or a day in this recess; if laid beside a stone, under shelter of
of this cliff, they would no doubt remain unmolested till the disappearance of the storm should permit me to revisit this spot in the afternoon or on the morrow.

Just as I had disposed of these encumbrances, and had risen from my seat, my attention was again called to the opposite steep by the most unwelcome object that, at this time, could possibly occur: something was perceived moving among the bushes and rocks, which, for a time, I hoped was no more than a raccoon or oppossum; but which presently appeared to be a panther. His grey coat, extended claws, fiery eyes, and a cry which he at that moment uttered, and which, by its resemblance to the human voice, is peculiarly terrific, denoted him to be the most ferocious
ferocious and untamable of that detested race.*

The industry of our hunters has nearly banished animals of prey from these precincts: the fastnesses of Norwalk, however, could not but afford refuge to some of them. Of late I had met them so rarely, that my fears were seldom alive, and I trod without caution the most rugged and solitary haunts: still; however, I had seldom been unfurnished in my rambles with the means of defence.

My temper never delighted in carnage

* The grey Cougar. This animal has all the essential characteristics of a tyger: though somewhat inferior in size and strength, these are such as to make him equally formidable to man.
and blood; I found no pleasure in plunging into bogs, wading through rivulets, and penetrating thickets, for the sake of dispatching woodcocks and squirrels: to watch their gambols and flittings, and invite them to my hand, was my darling amusement when loitering among the woods and the rocks. It was much otherwise, however, with regard to rattlesnakes and panthers; these I thought it no breach of duty to exterminate wherever they could be found: these judicious and sanguinary spoilers were equally the enemies of man and of the harmless race that sported in the trees; and many of their skins are still preserved by me as trophies of my juvenile prowess.

As hunting was never my trade or my sport, I never loaded myself with fowling-piece
piece or rifle: assiduous exercise had made me master of a weapon of much easier carriage, and, within a moderate distance, more destructive and unerring. This was the tomahawk; with this I have often severed an oak branch, and cut the sinews of a cat o'mountain, at the distance of sixty feet.

The unfrequency with which I had lately encountered this foe, and the encumbrance of provision, made me neglect on this occasion to bring with me my usual arms. The beast that was now before me, when stimulated by hunger, was accustomed to assail whatever could provide him with a banquet of blood; he would set upon the man and the deer with equal and irresistible ferocity: his sagacity was equal to his strength, and he
he seemed able to discover when his antagonist was armed and prepared for defence.

My past experience enabled me to estimate the full extent of my danger. He sat on the brow of the steep, eyeing the bridge, and apparently deliberating whether he should cross it: it was probable that he had scented my footsteps thus far, and should he pass over, his vigilance could scarcely fail of detecting my asylum. The pit into which Clithero had sunk from my view was at some distance: to reach it was the first impulse of my fear; but this could not be done without exciting the observation and pursuit of this enemy. I deeply regretted the untoward chance that had led me, when I first came over, to a different shelter.
EDGAR HUNTLY.

Should he retain his present station, my danger was scarcely lessened: to pass over in the face of a famished tiger was only to rush upon my fate. The falling of the trunk, which had lately been so anxiously deprecated, was now, with no less solicitude, desired; every new gust, I hoped, would tear asunder its remaining bands, and, by cutting off all communication between the opposite steeps, place me in security.

My hopes, however, were destined to be frustrated: the fibres of the prostrate tree were obstinately tenacious of their hold; and presently the animal scrambled down the rock, and proceeded to cross it.

Of all kinds of death, that which now menaced me was the most abhorred. To
die by disease, or by the hand of a fellow-creature, was propitious and lenient in comparison with being rent to pieces by the fangs of this savage: to perish in this obscure retreat by means so impervious to the anxious curiosity of my friends, to lose my portion of existence by so untoward and ignoble a destiny, was insupportable. I bitterly deplored my rashness in coming hither unprovided for an encounter like this.

The evil of my present circumstances consisted chiefly in suspense: my death was unavoidable, but my imagination had leisure to torment itself by anticipations. One foot of the savage was slowly and cautiously moved after the other: he struck his claws so deeply into the bark that they were with difficulty withdrawn.
at length he leaped upon the ground. We were now separated by an interval of scarcely eight feet. To leave the spot where I crouched was impossible; behind and beside me the cliff rose perpendicularly, and before me was this grim and terrific visage: I shrunk still closer to the ground, and closed my eyes.

From this pause of horror I was roused by the noise occasioned by a second spring of the animal: he leaped into the pit, in which I had so deeply regretted that I had not taken refuge, and disappeared. My rescue was so sudden, and so much beyond my belief or my hope, that I doubted for a moment whether my senses did not deceive me. This opportunity of escape was not to be neglected; I left my place, and scrambled over the trunk with a precipitation.
a precipitation which had liked to have proved fatal: the tree groaned and shook under me, the wind blew with unexampled violence, and I had scarcely reached the opposite steep when the roots were severed from the rock, and the whole fell thundering to the bottom of the chasm.

My trepidations were not speedily quieted: I looked back with wonder on my hair-breadth escape, and on that singular concurrence of events which had placed me, in so short a period, in absolute security. Had the trunk fallen a moment earlier, I should have been imprisoned on the hill, or thrown headlong: had its fall been delayed another moment I should have been pursued; for the beast now issued from his den, and testified his surprise and disappointment by tokens, the sight
sight of which made my blood run cold.

He saw me and hastened to the verge of the chasm: he squatted on his hind legs, and assumed the attitude of one preparing to leap. My consternation was excited afresh by these appearances: it seemed at first as if the rift was too wide for any power of muscles to carry him in safety over; but I knew the unparalleled agility of this animal, and that his experience had made him a better judge of the practicability of this exploit than I was.

Still there was hope that he would relinquish this design as desperate. This hope was quickly at an end: he sprung, and his fore legs touched the verge of
the rock on which I stood: in spite of
vehement exertions, however, the surface
was too smooth and too hard to allow
him to make good his hold—he fell, and
a piercing cry uttered below, shewed
that nothing had obstructed his descent
to the bottom.

Thus was I again rescued from death.
Nothing but the pressure of famine could
have prompted this savage to so audacious
and hazardous an effort; but, by yielding
to this impulse, he had made my future
visits to this spot exempt from peril.
Clithero was, likewise, relieved from a
danger that was imminent and unforeseen;
prowling over these grounds the panther
could scarcely have failed to meet with
this solitary fugitive.

Had
EDGAR HUNTLY.

Had the animal lived, my first duty would have been to have sought him out, and assailed him with my tomahawk; but no undertaking would have been more hazardous: lurking in the grass, or in the branches of a tree, his eye might have descried my approach, he might leap upon me unperceived, and my weapon would be useless.

With a heart beating with unwonted rapidity, I once more descended the cliff, entered the cavern, and arrived at Huntly farm, drenched with rain, and exhausted by fatigue.

By night the storm was dispelled; but my exhausted strength would not allow me to return to the mountain. At the customary hour I retired to my chamber.
I incessantly ruminated on the adventures of the last day, and enquired into the conduct which I was next to pursue.

The bridge being destroyed, my customary access was cut off: there was no possibility of restoring this bridge; my strength would not suffice to drag a fallen tree from a distance, and there was none whose position would abridge or supercede that labour; some other expedient must therefore be discovered to pass this chasm.

I reviewed the circumstances of my subterranean journey. The cavern was imperfectly explored; its branches might be numerous: that which I had hitherto pursued, terminated in an opening at a considerable distance from the bottom: other
other branches might exist, some of which might lead to the foot of the precipice, and thence a communication might be found with the summit of the interior hill.

The danger of wandering into dark and untried paths, and the commodiousness of that road which had at first been taken, were sufficient reasons for having hitherto suspended my examination of the different branches of this labyrinth. Now my customary road was no longer practicable, and another was to be carefully explored: for this end, on my next journey to the mountain, I determined to take with me a lamp, and unravel this darksome maze: this project I resolved to execute the next day.
I now recollected what, if it had more seasonably occurred, would have taught me caution. Some months before this a farmer living in the skirts of Norwalk, discovered two marauders in his field, whom he imagined to be a male and female panther. They had destroyed some sheep, and had been hunted by the farmer with long and fruitless diligence: sheep had likewise been destroyed in different quarters; but the owners had fixed the imputation of the crime upon dogs, many of whom had atoned for their supposed offences by their death. He who had mentioned his discovery of panthers, received little credit from his neighbours; because a long time had elapsed since these animals were supposed to have been exiled from this district, and because no other person had seen them.
them. The truth of this seemed now to be confirmed by the testimony of my own senses; but, if the rumour were true, there still existed another of these animals, who might harbour in the obscurities of this desert, and against whom it was necessary to employ some precaution: henceforth I resolved never to traverse the wilderness unfurnished with my tomahawk.

These images, mingled with those which the contemplation of futurity suggested, floated for a time in my brain; but at length gave place to sleep.
SINCE my return home, my mind had been fully occupied by schemes and reflections relative to Clithero. The project suggested by thee, and to which I had determined to devote my leisure, was forgotten, or remembered for a moment, and at wide intervals. What, however, was nearly banished from my waking thoughts, occurred in an incongruous and half-seen form to my dreams. During my sleep the image
I commonly awake soon enough to
mark the youngest dawn of the morning:
now, in consequence perhaps of my per-
turbed sleep, I opened my eyes before
the stars had lost any of their lustre;
this circumstance produced some surprize,
until the images that lately hovered in
my fancy were recalled, and furnished
some

EDGAR HUNTLING.

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image of Waldegrave flitted before me.
Methought the sentiment that impelled
him to visit me was not affection or
complacency, but inquietude and anger:
some service or duty remained to be per-
formed by me, which I had culpably
neglected; to inspire my zeal, to awaken
my remembrance, and incite me to the
performance of this duty, did this glim-
mering messenger, this half-indignant
apparition come.
somewhat like a solution of the problem. Connected with the image of my dead friend, was that of his sister: the discourse that took place at our last interview—the scheme of transcribing, for thy use, all the letters which, during his short but busy life, I received from him—the nature of this correspondence, and the opportunity which this employment would afford me of contemplating these ample and precious monuments of the intellectual existence and moral pre-eminence of my friend, occurred to my thoughts.

The resolution to prosecute the task was revived: the obligation of benevolence, with regard to Clithero, was not discharged; these neither duty nor curiosity would permit to be overlooked or delayed.
delayed. But why should my whole attention and activity be devoted to this man? The hours which were spent at home and in my chamber could not be more usefully employed than in making my intended copy.

In a few hours after sunrise I purposed to resume my way to the mountain. Could this interval be appropriated to a better purpose than in counting over my friend's letters, setting them apart from my own, and preparing them for that transcription from which I expected so high, and yet so mournful a gratification?

This purpose, by no violent union, was blended with the recollection of my dream: this recollection infused some degree of wavering and dejection into my mind.
In transcribing these letters I should violate pathetic and solemn injunctions frequently repeated by the writer. Was there some connection between this purpose and the incidents of my vision? Was the latter sent to enforce the interdictions which had been formerly imposed?

Thou art not fully acquainted with the intellectual history of thy brother: some information on that head will be necessary to explain the nature of that reluctance which I now feel to comply with thy request, and which had formerly so much excited thy surprise.

Waldegrave, like other men, early devoted to meditation and books, had adopted at different periods different systems...
systems of opinion on topics connected with religion and morals. His earliest creeds tended to efface the impressions of his education—to deify necessity and universalize matter—to destroy the popular distinctions between soul and body, and to dissolve the supposed connection between the moral condition of man anterior and subsequent to death.

This creed he adopted with all the fulness of conviction, and propagated with the utmost zeal. Soon after our friendship commenced, Fortune placed us at a distance from each other, and no intercourse was allowed but by the pen. Our letters, however, were punctual and copious: those of Waldegrave were too frequently
frequently diverted to the defence of his favourite tenets.

Thou art acquainted with the revolution that afterwards took place in his mind. Placed within the sphere of religious influence, and listening daily to the reasonings and exhortations of Mr. S—, whose benign temper and blameless deportment was a visible and constant lesson, he insensibly resumed the faith which he had relinquished, and became the vehement opponent of all that he had formerly defended. The chief object of his labours in this new state of his mind, was to counteract the effect of his former reasonings on my opinions.

