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THE

OLD JERSEY CAPTIVE:

OR A

NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTIVITY

OF

THOMAS ANDROS,

(NOW PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN BERKLEY,)

ON BOARD

THE OLD JERSEY PRISON SHIP

AT NEW YORK, 1781.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND, SUITED TO
INSPIRE FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN A
PARTICULAR DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

—
“O may our lips and lives make known,
Thy goodness and thy praise.”



BOSTON: *As*

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LETTER I.

Introduction—His Captivity—Old Jersey—Reflections first night below—His opinion of the Revolutionary cause and Privateering—Fearful mortality—Burial of the Dead, &c.

Virgil represents Æneas as soothing the breasts of his afflicted companions with this remark, “Perhaps the recollection of these things will hereafter be delightful.” But to afford real pleasure, the remembrance of hardships and sufferings must be connected with some principles and facts, which cannot apply to every child of sorrow. The daring achievements of which the pirate may boast, and the fearful calamities he may have suffered, can never be truly delightful in a serious recollection, but a source of the keenest anguish. On this principle there is no escape from misery to

such as never repent of their crimes. The recollection of their mad and impious deeds must be tormenting as long as they remain conscious, rational beings. Two things in such a recollection, if it be a source of real comfort, must be true; a consciousness, that the cause in which we suffered was just and good, and a sense, that the help, by which we were sustained and our deliverance effected, was the bestowment of a gracious and compassionate Creator. I had a full conviction at the time, that the Revolutionary cause was just. I was but in my seventeenth year, when the struggle commenced, and no politician; but even a school-boy could see the justice of some of the principles, on the ground of which, the country had recourse to arms. The colonies had arrived to the age of manhood. They were fully competent to govern themselves, and they demanded their freedom, or at least a just representation in the national legislature.

For a power three thousand miles distant to claim a right to make laws to bind us in all cases whatever, and we have no voice in that legislation, this, it seemed, was a principle to which

two millions of freemen ought not tamely to submit. And as all petitions and remonstrances availed nothing, and as the British government, instead of the charter of our liberties and rights, sent her fleets and armies to enforce her arbitrary claims, the colonies had no alternative, but slavery, or war. Appealing to Almighty God for the justice of their cause, they chose the latter. Whether I approved the motives that led me into the service, is another question, which I shall presently notice. As to the strength given to sustain my toils and sufferings, and the deliverances granted, I had a powerful conviction that these were the gift of the great fountain of all good.

In the following narrative, our highest gratification, as we would hope, is to give glory to that kind and merciful Providence, which alone could have rescued me in the midst of so many deaths.

I would speak not so much of anything I myself achieved, as what the God of love and pity performed.

In the summer of 1781, the ship Hannah, a very rich prize, was captured and brought into

the port of New London. But in this case it was far worse than in common lottery gambling, for it followed, that there were thousands of fearful blanks to this one prize. It infatuated great numbers of young men who flocked on board our private armed ships, fancying the same success would attend their adventures; but no such prize was ever after brought into that port.

But New London became such a nest of privateers, that the English determined on its destruction, and sent an armament and laid it in ashes, and took fort Griswold on the Groton side of the river, and with savage cruelty put the garrison to the sword, after they had surrendered. Another mighty blank to this prize was, that our privateers so swarmed on the ocean, that the British cruisers, who were everywhere in pursuit of them soon filled their prisons at New York to overflowing with captured American seamen.

Among these deluded and infatuated youth, I was one. I entered a volunteer on board a new Brig, called the Fair American, built on purpose to prey upon the British commerce. She

mounted sixteen carriage guns, and was manned with a crew, whose numbers exceeded what was really her compliment. The quarter deck, tops and long boat were crowded with musketry, so that in action she was a complete flame of fire.

We had not been long at sea before we discovered and gave chase to an English Brig, as large as ours, and in appearance mounted as many guns. As we approached her she saluted us with her stern chases, but after exchanging a few shots, we ran directly along side, as near as we could and not get entangled in her top hamper, and with one salute of all the fire we could display, put her to silence. And thanks be to God, no lives were lost.

I, with others, went on board to man the prize and to take her into port. But the prize master disobeyed orders. His orders were, not to approach the American coast, till we had reached the longitude of New Bedford, and then to haul up to the northward, and with a press of sail to make for that port, but he aimed to make land on the back of Long Island; the consequence was, we were captured on the 27th of August, by the Solebay Frigate and safely

stowed away in the Old Jersey Prison ship, at New York.

This was an old sixty-four gun ship, which through age had become unfit for further actual service. She was stripped of every spar and all her rigging. And after a battle with the French fleet; and her lion figure-head was taken away to repair another ship, no appearance of ornament was left, and nothing remained but an old, unsightly, rotten hulk. Her dark, and filthy external appearance perfectly corresponded with the death and despair that reigned within, and nothing could be more foreign from truth than to paint her with colors flying, or any circumstance or appendage to please the eye. She was moored about three quarters of a mile to the eastward of Brooklyn ferry, near a tide-mill on the Long Island shore. The nearest distance to land was about twenty rods. And doubtless no other ship in the British navy, ever proved the means of the destruction of so many human beings. It is computed that not less than eleven thousand American seamen perished in her. But after it was known, that it was next to certain death to confine a prisoner here, the inhumanity and wicked-

ness of doing it was about the same as if he had been taken into the city and deliberately shot on some public square. But as if mercy had fled from the earth, here we were doomed to dwell. And never while I was on board, did any Howard or angel of pity appear to inquire into, or alleviate our woes. Once or twice, by the order of a stranger on the quarter deck, a bag of apples were hurled promiscuously into the midst of hundreds of prisoners crowded together as thick as they could stand, and life and limbs were endangered by the scramble. This instead of compassion was a cruel sport. When I saw it about to commence, I fled to the most distant part of the ship.

On the commencement of the first evening, we were driven down to darkness between decks secured by iron gratings, and an armed soldiery. And now a scene of horror, which baffles all description presented itself. On every side wretched, desponding shapes of men could be seen. Around the well room an armed guard were forcing up the prisoners to the winches, to clear the ship of water, and prevent her sinking, and little else could be heard but a roar of mu-

tual execrations, reproaches and insults. During this operation there was a small dim light admitted below, but it served to make darkness more visible, and horror more terrific. In my reflections I said, this must be a complete image and anticipation of Hell. Milton's description of the dark world rushed upon my mind :

“Sights of woe, regions of sorrow, doleful
Shades, where peace and rest can never dwell.”

But another reflection inflicted a still deeper wound. How came I here? From what motives did I go in quest of British property on the ocean? The cause of America I did indeed approve, and as to the business of privateering, considered as a national act, I did not see the force of that reasoning, by which some good men condemned it.

If it be right to inflict a wound, on a nation with whom we are at war, it is right, thought I, to strike at their commerce. Is it not the object of war to bring a wicked nation to a sense of justice by the infliction of pain? Strike then where they will feel most sensibly.*

* What I have here related I would not have pass for

But was it real love of country or a desire to please my Maker, that prompted me to engage in this service? My conduct was indeed legalized by my country, but what better than that of a pirate was my motive? I could not stand be-

my riper and more sober thoughts of war. I do now condemn war in all its causes and forms, except that of absolute self-defence. And even in this case, a people ought to act by the Christian spirit and rule, to be slow to anger, to be long suffering, to put up with many injuries and insults rather than to have recourse to war. It is a desperate remedy, and generally far worse than the disease. And if at last, in self-defence we must strike, let the blow be as mild and mixed with as much mercy as possible. However falsely ambitious and wicked men may reason about the doctrine of self-defence, and misapply it, to justify war in all cases, I am not prepared to surrender it. For, in this surrender, it appears to me I do necessarily give up the possibility of maintaining civil government. I must believe with Saint Paul, that the sword is the proper badge of the civil magistrate, and even God requires he should so use it as to be a terror to evil doers. Rom. 13.

