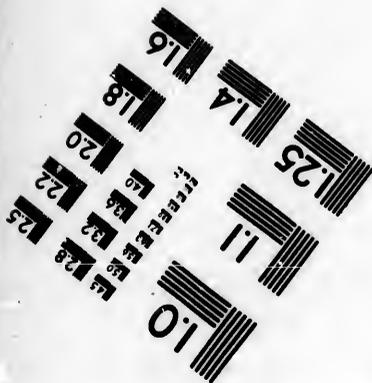
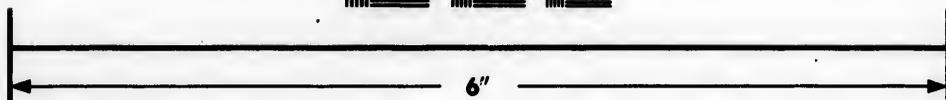
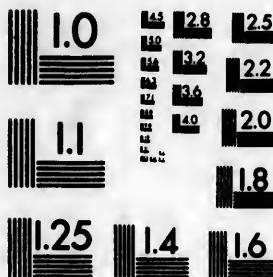


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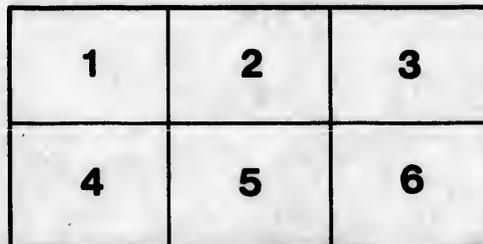
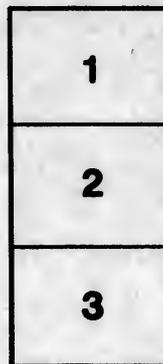
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Of the years 1821 and 1822.

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OF

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Of the years 1831 and 1832.

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1881

INTRODUCTION.

The following letters of "Mephibosheth Stepsure" appeared in the columns of the *Acadian Recorder*, during the years 1821 and 1822, and were read with much interest, amusement, and, it is to be hoped, with profit to the public of that day. They are now fast fading from the recollection of the public, as those who read and laughed over them in their original shape, move off from the stage of life. Such must be the fate of all literary productions, however meritorious, which are confined to the columns of the periodical press. The publisher believes that the following letters should not be allowed to sink into oblivion; and that the public to whose perusal they are now offered, will concur in this belief.

It is no secret that the letters of "Mephibosheth Stepsure" were among the lighter productions of the able pen of the late REV. DR. THOMAS McCULLOCH, a gentleman of whose versatile talents Novascotia, as the country of his adoption, is justly proud; but who, had he toiled to become famous, as diligently as he did to make himself immediately useful, would undoubtedly have attained a position, not in his adopted, but in his native, home, as one of the most distinguished literary men of his age.

INTRODUCTION

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the course of the preceding chapters. It is to be observed that the names are given in the order in which they are mentioned in the text, and not in the order in which they are mentioned in the original text. The names are given in the order in which they are mentioned in the text, and not in the order in which they are mentioned in the original text. The names are given in the order in which they are mentioned in the text, and not in the order in which they are mentioned in the original text.

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LETTERS

OF

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

To the Editors of the Acadian Recorder.

GENTLEMEN,—Happening one day to call upon Parson Drone, the clergyman of our town, I found him administering his old, standard consolation to my neighbour Solomon Gosling. The parson has been long among us, and is a very good sort of man; but, I believe, he has fared very hardly: for though my townsmen all respect him, and are the most active people in the world at selling watches and swapping horses, they have never made themselves richer and, therefore, have little to give but good wishes. But the parson, except when he is angry, is very good natured and disposed to bear with a great deal; and, having acquired a large fund of patience himself, he has become a quack at comforting, and prescribes it indiscriminately for all sorts of ills. His own life has been spent between starving and preaching; and having no resources himself, it never occurs to him, that, for the wants and troubles of others, there can be any remedy but patience.

My neighbour Gosling is completely an every day character. His exact likeness may be found at any time, in any part of the Province. About thirty years ago, his father David left him very well to do; and Solomon, who at that time was a brisk young man, had the prospect, by using a little industry, of living as comfortably as any in the town. Soon after the death of old David, he was married and a likelier couple were not often to be seen. But unluckily for them both, when Solomon went to Halifax in the winter, Polly went along with him to sell her turkeys and see the fashions; and from that day the Goslings had never a day to do well. Solomon was never very fond of hard work. At the same time he could not be accused of idleness. He was always a very good neighbour; and at every burial or barn raising, Solomon was set down as one who would be sure to be there. By these means he gradually

contracted the habit of running about ; which left his own premises in an unpromising plight. Polly, too, by seeing the fashions, had learnt to be genteel ; and for the sake of a little show, both lessened the thrift of the family, and added to the outlay ; so that, between one thing and another, Solomon began to be hampered, and had more calls than comforters.

When the troubles of life arise out of idleness, a return to industry is usually the last shift. The habits which my neighbour had been gradually contracting, left him little stomach for the patient and persevering toils of a farming life : nor would urgent necessity permit him to wait for the sure but slow returns of agricultural exertion. But necessity is the mother of invention ; and though the family or Goelings were never much noted for profundity of intellect, Solomon by pure dint of scheming, contrived, both to relieve himself from his immediate embarrassments and to avoid hard labor. Though Goose Hill farm, from want of industry, had not been productive ; it was still a property of considerable value : and it occurred to Solomon, that, converted into goods, it would yield more prompt and lucrative returns, than by any mode of agriculture. Full of the idea, accordingly, my neighbor went to town ; and, by mortgaging his property to Calibogus, the West India merchant, he returned with a general assortment, suited to the wants of the town. When I say a general assortment, it is necessary to be a little more explicit. It did not contain any of those articles which are employed in subduing the forest, or in cultivating the soil. These he knew to be not very saleable. He was aware, that, though old Tubal Thump supplies the whole town with iron work, he is so miserably poor, that he can scarcely keep himself in materials. The only article of the iron kind which he brought, was a hog-head of horse shoes, which a blacksmith in Aberdeen, who knew something of America, had sent out upon speculation. From the number of horses and young people in the township, Solomon knew that horse shoes, would meet with a ready sale.

When a merchant lays in his goods he naturally consults the taste of his customers. Solomon's, accordingly, consisted chiefly of West India produce, gin, brandy, tobacco, and a few chests of tea. For the youngsters, he had provided an assortment of superfine broad cloths and fancy muslins, ready made boots, whips, spurs, and a great variety of gum flowers and other articles which come under the general denomination of notions. In addition to all these, and what

Solomon considered as not the least valuable part of his stock, he had bought from Pendulum & Co. a whole box of old watches elegantly ornamented with lacquered brass chains and glass seals; little inferior in appearance to gold and Cairngorms.

When all these things were arranged, they had a very pretty appearance. For a number of weeks, little was talked of, but Mr. Gosling's Store; for such he had now become by becoming a merchant: little was to be seen, but my neighbours riding thither to buy, and returning with bargains. and during the course of the day, long lines of horses, fastened to every accessible post of the fences, rendered an entrance to his house almost impracticable. By these means, the general appearance of the town soon underwent a complete revolution. Homespun and homely fare were to be found only with a few hard fisted old folks, whose ideas could never rise above labor and saving. The rest appeared so neat and genteel upon Sundays, that even the Reverend Mr. Drone, though I did not see that his flock had enabled him to exchange his own habiliments for Mr. Gosling's superfine, expressed his satisfaction by his complacent looks.

Mr. Gosling, too, had in reality, considerably improved his circumstances. The greater part of my neighbours being already in debt to old Ledger and other traders about; and considering that if they took their money to these, it would only go to their credit, carried it to Mr. Gosling's Store; so that by these means he was soon able to clear off a number of his old encumbrances, and to carry to market as much cash as established his credit.

Among traders punctuality of payment begets confidence in the seller; and the credit which this affords to the purchaser, is generally followed by an enlargement of orders. My neighbour returned with a much greater supply; and here his reverses commenced. Credit could not be refused to good customers who had brought their money to the store. Those, also, who formerly showed their good will by bringing their cash, proved their present cordiality by taking large credits. But when the time for returning to the market for supplies arrived, Mr. Gosling had nothing to take thither but his books. These, it is true, had an imposing appearance. They contained debts to a large amount; and my neighbour assured his creditors, that, when they were collected, he would be able to pay them all honourably, and have a large reversion to himself. But, when his accounts were made out, many young men who owed him large sums, had gone to Passamaquoddy; and of those who remained

the greater part had mortgaged their farms to Mr. Ledger and the other old traders : and now carried their ready money to Jerry Gawpus, who had just commenced trader by selling his farm. In short, nothing remained for Mr. Gosling but the bodies or labours of his debtors ; and these last they all declared themselves very willing to give.

About this time it happened that vessels were giving a great price ; and it naturally occurred to my neighbour, that, by the labour which he could command, he might build a couple. These, accordingly, were put upon the stocks. But labour in payment of debt, goes on heavily ; and besides, when vessels were giving two prices, nobody would work without double wages ; so that the vessels, like the ark, saw many summers and winters. In the mean time peace came and those who owned vessels, were glad to get rid of them at any price. By dint of perseverance, however, Mr. Gosling's were finished : but they had scarcely touched the water, when they were attached by Mr. Hemp, who at the same time declared, that, when they were sold, he would lose fifty per cent upon his account for the rigging. Such was my neighbour's case ; when, happening, as I have already mentioned, to step into Parson Drone's, I found that Mr. Gosling had been telling his ailments, and was receiving the reverend old gentleman's ordinary, clerical consolation. "What can't be cured, must be endured : let us have patience."

"I'll tell you what it is, parson," replied my neighbour, "patience may do well enough for those who have plenty : but it won't do for me. Callibogus has foreclosed the mortgage ; my vessels are attached ; and my books are of no more value than a rotten pumpkin. After struggling hard to supply the country with goods, and to bring up a family so as to be a credit to the town, the country has brought us to ruin. I won't submit to it. I won't see my son Rehoboam, poor fellow, working like a slave upon the roads ; with his coat turned into a jacket, and the elbows clouted with the tails. My girls were not sent to Mrs. M'Cackle's boarding school to learn to scrub floors. The truth is, parson, the country does not deserve to be lived in. There is neither trade nor money in it, and produce gives nothing.— It is fit only for Indians, and emigrants from Scotland, who were starving at home. It is time for me to go elsewhere, and carry my family to a place that presents better prospects to young folks.

In reply, the parson was beginning to exhort Mr. Gosling to beware of the murmurings of the wicked ; when

Jack Catchpole, the constable, stepped in to say that the sheriff would be glad to speak with Mr. Gosling at the door. Our sheriff is a very hospitable gentleman; and, when any of his neighbours are in hardship, he will call upon them, and even insist upon their making his house their home. Nor did I ever know any shy folks getting off with an excuse. As it occurred to me, therefore, that Mr. Gosling might not come back for the parson's admonition, I returned home; and soon learned that my neighbour had really gone elsewhere, and made a settlement in the very place where Sampson turned miller. This event has not added much to the respectability of the Goslings; nor is it calculated to brighten their prospects. My neighbour's children are as fine a young family as any in the town; but it unavoidably happened, that the apparent prosperity of their father introduced among them habits, not very friendly to regular industry and saving. Hob Gosling, the oldest son, is really a smart young fellow; and in haying time or harvest, he can do more work in a day than any three labourers. But hard work requires recreation; and when a young man does any thing uncommon, he wishes to receive credit for it among his neighbours. Accordingly, it would sometimes happen, that it would take Hob a week to tell about the exertions of a day. He would also occasionally recreate himself by riding races, or playing a game at cards, when he was drinking a glass of grog with other youngsters over Mr. Tipple's counter: and by these means, though Hob is not a quarrelsome young man, his name was frequently called over in court in assault and battery cases. This, it is true, was not without its advantages. Hob acquired a great knowledge of the law, and the character of being a 'cute young man. But I am inclined to think that the gain ended here; for I remember that after one or two of these causes were tried, a few acres of Mr. Gosling's best marsh passed into the hands of Saunders Scantocreesch, a hard faced, hard working Scotchman, who, a few years ago, came among us with his stockings and shoes suspended from a stick over his shoulder, but now possesses one of the best farms in the town.

My neighbour's daughters, too, are very agreeable young ladies. Every body allows that Mrs. McCackle has done justice to their education. For painting flowers and playing upon the piano forte, they have few equals. Some of my neighbours, indeed, used to complain that, when Mr. Gosling asked them to dinner, the meat was always ill-cooked; and the puddings and pies, mere dough; but the reason was, that neither Mrs. Gosling nor the young ladies, could get

the black wench to do as she was bidden, unless they were always at her heels.

But this was not the only hardship which my neighbour suffered by the elegant accomplishments of the young ladies. To be genteel in the country, is attended with difficulties and losses of which you townfolks can have no conception. Morning visits in the afternoon, dressings and other things, interrupted so frequently with rural industry, that great show and sad accidents are usually combined. I recollect when Jacob Riba married his fourth wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gosling were invited to the wedding; and as it happened to be an charming day, the young ladies were left to look after the butter-making. But, when the chaise which carried the old folks to the marriage returned, it occurred to the young ladies, that, before proceeding to domestic toil, they would have plenty of time to return Miss Trotabout's last morning visit; and off they set, leaving directions with the black girl to have the churn before the fire by the time they returned. During their absence, it unfortunately happened that the wench descried one of her black cronies passing; and, running down the lane to enjoy a little talk, left the kitchen door open, when Mr. Gosling's boar pig Mammoth, who was always a mischievous brute, finding a clear passage, entered without ceremony and upset the churn. My neighbour's kitchen was immediately converted into the country of the Gadarenes. To guzzle up the contents was but the work of a moment. The succeeding scarcity, also aroused that inquisitive disposition for which swine, as well as ladies, are noted; when one of the vile animals, perceiving something in the churn, as it lay upon its side, thrust in its snout to examine. In this state of things, the black wench, having descried the young ladies at a distance, returned to her post. Vengeance succeeded amazement; and the first object of it, and apparently the most guilty, was the individual whose fore quarters had already passed from observation. Now, it so happens that no way has yet been invented to drive a pig straight forward, but to pull it by the tail. As soon, therefore, as it found itself assaulted behind, the unclean beast made a fair entrance into the wooden tabernacle: and, when the young ladies returned to make butter, it was rolling round the floor, to the utter dismay of the girl, and complete discomfiture of the whole herd of swine. From such trials as these, you townfolks, who have nothing else to do but be genteel, are altogether exempted.

After Mr. Gosling's unfortunate confinement, I went to call upon his family, imagining that the countenance of an acquaintance would help to soothe and keep up their spirits. Parson Drone, too, had prepared a long discourse upon patience, and was come to deliver it. But we found them all very cheerful; and the parson unwilling to lose his labour, made his visit short, and carried his discourse to old Caleb Stagers, whose mare had just died of the botch. Mr. Gosling's confinement they considered merely as a temporary inconvenience, arising from the spite of his creditors. But when his debts were called in, he would pay every body; and the whole family agreed, that, then, with the rest of his property, they would go to a country better worth the living in. I found among them, however, a diversity of opinion about where this should be. Mrs. Gosling spoke of the Ohio; but Mr. Rehobam declared, that it was a new country, without roads; where a young man could not lay a leg over a saddle from the one year's end to the other. Miss Dinah preferred the Cape of Good Hope, but she was afraid of the Caffres, who sometimes carry off white women. To elope with a lord or a duke, she observed, would be a very pretty incident, but, should any person ever write a novel about the Goslings, to be carried off by a Hottentôt would appear so droll. Upon the whole, they seemed to think the opinion of Miss Fanny most feasible: that it would be best to go to Botany Bay, where every genteel family like the Goslings, receives so many white niggers, sent out every year from Britain by Government for the supply of the colony.

As your warriors for the winter have not yet opened their campaign, I hope you will find room in your paper for the preceding account of my neighbour and his family. It will not, I know, be very interesting to your readers in general; for they have all seen the like, and heard the like a hundred times before: and as it is no fable but a true story, they will not be able to deduce from it any sage moral for their own direction in life. Yet its insertion will oblige a great many of your readers. By looking over the list of your subscribers, you will see that the Gosling family have extensive connexions in every part of the province and in every kind of occupation; and I am sure, it will gratify them all to hear how their relation Mr. Solomon is getting on. Should you oblige them and myself thus far, it may be induced to send you, at some future period, the sequel of my neighbour's trading career.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE

LETTER II.

Gentlemen,—Soon after Mr. Gosling went to live with the sheriff, I embraced the first spare time to pay him a visit. On arriving at my neighbour's new lodgings, I was told that he had just sitten down to dinner with a party of his acquaintances whom he had invited to see him. Finding thus that he had more need of a good appetite than of condolence, I returned home. As our roads are pretty much travelled, I did not proceed far without company: I was soon overtaken by Saunders Scantoreesh the Scotchman, who had been at old Tubal Thump's to get his axe new laid; and was now returning homeward as fast as his feet could carry him. We had scarcely exchanged salutation when Jack Scorem the lumberer, whose horse I had seen, fastened to Mr. Tipple's fence, came galloping up and joined us.

"So I hear," says Jack, "that old Gosling has got himself into limbo. The old fellow won't poison the town any more with his abominable stuff."

"And wha gar'd you drink it?" replied Saunders. "It wisna abominable stuff when your bits o' weens war rinnan wi' a greybeard fu' after anither, after a gude deal o' fleechin' an' frasin' to get it. It was Mr. Gosling then; but noo when you an' the like o' you hae brocht the pair gentleman to ruin, it's the suld fallow wi' the abominable stuff. Devil run throo the guts o' a' sic loons, that I sud ban." At the same time he brandished a new ax handle which he was carrying home with him. What might have happened, had the conversation been continued, I do not know; for Jack fights a hard battle at times; but fortunately for us all, Jehu, the oldest son of Mr. Gawpus the new merchant, came galloping along; and Jack, preferring a race to a battle, was soon out of sight.

Having found my old neighbour so comfortably fixed with the sheriff, I was in no haste to renew my visit. A few days ago, however, I received from him a note acknowledging my former call, and requesting me to eat a beef stake with him at half past five. As Mr. Gosling and I never were upon very intimate terms, this invitation was rather unexpected. But having all my life dined early, I do not like late hours. Besides, though Mr. Holdfast, the sheriff, frequently invites his friends, and never fails to be out of humour when they offer to leave him; I have always thought, that, for his guests to invite theirs and have dinner parties in his house, is carrying the joke rather too far. I, therefore, sent him my excuse, with a promise that I would see him next day.

Accordingly, after breakfast, having given my boys and servants their tasks, I stepped over to Mr. Holdfast's, and was introduced to my neighbour, whom I found so completely involved in a cloud of tobacco smoke, as to be scarcely visible. To account for this circumstance, it is necessary to remark, that the inhabitants of our town are all great smokers; and, though the country in general is pretty populous, the sheriff's house is usually the thickest part of the settlement. His house, also, standing in a public place, is very much exposed; and having more than once suffered depredations from housebreakers, he keeps his windows well secured; and hence the darkness in which Mr. Gosling was involved.

After surmounting the first impression which a dark room makes upon the eyes, I found my neighbour seated at a table along with a goodly number of our townfolk, who had come to lodge with the sheriff till they could be more comfortable at home. They were all busily employed over a game of whist, and enjoying their smoke at the same time; and as smoking begets thirst, a few tumblers and the needful stood upon the table.

It has been a time of general calamity among us; and on this account, though our sheriff is really a very respectable gentleman, many are now living with him, who, once a day, would have spurned at his invitations. These, as well as Mr. Gosling, have many relations in different parts of the province; and, as they may perhaps hear of their present circumstances, without learning the cause; for their information, I shall state how my townmen have been involved in misfortune, which ought rather to be termed unexpected than sudden.

But I must first vindicate myself from the unjust aspersions of some of your readers. It has been affirmed that my account of Mr. Gosling is merely a dry wipe at those, who, not contented with farming, have tried to better their circumstances by trade. But have I not affirmed that it is a true story? And, surely, I who know best, have the best right to be believed. Besides, I am confident that there is not one merchant in the country, who will see the least resemblance between my account of Mr. Gosling and himself. Far be it from Mephibosheth Stepsure, either by dry wipes or wet wipes, to attempt a reformation which worthy Parson Drone has long ago given up in despair. Some of your readers, I doubt, like our clergyman's hearers, apply everything to their neighbours. Every reasonable

man must now be satisfied respecting the truth of both what I have already said, and what I have yet to say ; and, therefore, I shall proceed to my account of Mr. Gooling's fellow lodgers.

I have already mentioned how Jack Scorem set off at the gallop after Mr. Gawpus' son Jehu. In the course of the race, they reached a part where the road takes a sudden turn ; when a jostling ensued, which brought man and beast to the ground. At this time the sheriff happened to be upon the road ; when perceiving the accident, and running up to lend his assistance, he found Jack both bruised and bleeding ; and positively insisted that, instead of going home to his family in such a plight, he should lodge with himself. Jack now declares himself to be perfectly cured ; but Mr. Holdfast is still as careful about him, as when he found him upon the road.

About ten years ago, Jack began the world, by settling upon a wood lot and marrying a daughter of old Pharaoh Squash. With the exception of rather more legs than one human body has a right to claim, Jack was a likely, clever handed fellow, and could chop more in a day than any of his neighbours. But this was a kind of work, of which, except at a chopping frolic, he was never very fond. His wife, too, bating a little glibness of tongue, common to the whole Squash family, was a very engaging and smart young woman.

Jack, having begun the world, was determined to show that he had begun it in earnest. Accordingly, after making a little hole in the woods, that nobody might mistake him for a Pictou highlandman, he raised a couple of good frames for his house and barn ; and, by chopping for Swing the sawyer, provided himself with as many boards as would do the outside work of his house. Mr. Ledger, too, who was never known to refuse credit to active, well doing young men, supplied him with paint, glass, nails, and other materials ; so that very soon by dint of labour and the help of a carpenter to make the sashes, the house that Jack built, with its white clapboards and green corners and window facings, had a very pretty appearance. The partitions and ceilings, it is true, were only loose boards ; but those he resolved to have finished before the winter set in.

When things were in this state, Mrs. Scorem was brought home from her father's ; and a happier couple were nowhere to be found. Jack was very fond of his wife ; the neighbours, too, were very kind in visiting and inviting the

young folks, so that the time slipt pleasantly away. But winter set in before he could get anything done to the house; and when he began to look after boards for his barn, there were none to be got. The young folks, however, were not easily put out. A few slabs would do very well to shelter the cow in a corner of the frame; and, if their house was cold, they were near the woods, and could keep a rousing fire.

But Jack's building had produced another inconvenience of much greater magnitude. A few potatoes were the whole of his crop. Everything, therefore, must be bought at the store; and as young folks like to be stilish, the day of reckoning was not duly considered. When the spring came, Mr. Ledger had a very long account against Jack: but then his farm showed that, during winter, he had been doing something besides visiting; he had slashed down a large piece of wood; and now, he determined to raise a crop which would do something for him in the fall.

It happened that spring, that Mr. Ledger's agent at home sent him out more vessels than he knew well how to load. Jack was in debt, and known to be a good axeman; and just when he was beginning to clear up his new land, Mr. Ledger's tempting offers interrupted the farming. He might jump into the woods in the morning, and at night return home two or three dollars the richer. This was a prospect not to be despised by one who was in debt; and besides, wished to have his house and barn finished.

It happened, also, that when Mr. Ledger's vessels came out, they brought a very large importation of goods. These proved a sore temptation to Jack and Mrs. Scorem; who like other young folks, had gone very bare together. But he was now making great wages, and they could well afford both to live better and dress better; and hence between finery and their summer's provisions, they had a great many errands to the store. In the mean time, Jack wrought very hard and finished his contract, but when Mr. Ledger balanced his books, he was astonished to find himself deeper in debt than before. At first he was very angry, and would not believe it. But in looking over the account, he found a great many gowns, ribbons, and laces, which, he thought, might have been spared. He had also some twinges about a long line of dittos, headed by 1 gallon spirits; but he liked to see his wife as fine as any of her neighbours; and it would be a miserable thing, if he could not afford a glass of grog to an acquaintance when

he called at the house. In short, the thing was done and could not be recalled. Still he was a smart young fellow, and had no need to resort to Parson Drone for consolation. The house and barn could stand for a year ; and, instead of chopping upon his farm, he could have another great lot of timber ready by the spring.

The little timber which had been upon Jack's premises, was now gone. But my cousin, Harrow, who lives at the far end of the settlement, and minds only his farming, had an excellent lot of it ; and Jack and a few more of the youngsters agreed to pay him stumpage and make one job of the whole. As they were all far from home, it was necessary to camp in the woods. Now, sleeping upon spruce boughs and living upon hard biscuit and salt pork not very well cooked, do not afford all the comfort requisite for hard working men. Without a little spirits, the fatigue of lumbering would be intolerable. Besides, persons who must quit their labour at dusk, cannot sleep all the long nights of winter ; and, when they are sitting in the camp, they need something along with a game at cards, to make them cheery and keep out the cold.

In the meantime, Mrs. Scorem and the wives of the other young men, found themselves very lonely at home. They also felt a little anxious about their husbands ; and to relieve their uneasiness, they naturally called upon each other, for the double purpose of passing a dull hour and hearing from the camp. Calls of this kind require comforts ; and, as young folks have usually a frank disposition, it became a point of emulation among them, who should be kindest. Jack, thus living in the woods, had now, as it were, two families to support ; and each of them conducted upon the supposition that he was making great wages and could very easily afford it.

The large lot of timber was at last made and delivered. But, when a deduction was made for hauling and stumpage, and also the price of a horse to carry his provisions, for all which Mr. Ledger was bound, the remainder left Jack farther in arrears than ever. At first he was confounded. A perusal of Mr. Ledger's account, however, satisfied him that all was fair and square. The number of dittos in his present account, had been considerably increased by camping in the woods ; but he now found for these a reasonable excuse ; they were a part of his supplies, and could not be wanted. The same lenity he found it impossible to extend to many of Mrs. Scorem's items ; and on returning home,

ill pleased and moody, he could not avoid muttering something about extravagance, tea, and trumpery. In a case of this kind, it was never known that any of the Squash family did not give as good as they got. Mrs. Scorem, therefore, could quote with great readiness the amount of Jack's dittos; so that domestic comfort began to assume a very gloomy appearance. But, as neither of them were ill-natured, after a few tears and a little pouting from Mrs. Scorem, harmony was restored; and they both fully resolved to be more careful in future, and get out of debt as soon as they could. To get out of debt, however, by farming, was now out of the question. Another great lot of lumber must, therefore, be made.

It is necessary, here, to say a few words about our worthy old parson, Rev. Mr. Drone. When the old gentleman first came among us, he was a brisk young man, and preached upon a great variety of subjects. Among other things, I remember, he tried to persuade us, that a person's general habits grow out of his occupation. But the whole town laughed at him. One was sure, that, if he had money to lend out, he would have more conscience than Gripus the usurer; and another, that he could keep tavern forever, without being such a drunkard as Tipple. None of the young people could see how a little card playing and frolicking could interfere with sober and industrious habits; and the old people, to a man, declared that it was perfectly easy to job about the one half of the year, and be very good farmers the other.—However this may be, I am inclined to think that habits arising out of any particular occupation, are not likely to be impaired by continuing in it. Accordingly, though Jack could not be called a drunkard; for he was seldom seen intoxicated, he used frequently to declare, that a good hearty glass of grog along with hard work in the woods, would do no man harm. In proportion, also, as he became more indulgent to himself, his opposition to Mrs. Scorem's domestic management diminished; so that she was at last left to get on in her own way in peace.

In this manner several years passed on, without anything particular to interrupt their quiet; except an occasional reflection upon Mr. Ledger's debt, which was gradually increasing. At last, one morning when Jack was going past the store, this gentleman called him into his house; and, after some friendly conversation and a good glass of grog, observed to him, that, though it was not his practice to

tell everybody the state of his affairs, he would mention to him, as a particular friend, that he was very hardly pushed. He owed a large sum to Mr. Balance, his agent at home, who was very anxious about it. To satisfy him therefore, he had just been taking a mortgage from a number of his neighbours; and he hoped that Jack also would give him this security upon his farm. The mortgages would satisfy Mr. Balance that he had not been making bad debts; and thus he would neither be pushed himself, nor be reduced to the painful necessity of harrassing good neighbours. He further assured Jack, when they were taking another glass, that he was the last man in the town that he would be willing to distress. Jack was very sorry to hear that his good friend Mr. Ledger was pushed, and no less so to think that his farm might be attached. To oblige this gentleman, therefore, and remove far from himself the evil day, the mortgage was given.

