

broken, would add most dreadfully to my calamity; in this lowest deep, there might be a lower still. I have reason to be, not only satisfied, but thankful,—what a lucky dog I am, I will laugh heartily on the morrow at this incident, and dare all my compatriots to such a leap. The rascals will call me Curtius, and say that I jumped into the gulph for the good of the community,—but they are not rid of me so easily,—I will have another turn about and jump about for this, Jim Crow's dancing days are not all gone. What a royal fall I have had,—I feel elevated in soul at the thought—would I could elevate my body—I can appreciate the fall of Lucifer and of Phœbus, hereafter, in a manner that I could never do before. How I can commiserate the tumble of these sons of the morning. My fall, some twenty feet, seemed immense,—what was theirs, rolling over and over, like tumbling pigeons, from the skyey battlements, to a place, thank heaven, considerably lower than even my present position. Like them also, I was rather too fond of the morning,—not rising early, indeed, but declining rest till the day stars had risen. A failure in my habits has brought me here. Had I waited some hours longer I would have had light to my path. Such accidents are enough to cause the decline of night walking in the realm. It was all the fault of my company,—a prosy speech, following a worse song, sent me home in dudgeon, and here I am. How cold my feet are, although I am standing on the remains of my hat. Would that it were waterproof, as it is labelled, and could take a passenger. However, no grumbling,—it is folly to fall out with one's self, after falling in,—or with one's circumstances, when they cannot be altered. Instead of being ankle deep, I might be over head and ears, and then, my creditors would have, even more than usual, cause for gloomy features. How precious was the late dry weather to me,—the farmers grumbled, and the good wives fretted, clover and clothes required a supply of the aqueous element, but the complainers little knew that my life hung on the fair weather, and that the well was preparing for my reception in the least obnoxious manner. A few bumps and scratches seem the amount of my bodily inflictions,—and as to my mind, it has acquired sensations and knowledge to which I was an utter stranger. That magnificent fall,—that indefinite dread, that crowding of life and death into a few seconds! Yes, I am richer than I was before by many chalks. The Doctor would be puzzled with my organs, now, I suspect. Each side does not correspond according to rule. I should be a tiger, if this left side of my cranium were consulted, but on the opposite, destructiveness is down to my own lamb-like character. Talking of *lamb*, reminds me of that prince of Lambs, Charles. How that fellow would moralize if he were here, how I might indite a strange story if I had a portion of his idealism. But, unfortunately, his essays are to my mind vague as a half forgotten piece of music,—sweet and plaintive, cheerful and sad, riotous and moody by turns, but nothing definite. I remember the movement, but not a note,—a word here and there, but not a line—if I did my lucubrations might be amazingly enriched, and the hours—"ayont the twal" would not drag on so slowly. But a fit of sordidness creeps on me here,—and there are other lines I would prefer to Elia's,—a rope's end, now, a rope's end, against any line in the *Iliad*.—This may not be, I am at fault in either of the lines. To avoid thinking of my cold, cold heels, let me to my head again. My intellectual spots are finely marked,—the scientific and poetic bumps push out like young horns. What a genius I must be in the morning. And then, my benevolence, and veneration, how magnificent;—rather tender, though, in their rapid growth; but what a good state these well sides must have knocked me into. I have, beyond phrenological doubt, improved fifty per cent by my fall;—and my face on the morrow—would it were come—will be a splendid index to a splendid development of the upper crust: barring black eyes, by the bye, which I strongly suspect to have been contracted in the descent. Yet no matter, all my bones are whole, and the extra holes at elbows and knees are not worth a thought. To say that they are worth nothing, would be to set too high a value on them, for my good friend Snip will charge something even for their obliteration. Would that I could, in one of my stumbling moods, stumble on some means of balancing his bill.—That would be a more curious feat than the balancing of the circus gentry, or the over-balancing into a well.—And such a fall! my precious limbs, "than you and I and all of us fell down." I wish that I could stand on my hands for awhile, and relieve my other extremities, which are like Poor Tom in the play, "all a cold." But I never learned such mountebank capers. I wish in my soul that I could mount-the-bank, and be off; this pellucid stream is too poetic by half for my notions, my lodging here is worse than "on the cold ground," and I am "all in the downs" without ever a ship under my feet.—Who knows what a shout may do. *Halloo, tally, ho, oh!—Halloo, water, fire, help, help, help!* No answer. My eyes what a noise I made, to myself. It was as if I were blowing a Brobdignag trumpet. It is vain. The succeeding silence is painful. How could I hope to be heard. The streets and alleys, and waste spots, which divide me from the thoroughfares where walkers by night most do congregate, are painfully distinct in my memory's map. If I had my chin above this horrid shaft—and what a shaft to have flung at a poor fellow—I could see the bumpkins' houses, not a stone's throw off,—but, after day's labour, they sleep well;—my voice could not reach them, although I should roar so as to spoil my singing for a week,—and if it did, they would only lie the closer, and wrap the blankets tighter about their ears, and hope that no larking "Waterford" was abroad, to the danger of their railings and windows.