To speak of civil government as itself guilty of murder when the law punishes capitally the man who has shed the blood of his neighbor, is, I believe, to commit the crime of speaking evil of dignities, and borders more on insanity, than sound Scripture or reason.

fore this self scrutiny. At the bar of God and my own conscience I was condemned. I cried out, "O Lord God, thou art good, but I am wicked. Thou hast done right in sending me to this doleful prison; it is just what I deserve." I could indeed plead that sordid avarice was not my sole motive, but curiosity—a love of enterprize, a wish to witness something of "the pomp and circumstance of war," to gaze at what kept the world awake, had an influence; but this was but a slender palliation. I was so overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, that I do not recollect, that I even asked for pardon, or deliverance at this time.

When I first became an inmate of this abode of suffering, despair and death, there were about four hundred prisoners on board, but in a short time they amounted to twelve hundred. And in proportion to our numbers, the mortality increased.

All the most deadly diseases were pressed into the service of the king of terrors, but his prime ministers were dysentery; small-pox, and yellow fever. There were two hospital ships near to the Old Jersey, but these were soon so

crowded with the sick, that they could receive no more. The consequence was, that the diseased and the healthy were mingled together in the main ship. In a short time we had two hundred or more sick and dying, lodged in the the fore part of the lower gun deck, where all the prisoners were confined at night. Utter derangement was a common symptom of yellow fever, and to increase the horror of the darkness that shrouded us, (for we were allowed no light betwixt decks,) the voice of warning would be heard, "Take heed to yourselves. There is a mad man stalking through the ship with a knife in his hand." I sometimes found the man a corpse in the morning, by whose side I laid myself down at night. At another time he would become deranged and attempt in darkness to rise and stumble over the bodies that every where covered the deck. In this case I had to hold him in his place by main strength. In spite of my efforts he would sometimes rise, and then I had to close in with him, trip up his heels and lay him again upon the deck. While so many were sick with raging fever there was a loud cry for water, but none could be had except on

the upper deck, and but one allowed to ascend at a time. The suffering then from the rage of thirst during the night was very great. Nor was it at all times safe to attempt to go up. Provoked by the continual cry for leave to ascend, when there was already one on deck the sentry would push them back with his bayonet. By one of these thrusts, which was more spiteful and violent than common, I had a narrow escape of my life. In the morning the hatch-ways were thrown open and we were allowed to ascend, all at once and remain on the upper deck during the day. But the first object that met our view in the morning was a most appalling spectacle. A boat loaded with dead bodies, conveying them to the Long-Island shore where they were very slightly covered with sand. I sometimes used to stand to count the number of times the shovel was filled with sand to cover a dead body. And certain I am that a few high tides or torrents of rain must have disinterred them. And had they not been removed, I should suppose the shore, even now, would be covered with huge piles of the bones of American seamen. There were, probably,

four hundred on board, who had never had the small pox,—some, perhaps, might have been saved by inoculation.

But humanity was wanting, to try even this experiment.—Let our disease be what it would, we were abandoned to our fate. Now and then an American physician was brought in as a captive, but if he could obtain his parole he left the ship, nor could we much blame him for this. For his own death was next to certain, and his success in saving others by medicine in our situation was small. I remember only two American physicians who tarried on board a few days. No English Physician, or any one from the city, ever, to my knowledge, came near us. There were thirteen of the crew, to which I belonged, but in a short time all, but three or four were dead. The most healthy and vigorous were first seized with the fever and died in a few hours. For them there seemed to be no mercy. My constitution was less muscular and plethoric, and I escaped the fever longer than any of the thirteen, except one, and the first onset was less violent.

There is one palliating circumstance as to

the inhumanity of the British, which ought to be mentioned. The prisoners were furnished with buckets and brushes to cleanse the ship, and with vinegar to sprinkle her inside. But their indolence and despair were such that they would not use them, or but rarely. And, indeed, at this time, the encouragement to do it was small. For the whole ship, from her keel to the tafferel, was equally affected, and contained pestilence sufficient to desolate a world; disease and death were wrought into her very timbers. At the time I left, it is to be presumed a more filthy, contagious, and deadly abode for human beings, never existed among a Christianized people. It fell but little short of the Black Hole at Calcutta. Death was more lingering, but almost equally certain.

The lower hold and the orlop deck were such a terror, that no man would venture down into them. Humanity would have dictated a more merciful treatment to a band of pirates, who had been condemned and were only awaiting the gibbet, than to have sent them here. But in the view of the English we were rebels and traitors.—We had risen against the

mother country in an unjust, and wanton civil war. On this ground they seemed to consider us as not entitled to that humanity, which might be expected by prisoners taken in a war with a foreign nation. Our water was good, could we have had enough of it; our bread was bad in the superlative degree. I do not recollect seeing any which was not full of living vermin; but eat it, worms and all, we must, or starve. The prisoners had laws and regulations among themselves. In severity they were like the laws of Draco, Woe to him that dared to trample them under foot.

A secret, prejudicial to a prisoner, revealed to the guard, was death. Captain Young of Boston, concealed himself in a large chest belonging to a sailor going to be exchanged, and was carried on board the cartel, and we considered his escape as certain; but the secret leaked out and he was brought back, and one Spicer of Providence being suspected as the traitor, the enraged prisoners were about to take his life. His head was drawn back, and the knife raised to cut his throat, but having obtained a hint of what was going on below, the

guard at this instant, rushed down and rescued the man. Of his guilt at the time, there was to me, at least, no convincing evidence. It is a pleasure now to reflect that I had no hand in the outrage.

If there was any principle among the prisoners that could not be shaken, it was the love of their country. I knew no one to be seduced into the British service. They attempted to force one of our prize Brig's crew into the navy, but he chose rather to die, than perform any duty, and he was again restored to the prison-ship.

Another rule, the violation of which would expose the offender to great danger was, not to touch the provisions belonging to another mess. This was a common cause, and if one complained that he was robbed, it produced an excitement of no little terror.

Another rule was, no giant like man should be allowed to tyrannize over, or abuse another who was no way his equal in strength.

As to religion, I do not remember of beholding any trace of it in the ship. I saw no Bible,—heard no prayer,—no religious con-

versation,—no clergyman visited us, though no set of afflicted and dying man men more needed the light and consolations of religion. But the Bethel-flag had not yet waved over any ship. I know not that God's name was ever mentioned, unless it was in profaneness or blasphemy ; but as every man had almost the certain prospect of death before him, no doubt there were more or less, who, in their own mind, like myself, had some serious thoughts of then accountability,—of a future state, and of a judgment to come ; but as to the main body it seemed, that when they most needed religion, there they treated it with the greatest contempt.

I wish it to be understood, that what I have said of this horrid prison relates almost exclusively to the time I was on board. Of what took place before or afterward, I say little. To all I do relate ,the words of the Latin poet are in some degree applicable.

“Which things, most worthy of pity I myself saw,
And of them—was a part.”

Nor would I heap the cruel horrors of this prison-ship as a reproach upon the whole nation without exception. It is indeed a blot which

a thousand ages cannot eradicate from the name of Britain ; but no doubt, when the pious and humane among them came to know what had been done, they utterly reprobated such cruelty. Since that time, the nation has so greatly improved in Christian light, feeling and humanity, they would not now treat even rebels with such barbarity ; and it is expected that this remark will be realized in their treatment of all other countries, who may wish and struggle to obtain the blessings of freedom and independence.

While on board almost every thought was occupied to invent some plan of escape, but day after day passed, and none presented that I dared to put in execution. But the time had now come, when I must be delivered from the ship or die. It could not be delayed even a few days longer ; but no plan could I think of that offered a gleam of hope. If I did escape with my life, I could see no way for it but by miracle.

LETTER II.

Death in appearance unavoidable—Escape from the ship by means unexpected—Concealment in a swamp—Shapes his course for the east end of the Island—Village resounding with martial music—Dwelling house mistaken for a barn—Sufferings during the night—Escape from being re-captured by two dragoons.

In the close of my first letter it was observed, that if I did escape, it seemed it must be by miracle. This remark was founded on the following facts.

1. If I continued on board a few days, or even hours longer, the prospect was certain death. For I was now seized with the yellow fever, and should unavoidably take the natural small pox with it; and who does not know, that I could not survive the operation of both of these diseases at once? I had never experienced the latter disease in any way, and it

was now beginning to rage on board the Old Jersey, and none could be removed. The hospital ships being already full of the sick, the pox was nearly ripe in the pustules of some, and I not only slept near them, but assisted in nursing those who had the symptoms most violently. In a very short time my doom must have been settled had I remained in the ship.