From the time that Mr. Ledger revealed to Jack the secret of his distress and received the mortgage, a sort of intimacy was established between them. That gentleman would frequently take him by himself, and give him a great many advices about care and economy. At first, Jack was very proud of this kind of confidence; but, by being often repeated, it became tiresome; and at last he cared for it as little and minded it as little, as one of parson Drone's sermons. On the contrary, Mr. Ledger did not bear so patiently as the parson, this disregard of his admonitions. When Jack's greybeard therefore, to which Saunders Scantocreech alluded, was in need of replenishing and arrived at the store, it would frequently be sent away as it came. This was usage not to be endured from one whom he had obliged by mortgaging his farm. Jack threatened revenge; and, accordingly, carried his next lot of timber to another trader, and set Mr. Ledger at defiance.

In this manner Jack's affairs went on for several years more. Lots of timber were made, and large debts contracted. In the mean time, the lumbering life had left the farm without improvement. The land which Jack had chopped the winter after his marriage, was again covered with fine young wood. The barn frame, it is true, for it was an excellent frame, had resisted the weather, and still stood its ground; but the house could no longer be known by its fine white clapboards and its green corners and facings. Time had swept away all the paint, and the

only contrast to its general weather beaten appearance was a strip of white, reaching from the garret window to the ground, occasioned by certain nocturnal distillations, which, in a cold winter's night, it is not always convenient to carry to the door. His windows, too, had suffered the inconvenience of being in the neighbourhood of children and towels. The want of glass was remedied by a plentiful supply of old hats, trowsers, and the like; at the same time keeping out the cold, and proving that those within had once worn clothes.

From what I have said respecting the outside of the house, it need scarcely be remarked, that comforts had not multiplied within. The loose boards had become looser by seasoning. The increase of children, also, had opened up new sources of want; and it usually happens, that large wants very injudiciously keep company with little credits. When Jack, therefore, returned home from the woods, it was to hear of a long list of particulars which the family needed, summed up with a good deal of grumbling that they had not been provided. Now, family conversations of this kind, when they are often repeated, are apt to become irksome. All persons, also, married and unmarried, contract a habit of going where they are most comfortable. From such matrimonial communings, therefore, Jack used to escape to his acquaintances, who neither told him of wants nor plagued him with grumbings; and, as they were commonly to be found about Mr. Tipple's counter, he became a regular attendant at that place of amusement. A course of this kind was not likely to lessen family grievances. Jack and Mrs. Scorem began to live very unhappily together. That he might forget the past and escape the present, a resort to Mr. Tipple's became every day more necessary; and the thought of returning home, demanded an additional dose to fortify him against the reception of Mrs. Scorem.

I have generally seen, that misfortune, which requires a stout heart and strong exertions to overcome it, produces contrary effects. Accordingly, as Jack's prospects of comfort diminished, he became less inclined to labour for comfort; and was no longer that active, hard working fellow which he had formerly been. In the mean time, from the failure of trade and other circumstances, the price of timber fell so much that Jack declared it better to go idle than to work for such wages. Go idle he did; but, when he was enjoying himself, Mr. Ledger sued out the

mortgage, and then caplased him for the balance of the account, and he is now living with the sheriff, till trade revives and labour returns to its old price. Before I left home, his little boys were at my house, asking a few potatoes to keep them from starving; and when I arrived at Mr. Holdfast's, I found Jack's thoughts and enjoyments limited to a game at cards and a glass of grog. By publishing this, you may encourage me to introduce you to the rest of the company.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER III.

GENTLEMEN,—I formerly observed that it has been, in our town, a time of general distress. This, however, is by no means the effect of carelessness or inactivity; for our townfolk are in general eager to be rich, and as active as eager. I will venture to affirm that there is not another township in the province, where there are so many bargains every day made. Indeed, the greater part of us spend the half of their time, running about expressly for the purpose of getting rich; yet, by some strange fatality, misfortune has fallen heaviest upon those who were most active. I remember, when parson Drone came amongst us, he tried to persuade us that the property of the town, at that time, could not make us all wealthy; and, therefore, that, if we would all be rich, we must by labour add as much to its value, as would enrich us all. But it appeared very plain to the most of us, that, if every one made so many bargains and gained by each of them, he would be so much the richer; and no man who can become wealthy by hard work, will ever submit to the drudgery of farming. I am inclined to think that our parson told us the truth; but the Reverend Mr. Shadrach Howl, who, last year, being tired of chopping down trees, converted himself into a preacher of the gospel, affirms that our calamities are judgment upon the town for rejecting his doctrines. However this may be, certain it is that our most active and ambitious townsmen are either living with the sheriff, or, from a principle of delicacy, keeping themselves out of the way of his invitations.

After the account which I have given of Jack Scorem, I find that I have little else to do than to send you the names of the sheriff's other ledgers. Though the life of each of them has been marked by a diversity of incidents; the original situation of most of them, their views, and the conclusion of their course have been exactly similar. Respecting them, therefore, I shall only send you a few brief notices.

Whoever looks at the soil of our township, would say, that nature designed us to be a farming people; and, that every man who gives the ground fair play, will be able to live very snugly. Accordingly, my cousin Harrow, Saunders Scantocreech, and a few others, who mind only their farms, have everything thriving about them; and whoever goes into their houses, is sure to find plenty and cheerfulness. Yet, though our soil is excellent, and farms very easily got, the most of our townfolk would rather ride two days round the country to make a bargain, than give the ground one day's labor. Whether this proceeds from the waywardness of human nature, or because, being British subjects, we are born traders, I cannot tell. Our parson is somewhat inclined to think that our parishioners are a part of the ten tribes; and says that the only objections to his opinion are, that, though our folks are great traders in watches, horses, and other things, and as eager to be rich as any of the seed of Abraham; not one of them deals in old clothes, or is as rich as a Jew. But Saunders Scantocreech, who reads his bible a good deal, declares, that, from their disposition to meddle with quiet honest men, they must be the Philistines, or else the children of Ishmael; because, when the court comes round, they are all at loggerheads among themselves.

Along with my neighbour Gosling, I found Mr. Gypsum, the plaster merchant, who once possessed as fair prospects as any in the town. Like most of our young folks, he began the world early. Much about the same time, he married and bought a farm with a good deal of marsh; for which he agreed to pay by easy instalments. The young people were both very active and eager to be out of debt. Now labour in our town is usually succeeded by bountiful returns; so that, in a few years, the farm sent more cattle and hogs to market than any of their neighbours; and Mrs. Gypsum's turkies always brought the highest price. By these means and using a good deal of thrift, they both owned an excellent farm, and were out

of every man's debt. By pursuing this course, Mr. Gypsum had also acquired a habit of labouring, which, in every line of life, is a valuable acquisition. But he had now got his farm in fine order; and, not being disposed to clear up any more wood-land, he had a good deal of spare time upon his hands. Still he was not disposed to be idle; and, it occurred to him, that as he had excellent plaster upon his lot, it would be easy for him, when he had nothing else to do, to build a vessel which would carry it to the Lines. Accordingly, the vessel was built, rigged by the help of good credit, and sent off with a cargo. At that time it happened that plaster was giving a great price; so that the rigging was soon paid: and Mr. Gypsum now owned a good farm and a vessel, and had money in his pocket besides. As the best returns were now made by trading, trading chiefly occupied his thoughts. But money in a man's pocket doing nothing, is mere lumber. It occurred to him, therefore, that, as he was now in the way of business, he might as well make the homeward voyage productive, by bringing flour and corn, which, in our town, are always in demand. Mr. Gypsum was now in very prosperous circumstances. Beside owning a farm and a vessel, almost the whole town owed him.

It has been rarely found that a state of hardship and poverty has excited envy. But Mr. Gypsum began to be eyed with considerable dislike. There was no reason why he should be growing rich so fast, when every body else was poor. A great many vessels, therefore, were put upon the stocks; and next year plaster at the Lines was a mere drug.

When a person enters into trade, he cannot always tell exactly when or how he may get out of it. The vessels were now built; to sell them at a fair price was out of the question; and to lay them up, dead loss. Still the Lines afforded a little relief, which my townsmen readily embraced. In the plaster market there are always more goods than money, and it frequently happened that merchants, who would not give cash, would be very willing to exchange goods at a fair profit. The greater part of goods, it is true, could not be got home without smuggling; but this was easily got over. There is not one of my neighbours who would not kick mightily at the name of rogue; and among us, were any person to take a penny from the pocket of another, the whole town would cry out against such a sinful and shameful operation: but cheat-

ing the whole community at once, was so far from being considered as either sin or shame, that Deacon Soruple, who allowed nothing to be sung in his vessel but hymns, was the greatest smuggler of the whole.

Beside flour and corn, there were now brought into the town, gin, tea, and a great variety of other articles which persons are very apt to think necessary comforts. But as plaster was now a drug at the Lines, on account of the multitude of carriers; so, in our town, there were more goods than good customers. When goods, however, are on hand, they must be sold. Where the profit, too, is considerable, it is a temptation to traders to make large allowances for the responsibility of buyers. All my neighbours who had been purchasing flour and corn, were equally willing to add the other articles to their comfort; and, as Mr. Ledger, who imported for himself, not only paid the duties, but began to be a little scrupulous about crediting, they carried their custom to the new traders. The young folks, also, who worked at the plaster, were always very ready to buy. In the mean time, the new traders, by appearing to own vessels and do a great deal of business, received credit from everybody who had anything to sell. But, by and by, everybody wanted his own; and when the merchants began to call in their accounts, the young folks had nothing; and the old people who had found it hard to raise grain, found it harder to raise money; and the new merchants in general, finding that, after smuggling in goods for the benefit of the town, they had been dealing with rogues, became dissatisfied, and, at the persuasion of the sheriff, retired from business.

As Mr. Gypsum had been a little forehanded, he stood it longer than any of them. But no man who is always going back, can always keep his feet. The neighbours, in striving to be rich, had ruined his trade. His smuggled goods, also, like theirs, were sold upon trust. Now, however, the other traders had retired, and there was the prospect of doing something; when unfortunately a great storm in the Bay wrecked his vessel with a large cargo of goods, and, at the same time, broke through a weak portion of his marsh dyke, which, in the hurry of business, he had neglected to mend. In this state, my cousin Harrow, who had for a long time supplied him with beef and other articles, recollecting how much custom Mr. Gypsum had given him, begged hard with the sheriff to accommodate him in his house, till he could collect his debts.

For the state of Mr. Gypsum's domestic affairs, I must refer to my account of Jack Scorem's family : only Mrs. Gypsum, being a trader's wife, conducted matters in a more genteel way. Her husband was a merchant, and kept company with gentlemen ; and everything about his house ought to correspond with his station. One thing I recollect, that go into Mr. Gypsum's house at any hour of the day, you would find the gin bottle standing upon the table. Smuggled gin was cheap : it also helped on trade among the customers ; and Mr. Gypsum himself never failed to set them a good example. Not that he was by any means a professed drunkard. But people who are from home, from the want of domestic comforts, are apt to become listless ; and hence, when he and the sailors were lolling about the deck without anything to do, they would frequently take a glass to help away the time. I never heard that he was in the practice of anything to do him harm ; for, with the exception of a troublesome disease in his nose, he is a sound, healthy man. This, he says, is the effect of beating up the Bay, one night late in the fall, against a violent north-wester : And here, from Mr. Gypsum's sad experience, I would warn all your readers that there is nothing like taking a disease of this kind at its very commencement ; for, when it gets far on, the cure is worse than the disease. Through neglect Mr. Gypsum's nose became worse and worse, till it burned like fire. At last he got alarmed, and applied to an old lady in our town, noted for curing cancers. But, after using for a long time, to no purpose, a poultice of cow-dung soaked in cold water, he found out by mere accident, that holding the afflicted member over a glass of spirits, gave him instant relief ; and now, as one glass has not the same effect twice, he will never get over the expense of keeping it easy.

Another of the sheriff's lodgers is Mr. Soakem, the tavernkeeper. Like the rest of us, he began the world by settling upon a farm. At first, he was a hard working man, and soon made himself comfortable. But he was very eager to be rich, and he would frequently compare his hard labor with his little gains, as he called them. At last, one day, passing Mr. Tipple's, and observing the great number of horses which were fastened to the fence, it occurred to him that a large proportion of the township passed by his house, and he might as well keep tavern as not : He would mind the business of the farm,

and Mrs. Soakem would attend to the travellers. Accordingly, he applied for license in the usual way.

When our parson, who was then young and spry, heard of it, he used every argument in his power to dissuade him. He begged him to consider what religion could be in a family, open at all hours, to all kinds of company. He entreated him to reflect upon the influence which the profligate conduct of vagabonds must have upon his children. He told him, that a person entering upon any line of life should view those who are in it, and asked him, how he would like to see himself and his family like Tipple. He conjured him to prefer his religious character and prospects to a little wealth with such fearful hazards. And lastly, he denounced, that, where one man's sin is another man's gain, the judgment of God is the amount of the profit. Still, Mr. Soakem was not convinced. Houses of entertainment were necessary, and might be very decently kept by religious people; and he hoped that the parson knew him better than to compare him to Tipple. When Mr. Drone found his arguments fruitless, he applied to the magistrates. He told them that taverns are at best but necessary nuisances, and ought not to be multiplied. He bid them look round the township, and see how many had been ruined by living in their neighbourhood. And as he got on, becoming gradually more earnest, he said they had received his majesty's commission for better purposes, than to grant a license to every fool who chose to ruin himself and his family; that they were the guardians of good order; and, that, if they placed temptations in the way of the unwary, they were the partakers of other men's sins; and might assure themselves that the gall and wormwood would be shared between them.

Our magistrates have always been in the practice of giving licenses to all who request them. The town, they say, needs the license money; and, if the taverns increase too much, those who keep them, will get tired of the business. They were, therefore, not well pleased that Parson Drone should interfere, and pretend to instruct them in their official duties. They never meddled with his preaching, and he had no right to interfere with them. Hence, partly at the solicitation of Mr. Soakem, and partly from opposition to the parson, the license was granted.

When Mr. Soakem opened his house of entertainment, he was eager to get rich. At the same time, he was really an industrious honest man; and he commenced with a firm determination to show Parson Drone and the whole town, that he was a different man from Tipple, and kept another sort of a house. Accordingly, as his character was known, everything at first went admirably on. The young folks went where they could get card playing and fun; and nobody lodged at Mr. Soakem's tavern, except those sober travellers who wished to take their glass moderately and quietly after the fatigues of the day. As his custom was thus small, and whole attention of the family directed to have everything clean and comfortable, travellers never failed to be pleased; and, frequently, to show their satisfaction, as Mr. Soakem was a very conversable man, they would invite him to chat an hour with them and take a glass of grog.

When there happens to be a good tavern upon the road, every body soon knows of it. Mr. Soakem's trade began to enlarge very fast. This produced a corresponding exertion to please; and everybody was pleased. About this time I observed, that, from the attention which the tavern required, my neighbour's farm did not look so well as it used to do. From the hurry of travellers, also, family prayers and graces would be sometimes hurried over, and sometimes omitted; but, at first, this only happened in unavoidable cases.

Mr. Soakem was now in prosperous circumstances, and making money very fast. Whether it was on account of his good conduct, or because he was getting rich, I cannot exactly say; but he began to be very much respected, and his friends thought him well qualified to be one of the justices for the town. He was no longer plain Boniface, but Mr. Soakem; and I have even seen some of his letters from your town merchants, with Esq. to his name. Mr. Soakem, having thus acquired much respectability, now studied to conduct himself with the decent dignity which became him. Instead of bustling about, as formerly, when a traveller arrived, to get everything comfortable, as his children were now growing up and should learn to do something, the horses were left to the boys, and the girls had the cooking and other in-door affairs. Mrs. Soakem, too, began to assume a lady-like deportment; and though the very best of you Halifax gentry

had stopped at the door, she would not have budged from her seat.

With this new arrangement travellers were not always satisfied, and like the discontented in all ages, they looked back with regret to good old times. They complained, that, in the house, there were far more attendants than service; and whether it was that the boys had given the horses too much to eat, they could never get them to start from the door without a good deal of whipping and spurring. With these things, it must be confessed, Mr. Soakem was altogether unacquainted, for on account of the enlargement of his business and other causes, he was often from home.

I do not know how it is in Halifax; but, in the country, it is really a great hardship to be a respectable gentleman. Such a person, for the sake of character, must do a great many things which he would otherwise avoid. Accordingly, when Mr. Soakem was abroad, in order to maintain his reputation, he would stop at every tavern on the road, and show how a gentleman ought to behave.—In the mean time, the young people were left to manage both the farm and the house of entertainment. This was more than they could well do; and, besides, not very consistent with sober and industrious habits. They had learned, also, whose children they were.—Now, this kind of knowledge never fails to influence strongly the conduct of youth. They did not see why Mr. Soakem's children should be always drudging upon a farm like beasts, or be the servant of every fellow who choose to come along the road. Of course, when their father was from home, and he was from home very often, they would visit their companions, and their companions would visit them; and travellers, understanding how things stood, passed on to the New Inn about half a mile distant. In short Mr. Soakem's gradually became like the habitation of the wicked. He was rarely in it himself; his children were always strolling about; and no traveller came near it; when, at last, one day the sheriff calling and finding him at home, remarked, that he must now be very lonely, and insisted upon introducing him to the company in which I found him.

I remember, when Mr. Soakem began to keep tavern, it happened to be the subject of conversation between parson Drone and myself. "I'll tell you," says he, ' Mr.

Stepsure, how it will turn out." (Among the neighbors I am plain Mephibosheth, but he called me Mr. Stepsure.) "I'll tell you, Mr. Stepsure, how it will turn out. Our neighbour Soakem is a well meaning, decent man; but eager to be rich, and totally ignorant of the influence of external circumstances upon human character and conduct. He is determined to keep tavern. A tavern must be open at all hours, and to all kinds of company. Irregularity in eating and sleeping requires the comfort of drinking. In a family, too, the want of good order destroys all personal and family religion; and, when our neighbour's children are deprived of his present good example, they will learn to imitate his guests. In short, Mr. Soakem, between tasting at home and drinking abroad, will become a mere sot. His fine family of children will be the prey of ill example and idleness; and Mrs. Soakem, poor woman, who dreams of being rich, will come upon the town. It is well for you, Mr. Mephibosheth Stepsure, that you are lame of both feet, and cannot run about like the rest of the town. They are a bustling, bargaining, running about sort of folks. But depend upon it, it is, as the wise man says, a sore travail and an evil disease. I have generally seen, that he who, instead of minding his farm, is always running about, needs a long rest at last; but, instead of running home to get it, he stops at the sheriff's."

Accordingly, Mr. Soakem's boys are mere lazy, drunken vagabonds. His daughters, too, who are really fine looking girls, have become pert, idle husseys, without industry and economy. Mrs. Soakem, through the misfortunes of the family, has lost all heart to well doing; for, what can a woman in such circumstances do? And, when I arrived at the sheriff's, I found Mr. Soakem with eyes like collops, poring upon the cards, and the grog before him.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

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LETTER IV.

GENTLEMEN, — Though your paper affords to your readers, instruction of different kinds ; I have never observed that you preach to them any sermons. I can assure you however, that you might be much worse employed ; for, to my own certain knowledge, they have been some times useful. Though it does not become me to boast of my attainments, I must say, that even I myself was in former times edified by the discourses of our old parson, the reverend Mr. Drone.

When the parson came among us, he was an active observing gentleman. He looked at everybody and at everything they were doing ; and when he began to preach he said, "I am not come among you to tell you only about your souls. Time stands in relation to eternity.—The duties of this life, also, are a step to a better ; and he who neglects them, neglects both body and soul. It is my duty to impress upon your minds, that you now belong to this world, and ought to act consistently with the present stage of your existence. I shall, therefore ascertain your circumstances ; and then direct you to those actions which every case requires."

About that time there happened to be a great many young people in the township ; and one day the parson, for his text, gave out this portion of scripture, "*It is not good for man to be alone.*" I was, then, thinking of my old woman, Dorothy ; and, as I at first thought that the parson had heard of it, I felt a little confused. On recovering myself a little, I observed most of the young men looking at old Peter Pumpkin's large family of daughters, who, at this time, were the most noted bundlers in the town. All the young women of the congregation seemed wonderfully pleased ; and kept their eyes attentively fixed upon the parson, who was then a fine looking young gentleman. I cannot say that among the old people there was the same general appearance of approbation. A few of them edged closer to their wives ; but the greater part looked very grave ; and Mrs. Grumble's husband, Job, who is a quiet, inoffensive man, assumed a length of visage, which, had he been standing beside her coffin, I am sure, would not have been greater.

As I was then thinking about Dorothy, I was very attentive to what the parson said ; and though it is a long

time since, I recollect some notes of the sermon, as well as if it had been preached yesterday. He told us, that man, by the constitution of his nature, and the external circumstances of his lot, was evidently designed for society; and by the diversity of sex, for domestic life. "It is therefore, to *home*," says he, "that human beings must look for the commencement and perfection of social duties and social enjoyments. Nature has established a relation between male and female, which constitutes a basis for duty; and a feeling of duty produces exertions of energy, which exalt the mind and give it exalted pleasures. My dearly beloved brethren, honour the relation, and cultivate the duties of the matrimonial life. Live in its society; study to please each other; and, by the help of a little, mutual good nature and exertion, you will enjoy as much happiness as human beings have a right to expect. But let me earnestly beseech you, to beware of everything which interrupts domestic society; for I tell it to you from this sacred book, (and he gave a rap upon the table which made many of us start,) I testify to you, that the person who is often from home, whether upon business or from any other cause, is in danger of returning a worse man and to fewer enjoyments.

As it is foolish to pay a parson to instruct us and not follow his advice, I married Dorothy; and I must say, that, though my spouse and I have lived long together, our greatest affliction is, that we must by and bye part; The young folks in general, also, were very well pleased; but some of the old people went away with melancholy countenances. Mrs. Grumble's husband, Job, observed, that the parson was a young man and did not know the world. Israel Doubleribs said, that, when Mr. Drone had, like him, worn out two wives, he would know better about it, and Caleb Castup, who was then newly married, declared that it was all humbug and nonsense; for whether he staid at home or went abroad, Mrs. Castup and he were equally happy.

Caleb was a very good sort of young man; only a little fond of riding. After his marriage, however, he became much more steady, and gradually acquired a very pretty property. In course of time, too, as is usual among us, his family contained a number of fine stout boys, who were very useful about the farm. On consi-

dering with himself that his family were getting up, and would need a little help when they settled upon farms of their own; he began to feel an anxiety to get richer faster than his farm, in its present state, would admit. When he was turning the subject in his mind, and had almost resolved to take in a few new fields, a contested election happened in the town. Caleb, by being in snug circumstances, possessed a good deal of influence. In a case of this kind, too, he was very willing to show his weight; and, as he took an active part in the business, the candidate of his choice was returned. From the hurry of the affairs the boys were left to manage the farm; and nothing was said about taking in new fields. It happened, also, as was natural where things are intrusted to boys, that, on returning home at night from electioneering, he saw a great many reasons to be dissatisfied. One thing was neglected; and another done wrong. Being a little hasty, he would scold the boys; but Mrs. Castup, who was a very considerate woman, would take their part, and tell him that he should not look for old heads upon young shoulders; and, at one time, when he was very angry, plainly said to him, that it would be greater wisdom to be at home minding his farm and his boys, than galloping round the country about other people's affairs. But when they both cooled a little, they were not disposed to quarrel, and the matter was dropt.

By electioneering Caleb had not improved his circumstances. Of this the new member was sensible; and, when the house divided the road money, though there were almost as many applications as pounds to be expended, he was made commissioner. Accordingly, when spring opened, he and the boys were very industrious, and had their ordinary crop in the ground rather sooner than usual. When the road work commenced, as he had good stout teams and boys of his own, much of the labour was done by himself; and as it was near his house, he could be at home in the evening; so that the prospect of profit was considerable. No person, however, must imagine, that because it was done by himself it was finished in a sham way. The new members' word had been pledged for him, and all the neighbours were watching him. Besides, he looked forward to future employment; and therefore, he determined that nobody should have cause to find fault. When the money was

expended, every body agreed that a piece of road, finished so reasonably and so well, had never before been seen in the town.

His farm, it is true, had not succeeded so well as the road-making. His potatoes were badly hoed, and his grain ill taken care of.—Mr Bullock's breachy cattle would destroy his grass, and neighbour Snout's hogs rooted out his corn; so that, when he returned home in the evening, it was usually to witness new depredations. Now, in a farming life, there is nothing so irritating as the destruction of crops. On entering the house, therefore, it was generally in ill humour. It was a strange thing, that when he was from home, toiling like a beast to make the family comfortable, every thing about the farm was allowed to go to ruin and destruction.

At first, Mrs. Castup, who knew that the little boys were to blame, would only say, she did the best that she could. But, as the trespasses were repeated, so were the ill natured remarks; till at last she plainly told him, that, when a farmer puts a crop in the ground, he should consider how he is to get it out: that it was faring with him as with old Tubal Thump when he had two irons in the fire; and that if he wanted the farm better managed, he might take care of it himself. In this humour they would go to bed; and, in the morning, neither of them were well pleased. In the course of the day, however, good nature would return; and thus, without any real dislike to each other, they began to find that they were both most comfortable when apart. The approach of evening brought along with it a sort of depression of mind, and they were always glad when the morning was past. Still, in the fall, notwithstanding their little family bickerings and the losses upon the farm, he was considerably a gainer.

The general satisfaction which he had given, procured for him proportionate favor. He was now considered as a faithful servant of the public; and as such, intrusted with a much larger sum; but this was to be expended in a distant part of the town. The farming was now of less consequence, and less regarded. From the occurrences of the preceding summer, also, to be from home was not considered as any great hardship on either side.

Caleb had been hitherto rather a sober living man and kept his family in such excellent order, that there was some talk in the town of making him a deacon. But I believe, after he had been some time upon the roads, the notion was dropt. Every person knows that working upon the highways in the heat of summer, is a scorching employment; and were it not generally known that a little spirits qualifies cold water, from the parching thirst of the labourers dreadful accidents would often ensue. Accordingly, even the young folks, though not the most careful about their health, being fully aware of the danger, always took care to be well provided. In the course of the day, also, when they were quenching their own thirst, from respect they would ask Mr. Castup the commissioner, to taste, who, though he did not care a great deal about it, did not wish to offend by refusing; so that, between one and another, he would sometimes be forced to drink a great deal. Being commissioner, too, he would occasionally treat them; and to show them that he was not niggardly, he would set them an example. As Mr. Castup the commissioner, also, he was a man of some consequence. Though his own boys therefore could camp in the woods with the rest of the youngsters, his respectability required himself to lodge in Mr. Soakem's tavern. Here, when his boys would be enjoying themselves in their own way, he would spend his evenings with Mr. Soakem, and those who frequented his house. To make a long tale short, from being a sober, industrious man, he became a mere sot, and his boys are getting on after him as fast as they can. The farm, from neglect, became of no use to his family. The sudden decrease of our revenue, also, made his profit by the roads a mere song, when one day, as he was passing the sheriff's, that gentleman invited him to walk in and see Mr. Soakem.

This was partly a relief to his mind; for home had no charms. At first, when he would come home to Mrs. Castup, intoxicated, she considered it merely as a state in which all gentlemen occasionally are, and it gave her no uneasiness. But frequent repetitions produced weeping and entreaties, and at last reproaches. And it was even said, though I cannot affirm it, that they proceeded as far as a battle. Certain it is, that, between poverty and quarrelling, home was a torment to them both. His

family, also, and a fine family they were, are fit for nothing else but strolling about and drinking; and poor Mrs. Castup curses the day which made her husband a commissioner of roads.

In the same company I found my neighbour Steer, whose course requires only to be mentioned. Neither a snug farm, nor every reasonable domestic comfort, could satisfy him without becoming suddenly rich; and to effect this purpose, he became a dealer in cattle. Being thus often from home, exposed to all kinds of companies and hardships, he would at last drink as much as Soakem, without being the worse of it. When he began the business, he was a civil young man and religiously disposed; but whether it be that cattle, like sailors, will not get on without swearing, or whether, that those who associate with brutes, become brutes themselves, I cannot tell; but Steer became the most profane person in the town, and did a great deal of harm among the youngsters. Being often in Halifax, he was supposed to see and know more of the world than some of us; and when any of the old people reproved him, he would laugh at them, and say that he used the language of a gentleman. But Saunders Scantocreech used to declare that it was the language of Ashdod: that parson Drone should cast him out of the church, as Ezra did the mongrel Jews; and that, if our magistrates did their duty, they would put the villain to death for his blasphemies.

Steer's trade still seemed to go on wonderfully well and become gradually larger; till, at last, having collected all the disposeable cattle of the town into one large drove, and sent it to Halifax, he declared that he had gone too much abroad for his good, and that nobody should see him from home for a long time to come. This resolution produced in our town, a great deal of running to visit him; but whether he was at home, nobody could tell. The general report was, that the devil haunted his house; for strange noises were heard by listeners outside; as if Steer were swearing, and his wife crying and calling out for help. Whether the devil really haunted the house, I cannot tell. Mr. Gawpus, the new merchant, it is true, got himself terribly frightened by something, in passing it one dark night afterward; but it turned out, to be Mr. Gosling's boar pig, Mammoth.