At this time other changes took place in
in his situation; in consequence of which we were once more permitted to reside under the same roof. The intercourse now ceased to be by letter; and the subtle and laborious argumentations which he had formerly produced against religion, and which were contained in a permanent form, were combatted in transient conversation. He was not only eager to subvert those opinions which he had contributed to instil into me, but was anxious that the letters and manuscripts which had been employed in their support, should be destroyed. He did not fear wholly or chiefly on my own account: he believed that the influence of former reasonings on my faith would be sufficiently eradicated by the new; but he dreaded lest these manuscripts might fall into other hands, and
and thus produce mischiefs which it would not be in his power to repair. With regard to me, the poison had been followed by its antidote; but with respect to others, these letters would communicate the poison when the antidote could not be administered.

I would not consent to this sacrifice; I did not entirely abjure the creed which had with great copiousness and eloquence been defended in these letters: besides, mixed up with abstract reasonings, were numberless passages which elucidated the character and history of my friend; these were too precious to be consigned to oblivion; and to take them out of their present connection and arrangement, would be to mutilate and deform them.

His
EDGAR HUNTLY.

His entreaties and remonstrances were earnest and frequent, but always ineffectual; he had too much purity of motives to be angry at my stubbornness; but his sense of the mischievous tendency of these letters was so great, that my intractability cost him many a pang.

He was now gone, and I had not only determined to preserve these monuments, but had consented to copy them for the use of another—for the use of one whose present and eternal welfare had been the chief object of his cares and efforts. Thou, like others of thy sex, art unaccustomed to metaphysical refinements; thy religion is the growth of sensibility, and not of argument; thou art satisfied and prepossessed against the subtleties with which the being and attributes
of the Deity have been assailed. Would it be just to expose thee to pollution and depravity from this source?—to make thy brother the instrument of thy apostacy, the author of thy fall—that brother whose latter days were so ardently devoted to cherishing the spirit of devotion in thy heart?

These ideas now occurred with more force than formerly. I had promised, not without reluctance, to give thee the entire copy of his letters; but I now receded from this promise: I resolved merely to select for thy perusal such as were narrative or descriptive. This could not be done with too much expedition: it was still dark, but my sleep was at an end, and by a common apparatus that lay
lay beside my bed, I could instantly produce a light.

The light was produced, and I proceeded to the cabinet where all my papers and books are deposited. This was my own contrivance and workmanship, undertaken by the advice of Sarsefield, who took infinite pains to foster that mechanical genius which displayed itself so early and so forcibly in thy friend. The key belonging to this was, like the cabinet itself, of singular structure: for greater safety, it was constantly placed in a closet, which was likewise locked.

The key was found as usual, and the cabinet opened. The letters were bound together in a compact form, lodged in a parch-
a parchment case, and placed in a secret drawer. This drawer would not have been detected by common eyes, and it opened by the motion of a spring, of whose existence none but the maker was conscious; this drawer I had opened before I went to sleep, and the letters were then safe.

Thou canst not imagine my confusion and astonishment when, on opening the drawer, I perceived that the packet was gone: I looked with more attention, and put my hand within it, but the space was empty. Whither had it gone, and by whom was it purloined? I was not conscious of having taken it away; yet no hands but mine could have done it. On the last evening I had doubtless removed it to some other corner, but had
had forgotten it: I tasked my understanding and my memory; I could not conceive the possibility of any motives inducing me to alter my arrangements in this respect, and was unable to recollect that I had made this change.

What remained? This invaluable relique had disappeared; every thought and every effort must be devoted to the single purpose of regaining it: as yet I did not despair; until I had opened and ransacked every part of the cabinet in vain, I did not admit the belief that I had lost it: even then this persuasion was tumultuous and fluctuating; it had vanished to my senses, but these senses were abused and depraved. To have passed, of its own accord, through the pores
pores of this wood was impossible; but if it were gone, thus did it escape.

I was lost in horror and amazement. I explored every nook a second and a third time, but still it eluded my eye and my touch; I opened my closets and cases—I prayed every where, unfolded every article of clothing, turned and scrutinized every instrument and tool, but nothing availed.

My thoughts were not speedily collected or calmed: I threw myself on the bed, and resigned myself to musing. That my loss was irretrievable, was a supposition not to be endured: yet ominous terrors haunted me; a whispering intimation that a relic which I valued more than life, was torn for ever away by some malignant
malignant and inscrutable destiny; the same power that had taken it from this receptacle was able to waft it over the ocean or the mountains, and condemn me to a fruitless and eternal search.

But what was he that committed the theft? Thou only of the beings who live wast acquainted with the existence of these manuscripts: thou art many miles distant, and art utterly a stranger to the mode or place of their concealment. Not only access to the cabinet, but access to the room, without my knowledge and permission, was impossible: both were locked during this night. Not five hours had elapsed since the cabinet and drawer had been opened, and since the letters had been seen and touched, being in their ordinary position. During this interval
interval the thief had entered, and de-
spoiled me of my treasure.

This event, so inexplicable and so
dreadful, threw my soul into a kind of
stupor or distraction, from which I was
suddenly roused by a footstep softly
moving in the entry near my door. I
started from my bed, as if I had gained
a glimpse of the robber: before I could
reach the door, some one knocked: I did
not think upon the propriety of answering
the signal, but hastened with tremulous
fingers and throbbing heart to open the
door. My uncle, in his night-dress, and
apparently just risen from his bed, stood
before me!

He marked the eagerness and pertur-
bation of my looks, and enquired into
the cause. I did not answer his enquiries. His appearance in my chamber, and in this guise, added to my surprise; my mind was full of the late discovery, and instantly conceived some connection between this unseasonable visit and my lost manuscript. I interrogated him in my turn as to the cause of his coming.

"Why," said he, "I came to ascertain whether it were you or not who amused himself so strangely at this time of night. What is the matter with you? Why are you up so early?"

I told him that I had been roused by my dreams, and finding no inclination to court my slumber back again, I had risen, though earlier by some hours than the usual period of my rising.
"But why did you go up stairs? You might easily imagine that the sound of your steps would alarm those below, who would be puzzled to guess who it was that had thought proper to amuse himself in this manner."

"Up stairs! I have not left my room this night: it is not ten minutes since I awoke, and my door has not since been opened."

"Indeed! that is strange—nay, it is impossible! It was your feet surely that I heard pacing so solemnly and indefatigably across the long-room for near an hour. I could not for my life conjecture for a time who it was, but finally concluded that it was you: there was still..."
still, however, some doubt, and I came hither to satisfy myself."

These tidings were adapted to raise all my emotions to a still higher pitch. I questioned him with eagerness as to the circumstance he had noticed. He said he had been roused by a sound, whose power of disturbing him arose not from its loudness but from its uncommonness. He distinctly heard some one pacing to and fro with bare feet, in the long room: this sound continued, with little intermission, for an hour. He then noticed a cessation of the walking, and a sound as if some one were lifting the lid of the large cedar chest that stood in the corner of this room. The walking was not resumed, and all was silent. He listened for a quarter of an hour, and

busied.
busied himself in conjecturing the cause of this disturbance. The most probable conclusion was, that the walker was his nephew, and his curiosity had led him to my chamber to ascertain the truth.

This dwelling has three stories: the two lower stories are divided into numerous apartments: the upper story constitutes a single room, whose sides are the four walls of the house, and whose ceiling is the roof. This room is unoccupied, except by lumber, and imperfectly lighted by a small casement at one end. In this room were footsteps heard by my uncle.

The staircase leading to it terminated in a passage near my door: I snatched the
the candle, and desiring him to follow me, added that I would ascertain the truth in a moment: he followed, but observed that the walking had ceased long enough for the person to escape.

I ascended to the room, and looked behind and among the tables and chairs, and casks, which were confusedly scattered through it, but found nothing in the shape of man. The cedar chest spoken of by Mr. Huntly, contained old books, and remnants of maps and charts, whose worthlessness unfitted them for accommodation elsewhere: the lid was without hinges or lock:—I examined this repository, but there was nothing which attracted my attention.

The way between the kitchen door,
and the door of the long-room, had no impediments; both were usually unfastened: but the motives by which any stranger to the dwelling, or indeed any one within it, could be prompted to choose this place and hour, for an employment of this kind, were wholly incomprehensible.

When the family rose, enquiries were made, but no satisfaction was obtained: the family consisted only of four persons, my uncle, my two sisters, and myself; I mentioned to them the loss I had sustained, but their conjectures were no less unsatisfactory on this than on the former incident.

There was no end to my restless meditations. Waldegrave was the only being besides
besides myself, acquainted with the secrets of my cabinet. During his life these manuscripts had been the objects of perpetual solicitude; to gain possession, to destroy or secrete them, was the strongest of his wishes. Had he retained his sensibility on the approach of death, no doubt he would have renewed, with irresistible solemnity, his injunctions to destroy them.

Now, however, they had vanished: there were no materials of conjecture—no probabilities to be weighed, or suspicions to revolve: human artifice or power was unequal to this exploit—means less than preternatural would not furnish a conveyance for this treasure.

It was otherwise with regard to this unseason-
unseasonable walker: his inducements indeed were beyond my power to conceive; but to enter these doors, and ascend these stairs, demanded not the faculties of any being more than human.

This intrusion and the pillage of my cabinet were contemporary events. Was there no more connection between them than that which results from time? Was not the purloiner of my treasure and the wanderer the same person? I could not reconcile the former incident with the attributes of man; and yet a secret faith, not to be out-rooted or suspended, swayed me, and compelled me to imagine that the detection of this visitant would unveil the thief.

These thoughts were pregnant with dejection
dejection and reverie. Clithero, during the day, was forgotten: on the succeeding night my intentions with regard to this man returned. I derived some slender consolation from reflecting that time, in its long lapse and ceaseless revolutions, might dissipate the gloom that environed me. Meanwhile I struggled to dismiss the images connected with my loss, and to think only of Clithero.

My impatience was as strong as ever to obtain another interview with this man: I longed with vehemence for the return of day; I believed that every moment added to his sufferings, intellectual and physical, and confided in the efficacy of my presence to alleviate or suspend them. The provisions I had left would be speedily consumed, and the abstinence of three days
days was sufficient to undermine the vital energies. I some times hesitated whether I ought not instantly to depart; it was night indeed, but the late storm had purified the air, and the radiance of a full-moon was universal and dazzling.

From this attempt I was deterred by reflecting that my own frame needed the repairs of sleep: toil and watchfulness, if prolonged another day, would deeply injure a constitution by no means distinguished for its force; I must therefore compel, if it were possible, some hours of repose. I prepared to retire to bed, when a new incident occurred to divert my attention for a time from these designs.

CHAP.
CHAP. V.

WHILE sitting alone by the parlour-fire marking the effects of moonlight, I noted one on horseback coming towards the gate: at first sight methought his shape and guise were not wholly new to me; but all that I could discern, was merely a resemblance to some one whom I had before seen. Presently he stopped, and looking towards the house, made enquiries of a passenger who chanced to be
be near. Being apparently satisfied with the answers he received, he rode with a quick pace into the court, and alighted at the door. I started from my seat, and going forth, waited with some impatience to hear his purpose explained.

He accosted me with the formality of a stranger, and asked if a young man, by name Edgar Huntly, resided here: being answered in the affirmative, and being requested to come in, he entered, and seated himself without hesitation by the fire. Some doubt and anxiety were visible in his looks: he seemed desirous of information upon some topic; and yet betrayed terror lest the answers he might receive should subvert some hope, or confirm some foreboding.

Meanwhile
Meanwhile I scrutinized his features with much solicitude: a nearer and more deliberate view convinced me that the first impression was just; but still I was unable to call up his name or the circumstances of our former meeting. The pause was at length ended by his saying, in a faltering voice—"My name is Weymouth: I came hither to obtain information on a subject in which my happiness is deeply concerned."

At the mention of his name I started: it was a name too closely connected with the image of thy brother, not to call up affecting and vivid recollections. Weymouth thou knowest was thy brother's friend. It is three years since this man left America; during which time no tidings
tidings had been heard of him, at least by thy brother. He had now returned, and was probably unacquainted with the fate of his friend.

After an anxious pause, he continued:—
"Since my arrival I have heard of an event which has, on many accounts, given me the deepest sorrow: I loved Waldegrave, and know not any person in the world whose life was dearer to me than his: there were considerations, however, which made it more precious to me than the life of one whose merits might be greater:—with his life, my own existence and property were, I have reason to think, inseparably united.