2. The arrival of a cartel and my being exchanged, would not help the matter, but render my death the more sure. When a list of the names of the prisoners was called for on board the frigate, by which we were captured, I stepped up and gave in my name first, supposing, that in case of an exchange, I should be the sooner favored with this privilege. And the fact indeed was that no exchanges took place, but from the port of New London. And former exchanges had left me the first on the roll of captives from this port ;—and I dreaded nothing more than the arrival of a cartel, for numbers would be put on board and sent home with me from the hospital ships, whose flesh was ready to fall from their bones in this dreadful disease ; and, indeed, I had no sooner made

my escape than a cartel did arrive, and such dying men were actually crowded into it; and it was evidently the policy of the English to return for sound and healthy men, sent from our prisons, such Americans as had but just the breath of life in them, and were sure to die before they reached home. The guard were wont to tell a man, while in health, "You have not been here long enough, you are too well to be exchanged."

3. There was yet one more conceivable method of getting from the ship, and that was, the next night to steal down through a gunport, which we had managed to open when we pleased, unbeknown to the guard, and swim ashore. But this was a most forlorn hope; for I was under the operation of the yellow fever, and but just able to walk, and when well, I could never swim ten rods, and should now have at least twenty to swim. Besides, when in the water, there was almost a certainty I should be discovered by the guard and shot, as others had been.

In this situation, what wisdom or what finite power could save me? If I tarried on board

I must perish ! If put on board the cartel every hour expected, I must perish ! If I attempted to swim away, I must ! If utter despair of life had now taken hold of me, who could have said there was no ground for it ? But now it seems that God who had something more for me to do, than to perish in that ship undertook for me.

“ When helpers fail and foes invade,
God is our all-sufficient aid.”

Mr. Emery, the sailing master, was just now going ashore after water ; without really considering what I said, and without the least expectation of success, I thus addressed him, “ Mr. Emery, may I go on shore with you after water ? ” My lips seemed to move almost involuntarily, for no such thing to my knowledge had ever been granted to such a prisoner. To my surprize and the astonishment of all that heard him, he replied, “ Yes, with all my heart.” I then descended immediately into the boat, which was in waiting for him. But the prisoners came to the ship’s side and queried, “ What is that sick man going on shore for ? ” And the British sailors endeavored to dissuade me from it, but never was counsel so

little resisted as theirs, and to put them all to silence I again ascended on board;—but even this was an interposition of a kind Providence, for I had neglected to take my great coat, without which I must have perished in cold and storms. But I now put it on and waited for the sailing master, meaning to step down again into the boat just before him, which I did; and turned my face away, that I might not be recognized and another attempt be made to prevent my going. The boat was pushed off and we were soon clear of the ship. I took an oar and attempted to row, but an English sailor took it from me, and very kindly said, “Give me the oar, you are not able to use it, you are too unwell.” I resigned it and gave up myself to the most intense thought upon my situation. I had commenced the execution of a plan, in which if I failed, my life was gone; but if I succeeded, it was possible I might live. I looked back to the black and unsightly old ship, as an object of the greatest horror. “Am I to escape, or return there and perish,” was with me the all absorbing question. I believed in a God whose plans and purposes were eternal

and immutable, and I had no doubt but that with him my bounds were set and my destiny unalterably fixed. Oh that I could know how he intended to dispose of me, that I might struggle with the hope of success, or resign myself to my fate.

But this train of thought was soon terminated by the consideration, "that secret things belong to God;" and that all my present concern was action, or the application of the proper means of escape,—and now we had ascended the creek and arrived to the spring where the casks were to be filled, and I proposed to the sailors to go in quest of apples. I had before told them that this was my object in coming on shore, but they chose to defer it till the boat was loaded; and as they did not exact any labor of me, this was just as I would have it. I thought I could do quite as well without their company as with it.

The sailing master passing by me very kindly remarked, "This fresh air will be of service to you." This emboldened me to ask leave to ascend the bank, a slope of about forty-five degrees and thirty feet in height, terminating in a

plain of considerable extent, and to call at an house near by for some refreshment. He said "Go, but take care and not be out of the way." I replied, "My state of health was such that there was nothing to fear on that score." But here, I confess, I violated a principle of honor for which I could not then, nor can I now entirely excuse myself. I feel a degree of conscious meanness for treating a man thus, who put confidence in me, and treated me in such a manner as shewed he was a gentleman of sensibility and kindness. But the love of life was my temptation; but this principle is always too great, when it tempts us to violate any principle of moral rectitude and honor. And should I even now learn that my escape involved him in any trouble, it would be a matter of deep regret. Not long after my arrival at home, I sent him my apology for what I did by a British officer, who was exchanged and going directly to New York.

I consider him as God's chosen instrument to save me,—and to him as such I owe my life.

When the boat returned, the inquiry was made by the prisoners, (as I was afterwards in-

formed,) "Where is the sick man that went with you?" The English sailors consoled themselves with this reply, "Ah, he is safe enough, he will never live to go a mile." They did not know what the Sovereign of life and death could enable a sick man to do.

Intent on the business of escape, I surveyed the landscape all around. I discovered at the distance of half a mile, what appeared to be a dense swamp of young maples and other bushes. On this I fixed as my hiding place; But how should I get to it, without being discovered and apprehended before I could reach it. I had reason to think the boat's crew would keep an eye upon me; and people were to be seen at a distance in almost every direction. But there was an orchard which extended a good way toward the swamp, and while I wandered from tree to tree in this orchard I should not be suspected of any thing more than searching after fruit. But at my first entrance into it I found a soldier on sentry, and I had to find out what his business was, and soon discovered he had nothing to do with me, but only to guard an heap of apples; and now I gradually

worked myself off to the end of the orchard next to the swamp, and looking round on every side, I saw no person, from whom I might apprehend immediate danger.

The boat's crew being yet at work under the bank of the creek, and out of sight, I stepped off deliberately, (for I was unable to run, and had I been able, it would have tended to excite suspicion in any one that might have seen me, even at a distance,) and having forded the creek once or twice, I reached the swamp in safety. I soon found a place which seemed to have been formed by nature on purpose for concealment. An huge log, twenty feet in length, having lain there for many years, was spread over on both sides, with such a dense covering of green running briars as to be impervious to the eye. Lifting up this covering at one end, I crept in close by the log, and rested comfortably and securely, for I was well defended from the north-east storm, which soon commenced.

When the complete darkness of the night had shut in, and while raining in torrents, I began to feel my way out. And though but just

able to walk, and though oft thrown all along into the water by my clothes getting entangled with the bushes, yet I reached the dry land, and endeavored to shape my course for the east end of Long Island. In this I was assisted by finding how New York bore from me by the sound of ship bells, and the din of labor and activity, even at that time of night.

Here let me remark, how easy it is with God to cause men to do good, when they intend no such thing. Without my great coat, it would have been scarcely possible to have survived the tempest, rain and cold of this night in the month of October. But had not the prisoners endeavored to prevent my going in the boat, and caused me to ascend again into the ship, I should have left it behind. Little did I then think what good Heaven meant to bestow on me, by the trouble they then gave me.

I soon fell into a road, that seemed to lead the right way, and when during the night I perceived I was about to meet any one, my constant plan was to retire to a small distance from the path, and roll myself up as well as I could to resemble a small bunch of bushes, or fern.

By this expedient, I was often saved from recapture.

This road soon brought me into quite a populous village, which was resounding with drums and fifes, and full of soldiers, but in great mercy to me it rained in torrents, so I passed through in the midst of the street in safety. Here I would remark, once for all, that I was then so entirely unacquainted with the particular geography of Long Island, that I could not name the places where the events of my narrative happened, nor shall I now attempt to do it. By an accurate map before me, it is possible I might decide what village this was, but I shall let it pass without a name.—It would not have been any great mark of wisdom to have stopped when passing through it, and inquired of these fifers and drummers, what was the name of the place.