At last, one day, when Steers' boy was returning home with a bottle of spirits, a strange looking gentleman bade

him tell his father, that he had a large lot of cattle on hand and wished to speak with him. As he had not completely overcome the habit of bargaining, he ventured abroad; and was immediately addressed by the sheriff, who assured him that all his cattle on hand were stalled, and had not even been allowed to go once out of doors; and as some of them had been kept up for years, they were in excellent order. But to give Steer fair play, he carried him along with him to judge for himself.

Alongside of Steer, I found his old servant Peter Longshanks. Peter, in his younger days, was a nice young fellow; though, in the opinion of the girls, not the best model of a man. In the formation of the upper part of his frame nature had been very sparing of materials. She had, however, given him an offset of extremities, which beat Jack Scorem's by at least four inches, and from the youngsters procured for him the nickname of Nobody. Peter was a good natured and obliging fellow; and, on this account, his legs had frequently a great deal to do in places where he had himself little business. At last, like the rest of us, he married, settled upon a farm, and was beginning to live comfortably. About that time Steer's droves required an additional hand to manage them. Peter could run like a cariboo, and the offer of large wages tempted him to quit the farming. Of course, the habits of the master became the habits of the man. In Halifax, indeed, their manner of living was a little different. When Steer was spending the evening with Brisket, the butcher, and other gentlemen, Peter, being a servant, was forced to look out for companions. By accident he heard of Signior Caperini, at that time famed in his skill for improving the paces of the human species; and Peter, having a natural gift that way, thought, by a little improvement it might become a source of profit in the country. Accordingly, by taking lessons as often as he was in town, and drilling a good deal by himself, he became an experienced dancer, forsook Steer, and advertised for a school in the township. To the old religious people the prospect of Peter's school gave general offence.—They remarked that, beside the improvement of his dancing talent, he had been taking lessons from Steer. Parson Drone, too, assured his congregation that dancing frolics did harm without good. But Saunders Scanto-

creesh, whose girls wished very much to attend, was furious. He said that all such doings were against the Bible and the Confession of Faith; and that none of the seed of Scantocreech should, with his consent, enter the synagogue; and farther, that Peter Longhanks, instead of capering about the country, corrupting the youth, had better be minding his poor starved family, and considering what account he would give of the use of his legs at the day of judgment.

Still, the business of the school went on. The night for its commencement was fixed; and Peter had engaged old Driddle, the fiddler, who, by the by, having played at all our weddings these twenty years, is fit for nothing else but fiddling and drinking. Unluckily, the commencement night happened to be the coldest, last winter. All the young folks, however, and Driddle were there; but after a good deal of screwing, and twisting, and trying, and as much wondering what could have become of Mr. Longhanks, no Mr. Longhanks appeared: and the young people, having waited as long as the cold would let them, returned home, disappointed and angry. In the morning every body learned that Mr. Longhanks, in coming to the school, had got both his feet frosted; and, therefore, had gone to Mr. Soakem's. There is scarcely another employment in life, exposed to such a sweeping calamity. A dancing master with his feet frosted, is a real object of sympathy. Time, however, cures a great many sores, and Mr. Longhanks' were getting well; when, one morning, Mr. Holdfast stepped in, expressed himself happy to hear that he was getting well, and begged him to try if he could walk as far as his house.

But, overlooking in the mean time, the rest of my townsmen, I shall just introduce to you Mr. Pat O'Rafferty, our schoolmaster, who had become their companion in the sheriff's. Pat was born in the county of Tipperary; and, as he said himself, came of a genteel family; for his fathers' establishment consumed more buttermilk and potatoes than any of the neighbours. In due time he was put to school, and learned to write a good hand; which so pleased his father, that the old gentleman told him one day that he was resolved to make him a priest. Pat said, he did not like to be a Holy Father; because he liked Judy O'Flanagan; but if his father wished him to be a spiritual man, he had no objection to

be clerk to Mr. Wort at the whiskey distillery. To the distillery, accordingly, he went ; and in a short time, was the best judge of whiskey about it. Pat married Judy, and they soon loved each other so well, as to be rarely without the proofs of mutual affection : Judy had black eyes ; and Pat a great many scratches. In the course of clerking, also, he became so dexterous, that he would write all that he was ordered and some times a little more. This could not be long done without his master getting notice of it ; and when Mr. Wort heard of it, he was so full of it himself, that he could not avoid telling the whole affair to his friend Justice Choakem. The Justice was a curious sort of man ; and whenever anything out of the common road was done, the person who did it, was sure to be sent for and rewarded. He, therefore, expressed a very strong wish to see Pat, and to prevent disappointment, the best way, he thought, would be to issue a warrant.

Besides being a great rewarder of merit, the Justice loved bacon better than any other kind of food. In order, therefore, to have it to his taste, he was in the practice of curing his own ham. Now, it happened one day, that, when his worship was thinking about a large hog which he had lately purchased, a servant stepped in and told him, that he was just come ; and, says he, " a stout fellow he is ; for he took three of us to bring him along." The justice immediately ordered to kill and hang him up ; but, when the servant returned to see what they should do next, it turned out to be Teddy O'Leary, who had been sent for, to show the squire how he contrived to make the neighbour's hens disappear when he pleased. Pat heard that justice Choakem wanted to speak with him, and would have very gladly obliged his honour ; but he was not willing to run such fearful risks. He, therefore, shipped himself off for Newfoundland where he amused himself all summer with codfishing. Here, though the grog in summer was very much to his taste, the prospect of starving in winter was not so comfortable. This induced him, with a cargo of his countrymen, to land upon our coast, late in the fall, a few years ago. Pat found his way to our town. As there is among us a general taste for education, we employed him to communicate to our youth the true tone and accent of the English language. Here he naturally lodged with Mr. Tipple. But, though he paid punctually for the grog,

(for Tipple gives no credit,) his beard for some time was entirely overlooked by them both. At last Mr. Tipple, being anxious to preserve the reputation of his house, and to guard the town against the ill example of drunkards, begged the sheriff to take charge of him and prevent him from going at large.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER V.

GENTLEMEN,—Since my last letter I have experienced so many vexations, that I had almost resolved never to write to you again. Both the incredulity and belief of the world are so capricious, that no man who writes for the public is sure of getting justice. For example, when it was told last winter that a worthy old gentleman of this province went out, and slew a bear in a time of snow; merely because he was known to have been a man of war in his youth, everybody believed it: and now when I have stated the exact truth, it is the current report that there is no such township as ours, nor any such characters, as I have described, in the Province. Now, I am not willing to have my word questioned; for, tho' I say it, the word of Mephibosheth Stepsure will go much further than some of his neighbours' notes of hand. But this is not the worst of it: I am reviled at home, as well as discredited abroad. The Sheriff's lodgers, in particular, are very angry at what I have written about their grog drinking and Mr. Holdfast's kindly treatment. So far from being sensible of this gentleman's good offices, Mr. Pat O'Rafferty declares that he is a perfect Polyphemus; only he does not eat them, when he has got them into his den. Jack Scorem says that I am an old censorious rascal, and deserve the stocks for writing such stuff about him and his family; and that it is well for me that no stocks will take in my abominable clubs.

I do not care very much for Jack's revilings. I feel a little, however, that I should have met with such general discredit; for no man likes to be disbelieved and belied, when he knows that he is telling the truth. I was, therefore, inclined to discontinue my communications; but my spouse Dorothy will not give her consent;

and we married people, as worthy parson Drone teaches, are bound to study family peace. She has always had a great respect for her husband and cannot think of his being reckoned a story teller; and she affirms that to drop the affair, is to plead guilty. Besides, the reproaches which Jack has thrown out against the extreme parts of my outward man, have made her very angry. My feet, she says, and she has seen them often, are as seemly feet of the sort, as could be fastened to any man's legs; and that they have never carried me the roads that some people's have been obliged to go; that lame as Mephibosheth Stepsure is, he can go about at large, when some folks who have as many legs as a spider, are obliged to lay them up in the sheriff's.

On consulting Mr. Drone upon the business, he appeared to be very much at a loss. Our parson has been, by poverty and depression, so completely secluded from society, that he has, I may say, become an entire stranger to the ways and even language of the world. His principal comfort, he says, is the perusal of the old Scotch and English divines; and, some how or other, he has become very like them himself. He seemed inclined to think that I should write; but advised me, in the mean time, to exercise a little patience.

What was wanting in the parson, however, I found my neighbour Scantocreech very forward to supply. When Saunders heard the reports that were going, he threw down his spade and came over to our house; and finding me at a loss what to do, he declared that I should write, though he should kill every goose in his yard to supply me with pens. My word he said was not believed; because the country was swarming with a set of idle vagabonds like the sheriff's people, who were not willing to see themselves described; that, if they got what they deserved, instead of being allowed to go galloping about they would be put under saws and harrows; that they were no better than the remnant of the Hittites and Perizzites, who were left in the land to be thorns in the sides of honest men; and what was worse, in prosperous times they had been allowed to multiply, till decent folks could not live in the country and bring up a family, without mingling with them and learning their ways; that, in short, the good of the province required, that all such ne'er do well vagabonds, whether in the possession of the sheriff or out of it, should be hunted out from Dan

to Bethsheba : And finally, he concluded with saying, that, if I would not write, though he was dead ill at the spelling, he would rub up a little and do it himself. When he was, gone, my old woman observed, that Saunders Scantocreesch was a solid, sensible man ; and I, on the other hand, resolved to continue my relation.

You will recollect that I found the sheriff's lodgers playing a game at cards and the grog before them. They all declared themselves glad to see me ; asking me, at the same time, to be seated and take a glass along with them. In these dull times, they said, spirits were a rare article with them ; but I had had the good luck to hit the right time, and was intitled to a share. As an invitation to drink in such cases, is usually an invitation to something else, I declined the offer, remarking to them, that people who have little should be sparing in the use of it. After a little general conversation, Mr. Gosling took me to a remote part of the room ; and told me, that as he had sent for me upon a very particular business, he was glad that I was come. His creditors had agreed to relieve him, upon condition of finding security till his own debts were collected. This he thought very reasonable ; and, accordingly, he would have applied to his cousin Sheldrake ; but, as I knew, the poor gentleman, not being able to endure the rigour of a Nova Scotian winter, had gone to the southward for the benefit of his health. In his absence, he had spoken to some of the rest of his friends, when they were dining with him lately, who all agreed to do it at once. But unfortunately when the bond was prepared, one of them was taken sick ; another, obliged to go down to Halifax ; and, through some unexpected accident or other, he had not been able to see any of them since. All the creditors, however, declared Mr. Stepure's name to be perfectly sufficient. This he had assured them he could easily get, as there was no risk in the case ; and he had just sent for me to sign the bond.

I found that my neighbour had more friends to eat dinners than to sign bonds. As I had neither been feasted nor had made promises, I was not altogether sure, that, in the division of Mr. Gosling's business, the signing was my share. At the same time I felt a little, to give him a flat refusal ; but just when I was considering about an answer, notice was sent us by the sheriff, to look sharp, for parson Drone was coming in,

This was a relief to me ; but it produced a sad bustling among the rest of the company. The cards disappeared in a moment ; the bottles and tumblers were clapt under a bed ; and Jack Scorem picked up a piece of an old bible, which was lying upon the floor, and laid it upon the table.

Every thing was scarcely in order when the parson entered ; and, I do believe, he was received with real respect by them all ; for religion forces an assent to its excellence. and the breath of a religious man fans the embers of affection in the very worst of the human race. After Mr. Drone was seated, he expressed his sorrow at finding them where they were. He observed, farther, that he had frequently seen those who lived long with the sheriff, instead of becoming wiser and better by tribulation, leaving his house utter malignants and enemies to a seemly walk, and conversation ; and, therefore, to warn them against lukewarmness, the usual beginning of such wickedness, if they would vouchsafe to yield an ear to his doctrine, he would tender them a word of exhortation. Immediately they all expressed their gratitude and readiness to hear ; and for myself, I must confess, that, after what Mr. Gosling had told me, I fervently wished that the parson would give us one of his longest discourses.

We had now placed ourselves in a hearing position, and the parson was just about to commence ; when *O tempora, O mores*, or something like it, was exclaimed from a dark corner of the room. Jack Scorem jumped up instinctively ; and, clenching his fist, cried out : " Keep your slang to yourself, and give us none of your Gaelic ; or, I'll lend you a sneezer upon the snout, that will bring the ill blood out of you." But, recollecting that the parson was present, he again sat down. Our attention was now directed to the dark corner from which the voice had issued ; when the person who had spoken, conceiving, I suppose from Jack's last motion, that no danger was at hand, stepped forward, and showed us a thin, sharp faced, dark coloured man, in a thread bare coat which had once been black. He assured the parson that he had got among the very goats of his flock ; and, that, if, instead of giving them an exhortation, he would give each of them a halter, it was what they deserved. " The fellows," says he, " from morning to night, except when the grog is running down their throats, abuse the

country ; but the only misfortune, is, that the country is cursed with such wretches" : and to satisfy the parson, he turned up the bed which concealed the bottles and tumblers ; at the same time assuring him, if every man's pockets did not contain a pack of cards, he would retract what he had said.

Our worthy old clergyman, lifting up his hands, declared, that he did not think there had been such wickedness upon the earth ; and that, verily, our lot had been cast in the very dregs of time. But neither of us had much time for moralising ; for, as the conduct of the company was now blown, Mr. Drone's presence commanded less respect ; and to protect the poor gentleman we were obliged to call for the sheriff, who reduced them to order, and conducted the stranger and us into another apartment.

When by ourselves, we soon learned how the stranger had become acquainted with the sheriff. He would neither tell who he was, nor whence he had come ; but he informed us that he had arrived in the township upon Saturday evening, and had lodged in Mr. Tipple's ; and that his landlord, finding him without funds, had turned him out next morning before breakfast. In passing along, he happened to meet Deacon Sharp, who was going to sermon. The deacon was a grand juryman, and mindful of his oath ; and rightly judging that this was neither a Halifax gentleman who might be affronted and injure the town ; nor any of the neighbours who regularly travel from necessity with their teams upon the Lord's day, he resolved to make him a warning to others ; and, when he found that he had nothing to pay the fine, conscientiously put him into the hands of the sheriff.

The parson, though he observes the Sabbath better than any of us, thought it a hard case, and promised to speak to the magistrates about him. Afterward, they entered into a long conversation about something which they called Political Economy. They seemed to me to talk very learnedly, but I could not understand them. All that I remember is, that they mentioned a great many names which I never heard of before, such as, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Major Torrens, Du Say, and the French Economists. When we parted, Mr. Drone took the sheriff's promise that he would give the stranger something comfortable to eat and keep him by himself ; and afterward, when the parson and I were going along the

road, he appeared to me to be as lively as in the days of his youth : and in talking of the poor gentleman in confinement, he remarked that he was a very learned man, and the only person he had met with in the country who knew its interests.

Next morning, I was a good deal surprised to hear that the stranger was dead. Had he remained with the sheriff's other lodgers, I would have been disposed to think that he had not received fair play ; but as things were, I was at a loss how to account for it. To satisfy myself, therefore, I stepped over to the sheriff's ; and sure enough, the poor man was dead and very much swelled. When an inquest was held, the jury were exceedingly puzzled about what to make of it. Whether he had been poisoned, there was no evidence. At last they determined to look into the matter completely, and sent for the doctor, who, at that time, happened to be attending the wife of my neighbour Scantocrees. When the message came for the doctor, Saunders grasped an axe handle, and vowed that while he had the breath of life in his body, none of the seed of Adam, living or dead, should be the means of calling his child, when it was born, Ichabod ; and that if the doctor offered to go, he would fell him upon the floor. The jury were then very much at a loss. But Mr. Pat O'Rafferty, said, that, in Newfoundland, he had split up codfish many a time, and could do the business perfectly. The poor man was, accordingly, opened by Pat ; when it was discovered that his stomach was crammed with cabbage, and the rest of his bowels very much distended with wind. The sheriff had been boiling a quantity for his pigs ; and, recollecting his promise to Mr. Drone, had sent a large dose of them to the stranger, who, having eaten nothing since Mr. Tipple turned him out, took as many of them as finished a life upon which the sun of prosperity did not appear to have beamed.

When the jury prepared to make up their verdict, there was a violent dispute among them, whether it should be *Died by the visitation of God*, or *died by the visitation of the Sheriff*. It happened that Mr. Gawpus, who is the sheriff's cousin, was upon the jury ; and it occurred to him, that, if the last decision were adopted, Mr. Holdfast might be brought in for manslaughter. Besides he thought that the present accident afforded him a good opportunity of displaying his medical

talents ; for, by reading the directions upon a large package of quack medicines which he brought up from Halifax with the rest of his goods, he has lately become so skilful, that our old doctor is now generally neglected. He, therefore, insisted that the stranger was not killed by the cabbage at all, but had died, merely, because the breath had gone out of his body ; and that if he had continued to breathe, which no doubt he would have done had his belly been rubbed with his Steer's Opodeldock, he would have been alive still. Mr. Gawpus's opinion had much weight with the jury, who were mostly his customers. They, therefore, returned their verdict, *Died, because he could not live any longer* : and the overseers of the poor were directed to get the body put under ground, as quickly and with as little expense to the town as possible.

The burial happened to be upon the day which was to decide a bet of twenty guineas upon the comparative merits of Mr. Gawpus' grey mare, and the sheriff's bay gelding. On this account, nobody could attend except Saunders Ssantocreesh, myself, and one or two more. The sheriff's lodgers would very willingly lend us a hand ; but somehow or other, before he went to the race, he happened to turn the key of their room-door ; so that they could not get out. When we were waiting about, to see if any more would come, my neighbour Saunders, observing Jack Scorem and Peter Longshauks looking out of the window, walked up to them, and said he was glad to see them so comfortably lodged. They should consider it, he added, as matter of daily thankfulness, that they had fallen in with a gentleman who took so good care of them ; for, had they lived in persecuting times, they might have been obliged, like the Scotch worthies, to wander among moors and mosses ; and, at last, been taken up by some of the Highland host or of Claverhouse's dragoons ; who would have either shot them or hanged them. He asked Jack, how the old fellow with the abominable staff was coming on in limbo : and advised him to take good care of himself, and never to ride a race with John again, till he was sure the sheriff was not upon the road. To Peter he remarked, that, after such a long rest with Mr. Holdfast, his legs must be in fine trim ; and that his girls were anxious to attend the school when the cold weather was fairly set in. He advised them both, since the stuff

was abominable, they had as well leave it to Mr. Gypsum's nose, and, when they felt an inclination to drink, to eat plenty of cabbage, which was an excellent quencher of thirst and far better for them ; and he concluded by exhorting them not to spare the cabbage, for he had abundance : and when the sheriff's were done, he would send them over a load. By this time there was a good deal of noise among the lodgers. As I was standing at some distance, I could hear only the words *Scotch rascal* and *oatmeal*, frequently repeated. I had, however, no time to inquire ; for it was now far in the day, and we proceeded to carry the poor stranger to his grave.

By the time we returned, the sheriff also had come from the race in very ill humor. His gelding had stumbled, when a few steps more would have won the twenty guineas ; and twenty guineas in these days were not easily got. For his part, he did not know what the world would come to. Money had disappeared from the country, and he verily believed the devil had come in its place ; for he had seen as much fighting at the race, as was enough to put racing out of fashion ; and in return for all his efforts in preserving the peace, his only reward was to have every strolling vagabond turned in upon him, to die on his hands, and bring discredit on his establishment. " Had the fellow," says he, " been able to pay, it would have been nothing, but he, and all that belonged to him, are not worth a groat." At the same time he held up an old, black silk handkerchief, and shook out a parcel of papers, which he began to pick up for the purpose of throwing them into the fire. On requesting a sight of them I found them filled with a great variety of marks, which I could not understand. But, recollecting what our parson had said about the stranger, it occurred to me that he might be gratified at a sight of them ; and, therefore, instead of throwing them into the fire, with the consent of the sheriff, I put them into my pocket and carried them to Mr. Drone.— On looking over them, he said they were letters in short hand, addressed to the Recorder ; but it was of no use to send them, unless they were transcribed. This, he has engaged to do ; but when you will receive them, I cannot say ; for our worthy parson is very poor, and cannot keep a servant ; and, on this account, between tending his flock and looking after his cattle, he has a good deal to do.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

P. S. Since writing the above, a variety of alterations have occurred in the town. Our sheriff is a very genteel man ; and, as he sees a good deal of company at home, he is forced at times to be abroad in the evenings, in company with Mr. Cribbage, Mr. Pool, and a few other gentlemen. In his usual way, accordingly, he stepped over one evening to Mr. Triumph's, partly to spend a spare hour, and partly to settle with Mr. Gawpus about the 20 guineas. When he returned home pretty late, (which was sometime before daylight,) he found his house standing exactly where it was before, but his lodgers were gone. Nothing remained but Mr. Gosling's bond, a number of empty bottles, and a note from Mr. Pat O'Rafferty. The note informed him that they had gone to the New Inn to spend the evening ; and designed, early the next morning, to take a look down the Bay. That, if he wanted to speak with them, he must make haste, and be sure to borrow Mr. Gawpus' mare, for his own gelding was a stumbling brute ; And, lastly, that, if he wished his lodgers to stay with him in future, he must give them plenty of cabbage. The sheriff rode every way but to the New Inn ; and at last learned, that, had he gone there, he would have found them snug. Since then, he has secured his house well ; and told his securities from a window that no man in future shall enter his doors.

This event has increased the afflictions of Mr. Gosling's family, who were rather in need of comfort. Upon the day before the old gentleman left the sheriff's, his son Hob and Mr. Gawpus' son Jehu, agreed to ride each other's horses for a wager. Hob started upon the grey mare, soon distanced Jehu out of sight, and since that time has never been heard of : And poor Miss Dinah is in a very bad way. Some time ago, along with a number of the youngsters, she went to Miss Sippit's tea party and frolic, in very good health and spirits. After a good deal of dancing, the young folks, as it was a wet night agreed to bundle ; and the poor girl has never been well since. In the midst of all these saddening departures, my neighbour Saunders is almost the only rejoicer. He declares that the country is well rid of them, and thinks that their flight is one of the best signs of the times, and a warning to future generations. M. S.

LETTER VI.

Since I wrote you last, nothing of consequence has happened among us : except that Mr. Catchem has been appointed sheriff. For the comfort of our town, it was really necessary that the office should be immediately filled. Our parson looks after the souls of his flocks ; but they have bodies too ; and I do assure you, that, in these times, the most of people's bodies cost them more trouble than their souls ; so that such a man as the sheriff, who kindly takes care of them, is both very useful and has a great deal to do. As far as I can see, Mr. Holdfast will not be missed. Mr. Catchem has got a large house ; and he has already been going a good deal about, expressly for purpose of inquiring who are uncomfortable at home.

As soon as the new sheriff undertook the office, he proceeded to take charge of the farm of my neighbour Fairface ; and, as he had several others upon his hands, and could not manage them all, he thought it better to sell the farm, and apply the price for my neighbour's benefit. The most of us imagined Mr. Fairface to be very well to do. Neither he, nor his family, it is true, were ever great workers. But they owned a fine farm, kept a very genteel house, and drove the best chaise in town : And you may depend upon it the chaises in our town are neither few nor shabby. It would appear, however, that my neighbour Fairface is one of those, who, as Saunders Scantocreesch says, cannot walk upon their feet like other sober folks ; but trust in chariots and in horses, and go down to Egypt for help, and at last get themselves drowned in the Red Sea ; for so he calls Mr. Ledger's large book with the coloured lines, in which he records those events that the rest of the town are most apt to forget.

Thinking that the farm might suit my son Abner, I resolved to attend the sale ; and knowing that my neighbour Saunders wanted it for his son Jack, I called in at his house upon the way, and took him along with me. When we arrived at the farm, riders and chaises and sleighs were turning in from every part of the town. Not that my townsmen in general had any design of buying ; for, in talking together before the sale commenced, they all agreed that money was money now, and no where to be got ; but haying nothing to do at home,

they rode over to see how the farm would go, and who would get it.

The farm is really a fine property, and, a few years ago, would have given fifteen hundred pounds; but, though the sheriff did ample justice to the sale, it was at last knocked down to my neighbour Scantocreesch for four hundred and ninety. When the sale was over, our townfolk began to joke Saunders about living with the sheriff; and Mr. Catchem, too, asked him pretty sharply about his mode of payment. Saunders replied, that, before he could pay him he must try to find out where all the money had been going to in these bad times; and pulling out the leg of an old stocking, tied at both ends, he told out of it as many doubloons as satisfied the sheriff, and made all the jokers marvel. After tying up the remainder, he told us that he had been turning up his fields and found it there. He, therefore, advised us all to do the same thing; and, perhaps, we might be as fortunate; but, withal to follow his plan, and not do like the Chester folks, who once dug for money, but got so deep at last, that they arrived in the other world; and falling in with the devil, were glad to get away with the loss of all their tools.

When we were about to separate, Ehud Slush, one of our townsmen, arrived, evidently at the expense of a good deal of kicking and spuring. Ehud's mare is old; and withal, not very well fed. Besides, when he alighted, he told us that he had been out at his fox traps; and, having found parson Howl's dog in one of them, he had been detained a little; so that he could not get forward to the sale: For his part he had no intention to bid; for there was no money in the country, and it was a strange thing where it could be all gone to.

Our townsman Slush is sometimes in Halifax with his furs; perhaps, you may have seen him. He is a squab little man, with large prominent eyes, and lips unusually thick; which, according to the fashion of the world, because they are near neighbours, keep as far apart from each other as possible. I am inclined to think that the human face divine of Ehud Slush, is so fashioned from the nature of his employment; for hunters must always look sharp, and every body knows that the mouth administers great help, when the eyes are in earnest.—But some of the neighbours affirm that it is in consequence of his intimacy with a bear, which scraped acquaintance with

him one day in the woods, and shook hands so often that he could scarcely get away.

About twelve years ago, Slush was a good natured young fellow. In due time, according to the practice of our town, he married and settled upon a lot of good land, and really had the prospect of being very comfortable. He had never, indeed, been guilty of hard work ; but, now, he had got a wife in addition to his mare ; and working or starving were his only alternatives. Ehud boldly chose the first, sharpened his ax, and determined that no son of the forest should resist its strokes.

When he began to cut down, he observed a great many fox tracts ; and it naturally occurred to him, that he had a trap in the house, and might as well set it as not. The trap, accordingly, was baited and set ; and next morning he owned a black fox. The fox was brought home in triumph, and skinned, and dried, and carried to market, and sold ; and Ehud put sixteen dollars into his pocket. —Such an easy way of getting rich was not to be overlooked. In imagination he was already an extensive dealer in the skins of black foxes ; and as a commencement of the business, he carried home with him traps to the amount of sixteen dollars. But no man is lucky forever. Though the traps were carefully managed and regularly visited, nothing sable came near them ; except the little brother of Mr. Gosling's black wench, who happened to be strolling in the woods and got himself caught : And in the spring, Slush owned the skins of three red foxes and of as many martins. Hunters, however, as well as fishers, are a persevering generation ; and hence, with a variety of luck, he has ever since continued to lie in wait for foxes.

Good farming or indeed farming at all, in such a case, would be contrary to nature ; for, in every country, fox hunters are the avowed enemies of every thing in the shape of crop or inclosure. Besides, though Slush had been disposed to farm, it was out of his power. The man who sets a number of traps, has a great deal to do. In addition to visiting them, he must look after bait ; and hence, when Ehud was not in the woods, he was wandering about the town in search of dead animals, tripes, and other garbage in the way of his profession. In stating his toils, I cannot say much about the amount of his gain. I am inclined to think that it is not very great ; for his house and family are always in wretchedness and rags.—

Still they contrive to keep life in. In going about for bait, he gets an occasional belly full among the neighbors ; which, like all hunting folks, he contrives to make sufficient for a long time to come. Mrs. Slush, too, is a very industrious woman in her own way ; so that between making occasionally a little soft soap with the help of the bait, doing dirty jobs for the neighbours, and getting now and then a rabbit, they make out to live. Even in this way, however, they have not been able to get on without contracting a great many small debts ; which have made Slush wonder, fully as much about the security of cash, as about the security of foxes. Indeed, necessity has rendered the former a subject of daily admiration ; for he rarely meets any of the neighbours without being reminded that they are very needful of money.

