

servants to "work!" He treated them as beasts of burden—"Work! hang ye, work!" and a few oaths, seemed to be the principal words in the man's vocabulary. Peter had not been overwrought in the flogate—he had been his own master at Foxlaw—and when doing his utmost he hated to hear those words everlastingly rung in his ear. But he had another cause for abhorring his employment; his master had a number of slaves, on whom he wreaked the full measure of his cruelty. There was one, an old man, in particular, on whom he almost every day gratified his savageness. Peter had beheld the brutal treatment of the old negro till he could stand it no longer; and one day when he was vainly imploring the man who called himself the owner of his flesh for mercy, Peter rushed forward, he seized the savage by the breast, and exclaimed—"Confound, ye sir, if I see ye strike that poor auld black creature again, I'll cleave ye to the chin."

The slave owner trembled with rage.—"What!" said he; "it's a fine thing, indeed, if we've wollopped the English for liberty, and after all a man an't to have the liberty of wollopping his own neeger!"

He drew out his purse, and flung Peter's wages contemptuously on the ground. Peter stooping placed the money in his pocket, and turning towards Charleston, proceeded along the bridge to Boston. He had seen enough of tilling another man's farm in America, and resolved to try his fortune in some other way—but was at a loss how to begin. I already have told you how Peter's mother praised his delivery in his debate with the schoolmaster; and Peter himself thought that he could deliver a passage from Shakspeare in a manner that would make the fortune of any hero of the sock and buskin; and he was passing along the Mall, counting the number of trees in every row, much in the same manner, and for the same reason, as he had formerly so counted the islands in the harbour, when the thought struck him that the Americans were fond of theatricals; and he resolved to try his stage: he called at the lodgings of the manager in Franklin Place: he gave a specimen of his abilities; and at a salary of eighteen dollars a week, Peter Paterson was engaged as leader of the "heavy business" of the Boston *corps dramatique*. The tidings would have killed his mother. Lear was chosen as the part in which he was to make his first appearance. The curtain was drawn up: "Peter, what would your mother say?" whispered his conscience, as he looked in the glass, just as the bell rang and the prompter

called him: and what indeed would Betty Paterson have said to have seen her own son Peter, with a red cloak, a painted face, a grey wig, and a white beard falling on his breast! Lear—Peter—entered. He looked above, below, and around him. The audience clapped their hands, shouted, and clapped their hands again. It was to cheer the new performer. Peter thought they would bring down the theatre. The lights dazzled his eyes. The gallery began to swim—the pit moved—the boxes appeared to wave backward and forward. Peter became pale through the very rouge that bedaubed his face, and sweat, cold as icicles, rained down his temples. The shouting and clapping of hands was resumed—he felt a trembling about his limbs—he endeavoured to look upon the audience—he could discern only a confused mass. The noise again ceased.

"Attend—France—Burgundy—hem!—Gloster!" faltered out poor Peter. The laughter became louder than the clapping of hands had been before. The manager led Peter off the stage, paid him the half of his week's salary, and bade him good-by. It is unnecessary to tell you how Peter, after this disappointment, laid out eight dollars in the purchase of a pack, and how, as pedlar, he travelled for two years among the Indians and back-settlers of Canada, and how he made money in his new calling. He had written to his parents and to Ann Graham; but, in his unsettled way of life, it is no wonder that he had not received an answer. He had written again to say, that, in the course of four months, he would have to be in New-York in the way of business—for Peter's pride would not permit him to acknowledge that he carried a Pack—and if they addressed their letters to him at the Post-office there, he would receive them. He had been some weeks in New-York, and called every day, with an anxious heart, at the Post office.—But his time was not lost; he had obtained many rare and valuable skins from the Indians, and, with his shop upon his back, he was doing more business than the most fashionable store-keeper in the Broadway. At length, a letter arrived. Peter hastily opened the seal, which bore the impress of his mother's thimble, and read:—"My dear bairn,—This comes to inform ye that baith your father and me are weel—thanks to the Giver o' a' good—and hoping to find ye the same. O Peter, hinny, could ye only come hame—did you only ken what sleepless nights I spend on your account, ye wad leave America as soon as ye get my letter. I wad