"On my return to my country, after a long.
a long absence, I made immediate enquiries after him: I was informed of his untimely death. I had questions of infinite moment to my happiness to decide with regard to the state and disposition of his property: I sought out those of his friends who had maintained with him the most frequent, and confidential intercourse; but they could not afford me any satisfaction: at length I was informed that a young man of your name, and living in this district, had enjoyed more of his affection and society than any other—had regulated the property which he left behind, and was best qualified to afford the intelligence which I sought. You, it seems, are this person, and of you I must make enquiries, to which I conjure you to return sincere and explicit answers.

"That,"
"That," said I, "I shall find no difficulty in doing: whatever questions you shall think proper to ask, I will answer with readiness and truth."

"What kind of property, and to what amount, was your friend possessed of at his death?"

"It was money; and consisted of deposits in the Bank of North America. The amount was little short of eight thousand dollars."

"On whom has this property devolved?"

"His sister was his only relation; and she is now in possession of it."

"Did
"Did he leave any will by which he directed the disposition of his property?"

While thus speaking, Weymouth fixed his eyes upon my countenance, and seemed anxious to pierce into my inmost soul. I was somewhat surprised at his questions, but much more at the manner in which they were put. I answered him, however, without delay—"He left no will; nor was any paper discovered by which we could guess at his intentions: no doubt, indeed, had he made a will his sister would have been placed precisely in the same condition in which she now is: he was not only bound to her by the strongest ties of kindred, but by affection and gratitude."

Weymouth now withdrew his eyes from
from my face, and sunk into a mournful reverie: he sighed often and deeply. This deportment and the strain of his enquiries excited much surprise. His interest in the fate of Waldegrave ought to have made the information he had received, a source of satisfaction rather than of regret. The property which Waldegrave left was much greater than his mode of life and his own professions had given us reason to expect; but it was no more than sufficient to ensure to thee an adequate subsistence: it ascertained the happiness of those who were dearest to Waldegrave, and placed them for ever beyond the reach of that poverty which had hitherto beset them. I made no attempt to interrupt the silence, but prepared to answer any new interrogatory. At length Weymouth resumed.

"Waldegrave
"Waldegrave was a fortunate man to amass so considerable a sum in so short a time; I remember when we parted he was poor. He used to lament that his scrupulous integrity precluded him from all the common roads to wealth: he did not contemn riches, but he set the highest value upon competence; and imagined that he was doomed for ever to poverty. His religious duty compelled him to seek his livelihood by teaching a school of blacks. The labour was disproportioned to his feeble constitution, and the profit was greatly disproportioned to the labour: it scarcely supplied the necessities of nature; and was reduced sometimes even below that standard by his frequent indisposition. I rejoice to find that his scruples had somewhat relaxed their force, and that he had betaken himself to some more
more profitable occupation. Pray, what was his new way of business?"

"Nay," said I, "his scruples continued as rigid in this respect as ever: he was teacher of the Negro free-school when he died."

"Indeed! How then came he to amass so much money? Could he blend any more lucrative pursuit with his duty as a schoolmaster?"

"So it seems."

"What was his pursuit?"

"That question, I believe, none of his friends are qualified to answer. I thought myself acquainted with the most secret
transactions of his life, but this had been carefully concealed from me; I was not only unapprised of any other employment of his time, but had not the slightest suspicion of his possessing any property besides his clothes and books. Ransacking his papers, with a different view, I lighted on his bank-book, in which was a regular receipt for seven thousand five hundred dollars. By what means he acquired this money, and even the acquisition of it, till his death put us in possession of his papers, was wholly unknown to us."

"Possibly he might have held it in trust for another: in this case some memorandums or letters would be found explaining this affair."

"True: this supposition could not fail
to occur; in consequence of which the most
diligent search was made among his papers;
but no shred or scrap was to be found which
countenanced our conjecture."

"You may reasonably be surprised, and
perhaps offended," said Weymouth, "at
these enquiries; but it is time to explain
my motives for making them. Three
years ago I was, like Waldegrave, indi-
gent, and earned my bread by daily
labour. During seven years service in
a public office, I saved from the expences
of subsistence a few hundred dollars.
I determined to strike into a new path,
and with this sum to lay the founda-
tion of better fortune: I turned it into
a bulky commodity, freighted and loaded
a small vessel, and went with it to Bar-
celona, in Spain. I was not unsucces-
sful in my projects; and changing my
abode
abode to England, France, and Germany, according as my interest required, I became finally possessed of sufficient for the supply of all my wants. I then resolved to return to my native country, and laying out my money in land, to spend the rest of my days in the luxury and quiet of an opulent farmer. For this end I invested the greatest part of my property in a cargo of wine from Madeira; the remainder I turned into a bill of exchange for seven thousand five hundred dollars. I had maintained a friendly correspondence with Waldegrave during my absence, there was no one with whom I had lived on terms of so much intimacy, and had boundless confidence in his integrity: to him therefore I determined to transmit this bill, requesting him to take the money into safe keeping until my return. In this manner
manner I endeavoured to provide against the accidents that might befall my person or my cargo in crossing the ocean.

"It was my fate to encounter the worst of these disasters. We were overtaken by a storm, my vessel was driven ashore on the coast of Portugal, my cargo was utterly lost, and the greater part of the crew and passengers were drowned: I was rescued from the same fate by some fishermen. In consequence of the hardships to which I had been exposed, having laboured for several days at the pumps, and spent the greater part of a winter night hanging from the rigging of the ship, and perpetually beaten by the waves, I contracted a severe disease, which bereaved me of the use of my limbs. The fishermen who rescued me, carried me to their huts; and there I remained
remained three weeks helpless and miserable.

"That part of the coast on which I was thrown, was in the highest degree sterile and rude: its few inhabitants subsisted precariously on the produce of the ocean. Their dwellings were of mud, low, filthy, dark, and comfortless; their fuel was the stalks of shrubs, sparingly scattered over a sandy desert; their poverty scarcely allowed them salt and black bread with their fish, which was obtained in unequal and sometimes insufficient quantities, and which they eat with all its impurities and half cooked.

"My former habits as well as my present indisposition required very different treatment from what the ignorance and penury of these people obliged them to bestow
bestow. I lay upon the moist earth, imperfectly sheltered from the sky, and with neither raiment nor fire to keep me warm. My hosts had little attention or compassion to spare to the wants of others. They could not remove me to a more hospitable district; and here, without doubt, I should have perished had not a Monk chanced to visit their hovels. He belonged to a Convent of St. Jago, some leagues farther from the shore, who used to send one of its members annually to inspect the religious concerns of these outcasts. Happily this was the period of their visitations.

"My abode in Spain had made me somewhat conversant with its language: the dialect of this Monk did not so much differ from Castilian, but that, with the assistance of Latin, we were able to converse."
verse. The jargon of the fishermen was unintelligible, and they had vainly endeavoured to keep up my spirits by informing me of this expected visit.

"This Monk was touched with compassion at my calamity and speedily provided the means of my removal to his Convent. Here I was charitably entertained, and the aid of a physician was procured for me. He was but poorly skilled in his profession, and rather confirmed than alleviated my disease. The Portuguese of his trade, especially in remoter districts, are little more than dealers in talismans and nostrums. For a long time I was unable to leave my pallet, and had no prospect before me but that of consuming my days in the gloom of this cloister.

"All
"All the members of this Convent, but he who had been my first benefactor, and whose name was Chaledro, were bigotted and sordid. Their chief motive for treating me with kindness was the hope of obtaining a convert from heresy: they spared no pains to subdue my errors, and were willing to prolong my imprisonment in the hope of finally gaining their end. Had my fate been governed by these, I should have been immured in this Convent, and compelled either to adopt their fanatical creed, or to put an end to my own life, in order to escape their well-meant persecutions.—Chaledro, however, though no less sincere in his faith and urgent in his entreaties, yet finding me invincible, exerted his influence to obtain my liberty.

"After-
"After many delays and strenuous exertions of my friend, they consented to remove me to Oporto. The journey was to be performed in an open cart over a mountainous country, in the heats of summer. The Monks endeavoured to dissuade me from the enterprise for my own sake, it being scarcely possible that one in my feeble state should survive a journey like this; but I despaired of improving my condition by other means: I preferred death to the imprisonment of a Portuguese Monastery, and knew that I could hope for no alleviation of my disease but from the skill of Scottish or French physicians, whom I expected to meet with in that city. I adhered to my purpose with so much vehemence and obstinacy, that they finally yielded to my wishes.

My
"My road lay through the wildest and most rugged districts; it did not exceed ninety miles, but seven days were consumed on the way. The motion of the vehicle racked me with the keenest pangs, and my attendants concluded that every stage would be my last. They had been selected without due regard to their characters: they were knavish and inhuman, and omitted nothing, but actual violence, to hasten my death: they purposely retarded the journey, and protracted to seven what might have been readily performed in four days: they neglected to execute the orders which they had received respecting my lodging and provisions; and from them, as well as from the peasants, who were sure to be informed that I was a heretic, I suffered every species of insult and injury. My consti-
constitution as well as my frame, possessed a fund of strength of which I had no previous conception. In spite of hardship and exposure and abstinence, I at last arrived at Oporto.

"Instead of being carried, agreeably to Chaledro's direction, to a Convent of St. Jago, I was left, late in the evening, in the porch of a common hospital. My attendants, having laid me on the pavement, and loaded me with imprecations, left me to obtain admission by my own efforts. I passed the live-long night on this spot, and in the morning was received into the house, in a state which left it uncertain whether I was alive or dead.

"After recovering my sensibility, I made various efforts to procure a visit from
from some English merchant: this was no easy undertaking for one in my deplorable condition; I was too weak to articulate my words distinctly, and these words were rendered by my foreign accent scarcely intelligible: the likelihood of my speedy death made the people about me more indifferent to my wants and petitions.

"I will not dwell upon my repeated disappointments, but content myself with mentioning that I gained the attention of a French gentleman, whose curiosity brought him to view the hospital; through him I obtained a visit from an English merchant; and finally gained the notice of a person, who formerly resided in America, and of whom I had imperfect knowledge: by their kindness I was removed
removed from the hospital to a private house; a Scottish surgeon was summoned to my assistance, and in seven months I was restored to my present state of health.

"At Oporto I embarked in an American ship for New York. I was destitute of all property, and relied for the payment of the debts which I was obliged to contract, as well as for my future subsistence, on my remittance to Waldegrave. I hastened to Philadelphia, and was soon informed that my friend was dead. His death had taken place a long time since my remittance to him; hence this disaster was a subject of regret chiefly on his own account: I entertained no doubt but that my property had been secured, and that either some testamentary directions
tions or some papers had been left behind respecting this affair.

"I sought out those who were formerly our mutual acquaintance: I found that they were wholly strangers to his affairs; they could merely relate some particulars of his singular death, and point out the lodgings which he formerly occupied: hither I forthwith repaired, and discovered that he lived in this house with his sister, disconnected with its other inhabitants. They described his mode of life in terms that shewed them to be very imperfectly acquainted with it: it was easy indeed to infer from their aspect and manners, that little sympathy or union could have subsisted between them and their co-tenants; and this inference was confirmed by their insinuations,
tions, the growth of prejudice and envy. They told me that Waldegrave’s sister had gone to live in the country; but whither, or for how long, she had not condescended to inform them, and they did not care to ask: she was a topping dame whose notions were much too high for her station; who was more nice than wise, and yet was one who could stoop when it most became her to stand upright. It was no business of theirs, but they could not but mention their suspicions that she had good reasons for leaving the city, and for concealing the place of her retreat: some things were hard to be disguised; they spoke for themselves, and the only way to hinder disagreeable discoveries, was to keep out of sight.

"I was
"I was wholly a stranger to Waldegrave's sister—I knew merely that he had such a relation: there was nothing therefore to outbalance this unfavourable report, but the apparent malignity and grossness of those who gave it. It was not, however, her character about which I was solicitous, but merely the place where she might be found, and the suitable enquiries respecting her deceased brother, be answered: on this head these people professed utter ignorance, and were either unable or unwilling to direct me to any person in the city who knew more than themselves. After much discourse they at length let fall an intimation that if any one knew her place of retreat, it was probably a country lad, by name Huntly, who lived near the Forks of Delaware. After Waldegrave's death
death this lad had paid his sister a visit, and seemed to be admitted on a very confidential footing: she left the house, for the last time, in his company; and he therefore was most likely to know what had become of her.

"The name of Huntly was not totally unknown to me; I myself was born and brought up in the neighbouring township of Chetasco: I had some knowledge of your family; and your name used often to be mentioned by Waldegrave, as that of one who, at a maturer age, would prove himself useful to his country: I determined therefore to apply to you for what information you could give. I designed to visit my father, who lives in Chetasco, and relieve him from that disquiet which his ignorance of my fate could
could not fail to have inspired: and both these ends could be thus at the same time accomplished.