Ehud had come to the sale without much consideration. It had entirely escaped him, that, when money is scarce, men and beasts are very much alike : upon the least alarm, some run like foxes ; and others are as familiar and crusty as bears. He was therefore, in the middle of a scrape before he was aware.—He had scarcely alighted from the old mare, when my cousin Harrow began to inquire how he liked the potatoes which he had sold him last year ; and Slush had just wondered where all the cash had gone to ; but here the conversation was interrupted by Mr. Catchem, who bid Slush come along with him and he would show him.

I hope however, that Ehud's ill luck will deter nobody from setting traps. The country needs labour, and catching foxes is a laborious trade. They also are destructive animals ; and, in a particular manner, ruinous to geese. Besides, in these days, catching plenty of black foxes is a lucrative employment ; and it would be a pity if civilized people should let the Indians get them all. Every body, therefore, should catch black foxes ; and, I am sure, if we were all running about with dead pigs and pieces of horses, we would be a more industrious people than we are.—For my own part, I wish the trade encouraged ; and, therefore, give notice to all fox catchers, that by and by, when they want potatoes, or begin to wonder about the scarcity of cash, my cousin Harrow has the first for sale ; and Mr. Catchem will tell them about the last.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

L E T T E R V I I .

GENTLEMEN,—Calling upon our parson to-day, I found that he had nothing transcribed. Mr. Drone, as I formerly mentioned, is very poor and cannot keep a servant. On this account he usually has a great deal to do ; and this week, it happened, that, between additional parish duty and killing some pigs for the winter, he has been very much hurried. Not that the Reverend old gentleman kills them and scrapes with his own hands ; for of this I am not assured. But work about a farm goes ill on without a master's eye, and you may depend upon it he has a great deal to do to make the two ends to meet. Indeed, if our parson did not, besides feeding his flock, occasionally rear a few pigs, he could not live among us.

From these remarks, however, you must not conclude that our parson is disliked in the town. On the contrary, he is very much respected ; and, upon all occasions of good cheer in our own houses, we send for him and give him a share ; but kindness beyond this, a great many of us have not in our power ; for, as I told you before, the most of us are in debt to the merchants, as well as to the parson ; and, as these have not so much patience as Mr. Drone, they are always first paid. You may depend upon it, however, that the parson has the good wishes of us all ; and, accordingly, at all our parish meetings, when nobody has paid him everybody cries shame ; and in order to preserve some respect for religion among ourselves, and to support our clergyman respectably, a resolution is every year entered upon the parish book, that he shall be well and regularly paid in all time coming.

On conversing with our parson, I found him considerably at a loss what to do with the stranger's letters. He upbraids every class of the community with such boldness, and at the same time with so much justice, that his statements will sting in every direction ; and Mr. Drone is not willing to bear the odium which will naturally fall upon the transcriber. Neither traders nor farmers escape his censures. He says that the distresses of the province originate in the extravagance, idleness, and ill applied labour of the community. Even our worthy clergy have not escaped his reproaches : " And, indeed," says Mr. Drone, while at the same time the tear

was trickling down the cheek of the worthy old gentleman, "we clergymen have not stemmed the current of corruption as we ought. Partly from necessity, and partly otherwise, there is among us a great deal of ill spent time and unprofitable labor. For myself, I can say, that I have often fed cattle when the flock of Christ needed my labours ; and my conscience tells me, that, had I never entangled myself in the affairs of this life, I would have warred a more successful warfare against the vices of the town." What, therefore, may become of the letters, I cannot yet inform you. The parson says, that what can't be cured, must be endured ; and then patience should be exercised : but that no man is called to bear reproach, merely for the sake of showing patience under it ; and, therefore, he will take time to consider. He has been pleased farther to say, that my life illustrates the very doctrines which the stranger inculcates ; and, lest the letters should not be sent, he insists that I shall send you an account of the various steps of my progress.

When a man offers to write the history of his own life, everybody expects that he is going to tell lies ; and on this account, I whose word has been questioned already, was not willing to comply with Mr. Drone's request. But my old woman insists upon it. She says that Mc-phibosheth Stepsure need not be ashamed among decent folks like himself at any time ; and farther, that if I will not do it, she will employ Saunders Scantoercesh, honest man, and help him with the spelling herself. Saunders, also, declares, that, though he is desperate ill at diting a letter, and after getting as far as these words, "hoping these few words will find you in the same," would rather work a hard days' work than write another sentence, it shan't fail on his part. He says that I have been writing the chronicles of the town ; and that chronicles, to be properly written, should contain the history of some good men among a great many bad. And he farther affirms, that I have now a call to lift up a testimony against the whole seed and generation of villains, who are ignorant of everything but the doctrine of Balaam ; and, exactly like their master, are constantly running unlawful roads, and ruining themselves, trying to get rich at honest folks' expence. Saunders also assured me, that, in other parts of the province, people were beginning to call the whole of us in our town, a generation of vipers ; and that the credit of the town required me to show,

that at least worthy honest Mephibosheth Stepsure and a few others, are sober industrious men ; and live as comfortably as farmers can desire. My old woman insisted that Mr. Scantocreesh should stay and dine with us ; and I resolved to put Mephibosheth Stepsure into the book of chronicles.

With respect to our town, I have not a great deal to communicate. If what my neighbour Scantocreesh says, be true, our townfolk are in a fair way of getting better. A number of them are already living with Mr. Catchem ; and Saunders says, that the Jews gathered a great deal of wisdom, when they went into captivity. At present I shall only mention Bill Scamp ; whose history deserves the attention of all fathers who have active young sons, with whom they expect to live comfortably in their declining days.

Old William the father was an industrious, hard working man ; and by dint of perseverance and moderate living acquired a very pretty property. I rather think however, that our parson judged William too eager about providing a property for his son, to be sufficiently mindful of other points no less necessary ; for I have frequently heard Mr. Drone tell him, that when he was striving to leave a farm worthy of his son, he should take care to leave a son worthy of his farm ; and neither be like old Stot, who wrought like a beast all his days, and left a beast behind him, nor like Gibeon Trick, whose son ran through his father's property, and lost both his ears before he was of age. William usually replied, that his son's education was not neglected ; for he got more schooling than any in the town ; and he was sure that he saw no ill example at home : He did not, it is true, spend much time in counselling him ; for he could not spare it, but Bill was a sharp chap at uptaking ; and, as he was not given to bad ways, he did not need much advice.

The old man was always eager upon the work. By these means, he was both able to work a great deal, and to do it well too ; and, on this account, it frequently happened, that, rather than see a job badly done, he would do it himself ; so that Bill had a great deal more spare time than his father. William, also, had a strong affection for his son ; and, knowing that too much hard work is hurtful, particularly to young growing boys, when Bill was not steadily employed, he would say little about it.

It must not, however, be imagined that Bill was lazy. He was a smart little fellow ; and could get upon the mare and go an errand, better than any boy of his age. To the father, this was particularly gratifying ; both, as it showed the activity of his son, and saved himself a great deal of time and useless toil. To the neighbours who would be occasionally complaining of heedless children, he would frequently say, that he did not know how it was, but his Bill was an uncommon boy for his age, and might be intrusted with any thing.

In this manner things moved on for a number of years ; when, at last, the old man was a little startled, by the appearance of a seal hanging down below Bill's waistcoat. On being questioned about it, he told his father, that he had been down, as he had bid him, to Mr. Gosling's store, and that, just when he was getting upon the mare to go away, he thought of taking with him the black fox skin which he had caught last winter. This he had sold to Mr. Gosling, and received the watch in payment. Though the old man thought that the watch might have been spared, still he was not displeased to see that his son had a little spirit. The watch appeared to be a good one ; besides, it had a fine chain and seal, and, therefore, as he seemed to have made a good bargain, he was rather praised than blamed. By and by, it was discovered that the watch did not go well. On this account, it was exchanged ; and a great many changes occurred in search of a better. Sometimes, Bill had no watch at all ; at other times, one ; and frequently, two. All this the old man viewed with little concern, or rather with a feeling of satisfaction at the good management of his son ; for Bill always assured him that he had gained upon every bargain.

For a considerable time this trading course continued without any interruption or apparent change ; when, at last, old William one day going out from his dinner, decried a young gentleman of very genteel appearance approaching the house. Wondering a good deal who he could be and what he could be wanting, he waited his arrival ; and was introduced to his own son Bill, in a fine fancy vest, and a long coat and pantaloons of Mr Gosling's superfine. The history of Bill's transformation was soon told. Having made a little by his watches, he had thought of buying himself a suit of clothes for Sunday ; and had just been at the tailor's to get them. William

had never before seen any thing, in his family but homespun, and still he thought that homespun was good enough. But Bill assured him that he had got a great bargain of the cloth ; it was also paid for by his own profits ; and besides, the old man was secretly so pleased with the improvement of his son's appearance, that he would have almost paid for them himself, for the sake of seeing him so fine. Bill, therefore, found no difficulty in adding to his stock, boots, spurs, and all the other habiliments of a gentleman.

Soon after Bill's defection from the homespun, his father was, one morning, a good deal surprised at finding a strange horse in the barn, instead of his own mare. On returning to the house to enquire about it, he learned from Bill, that, of late, he had been thinking a good deal about the mare ; she was getting old and not fit for the work, and he had just exchanged her with a couple of tons of salt hay, for an excellent young horse, which their neighbour Swap had bought at an officer's sale in Halifax ; and which could ride and draw equally well. The old man thought with himself, that he should have been consulted ; but it was an excellent bargain. The mare was really getting infirm ; two tons of salt hay were nothing ; and the horse was a capital young beast ; so that all things considered, he was very well pleased, and viewed his son, as an excellent manager. From this time Bill made great proficiency in the knowledge of horse flesh ; and apparently added so much to his gains, that, upon the farm, there would sometimes be more horses than cows.

Much about the same time that the homespun was forsaken, Bill's occasions to be from home in the evening, began to be pretty frequent. At what time he returned was never exactly ascertained by old William ; for, like every hard working man, he went early to bed ; and his wife was what the world calls a very prudent woman, and said nothing about it. When questioned next morning about his absence, he had either been at the mill, or the blacksmith's shop, or some other place where farmers must occasionally go ; except when he happened to be from home all night, and then he had stepped up to his uncle the deacon's, and staying rather late, he had been persuaded to stop and sleep with the boys.

It has been always said, that late hours from home are injurious to health. Accordingly, Bill, at times, was not so able to rise in the morning as usual. Sometimes, he had been all night very bad with the colic; but, most frequently, he was afflicted in the morning with a violent headache. The old man had been all his days healthy and stout, and people of this description are not the most sympathising. On this account, Bill's ailments at first received but little attention. But, at last, their frequent recurrence made his father think more seriously about them, when going to his bedside one morning to see what was the matter, he found a great deal of ugly looking stuff upon the floor; which plainly showed, that the stomach from which it had proceeded must be in a very bad way. The old man was very much alarmed, and spoke of sending for the doctor; but Bill would not hear of it; he hated doctor's stuffs, and besides, doctors were so dear, that a man might as well die as employ them. At last, his father recollected how much good a little bitters had sometimes done himself in the morning when he was not very well. Bill was persuaded to try them, and they had a wonderful effect.

Much about the same time, William received another unexpected alarm. One morning when the family were sitting down to breakfast, Bill having occasion to use his handkerchief, pulled it from his pocket, but instead of coming alone, it brought with it a pack of cards, which the sudden jerk of the handkerchief showered upon the floor. To his father, a sight of Satan would scarcely have been more confounding. But whatever astonishes the mind produces a dead pause; and before rage could find utterance, Bill had collected the cards and thrown them into the fire. He knew exactly how it was: he had called in, last evening, at Mr. Gosling's store, where young Cribbage was buying cards: Cribbage knew very well that he never played at cards, because his father hated them, and for the fun of the thing had slipped them into his pocket; but the first time they met, he would make it dear fun to him. Where the mind wishes to believe, it is easily persuaded. William was glad to receive such a feasible account, and the affair passed off without doubt or inquiry.

Soon after the joke about the cards, Bill, as was now frequently the case, had stopped all night with his cou-

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sins, the deacon's boys; but, on returning home in the morning, he brought along with him a pair of black eyes. When William learned where he had been, he was not a little puzzled to make out how black eyes had come in Bill's way at his uncle's. He knew that the deacon himself was no man of war, and his boys had never been known to lift their hand to anybody. He was, therefore disposed to think that all was not right; but, just when he was getting into a rage Bill put him in mind of the cards; and told him, that, happening to meet young Cribbage at the store, the fellow was not satisfied with making game of him before a great many people, but threw out a great many wipes against old codgers who hate card playing. Bill could not bear to hear his father abused, and began to give Cribbage a good hiding; when young Pool and Triumph struck in and bruised him so much that, in returning home, he could not come farther than his uncle's. William was very angry, and was for being off to a lawyer directly. The town he said, was come to a fine pass, when sober, decent lads could not go about their business, without being insulted by vagabonds; but, if there was law in the country, they should remember the old codger as long as they lived. Along with the black eyes, Bill appeared to have acquired a great deal of wisdom. He told his father that he did not like to go to law; because, when young people's names were called in court, it sometimes did no good to their character afterward; besides, that lawyers were as bad as the doctors, and, farther, that young Cribbage was a spiteful fellow, and might do them harm in some other way. William was very proud to find such an old head upon young shoulders; and partly to gratify Bill, and partly to avoid the costs of a suit, he let the business sleep.

The remainder of Bill's career may be stated in a few words. After getting rid of his black eyes, he married one of our neighbour Puff's daughters. Puff, by mortgaging his farm to old Ledger, kept a very genteel house, and his daughters were well bred, flashy young women. Soon after Bill's marriage, his father began to feel the infirmities of old age. He used frequently to say, that though his judgment was as good as ever, his memory was gone. Amidst the infirmities of age, it is a great comfort to old folks, that, whatever destruction time works in their memory they never find it affecting

their judgment. I am, therefore, inclined to think that he who called old age a second childhood, must have been some foolish young fellow without experience ; and doubtless, if he lived to gather wisdom, like old people, he afterwards found his judgment as good and even better than before. My neighbour William, showed the soundness of his, by giving up the farm to Bill, upon condition of supporting himself and the old woman comfortably as long as they lived.

Bill was now a man of more consequence than ever. Being also a married man, the neighbours began to call him Billy, and some of them, young William. But even at the last of these names, he had a way of looking sour, for he was a good customer to Mr. Gosling's superfine, and, on this account, among strangers he was always Mr. Scamp. Indeed, Mrs. Scamp and he were very genteel young people. They kept good company too, and I dare say would have been ashamed to be seen with homespun boys, such as Jack Scantocrees, my cousin Harrow's family, and my son Abner.

It seems it is a law in genteel life that everything must correspond ; and, in general, it is a very good law. When any person does happen to see one of your long-tailed, superfine gentlemen swinging an axe, or holding the plough, the sight never fails to disgust. It always reminds me of what my old woman Dorothy says of those poor unfortunate people who are lame of only one leg : that they have something unnatural about them, for they can neither make out a genteel limp or a seemly walk. But Mr. and Mrs. Scamp, who moved in a circle where the law is observed, both understood and obeyed it. When they had dressed themselves out for visiting, it was impossible to ride upon horseback, without being covered with hairs, or bespattered with mud. Besides, nobody in our town rode upon horseback, but Ehud Slush, old Trot, and the like of them. Fine clothes, therefore, needed a fine chaise ; and a fine chaise, a fine house, and a long list of et ceteras. But *deca*, beside farming, which by the by was not much, no man in the town made so many bargains in the course of a year.

Neither bargaining nor farming, however, can withstand overwhelming calamity ; and it usually happens that such misfortunes as Mr. Scamp's, come upon people when they are worst prepared for them. Indeed it

was not possible to be prepared ; for, though he said himself that he was always gaining, he gradually got in debt to everybody. Whether it was, that other people cheated him, and then abused him, I cannot tell ; but, along with his debts, he acquired a name that for a penny he would cheat his father. I cannot say that this is exactly true ; but sure enough the sheriff has sold the farm (for my son Abner has got it) ; and old William and his wife are like to come upon the town.

My neighbour Scantocreesh says that nothing better could happen : that the villain was made a man of before the shell was off his tail, and that he was learning to be one of the drunkards of Ephraim when he should have been learning his catechism. Saunders hopes to see the day, when every cheating, lying, huckstering vagabond, instead of being allowed to run about, making the shekel light and the ephah small, shall be carried away into utter captivity. He also vows that, as long as his name is Saunders, none of his seed or generation shall lay a finger on his farm ; but, for my own part, as soon as I feel myself to be an old dotard, which will be exactly when I think of parting with my property and depending upon others, I design to give up all, without the least security, to my youngest son ; for I will then be able to say, (and every old dotard can say the same of his son,) that there is no danger of my boy using me as Bill Scamp did old William.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER VIII.

GENTLEMEN,—I have somewhere read in an old book, that, at one time, Jupiter being in a great rage, as fathers sometimes are, tossed his son Vulcan neck and heel out of heaven. The poor fellow, between terror and tumbling, had a sad time of it. Whether it was that the gods of those days could not tumble upward, I cannot tell ; but, sure enough, he came down just as any of us would have done. If anybody thinks that I am telling an incredible story, I can only say, that it is nothing to what happened in Scotland, when it rained

old wives and pike staves. Vulcan, poor lad, in the course of his descent, had recovered himself considerably ; for like the cats that always contrive to fall in the most comfortable posture, he came down feet foremost. But even though he was a god, such a terrible fall could not be experienced without some damage ; and, accordingly, when he began to gather himself out of the mud, into which he had sunk pretty deep, he found himself lame of both legs.

For my own part, I can give no such honourable account of my origin and lameness. I neither came down from Jupiter, nor am I, to the best of my knowledge, of royal descent, like old Mephibosheth ; but, the son of Jabez Stepsure, of whom I know nothing, but, that, along with his wife and my cousin Harrow, who had been left upon their hands a little orphan, he came into the town very poor, about the time I was born, and died soon after. Nature, in conferring upon me the due quantity of lower extremities, had been sufficiently bountiful : but somehow she had omitted the last finish ; so that, though by a little care I became pretty sur-footed, my gait was never the most graceful. Of my mother I know as little as of my father, for she did not survive him long ; and, on this account, by the time I was able to crawl about, my cousin Harrow and I came upon the town. As is usual in such cases, we were publicly advertised : but, when the day of sale came, though my cousin went off for a trifle, nobody would bid for me : for who, it was said, would take the trouble of bringing up a creature that would never be worth his victuals. When the crowd was about to disperse, old Squire Worthy arrived : and understanding how things stood, he told them, that, though they had all seen a good deal of hardship since they came to the town, they had yet some humanity to learn ; and that, if the poor boy was deformed, he had the more need to be taken care of. He then told the overseers of poor to allow him a reasonable sum ; and, lifting me upon the horse before him, he carried me home to his house.

Squire Worthy or the old Squire, as he was afterwards called, was a man very different from the squires of the present generation. There were then no offices of profit, nor expenditures of public money, which, in these days, make honor the ladder to advantage ; and the old gentleman, instead of trafficking in writs for the sake of fees, was the peacemaker of the town. When neighbors

quarrelled and threatened to sue each other, Squire Werthy, instead of sending the constable, used to get upon his horse and visit them ; and somehow, by good-natured remonstrances, for he was a very good natured man, he generally prevailed upon them to cease from strife. In short, he had been made a magistrate ; because our governor at that time knew him to be a good man ; and likely to do good, not by dealing out law, but by promoting good neighbourhood. When the Squire settled in the town, he brought considerable property with him ; so that he could afford both to live better and to show more hospitality than those around him ; and, as he did not seem to have a worldly wish beyond the desire of seeing everybody comfortable about him, his family always enjoyed abundance, and the neighbours looked up to him in all their little straits.

By the time I entered into the Squire's family, his own children were young men and women ; and I must say for them, that, as they all lived very affectionately among themselves, so they all used me with a great deal of kindness. As far as I recollect, the only hardship which I experienced, was the occasional difficulty of serving a great many masters at once. Every syllable of my name would be put into requisition at the same time : Meph must bring one thing, and Phib take away another ; Bosh come here, and Sheth go there. But, as nature had given me only one person to four names, Mephibosheth could do but one thing at once ; and, of course where one was pleased, there were three angry. Still after their little pet was over, they were as kind as ever. They knew that I was willing to serve them all ; and easily saw that, to be in four places at once, was too much even for one who had his feet in good order.

The history of my apprenticeship I shall make very brief. It contains little which can amuse your readers ; and, I am sure, just as little which will afford them instruction ; for the world is wonderfully changed, since I was an apprentice. This province, in particular, is fast growing in importance. The proposal which was made some time ago to adapt the state of the country to its ideas, by making all our militia men captains and colonels, shows plainly that we are, with few exceptions, a nation of gentlemen, and what instruction can gentlemen derive from the apprenticeship of a bound servant ?

With the exception of the youthful griefs of being called the lame boy, and then the lame lad ; and being occasionally not so well dressed as the rest of the family, my time passed very pleasantly away. As soon as I was of any use, I was set to do little things about the house ; and by and by, to job about the farm. One thing I recollect, that, being at first a good deal with my mistress, who was an excellent woman, she used frequently to tell me that I was a poor orphan, without parents to take care of me ; and, therefore, I must learn to take care of myself. The good lady's drilling upon the subject had all the effect which she could desire. " Who am I ? " was a question which I frequently put to myself ; and, as the answer never contained any account of rich parents nor fine prospects, my humility suffered no violent attack ; and it regularly recurred, to me, that I who had nobody to do any thing for me, must learn to be my own helper.

Nature had not qualified me for running races. There is however, scarcely any disadvantage in life, which may not be turned to some good account. Nimble young men, like Peter Longshanks, are apt to have their business in one place and their legs in another ; but to me, to whom even a moderate pace was always a painful exertion, it soon became a subject of study, when walking was necessary, how many steps might be saved. Your readers must not here suppose that I am going to praise myself, by telling them, that like young Bill Scamp, I had an old head upon young shoulders. On the contrary, this calculating disposition arose out of hard necessity ; for, in the Squire's we conducted the farming, very much upon the old plan. But, as some of your readers may not comprehend how the old system of farming could have any connexion with my lame legs, I will explain the point.

Everybody knows that farmers keep cows. Now, according to the new mode, some will house them as carefully, as Mr. Catchem does his lodgers ; and others will put them within as good houses, as if they were going to pound them. But the Squire's cows had the range of the whole province before them ; and when milking-time came, we would sometimes seek them a couple of days, and perhaps not find them at all. For the loss of time, we did not care anything about it ; for we had got the crop in the ground, and except hosing the potatoes and

a little corn, we had nothing else to do. But when the finding of the cows came to my share of the farming, as it frequently did, my feet would remonstrate naughtily; and this usually introduced a great deal of communing with myself how such an evil might be prevented.

It generally happens, also, that as the crop goes forward, pasture becomes scarce, and the cattle are breachy. Now, in the old farming, it is a standing rule that the fences will do another year, so that at last they need a great deal of mending, and everybody knows that cattle have always an antipathy against the mended part of a fence. On this account, half a dozen repairs left the seventh no less necessary. This was a source of sore travail to my lame legs; for, as the Squire's sons were often from home, to look after the fences was a part of my business; and you may depend upon it, that it cost me no little hobbling about and mending, before I learned that much journeying, and time, and labour, are saved by doing a thing well at once.

Another part of the old farming consists in doing great day's works: And here, I must say for my master's sons, that few young men could either work harder, or do more in the same time. But then, after the job was finished, the least additional labour would have been contrary to all law and custom. If we had been ploughing or harrowing, at the conclusion of the business the cattle were loosed, and the implements remained stationary till they were again in demand. Hoes, harness, and everything else about the farm, were managed much in the same way; except the axe, which, being every day needed, kept its own place pretty well. This kind of economy, I recollect, was no great help to us; for when we set about a job of any kind, everything was out of order; and the labor of repairing, or running about to borrow, was frequently greater than the rest of our toil. By the by, when I mention borrowing, it is necessary to remark that, according to the old farming, to return a borrowed article would be such a violation of established order as was scarcely ever known; and as my master was much better provided than the neighbours, we had usually more lending than borrowing, and, of course, this additional travel. But these things I did not, at that time, regard very much. My master's sons were more nimble than I, and upon such occasions always employed: for who would send a lame lad upon an errand

when people are in a hurry? and you may depend upon it, there is nothing done without hurry, according to the old farming.

The only thing in which I had been a particular interest was the finding of the articles which were to be used. Nobody knew any thing about them; and I, as the servant of the family, was supposed to have the care of every thing; and whatever was wanting, it became necessity for me to find. In those days I was just as heedless as other young people; but the pain of doing in a hurry according to the old farming, what nature had not enabled me to do as fast as other folks, at last taught me, that keeping every thing in its own place, is not only an excellent preservative of articles, but a great saving of time and labour to those who use them. For the sake of my lame legs, therefore, my master's farming implements were always what they ought to be; and this simple particular had such an influence upon the prosperity of the farm, that the very man who had declared me to be a creature not worth my victuals, tempted me with an offer of great wages, to get away from the squire, and to live with him. But I loved my master; and I must say for him, that he always treated me like a son; and used frequently to say, that he did not know what he would do, if he wanted Mephibosheth. These remarks will show the connection between the old farming and lame legs.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the state of my lower extremities saved me from the errands of the family. These fell to the share of my master's sons, who were smart, active young men, and never, at any time, needed two hints to go upon an errand. At that time I frequently wondered what could make them so anxious to be from home; for, as I said before, the whole family lived very affectionately together. Since then I have heard parson Drone say, that it is foolish for parents to complain of strolling children: that this disposition is altogether a habit which might have been prevented, by sending them upon fewer errands, and keeping them steadily employed upon the farm: and, also, that any parent of common sense might learn a lesson upon this subject from the very dogs of our town, which go regularly to church whether there be sermon or not. The parson, also, often affirms that it is a measure of sound policy much needed in this province, to provide every part of it

with tolls ; not only for the sake of the roads, but also to counteract that wandering disposition, which he says is a principal cause of our immoralities and distresses. However this may be, certain it is, that I have many a time seen my master's sons leaving agreeable entertainment at home, perhaps for the sake of hanging about a blacksmith's shop, even when there would be nobody there but themselves ; and I, on the other hand, was rarely from home, and never felt an inclination to go.

Whether I ever made any havoc in the hearts of the young women of our town, my knowledge does not enable me to affirm. I am rather inclined to think that my achievements in this line were not very great ; for when I happened to be in the company of any of them, which, by the by, was not often, my feet seemed to be the only thing about me which attracted their attention ; and, tho' my old Dorothy says they are very becoming feet of their kind, they are not the most comely portion of my frame. This only I recollect, that, when any frolicking was going on, I was never asked to be there. To be overlooked by the young folks in this way, was to me a great affliction ; and I would often wonder whether it was that I was a bound servant and could not dress very finely, or because, being no great hand at the dancing, it was supposed that a frolic could not give me much enjoyment. I must, however, do the young people the justice to say, that, though I was overlooked at their frolics, I was not always neglected ; for I recollect that, when any of them were sick or dying, they would often send for me to come and chat with them, which the rest of the youngsters had seldom leisure to do. These things I mention principally for the purpose of showing you that I had fewer occasions to be from home in the evenings than other young people. Indeed, I was rarely from my master's ; except when he sent me to chop a little firewood for Widow Scant, and see how she was coming on. The widow and her daughters lived on my master's farm, in a little log hut by the edge of the wood. She was a very religious sensible woman ; and, on this account, as well as because she had seen better days, the squire was very kind to her : And when anything nice was in his own family, he took care that the portion of the widow and fatherless was always sent. The whole family, indeed, considered kindness to the widow as an indispensable duty. My master's daughters, in particular,

who were excellent young women, would have parted with almost anything, for the sake of seeing her comfortable.

Being thus generally home in the evenings, I had a great deal of spare time upon my hands; and often, in the winter, like other boys, I did not know what to do with myself. At last, my master advised me to try the writing and cyphering a little; all the young people promised to help me. It was fortunate for me that my worthy master was so considerate; for, otherwise, I must have remained without these useful branches of learning. —Our town, at the time, happened to be in the same state, as many parts of the province at present. No two persons could agree about a place for the schoolhouse; and, therefore, they all resolved to prevent their neighbours' children from receiving education, by having no school at all. With a little help and perseverance, I learned, as you see, to write a tolerably legible hand; and got through my Dilworth without much difficulty.

After getting on so far in my learning, I was again very much at a loss how to dispose of my spare time. I was past these days in which windmills, and bows and arrows, gratify the mind. It happened that Widow Scant, out of the wreck of the world, had saved her husband's books, and, when I would step up about dusk to see how the firewood stood, she frequently put a book into my hand, and asked me to read for her. Though the widow was a very good woman, she did not restrict her reading to religious books. Young people, she used to say, should know something about this world as well as about the next; and when she employed me to read, it was generally some book of voyages or travels, of which she had a number. Of this kind of reading I became at last so fond, that she would sometimes be obliged to remind me of home; and finally to get rid of me would allow me to put the book into my pocket. By these means I contracted such a habit of staying at the widow's, that my master's family began to joke me about the daughter. But they might have easily seen that a lame lad like me, who was another man's servant, had no use for a wife.