Being sick and greatly exhausted by the adventures of the day and night, it now became absolutely necessary to seek a place of rest, and a barn to me was now the only palace in which I dared to enter. I stepped up to the door, of what I took to be such a building, and

was just about to open it, when my eye was arrested by a white streak on the threshold, which I found to be the light reflected from a candle, and I heard human voices within. But human voices were now to me the objects of the greatest terror, and I fled with all the speed I possessed.

Coming to another barn, I discovered an high stack of hay in the yard covered with a dutch cap, I ascended and sunk myself down deep in the hay, supposing I had found a most comfortable retreat. But how miserably was I deceived. The weather had now cleared up, and the wind blew strong and cold from the north-west, and the hay was nothing but coarse sedge, and the wind passed into it and reached me as if I had no protection from it. I had not a dry thread in my clothes, and my sufferings from this time to about eleven o'clock the next day, were great,—too great even for health, but I had to encounter them under the operation of a malignant fever, which would have confined me to my room, if not to my bed, had I been at home.

A young woman came into the yard and milked a cow, just at the foot of the tower where I lay concealed; but I had no eye to pity, or kind hand to alleviate my distress. This brought home with all the tender charities of mother, sister, and brothers to my recollection, with a sensibility I could feel, but cannot describe. The day was clear and grew more moderate, and the coast being clear also, I left my cold and wretched retreat, and deliberately made off for the woods, at the distance of half a mile. However, before I descended I had seen prisoners who had escaped from the ship, re-taken and carried back. But their mistake was, they would go two or more in company. But I would have no companion, it would excite suspicion, and render concealment more difficult, and under the kind Providence of God, I chose to be my own counsellor, and to have none to fall out with in the way, as to what course we should pursue.

Having entered the woods, I found a small, but deep dry hollow, clear of brush in the center, though surrounded with a thicket on every side. Into this the sun shone with a most de-

lightful warmth. Here I stripped myself naked, and spread out my clothes to dry.

Being too impatient of delay, I regained the road just as the sun was setting, but it came near to proving fatal; for I discovered just ahead, two light dragoons coming down upon me. At first it seemed, escape was impossible. But that God, who gave me a quickness of thought in expedients that seemed to go quite beyond myself, was present with his kind aid.

I now happened to be near a small cottage, and a corn-field adjoining the road.—I fained myself to be the man of that cottage,—the owner of that corn-field. And getting over the fence, I went about the field deliberately picking up ears of corn that had fallen down, and righting up the cap sheaf of a stack of stalks. The dragoons came nigh, eyed me carefully, though I affected to take no notice of them, and passed on. They were probably in search of me.

I had lost my hat overboard, when in the Old Jersey, and had thenceforward to cover my head with an handkerchief. I deemed it a calamity at the time, but as an act of Providence

the mystery now began to be unfolded. Having no hat but an handkerchief about my head, helped to deceive the dragoons, and cause them to think I was the cottager, who owned that corn-field.

LETTER III.

Subsists upon fruit—Escape from falling into the hands of a guard—Attacked by a kennel of dogs—The value of a barn—The roughness and meanness of an old man—The benevolence and kindness of a woman—Encampment of soldiers—The day passed on a stack of rye under a dutch cap—Extensive plain, falls into the hands of a British light-horseman—Providential escape, but soon finds himself in the midst of a party of horse and foot.

To lie concealed during the day, and to travel at night, was my practice, till I had got

far towards the east end of the Island. For several days I had not taken any nourishment, but water and apples. I found late pears and was pleased with their taste, but they operated as an emetic, quicker than ipecac. A subacid apple sat well on my stomach, and was very refreshing, though had I been sick at home with the same disease, I should have probably been denied this favor. Indeed, from what I experienced in the free use of water, ripe fruit, unfermented cider found at the presses, &c., I was led to suspect, that a great deal of the kind nursing of persons in fever, was an unnecessary and cruel kind of self-denial. But I supposed nature would sink without some other kind of aliment. But the first attempt to act upon this principle would have proved fatal, had it not been for a kind providential interference.

Late in the evening, I stepped up to an house on the road, and lifted my hand to rap, but the door folded inward, and evaded my stroke, and a lady appeared with a light in her hand. I besought of her a draught of milk, she replied,

“that there was then a guard of soldiers in the house, and they had consumed it all.” The business of this guard was to keep a look-out towards Long Island sound, and their sentries were on the opposite side of the house. Had I rapped and been met by one of this guard instead of the lady, what would have been the result? And by whose arrangement did the incident so happen that I escaped?

Pursuing my journey, I came to a place where the road parted. One branch turned off through a lofty grove of wood; the other ascended a gentle rise towards a house near by. I knew not which to take; but that leading towards the house, best suited my general course. But coming up, near the house there issued forth from the out-buildings a greater kennel of dogs than I had ever before seen, and assaulted me with a furious yelling. I stopped short, drew up my hands as far as I could out of their reach, and stood still. They snapped at me very spitefully with their jaws within a few inches of my body. And now what should I do? To have attacked them, or fled precipitately would have been instant destruction. I concluded to take

no notice of them, but to turn about gently and take the other road, as if there was no such creature in the world as a dog.—I did so, and they followed me for about twenty rods, snapping at me, and seeming to say, “You shall not escape, we will have a taste of your blood.” And in this design, there seemed to be a perfect union, from the great bow-wow, down to the yelping spaniel. But at last they all ceased to roar, bid me good-night and disappeared; and I was not much grieved at the loss of their company, and their music. It was a concert in which all the discords in the whole staff were put in requisition.

The next place where the reader will find me, is a barn. And indeed, I never knew the full value of such a fabrick till now. Who can sufficiently eulogize its utility; were I a poet, its praises should not go unsung. In a feeling personification, I would hail thee as full of mercy to the brute creation, defending them from the stormy blasts and chilling frosts of winter. Nor would I stop here; for to how many wretched wandering human beings hast thou been a kind retreat. Denied, even the hearth

of a hard-hearted avarice, and proud unfeeling luxury, they had perished in the high way, had not thy hospitable doors been open for their reception. To thee, as the means of protection from floods of rain and cold, I owe the preservation of my life.

Had I ventured into the habitations of men, instead of those of the horned ox, my escape had been impossible. Soon after escaping the fury of the dogs, in this peaceful abode, I took up my lodgings for the night. A man coming into it in the morning, I made bold to slide down from the hay loft; and after making some apology for trespassing upon his premises, I asked him, if it was probable I could get some refreshment in the house. He seemed to think I could. I then entered the house and stated my wants; but as I did not design to be a mean, dishonest beggar, first get what I wanted, and then say I had nothing to pay, or sneak off and say nothing about pay, I told the family I had but three coppers with me, so that if they gave me meat or drink, it must be done merely on the score of charity. But the woman seemed to be thinking more about providing something

for the relief of a wretched sufferer, as I must have appeared to her, than about money. But the old man was troublesome with his questions. He said it was but a few days ago two men called at his house and told a story, which was found to be all false, and at last he observed, out right, "I believe *thee* also is a rogue," but the woman, would now and then as he pressed hard upon me, check him and say, "do let him alone," she had no questions to ask. All she wanted was to feed me; and had it not been for her, I know not what the crabbed old man would have done with me.

And here, O woman, in gratitude to thy sex, let me, with the famous Ledyard remark, that while I have found man too often rough and cruel, when I have been a suffering stranger, or have been borne down with discouragement and sorrow at home, I have seldom found thee otherwise than gentle, kind and humane. After I had taken my refreshment, I said to the old man, "I thank you for your kindness. Here are the three coppers, all I have to carry me a long journey." He did not take them but said, "You may give them to that little girl."

She took them, but if she was illiberal and mean, the old man made her so. I left the house and going a short distance, a spacious plain opened to view, and on it, by the tents I saw, I concluded there was an encampment of soldiers. I therefore turned aside into the field, ascended a stack of rye, covered with a dutch cap, and here I remained all the day, it being very stormy ; but in the evening I looked out from my hiding place, and beheld a most lovely moon-shine had succeeded the storm. The tents had all disappeared, and I took up my journey over the plain.