"Before I left the city, I thought it proper to apply to the merchant on whom my bill had been drawn: if this bill had been presented and paid, he had doubtless preserved some record of it; and hence a clue might be afforded, though every other expedient should fail. My usual ill fortune pursued me upon this occasion; for the merchant had lately become insolvent, and to avoid the rage of his creditors, had fled, without leaving any vestige of this or similar transactions behind him. He had, some years since, been an adventurer from Holland, and was suspected to have returned thither.

CHAP.
"I came hither with a heart despousing of success: adversity had weakened my faith in the promises of the future, and I was prepared to receive just such tidings as you have communicated. Unacquainted with the secret motives of Waldegrave and his sister, it is impossible for me to weigh the probabilities of their rectitude. I have only my own assertion to produce in support of my claim; all other
other evidence, all vouchers and papers, which might attest my veracity, or sanction my claim in a court of law, are buried in the ocean. The bill was transmitted just before my departure from Madeira, and the letters by which it was accompanied informed Waldegrave of my design to follow it immediately: hence he did not, it is probable, acknowledge the receipt of my letters. The vessels in which they were sent arrived in due season: I was assured that all letters were duly deposited in the postoffice, where, at present, mine are not to be found.

"You assure me that nothing has been found among his papers, hinting at any pecuniary transaction between him and me. Some correspondence passed between us previous to that event: have no letters,
EDGAR HUNTLY.

letters, with my signature, been found? Are you qualified, by your knowledge of his papers, to answer me explicitly? Is it not possible for some letters to have been mislaid?"

"I am qualified," said I, "to answer your enquiries beyond any other person in the world: Waldegrave maintained only general intercourse with the rest of mankind; with me his correspondence was copious, and his confidence, as I imagined, without bounds. His books and papers were contained in a single chest at his lodgings, the keys of which he had about him when he died: these keys I carried to his sister, and was authorized by her to open and examine the contents of this chest. This was done with the utmost care. These papers are now
now in my possession: among them no paper of the tenor you mention was found, and no letter with your signature. Neither Mary Waldegrave nor I are capable of disguising the truth or committing an injustice: the moment she receives conviction of your right she will restore this money to you; the moment I imbibe this conviction I will exert all my influence, and it is not small, to induce her to restore it. Permit me, however, to question you in your turn. Who was the merchant on whom your bill was drawn, what was the date of it, and when did the bill and its counterparts arrive?"

"I do not exactly remember the date of the bills: they were made out, however, six days before I myself embarked, which
which happened on the tenth of August, 1784. They were sent by three vessels, one of which was bound to Charleston, and the others to New York: the last arrived within two days of each other, and about the middle of November in the same year. The name of the payer was Monteith."

After a pause of recollection, I answered—"I will not hesitate to apprise you of every thing which may throw light upon this transaction, and whether favourable or otherwise to your claim. I have told you that among my friend's papers your name is not to be found; I must likewise repeat that the possession of this money by Waldegrave was wholly unknown to us till his death; we are likewise unacquainted with any means by which
which he could get possession of so large a sum in his own right: he spent no more than his scanty stipend as a teacher, though this stipend was insufficient to supply his wants. This Bank receipt is dated in December, 1784, a fortnight perhaps after the date that you have mentioned. You will perceive how much this coincidence, which could scarcely have taken place by chance, is favourable to your claim.

"Mary Waldegrave resides at present at Abingdon: she will rejoice, as I do, to see one who, as her brother's friend, is entitled to her affection. Doubt not but that she will listen with impartiality and candour to all that you can urge in defence of your title to this money. Her decision will not be precipitate, but it will
will be generous and just, and founded on such reasons that, even if it be adverse to your wishes, you will be compelled to approve it."

"I can entertain no doubt," he answered, "as to the equity of my claim. The coincidences you mention are sufficient to convince me that this sum was received upon my bill; but this conviction must necessarily be confined to myself. No one but I can be conscious to the truth of my own story: the evidence on which I build my faith in this case, is that of my own memory and senses; but this evidence cannot make itself conspicuous to you: you have nothing but my bare assertion, in addition to some probabilities flowing from the conduct of Waldegrave. What facts may exist to corro-
borate my claim, which you have forgotten, or which you may think proper to conceal, I cannot judge. I know not what is passing in the secret of your hearts; I am unacquainted with the character of this lady and with yours—I have nothing on which to build surmises and suspicions of your integrity, and nothing to generate unusual confidence; the frailty of your virtue and the strength of your temptations I know not. However she decides in this case, and whatever opinion I shall form as to the reasonableness of her decision, it will not become me either to upbraid her, or to nourish discontentment and repinings.

"I know that my claim has no legal support—that if this money be resigned to
to me, it will be the impulse of spontaneous justice, and not the coercion of law to which I am indebted for it. Since, therefore, the justice of my claim is to be measured, not by law, but by simple equity, I will candidly acknowledge that as yet it is uncertain whether I ought to receive, even should Miss Waldegrave be willing to give it: I know my own necessities and schemes, and in what degree this money would be subservient to these; but I know not the views and wants of others, and cannot estimate the usefulness of this money to them; however I decide upon your conduct in withholding or retaining it, I shall make suitable allowance for my imperfect knowledge of your motives and wants, as well as for your unavoidable ignorance of mine.
"I have related my sufferings from shipwreck and poverty, not to bias your judgment or engage your pity, but merely because the impulse to relate them chanced to awake—because my heart is softened by the remembrance of Waldegrave, who has been my only friend, and by the sight of one whom he loved.

"I told you that my father lived in Chetasco: he is now aged, and I am his only child: I should have rejoiced in being able to relieve his gray hairs from labour, to which his failing strength cannot be equal. This was one of my inducements in coming to America; another was, to prepare the way for a woman whom I married in Europe, and who is now awaiting intelligence from me in London: her poverty is not less than
than my own; and by marrying against the wishes of her kindred, she has bereaved herself of all support but that of her husband. Whether I shall be able to rescue her from indigence, whether I shall alleviate the poverty of my father, or increase it by burdening his scanty friends by my own maintenance as well as his, the future alone can determine.

"I confess that my stock of patience and hope has never been large, and that my misfortunes have nearly exhausted it: the flower of my years has been consumed in struggling with adversity, and my constitution has received a shock from sickness and ill-treatment in Portugal, which I cannot expect long to survive. But I make you sad," he continued: "I
"I have said all that I meant to say in this interview: I am impatient to see my father, and night has already come; I have some miles yet to ride to his cottage and over a rough road: I will shortly visit you again, and talk to you at greater leisure on these and other topics; at present I leave you."

I was unwilling to part so abruptly with this guest, and entreated him to prolong his visit; but he would not be prevailed upon: repeating his promise of shortly seeing me again, he mounted his horse, and disappeared. I looked after him with affecting and complex emotions; I reviewed the incidents of this unexpected and extraordinary interview as if it had existed in a dream. An hour had passed, and this stranger had alighted among
among us as from the clouds, to draw
the veil from those obscurities which had
bewildered us so long, to make visible a
new train of disastrous consequences
flowing from the untimely death of thy
brother, and to blast that scheme of hap-
piness on which thou and I had so
fondly meditated.

But what wilt thou think of this new-
born claim? The story, hadst thou ob-
served the features and guise of the
relater, would have won thy implicit
credit: his countenance exhibited deep
traces of the afflictions he had endured
and the fortitude which he had exercised;
he was sallow and emaciated, but his
countenance was full of seriousness and
dignity; a sort of ruggedness of brow,
the token of great mental exertion and
varied experience, argued a premature old age.

What a mournful tale! Is such the lot of those who wander from their rustic homes in search of fortune? Our countrymen are prone to enterprise, and are scattered over every sea and every land in pursuit of that wealth which will not screen them from disease and infirmity, which is missed much oftener than found, and which, when gained, by no means compensates them for the hardships and vicissitudes endured in the pursuit.

But what if the truth of these pretensions be admitted? The money must be restored to its right owner. I know that whatever inconveniences may follow the
the deed, thou wilt not hesitate to act justly: affluence and dignity, however valuable, may be purchased too dear: honesty will not take away its keenness from the winter blast, its ignominy and unwholesomeness from servile labour, or strip of its charms the life of elegance and leisure; but these, unaccompanied with self-reproach, are less deplorable than wealth and honour, the possession of which is marred by our own disapprobation.

I know the bitterness of this sacrifice, I know the impatience with which your poverty has formerly been borne—how much your early education is at war with that degradation and obscurity to which your youth has been condemned—how earnestly your wishes panted after a state which
which might exempt you from dependence upon daily labour and on the caprices of others, and might secure to you leisure to cultivate and indulge your love of knowledge and your social and beneficent affections.

Your motive for desiring a change of fortune has been greatly enforced since we have become known to each other: thou hast honoured me with thy affection; but that union on which we rely for happiness, could not take place while both of us were poor: my habits, indeed, have made labour and rustic obscurity less painful than they would prove to my friend; but my present condition is wholly inconsistent with marriage: as long as my exertions are insufficient to maintain us both, it would be unjustifiable to burden...
den you with new cares and duties: of this you are more thoroughly convinced than I am. The love of independence and ease, and impatience of drudgery are woven into your constitution: perhaps they are carried to an erroneous extreme, and derogate from that uncommon excellence by which your character is, in other respects, distinguished; but they cannot be removed.

This obstacle was unexpectedly removed by the death of your brother: however justly to be deplored was this catastrophe, yet, like every other event, some of its consequences were good: by giving you possession of the means of independence and leisure, by enabling us to complete a contract which poverty alone had thus long delayed, this event has been at the same
same time the most disastrous and propitious which could have happened.

Why thy brother should have concealed from us the possession of this money—why, with such copious means of indulgence and leisure, he should still pursue his irksome trade, and live in so penurious a manner, has been a topic of endless and unsatisfactory conjecture between us. It was not difficult to suppose that this money was held in trust for another; but in that case it was unavoidable that some document or memorandum, or at least some claimant would appear. Much time has since elapsed, and you have thought yourself at length justified in appropriating this money to your own use.
Our flattering prospects are now shut in; you must return to your original poverty, and once more depend for precarious subsistence on your needle. You cannot restore the whole; for unavoidable expences, and the change of your mode of living, have consumed some part of it: for so much you must consider yourself as Weymouth's debtor.

Repine not, my friend, at this unlked-for reverse: think upon the merits and misfortunes of your brother's friend—think upon his aged father, whom we shall enable him to rescue from poverty—think upon his desolate wife, whose merits are probably at least equal to your own, and whose helplessness is likely to be greater. I am not insensible to the evils which have returned upon us with augmented force.
force, after having for a moment taken their flight; I know the precariousness of my condition and that of my sisters—that our subsistence hangs upon the life of an old man. My uncle's death will transfer this property to his son, who is a stranger and an enemy to us, and the first act of whose authority will unquestionably be to turn us forth from these doors. Marriage with thee was anticipated with joyous emotions, not merely on my own account or on thine, but likewise for the sake of those beloved girls to whom that event would enable me to furnish an asylum.

But wedlock is now more distant than ever: my heart bleeds to think of the sufferings which my beloved Mary is again fated to endure; but regrets are only
only aggravations of calamity—they are pernicious, and it is our duty to shake them off.

I can entertain no doubts as to the equity of Weymouth's claim: so many coincidences could not have happened by chance. The non-appearance of any letters or papers connected with it, is indeed a mysterious circumstance; but why should Waldegrave be studious of preserving these? They were useless paper, and might, without impropriety, be cast away, or made to serve any temporary purpose; perhaps, indeed, they still lurk in some unsuspected corner. To wish that time may explain this mystery in a different manner, and so as to permit our retention of this money, is, perhaps, the dictate of selfishness: the transfer to Weymouth will
will not be productive of less benefit to him and to his family, than we should derive from the use of it.

These considerations, however, will be weighed when we meet; meanwhile I will return to my narrative.
HERE, my friend, thou must permit me to pause. The following incidents are of a kind to which the most ardent invention has never conceived a parallel; Fortune, in her most wayward mood, could scarcely be suspected of an influence like this: this scene was pregnant with astonishment and horror; I cannot even now recall it without reviving
reviving the dismay and confusion which
I then experienced.