Here, again, I must introduce you to our worthy old parson, the Rev. Mr. Drone. The old gentleman has often told me, that, next to my lame legs, my acquaintance with Widow Scant was the best gift which I ever received from a bountiful Providence. He says, and

from experience I know it to be true, that an inclination to read is an incalculable gain : that, beside the information and enjoyment which reading affords, it leads to those steady habits which constitute character, and qualify persons for the duties of the social life.

At one time, I recollect, the parson was so impressed with the importance of this point, that he exerted himself to get a small library among us ; and he so far succeeded as to induce a number in the town, after grumbling a good deal and abusing the parson, to give a trifle for the sake of the youth. It was no use, they said, the boys of this country had no inclination to read ; and it was needless to throw away good money upon parson Drone's nonsense. Accordingly, when the books were bought, those who had paid for them, recounted their predictions : and those who had abused the clergyman most and given nothing, laughed at their neighbours, for not a youngster would look at them. In the selection of the books the parson's voice had no influence. Every man who gave anything was determined to have a book to his own taste. Deacon Scruple, who had found the benefit of hymns when he was smuggling, insisted upon getting a great many hymn books ; some of the magistrates wanted Bunn's Justice ; and Mrs. Grumble's husband Job voted for the Crook in the Lot. Mr. Drone told them that they were doing wrong : that, if they wished the youth to read, they must provide books which are engaging to youth ; and that, if they did not render amusement an introduction to rational and religious information, they would not succeed.

As the parson predicted, so it fared with the library. The only readers are a few religious old people, who still make it a point of conscience to read so many pages to their family, upon the Sunday evening ; and it generally happens that the young people, when the reading begins lay themselves back upon their chairs and are soon fast asleep. Saunders Scantocreesh says, that there is no wonder, though the young people in our town be as ignorant as his stots, for the most of their parents have just as little sense : they encourage their children in card playing and frolicking, and every kind of folly ; but where is there one of them that even bought for them a diverting story book to entice them to read ? Saunders farther affirms that almost every village in Scotland has its library, and that the thing speaks for

itself. Everybody, he says, reads, except ne'er do well vagabonds : and that, not only diverting stories, but the Bible too. For myself, I can only say, that the disposition to read was acquired exactly as the parson stated, and also, that, by means of it, I have passed many an hour in the evening with pleasure, when my neighbours were in Tipple's.

The period of my apprenticeship was now drawing near its conclusion, when, one day, my master put me in mind of the circumstance. At the same time he told me that, if I would consult my own interest as carefully as I had attended to his, I must look out for a good lot of land, settle upon it, and get married ; for he had generally seen that, in this country, if young people acted otherwise, they rarely turned out well. He then said, that, as a reward for my fidelity to him, I might either have the money which he received from the overseers, or one of his wood lots, and that, if I chose the last, I might take a little time to myself, and get a few acres down before next spring. The land was by far the best offer, and was, therefore, my choice ; and next spring, with my lot of land, a few acres chopped, and my lame legs, I began the world.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER IX.

GENTLEMEN,—I formerly stated, that, with a lot of land, a few acres chopped and a pair of lame legs, I began the world. In the subsequent part of my life none of your readers must expect a relation of surprising events. I was not, like Robinson Crusoe, cast upon a desolate island, and forced to try shifts which nobody had ever tried before me. On the contrary, I was in a christian country ; and in the midst of neighbours who kindly spent a great part of their time, in preventing one another from being lonely. Not much of the visiting, it is true, came to my share ; for in those days I was lame Meph, and of not much consideration among our great folks. Besides, when I was out of bed, I was generally doing something ; and, on this account, as well as because

in those days I neither smoked nor kept grog in my house, it was supposed that I did not need to be visited. My only visitors were a few young people, who would lay their hands together to go to Meph's in the evening, and have a little fun. But when I understood their drift, I used to read to them a sermon. Of my gift in preaching I can say very little. It has been often said, read sermons rarely do much good; and, sure enough, though I read good sermons, and very distinctly too, the young people profited so little under my ministry, that none of them ever came back a second time.

Before I proceed to the history of my life, I must remind your readers of the apprenticeship which I had served to my lame legs. As I formerly stated necessity kept me at home; and there the same necessity forced me to keep every thing in its own place, and to do every thing well and at the proper time. By pursuing this course, though I was seldom hurried, I had not much spare time in working hours; so that, at last, I contracted such a habit of doing some thing or other, that, when I had nothing to do, I felt myself uneasy.—The only additional particulars in which I differed from the rest of the youngsters, were the habits of reading in the evening and going pretty often to Widow Scant's, for whom I had contracted the same affection as my master's family.

When I was about to clear up my few chopped acres in the spring, a number of young people proposed to make a frolic of the business, and do it for me. This would have been a great help in the mean time; and at first I was very much inclined to accept the offer. But a little consideration showed me that the profit of a frolic would be dearly purchased. At a business of this kind a number attend principally for amusement. In return, I would owe each of them a day when his frolic came round; and, in order to pay my debt, it would be necessary for my lame legs to travel to every part of the town; perhaps too at the very time when I might be most needed at home. Besides, young people, upon such occasions, expect something better than ordinary eating and drinking; and feasting I could not afford without running into debt. Mr. Ledger, it is true, had told me to come to his store for whatever I wanted; but a conversation which I had with my old master a few days before, convinced me that applying to that gentle-

man in a strait, was, as Saunders Scantocreech says, like going down to Egypt for help; instead of finding myself better off, I might be drowned in the Red Sea.

The Squire had stepped over to see how I was getting on; and, when about to leave me, he said that he was going to give me a very serious advice. The evening before I had been to see widow Scant, and thought that he intended to speak about the daughter, but he had a different subject in view. "Never," says he, "Mephibosheth, allow yourself to get into a merchant's books. Debt hangs about the neck of an honest man like a millstone; and, in this country, it requires no ordinary uprightness and activity, to prevent him from sinking under the load. Running into debt and long credits, have been the destruction of both property and religion among us. The person who has credit in a store, is apt to feel wants which his circumstances do not warrant him to gratify; and to gratify these wants, he involves himself in debts, which, perhaps, never leave him till he has lost his little property and his character too. There is Puff, who has credit with Mr. Ledger; and he is living, not by his labour, but by sinking his farm: And there is old Guess, who, for these thirty years, has been telling his creditors when he would pay them; and, you know, he has nothing left him but the name of a notorious liar. Merchants are very useful, and we cannot do without them; but they live altogether by the labours of other people; and they usually live well. Those, therefore, who employ them, must support them; and, hence, a merchant cannot live, unless he lay the loss of bad pay, upon the purchases of good customers. In short, according to the way in which business is carried on in the country, a merchant could not live, unless the one half of us could afford to pay the debts of the whole. If, therefore, a farmer wish to thrive, he must take care to have much credit but little debt." The old gentleman's advice was not lost; and from that day to this, though I have often rejected Mr. Ledger's counsels as obstinately as Jack Scorem, my greybeard was never sent away empty from the store.

About the time that my farming commenced, the son which he had been long sending between Mr. Burdock and young Quirk were wanted. Quirk was what our townsfolk call a 'cute young man. Indeed, he was a smart chap; but somehow or other he was very poor, and not

much respected. When he began the world by settling on a farm like the rest of us, he happened to be made a constable. This led him to acquire a great knowledge of the law, which was at times useful to him in the way of his profession : for, as he had the counting of other people's money, he often found it much easier to tell how the cash came into his hands, than how it got out of them. He was also very helpful to the neighbours by giving them advice. This, as it saved them a guinea at the commencement of a suit, was very acceptable. But, though I speak to the shame of our town, I must say, that those who followed Quirk's cheap counsels, when their suits were decided, were always very ungrateful, and abused him without mercy.

Quirk, by his new occupation, made a great deal of money. On this account, his little clearing was not in good order ; and one day when he was from home, serving an ejection, Mr. Bullock's oxen came along, and seeing something very inviting within a little brush, they stepped over it, and took peaceable possession of his grain. When Quirk returned, he was in a great rage, beat the oxen unmercifully, and then drove them to the pound. The case had now become complicated. Mr. Bullock, who is one of our great people, spoke big ; and Quirk, who thought that the beating of the cattle could not be proved, answered him with law in abundance. Suits were entered ; and, as the lawyers said, on account of the intricacy of the business, protracted from term to term ; till, at last, Quirk had justice done to him, and then sold his farm to cover the expenses. To me this was a useful lesson. Before planting I put a good fence around my few acres ; and I must say, that, though both Mr. Bullock's cattle and neighbour Snout's pigs were often about, I always found them civil. Since that time I have had much experience of both beasts and fences ; and I have always found that good fences make good friends and safe crops. Many persons believe that cattle break down fences because they have no sense. But, I assure you, that they are more sensible animals than those who try to keep them out. As far as my experience goes, no ordinary beast tries to get into a field, after a farmer has fairly convinced it that he intends to keep it on the outside of the fence ; and I have never seen a farmer who proceeds upon this principle, either quarrel with his neighbors about trespasses, or protect himself against them by selling his farm.

My clearing was small, and, therefore easily managed : and, as I was always at home to do everything about my little crop in the proper time and way, it throve wonderfully well. At that time, I recollect, the satisfaction of viewing it, was greater than the pleasure which I derived from considering its value. My old master, too, was so well pleased with my success, that he brought a number of the neighbours to see what industry would do. They all agreed that everything was excellent, and in excellent order ; but to account for appearances each had a different reason. When Deacon Sharp saw how my potatoes were hoed, he was sure I must have wrought upon Sunday. Old Pumpkin, who has a large farm and expends his labour chiefly in hunting away cattle from his fields, remarked, that lame people are lucky ; and Mrs. Grumble, who had come out of curiosity with the rest, complained, that there had always been a crook in Job's lot and hers ; and that, if Providence had been as kind to them as to Meph, they would have had a very different life of it. My old master, I could see, was very much displeased. After hearing them out, he told them, that, though they had seen Mephibosheth's fields, they had never yet taken a proper view of himself. Every person's eyes were now directed to my lame feet : which, the Squire perceiving, told them that that was not what he meant ; and observing Mrs. Grumble feeling for her spectacles, he asked them if they did not see about Mephibosheth, good sense directing labour and care to their proper ends. Here my visitors left me displeased, and all speaking loudly that I might hear them. Deacon Sharp declared that he and Deacon Scruple would see into the business ; for such doings must not be permitted in the town. Old Pumpkin wondered that the Squire was not ashamed to hint that they had less sense than a lame creature ; and, that when Meph was so careful to fence out other people's cattle, he had better take care not to send his own about his farm. And Mrs. Grumble said that she wished me no ill ; but it was a hard case that lame Meph should be so well off, when her Job and other decent men had such bad crops. This little pet, however, did not last long ; for next spring I sold my spare wheat to Pumpkin, whose family live chiefly upon pies ; and Job, who is obliged to live very meanly, bought all the spare potatoes which I had raised.

For myself, I was so pleased with my success, and so encouraged by my master's commendations, that I resolved to get on as I had done ; and, during the whole of my life, I have never had the least reason to complain of my returns. Many of my neighbours, it is true, have not been so successful. Still they are in general very good people, and very helpful to one another. Indeed, if they did not help each other, their life would be very miserable. I am always at home, looking after my affairs, and never fail to have good crops ; but my neighbours so often meet with bad land, hard labour, and poor returns, that they are obliged to spend much of their time in mutual visits, for the purpose of unburthening their minds, condoling, and keeping each other in heart.

The man who settles upon a wood lot, has a good deal to do the first year ; and if he be not disposed to get into debt, he must take care to lose no time. Yet, if he employ himself with ordinary judgment and steadiness, it is wonderful how much he will do, without doing great days work. After getting in my seed, I began to think about my house and barn. By the help of the squire's team I had got the logs upon the spot ; (for I could not, like Jack Scorem, venture upon two frames,) and just when I was considering who would help me put them up, young Loopy came up. Loopy lived then, as he does now, in a little log hut, covered with spruce bark. Neither the outside or inside of it, I recollect, presented any inducement to visit it twice. His door was always beset by a couple of starved pigs, which occupied this station for the double purpose of enjoying the benefit of the puddle, and of being at hand to make their entrance good when the door happened to be opened. Loopy and his wife were good-looking, flashy, young people ; and, on Sundays and other public occasions, few dressed better, or carried their heads higher. But, in speaking of them, our old parson used to say, that if you trace a butterfly to its shell, you will find it a maggot ; and, sure enough, if there was any comfort or cleanliness about Loopy's house, the pigs had got them. His whole furniture was a large looking-glass, a cross-legged table, a few broken chairs, a number of nails driven into the walls ; and for a bed, a couple of blankets laid upon a little straw. As his articles were few, they were of course pretty much used. Mrs. Loopy was frequently from home, and required to be dressed. On this account

the eating apparatus was not much looked after. They usually stood upon the table, amidst scraps of pork or fish and piles of potatoe skins; of which, also, the chairs had usually a proportion. The nails were very useful for keeping their clothes out of the pigs way; and for showing how many gowns, petticoats, trowsers, and other finery, the young people had got. As for the bed, it was in constant use; and served the whole family. In Loopy's it was a standing order, that the dog jumped out, and Loopy and his wife jumped in. When he was finely dressed, I remember, he had a particular way of twisting his shoulders. Not that he carried any of his stock about with him; for I never knew him have more than one cow and the two pigs; except when he happened to be in the horse trade. But some people's clothes, you know, do not sit easily upon them; and then they are fidgetty. I make this remark, because many flashy young people may think that I am pointing at them; when I am only describing Loopy, who came past at the time that I was thinking how I should get up my log house and barn.

Loopy, stopping a little for the purpose of offering me a great bargain of a horse, gave me a very discouraging view of the farming life. I'll tell you, says he, Meph, what it is; you have got a world of hard work before you. Upon my word, the farmer has a laborious life of it. I do assure you, it takes a great deal of toiling to maintain a family by a farm; and after all, it won't do. But, as Loopy had never been guilty of working hard, he could know the toil of it only by tradition, which is not a very sure guide. I was not, therefore, discouraged completely, though I refused the horse; and, when he left me to call upon his aunt, Mrs. Grumble, I began the preparation for getting up my house and barn.

A log house is easily managed; and where its owner has any taste, it is susceptible of a degree of neatness and comfort, which comparatively few farmers of this country can afford to display in a larger building. For example, my neighbour Pumpkin, whose ideas were always large, in order that his building might correspond with his farm, raised a huge frame; and really, when the outside was finished, had an imposing appearance. Travellers admired it very much, and Pumpkin himself, from the praise bestowed upon his good taste, began to

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look big. But, in building the outside to please travellers, he forgot that he had the inside to build for the comfort of his family. As I formerly stated, much of his farming labour is expended in hunting the cattle from his large fields, on this account he was never very forehanded; and, when passengers were admiring Mr. Pumpkin's fine house, he and his family were living in a corner of it, which had been partitioned off by a few loose boards. The rest of the building was found very handy for holding odd things. Now, about a farm house, this is a discovery which the owner cannot keep to himself. Pigs, dogs, carts, and fowls, all make it and make use of it too; and my neighbour's house, besides the finery of the young ladies, suspended upon nails and pegs around the walls, generally contained a great variety of articles and smells, very useful to a farmer. Pumpkin had resolved to finish by degrees; but fighting against time, is a hard battle. The other day I had occasion to pass by his house, and came home very thankful to Providence, as I have often been, for my lame legs. I found the family, emptying the windows of the old hats and trowsers; and one of his sons, who was tearing the clapboards from the end of the house, told me, that had I been anything else than a lame old rascal, he would have given me a beating. By the bye, since I wrote you about Jack Scorem's house, there has been sad havoc among the clapboards in our town. Some of the youngsters have got wooden spouts erected; which you will see standing out from the houses, when you come up the country. How the rest intend to conduct the distillation in future, I have not yet learned. But, with the exception of Jack's house, and those of old Stot, Ehud Slush, and one or two more, the buildings of the town are very much altered.

Where every thing is done in a hurry, according to the old farming, there are a great many little things omitted, because they can be done at any time. For example, when a new settler builds a log house, he often leaves the ground about his door in a state of nature; and the chimney top, or roof, or the corners, remain unfinished. This part of the old system, my master could never endure; and, indeed, I have generally seen, that, where these things are without, there is a corresponding want of comfort within. The farmer who does not finish his jobs, has either too many of them for his

profit, or wants that industry which ensures comfort. I therefore, finished my house as it ought to be; and, by doing so, found myself a gainer. The additional labour was trifling. In return for this trifling labour, I was relieved equally from smoke and puddle; and when my neighbours, in their large open houses, were shivering before huge fires in winter; my little hut well stuffed with moss, rendered me snug with a small quantity of fuel.

After finishing my house, I began to think about a garden and orchard. In visiting widow Scant, who derived a great part of her living from a little garden kept in excellent order, I had seen its importance to a family. In my master's, too, whose house was surrounded with fruit trees, we never went to the door in summer without being delighted; and, upon his table, I have often seen a dinner, derived from his own premises, which would have gratified a prince.

With respect to my garden and orchard, however, as I was in no hurry, I did not proceed according to the old farming. The most of my neighbours had tried to raise an orchard; but had given it up in despair. Either the trees would not grow at all or, if they did grow, it was only for a year or two; and then they died, or were destroyed by the cattle. But upon these points, I never found any difficulty. Pigs and fruit trees I have found to be much alike; starvation brings leanness; and good feed, a flourishing appearance and profit. As for my cattle, after looking at the fence of my orchard, they always went away abusing the trees for being as sour as crabs; and now, the only difference between many of my neighbours and me, is, that they have not been able to raise orchards, and I sell them fruit.

When my garden and orchard were put in good order; with the addition of a few flourishing polls of hops, rose bushes, and honey-suckles, planted about my house, my premises looked very well. My good old master, I remember, who took an interest in my success, was so pleased, that, when any of the great folks from Halifax, came about, he never failed to bring them, as he said, to see industry rewarded with prosperity and comfort. Those gentlemen, too, would sit down in my house or at the door, with as much cheerfulness and familiarity as any of the neighbours; and, in conversing with the squire would draw a great many comparisons between my little

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hut and her Pumpkin's large white castle, surrounded by fields ill cultivated and as wretchedly fenced.

Many of your readers may not believe that a stout, active person, and much less a lame lad, could get on so well. I will, therefore, explain the business to their satisfaction, in a very few words. I was no visitor myself, and few came to see me. Here was a large saving of time and expense. I was neither a great man nor a great man's son: I was Mephibosheth Stepsure, whose highest ambition was, to be a plain, decent farmer. Here, the whole habiliments and expenses of a gentleman were saved; and, being a gentleman, I assure you, is a trade which requires costly tools. But, though I was lame Mephibosheth, I had a good stout back and good hard hands, and a disposition to keep them both out of mischief, by giving them something useful to do. I was always at home to do everything properly, and at the proper time. On this account, though I was rarely in a hurry, and seldom needed to work hard, I was able to do a great deal; and I must here observe, that I never accounted any kind of labour too mean or slavish, if I saw it to be useful. Besides, though I was farmer, I was lumberer too. I did not, indeed, like Jack Scorem, make great lots of timber. But knowing that I owned trees, as well as land, I judged that I had a right to turn them to my advantage; and, therefore, rarely entered the woods without laying them under contribution. It was easy to arrange matters so as to carry home a companion; and whether it was a junk for shingles, staves, axe handles, or any other use, my shoulders never grumbled. All these I deposited at home; and, during the long winter nights, when my neighbors were at Tipple's, or visiting each other, some little article was added to my stock. These, according to my usual custom, I always made well; and, as my neighbours generally found it cheaper to buy than to make, my articles met with a ready sale, and brought ready money too. At first, also, I lived hardly; for what right had I to live otherwise? But the time slipped past, and I soon found myself surrounded with every comfort which a farmer ought to desire.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER X.

GENTLEMEN,—

During the first year of my farming, as I formerly mentioned, I had a great deal to do. But, in the warfare of life, labour and perseverance fight a hard battle; and, unless the odds against them be very great indeed, they never fail to be rewarded with victory. Before my crop was ready to be removed from the ground, my barn and cellar were in order; and long before the winter set in, my house was as snug and comfortable as a little log house could be.

I am not going to tell your readers every particular which occurred in my bachelor's hall. My cookery, you may depend upon it, was not very fine; nor my varieties, numerous. I was never a great hand at stews and nashes, and frying, and brandering. As for those little preserved vegetables which set out a table, and help better food, though I liked them very well, I had something else to do than look after them. Besides, in those days they were not necessary. All that a hard working young fellow needs, is, to bring his hungry stomach into the company of food; and, if it be clean, coarseness is no ground of quarrel between them: they stick as lovingly to each other as any new married couple. Indeed, I have generally seen that your men cooks have more belly than head. Abroad, they are of little use; and at home, the torment of their wives. There is our townsman Pickle, who is a great hand at sauces and preserves. He can fry pork with the face of clay; and his wife, poor woman, ever since they were married, has been serving an apprenticeship to him, and a very uneasy one too; for he is always in his kitchen, and always finding fault. Nothing but the cooking prevents him from living well in his family. About this he is so much employed, that little time to labour for the materials remains. Pickle frequently observes, that every wise man will see into his kitchen affairs; but Saunders Scantocreesh says, that the man's god is his belly; and his idolatry has rewarded him with famine.

With respect to my little hut, I must observe, that whoever came into it, never found the house running out at the door. My old master's family lived very neatly; and I myself too, you will recollect, had served an ap-

prenticeship to keeping everything in its own place. This I have found to be a principal source of my success in life; for the abuse of articles is the chief cause of their destruction. Whatever belonged to the inside of my hut, stood in its proper place; and everything which had no right to be there, was condemned to exclusion. Though I had not many clothes, I always liked to be decent. On that account, as I had resolved to keep myself out of debt, I could neither afford to have a shirt lying here, and a pair of trowsers there; nor yet to hang them upon nails or pegs; for I have generally seen that clothes have no great notion of hanging any more than their masters; and if they can only get down, they are not very nice about where they go afterwards. At the expense of a few hours work, therefore, I made myself a chest or two, which saved me a great deal of money and a great deal of confusion.

My bed is the only additional particular which deserves to be noticed. My old master used to say, that a good bed is one of the best enjoyments of life; and whoever slept in his house, was sure to lie comfortably. Indeed, a good bed is not only a comfort, but a great saving to a laboring man. Whoever sleeps upon a little straw, as many of our dashing youngsters are obliged to do, must sleep in his clothes during the cold nights of winter; and where clothes are not allowed reasonable rest as well as their owners, not a few of them are requisite, I assure you, to keep flashy young people genteel.

You must not, however, imagine that all our town-folk lie down like cattle. It is the boast of my neighbor Puff, that whoever sleeps in his house, sleeps on a feather bed. This I know to be true; for, being a gentleman, he would allow no other kind of beds in his house. Yet, I have often heard his visitors remark, that they would rather hear parson Drone's longest sermon, than be in Puff's feather bed. When the parson is preaching, his hearers can take a nap at their leisure; but, in Puff's feather beds, the loud and incessant conversation between the ribs of his lodgers and the boards below them, sets sleep at defiance. For myself, though I liked a good bed, I had few articles of dress; and, therefore, could not afford to lie upon straw. I had frequently heard, too, that neither lectures nor conversations in bed are very comfortable things; and, as I had

as often observed that great talkers are not great workers, I resolved that my ribs should give me none of their jaw ; and, therefore, when my oats were threshed, I made myself a bed of chaff, which put the talkers out of each other's hearing ; and as I did not keep a dog, nobody slept in it but myself.

Summer had now fled ; and with it, all that variety of prospects which charms and cheers. The fading beauties of the autumn, also, had fallen before the stern blasts of the north ; and rain, sleet, and snow, had descended in succession. But none of the harbingers of winter took me by surprise. I have always considered these as the preparations of nature for a returning crop ; and, as the exertions of nature are made for the benefit of man, it appeared to me foolish, that, in the midst of so much activity, he alone should be idle. When winter comes, the most of my neighbours find a great many days in which no man can work out of doors ; and then spend the time smoking their pipe and talking about the storm. With me this was never the case. In summer and fall, I considered that winter was coming ; and, being a poor lad who could not afford to go idle, I had laid the forests under contribution ; and had more work before me than I was well able to do. By these means, in the spring, besides supplying my neighbours with axe handles, yokes, and other little articles, I carried to Mr. Ledger's store, such an assortment of lathwood, shingles, oars, handspikes and staves, as he had rarely received from one hand at once. This established confidence between us ; and I, as well as Jack Scorem, looked upon that gentleman as my very good friend. If any person doubted Mr. Ledger's friendship and mine, I can only tell him, that, when that gentleman would wrangle with the rest of the youngsters for attempting to impose upon him their plugged timber and other articles, mine, made well in my usual way, were taken at my word ; and whenever I wished to see how our account stood, Mr. Ledger, instead of speaking of his straits and Mr. Balance, would tell me that he was in no hurry.

Still it must be confessed, that neither my industry nor reading made me so comfortable as I wished to be. In the long winter nights, I felt at times very lonely ; and, though I dreaded neither ghost nor witch, I often wished I had somebody along with me. In such a case

I usually stepped over to widow Scant's, and spent a spare hour. The widow was a sensible and cheerful woman; and, in her company, the time passed so agreeably away, that, occasionally, she would be obliged to remind me that the night was getting late.

Towards spring, when Mrs Grumble's husband Job was buying my potatoes, I began to be less lonely at home. The old lady would frequently come to speak about them: and, not being in a hurry, (for our town-folk are never in a hurry, except when they are farming, going from home, or getting out of church,) she would spend an hour, deploring the hard lot of some decent, sober folks. I do not know how it was, but everything about me pleased her exceedingly; and, after praising my farm and my house, she would compliment myself, by wishing that her daughter Leah might get a husband like Mephibosheth Stepsure.

Though Job's family lived chiefly upon potatoes, Leah was a flashy young woman. When she issued out of Job's poor hovel, to go to a frolic or a sermon, many a traveller has received an unexpected surprise. Nature had designed Leah to take the lead in every thing; for she was mistress of the family, and very harsh to the old people; and, though every one who followed her admired her person, those only who met her could feel the force of her charms. It is true there were no dimples in Leah's cheeks, but still she had all the expression of a commanding beauty. To compensate for the want of these useless pits, which some chuffy cheeked young people have in their faces, she would see two ways at once much more distinctly than Venus; and possessed a nose, evidently intended for finding its way into very small crevices; and as to the charms of her voice, nobody in the town could sing treble like Leah. When the old lady, then, wished her daughter as good a husband as Mephibosheth, you may depend upon it it was no small compliment; for you know I was lame. But Mrs. Grumble's friendship and mine did not last long. Since that time, too, I have often thought that it did not fail upon my part; for, when she used to wish Leah as good a husband as myself, I never failed to wish her a better. Whether it was that I did not praise the young lady enough, I cannot tell; but Mrs. Grumble ceased to visit me, and declared among the neighbours that I was a deceitful fellow, to whom Providence was too kind; and

I, for company, was again obliged to return to Widow Scant's.

About the commencement of my second summer's farming, parson Drone was settled among us. As I told you before, he then preached a sermon which proved to my satisfaction that it is not good to be alone; and, having always a disposition to enjoy as many comforts as possible, I married the widow's daughter Dorothy. The habit of visiting them had become so inveterate, that I could not do without them. I, therefore, concluded, that to have them in my house would save me much time and trouble; and so I got a wife. For many reasons I liked Dorothy, and Dorothy liked me; not because I made a handsome figure on the floor at a frolic: for when my feet were born, the graces, who had been invited to the ceremony, fled with precipitation as soon as they saw them; and, on this account, I was never a great dancer. Indeed, the Highland Fling was the only dance of which I could make any hand. But Dorothy liked me, because I was a sober, industrious lad, good natured, and kind to her mother. And here let me give a private hint to all good young ladies who are looking forward to matrimony. No man can be always cutting figures upon the floor for the happiness of his wife; and to make up for this deficiency, nothing but a great deal of sober industry and good nature will do. Without these, therefore, the married life becomes a warfare, in which female charms and exertions to please, instead of being repaid with domestic enjoyment, must grapple with a host of miseries. Marriage changes states but not dispositions. What a man is, such he is likely to remain; and, therefore, my good young ladies, if you do not wish to waste life in putting sloth to shame and soothing down crossness, take care not to marry them. But, as every body who hears of a marriage, asks about the bride, I, who was present and saw every thing with my own eyes, will give you an account of Dorothy.