Lying snug, and blankets, make my situation torture, by contrast,—this must not be, I must get up my spirits, if not my body,—or I may dissolve like sugar in a cup of tea. "Sweets to the sweet," or rather, cold to the cold; for my remaining warmth would not take the chill off this water lot of mine. How will spousy storm to see day breaking, and I still invisible. Perhaps even now she thinks of me, and little imagines what quarters her worse half has found. "Oh take me to your arms my dear." What music would her voice now be,—even though she were to favour me with a shower bath by way of punishment, before drawing me up.

The Yankee loafer wished he was a respectable pig, and I almost wish I was a well-conditioned frog,—how nicely I could enjoy this killing cold spring, and sit on a stone gaily,—taking mine ease in my well, and croaking away merrily to the moon. But "wishing," according to the poet, "of all employments is the worst," and I'll waste no more time on it. I do not believe the aphorism, by the bye, it may be the most unproductive employment, but as no news is good news, so no proceeds are good proceeds compared with disaster, and I wish it was no proceeds only with me, instead of proceeding into a well. What a predicament! was ever christian in such a pickle, and so far from being preserved,—I am losing all patience, and feel inclined to attempt my escape by storm. *Halloo, halloo up there, hoy!*—All silence, again. How idle is this baying of the moon. I cannot see the "apparent queen of night," but the stars shine brightly down on my dungeon. I look up, through this tube, which is of the earth, earthy, as through a great telescope, and see the gems of heaven, sparkling in unspeakable beauty. I will turn star-gazer, if not astronomer, and meditate on the starry heavens as well as Hervey. Is that Saturn, or Mercury up there? I know not, they are all one to me, but some of the heat of the former, and the wings of the latter, would be very acceptable. However, they seem more in danger of falling, up there on the brow of night, than I am; the world should indeed turn upside down, before I could be shaken out of my present strong hold. I cannot tell the names of these luminaries, nor describe their peculiarities, complacently as if I had visited each, like some of my friends,—but I know that their immense distances, their brilliancy, the heavenly field they move in, the music and poetry of every part of their existence, strike me very forcibly to-night, when I have no other objects of contemplation. Is there, in any of them, a poor fellow in a well, looking on other stars, on "this earth, itself a star," and not dreaming that he had a comrade in distress so far away? Has any pilgarlick, up there, been making too free at night, gone rather reeling home, and ended his dance as I have?—It is difficult to imagine such a possibility among such beauty;—silver, and gold, and azure, rolling orbs and ever-fixed space; but, at a distance, this earth, with whose bowels I have become so inconveniently acquainted, may look as heavenly as any. If I have no claim on the Mercury of the heavens, I seem to have on that of the earth, for here I am in this casing of mine, showing the state of the temperature like mercury in a thermometer. I am not over mercurial, nevertheless, and unfortunately there is nothing changeable in my scale,—it is down, down, steady to cold water degree, at all events,—and that seems quite enough for the fixing of all the volatility in my composition. What a magnificent cloud sweeps past, casting a gloom over my prison, as one would cover up a mouse in a stone jar. Another cloud, and another, roll along,—one like a camel, with its snow-white hump, and another with a giant face, peeping down ominously into my tube. Keep moving, good clouds, no conglomeration to-night!—a rattling rain storm might drown me in this huge bottle, and what a specimen for an Institute museum would I then be! What a penalty for not watering better what I took to-night. Banish the thought,—let me make a splash here, jumping Jim Crow, at the risk of frightening the frogs and rats out of their wits,—anything to keep vitality in my toes. I will be sadly out of tune to-morrow, a week's lying to will scarcely bring me round this bout. "Who will fill my vacant corner, who will sing my songs at night?" No matter. Let me but rise to the world, and to rise in the world will be the next care. One thing at a time, but here I can do nothing. What a fool I have been through life,—I could weep for my folly, only that my tears might add to the pool in which I am located,—Alas! alas! I have been running devious courses, which have appropriately ended in the Slough of Despond. I must look better to my ways in future.

As one cannot get out of a hobble, without getting into one, now is the time for showing my tact. To climb, one must not be on the topmost peak; here I am low enough for the commencement of operations;—let me see, or rather feel, carefully. Here are stones, and crannies between them, large enough for toes and fingers surely. If I had half the capabilities of a monkey now, how independent I would be of all my friends. Who knows what I may yet become, let me get as near the top of the tree as possible, here goes for a beginning. Ha, ha, loose, slippery, earth crumbling and stones sliding out.—I am not so bad as I might be; better to be ankle deep in water, star-gazing thus, than to have a ton of earth and stones between me and the moon. That would indeed be a consummation to all my dreams. "Paws off Censer," leave bad enough alone, rather than make it, much worse. Oh for some of that vaulting ambition now, which overleaps itself,—I would be careless what I fell on, so I got out of this.—What a contrast I am to place holders.—The struggle is generally to get in,—and to be out is synonymous with long faces. I wish I was among the outs;