Possibly, the period will arrive when I
shall look back without agony on the
perils I have undergone: that period is
still distant. Solitude and sleep are now
no more than the signals to summon up
a tribe of ugly phantoms. Famine and
blindness and death and savage enemies,
ever fail to be conjured up by the silence
and darkness of the night; I cannot dis-
sipate them by any efforts of reason: my
cowardice requires the perpetual consola-
tion of light; my heart droops when I
mark the decline of the sun; and I never
sleep but with a candle burning at my
pillow. If, by any chance, I should
awake and find myself immersed in dark-
ness,
mess, I know not what act of desperation
I might be suddenly impelled to commit.

I have delayed this narrative longer
than my duty to my friend enjoined: now that I am able to hold a pen, I will hasten to terminate that uncertainty with regard to my fate, in which my silence has involved thee—I will recall that series of unheard-of and disastrous vicissitudes which has constituted the latest portion of my life.

I am not certain, however, that I shall relate them in an intelligible manner; one image runs into another, sensations succeed in so rapid a train, that I fear I shall be unable to distribute and express them with sufficient perspicuity. As I look back, my heart is sore and aches
within my bosom; I am conscious to a kind of complex sentiment of distress and forlornness that cannot be perfectly portrayed by words: but I must do as well as I can. In the utmost vigour of my faculties, no eloquence that I possess would do justice to the tale; now in my languishing and feeble state, I shall furnish thee with little more than a glimpse of the truth: with these glimpses, transient and faint as they are, thou must be satisfied.

I have said that I slept; my memory assures me of this—it informs of the previous circumstances of my laying aside my clothes, of placing the light upon a chair within reach of my pillow, of throwing myself upon the bed, and of gazing on the rays of the moon reflected on.
on the wall, and almost obscured by those of the candle; I remember my occasional relapses into fits of incoherent fancies, the harbingers of sleep—I remember, as it were, the instant when my thoughts ceased to flow, and my senses were arrested by the leaden wand of forgetfulness.

My return to sensation and to consciousness took place in no such tranquil scene. I emerged from oblivion by degrees so slow and so faint, that their succession cannot be marked: when enabled at length to attend to the information which my senses afforded, I was conscious, for a time, of nothing but existence: it was unaccompanied with lassitude or pain, but I felt disinclined to stretch my limbs, or raise my eyelids; my
my thoughts were wildering and mazy, and though consciousness were present, it was disconnected with the locomotive or voluntary power.

From this state a transition was speedily effected: I perceived that my posture was supine, and that I lay upon my back. I attempted to open my eyes; the weight that oppressed them was too great for a slight exertion to remove; the exertion which I made cost me a pang more acute than any which I ever experienced; my eyes, however, were opened; but the darkness that environed me was as intense as before.

I attempted to rise; but my limbs were cold, and my joints had almost lost their flexibility: my efforts were repeated, and
at length I attained a sitting posture. I was now sensible of pain in my shoulders and back; I was universally in that state to which the frame is reduced by blows of a club mercilessly and endlessly repeated; my temples throbbed, and my face was covered with clammy and cold drops; but that which threw me into deepest consternation, was my inability to see; I turned my head to different quarters, I stretched my eyelids, and exerted every visual energy, but in vain—I was wrapped in the murkiest and most impene-trable gloom.

The first effort of reflection was to suggest the belief that I was blind: that disease is known to assail us in a moment and without previous warning. This surely was the misfortune that had now befallen
befallen me: some ray, however fleeting and uncertain, could not fail to be discerned, if the power of vision were not utterly extinguished; in what circumstances could I possibly be placed, from which every particle of light should, by other means, be excluded.

This led my thoughts into a new train. I endeavoured to recall the past; but the past was too much in contradiction to the present, and my intellect was too much shattered by external violence, to allow me accurately to review it.

Since my sight availed nothing to the knowledge of my condition, I betook myself to other instruments. The element which I breathed was stagnant and cold; the spot where I lay was rugged and hard; I was
I was neither naked nor clothed—a shirt and trousers composed my dress, and the shoes and stockings which always accompanied these, were now wanting. What could I infer from this scanty garb, this chilling atmosphere, this stony bed?

I had awakened as from sleep. What was my condition when I fell asleep? Surely it was different from the present. Then I inhabited a lightsome chamber, and was stretched upon a down bed; now I was supine upon a rugged surface, and immersed in palpable obscurity; then I was in perfect health; now my frame was covered with bruises, and every joint was racked with pain. What dungeon or den had received me, and by whose command was I transported hither?
After various efforts, I stood upon my feet. At first I tottered and staggered. I stretched out my hands on all sides, but met only with vacuity. I advanced forward. At the third step my foot moved something which lay upon the ground: I stooped and took it up, and found on examination that it was an Indian tomahawk. This incident afforded me no hint from which I might conjecture my state.

Proceeding irresolutely and slowly forward, my hands at length touched a wall. This, like the flooring, was of stone, and was rugged and impenetrable: I followed this wall. An advancing angle occurred at a short distance, which was followed by similar angles. I continued to explore this clue, till the suspicion occurred that I was
EDGAR HUNTLY.

I was merely going round the walls of a vast and irregular apartment.

The utter darkness disabled me from comparing directions and distances. This discovery, therefore, was not made on a sudden, and was still entangled with some doubt. My blood recovered some warmth, and my muscles some elasticity; but in proportion as my sensibility returned, my pains augmented. Overpowered by my fears and my agonies, I desisted from my fruitless search, and sat down, supporting my back against the wall.

My excruciating sensations for a time occupied my attention. These, in combination with other causes, gradually produced a species of delirium; I existed
as it were in a wakeful dream. With nothing to correct my erroneous perceptions, the images of the past occurred in capricious combinations and vivid hues. Methought I was the victim of some tyrant who had thrust me into a dungeon of his fortress, and left me no power to determine whether he intended I should perish with famine, or linger out a long life in hopeless imprisonment: whether the day was shut out by insuperable walls, or the darkness that surrounded me, was owing to the night and to the smallness of those crannies through which daylight was to be admitted, I conjectured in vain.

Sometimes I imagined myself buried alive; methought I had fallen into seeming death, and my friends had consigned me to the tomb, from which a resurrection
tion was impossible:—that in such a case my limbs would have been confined to a coffin, and my coffin to a grave, and that I should instantly have been suffocated, did not occur to destroy my supposition; neither did this supposition overwhelm me with terror, or prompt my efforts to deliverance: my state was full of tumult and confusion, and my attention was incessantly divided between my painful sensations and my feverish dreams.

There is no standard by which time can be measured, but the succession of our thoughts, and the changes that take place in the external world: from the latter I was totally excluded; the former made the lapse of some hours appear like the tediousness of weeks and months. At length a new sensation recalled my rambling
rambling meditations, and gave substance to my fears: I now felt the cravings of hunger, and perceived that, unless my deliverance were speedily effected, I must suffer a tedious and lingering death.

I once more tasked my understanding and my senses to discover the nature of my present situation, and the means of escape. I listened to catch some sound: I heard an unequal and varying echo, sometimes near and sometimes distant, sometimes dying away and sometimes swelling into loudness: it was unlike anything I had before heard; but it was evident that it arose from wind sweeping through spacious halls and winding passages. These tokens were incompatible with the result of the examination I had made; if my hands were true, I was immured
immured between walls through which there was no avenue.

I now exerted my voice, and cried as loud as my wasted strength would admit: its echos were sent back to me in broken and confused sounds and from above. This effort was casual; but some part of that uncertainty in which I was involved, was instantly dispelled by it. In passing through the cavern on the former day, I have mentioned the verge of the pit at which I arrived: to acquaint me as far as was possible with the dimensions of the place, I had hallooed with all my force, knowing that sound is reflected according to the distance and relative positions of the substances from which it is repelled.
The effect produced by my voice on this occasion resembled with remarkable exactness the effect which was then produced. Was I then shut up in the same cavern? Had I reached the brink of the same precipice, and been thrown headlong into that vacuity? Whence else could arise the bruises which I had received but from my fall? Yet all remembrance of my journey hither was lost: I had determined to explore this cave on the ensuing day; but my memory informed me not that this intention had been carried into effect: still it was only possible to conclude that I had come hither on my intended expedition, and had been thrown by another, or had, by some ill chance, fallen into the pit.

This opinion was conformable to what I had
I had already observed:—the pavement and walls were rugged like those of the footing and sides of the cave through which I had formerly passed.

But if this were true, what was the abhorred catastrophe to which I was now reserved? The sides of this pit were inaccessible; human footsteps would never wander into these recesses: my friends were unapprized of my forlorn state; here I should continue till wasted by famine; in this grave should I linger out a few days in unspeakable agonies, and then perish for ever.

The inroads of hunger were already experienced; and this knowledge of the desperateness of my calamity, urged me to frenzy. I had none but capricious
and unseen Fate to condemn; the author of my distress, and the means he had taken to decoy me hither, were incomprehensible: surely my senses were fettered or depraved by some spell: I was still asleep, and this was merely a tormenting vision or madness had seized me, and the darkness that environed, and the hunger that afflicted me, existed only in my own distempered imagination.

The consolation of these doubts could not last long; every hour added to the proofs that my perceptions were real:—my hunger speedily became ferocious; I tore the linen of my shirt between my teeth, and swallowed the fragments: I felt a strong propensity to bite the flesh from my arm; my heart overflowed with cruelty, and I pondered on the delight I should
should experience in rending some living animal to pieces, and drinking its blood and grinding its quivering fibres between my teeth.

This agony had already passed beyond the limits of endurance: I saw that time; instead of bringing respite or relief, would only aggravate my wants, and that my only remaining hope was to die before I should be assaulted by the last extremes of famine. I now recollected that a tomahawk was at hand, and rejoiced in the possession of an instrument by which I could so effectually terminate my sufferings.

I took it in my hand; moved its edge over my fingers, and reflected on the force that was required to make it reach my heart; I investigated the spot where it
it should enter, and strove to fortify myself with resolution to repeat the stroke a second or third time, if the first should prove insufficient: I was sensible that I might fail to inflict a mortal wound, but delighted to consider that the blood which would be made to flow, would finally release me, and that meanwhile my pains would be alleviated by swallowing this blood.

You will not wonder that I felt some reluctance to employ so fatal, though indispensable a remedy. I once more ruminated on the possibility of rescuing myself by other means. I now reflected that the upper termination of the wall could not be at an immeasurable distance from the pavement: I had fallen from a height; but if that height had been con-
siderable, instead of being merely bruised, should I not have been dashed in pieces?

Gleams of hope burst anew upon my soul. Was it not possible, I asked, to reach the top of this pit? The sides were rugged and uneven; would not their projections and abruptnesses serve me as steps by which I might ascend in safety? This expedient was to be tried without delay; shortly my strength would fail, and my doom would be irrevocably sealed.

I will not enumerate my laborious efforts, my alternations of despondency and confidence, the eager and unwearied scrutiny with which I examined the surface, the attempts which I made, and the failures which,
which, for a time, succeeded each other a hundred times; when I had ascended some feet from the bottom, I was compelled to relinquish my undertaking by the untenable smoothness of the spaces which remained to be gone over; a hundred times I threw myself, exhausted by my fatigue and my pains, on the ground: the consciousness was gradually restored that till I had attempted every part of the wall, it was absurd to despair; and I again drew my tottering limbs and aching joints to that part of the wall which had not been surveyed.

At length, as I stretched my hand upward, I found somewhat that seemed like a recession in the wall: it was possible that this was the top of the cavity, and this might be the avenue to liberty. My heart
heart leaped with joy, and I proceeded to climb the wall. No undertaking could be conceived more arduous than this: the space between this verge and the floor was nearly smooth: the verge was higher from the bottom than my head: the only means of ascending that were offered me, were by my hands, with which I could draw myself upward, so as at length to maintain my hold with my feet.

My efforts were indefatigable, and at length I placed myself on the verge. When this was accomplished my strength was nearly gone; had I not found space enough beyond this brink to stretch myself at length, I should unavoidably have fallen backward into the pit, and all my pains had served no other end than to deepen
deepen my despair and hasten my destruction.

What impediments and perils remained to be encountered I could not judge. I was now inclined to forbode the worst: the interval of repose which was necessary to be taken, in order to recruit my strength, would accelerate the ravages of famine, and leave me without the power to proceed.

In this state, I once more consoled myself that an instrument of death was at hand: I had drawn up with me the tomahawk, being sensible that should this impediment be overcome, others might remain that would prove insuperable. Before I employed it, however, I cast my eyes wildly and languidly around. The darkness...
darkness was no less intense than in the pit below; and yet two objects were distinctly seen.