My spouse was a good looking little woman, but as unlike the young ladies of these days as our townsman Tim is unlike Peter Longshanks. Females now a days, have lost all dimensions but length. The time has been when I could have swung any of them around me with my finger and thumb. Dorothy was a round faced, red cheeked, junky little woman, and had good bottom in her too, I assure you; for I recollect very well, that,

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when I used in those days to lift her over a bad step, she was a good heavy load for any ordinary working man. About the bride's dress I shall say but little. Dorothy owned neither garbflower nor notion of any kind. Still, she had good decent clothes, such as *he* came the daughter of widow Scant; and they were paid for too. As for our wedding, nobody was present but the parson and my good old master and mistress, who always rejoiced in my prosperity. Among us it is the practice to set off the young folks with a general meeting of the town, and a dinner which would keep the new married couple comfortable for a great many months; and, though starvation should follow, this must not be omitted. But such feasting I could ill afford. Besides, though I, as well as my neighbours, liked a good dinner, I was not sure that Dorothy and I would come so well on with the starving part of the business. Some of the youngsters told me that they wished to come to the marriage, and get a little fun; but, though I assured them that I would be as glad as ever to see them, none of them came. They expected, I suppose, that I would give them another word of sermon.

Besides Dorothy's person, there were several other reasons which induced me to make her my wife. Those I shall state in order, for the benefit of all young men who have a notion to be married.

My spouse, as you know, was Widow Scant's daughter; and nobody would be long in the company of the widow, without being the better for it. As I told you before, she was a very sensible and religious woman. About her religion, it is true, she said very little herself; and what she did say, was not much to her credit. But the neighbours pointed to her conduct, and agreed that she was an excellent woman. Mrs. Sham and Miss Clippit, indeed, who were two of parson Howl's hearers, called her the barren fig tree, and always assumed that she had no life. In mentioning these two ladies, I must give you a little sketch of their character, for they well deserve a place in the Chronicles of the town.

Mrs. Sham and Miss Clippit were exceedingly religious in their own way, and zealous, too, in proportion. Accordingly, they spent most of their time running about the town to tell everybody their experiences and how they felt. How many believed them I cannot exactly say; but, as people by practice improve in religion as

well as in other things, these ladies at last became so acute, that, by looking in a person's face, they could ascertain his state precisely; and when they found it bad, they could even do a great deal for his conversion. When my neighbour Scantocreech came to our town, because he wrought pretty hard, Mrs. Sham declared him to be in a natural state. But Saunders was not easily alarmed: he said that slothfulness in business is no mark of fervency of spirit. At last the two ladies sent him word that they designed to hold a meeting in his house, in order to pray for him and convert him; and, as Mrs. Sham could recount something very like miracles, as seals of her ministry, she was pretty confident of success. Saunders did not know very well what to make of it. He said, that, in Scotland, neither the Stuarton sickness nor the Cambuslang work, (both businesses of the same sort,) had done much good; and he doubted that his conversion would come on slowly in their hands. He let them know, however, that as they seemed to think his house nearer heaven than their own, it was the best place for praying with a prospect of being heard; and, therefore, they were welcome to come and try their hand at the business. At the same time, he gave notice to a few of us that he was going to be converted, and asked us to step over and witness the process.

When the time arrived, we were all there, to see what would become of Saunders; and, really, every thing looked as if some strange event was about to happen. My neighbour is a hardfaced Scotchman; but, as if he had set his face against conversion, it seemed harder than usual. The two ladies, also, when they arrived, along with the others, to assist them in holding the meeting, appeared exceedingly solemn. Instead of being cheerful and chatty, as Widow Scant usually was, they looked as grim as if they had been going to hang Saunders. Before they had well sitten down, Mrs. Sham began to tell him what miserable sinners she and sister Clippit had been, to which my neighbour nodded a cordial assent; but, when she recounted the joys which succeeded their conversion, he seemed to examine their grim countenances with a great deal of care. She then run over with much volubility, what she called marks of grace, and the experiences of gracious souls; and was just beginning to tell him about the day of

judgment and its consequences to himself, when Saunders interrupted her by saying that he did not expect his conversion to be an easy job, and that we had better first take something to eat. To such a reasonable proposal nobody objected. My neighbour, who is a very hospitable man, gave us his very best cheer; and I could easily see, that, though the two ladies had perceived nothing to be commended in Saunders, they found something very good about his house. After our repast my neighbour observed, that, about a business of this sort, he understood there was always a good deal of tumbling and roaring. He therefore proposed, that, as the evening was very fine and his house small, we had better all go to the smooth green before his door, where we would have plenty of room. Accordingly, we turned out, one after another, as fast as possible.

When we were all upon the green, Saunders said to the two ladies, that he had new got them out of his house, and would tell them a little of his mind before they began; and first of all, that, if he needed to be converted, he was resolved that it should be done by the word of God and his own minister, who had some sense and religion; and not by silly women like them, laden with sins, and as ignorant of true godliness as his stots. He told Mrs. Sham, that, before running about the country, pretending to convert sober, industrious folks, she had better show a little christianity at home, by lessening that misery in which her idleness, ill-management and ill nature had involved her family. As for sister Clippit, he advised her to find a husband for herself, and get children, as the bible bid her. This, he assured her, would be more to her credit than tattling through the town about her experience and marks of grace, when everybody could see nothing about her but marks of corruption; and, therefore, concluded her to be one of Solomon's foolish women, who are clamorous and know nothing. They, and the like of them, he said, were a disgrace to religion. Instead of minding their own affairs, and living comfortably like other decent folks, they ran about the country in idleness, living upon their neighbours the one half of their time, and starving the other; and if it fared ill with themselves, it fared worse with their religion. Every fool among them was a preacher and a converter; and when a decent minister who could put a little sense in them happened to come

among them, they soon starved him away. They would give him plenty of prayers, and long stories which they had heard from one another, about their conversions, and experiences, and marks of grace. But, when necessity forced the poor gentleman to remind them that the laborer is worthy of his hire, his whole congregation would forsake him to run after the like of Shadrach Howl, whom no careful man would trust with the feeding of his swine. With their groaning and whining, and slang about religion, he said they had made decent people who have some sense of it, almost ashamed to mention many of its doctrines. At last, Saunders concluded with advising them to go home, read their bible, and mind their own calling, and let ministers mind theirs. This, he said, would help them to redeem their character, which they would soon find to be necessary; for he hoped to see the day in this province when everybody, instead of running after them, would, according to the bible, believe them to be silly women, who had turned aside unto Satan. Thus ended all hope of my neighbour's conversion. With respect to myself, I was something of Saunders' mind. I have always thought that that kind of female religion which speaks little and does much, is both the most graceful and the most beneficial. I therefore married Dorothy, because hers had been learned in Widow Scant's school. What this means, will be by-and-bye explained. In the meantime I would observe to all young men, that, as none but a fool will account female religion to be no ornament nor source of domestic enjoyment, so every wise man, before he slips, with a female, into a noose from which there is no escape with the life, will consider where she has learned her religion, and what are its fruits.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XI.

GENTLEMEN,—

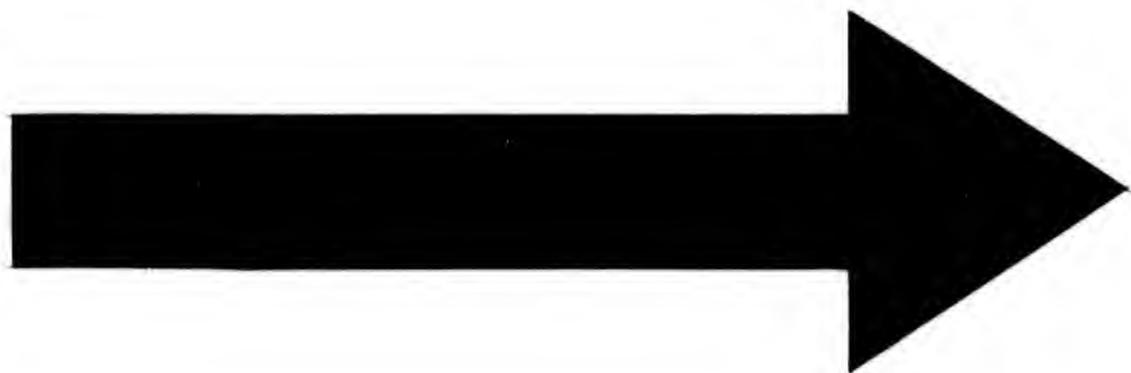
I formerly told you that I had married the widow's daughter. Indeed, I might be said to have married the widow too; for neither Dorothy nor I could think of parting with her. Our worthy old parson used to observe, that wherever Widow Scant was, there would be a blessing along with her, and therefore as I had married the daughter, it would have been foolish to have left the blessing behind. What the parson said, I have found to be true. I have now a large farm; I have also every comfort which a farmer should desire; and, as times go, I cannot be called a poor man; for, as you know, I lately bought Bill Scamp's farm for my son Abner. But, after all, these are the least parts of the blessings which I received with the widow. I enjoyed her conversation daily; and, instead of those grudgings and grumblings, which, in this country, are usually found at family consultations about how the old people are to be kept, making the widow comfortable was my principal enjoyment. Many a time when I was working about the farm, the wish to keep her, as good old people ought to be kept, has strengthened my back and made it willing to run faster than my legs could carry it. Indeed, almost the whole symptom of heavy which ever appeared in our family, was, when the children knew that grandmother wanted anything; and, then, there were more servants than jobs.

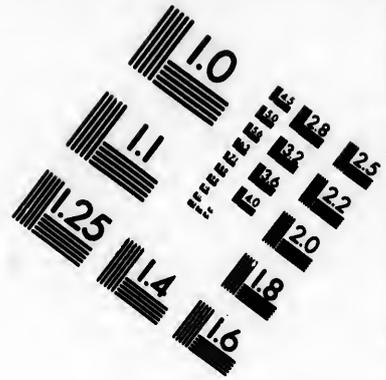
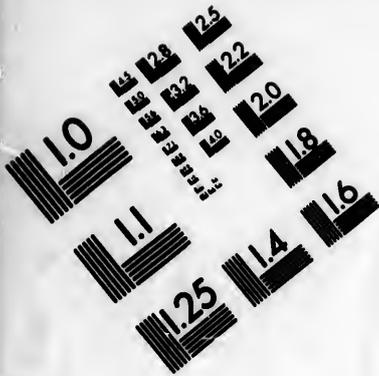
When Dorothy and I were married, Mr. Drone made a solid and sensible discourse of at least an hour's length, in which he explained all the reasons and grounds of matrimony. Then he gravely laid before us the duties of the married life, and, among other things, he told me, I remember, that, if I wished to have comfort for a lodger in my house, I must strive to keep want on the outside; for, says he, a husband's house is the home of his wife; she clings to him as the vine clings to the elm; and, when he willingly gives her poverty for a companion, he kills affection by the root, and domestic comfort dies along with it; so that, even when they have something to eat, they eat with bitter

herbs. As I had, therefore, married Dorothy and the old woman, expressly with a view that we might all be comfortable, I could easily see that I had no time to lose, and must work harder than ever. To me, a return of labor after marriage was an easy task, for I always liked to be doing something; besides, our marriage was succeeded by a great many savings in those very things which, at times, bring ruin upon promising young people. Neither calls nor visitings wasted our time, exposed us to expense, or supplanted habits of industry by those of a worse kind; for, to tell you the truth, the marriage of lame Meph and Dorothy made less noise in our town than the death of Caleb Stagger's mare when she died of the botts. I therefore returned quietly to my work, and I recollect very well that when I was slashing down the woods, thoughts of card playing and frolicking, horse racing and drinking, never crossed my mind; but my affection for Dorothy and the widow made the strokes fall thick, and made every stroke tell.

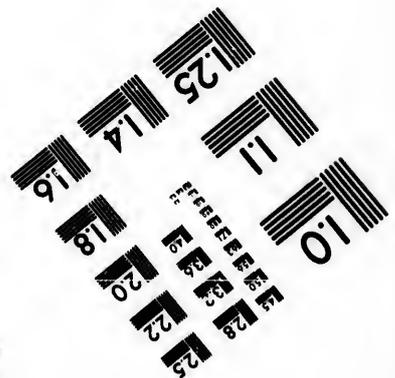
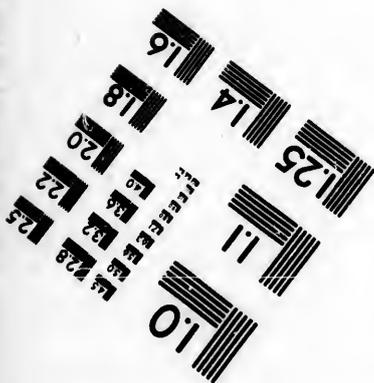
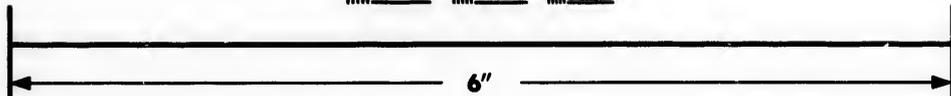
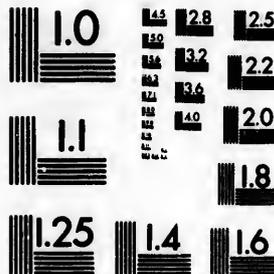
By these means, fields and crops rose very fast about my little hut. Whether it was that I was now a married man, I cannot exactly say; but, at that time, I observed that the increasing civility of the neighbours kept pace with the enlargement of my farm. I was no longer lame Meph and lame Bosh, but Mephy or Boshy; and some of the old people even called me Mephibosheth. This was very gratifying, for every decent man likes to be respected. I did not, however, get too proud. Some doubts which hung upon my mind prevented me from running about the country with my respectable new name. Having no superfine coat like Bill Scamp, I was not certain but I might be mistaken for lame Meph, instead of arriving at the higher appellation of Mr. Stepsure. I therefore staid at home, and in the meantime pleased myself with the hope, that, as my name had grown with my farm, a few more fields would at last bring it to its full stature and due number of syllables. Nor have I been disappointed: all the neighbours call me Mephibosheth, except when they wish to borrow from me, and then I am Mr. Stepsure. But it is now time for us to look at the inside of my little hut. I formerly told you that I had married Dorothy, because she was Widow Scant's daughter, and had learned her religion in Widow Scant's school. This last point I shall now explain to you.

When worthy Mr. Drone, at our marriage, tendered me the word of exhortation, he did not forget Dorothy. Whether it was that he was particularly anxious for our comfort, or thought that my spouse needed a little additional admonition, I do not know. But, when he was leaving us after dinner, he told her that he was going to give her a very serious advice. "Dorothy," says he, "you have got a very good lad for your husband, (so the clever spoken, sensible gentleman, was pleased to say,) and if you do not find yourself very comfortable, it will be your own fault. Remember, however, that you must derive your comfort from your husband's happiness. If you seek it elsewhere, woe will befall you. Many of the females of our town experience, that an unhappy husband makes a wretched wife, and they have themselves to blame. Young women are not sufficiently aware of the connexion between female happiness and home. Their enjoyments are scattered among the neighbours: of course, they must go after them; and, when a husband, after toiling all day, returns to his house, he finds his wife absent from her post, and everything in confusion; and, because he likes his wife, and sees no means of comfort without her, in order to bring her home, he follows her to one or other of the neighbour's houses. Now, our townsfolk, upon all visiting occasions, are very hospitable; and both the young people soon learn that a neighbour's house, and not their own, is the place of enjoyment. For a little while this does very well; but I have generally seen that the husband who is bound by no tie to his house, in the course of straggling after his wife, loses the chain of attachment which linked them together, and then instead of going all the way to bring her back, he gets no farther than Tipple's. Dorothy, if you wish to enjoy true comfort yourself, make your husband happy by making his house his home. You have been a good daughter. The old woman, too, has richly repaid you, by instilling into your mind the principles of religion; and I am now going to tell you the use of them. Religion qualifies people to go to heaven, because it prepares them to do their duty in the mean time, and that is always a bad sort of it which does not draw the mind to social relations and social duties. Our duty in this life is a trust from God, and whoever looks forward to the true riches must take care to be faithful in that which is least. You must





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therefore bring your catechism to bear upon the matrimonial state; and, as I told Mephibosheth to chase want from his house, I now tell you that domestic happiness, though helped by plenty, depends very much upon who lives in the house, and of what use is made of plenty when it gets to the inside. In short, Dorothy, if you wish to live a comfortable life, be a domestic woman, and when your husband shows industry without, let him see, that, beside the old woman and you, he has got contentment, cleanliness and economy within."

As I knew this to be the education which my spouse had been all her life receiving from the widow, I thought the parson's discourse rather long, particularly as his last sentence contained the substance of the whole. Many of your readers, too, I dare say, will feel very glad that they do not belong to Mr. Drone's congregation. In our town, we are now pretty well used to his ministry; yet it must be confessed, that, even among ourselves, when he formerly discussed topics of this sort which nobody cared about, the sermon always required a great deal of sleeping, in order to get through with it. But I thought of setting down the advice, that you might see what our parson was when he was young and spry. Of late years, indeed, the poor gentleman is very much changed, and rarely gets beyond the doctrine of patience. When Tubal Thump's young daughter-in-law came with black eyes to the parson the other day, complaining of her husband, he only told her that what can't be cured must be endured; and, that, even though he should beat her frequently, the best way was to stay at home and take it; for patience might bring a blessing along with it, which would do her good in the end. Under all the calamities of our town, too, the only comfort which he administers, is, that when the state of society gets wrong to a certain extent, it then begins to get better of itself; and that those who exercise a little patience in the mean time, will see better days. Our townsfolk cannot comprehend him; but my neighbour Scantocreech affirms, that the parson's doctrine is both true and plain. Though Saunders does not try the preaching; (for you know he was not converted), he pretends to know a little of the signs of the times; and, really, he seems to have no sympathy for our distressed neighbours. He says that the calamities of the ne'er-to-do well villains, are the dawning of a bright day for

Nova Scotia, when every huckstering, swapping, cheating, running-about vagabond will be driven into the woods, and a race of decent, industrious folk, like Me-phibosheth Stepsure, will inherit the land. But I must now conduct you back to my little hut.

When I was living with the Squire, Dorothy served an apprenticeship to the widow, which made compliance with the parson's advice a very easy business. Like myself, she had been habituated to domestic life. She was not lame, it is true, but she was a poor widow's daughter; and, as she could not dress finely like the rest of our young ladies, she was not in much repute. By these means, her mother became her principal acquaintance; this fanned the flame of affection between them; and thus, by domestic life and domestic enjoyments, a habit was formed, that, to Dorothy, home and her mother were everything.

Some of your readers will perhaps say, all this is plausible enough; but how could a young woman learn contentment in the house of a poor widow? But the Widow and Dorothy were not its only inhabitants: religion lived there; and, where there is religion like the widow's, industry and contentment are always its companions. For things which most of people despise, I have seen more gratitude in Widow Scant's, than ever entered the door of a rich man's house; and gratitude hates grumbling; it is the companion of comfort. But besides religion, Dorothy had found a *home* in the Widow's; and strange as it may appear to many of your readers, whoever finds a *home*, has gained the grand point in the business of life. It will take very hard fare indeed, to kill contentment and drive him from his home. Having, therefore, married the widow as well as the daughter, my house was home to Dorothy; besides, she was very good natured; and good nature is not only willing to be pleased itself, but, when it draws affection to itself, it deals out cheerfulness and contentment to others with a liberal hand. Indeed, I never see my spouse angry, except when anybody meddles with the configuration of my feet; and, really, she has discovered about them so much decent seemliness, that she has no great opinion of the judgment of the graces.

But, when I am upon the subject of contentment, I must make a few remarks for the benefit of young folks. Many of the ills of life are unavoidable; and wherever

this is the case, a discontented mind bears the calamity, and has the grumbling to the bargain. Others, again, may be surmounted; but everybody knows that neither praying nor grumbling pulls the cart from the mire: the sure way is to set a shoulder to the wheel. In most cases this brings relief; and, even where it fails, it frees the mind in the mean time from its broodings of misery. A discontented disposition is an everlasting plague. It both kills comfort, and destroys the only means which could again bring it to life; as Job's wife and Mrs. Grumble and all her connexions know. They are a large family in our town. Indeed, they have spread out so, as to be the chief part of its inhabitants; for somehow discontentment never prevents the increase of population. For different reasons they deserve a place in the chronicles of the town; and, therefore, as Mrs. Grumble and her father are samples of the whole, I shall give you an account of them.

Mrs. Grumble is the daughter of old Whinge, who was once a leading man in parson Drone's congregation. The old gentleman is still alive; and, though his daughter has seen a great many years, he is healthy and stout, and likely to live a long time. In his own way he is exceedingly devout. Our parson often says that Whinge has wonderfully mistaken the nature of religion; yet he still hopes that the old man has some gold amidst large heaps of dross. He is among the oldest settlers in the town; but whether he came from Scotland or Italy or from New England, I cannot exactly say. Being always very poor, he has never known many changes of raiment; and, at last, his dress has become a part of his religion. His Sunday's clothes are a legacy from his grandfather, who, as I can see from old pictures, must have been a first rate buck about the days of Queen Ann. The tails of his coat meet before; but as far the rest of it, it sets description at defiance. Perhaps you know some poker-made dandy looking chap; he could creep through the sleeve of Whinge's coat with a great deal of ease. Besides, in every part of it, it has as many buttons and buttonholes as would cost any of your town tailors a whole week's work. His waistcoat is remarkable for nothing but its flaps and pockets; a pig six weeks old would lie snugly in each of them. As for his lower habiliments, the less that is said about them the better. When Whinge has his Sunday's dress on,

he has a venerable appearance ; and among our youngsters, he is generally known by the name of Methusalem. During the course of his long life he had observed that dandies and other creatures of the same cast, have neither sense nor religion. On this account he has acquired a notion, that his own dress is the religious fashion ; and, when he sees the young people upon Sundays, he never fails to rail against the foolish vanities of the present generation, and to lament the degeneracy of the times.

Before parson Drone was settled in the town, Whinge, among our religious folks, was a kind of oracle. The most of his time was spent in their houses ; praying and giving them advice about their souls. The amount of his doctrine was, that time and time's things are nothing — that every religious man must live above the world, and derive his comforts from his religious frames. Of course, his farm was in a very bad state. Indeed, if our religious people had not been kind to him : one giving him a little grain ; and another, a few potatoes, he could never have made out. But it was often remarked that, though Whinge lived above the world when he was giving advice ; if any of the neighbours offered him a little help, he always showed that even good men fall before temptation. After the arrival of the parson, these helps were naturally withheld ; and since that time, he has staid mostly at home ; not labouring on his farm and living comfortably, but bemoaning, that, since Mr. Drone began to preach, religion has no life, and the church has fallen into very bad times. Some of our sly folks used to hint that Whinge was lazy, and liked much better to talk about religion than to do anything for it : but this is only report. All that I can say from my own knowledge, is, that the old gentleman always seemed to like time's things very well when he could get them for nothing ; and though at home he lived, I believe, pretty much above the world, in his neighbours' houses he never found fault with earthly things for being too many or too good. I have frequently heard parson Drone tell him, that, though a religious man cares nothing about worldly comforts, industry is an indispensable duty, as it affords the means of doing good to others. In reply, Whinge as often possesses a great love for bible societies and other good institutions ; but he has nothing to give them ; nor does he conceive

giving to be any part of his duty. The work, he says, is God's; and he will carry it on in his own way, if we only pray about it.

As Whinge had no industry, want lived in his house; and when want does not scrape acquaintance with industry, it becomes the companion of discontent. In Whinge's house, every thing went on with a grudge. But discontent generally put on the form of religion; and, when the family entered upon serious conversation, their standing topic was the poverty of religious men, and the hard lot which they must expect in the world. Whinge, in a strait, never thought of exerting himself, and making his young folks work a little harder. All his comfort was derived from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In this school, Mrs. Grumble received her education; and Job, poor man, and his family, are reaping the fruits of it.

Job was a simple, honest young fellow. In those days, too, he neither wanted hands nor heart to employ them; and, though the youngsters played upon him at times, he had good nature and industry sufficient to make any ordinary woman happy. Job was a sober lad too. Instead of running about taverns, he used frequently visit old Whinge, to hear him talk of religion. Whether his present wife had taken a fancy for him, I cannot say; but when some mischievous boy slipt a hornet's nest into Job's trowsers, there was no end to her dissatisfaction, that providence should allow such doings. Though the thing happened about Whinge's house, it did not terminate his visits. Job was not superstitious; and, therefore, did not consider the visitation of the hornets an evil omen. Some time after, as he was passing through the woods, his foot slipped, in stepping upon a windfall; and, on reaching the ground, he found himself seated very snugly in one of Eben's fox traps. This, Whinge's daughter declared to be no ordinary dispensation; and, indeed, it was a long time before he was cured. It, therefore, called forth her discontent and her kindness; and judging that such an affectionate young woman, who knew so well how to sympathize with affliction, must prove an excellent wife, he made her Mrs. Grumble.

Job was fond of his wife, and resolved to make her happy. After his marriage, therefore, he wrought hard upon his farm; and, as he was a stout young fellow, he

was likely to get on very fast. Mrs. Grumble, too, was an affectionate wife; and exerted herself, in her own way, to make Job as happy as possible. When he came home from the woods, it was to hear her lamenting that her Job, who wrought so hard, should have such hard fare; when all the neighbours enjoyed so many fine things. For some time this did very well. It made Job happy to hear her; and in the overflowings of his affection, he would tell her, that he would rather have her and hard fare, than all the fine things of the neighbours. But the truth is, that, along with the daughter of old Whinge, he had married the spirit of discontent, which gradually extended itself to every thing which came in its way, not even excepting Job; so that, at last, with a wife who really liked him, he became very miserable. Besides, a mind which sees every thing wrong, sinks under the burden; and has little inclination to put anything right. On this account, Job's hut began very soon to resemble Loopy's. By this means he lost his *home*, and with it his love for his wife. Now, a married man who has no *home*, is like a stray sheep, ready to go one way as soon as another. Every mind pants for enjoyment; and, when a wife withholds it, her husband looks for it in some other place. Accordingly, many of my neighbours have discovered Tipple's to be the happiest house in the town. But Job was a sober lad; and, when he lost comfort, he did not part with decency. He only became heartless. This, however, was sufficient to destroy all progress. Though he still stuck to his farm, he wrought but little, and that little not much to the purpose. He spent the most of his time poking about his small clearing; and, when he happened to turn his eye to his house, he viewed it with dislike, and hated to come near it.

Thus, Mrs. Grumble, who could not be contented with a kind and industrious husband, has passed through a pretty long life, whose only comforts have been, recounting hard dispensations of providence and eating potatoes. Our old parson says, that Job is the only man in the town who has been edified by his sermons on patience. My neighbour Saunders affirms, that Mrs. Grumble is one of the foolish women who torment husbands, because they have not been taught a little sense at the outset; and that, if honest Job, instead of allowing himself to be henpecked and miserable for life, had

laid a few cross dispensations upon her back, she would have soon become thankful for small mercies, and repaid him with smiles all the days of his life. For my own part, I have never needed to try this experiment, and I would advise all young wives to keep themselves out of the way of it; for, though it might do them good, it must be like the rest of doctors' stuffs, not very pleasant. Young folks had better do like my spouse and me. My neighbours remark that, when I am going home, I gradually quicken my step; and, when I arrive, Dorothy and Mephibosheth are always glad to see one another.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XII.

GENTLEMEN,—

At our marriage, as I stated in my last letter, Mr. Drone delivered to my spouse an admonition upon the subject of cleanliness. Imagining that the parson had seen something about her which he did not like, I was not altogether pleased; for new married folks, you know, are not willing to find fault with each other themselves, and much less to hear patiently the censorious remarks of the neighbours. On turning the subject in my mind, also, I recollected that both Dorothy and I, before our marriage, had been improving on this point. When I happened to go to the Widow's a little earlier than usual, I would sometimes catch her putting herself or the house in better order; and then, as if something had been wrong, she seemed to be mortified. On this account, I thought he might have kept his advice to himself; or, if he would reprove dirty people, carried it to old Stot's and Loopy's, where it was more needed. But a discourse which he made to her a short time afterwards, convinced me of my mistake, and satisfied me that our parson, in his early days, was a shrewd, observing gentleman. Perhaps some of your readers would like to know what it was: I shall therefore set it down. If they can only get through with it without sleeping, as our town folk generally do when the parson

preaches, it may do them good; for my old woman, I assure you, has been none the worse of it. At any rate, in your paper, it will be like a doubloon in a poor man's pocket in these times, it will beget admiration how it happens to be there.

A few weeks after our marriage, Mr. Drone stepped over one day to see how we were coming on in the matrimonial state. When he arrived, he found my spouse mending the elbows of an old jacket, which you may depend upon it she could do to very good purpose. Every thing about the house, also, was in order; and herself, as trig and tidy as when she was only Widow Scant's daughter. "Dorothy," says he, "I am glad that you understand and practice the duties of religion so well. This is better than singing hymns in the midst of rags and dirt, as many of our young folks usually do.