Sometime in the latter part of the night, I reached the East end of it, and saw before me a number of buildings, though before this, I had not seen any on the plain. But no sooner had I come up to the first house, than I was drawn into a scene of the utmost peril. In the midst of the road there was a blacksmith's shop ; on the north side there was a lane forming a right angle with the road, and leading up to an house about twelve rods from it. To the westward of the house, about eight rods distant stood the barn, and a lane leading from the house to it ;

and in the square, three sides of which were formed by the road and these two lanes was the garden, and in the corner of this garden near to the house, I discovered a number of bee-hives and I coveted some of the honey. I went first up to the house, and though the door was open, I saw no light and heard no noise. But I deemed it prudent, not to climb over the fence, just at the door of the house to get at the bees, but to take the lane down to the barn, and there to get into the garden and come up under the cover of the fence to the bee-house. This I did not then call stealing, for I was in an enemy's land and might make prize of whatever I could lay my hand upon. But this opinion I now fear, will not stand the test of the day of judgment.

Having just stepped into the barn-yard, and not suspecting the least danger, I saw a great number of horses tied all around the yard with all their manes and docks cut in uniform. I stood motionless for a moment, and began to say to myself "What does this mean? Can one farmer own so many horses?" But before the thought was finished, and as unexpected as

a flash of lightning in a clear day, a dragoon coming out of the barn with his burnished steel glittering in the bright rays of the moon stepped up to me and challenged, "Who comes there?" I answered, "A friend." But before he could say a friend to whom, a plan of escape must be formed and put in execution. It was formed and succeeded. Before he could ask the second question, I roared out as if I were angry, "Where is the well, I want to get some water?" Taking me from this seemingly honest and fearless query to be one of the party, he showed me the well, and I went to it deliberately, drew water, and escaped out of his hands. The fact was, as I soon found, this was a detachment of horse and foot going out on the Island for forage, to be conveyed to the army at New York, and doubtless he supposed me to be a person, a waggoner perhaps attached to it. And here again I found the great advantage of losing my hat. Having an handkerchief tied about my head, helped on the deception.

The hand of Providence was here very striking in two things. The instantaneous invention of a plan of escape in such an unexpected

emergency. And taking from me every emotion of fear, I was naturally timid, but here I knew not what fear was, but had the most perfect command of myself. A little hesitancy,—a little faltering through fear would have been fatal. After leaving the well, I went down the lane into the road near to the blacksmith's shop. At this moment four of the party came out from behind the opposite side of the shop in full view at the distance of about three rods from me. I stood motionless and said to myself, "All is now lost."

But their attention was taken up with a small dog, with which they were sporting. But as they did not come at once and seize me in the brightness of the moon-light, I began again to conceive hope and edged away to the fence, and rolled through between the two lower rails. Soon afterward the men said, "Let us go to the barn and turn in," and immediately disappeared. Their sporting with the dog, in itself was a trifling circumstance, but to me it was a great event. It saved my life,—to me in the hour of despair it brought deliverance.

Stretched along as close as I could lie to the

lower rail of the fence, I took a little time to survey my situation on all sides, and to discover, if I could, any opening for escape. If I attempted to save myself by going out into the open field, I must be discovered by the sentries and picked up by a dragoon. If I remained where I was, it would soon be day-light, and I could not be mistaken for one of the party. About thirty rods ahead I discovered a large house illuminated from the ground floor to the garret. This I was sure must be the main bivouac of both infantry and horse, and waggons were in numbers passing on to this house. At last I hit upon this plan, when another waggon should pass I would rise and lay hold of it behind, and let it carry me forward into the midst of the party, and they would suppose me to belong to it. The driver sitting under cover, forward, would not be able to see me.—When the next waggon passed I attempted to get hold of it, but could not overtake it, and was left alone in the midst of the road and considerably advanced towards the house just mentioned, as the general rendezvous. And now as no other mode of escape offered, I resolved

to walk boldly and leisurely into, and through the midst of the throng of men and horses, and waggons, and sentries, and pass away if I could. The plan succeeded,—I passed fearlessly, with great deliberation, erect, and firm without any shyness through the midst of them. Some eyed me carefully, yet no one said “Who art thou?” And I was soon out of sight and hid in a dense prim-bush fence, lest a suspicion should arise that a strange man had passed, and a dragoon should pursue me.

Twenty miles farther to the eastward, I narrowly escaped falling again into the hands of this same party. Had I not without any knowledge or intention of my own, happened to take another road, I should have met them in full march on their return, and being in the daytime, escape would have been next to impossible. As it was, my road brought me on to the ground, where the night before they had chosen to bivouac, and I found their fires still burning.

After leaving my hiding place in the prim-fence, I soon found myself in a large orchard in quest of fruit, I had examined nearly every

tree and found none. But just as I was about to give up the search, I lit upon a tree, where the ground was covered with the fairest and the richest species of apple I ever tasted. They refreshed me as if they had been gathered from paradise, having neither eaten nor drank any thing for a considerable time. How all the other fruit in the orchard should have been gathered in, and the produce of this uncommonly excellent tree left, struck me as a kind of mystery. It was no miracle, but it was a mercy to a wretched sufferer then burning up with fever and thirst.—I now sought for and took up my lodgings in the birth-place of my Saviour.

Prosecuting my journey on a succeeding evening, I happened to lie opposite to an house standing a little out of the road. Before I was aware of the danger a dragoon met me and stopped so near, I could have put my hand on his holsters. Now, thought I to myself, "I am taken," but what a blessed thing it was I lost my hat. The old dirty handkerchief about my head, saved me again. From this appearance, taking me to be the master of the house near by, he says, "Have you any cider?" "No

sir" was my reply, "but we expect to make next week; call then and we shall be glad to treat you." This said, we each went his own way.

Commencing my journey at another time, early in the evening, I was accosted by a man of a stern appearance and address, standing on the door-step. He wished to know whence I came and where bound. I told him I had just sailed out of New York, bound to Augustine in Florida, and was driven ashore by an American privateer, a little to the eastward of Sandy-Hook, and was making my way down to Huntington, where I belonged. "What," says he, "You belong to an American privateer? I wonder you have not been taken up before?" By this it seems he would have apprehended me had he known what I was. He was, no doubt, a Long Island tory. But I replied, "Sir, you mistake me, I did not say I belonged or had belonged to an American privateer. I meant to say I belonged to an English vessel out of New York, and had been driven ashore by such a privateer. Then, without further ceremony I passed on, and he did not attempt

to stop me.* And now again I sought rest and concealment, as it grew late in the evening, and again I found it in a barn. But I had now by exposure contracted a violent cough, and could not suppress it, though deep sunk in a hay-mow. The owner coming into the barn in the morning, heard me, but he offered me no disturbance, and I hoped it would have been my

* When I had got clear of the Prison-ship and commenced my journey to the East end of the Island, one of my first concerns was, to frame a story that might serve to prevent my being seized and returned back to captivity. In this story, I mixed just as much truth, and just as much falsehood, as would render it probable, and deceive an enemy. And the substance of it was what I stated to this man; subject, however, to such variations as circumstances would require. And at the time, I had no reproaches of conscience for this falsehood. It was, I supposed, justified by expedience or necessity. But I now wholly condemn this reasoning. I have no idea it can be right to tell a lie to any rational being in the universe to save my life, or even my soul. I now protest against all lies, in every shape, or form; whether lies of levity, vanity, convenience, interest, fear or malignity.

Lying is entirely inconsistent with obedience or trust in God, whether we run into it to avoid the greatest danger, or obtain the greatest good. Peter supposed, that, to save his own life he must abjure all knowledge of Christ. But did he do right? I have never heard him justified. He did not justify himself, for when he reflected on what he had done, he went out and wept bitterly.

peaceful retreat for the whole day. But, sometime after, the man who visited the barn had left it, a number of children came up to it, and placed their hands against the door and gave it a violent shaking, crying out at the same time, "Come out you run-away, you thief, you robber," and then retreated with great precipitation. But I did not remove out of my bed, hoping they might not give me another such honorable salute. But it was not long before they appeared again, and cried out, "Come out you old rogue, you run-away, you thief. We know you are here, for Daddy heard you cough." And then retreated as before. And I retreated also, fearing some older children might honor me with a visit and find out in very deed that I was a run-away.

