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(For the Odd Fellows' Record.)

RECOLLECTIONS OF A CONVICT.

BY "Y-LE."

CHAP. I.—INTRODUCTORY AND PARENTAL.

PARDON me, kind reader, if, previous to laying before you the hardships I endured as a convict, I state a few particulars respecting my early history, and the circumstances attending my transition from a state of liberty to one of worse than slavery. We have all a beginning in life, and that beginning, so long as our shield of second causes remain, is more likely to be one of innocence than of vice; but should He, in whose hands is the issue of all things, be pleased to take from us that shield, our life, taking the world as it is, is more likely to be influenced by evil than good; as there are few hands or hearts—very few indeed—willing to help or feel for the sorrows of a parentless or a fatherless child. The foregoing I take for granted, as, had it been otherwise in my own case, the painful recollections called up in giving publicity to this history, might have been spared me.

There is an adage which says that "those who are born to be hanged will not be drowned." I narrowly escaped the former, and regarding the latter, I have so often nearly realised being so, that I begin to think the above aphorism has no bearing on my case. Having introduced myself to you thus, allow me now to proceed with my narrative.

In 1811 there was a small thatched house standing at the outskirts of a village, situated a few miles from Glasgow, N. B. In that house it was that my parents were blessed with a son, and that son was myself. There were no bells set a-ringing; no bonfires lighted; no roar of artillery; no addresses presented in honour of my first appearance; although, I believe, the usual assemblage of neighbours and blytheneat seekers were not a-wanting; but whether out of respect to the happy couple or otherwise, it is not for me now to enquire. The bustle of this era over, I became, in time, capable of paying visits to our neighbours, and enjoying the luxury of dabbling in a dub of stagnant water, which erst had been a pond, lying convenient to our thatched domicile; and no duck ever exhibited more real pleasure in its aquatic gambols, than I did when

jumping knee-deep in this green-surfaced village lake.

School-boy days succeeded, and with them the routine of fighting, flogging, crying, coaxing, and learning; but, were the truth told, the last received the smallest share of my attention. I had, somehow or other, a peculiar knack of getting into mischief, and it was a rare case in which I managed to effect a retreat, honorable or otherwise, without carrying with me indubitable evidence of being concerned in the affair, whatever it might be. I had few compeers at "bools and buttons;" I could throw a stone as far and as high as most boys of my age; and, on one occasion, in attempting the latter juvenile feat, I sent a pebble through a pane of glass in front of a house, the said pebble, after *winding* its way along a passage, making its exit through another pane in the rear of the dwelling. But why should I dwell on such things? Why! Is there a being possessed of his faculties who does not look back with pleasurable feeling, almost indescribable, to the days spent around the home of his birth, and remembers the season, with all its joys and sorrows, only as a glorious feast of early associations, of the most interesting character? Friendships are often formed at that time, which end only in the grave—loves, not unfrequently, which, as "heaven is love," may last us eternally. Yes, home of my boyhood! when all else has failed to yield a happy moment, to thee have I turned as a never-failing source, capable of affording, as far as worldly pleasures are concerned, a stream of the kindest waters that ever flowed from the sweetest spring on earth.

My father, previous to my birth, had carried on an extensive trade in a neighbouring town. He was shrewd and intelligent. There was no society connected with the place, in which he was not interested. His advice was asked on many occasions of doubt by his less gifted neighbours, and his workshop was a common resort for parties discussing the various measures in which the town was interested. His advice, as I have already stated, being often asked, it became, unfortunately, the custom with those persons who wished to have the benefit of his judgment, to send for him to a public house in the locality. Although, for many a day, no evil resulted from this circumstance, still, there it was, that the germ was first engendered which ultimately wrought his destruction. Beware, reader! if God has given you talents above your fellow men,