"People who have a *home*, should strive to have in it every rational enjoyment, and cleanliness and economy bring along with them a great many comforts. Indeed, I have generally seen that where cleanliness and economy are wanting, there is no domestic happiness and very little religion. It is a miserable life and a foul kind of piety which do not try to keep the door between dirt and duty. As instance of this, I might mention the wife of our townsman Whinge, Mrs. Drab, Mrs. Slabber, and many others in the neighbourhood. Whinge, from his poverty, as you know, is obliged to stay at home, with no other comfort than the grumbling of a discontented mind; but the husbands of the rest live chiefly in Tipple's, or travel about the town, without any business.

"All our unmarried females understand the subject of neatness exceedingly well; and, though I say it, I question if there be another township in the province which contains as many pretty and neatly dressed young females as ours. Yet, I doubt if there be another in which there are so many filthy houses and slovenly wives. When the lawyers, who are a jibing generation, visit our town, I am often ashamed to hear them ask the meaning of the white strips upon our houses, and to see them pointing to our windows, and then offering to send us up a cargo of old hats and trowsers. The wives, I know, are not always to blame; for many of them have husbands who would depress the heart and industry of the best of women. Instead of minding their farms, as industrious men ought, they are constantly running

about, looking after everything but their own business ; and their poor wives are left to fag on with poverty and wretchedness : first, to bear the ill humours of husbands who return home to miseries which they have taken no care to prevent, and then, to receive the character of bad wives from strangers who do not know their difficulties. Females were given to be helps ; and I do believe that when husbands give them fair scope, they add more to the amount of human happiness than is usually ascribed to them. Many a young woman, who, in good hands, would have proved the ornament of her husband, has, through his own ill management, become his torment and shame.

“ Still it must be admitted, that a number of wives are unhappy through their own mismanagement. When they were candidates for marriage, it never occurred to any of them to trust solely to the force of their charms. On the contrary, I have often thought them more eager for dress than became their station. But scarcely have they entered upon a married life, than, as if neatness and cleanliness were unnatural things, they forget the ornaments of a maid and the attire of a bride ; and present to their husbands, not the appearance which contributed to gain his heart, but what, had it been seen before marriage, would have killed affection forever. Remember, Dorothy, that affection obtained is not affection secured. To gain and to secure, require the same means ; and the wife who desires domestic happiness, must, by the neatness of her person and house, take care to prevent her husband from harbouring a suspicion, that, before marriage she had cheated him by false appearances. A woman of taste is always an engaging object. Beauty by itself will never secure the heart of a husband ; and wherever it is combined with slovenliness, it is, as the wise man says, like a jewel in the snout of the vilest of animals. Many of our young wives dress only for the benefit of their neighbours ; and their husbands, because they see nothing pleasant at home, are always running about. Dorothy, if you wish to enjoy the company of Mephibosheth, use those means which brought him to Widow Scant's.”

When your married subscribers read these admonitions to their wives, I hope they will likewise tell them that to be angry and call me old lame rascal, is of no use. If there be any blame, it is the parson's. But to

blame him, would be unreasonable; for his discourse, you see, refers only to the people of our town; and I, who know the wife of old Whinge, Mrs. Drab, Mrs. Slabber, and indeed the whole of the neighbours, know likewise, that he had just cause for all that he said, and a great deal more.

Mrs. Whinge, as well as her husband, is, in her own way, a very religious kind of woman; and, like some other religious folks, the state of her neighbours who are not doing as she does, gives her much uneasiness. One source of her discontent, is, what she calls the stinking pride of our young people, who, as I told you before, dress very genteelly; and, as they think it of no use to dress for the sake of *home*, are always running about the town. Indeed, of late years, I have frequently thought that the old lady has both reason and religion upon her side; for our youth are wonderfully altered since I was a boy. Though many of them live upon potatoes and sleep upon straw, the very poorest of them have their gumflowers and notions of all kinds, silk gowns and superfine longtailed coats; as you may learn from Mr. Ledger and other merchants, who are very observing gentlemen; and, for the credit of our town, keep an exact list of its finery; and when any of them, such as Bill Scamp, are dressed and galloping about, should they happen to meet the very best of you Halifax gentry upon the road, they will stare at you, as if they intended to tell you how thankful you ought to be that they allowed you to get out of their way without giving you a beating. But it was not the debt of the young people, their want of industry, nor their want of economy, which troubled Mrs. Whinge; it was merely their neatness compared with the appearance of her own family, who never were the best dressed nor the most cleanly in the town.

Were I to consult the credit of our township, I would stop here, but he who writes chronicles should tell the truth; and, in writing about religious people, such as Mrs. Whinge, he should be particularly careful to record those truths which illustrate the nature of their religion. This our worthy old parson calls trying the spirits; and I recollect that, frequently, in his younger days, he would exhort us never to receive any kind of religion which did not tend to make us wiser and better—to exalt human nature above the inferior creation; and above

all, to draw us to home, and to make it the abode of rational and religious enjoyment. At present, therefore, overlooking Mrs. Drab and Mrs. Slabber, whose character originates in pure laziness and want of thought, I shall restrict myself to a brief notice of Mrs. Whinge.

As old Whinge had ingrafted want of industry and discontent upon religion, it was easy for his wife to mistake dirt for humility. Accordingly, when the old lady expatiated upon the stinking pride of the young people, their gentle stomachs usually came in by way of appendix. Indeed much squcamishness could never have lived in the family of Whinge; for it will be generally found, I believe, that where want arises from habits of indolence, cookery does not arrive at its highest perfection. That it takes a great deal of dirt to poison poor people, was one of the old lady's favorite sayings. Of course, a mouse drowned in the milk, or hairs or other little straggling articles in food, were nothing; and even one day at dinner, when Whinge observed that providence had sent them more meat than the family knew about, and the old lady examining, instead of finding death in the pot, only drew out a frog; though it proved a considerable stumblingblock in the way of the young people's hunger, it was not, in the opinion of the old folks, sufficient to spoil good broth. If any of your readers suppose that no living creature could ever submit to stay in such a family, he is altogether mistaken. Many of our townfolk, it is true, were not fond of lodging with Whinge; but, when they did happen to sleep in his house, they were not without bedfellows; and some of them would even remark, that they had never seen so much company before. At one time Mrs. Whinge took a notion, that for a married woman to have her head uncovered, is a grievous sin. On this account, the practice of many of our young wives gave her great offence; and, in order to be in the way of her own duty, she was accustomed to bring her clean cap into contact with the foul, and thus to remove the one and slip on the other at the same time. By these means she kept herself free from transgression; but what quieted her conscience, excited a sad commotion in her head. The population there increased very fast, and at length, like our townfolk, they became dissatisfied with the country, and began to emigrate. Whether they

were going to the Ohio or Upper Canada, nobody could tell ; but I recollect that, when any of our youngsters were obliged to set beside Mrs. Whinge at church, they were particularly careful to leave a clear passage for the departure of the travellers.

If any of your readers disbelieve this account of Mrs. Whinge, let them consider that it is so written in the chronicles of our town, and written too by Mephibosheth Stepsure. Should they still bogle at believing, send them to me ; and, though Whinge lives in a far out settlement, I will conduct them thither, and procure them a night's lodging. But, remember, I do not promise to stay along with them ; for I may be needed at home. In the meantime I hope all your female readers will be persuaded that domestic cleanliness is much better calculated to secure family comfort than Mrs. Whinge's plan of covering the head and finding frogs in the broth.

But beside contentment and cleanliness, parson Drone, in his younger days, was a great hand for recommending domestic economy ; and at one time, I remember, after visiting the town, he preached a sermon upon the subject. As he has acquired some credit, particularly among the young people, by his discourse upon marriage, I shall show you how he treated the doctrine of economy ; for, as he himself observes respecting patience, it is, in a family, a comfortable doctrine, yea, and moreover, very seasonable, and suited to the times. But I must first show you what is meant by his visiting the town.

You must not imagine that our clergyman ever spent his time going about to make morning calls. The visitation of parson Drone was a season of much solemnity among our religious people, and of no less quaking among transgressors. In those days the old gentleman feared nobody in the discharge of his duty ; he divided the word of truth as every man needed ; and, as he regularly visited every house in the town for this purpose, each family heard from him those truths which he judged best adapted to their case, whether they conveyed reproof or encouragement.

But, as I formerly observed, after one of his general visitations, he appointed a week day's sermon for the female part of his congregation. Whether he was going to praise or to blame, nobody could tell ; but everybody

was agog; and, though we men folks had not been invited: male, as well as female, the whole town were there.

For the service of the day, Mr. Drone gave out that portion of scripture which says, "*I will, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house.*"

On observing my neighbour Pumpkin's large family of daughters, I could see that they were wonderfully pleased. Some of them had staid long upon his hands; for I have generally seen that bundling is not the short road to marriage. When a lad of sense looks out for a wife, it is never among those who have been in bed with a great many young fellows. Pumpkin's young ladies imagined that the parson, having formerly shown it to be not good to be alone, was now going to prove that it was good to marry. But Mr. Drone, by commencing, set conjecture at rest.

"There are," said he, "three points contained in the text. With respect to the first, I must refer you to my former discourse; and be assured that the young woman who seeks to avoid solitude, without taking marriage in the way, is in great danger of getting company which will bring her to shame."

Here the countenances of the whole Pumpkin family fell; for, though the oldest had acquired a good deal of brass, it was not possible for one young woman to out-stare a whole congregation.

"The second topic," subjoined the parson, "stands in connexion with the first, and ought not to receive a separate illustration. I shall, therefore, at present, direct your attention solely to the third, which is, *guide the house.*"

Here, with the exception of a little fidgeting and shifting of position among the Trotabouts, who are pretty numerous in the town, we became all very attentive; and Mr. Drone proceeded.

"It was not good for man to be alone; and divine beneficence provided for him a companion and helper. But she who was given him to be the joy of his life, soon helped him to sin, and labour and sorrow became the allotment of both. This is a fair statement of the case: let us next view its results."

"Every mind shrinks from pain; and, because the exertions of labour fatigue, many foolishly conclude that

an escape from toil is a relief from sorrow. But are those of you who work least, the happiest in the town? They have the fewest means of enjoyment; and their idle life gives them time for pursuits which at last load them with misery."

At this part of the parson's discourse, a number of our townsmen, who had come to enjoy themselves at the expense of the females, began to get very long faces. The wives of Tipple's customers all looked at their husbands, and the head of my neighbour Trot required a great deal of scratching. As for young ladies of the Trot-about connexion, by their smothering a laugh, I could easily see that none of them believed travelling about the town to be a journey of sorrow.

"Many," said the parson, "view labour only as the wages of sin; and without quarrelling with the sin, they avoid the labour. But to man in his present state, industrious exertion is one of heaven's best gifts. It is the wise arrangement of a beneficent providence, to curb his vices, and thus protect him from innumerable miseries; it is the means to collect around him an abundance of individual and social enjoyments; but those who escape from the activity of an industrious life, do not escape to a life of happiness; they become the debased and profligate, and, at last, the wretched dregs of a miserable world.

"A life without care would not satisfy man; and thorns and thistles, and barren land, were sent to give him something to think about. He would not limit his activity to the service of his creator; and, now, his duty arises from his sin; and his activity must relieve his own wants. Here is a correct view of the case; upon the earth transgression has entailed a curse, which man must remove by an industrious life. This, and this only, will gladden the wilderness and solitary place; will make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Do you wish the excellencies of Carmel and Sharon to adorn your fields? arouse activity to labour; and then, in the restoration of beauty and fruitfulness to the face of nature, and in the return of rational and religious enjoyment to your *home*, you shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

With this part of the parson's discourse, our females seemed wonderfully pleased, but Tipple's customers began to yawn a good deal; and Trot, who for several

days before, had been every where, and asking everybody what Mr. Drone was going to preach about, fell fast asleep.

"With these introductory remarks," subjoined the parson, "I shall now proceed to the immediate subject of my discourse."

"As labour is thus a general allotment, females must not expect an exception. In the business of life they are still the helpers of men; and nature itself marks out the sphere of their activity. With the rugged toils of the field, the strength of man coincides; and for the delicate frame of the female, there are domestic labours, where prudent management is more availing than strength. By the misconduct of a female, labour and sorrow have become the portion of man. To the female, therefore, it belongs, to be the sweetener of his toil and the soother of his sorrow; and when he turns to his *home*, as the retreat of comfort, and gathers into it the means of enjoyment, she must *guide the house*."

"The female, then, who would be the *guide* of her husband's house, must make it the place of her abode: she must be a *keeper at home*. I do not mean, that, between females or families there should be no mutual visitings. Well regulated social intercourse is a sweetener of life; but, recurring too often, it is the destruction of morals and of all domestic enjoyment. The female who views *home* as a prison—who escapes from it with pleasure, is unfaithful to her trust. When she is straggling about the town, there must be ill management in the house of her husband; and be assured, that the heart of a husband is never linked with the misconduct of a wife. *Home* hated by the wife, has no charms for the husband; when necessity forces them to make it their abode, misery dwells there.

"Remember, also, that the female who lives with a husband, is not a mere *keeper at home*: she is the *guide* of his house; and whether she have the management of little or much, economy is the parent of permanent comfort. By economy, I do not mean that niggardly disposition which grudges the very comforts for which labour is expended. It embraces the whole range of female exertion in *guiding the house*. Economy sees the mistress of a house, and everything about it, in their own places; and every part of domestic labour, done at the right time. It takes care that the desire of pleasure

contracts no debt. It restricts itself to the means of enjoyment which a husband provides; and, when it proceeds to expend, it equanders not upon transient pleasures: its first cares are the solid and permanent comforts of domestic life. This is economy; and now, let me tell you, that, because many of you want it, you want everything which can make *home* desirable to either husband or wife. Through inattention to time and place, you are always in confusion, always in a hurry, and always behind in your labour. Besides, there is among you, a sad mismanagement of the means of domestic comfort. With some of you, I know, there is alternately feasting or famine, clothing with finery or living in rags. To your elegant appearance and feasting, as far as they are consistent with a christian deportment, I do not object. But, surely, for the sake of fine clothes and frolickings, either to get your husbands into debt, or to be deprived of the real comforts of life during the greater part of the year, discovers a disregard of domestic happiness which cannot fail to produce ill-doing husbands and wretched wives; and _____"

How far the parson might have proceeded, I do not know; for, upon topics of this kind, he was always long-winded. But just at this part of his discourse, an alarm was given that the pipe of the stove had caught fire, and had kindled the roof. To preserve the church, therefore, we turned out as quickly as possible; and, indeed, the most of our females now needed to be cooled. The wife of my cousin Harrow, Dorothy, and a few others, agreed that Mr. Drone had given us a solid and sensible discourse; but it was a long time before the rest of the females would be reconciled to the parson, or even hear his sermon upon economy mentioned.

Thus, by means of a religious education, beside the old woman and Dorothy, contentment, cleanliness, and economy, lived in my house. I must do my spouse the justice to say, that the prosperity of our family is not more indebted to my labours without, than to her thrifty management and economy within. She has been a good wife to me; she is, therefore, mistress in my house; and whatever she says about domestic affairs, is law in the family. Some of your readers may, perhaps, suspect, that she has got into trowsers. You may tell them, that, were some of their wives there, they would be better men, and their families more comfortable. But, to

prevent all misrepresentation and mistake, I will give you the history of the trowsers from beginning to end; and I request all your farming readers to consider it well: my sheep produce the wool, my family spin it, and weave it, and dye it; my wife makes the trowsers, and I wear them.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XIII.

GENTLEMEN,—

At our marriage, as you may recollect, the parson told me that if I wished to have comfort for a lodger in my house, I must keep want on the outside. To me the advice appeared to be reasonable; for want gives no scope to the domestic talents of a wife. When it arises from a husband's indolence, it represses female desire and exertion to please: it arouses feelings which make home the habitation of misery. Determined, therefore, that my spouse should have fair play, I considered with myself that I was a stout young fellow, having so much time, and able to do a certain quantity of labour; and then I resolved, that neither lost time nor ill-employed labour should stand in the way of her domestic management. Every man who works for his neighbour, knows time to be money. I, therefore, determined to make it money, by working for myself. Upon this point the experience of my neighbour Trot afforded me a useful warning.

Trot, in his younger days, owned an excellent property, and was a good sort of man. Many a hungry belly he has filled; and he has lodged many pennyless travellers, who have long since forgotten that he ever showed them kindness. Nature had given Trot a very long nose, which was always in his way, and gave him great annoyance when he began to work. Indeed, I may say that his life has its direction from this member of his body; for, when it was kept out of his own way, it usually got among his neighbours' affairs, and at last the habit of thinking and talking about other folks' business

became so inveterate, that, unless compelled by hard necessity, he would never submit to the painful exertions of bridling his nose daily, and working for himself. Had Trot's curiosity been properly directed, it would have rendered him a sensible and well-informed man; but his desire of knowledge rarely looked beyond the trifling occurrences of the day. Respecting these, it became, by habit, insatiable. If a stranger passed when he was getting out of bed, he has been known, for the sake of learning the news, to run after him with his trowsers in his hand. When his own farm needed his presence, he would get upon his horse and ride twenty miles, to learn what his acquaintances were doing; and many a long day he has spent with Ehud, travelling through the woods to see what was in the traps.

With such a life, Trot's farm could not be in very good order. He had always more work than he was able to overtake. This could not escape his observation; and, in thinking, upon the subject, he discovered, that, in this country, the winters are so long, as to leave very little time for the labour of farming; and many a mile he has ridden, to tell his neighbours about the shortness of summer and length of winter. At last, the sheriff persuaded him, that, as the short summers prevented him from managing his farm to his liking, it would be better to give it up; and, now, the poor old man, without property or even a horse to ride upon, wanders about the town hunting for news, and will continue to wander till his legs fail him. His large family, too, (and a fine family they would have been, had a domestic father been the guide of their youth,) are mere strolling vagabonds. Though they may be found in every part of the province, they live no where. They are noted for doing one great day's work, drinking two, getting into debt, and then decamping to some remote part, to begin another great day's work.

Trot had warned me that the summers are short. I, therefore, concluded that not a day must be lost; and, in adhering to this rule, I found my lame legs of essential service. In this country there are many public duties and private necessities, which call a farmer from home, and which require to be carefully watched, if he wish to avoid contracting a disposition to wander. For myself, I had found a *home*, and had no desire to be abroad, and my feet excused me from a variety of ser-

vices. I was not fit to be a constable; for the people of our town are pretty long legged, and run amazingly when a constable comes in sight. In those days, also, it was not supposed by anybody that lame Boshy was qualified to be a jurymen. In our town, I assure you, the business of the courts is well looked to; it is never intrusted to either blind or lame. I question if there be another township in the province which supports as conscientiously the dignity of the courts. When the sheriff summons so many to attend, the rest, except my cousin Harrow, Saunders Scantocreesh, and a few others, summon themselves and their horses; and, indeed it is a fortunate thing that our people are so public spirited; for, otherwise, the lawyers would get it all their own way; and, then, I do not know what would become of the town. But my neighbours are well aware of the danger; and whenever the attornies come round, every man gets upon horseback and gallops to the court. Here, the whole of them, as often as they can be spared from Tipple's, abuse the lawyers for ruining the country. By these means the lawyers are watched, and the country well taken care of. As for myself in those days, the voice of lame Mephy would have been less listened to than the grunting of one of Snout's pigs. Instead of going to court, therefore, to abuse the lawyers, I staid at home, and wrought many a good day's work upon my farm; and this I must say had a wonderful effect upon its improvement. I have generally seen that the farmer who is often away from his own business, finds a return to it up hill work. When he does farm, labour goes on slowly, for his mind is elsewhere. On the contrary, I, who was always at home, went to work like a clock, and with a hearty good will. By these means, when my neighbours, by taking care that the lawyers should not ruin the country, became poor and embarrassed, I, by degrees, got pretty forehanded, and could relieve them in a strait.

But the increase of my property had almost subjected me to those public calls from home, which, by means of poverty and lameness, I had been hitherto enabled to avoid. When a number of the neighbours whom I had relieved in their difficulties, found it inconvenient to repay me, there was a great deal of talk in the town about getting me made a magistrate. Had any of your readers been in my situation, doubtless they would have felt

highly gratified; for, as our townsman Justice Grul, who sits in his bed till he mends his trowsers, frequently affirms, it is a high honour to be a magistrate. But the thing was scarcely mentioned, when Pumpkin and Puff set their faces against it, and the affair was dropped. Pumpkin, who had long imagined that his large house and farm entitled him to the office, looked big; and affirmed, that, were lame Meph, who had been brought up by the town, to be set over it to rule, it would be disgraced forever; and Puff, who is a gentleman, declared, that blind Bartimeus Beetle, our townsman, was fitter to distinguish colours, than a lame creature like me to sit in judgment between man and man. My friends, then, had no way of exalting me to honour, except by getting me made a captain of militia, but this the nature of my paces would not admit.

Thus, notwithstanding the good wishes of my friends, my lame carcass could neither ascend the bench, nor be adorned with a uniform and epaulette. But, to compensate for the want of honour, I was at liberty to stay at home as long as I pleased; and I recollect very well that when our magistrates and militia officers, for the sake of high honours, were neglecting their own business, my snug farm was in excellent order, and everything about my house comfortable. Let no person, however, conclude, that I either despise dignities, or would discourage those who are not lame from mounting to them as fast as they can. On the contrary, laudable ambition is well entitled to praise. When, for the sake of king and country, it submits to such hardships, as many of our magistrates and militia officers endure, it transforms the man into the patriot and hero; and these, I am sure, every loyal subject would wish to be as plentiful as potatoes. For the credit of our town be it told, that, though I be a lame creature, there is among us an abundance of legs, and feet too, ever ready to run when king and country call; and not only to run, but to make the body which they bear submit to every kind of privation and hardship which comes in their way. Many there are among us, as brave, public spirited and persevering as Captain Hector Shootem; but, perhaps, you do not know the captain.

Captain Hector Shootem, or Hec, as our youngsters usually call him when he is not upon duty, about ten years ago, was a nice, good natured young fellow. About

that time he settled upon a lot of land, got married, and no man among us was more likely to do well. Hector possessed an active disposition, and could swing an axe with any young fellow in the town; and, as he was a stout well-made lad of at least six feet high, there was every appearance that trees would fall before him like reeds before the wind. But his stately form procured him a sergentry in the militia of our town, and then the ardor of his genius gave him an elevation of thought which soared far above chopping and rolling. Hector was rather a genteel young man. With the spirit of a gentleman, also, he possessed the ambition of a soldier; and now looked forward to his present commission as the most desirable object in nature. At last, by the usual means, his desire was gratified; and, by selling his oxen, he was enabled to clothe himself in what he conceived to be martial glory. My neighbour Saunders used often to tell him that it was folly for a poor man like him, whose comfort depended upon his labour, to spend his time as he did; that if he wished to be a man of renown, he was a stout young fellow, and might easily make himself famous by lifting up his axe against thick trees; and that, as for swords, a farmer had nothing to do with them, unless he could lay his hand upon a piece of a broken one, and then, by putting it into a wooden handle, it might be very useful in the fall when the pigs were to be scraped. But Hector's military ardor was not to be repressed. His head was full of marches and countermarches, wheeling, halting, and charging. As for the sons of the forest, they did not belong to the enemy, and were never attacked.

Some of your readers must conclude that this was empty parade; for Hector was a valiant man, and never feared an enemy in his life. It is true he was not a bloodthirsty man, as no brave man is. Except killing a rabbit or a partridge occasionally, and, at one time, a weasel which had dared to commit depredations among his poultry, I never heard of his shedding the blood of any living creature. But this was because the enemy never faced him. Had he been at the battle of Waterloo, or any other great battle, the whole world would have heard of him; for upon a muster day he and his men would charge as boldly as if the enemy had been there; and if they had only dared to be there, and waited till Captain Stootem's company put them all to

the bayonet, I am sure they would have been skivered every man of them. This is not mere conjecture; for, in the battle of Scorem's Corner, which the company fought with Snout's pigs, they acted with a cool and determined bravery which excited the admiration of the whole battalion, and procured them the thanks of the commanding officer. The affair well deserves to be recorded; and, were I writing dispatches instead of chronicles, I would send you an account of it, as long as one of parson Drone's sermons upon economy.

It happened, that, as Captain Shootem and his men were marching from the field after a general muster, my neighbour Pumpkin was hunting Snout's pigs from his fields. The whole herd, headed by Mr. Goslin's boar pig Mammoth, were in full retreat; and, just as the company advanced to the sudden turn of the road where Jack Scorem's horse fell, Mammoth, who was ever at the head of all swinish mischief, rushed forward, and turned the left flank of the company, before they were apprised of the approach of the enemy. The squeeling of Mammoth, and the shouts of the soldiers, were as good as scouts to the herd; and, instantly, according to the tactics of swine upon reconnoitering occasions, there was a dead stand and a dead silence through the whole army. But, in a moment, the brave Captain Shootem was in the post of danger, and the cool behaviour and bravery of his men were beyond all praise. Halt, dress, march, charge, were uttered and executed in the same breath. Terror and confusion pervaded the enemy; and such grunting, and snorting, and blowing, and throwing up of heels, had never before been witnessed in the town. Had the cowardly rascals only waited for the charge, the carnage and bloodshed would have been terrible. As it was, it covered Captain Shootem with glory, and from that day's achievement he obtained the character of a brave and experienced officer.

That your readers may justly appreciate the merits of the captain, they ought to be informed that his military ardor and gallantry had to struggle with a great many hardships—hardships, too, which would have made my cousin Harrow, Saunders Scantocreesh, and even myself, lose all ambition for martial glory. In the pursuit of military honour, the pursuits of husbandry had been considerably overlooked, so that the captain's means of domestic comfort did not keep pace with the increase of

his family. The sale of his oxen, it is true, enabled him upon field days to make a warlike appearance, but it added little to the produce of his farm. In the mean time, the expense of treating his company and of occasional dinners with his brother officers, was an unavoidable tax, which, when brought into connexion with his farming, was not easily borne.

But beside these difficulties, the captain submitted to a great many hardships which the world never dreamed of. When he himself, upon public occasions, was gracefully adorned with the insignia of war, his little children at home were covered with coats of many colours, so assorted and sewed that it was impossible to tell to what battalion they belonged. Even the genteel appearance of the captain was not made without resorting at times to extraordinary shifts. Happening, one evening, to step over to his house about a little business, I found him in bed; because next day being a general muster, Mrs. Shootem was washing his trowsers. As my business was a little urgent, I called next morning, and found him still in bed, and the whole family in confusion. The trowsers had been hung out all night to dry, and in the morning they were gone. This was an event more appalling to a brave man than the battle of Scorem's Corner, or any other battle. To be absent from the muster, would disgrace him; and to appear upon the field without trowsers, might put him under arrest, or at least send him to Coventry. But Mrs. Shootem, who is a nice, handy body, possessed a white petticoat, and, in a trice, the captain was rigged out in trowsers as good as new; and, I must say, that in a petticoat he was just as good a soldier as when he wore his own trowsers. Nobody could discern the least difference. For the credit of our town, however, it must be stated that the trowsers were not stolen. That night some of Snout's pigs happened to be out on a scouting party, and carried them off. Whether this was done to revenge themselves upon the brave Captain Shootem for their disgraceful defeat, nobody knew; but, sure enough they were afterwards found in one of Snout's pens, administering to the cleanliness and comfort of a numerous family. After their discovery, it became an inquiry in the battalion, how the captain happened to be better provided with trowsers than his brother officers. This led to the discovery of the affair of the petticoat; and

vor after he received the name of a place in the next province, of which some of your readers may have heard.

At first, Mrs. Shootem was wonderfully elated with the honours of her husband, and ate her potatoes with a great deal of pleasure. When the captain, also, returned a little gay from a muster or a militia dinner, he would kiss her gallantly, and sing,

None but the brave deserve the fair ;

And Mrs. Shootem was a very happy woman. At last, however, finding it all song and no supper, she got a little discontented ; and, when the captain commenced his music, she would interrupt him with a stanza of grumbling. But he was none of those valiant men who are brave in the field and henpecked at home. He who had discomfited a whole herd of swine, was not to be fooled by a wife. After the affair of the petticoat, also, imagining that since its transformation into trowsers, Mrs. Shootem was plotting to wear them, he resisted her boldly ; and, henceforward, neither kiss nor song entered into their family communings. In this state matters continued till lately, when a number of the neighbours began to complain to him pretty loudly of the scarcity of cash. Captain Hector did not like to be troubled with either their grievances or grumbings, and, in order to be out of the way of them, resolved to take a look at the Lines, and see what the enemy were doing. But Mr. Catchem, hearing of his intention, assured him that the villains who used to annoy us at the Lines, were all reformed now, and peaceably minding their own affairs. The sheriff farther declared, that he himself really needed the presence of the captain exceedingly, having got into his house Bill Scamp and a number of vagabonds as bad, who regarded neither law nor gospel, and therefore he begged him to accept a lodging in his house, and keep them in order.