After I had experienced so many narrow escapes, and had now passed, as I supposed, and as proved to be the fact, beyond all further danger from foraging parties, scouts, and patrol of a military character; and though the fever was still upon me, yet it seemed rather to abate, than to be aggravated by all the exposure, cold, storms, fatigues, fears, anxieties and privations I endur-

ed, I inferred with great confidence, that it was the design of Almighty God, that I should yet again see home; and entering a wood, where no human eye could see me, I fell upon my knees, and looking up to heaven, I attributed to him all my deliverances, and all the understanding, assistance and strength by which I had been sustained; and besought the continuance of his mercy to extricate me from all remaining danger, and sufferings, and to complete my deliverance. I arose, and now went forward more than ever, under a sense of the Divine goodness and protection.

LETTER IV.

Kind treatment by a woman—The woods, supposed impossibility of living to pass them—The steel-hearted lady—The contrast—Affecting circumstances of a night passed in a pious family.

I come now to a day, in which various and interesting incidents occurred. I now ventured to travel in open day-light, and no longer to ask protection from the sable honors of an absent sun. Commencing my journey early in the morning, I came to a large and respectable dwelling house, and thinking it time to seek something to nourish my feeble frame; for appetite I had scarcely any; I entered it, neatness, wealth and plenty seemed to reside there. Among the inmates of it a decent woman, who appeared to be the mistress of the family, and a tailor, who was mounted upon a

large table and plying his occupation, were all that attracted my notice. To the lady I expressed my wants, telling her, at the same time, which was my invariable practice, if she could impart to me a morsel, it must be a mere act of charity, giving, and hoping to receive nothing again. For poverty was a companion of which I could not rid myself. She made no objections, asked no questions, but promptly furnished me with the dish of light food, I desired. Expressing my obligations to her, I rose to depart. But, going round through another room she met me in the front entry, placed an hat on my head, put an apple-pie in my hand, and said, "you will want this before you get through the woods." I opened my mouth to give vent to the grateful feelings, with which my heart was filled. But she would not tarry to hear a word, and instantly vanished out of my sight. The mystery of her conduct, as I suppose, was this; she, her family and property, were under British government. She was, doubtless, well satisfied, that I was a prisoner escaping from the hands of the English; and if she granted me any protection or succor, knowing me to be

such, it might cost the family the confiscation of all their estate. She did not, therefore, wish to ask me any questions, or hear me explain who I was, within hearing of that tailor. He might turn out to be a dangerous informer. I then departed, but this mark of kindness was more than I could well bear, and as I went on for some rods, the tears flowed copiously. What a melting power there is in human kindness!—The recollection of her humanity and pity, revives in my breast even now, the same feeling of gratitude towards her. O, how true are Solomon's words, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."

Indeed there were but two things that could thus dissolve me in my greatest sufferings and dangers; and these were, an act of real kindness and compassion from a stranger, and the thought of the pungent grief, my misfortunes must occasion to the kindest of mothers. As to my father, his paternal affection and care had been long sleeping in the grave.

But by and by I began to recollect and consider what the lady meant by the woods. I supposed it possible there might be a forest,

four or five miles in length, through which I must pass;—of the real fact I had not the least anticipation. But very soon I came to the woods, and found a narrow road of deep loose sand, leading through them. The bushes, on both sides grew hard up to the waggon-ruts, and there was not a step of a side walk of more solid ground, and the travelling was very laborious. But I pressed on with what strength I had, and after a few miles supposed I was nearly through the wilderness, and began to look ahead for cleared land and human dwellings, but none appeared. After I had with great labor and almost insupportable distress travelled a distance, I deemed at least, nine miles, I met two men pressing on in a direction opposite to my own. They seemed to be in a hurry, and anxious to know how far I had come in these woods. “About nine miles, said I, how far have you come in them?” They replied, “about the same distance,” and immediately pushed forward, asking me no other question. Then said I to myself, “Here I make my grave; farewell thoughts of home, and all earthly expectations; here I must lie

down and die!" My feet were swelled so, that the tumefaction hung over the tops of my shoes for three-fourths of an inch, and I was about to seek out a favorable spot to lie down and rise no more: But at this instant something seemed to whisper to me, "Will it not be just as well if you must die, to die standing up and walking?" I could not say no,—and resolved to walk on till I fell down dead. And this whisper has been of great service to me in after life. When I have been ready to sink in discouragement under difficulties and troubles, or opposition and persecution. For I have since found that the Old Jersey was not the only abode of inhumanity and woe; but the whole world is but one great prison-house of guilty, sorrowful, and dying men, who live in pride, envy and malice, "hateful and hating one another."

When I say, "I have been ready to sink under such trials," I have recollected these words and said, "Will it not be as well to die standing up as lying down?" And thus I have taken courage and gone forward, and the result has been as auspicious. For such was the good-

ness of God, that I was carried through this Long Island wilderness, and a little before sunset I discovered, as it were, land at no great distance.

The first house I came to at the east end of these woods, I entered in quest of humanity and pity. But these virtues appeared not to be at home there. Every thing without and within, denoted a situation happily above penury, or the trials, vexations, and griefs of poverty. A degree of elegance and neatness appeared. In the kitchen I discovered a number of fish just touched with salt and hung up and dried. My feverish appetite fixed on a piece of one of these fish, as a rasher that might taste well. I besought the lady of the house to give me a very small bit, but my request was not granted. I repeated it again and again. But her denial was irrevocable. Now thought I, I will try an experiment, and measure the hardness of your heart. So I stated to her my sickly, destitute condition, told her, she might judge by my appearance, that I was overwhelmed by misfortune, and had been very unsuccessful at sea. I wished her to consider how she would be de-

lighted had she a brother, or dear friend, suffering in a strange land, if any one should stretch out to him the hand of relief,—minister to his necessities, wipe away his tears, and console his heart. Indeed I suggested every thought and plea of which I was master, that could move an heart not made of steel. And what was it all for? For a piece of dried, blue fish, not more than two inches square! And did I succeed? No. All my intreaties were vain,—so without murmuring, or casting on her any reflection, I took my leave.

Here, O woman, thou didst for once forget thyself, and forfeit thy character for humanity and pity. After I was gone, I presume thou didst reflect upon thine own insensibility, and reproach thyself, and I most cheerfully forgive thee.

Passing on but a few rods, I entered another human dwelling, and what renders the circumstance that took place, the more to be noticed is, it appeared to be a tavern. I expressed my wants to a lady, who I had no doubt, was the mistress of the house. By the cheerfulness and good nature depicted in her counte-

nance and her first movements, I knew my suit was granted, and I had nothing more to say, than to apprise her that I was penniless. And if she afforded me any relief she must do it hoping for nothing again. Now, behold the contrast! In a few moments she placed on the table a bowl of bread and milk, the whole of one of those fish roasted, that I had begged for in vain at the other house, and a mug of cider. And, says she, "sit down and eat." But her mercy came near to cruelty, in its consequences; for although I was aware of the danger, yet I indulged too freely. My fever was soon enraged to violence, and I was filled with alarm.

It was now growing dark and I went but a short distance farther, and entered an house and begged the privilege of lodging by the fire. My request was granted, and I sat down in silence, too sick and distressed to do or say any thing. But I could see and hear. There was no one in the house but the man and his wife. They appeared to be plain, open hearted, honest people, who never had their minds elated with pride, nor their taste perverted by

false refinement, or that education, which just unfits persons to be useful and happy in the common walks of life.