—the sweets of this situation are few indeed, no salary, no power, no patronage, who would be in under such circumstances? And yet I am forced to hold office, am denied the miserable privilege of retiring. Satisfied with the pinching I have received getting in, I would require no pension on going out,—no compromise, no salve for my hurt feelings,—some sticking plaster, hot water to my feet, and an humble couch, is all I would crave; and yet here I must remain. "I can't get out," "I can't get out," as Stern's Starling said,—and the cry is quite as common, although not so prominent, among the world's cries, as "I can't get in." What multitudes of fellow sufferers I have, pilgarlicks reflecting in wells of every kind,—wells of debt, of family difficulties, wells moral, and political—who ardently long for free play of mental limb, amid the impalpable, but oh! how strong, walls which surround them.—Perishingly cold this is,—I seem to exhibit all the phenomena of capillary attraction, for the chill creeps up steadily and surely, through all my veins, as if it would overflow at my head, and pour off like an ornamental fountain. A pretty ornament I would make truly—I wish I was stuck on my own mantlepiece for once—my teeth chatter, and my head and inferior limbs shake, as elegantly as if I went by machinery.—A ladder, a ladder, my kingdom for a ladder. How would I bless the sight of one, and hail it as an invention of stupendous consequence. I have new notions of that which Jacob saw in his dream, and will reverence every rail of the next I see. Circumstances alter views strangely, yesterday I would be insensible to the sight of such an apparatus, and would think one thrust on me anything but an honour,—now I would gladly give up all my chance of the order of the garter, for a hodman's mode of approaching heaven. "Here swan-like let me sing and die," sang Byron, over his wine,—I run a good chance of dying like a swan, as far as sitting in the water is concerned. As to singing, I reckon that my croaking is not much unlike that of the princely bird. It keeps all its singing also until death, and then none hear the strain;—so my croaking, to which I always had an antipathy, remained for this frog-hole, and all are deaf to my new music.—Why am I like Brunel? Because I'm in the tunnel and can't get on.—Why am I like a Tee-totaller? Because I stand up for the cold water. Why am I related to Boz's Samivel? 'Cause I am a Well-er.—Why am I like Solomon? Because I'm deeper than my compatriots. Why am I becoming Yankeeified? Because I want to go ahead.—Why am I a paradox? Because I'm in a "moving" condition, and yet stock still.—Why am I like a dancing master? Because I have a spring at my heels. Why am I like a distressed poet? Because I wish for a good line. Why am I like one seeking a portrait painter? Because I want to be drawn to the life. So far so good. This conundrum feu de joie, has relieved me,—wish I was letting them off at the club,—but here is a sad damper for wit and dress boots. "Thus far into the bowels of the land," have I penetrated, and oh! for some "medicine for a well diseased," to cause it to eject its unwonted occupant from its dark, and too earthy jaws. However, from the head of this scorpion evil, I may pluck the diamond comfort, as Shakespeare says, or something to that effect. I am a shake-spear myself, to-night, for I am rather lathy and spear-like in my build, and as for shaking, witness every stone in my round house. But for the comfort of the thing:—what convulsion, or revolution, can affect me here? If an incursion of barbarians swept the face of the land, not one would stumble against me. No treasons can molest this castle,—no tempest can shake its walls,—no street brawlers will meddle with me,—no dun will ask am I at home here,—all the squally children and cross wives are as nothing at this depth. It is some consolation to be safe. Stage coaches may upset, robbers prowl, conflagrations rage, I am safely lodged here, below the reach of earth's affairs,—although, to tell the truth, I wish I could reach them. This is the place for truth,—is she not hidden in a well, and will I not become intimate with the goddess to-night? She whispers that, "patience is a universal plaster," I will apply it to my breast, wishing it may prove a warning plaster;—another of her select sentences is, "Come what come may, hope and the hour rubs through the roughest day,"—aye and roughest night too, thank Heaven, and the present one will soon be passed. "Hope and the hour,"—hold on hope, roll by hours, and deliverance will come with the morning. Again the clouds disperse, and the stars glitter, and the climbing moon, at last, sheds a slant ray down my prison. How well defined every stone is, I escaped by a miracle, a thicker skull than mine might have been irreparably damaged, descending by the ran as mine did. How the long grass and moss clamber by the sides, living here gaily as on the sunny bank. There is a place for everything, but this is no place for me, although I may be excused for not leaving it. I feel the moon's poetic attraction, but would that her physical were increased for a moment, and that she could raise me, as she does the tides, a few feet nearer herself.—Some philosophers say that the earth's centre is a mass of fire!—I have cause to doubt it, I am nearer it now than I was an hour ago, and the cold is vastly increased: I speak from experience,—and experiment, unfortunately. Nevertheless, there may be some foundation for the opinion,—for a poor fellow gets into "hot water" very rapidly, in this kind of centre-seeking,—if snarls of every description mean "hot water." How fascinating are those heavenly bodies, again they occupy my attention, as there is no other body in sight.—Surely, surely, that is the pearl of dawn which tints the zenith,—the east has been long since beautifully dappled,—I did not leave the sign of the stag so early as I thought, and rescue will yet save me from perishing piecemeal here. The music of