They resembled a fixed and obscure flame; they were motionless: though lustrous themselves, they created no illumination around them: this circumstance, added to others which reminded me of similar objects noted on former occasions, immediately explained the nature of what I beheld.—These were the eyes of a panther.

Thus had I struggled to obtain a post where a savage was lurking, and waited only till my efforts should place me within reach of his fangs. The first impulse was to arm myself against this enemy: the desperateness of my condition was fora moment
moment forgotten; the weapon which was so lately lifted against my own bosom, was now raised to defend my life against the assault of another.

There was no time for deliberation and delay: in a moment he might spring from his station and tear me to pieces; my utmost speed might not enable me to reach him where he sat, but merely to encounter his assault: I did not reflect how far my strength was adequate to save me; all the force that remained was mustered up and exerted in a throw.

No one knows the powers that are latent in his constitution: called forth by imminent dangers, our efforts frequently exceed our most sanguine belief. Though tottering on the verge of dissolution, and apparently unable to crawl from
From this spot, a force was exerted in this throw probably greater than I had ever before exerted: it was resistless and unerring. I aimed at the middle space between these glowing orbs: it penetrated the scull, and the animal fell, struggling and shrieking, on the ground.

My ears quickly informed me when his pangs were at an end: his cries and his convulsions lasted for a moment, and then ceased. The effect of his voice in these subterranean abodes was unspeakably rueful.

The abruptness of this incident, and the preternatural exertion of my strength left me in a state of languor and sinking, from which slowly and with difficulty I recovered. The first suggestion that occurred,
that I did not turn from the yet warm blood and reeking fibres of a brute.

One evil was now removed only to give place to another. The first sensations of fulness had scarcely been felt, when my stomach was seized by pangs whose acuteness exceeded all that I ever before experienced. I bitterly lamented my inordinate avidity: the excruciations of famine were better than the agonies which this abhorred meal had produced. Death was now impending with no less proximity and certainty, though in a different form: death was a sweet relief for my present miseries, and I vehemently longed for its arrival. I stretched myself on the ground—I threw myself into every posture that promised some alleviation of this evil—I rolled along the pavement of the
the cavern, wholly inattentive to the dangers that environed me: that I did not fall into the pit whence I had just emerged, must be ascribed to some miraculous chance.

How long my miseries endured, it is not possible to tell; I cannot even form a plausible conjecture: judging by the lingering train of my sensations, I should suppose that some days elapsed in this deplorable condition; but nature could not have so long sustained a conflict like this.

Gradually my pains subsided, and I fell into a deep sleep. I was visited by dreams of a thousand hues: they led me to flowing streams and plenteous banquets, which, though placed within my view, some
some power forbade me to approach. From this sleep I recovered to the fruition of solitude and darkness; but my frame was in a state less feeble than before: that which I had eaten had produced temporary distress, but on the whole had been of use. If this food had not been provided for me, I should scarcely have avoided death; I had reason therefore to congratulate myself on the danger that had lately occurred.

I had acted without foresight; and yet no wisdom could have prescribed more salutary measures. The panther was slain, not from a view to the relief of my hunger, but from a self-preserving and involuntary impulse. Had I foreknown the pangs to which my ravenous and bloody meal would give birth, I should
should have carefully abstained; and yet these pangs were a useful effort of nature to subdue and convert to nourishment the matter I had swallowed.

I was now assailed by the torments of thirst: my invention and my courage were anew bent to obviate this pressing evil. I reflected that there was some recess from this cavern, even from the spot where I now stood: before, I was doubtful whether in this direction from this pit any avenue could be found; but since the panther had come hither there was reason to suppose the existence of some such avenue.

I now likewise attended to a sound, which, from its invariable tenour, denoted somewhat different from the whistling of a gale:
a gale: it seemed like the murmur of a running stream. I now prepared to go forward, and endeavoured to move along in that direction in which this sound apparently came.

On either side and above my head, there was nothing but vacuity. My steps were to be guided by the pavement, which, though unequal and rugged, appeared on the whole to ascend. My safety required that I should employ both hands and feet in exploring my way.

I went on thus for a considerable period. The murmur, instead of becoming more distinct, gradually died away. My progress was arrested by fatigue, and I began once more to despond. My exertions produced a perspiration, which,
while it augmented my thirst, happily supplied me with imperfect means of appeasing it.

This expedient would perhaps have been accidentally suggested, but my ingenuity was assisted by remembering the history of certain English prisoners in Bengal, whom their merciless enemy imprisoned in a small room, and some of whom preserved themselves alive merely by swallowing the moisture that flowed from their bodies. This experiment I now performed with no less success.

This was slender and transitory consolation: I knew that wandering at random I might never reach the outlet of this cavern, or might be disabled by hunger and fatigue from going farther than the outlet.
outlet. The cravings which had lately been satiated, would speedily return, and my negligence had cut me off from the resource which had recently been furnished: I thought not till now that a second meal might be indispensible.

To return upon my footsteps to the spot where the dead animal lay, was a heartless project: I might thus be placing myself at a hopeless distance from liberty: besides, my track could not be retraced. I had frequently deviated from a straight direction for the sake of avoiding impediments: all that I was sensible of was, that I was travelling up an irregular acclivity. I hoped sometime to reach the summit; but had no reason for adhering to one line of ascent in preference to another.
To remain where I was, was manifestly absurd: whether I mounted or descended, a change of place was most likely to benefit me. I resolved to vary my direction, and, instead of ascending, keep along the side of what I accounted a hill. I had gone some hundred feet when the murmur, before described, once more saluted my ear.

This sound being imagined to proceed from a running stream, could not but light up joy in the heart of one nearly perishing with thirst: I proceeded with new courage. The sound approached no nearer, nor became more distinct; but as long as it died not away, I was satisfied to listen and to hope.

I was eagerly observant if any the least
least glimmering of light should visit this recess: at length, on the right hand a gleam infinitely faint caught my attention. It was wavering and unequal. I directed my steps towards it. It became more vivid, and permanent: it was of that kind, however, which proceeded from a fire kindled with dry sticks, and not from the sun. I now heard the crackling of flames.

This sound made me pause, or at least to proceed with circumspection. At length the scene opened, and I found myself at the entrance of a cave. I quickly reached a station whence I saw a fire burning. At first, no other object was noted; but it was easy to infer that the fire was kindled by men, and that they who kindled it could be at no great distance.

\[3\]  

CHAP.
THUS was I delivered from my prison, and restored to the enjoyment of the air and the light. Perhaps the chance was almost miraculous that led me to this opening: in any other direction I might have involved myself in an inextricable maze, and rendered my destruction sure. But what now remained to place me in absolute security? Beyond the fire I could see nothing; but since the smoke rolled rapidly
rapidly away, it was plain that on the opposite side, the cavern was open to the air.

I went forward; but my eyes were fixed upon the fire. Presently, in consequence of changing my station, I perceived several feet, and the skirts of blankets. I was somewhat startled at these appearances. The legs were naked, and scored with uncouth figures: the mocassins which lay beside them, and which were adorned in a grotesque manner, in addition to other incidents, immediately suggested the suspicion that they were Indians. No spectacle was more adapted than this to excite wonder and alarm. Had some mysterious power snatched me from the earth, and cast me in a moment into the heart of the wilderness? Was I still in the vicinity of my
my paternal habitation, or was I thousands of miles distant?

Were these the permanent inhabitants of this region, or were they wanderers and robbers? While in the heart of the mountain I had entertained a vague belief that I was still within the precincts of Norwalk: this opinion was shaken for a moment by the objects which I now beheld; but it insensibly returned: yet, how was this opinion to be reconciled to appearances so strange and uncouth, and what measure did a due regard to my safety enjoin me to take?

I now gained a view of four brawny and terrific figures, stretched upon the ground: they lay parallel to each other on their left sides; in consequence of which
which their faces were turned from me. Between each was an interval, where lay a musket: their right hands seemed placed upon the stocks of their guns, as if to seize them on the first moment of alarm.

The aperture through which these objects were seen, was at the back of the cave, and some feet from the ground: it was merely large enough to suffer a human body to pass: it was involved in profound darkness, and there was no danger of being suspected or discovered as long as I maintained silence, and kept out of view.

It was easily imagined that these guests would make but a short sojourn in this spot: there was reason to suppose that it
it was now night, and that after a short repose, they would start up and resume their journey. It was my first design to remain shrouded in this covert till their departure; and I prepared to endure imprisonment and thirst somewhat longer.

Meanwhile, my thoughts were busy in accounting for this spectacle. I need not tell thee that Norwalk is the termination of a sterile and narrow tract, which begins in the Indian country: it forms a sort of rugged and rocky vein, and continues upwards of fifty miles: it is crossed in a few places by narrow and intricate paths, by which a communication is maintained between the farms and settlements on the opposite sides of the ridge.

During
During former Indian wars, this rude surface was sometimes traversed by the Red-men; and they made, by means of it, frequent and destructive inroads into the heart of the English settlements. During the last war, notwithstanding the progress of population, and the multiplied perils of such an expedition, a band of them had once penetrated into Norwalk, and lingered long enough to pillage and murder some of the neighbouring inhabitants.

I have reason to remember that event. My father's house was placed on the verge of this solitude; eight of these assassins assailed it at the dead of night: my parents and an infant child were murdered in their beds; the house was pillaged, and then burnt to the ground: fortunately,
happily, myself and my two sisters abroad upon a visit. The preceding had been fixed for our return to father's house; but a storm occurred which made it dangerous to cross the river; and by obliging us to defer our journey, rescued us from captivity and death.

Most men are haunted by some sort of terror or antipathy, which they are often able to trace to some incident which befell them in their earlier years. You will not be surprised to learn the fate of my parents, and the sight of the body of one of this savage band, in the pursuit that was made after them, was overtaken and killed, should prove lasting and terrific images in my life.
I never looked upon, or called up the image of a savage, without shuddering.

I knew that at this time some hostilities had been committed on the frontier—that a long course of injuries and encroachments had lately exasperated the Indian tribes—that an implacable and exterminating war was generally expected: we imagined ourselves at an inaccessible distance from the danger; but I could not but remember that this persuasion was formerly as strong as at present, and that an expedition which had once succeeded, might possibly be attempted again: here was every token of enmity and bloodshed; each prostrate figure was furnished with a rifled musquet and a leathern bag tied round his waist, which was probably stored with powder and ball.

From
From these reflections, the sense of my own danger was revived and enforced; but I likewise ruminated on the evils which might impend over others: I should, no doubt, be safe by remaining in this nook; but might not some means be pursued to warn others of their danger? Should they leave this spot without notice of their approach being given to the fearless and pacific tenants of the neighbouring district, they might commit in a few hours the most horrid and irreparable devastation.

The alarm could only be diffused in one way. Could I not escape unperceived, and without alarming the sleepers, from this cavern? The slumber of an Indian is broken by the slightest noise; but if all noise be precluded, it is commonly profound.
profound. It was possible, I conceived, to leave my present post, to descend into the cave, and issue forth without the smallest signal: their supine posture assured me, that they were asleep: sleep usually comes at their bidding; and if, perchance, they should be wakeful at an unseasonable moment, they always sit upon their haunches, and leaning their elbows on their knees, consume the tedious hours in smoking. My peril would be great: accidents which I could not foresee, and over which I had no command, might occur, to awaken some one at the moment I was passing the fire: should I pass in safety, I might issue forth into a wilderness of which I had no knowledge, where I might wander till I perished with famine, or where my footsteps might be noted and pursued, and
and overtaken by these implacable foes. These perils were enormous and imminent: but I likewise considered that I might be at no great distance from the habitations of men, and that my escape might rescue them from the most dreadful calamities. I determined to make this dangerous experiment without delay.

I came nearer to the aperture, and had consequently a larger view of this recess. To my unspeakable dismay, I now caught a glimpse of one, seated at the fire: his back was turned towards me, so that I could distinctly survey his gigantic form and fantastic ornaments.

My project was frustrated. This one was probably commissioned to watch and to awaken his companions when a due portion
portion of sleep had been taken: that he would not be unfaithful or remiss in the performance of the part assigned to him, was easily predicted: to pass him without exciting his notice, and the entrance could not otherwise be reached, was impossible. Once more I shrunk back, and revolved with hopelessness and anguish the necessity to which I was reduced.

