

leaves one pleasure to find another. No, faith! The thorns have pricked me more than once, but I never thought very much about them; I merely tried to press them out before they had swollen too much; and when I came across the fragrance of the roses, inhaled the pleasing atmosphere with a right good will—and so jogged on.

But to return. Having arrived at the age of seventeen, I was placed in a situation in life, from which, in perspective of course, I saw future greatness stretching itself visibly before me. But—alas for human frailty!—how true it is, that, when placed against the sweeping current of youthful passion,

The best laid schemes o'mice an' men
Gang aft agley.

All my schemes went terribly “agley,” because on the impulse of a moment—the flashing of a thought—I determined to enlist; conscious, too, that such an action would sap the foundations of all the air-built fabrics reared by those who loved me well and by myself.

My readers must not imagine, from my having come to this decision, that my brain was a storehouse of romance in which chivalric deeds, martial glory, high renown, and all “the pride, and pomp, and circumstance of war,” were jumbled together in most admirable confusion; neither must they think that my soft and pliant heart had been, like many a favorite beauty’s flowers, made the plaything of a moment, and then picked to pieces and trodden under foot, and that I had recklessly and thoughtlessly immolated myself upon the altar of unrequited passion. No such thing. There was nothing of the romantic and little of the entertaining, but a wonderful amount of the foolish, in the presiding cause of my enlistment; but such as it was, creditable or otherwise, as thereby hang my tales, I will lay it before the reader, in the hope that, haply, it may lead some young fellow as rash as I was then to pause and think.

Thus it was. An intimacy having sprung up between