They possessed good common sense, which is the best kind of sense. Every thing within indicated economy and neatness, order and competence. But what was better than all this, they appeared to be cordial friends to each other. It was indeed one of the few happy matches,—nor was this all, for I soon perceived, they were united by still higher principles than mere conjugal affection—it was evident that the fear of God had took up its residence there. Before it became late in the evening the man took his Bible and read a chapter, and that with a tone and air, that induced me to think he believed it. He then arose and devoutly offered up his grateful acknowledgments and supplications to God, through the Mediator. By this time I began to think I had got into a safe, as well as a hospitable retreat. They had before made many inquiries, not impertinent and captious, but such as indicated they felt tenderly, and took an interest in my welfare; but they evi-

dently obtained no satisfaction from my answers, for I was too weary and distressed to take pains to form or relate any thing like a consistent story. And I was the less careful to do it from my supposed safety, founded on their evident fear of God, and kind feelings. But they seemed as if they could not rest till they had drawn from me the real truth, though they gave not the least hint that might reproach me for the want of truth and honesty. At last I resolved I would treat him so no longer. I would throw off the mask, risk all consequences, and let them into the real secret of my condition, and said, "You have asked me many questions this evening, and I have told you nothing, but falsehoods. Now hear the truth. I am a prisoner, making my escape from the Old Jersey, at New York. Of the horrors of this dreadful prison you may have been informed. There, after many sufferings, I was brought to have no prospect before me but certain death. But by a remarkable and unexpected interposition of Providence I got on shore, and having had many hair-breadth escapes, I have reached this place, and am now lodged under your hos-

pitiable roof. I am loaded with disease ; and am in torment from the thousands of vermin which are now devouring my flesh. I have dear and kind friends in Connecticut, and I am now aiming to regain my native home. The kindest of mothers is now probably, weeping for me as having, ere this, perished in my captivity, never more expecting to see her child. Thus I have told you the real truth. I have put my life in your hand. Go and inform against me and I shall be taken back to the Prison ship, and death will be inevitable." I ceased to speak, and all was profound silence. It took some time to recover themselves from a flood of tears in which they were bathed. At last the kind and amiable woman said, " Let us go and bake his clothes." No sooner said than the man seized a brand of fire and threw it into the oven. The woman provided a clean suit of clothes to supply the place of mine till they had purified them by fire. The work done, a clean bed was laid down, on which I was to rest, and rest I did as in a new world ; for I had got rid of a swarm of cannibals, who were without mercy eating me up alive !—And

what think you were my views and impressions in regard to what had here passed? Never before or since, have I seen a more just, practical comment on that religion, which many profess, but few properly exemplify: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, a stranger, and ye took me in, sick and ye visited me." With wonder and gratitude these words shined in my very soul. Well might I have said, O Jesus, is this the religion thou hast given to the human family? If it universally prevailed, the woes of man would be relieved, and heaven would come down to earth. This happy couple who are now, in all probability, called away by their gracious Redeemer, to fill a mansion in the skies, and are now rejoicing before the throne of Him whom they supremely loved, appeared to enjoy a rich reward in the mercy they had shown to a wretched stranger. It was all they asked. It was all performed with such cheerfulness, such tenderness, simplicity and ease, as gave to Christianity by which it was prompted, a beauty, which must have compelled the infidel to admire what he affects to disbelieve.

In the morning I took my leave of this dear family, who had enchanted and riveted my soul to them by their kindness, in esteem and gratitude, which have for fifty years suffered no abatement.

I learned of them a lesson of humanity, I have ever remembered and ever wished to imitate. The day was clear, and after travelling a short distance, I threw myself down on the sunny side of a stunted pitch pine, upon a bed of warm sand. And what a deliverance did I now find I had experienced. My body was no longer food for millions. I rested as on a bed of down.

LETTER V.

Arrival at Sag-Harbor—Kindness met with in a public house—Story of the sloop and whaleboat—Escape to New London, after being captured by an American privateer near Plumb Island—Relapse of fever—Unable to travel—Reaches home at Plainfield, (Conn.) by assistance—Life despaired of—Fearful views of eternity—Gives up himself as lost, forever.

Omitting the notice of intervening circumstances and events, in about a week after this I found myself at Sag-Harbor, at the east end of Long Island. Nor did the kind Providence of God here forsake me. Again I found humanity and pity in a public house. I was permitted to lie by a warm fire, (a great luxury, the weather having become cold,) while two others of my companions on board the same engine of perdition to American seamen, hav-

ing made their escape, were denied this favor, and had to take lodgings in the barn. While lying on my bed of down, (the warm brick hearth,) the door of an adjoining room where our host and his lady slept, being open, I heard her say, "I could not consent that the other two should lodge in the house, but I pitied this young man." But I could see no cause for this difference of feeling in the woman, but the agency of Him who hath all hearts in his hand. In a few days an opportunity of crossing the Sound presented. A whale boat with a commission to make reprisals upon the enemy came into the harbor. Her crew, as I supposed, were a set of honest good farmers, who resided at Norwich in Connecticut, where I was born, and knew my connections. They agreed to give me a passage to New London. A sloop also came into the harbor with-a like commission, and with a permit to bring a family from Connecticut, who belonged on the Island. This boat and sloop made sail together, one bound to New London, the other to Seabrook. But the weather being very boisterous, the boat was in danger, so we all went on board the sloop,

and the boat was made fast to her by a tow-line. But at no great distance from Plumb Island, a privateer, which proved to be out of Stonington, pounced upon us; and, under the suspicion of our being illicit traders, carried us all into New London. And here a scene of wickedness was developed, of which I could not have supposed my honest friends had been capable. An agent had been sent to New York with golden armor, and he had obtained a quantity of dry goods and brought them to Sag-Harbor. Here the cruising whale boat was to receive and carry them to New London, where they would be libelled; and some of the crew were to come into court, and give oath that they were taken from the enemy by virtue of their commission. And thus a trade was carried on with the enemy to an indefinite extent. These goods were put on board the sloop, when the boat was made fast to her. And when the privateer appeared and we could not escape from her, the captain of the sloop agreed to declare the goods were his, and that he had taken them as a lawful prize from the enemy. And the crew of the whale boat, the

purchasers and owners of the goods were to swear they saw him do it. The goods being condemned, the captain of the sloop was then to act like an honest rogue, and to restore them to the crew of the boat. But after the goods were actually condemned and the crew of the boat, the real owners had in open court sworn that the goods were his by lawful capture; the captain of the sloop thought he had now a fair opportunity to play upon them a profitable trick; accordingly, he refused to restore them, and went off with the goods, sloop and all, to Connecticut river. But the crew of the boat were not willing thus to quit all claim to the goods, though they had sworn they were not theirs, and contrived to have the sloop with the goods again seized. And I, who knew the whole story, was sent for as a witness. And by my testimony, and that of one of the whale boat's crew, who had not testified before that, the goods were captured by the captain of the sloop, the real truth came to light, and both sloop and goods were condemned; so that the crew of the whale boat ultimately obtained, not only their goods, but the sloop also, as an illicit

trader. And thus the treachery of the captain did not prove so gainful as he intended. He was taken in his own craftiness. An event so common, that it is a matter of wonder that all rogues do not grow sick of their villany.

In this business it was hard to tell, who were the most unprincipled offenders ; who thought least of the guilt of perjury, and trampling under foot the laws of their country. These cruizing boats were sometimes guilty of great injustice and barbarity towards the peaceful and friendly inhabitants of the Island.

There was no small excitement at Sag-Harbor, when I first arrived there, by what had just been done by one of them. They entered an house, and not content with other plunder, they tore from the neck of a woman just confined, her golden necklace. How awfully true are the words of Paul : “ For they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil.” 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

I had now travelled an hundred and fifty miles, and was safely landed at New London. And to me it was a great mercy, that we were captured by the privateer out of Stonington; otherwise I should have been carried into Connecticut river, much farther from home. But no sooner did I set my foot down in a land of safety, than I immediately sank under the power of that disease which had preyed upon me ever since I left the Prison ship. It will, perhaps, scarcely be believed, that I could have travelled so far, encountered such hardships, braved the chilling storms of autumn, put up in the cold retreat of barns, shivering in wet clothes, drenched in rain, without medicine, nursing, or any diet commonly esteemed proper, and yet all this time have been under the operation of an inveterate and settled fever. I should myself, have judged, that scarcely any person could, in such a condition, have survived. I should have supposed his fever must have come to a speedy crisis, and he must, most probably, have died. But this was not the case. The fever did not seem to be on the whole much increased, but it stuck fast to me.

And what follows will put this matter out of question. After arriving at New London I could travel only about three miles ; and all my strength failed, under the revived power and rage of the fever. But in this, perhaps, the kind hand of woman had some agency. The lady at Sag-Harbor, who pressed me in her pity, thought of my welfare after I should leave her house ; and, unsolicited, gave me a meat pie and a bottle of cider. Though I had not much relish for the pie, yet my thirst tempted me to drink of the liquid. I had before drank freely at the press without injury. But here is the difference : the cider in the bottle was fermented. I think it had some hand in producing a relapse.