This interval of dreary foreboding did not last long. Some motion in him that was seated by the fire attracted my notice: I looked, and beheld him rise from his place and go forth from the cavern. This unexpected incident led my thoughts into a new channel. Could not some advantage be taken of his absence? Could not this opportunity be seized for making
my escape? He had left his gun and hatchet on the ground: it was likely, therefore, that he had not gone far, and wouldspeedily return. Might not these weapons be seized, and some provision be thus made against the danger of meeting him without, or of being pursued?

Before a resolution could be formed, a new sound saluted my ear: it was a deep groan, succeeded by sobs that seemed struggling for utterance, but were vehemently counteracted by the sufferer. This low and bitter lamentation apparently proceeded from some one within the cave: —it could not be from one of this swarthy band: it must then proceed from a captive whom they had reserved for torment or servitude, and who had seized the oppor-
opportunity afforded by the absence of him that watched, to give vent to his despair.

I again thrust my head forward, and beheld lying on the ground, apart from the rest, and bound hand and foot, a young girl. Her dress was the coarse russet garb of the country, and bespoke her to be some farmer's daughter. Her features denoted the last degree of fear and anguish; and she moved her limbs in such a manner as shewed that the ligatures by which she was confined, produced, by their tightness, the utmost degree of pain.

My wishes were now bent, not only to preserve myself, and to frustrate the future attempts of these savages, but likewise
likewise to relieve this miserable victim. This could only be done by escaping from the cavern, and returning with seasonable aid:—the sobs of the girl were likely to rouse the sleepers: my appearance before her would prompt her to testify her surprise by some exclamation or shriek. What could hence be predicted but that the band would start on their feet, and level their unerring pieces at my head?

I know not why I was insensible to these dangers. My thirst was rendered by these delays intolerable; it took from me, in some degree, the power of deliberation: the murmurs which had drawn me hither continued still to be heard: some torrent or cascade could not be far distant from the entrance of the cavern, and it seemed as if one draught of clear water
water was a luxury cheaply purchased by
death itself: this, in addition to consi-
derations more disinterested, and which
I have already mentioned, impelled me
forward.

The girl's cheek rested on the hard
rock, and her eyes were dim with tears:
as they were turned towards me, how-
ever, I hoped that my movements would
be noticed by her gradually, and hence
lessen her surprise. This expectation was
fulfilled: I had not advanced many steps
before she discovered me. This moment was
critical beyond all others in the course
of my existence—my life was suspended,
as it were, by a spider's thread; all
rested on the effect which this discovery
should make upon this feeble victim.

I was
I was watchful of the first movement of her eye which should indicate a consciousness of my presence: I laboured, by gestures and looks, to deter her from betraying her emotion: my attention was at the same time fixed upon the sleepers, and an anxious glance was cast towards the quarter whence the watchful savage might appear.

I stooped and seized the musket and hatchet. The space beyond the fire was, I expected, open to the air: I issued forth with trembling steps: the sensations inspired by the dangers which environed me, added to my recent horrors, and the influence of the moon, which had now gained the zenith, and whose lustre dazzled my long benighted senses, cannot be adequately described.

For
EDGAR HUNTLY.

For a minute I was unable to distinguish objects: this confusion was speedily corrected, and I found myself on the verge of a steep. Craggy eminences arose on all sides: on the left hand was a space that offered some footing; and hither I turned: a torrent was below me, and this path appeared to lead to it: it quickly appeared in sight, and all foreign cares were for a time suspended.

This water fell from the upper regions of the hill, upon a flat projection which was continued on either side, and on part of which I was now standing. The path was bounded on the left by an inaccessible wall, and on the right terminated at the distance of two or three feet from the wall, in a precipice: the water was eight or ten paces distant, and no impediment seemed
seemed likely to rise between us. I rushed forward with speed.

My progress was quickly checked. Close to the falling water, seated on the edge, his back supported by the rock, and his legs hanging over the precipice, I now beheld the savage who left the cave before me: the noise of the cascade, and the improbability of interruption, at least from this quarter, had made him inattentive to my motions.

I paused. Along this verge lay the only road by which I could escape: the passage was completely occupied by this antagonist: to advance towards him, or to remain where I was, would produce the same effect—I should, in either case, be detected. He was unarmed; but his outcries
outcries would instantly summon his companions to his aid: I could not hope to overpower him, and pass him in defiance of his opposition; but if this were effected, pursuit would be instantly commenced: I was unacquainted with the way; the way was unquestionably difficult: my strength was nearly annihilated; I should be overtaken in a moment, or their deficiency in speed would be supplied by the accuracy of their aim: their bullets, at least, would reach me.

There was one method of removing this impediment: the piece which I held in my hand was cocked; there could be no doubt that it was loaded—a precaution of this kind would never be omitted by a warrior of this hue: at a greater distance than this, I should not fear to reach
the mark. Should I not discharge it, and at the same moment rush forward to secure the road which my adversary's death would open to me?

Perhaps you will conceive a purpose like this to have argued a sanguinary and murderous disposition. Let it be remembered, however, that I entertained no doubts about the hostile designs of these men: this was sufficiently indicated by their arms, their guise, and the captive who attended them. Let the fate of my parents be likewise remembered: I was not certain but that these very men were the assassins of my family, and were those who had reduced me and my sisters to the condition of orphans and dependants. No words can describe the torment of my thirst: relief to these torments, and safety to
to my life were within view. How could I hesitate?

Yet I did hesitate: my aversion to bloodshed was not to be subdued but by the direst necessity. I knew, indeed, that the discharge of a musket would only alarm the enemies which remained behind; but I had another and a better weapon in my grasp: I could rive the head of my adversary, and cast him headlong, without any noise which should be heard, into the cavern.

Still I was willing to withdraw, to re-enter the cave, and take shelter in the darksome recesses from which I had emerged: here I might remain unsuspected till these detested guests should depart: the hazards attending my re-entrance
re-entrance were to be boldly encountered, and the torments of unsatisfied thirst were to be patiently endured, rather than imbrue my hands in the blood of my fellow men. But this expedient would be ineffectual if my retreat should be observed by this savage: of that I was bound to be incontestibly assured: I retreated, therefore, but kept my eye fixed at the same time upon the enemy.

Some ill fate decreed that I should not retreat unobserved. Scarcely had I withdrawn three paces when he started from his seat, and turning towards me, walked with a quick pace. The shadow of the rock, and the improbability of meeting an enemy here, concealed me for a moment from his observation. I stood still: the slightest motion would have attracted
his notice; at present, the narrow space engaged all his vigilance: cautious footsteps, and attention to the path, were indispensable to his safety. The respite was momentary, and I employed it in my own defence.

How otherwise could I act? The danger that impended, aimed at nothing less than my life; to take the life of another was the only method of averting it: the means were in my hand, and they were used: in an extremity like this, my muscles would have acted almost in defiance of my will.

The stroke was quick as lightning, and the wound mortal and deep: he had not time to descry the author of his fate; but, sinking on the path, expired without a groan.
a groan. The hatchet buried itself in his breast, and rolled with him to the bottom of the precipice.

Never before had I taken the life of a human creature: on this head I had, indeed, entertained somewhat of religious scruples: these scruples did not forbid me to defend myself, but they made me cautious and reluctant to decide; though they could not withhold my hand: when urged by a necessity like this, they were sufficient to make me look back upon the deed with remorse and dismay.

I did not escape all compunction in the present instance; but the tumult of my feelings was quickly allayed. To quench my thirst was a consideration by which all others were supplanted: I approached
approached the torrent, and not only drank copiously, but laved my head, neck, and arms, in this delicious element.

CHAP. IX.

NEVER was any delight worthy of comparison with the raptures which I then experienced. Life, that was rapidly ebbing, appeared to return upon me with redoubled violence; my languors, my excruciating heat, vanished in a moment;
and I felt prepared to undergo the labours of Hercules. Having fully supplied the demands of nature in this respect, I returned to reflection on the circumstances of my situation. The path winding round the hill was now free from all impediments. What remained but to precipitate my flight? I might speedily place myself beyond all danger; I might gain some hospitable shelter, where my fatigues might be repaired by repose, and my wounds be cured; I might likewise impart to my protectors seasonable information of the enemies who meditated their destruction.

I thought upon the condition of the hapless girl whom I had left in the power of the savages. Was it impossible to rescue her? Might I not relieve her from her
her bonds, and make her the companion of my flight? The exploit was perilous, but not impracticable: there was something dastardly and ignominious in withdrawing from the danger, and leaving a helpless being exposed to it: a single minute might suffice to snatch her from death or captivity: the parents might deserve that I should hazard, or even sacrifice my life in the cause of their child.

After some fluctuation, I determined to return to the cavern, and attempt the rescue of the girl. The success of this project depended on the continuance of their sleep: it was proper to approach with wariness, and to heed the smallest token which might bespeak their condition. I crept along the path, bending my ear forward.
forward to catch any sound that might arise.—I heard nothing but the half-stifled sobs of the girl.

I entered with the slowest and most anxious circumspection: every thing was found in its pristine state. The girl noticed my entrance with a mixture of terror and joy: my gestures and looks enjoined upon her silence. I stooped down, and taking another hatchet, cut asunder the deer-skin thongs by which her wrists and ankles were tied; I then made signs for her to rise and follow me. She willingly complied with my directions; but her benumbed joints and lacerated sinews refused to support her: there was no time to be lost; I therefore lifted her in my arms, and, feeble and tottering as I was, proceeded with this burden along.
along the perilous steep, and over a most rugged path.

I hoped that some exertion would enable her to retrieve the use of her limbs: I set her, therefore, on her feet, exhorting her to walk as well as she was able, and promising her my occasional assistance. The poor girl was not deficient in zeal, and presently moved along with light and quick steps: we speedily reached the bottom of the hill.

No fancy can conceive a scene more wild and desolate than that which now presented itself. The soil was nearly covered with sharp fragments of stone; between these sprung brambles and creeping vines, whose twigs crossing and intertwining with each other, added to the roughness.
roughness below, made the passage infinitely toilsome. Scattered over this space were single cedars, with their ragged spines and wreaths of moss, and copses of dwarf oaks, which were only new emblems of sterility.

I was wholly unacquainted with the scene before me: no marks of habitation or culture, no traces of the footsteps of men, were discernible: I scarcely knew in what region of the globe I was placed; I had come hither by means so inexplicable, as to leave it equally in doubt whether I was separated from my paternal abode by a river or an ocean.

I made enquiries of my companion; but she was unable to talk coherently: she answered my questions with weeping and
and sobs, and entreaties to fly from the scene of her distress. I collected from her, at length, that her father’s house had been attacked on the preceding evening, and all the family but herself destroyed: since this disaster she had walked very fast and a great way, but knew not how far or in what direction.

In a wilderness like this, my only hope was to light upon obscure paths, made by cattle. Meanwhile, I endeavoured to adhere to one line, and to burst through the vexatious obstacles which encumbered our way. The ground was concealed by the bushes, and we were perplexed and fatigued by a continual succession of hollows and prominences: at one moment we were nearly thrown headlong into a pit; at another we struck our feet against
the angles of stones: the branches of the oak rebounded in our faces or entangled our legs, and the unseen thorns inflicted on us a thousand wounds.

I was obliged in these arduous circumstances to support, not only myself, but my companion: her strength was overpowered by her evening journey, and the terror of being overtaken incessantly harassed her.

Sometimes we lighted upon tracks which afforded us an easier footing, and inspired us with courage to proceed: these for a time terminated at a brook, or in a bog, and we were once more compelled to go forward at random. One of these tracks insensibly became more beaten, and at length exhibited the traces of wheels.

To
To this I adhered, confident that it would finally conduct us to a dwelling.

On either side, the undergrowth of shrubs and brambles continued as before: sometimes small tracts were observed which had lately been cleared by fire. At length a vacant space of larger dimensions than had hitherto occurred, presented itself to my view: it was a field of some acres that had apparently been upturned by the hoe.—At the corner of this field was a small house:

My heart leaped with joy at this sight: I hastened towards it in the hope that my uncertainties and toils and dangers were now drawing to a close. This dwelling was suited to the poverty and desolation which surrounded it: it consisted of a few
few unhewn logs laid upon each other, to the height of eight or ten feet, including a quadrangular space of similar dimensions, and covered by thatch: there was no window, light being sufficiently admitted into the crevices between the logs; these had formerly been loosely plastered with clay, but air and rain had crumbled and washed the greater part of this rude cement away: somewhat like a chimney, built of half-burned bricks, was perceived at one corner; the door was fastened by a leathern thong tied to a peg.

All within was silence and darkness. I knocked at the door and called; but no one moved or answered: the tenant, whoever he was, was absent. His leave could not be obtained; and I therefore entered without it. The autumn had made some progress,
progress, and the air was frosty and sharp: my mind and muscles had been of late so stenuously occupied, that the cold had not been felt: the cessation of exercise, however, quickly restored my sensibility in this respect; but the unhappy girl complained of being half frozen.

Fire, therefore, was the first object of my search: happily, some embers were found upon the hearth, together with potatoe stalks and dry chips; and of these, with much difficulty, I kindled a fire, by which some warmth was imparted to our shivering limbs. The light enabled me as I sat upon the ground, to survey the interior of this mansion.

Three saplings, stripped of their branches, and bound together at their ends by twigs,
EDGAR HUNTLY.

Twigs, formed a kind of bedstead, which was raised from the ground by four stones; ropes stretched across these, and covered by a blanket, constituted the bed: a board, of which one end rested on the bedstead, and the other was thrust between the logs that composed the wall, sustained the stale fragments of a rye loaf; a cedar bucket, kept entire by withs instead of hoops, in which was a little water, full of droppings from the roof, drowned insects, and sand; a basket or two, neatly made, and a hoe, with a stake thrust into it by way of handle, made up all the furniture that was visible.

Next to cold, hunger was the most urgent necessity by which we were now pressed. This was no time to give ear to scruples.
EDGAR HUNTLY.

scruples: we therefore unceremoniously divided the bread and the water between us. I had now leisure to bestow some regards upon the future.

These remnants of fire and food convinced me that this dwelling was usually inhabited, and that it had lately been deserted. Some engagement had probably carried the tenant abroad: his absence might be terminated in a few minutes, or might endure through the night. On his return I questioned not my power to appease any indignation he might feel at the liberties which I had taken: I was willing to suppose him one who would readily afford us all the information and succour that we needed.

If he should not return till sunrise, I meant
meant to resume my journey. By the comfortable meal we had made, and the repose of a few hours, we should be considerably invigorated and refreshed, and the road would lead us to some more hospitable tenement.

My thoughts were too tumultuous, and my situation too precarious, to allow me to sleep: the girl, on the contrary, soon sunk into a sweet oblivion of all her cares: she laid herself, by my advice, upon the bed, and left me to ruminate without interruption.

I was not wholly free from the apprehension of danger. What influence his boisterous and solitary life might have upon the temper of the being who inhabited this hut, I could not predict: how soon
soon the Indians might awake, and what path they would pursue, I was equally unable to guess; it was by no means impossible that they might tread upon my footsteps, and knock in a few minutes at the door of this cottage. It behoved me to make all the preparation in my power against untoward incidents.

I had not parted with the gun which I had first seized in the cavern, nor with the hatchet which I had afterwards used to cut the bands of the girl. These were at once my trophies and my means of defence, which it had been rash and absurd to have relinquished. My present reliance was placed upon these.

I now, for the first time, examined the prize that I had made: other considera-
tions had prevented me till now from examining the structure of the piece; but I could not but observe that it had two barrels, and was lighter and smaller than an ordinary musket. The light of the fire now enabled me to inspect it with more accuracy.

Scarcely had I fixed my eyes upon the stock, when I perceived marks that were familiar to my apprehension. Shape, ornaments, and ciphers were evidently the same with those of a piece which I had frequently handled: the marks were of a kind which could not be mistaken. This piece was mine; and when I left my uncle's house it was deposited, as I believed, in the closet of my chamber.

Thou wilt easily conceive the inference which
which this circumstance suggested. My
hairs rose, and my teeth chattered with
horror—my whole frame was petrified;
and I paced to and fro, hurried from the
chimney to the door, and from the door
to the chimney, with the misguided fury
of a maniac.

I needed no proof of my calamity more
uncontestible than this:—my uncle and
my sisters had been murdered; the dwel-
ing had been pillaged, and this had been
a part of the plunder. Defenceless and
asleep, they were assailed by these inex-
sorable enemies; and I, who ought to
have been their protector and champion,
was removed to an immeasurable distance,
and was disabled by some accursed chance
from affording them the succour which
they needed.

For
For a time, I doubted whether I had not witnessed and shared this catastrophe: I had no memory of the circumstances that preceded my awaking in the pit. Had not the cause of my being cast into this abyss-some connection with the ruin of my family? Had I not been dragged hither by these savages, and reduced by their malice to that breathless and insensible condition? Was I born to a malignant destiny never tired of persecuting? Thus had my parents and their infant offspring perished, and thus completed was the fate of all those to whom my affections cleaved, and whom the first disaster had spared.

Hitherto the death of the savage whom I had dispatched with my hatchet, had not been remembered without some remorse;
Remorse; now my emotions were totally changed: I was somewhat comforted in thinking that thus much of necessary vengeance had been executed. New and more vehement regrets were excited by reflecting on the forbearance I had practised when so much was in my power: all the miscreants had been at my mercy, and a bloody retribution might with safety and ease have been inflicted on their prostrate bodies.

It was now too late. What of consolation or of hope remained to me? To return to my ancient dwelling, now polluted with blood, or perhaps nothing but a smoking ruin, was abhorred: life, connected with remembrance of my misfortunes was detestable; I was no longer anxious for flight: no change of the
scene but that which terminated all consciousness, could I endure to think of.

Amidst these gloomy meditations the idea was suddenly suggested of returning with the utmost expedition to the cavern. It was possible that the assassins were still asleep: he who was appointed to watch, and to make in due season the signal, for resuming their march, was for ever silent: without this signal it was not unlikely that they would sleep till dawn of day: but if they should be roused, they might be overtaken or met, and by chusing a proper station, two victims might at least fall: the ultimate event to myself would surely be fatal; but my own death was an object of desire rather than of dread: to die thus speedily, and after some atonement was made for those
those who had already been slain, was sweet.

The way to the mountain was difficult and tedious; but the ridge was distinctly seen from the door of the cottage, and I trusted that auspicious chance would lead me to that part of it where my prey was to be found. I snatched up the gun and tomahawk in a transport of eagerness: on examining the former, I found that both barrels were deeply loaded.

This piece was of extraordinary workmanship: it was the legacy of an English officer, who died in Bengal, to Sarsefield: it was constructed for the purposes, not of sport, but of war: the artist had made it a congeries of tubes and springs, by which every purpose of protection and
offence was effectually served: a dagger's blade was attached to it, capable of being fixed at the end, and of answering the destructive purpose of a bayonet. On his departure from Solebury, my friend left it, as a pledge of his affection, in my possession: hitherto I had chiefly employed it in shooting at a mark, in order to improve my sight; now was I to profit by it in a different way.

Thus armed, I prepared to sally forth on my adventurous expedition. Sober views might have speedily succeeded to the present tempest of my passions; I might have gradually discovered the romantic and criminal temerity of my project, the folly of revenge, and the duty of preserving my life for the benefit of mankind; I might have suspected the
the propriety of my conclusion, and have admitted some doubts as to the catastrophe which I imagined to have befallen my uncle and sisters; I might, at least, have consented to ascertain their condition with my own eyes, and for this end have returned to the cottage, and have patiently waited till the morning light should permit me to resume my journey.

This conduct was precluded by a new incident. Before I opened the door I looked through a crevice of the wall, and perceived three human figures at the farther end of the field. They approached the house. Though indistinctly seen, something in their port persuaded me that these were the Indians from whom I had lately parted. I was startled, but not dismayed;
dismayed; my thirst of vengeance was still powerful, and I believed that the moment of its gratification was hastening. In a short time they would arrive, and enter the house. In what manner should they be received?

I studied not my own security: it was the scope of my wishes to kill the whole number of my foes; but that being done, I was indifferent to the consequences: I desired not to live to relate or to exult in the deed.

To go forth was perilous and useless: all that remained was to sit upon the ground opposite the door, and fire at each as he entered. In the hasty survey I had taken of this apartment, one object had been overlooked or imperfectly noticed: close
close to the chimney was an aperture, formed by a cavity partly in the wall and in the ground: it was the entrance of an oven, which resembled, on the outside, a mound of earth, and which was filled with dry stalks of potatoes and other rubbish.

Into this it was impossible to thrust my body: a sort of screen might be formed of the brushwood, and more deliberate and effectual execution be done upon the enemy. I weighed not the disadvantages of this scheme, but precipitately threw myself into this cavity. I discovered in an instant that it was totally unfit for my purpose; but it was too late to repair my miscarriage.

This wall of the hovel was placed near the verge of a sandbank; the oven was
erected on the very brink: this bank being of a loose and mutable soil, could not sustain my weight; it sunk, and I sunk along with it. The height of the bank was three or four feet; so that, though disconcerted and embarrassed, I received no injury: I still grasped my gun, and resumed my feet in a moment.

What was now to be done? The bank screened me from the view of the savages; the thicket was hard-by, and if I were eager to escape, the way was obvious and sure. But though single, though enfeebled by toil, by abstinence, and by disease, and though so much exceeded in number and strength by my foes, I was determined to await and provoke the contest.

In addition to the desperate impulse
of passion, I was swayed by thoughts of the danger which beset the sleeping girl, and from which my flight would leave her without protection. How strange is the destiny that governs mankind! The consequence of shrouding myself in this cavity had not been foreseen: it was an expedient which courage, and not cowardice suggested; and yet it was the only expedient by which flight had been rendered practicable: to have issued from the door would only have been to confront, and not to elude the danger.

The first impulse prompted me to re-enter the cottage by this avenue; but this could not be done with certainty and expedition. What then remained? While I deliberated, the men approached, and after a moment's hesitation,
tion, entered the house, the door being partly open.

The fire on the hearth enabled them to survey the room: one of them uttered a sudden exclamation of surprise. This was easily interpreted:—they had noticed the girl who had lately been their captive, lying asleep on the blanket: their astonishment at finding her here, and in this condition, may be easily conceived.

I now reflected that I might place myself, without being observed, near the entrance, at an angle of the building, and shoot at each as he successively came forth. I perceived that the bank conformed to two sides of the house, and that I might gain a view of the front and
of the entrance without exposing myself to observation.

I lost no time in gaining this station. The bank was as high as my breast: it was easy, therefore, to crouch beneath it, to bring my eye close to the verge, and, laying my gun upon the top of it among the grass, with its muzzles pointed to the door, patiently to wait their forthcoming.

My eye and my ear were equally attentive to what was passing: a low and muttering conversation was maintained in the house. Presently I heard a heavy stroke descend. I shuddered, and my blood ran cold at the sound: I entertained no doubt but that it was the stroke of a hatchet on the head or breast of the helpless sleeper.
It was followed by a loud shriek: the continuance of these shrieks proved that the stroke had not been instantly fatal. I waited to hear it repeated; but the sounds that now arose were like those produced by dragging somewhat along the ground: the shrieks, meanwhile, were incessant and piteous. My heart faltered, and I saw that mighty efforts must be made to preserve my joints and my nerves stedfast:—all depended on the strenuous exertions and the fortunate dexterity of a moment.

One now approached the door, and came forth, dragging the girl, whom he held by the hair, after him. What hindered me from shooting at his first appearance, I know not; this had been my previous resolution: my hand touched the
the trigger, and as he moved, the piece was levelled at his right ear. Perhaps the momentous consequences of my failure made me wait till his ceasing to move might render my aim more sure.

Having dragged the girl, still piteously shrieking, to the distance of ten feet from the house, he threw her from him with violence. She fell upon the ground, and observing him level his piece at her breast, renewed her supplications in a still more piercing tone. Little did the forlorn wretch think that her deliverance was certain and near. I rebuked myself for having thus long delayed: I fired, and my enemy sunk upon the ground without a struggle.

Thus far had success attended me in this
this unequal contest. The next shot would leave me nearly powerless: if that, however, proved as unerring as the first, the chances of defeat were lessened. The savages within, knowing the intentions of their associate with regard to the captive girl, would probably mistake the report which they heard for that of his piece. Their mistake, however, would speedily give place to doubts, and they would rush forth to ascertain the truth. It behoved me to provide a similar reception for him that next appeared.

It was as I expected. Scarcely was my eye again fixed upon the entrance, when a tawny and terrific visage was stretched fearfully forth: it was the signal of his fate. His glances, cast wildly and swiftly round, lighted upon me, and on the fatal instrument which was pointed at
at his forehead. His muscles were at once exerted to withdraw his head, and to vociferate a warning to his fellow, but his movement was too slow—the ball entered above his ear: he tumbled headlong to the ground, bereaved of sensation, though not of life, and had power only to struggle and mutter.

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