When I could go no farther, I found a man, who was kind enough to carry me up to Norwich Landing. And I tarried there with a relative till my friends at Plainfield were informed of my arrival, and my eldest brother came with a carriage to help me home. The first night I lodged with a brother at Canterbury. This night I deemed myself to be dying, and going directly to my long home. But the next day,

I so revived as to reach the dwelling of my mother. A most affectionate mother, who always seemed willing to live or die for the good of her children, and who had made up her mind to submit to the will of God, and never more to see her son, and a child broken down with sickness and other calamities, and needing all her soothing attentions, can imagine what a kind of meeting it was! For a day or two it seemed to me I was getting better. I was unwilling to be sick any longer. I now wished to live and enjoy home; and I almost resolved I would no longer complain of pain or weakness. I would get well at all events. But the will of God was not so, and I perceived it was vain to strive with my Maker. My resolution failed, my heart sunk. I took my bed, and, as almost every one supposed, to rise no more. The doctor was sent for. And that every wave of sorrow and discouragement might break upon me and sink me to the lowest depth, he said to a friend, "I could not recover, unless I was all made over new;" and a young man of my acquaintance told me of it. My fever raged—I felt a pain in my head, piercing as if a sword had

been run through it—my reason fled. For about three weeks I was in a state of perfect derangement, and not able to articulate a word so as to be understood. I remember making the attempt. My sister listened and listened, but could not understand me, and I ceased from the effort as in vain. But it is a great mistake to suppose deranged people have no thoughts, and are insensible to suffering and pain.

In my derangement I lost all idea of being a human creature. I felt and saw myself to be a very stately tree, whose trunk soon divided itself into three great branches. I saw nothing of the form of a man about me, and was not conscious there was any such being in the universe. By some means, one of these great branches was split down, and the pain of this disaster was immense.

It may seem strange, but of all this I have ever since preserved a perfect remembrance, as of a thing, that had taken place in the full exercise of my reason. But in the midst of this period of derangement I had a short, though perfectly lucid interval. Heaven and earth, time and eternity, life and death, God and re-

ligion, again assumed the character of momentous realities. I now found myself, as I supposed, just breathing my last. My spirit just quitting its tenement of clay. But my views and feelings now were such as to set at nought, all the powers of description. I had heretofore been oft awakened to a sense of danger as a sinner. The first instance of it, took place when I was about ten years old, but I as often relapsed again into sin. I had offered up to heaven innumerable prayers, and was sometimes ready to think I understood and possessed religion, though I could get no strong hold of the divine promises, nor enjoy much comfort in the hope of final salvation.

The fact was, I knew but little about myself. I was very much a stranger to my own heart. But now my whole inner man seemed to be made as luminous as the most transparent glass. It seemed as though nothing good or bad, could lurk in any corner of it unseen; till this moment I never had an idea of any such self-knowledge. But as to any thing truly pure and holy, my soul appeared a perfect blank. As to external actions, though I could have

made out a list of them, equal, perhaps, to some other self-righteous man; yet my mind was perfectly turned away from these, as not to be thought of, and fixed on the state of my heart. In it I could discover no feeling, exercise or emotion, on which I could rest as genuine repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For aught I could see my religion went no farther than that of devils; like them I did believe, I did tremble. For I had a deep conviction of all the awful realities of a future state, as revealed in the Gospel. But it seemed now absolutely too late to ask or expect any mercy. I ceased to pray. I gave myself up to certain damnation, and sunk down in perfect and black despair. But this I now know to be a criminal unbelief. It was nothing but pride and hardness of heart, that prevented my coming to Christ, in what now appeared my last moment. But though I supposed it to be certain, that God intended to cast my soul into hell, I did not feel any sensible or raging enmity rising against him.

I was so guilty, and so justly condemned, that my mouth was completely stopped. And

dreadful as was my state of mind, I had not the least confidence in any of those refuges of lies, in which proud, healthy, prosperous sinners can hide themselves. The hail of God's wrath pouring down upon my soul, swept them away. Infidelity could afford me no aid. I could no more doubt the truth of what the Bible saith of the future state of the wicked, than I could doubt my own existence. As to guilt, remorse, terror and despair, I was then in hell, and how could I doubt its reality?

I had in some period of my life tried to be a Universalist, and great pains had been taken by a medical friend of liberal education to make me so. But in this awful crisis, this doctrine appeared to me to be folly and madness. It afforded not the least gleam of hope. It had not the power of a straw to ward off the lightning of heaven's wrath. For I knew the Holy Ghost had said, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." And I had a perfect conviction that I was not the subject, of even the least degree of this holiness. I said to myself, "In a few minutes I shall know what hell is;" and was rather impatient to be gone, and know

the worst of it. But now, as might be expected under this terrible and overwhelming view of my situation, my reason again fled.

About ten days after this, an unexpected and favorable crisis was formed in my disease, and I awaked as it were out of the grave. I say, unexpected, for my death was looked for as certain. A joiner, who lived near at hand, afterward told me, that having seen me the evening before, and my brother calling at his house the next morning, he did not ask him how I did, having no doubt, but he had come to speak for my coffin. Dr. Parish, who was then fitting for college at the academy at Plainfield, likewise told me, that he not only regretted my death as certain, but the suspension of his studies to attend my funeral.

When I found myself recovering, it occasioned a kind of regret on the ground, that I should have the affair of dying all to go over again. But still I could not but consider myself as a brand plucked from everlasting burnings. But it turned out in the end, that this fearful view of the certain perdition of such as die impenitent, did not convert my soul. I en-

tered into many solemn vows, ever after, to live to God; but I proved unfaithful to these vows. For it is not in the nature of an unconverted heart, to be steadfast and faithful in a covenant with God.

There were at this time, certain evangelical and important truths, of which I was not convinced, and without which I conceive there can be no sound conversion. I did not know what it was to be dead in trespasses and sins. Though I found my heart was not right in the sight of God, yet I did not know that I was such a slave to sin, that there was no moral power in me ever to turn from it, to the real love of holiness. Hence, to change my heart and lead an holy life, I secretly depended on myself, and not on a divine influence. This, I fear, is the great error of thousands. Hence their awakenings and their conversions come to nothing. This entire moral helplessness and dependence on the Spirit of God, to give a new heart and power to live a new life, I trust I was afterwards taught by experience to understand.

Another circumstance of spiritual darkness

was, I did not possess a clear view of the essential and momentous distinction between false religious affections, and such as were genuine. I was ready to think all sorrow for sin, all kinds of repentance, all kinds of love to God and Christ were real religion. But this I afterwards found to be a most dangerous error. Like Peter's love to Christ when he would not have him go up to Jerusalem and suffer; so a great deal of love to God is nothing but hatred. Some may love him so well, that they cannot bear to hear his true character ascribed to Him. They think it is heaping dishonor upon Him, which they cannot bear,—Is this true love? At last, I trust I found that no love of God has any religion in it but that, which primarily arises in the soul, from a view of the infinite excellence and moral beauty of the divine character, considered just as it is, independent of all selfish considerations.

It is a grand discovery in religion to find, that the greatest and most glorious, and even the very least exercise of it, consists in that charity, which seeketh not its own. For the

want of this discovery how does selfishness, illiberality, avarice, indifference to the honor of God, and the best interests of men, prevail in the character of many professors of Godliness.

Some time in the latter part of October, 1781, I arrived at home. And near the close of winter I so far regained my health, through the great kindness of the God of love, as to engage in the instruction of a school, in the town where I resided; and since that period almost my whole life has been devoted to the instruction of youth, and preaching the everlasting Gospel. And whether my life has been in any degree useful, or whether it would have been, as to the glory of God and the good of mankind, as well that I should have made my grave in the Old Jersey, will doubtless be made manifest in the last day. Of one thing I am certain, that is, it becomes me to say to the God of unchanging love, in review of the whole history of my life,—

“Thy thoughts of love to me surmount,
The power of numbers to recount.”

THE END.

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