For my own part, though I had always a wish to be respected, I was never satisfied that honour abroad would make my spouse and me so happy as a snug farm affording us every means of domestic comfort. On this account, I left public honours to others who were more willing than myself to enjoy them at the expense of a hungry belly, a starved family, and a burden of debt ; and, when others were abroad, as honourable men often are, I kept at home, improving my farm, and advancing

step by step to that abundance of domestic enjoyments which I and my family possess. For this I am indebted partly to my lame legs and partly to the advice of our worthy old parson.

Some time after our marriage, Mr. Drone stepped over to see what we were doing. At the house he found every thing in excellent order as usual, and my spouse busily employed about her domestic affairs. Having learned that I was clearing up a new field, he came out, and found me as black and dirty as burnt logs would make me. At first I felt a little ashamed, and began to apologise to the parson; but he interrupted me by saying, "*Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*" When Mr. Drone used these words, I looked at him with some surprise and said, that, when Christ came, I hoped he would find me about a better employment. We then sat down upon a log together; and, as nearly as I can recollect, the following is the amount of what the parson said:—

"Many of our townsmen sadly mistake both the nature of religion and the road to respectability. They, perhaps, say their prayers, read the scriptures, and attend the public ordinances of religion; and in these exercises they would wish Christ to find them. In the mean time, there is about them a want of industry—an eagerness for amusement, and an ambition for what they conceive to be honour, altogether inconsistent with a religious life. The deity has endowed man with activity: he has placed him in circumstances, in which activity expended upon industrious pursuits acquires property; and property enables him to enjoy the comforts of life, and to be the friend of every good and benevolent design. Intrusting the human race with all this beneficence, he has also said to them, *occupy till I come.* Can he, then, who has disregarded the injunction of his master, say at his appearance, *I have been glorifying thee upon earth; I have been finishing the works which thou gavest me to do.* It is the industrious and benevolent christian whom his lord esteems: the man who combines religious principle and worship with activity, industry, and diffusive benevolence. Whether he be found praying, or rolling logs in his field, *well done good and faithful servant* will be the salutation of Christ.

"Mephibosheth, if you wish to be a respectable man, attend to this course, and connect it with the words of

inspiration, *them that honour me, I will honour; and they who despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* Many of our people are eager for honour, but they seek not that honour which cometh from God; they neglect their duty, and, of course, seek honour in a path where want of respectability awaits them. They conceive that were they only justices or militia officers, they would be honourable men. But a fool exalted to dignity, is merely a fool more conspicuous. Besides, where there is either a want of means to maintain the dignity of an office, or of talents to discharge its duties, the office is disgraced, and the holder contemptible. Hence it is that Grub, with the high dignity of his office, is the jest of everybody; and many of our militia officers, too, with their show abroad, and their wretchedness at home, are very little better. They think themselves to be great men; but for the sake of a little show, to sacrifice industry and domestic comfort, proves them to be great fools; and with the sensible part of the community, this is their character. On the other hand, the life in which you are employed is a course which the deity honours with the means of enjoyment; and these means, used as every religious man ought to employ them, never fail to secure both respectability and influence."

Our parson seemed to me to speak very sensibly. I therefore stuck to my farm, and, sure enough, everything turned out exactly as the parson said. Justice Grub is old Grub still; maintaining the high dignity of his office, and mending his trowsers in bed. Captain Shootem has gone to live with the sheriff; and I, whose friendship both justices and militia officers are now very willing to cultivate, am

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XIV.

GENTLEMEN,—

I formerly stated that in this country there are many public duties and private necessities which call a farmer from home. I showed you also, that from a number of the first, I was relieved, by being neither a constable nor juryman, justice of the peace nor captain of militia. I shall now explain to you how I managed those private necessities which lead so many of our young people astray.

It has often occurred to me that our townspeople and Snout's pigs resemble each other very much. Whether pigs derive any instruction or amusement from their mutual gruntings, I do not know; but, though they are often quarrelling, and fighting, and tormenting each other, they always keep in company. Exactly in the same way, though our townsmen are needed at home, and might, with good management, be very comfortable there, they would rather meet at Tipple's, the court, or any other place of general resort; and though, on this account, they suffer many domestic privations, and occasionally, when abroad, get themselves beat and abused like pigs, they return again to the same place and company with as much eagerness as if nothing had happened. On mentioning to parson Drone this feature of the character of our people, he observed that the causes of it are simple, and the cure very easy, if they were only willing to be cured of a disease which had destroyed the industry, domestic comfort, and religion of the town.

"Man," said the parson, "is, by the principles of his nature, attached to society. He cannot live alone, without a perversion of mind or a deprivation of those social enjoyments for which he was formed. But the most of our townsmen, though married, have no *home*. The link which attached them to the wife of their choice, has been broken; and, hence, the society which they cannot find in their own houses, they expect in Tipple's, or in other places of public resort.

"Besides, in the human constitution, a principle of curiosity or a desire of knowledge, as philosophers term it, is an ingredient of powerful operation. When the

mind is not adding to its stock of information, it becomes dissatisfied. But our people in general have not acquired that intelligence which can enable them, by reflection and reasoning, to deduce from the stores of their own minds additional knowledge; and they have no disposition, by a perusal of books, to acquire the valuable information which these would afford them. Still, their desire to know something continues in operation; and to allay the uneasiness which always attends ungratified desire, they will neglect their business and travel about the town, to learn what their neighbours are doing; and when a few of them meet, a conversation about Snout's pigs, or any other trifle, as it fixes their attention and removes the uneasiness of the mind, becomes, in the meantime, a sufficient gratification.

"But that is not the worst of it. Repeated absence from home ingrafts upon the mind habits which are stronger and more pernicious than the perversion of original desire. Many of our people are often abroad when they have really no cause. They can no more stay upon their farms, than their dogs can stay at home upon Sundays; and along with this wandering disposition, some of them, you know, have contracted a habit of drinking which now forces them abroad, in the face of reason and religion, and at the expense of true enjoyment in time and happiness forever.

"Married persons, who would avoid such terrible evils, have only to unite in making their house a *home* to them both: and whoever does so, will find society there, which reduces, within reasonable bounds, all inclination for other kinds of social intercourse. With respect to the desire of knowledge, no man who gives it a rational direction finds it necessary to quiet his uneasiness by running about the town. When he cannot enjoy useful conversation with his neighbours, by the perusal of books he will converse with both the living and the dead; and, from the stores of his own mind, he will derive topics of reflection which will leave him no taste for the company and gratifications that draw other persons to Tipple's."

How far the parson was right, I shall leave your readers to judge. For myself I can only say, that, having found a home and society there, I had no wish to wander. I gradually furnished myself, also, with a good collection of books and a newspaper; and, though no

man enjoys a rational conversation with more relish than myself, I have never felt the least inclination either to go to Tipple's, or to talk about Snout's pigs. By these means, my necessities to go from home were considerably abridged.

In the course of my life I have frequently observed that, as a domestic disposition delights in *home*, it has fewer causes to be abroad. Every person endeavors to be near those things upon which he imagines his happiness to depend; and, in proceeding upon this principle, a farmer of domestic habits who manages well, easily relieves himself from a great deal of wandering. Some of the straggling of our town arises from domestic wants. Whatever necessaries a farmer does not derive from his own land, he must collect from a different quarter. Now, among us, there have been always a great many articles which our townsmen have judged it cheaper to buy than to raise. To provide themselves, therefore, with what a family needs, much time and running about are unavoidably expended. You are aware also, I presume, that, in this country, purchasing and paying belong to different sides of a book. A man in our town would sooner think of asking parson Drone to preach one of his longest sermons upon a week day, than he would think of buying an article without three, six, or twelve month's credit. On this account, after a great deal of running about and lost time, a necessary article is purchased at a high rate, (for all our townsmen stand out for great prices,) and then it makes a fair entry upon the one side of the book. But, before it finds its way to the other, much additional lost time and running about, I assure you, are indispensable; and, after all, the high price must be paid. But, though my legs are pretty long, as I stated to you before, I was never any great hand at the running; and, indeed, I have rarely tried it, except when I was going *home*. Besides, I did not like to be from home. I have always had a notion, too, that time is money. I therefore concluded that it would be best for me to raise upon my own farm the provisions which others collected from the different parts of the town. By these means, no time was lost. Labour, also, was expended as it ought to be; and, upon my fields and crops, this had a wonderful effect. But, after all, I must give our townsmen the praise of being, to an industrious farmer, a very useful and accommoda-

ting sort of folks ; they find it cheapest to buy provisions, and I sell them. Thus, by the produce of my farm, my travelling necessities were farther reduced.

But a number of our people raise considerable of produce upon their farms, and, of course, sell occasionally ; and when this happens, I do assure you, it costs them no little labour and travelling. As they are often going about, they cannot be expected to have a great deal to spare. On this account, it is requisite to dispose of what they have to the best advantage : that is, to sell it for the promise of a great price, and the payment as soon after as possible. But, in our town, those who have money in their pocket, are very shy about promises ; and when they do make them, they are rarely of a size sufficient to please persons who need and expect great prices. The people of our town, therefore, generally deal with such as Moses Slack, who is poor from thoughtless, ill management ; or with the like of Trot's sons, who, when the day of payment arrives, are not easily found. By proceeding upon this plan, some of them become rich in promises and notes of hand, which, by the bye, are amongst us a staple article of trade. But though they expend much time and travel looking after the promisers of great prices, they usually continue still rich in promises ; and as for the notes of hand, they are at last sold for what they will bring, to Truck and other chaps, who put them into some lawyer's hands, just to keep him out of mischief and prevent him from ruining the country.

From all this labour, and loss of time and trucking, I relieved myself by very simple means. As I owed no man anything myself, I was not willing to keep a register of other people's debts ; and, therefore, though I was as forward as any of the neighbours to help a poor settler beginning the world, the hope of a great price could never induce me to sell to idle folks or to ill-doing vagabonds. My dealings have uniformly been with those whose payment gave me no trouble. But, as some of your farming readers may not believe that I could always meet with good and ready pay, I shall show them how I managed.

Some farmers go to market with a bad article, and, perhaps, meeting with an ignorant purchaser, obtain a price which they do not deserve. By and bye, they carry him a better ; but the good article brings rogue

along with it. Other farmers again are uniformly noted for the inferior quality of their produce. In both cases they must hawk about for a customer—receive a low price, and then return home, complaining of dull markets and poor pay. I, on the other hand, considering that the world generally treats men as it finds them, was careful in the first place to establish a character. Whatever I sold, I sold it as it was, and at a reasonable rate, for good payers always expect to buy reasonably. During the whole course of my life, also, quality as well quantity has occupied my attention. On this account, my produce of every kind was generally good; and this, you may depend upon it, is a great help to me in these dull times, for now it is bespoke. All your readers will now be satisfied, I hope, that a farmer, by much running about, does not always arrive at the best market at last.

But beside the preceding causes of absence from home, the store, the mill, and the blacksmith's shop, are serious items among the travelling necessities of our town. As for the church, it scarcely deserves to be mentioned. Though our people generally go there, I never knew it gave any of them a habit of travelling. On the contrary, were they obliged to hear a sermon from our parson every time they go abroad, I do think they would become a very domestic sort of folks; for Mr. Drone has scarcely finished upon Sunday, when they all hurry homeward with as much haste as Snout's pigs when the dogs are at their heels. But, if any of them go to the other places which I have mentioned, the case is altogether different. Then, nobody can tell when they will be home. When they leave their own houses, it is true, they are in a great hurry, as our people going from home usually are. But, as they get over the road they get over their hurry too; for, except my cousin Harrow, Saunders, and a few others, I never, at those places, found our townsmen in haste. On the contrary, they will very contentedly hang about them the whole day, discussing the news, and a number of half pints which they fetch from Tipple's; and then, toward evening, instead of sending for any more, they find it most convenient to adjourn to his house and stay all night.

But neither the store, the mill, nor the blacksmith's shop, ever cost me much travel or lost time. The produce of my farm saved me many a journey to Mr. Led-

ger's. My spouse and I were a homespun couple, so that neither silks nor superfine produced travelling from home; and when I did go to the store, I must say that I always found Mr. Ledger a very considerate gentleman. To the neighbours who were crowding about his counter, he would say, that, as they were in no hurry, he would serve Mephibosheth first. To the mill, my journeyings were comparatively few: I did not, like many of the neighbours, for the purpose of being often there, carry my grain thither by a bushel at a time; and, as for old Tubal, when he saw me enter his shop, he knew that my pocket contained the money to pay him for the job; and, if even Puff's horse was there, he was put out till Mephibosheth's was shod.

As yet, I have said nothing about borrowing and lending, which, in our town, are both the cause of no small travel. With respect to borrowing, this, in ordinary cases, was with me out of the question. Without the necessary tools, a farmer can no more work to advantage than a tradesman. My first care, therefore, has always been, to provide myself with every farming article, which I keep in good order, and each in its own place. By these means, when I proceed to do anything, I save myself the trouble of running about to borrow bad articles; for borrowed articles are generally in bad order, and need a great deal of repairing before they can be used; and my own tools, carefully kept, enable me to go to work at once. Thus, my job is always well done; and, in the same time, I can do much more than any of the neighbours.

With respect to lending my farming articles, I confess I have ever been very shy. I consider them as part of my farm; and, except to a poor settler beginning the world, I have never been willing to let them out of my possession. At first, this procured for me the name of a particular kind of man; but it saved me a great deal of travel, (for no man in our town, except Saunders and a few others, carries home a borrowed article;) and, as I am in other things, as obliging as any of the neighbours, they are now used with my way, and do not take it ill, and my farming tools keep at home pretty well. Upon this subject, and indeed upon farming in general, I derived much useful instruction from the experience of my neighbour Moses Slack.

Mosey, as we usually call him, is a good natured,

easy man. Unlike most of our townsmen, who, as I said before, are pretty long-legged, Mosey, from his youth, was a squab little fellow. Nature had given him a good broad face, and a quantity of nose which equalled old Trot's; but some how or other she put her foot upon this last member after it was made; and ever since, its breadth has been much more remarkable than its length. Mosey, of course, cared nothing for news; nor, indeed, did he care a great deal for anything else. My neighbour Saunders frequently says that nature never intended him to be his own master, and that if he had only got his face blackballed when he was young, and been put into the hands of some decent master who would have provided for him and made him work, he would have been a very good negro. Certain it is, that Slack has never managed well for himself. But still Saunders may be mistaken; for he says exactly the same thing of many of our people who have as long legs and sharp noses as any in the town.

Though Mosey could work very well in company, he would just as well let it alone. Yet he cannot be called lazy, for he has spent a very busy life and wrought a great deal. About the time that my spouse and I were married, Mosey was joined in Wedlock to one of Mrs. Drab's daughters; and, as he settled upon a lot not far from mine, I had frequent opportunities of observing his progress. Before his marriage I helped him to put up a little log hut, which, he said, would do very well for a sheep house when he raised his new frame. Into this the young couple entered, and there they continued till it came down about their ears. Both he and his wife were fond of fine clothes, which, like all the Drab family, they were better at having on than taking care of. Like most young folks, too, they liked to live pretty well; so that, by the beginning of next summer, Mosey, instead of labouring upon his farm, was obliged to work the most of his time to Mr. Ledger, and the neighbours who had supplied him with provisions. His own crop, therefore, was small, and ill taken care of. Now, a life of this kind is much more easily begun than altered. He who spends his wages before they are due, is always behind with his payments. He is, of course, the servant of his creditors; and, when he happens to work for himself, everything which he does he does to a disadvantage. What should have provided Mosey with

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the necessary articles for getting on with his farm, had found its way to the back and belly of the young couple; and even those things which he had, as he was often from home working for other people, were always out of order. When he needed a little firewood, a horse was to be sought among the neighbours. After finding the horse, perhaps finding the collar cost him a great deal of running. Then his own traces or the dog was lost; and when these were found, and Mosey had got to the woods, probably the first stroke separated the axe from the handle, which had been split before. Mosey never thought of going to the mill till there was no flour in the house. Then in a great hurry a bushel was threshed—carried thither, and brought home at the expense of a day's waiting and a half pint or two. In this manner he managed the whole of his business.

When farming is so conducted, little can be raised. Mosey had, therefore, a great deal of travelling about the town in search of provisions; and as may be supposed, he traded with those who expect great prices, so that at last he became very poor. With this kind of life, however, he dragged on, till he owned a few fields, which, partly from want of thought and partly from necessity, received from him a miserable kind of cultivation. Mosey, in the management of his land, was a rigid adherent of the old system of farming. This, some of your readers may not understand. I shall therefore explain it.

During winter, every farmer, by means of his cattle, makes, about his barn, so much manure, which, when he can find sufficient labour in the spring, he lays on his land. I say, when he can find sufficient leisure, for the manure is not always used. A number of years ago, I recollect, our parson advised old Stot to lay lime upon his field; but the old man very justly observed, that to toil himself burning lime would be folly, when he could never find time to carry out the dung of his cattle. If a farmer's hurry, however, permit him to lay his manure upon his fields, they first yield him potatoes; and then wheat, as long as it will grow. When the wheat fails him, the ground is fit for oats; and after the oats refuse to grow any longer, it is in good state for laying down in grass. But it somehow happens, that, though our people who follow this rotation, sow very good grass, it turns always into sorrel. A few years after, the land is

again broken up, and yields a special good crop of weeds, which, as our townsmen never sowed them, produce a great deal of wondering how they happened to get there. This is the system of farming which Mosey followed; and, indeed, I may say, it is the general system of the town. How it may fare with the rest, I cannot exactly tell; but Mr. Ledger, after long forbearance, has been forced to sell out Mosey, and be satisfied with partial payment, for to put him in jail was of no use; and now he is jobbing about among the neighbours, till he can get away to the Ohio, Upper Canada, or to some other country better worth the living in.

From the experience of Mosey, as I formerly observed, I derived much useful instruction. Though he laboured his little fields so mightily, as rarely to give him rest, his crops were miserable. The principal part of them was weeds, and even these were not like the stout healthy fellows which I occasionally pick out of my own ground. All Mosey's ploughing and harrowing could not bring even weeds to perfection. I could therefore easily see that fields, like cattle, unless they be well fed and well taken care of, have a beggarly appearance, and are very little worth; and, during the course of my life, I have uniformly treated them in a similar way. For my cattle, I provide abundance of fodder; and for my ground, as much manure as possible; and, as I expect from my cattle only reasonable work, from my fields I never seek more frequent nor more abundant crops than nature and good heart enable them to afford. By pursuing this plan, I have always plentiful returns; and, as I labour for profit, I take care to raise only what is saleable. Though our townsmen purchase a great many useless articles, nobody buys weeds, for they have all plenty of their own, and therefore I never raise them.

The experience of Mosey, and also of my neighbour Pumpkin, showed me that neither labour nor large fields are sufficient to make a farmer wealthy. No man in our town ploughs so much, nor, in haying time, goes over so much ground, as Pumpkin; yet he is obliged to purchase flour for his pies, and his cattle are half starved in winter. I therefore resolved to try how a less farm, kept in good heart, would do. This diminished the toil of fenoing, and indeed labour of every kind; but strange as it may appear to some of your farmer readers, it increased the produce of my land wonder-

fully ; and now, beside maintaining my own family well, I supply Pumpkin and many of the neighbours.

Thus, by getting on in my own way, I own a snug farm. I have also bought a good property for Abner ; and I can tell you a pretty long and feasible story about where the cash has been going to in these hard times. Let no person, however, suppose that I am one of the great folks in our town. On the contrary, neither Mr. Cribbage nor any of the Sippit family would demean themselves so far as to ask the like of me to visit them. Still, among our folks, I pass for a remarkable kind of man : *I have a pair of lame legs—I stay at home—I mind my own affairs—I wear homespun, and I have become wealthy by farming.* In short, as I have been all along telling you, I am

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XV.

GENTLEMEN,—

Since I wrote you last, I stepped over one afternoon to converse an hour with my neighbour Saunders, who, as you may see, does not want rough, good sense. Upon the same day Puff's farm happened to be sold to Mr. Ledger. Puff is one of our great folks, and, as he says himself, has done a great deal to keep up the credit of the town. Indeed few among us carried their heads higher than the Puff family, or expended so much upon dress, chaises, and other sort of finery. But Mr. Ledger, who has also the credit of our town as much at heart as anybody, took a different view of the subject, and, by foreclosing the mortgage upon Puff's farm, interrupted his exertions to make us a respectable township.

When I was sitting with Saunders, the neighbours were returning from the sale in very gallant style, some in sleighs and others on horseback, and all hurrying to Tipple's or some other public place, in order to enjoy themselves a little before returning to domestic life. As they were galloping past my neighbours, one of his

little boys, who was wonderfully delighted with their appearance, came running in, and asked his father to buy him a horse. Saunders, though a good-natured man, is a little hasty, and wital, a deadly enemy to our townsmen's general practice of riding in chariots and on horses, which he calls the abomination of the Egyptians. All at once, therefore, his hand was raised high for correcting uses, but, in looking at the size of the little chap, he forgot that he had been angry, and brought it down gently over his head, telling him to be a good boy till spring, and that when Mortar the mason came to build the chimneys for his new house, he would get him a mare. At the same time Saunders observed, that though I had written a great deal about the management of my farm, the chronicles of our town would be incomplete, if they did not contain an account of the management of my children. Many fine young families amongst us, he said, were ruined through the thoughtless folly and ill conduct of their parents. The youth of this country, he added, were acute and active, and if they were only brought up as they ought to be, would become judicious and respectable men; but many of the parents were fools, and their children, as might be expected, turned out to be rogues and vagabonds.

You must not, however, imagine that all our young people are wickedly inclined. Miss Clippit, though formerly a miserable sinner, is now, as she says herself, a very religious young woman. In her own opinion, she knows more about experiences and marks of grace than parson Drone himself; and some of those who have attended her ministrations even say that she can preach a better sermon. I could mention many others, who, when they have no opportunity to frolic or play at cards, very punctually attend those night meetings where miserable sinners like Miss Clippit are all at once converted into uncommonly religious people; and you may depend upon it they do not attend without profit; for, when they go to Tipple's, which they do very often, they sing so many hymns over their grog, that he frequently declares his own house to be as uncomfortable to him as parson Drone's church upon Sunday.

Our people, indeed, do a great deal for the instruction of youth. All the Cribbage family, as soon as they are able to crawl about, acquire the first principles of arithmetic, the art of castle building, and a world of in-

genuity of different kinds, by means of the cards. The Sippits, too, as soon as they can handle a cup, are initiated into the mysteries of genteel life, by having tea parties and frolics for their little companions. When our youth get a little farther on, the boys are taught to get upon the mare and go errands, and also to read and write a little by Mr. Pat O'Rafferty, or some other teacher as good. As for the girls, they are intrusted to Mrs. M'Cackle, who, I assure you, does ample justice to their education. Though this lady has never been at court, nor, indeed, farther into what is called the world, than to edgo in at Sippit's of an evening, she knows all about fashionable life, and can teach our young ladies to talk as glibly, sit as uprightly, and walk as much according to rule as any boarding-school mistress can teach a boarding school miss. Besides she gives them many other accomplishments no less valuable. When they return home to get husbands and manage families, they can paint flowers and make filligree work to admiration. They can also sing and dance delightfully; and some of them can even play upon the piano forte so well, that in frolicking times old Driddle is now often out of employment. As for cookery and other things connected with housekeeping, Mrs. M'Cackle and her pupils are careful to leave them to vulgar folks. Indeed, to act otherwise would be a violation of common sense; for were any rational person to see one of our fine young ladies in her canton crapes, stooping over a washing tub, scrubbing a floor, or cooking a dinner, it would not appear less contrary to nature than the sight of one of our genteel young farmers, in his superfine long tail coat, ploughing or harrowing on a fine summer's day.

With respect to the religious instruction of youth, also, our town is provided with a variety of means. Our old parson, upon Sundays, preaches to all who are willing to hear him; and indeed upon other days too he labours among us as much as the care of his own cattle and pigs will permit. Mrs. Sham and Miss Clippit, as I told you before, are likewise labourers in word and doctrine. In addition to these, our town enjoys the ministrations of parson Howl, and also of young Yelpit, who was lately converted and called himself to the preaching of the gospel; so that upon the whole, our youth are by no means destitute of religious instructors. Mr. Drone, it is true, does not seem to relish the assist-

ance of these helpers in the word. Tipple, who dislikes the parson, says that our clergyman has been all his life praying for labourers to come into the vineyard, and now when they are come he is not satisfied. But my neighbour Saunders, who, since his conversion failed, holds them in utter abhorrence, declares that the whole seed and generation of them are under the delusion of satan, and no better than Muckle John Gib and Mrs. Buchan, who tried in Scotland to lead silly people off their feet with their ravings and nonsense; and that Providence has sent them and their erroneous doctrines into our town, not for the improvement but for the destruction of youth. Old fools, he says, gallop about the country after them and their meetings, and in the meantime their children at home have liberty to run into every kind of mischief; and young people, too, who follow them, get into a notion that they are converted, when they are only lazy, idle vagabonds, fit for nothing else but singing hymns and cheating; that if he had got his will when Mrs. Sham bit her husband's thumb to the bone, he would have made her eat her own tongue to the root; and that, as for Howl and Yelpt, fellows as ignorant as his stots, he would send them to the house of correction, where, if they did not learn some sense, they would at least get the laziness squeezed out of them, and be of some use in the world.

How far Saunders' views and plans are correct, I shall not pretend to affirm; nor, indeed, will any of your readers be well qualified to judge, till they peruse that part of the chronicles of our town which directly records the life and ministrations of parson Drone and his helpers. From what I have stated, however, they will all perceive that if the youth among us be not very religious, it is not for the want of public instructors.

In addition to these means of instruction, many of our young people receive also reproof and correction in abundance. Some parents, it is true, do not flog their children at home, nor would they permit Mr. Pat O'Rafferty to correct them; and, indeed, no wonder; for, when Pat was giving Judy her schooling, it cost her many a pair of black eyes. Puff, and others of our gentlemen frequently say that the poor little dears are not sent to a teacher to be snooled and beaten, but to get on with their education. It is certain, however, that all our youth do not serve such an easy apprenticeship. In

Mrs. Grumble's family, and among all her connexions, everything begins with a grudge and ends with a scolding. When Mrs. Sham, too, returns from her meetings, her girls, as they well deserve, receive both scolding and beating for their neglect of family affairs; and Trot's sons, who always left the work when he went after the news, were, at his return, sure of a good pounding.

With some of these means of education, our old parson was never well satisfied. For the cards in particular he was at no time an advocate. In discussing the point he has often told us, that, before a religious man receive them into his house, he should be sure that their admission originates in a degree of good sense and piety, superior to the principles of those who have reprobated cards as an amusement unfriendly alike to personal religion and the sober education of youth; and, also, that before any parent employ them for domestic recreation, he should ask himself, if, along with them, he be willing to grapple with that share of misery which they have entailed upon the world.

How it is with you in Halifax, I do not know; but the experience of our townsmen presents no encouragement to any rational man to be a great player at cards. Cribbage, and a number of gentlemen, have frequent evening parties in each other's houses by rotation, where they empty the pockets of each other with much apparent good humour upon all sides. But the losers invariably return home in a rage, abusing the winners, and sometimes declaring that they had been invited merely for the purpose of swindling them out of their money in order to pay for their supper. Not that any of our genteel people are swindlers, for a card player you know may fleece and even ruin his neighbour, and yet be as honest and honourable as any other gentleman like himself; but losses beget ill humour, and some how or other ill humour mistakes successful gamesters for rogues.

In our town, also, Swap, Truck, and other chaps of the same sort, are great hands at the cards; and between their amusement, and drinking, swearing and fighting, frequently spend whole nights in Tipple's. But though the happiness of a life of this kind be great, it is exposed at times to unexpected interruption. Not long ago it was reported among us that in the heat of

one of their broils the devil himself was so scandalized at their conduct, that he appeared personally to command the peace. The poor fellows, of course, were dreadfully alarmed, and talked of going to parson Howl to get themselves converted. But it turned out to be the brother of Mr. Goslin's black wench, who happened to be going past pretty early in the morning, and hearing the noise, looked in at the window to see what was the matter. When the truth spunked out, the chaps returned to the cards, and deferred their conversion till they would be more at leisure.

With the frolicking part of the education of youth, our old parson was always displeased. In adverting to this point, he has frequently said, "Young people need amusements, but both the nature and extent of their pleasures should be carefully watched. The youthful mind pants for enjoyment; and what it desires, it is prone to consider as the grand object of life." But in the present state of human existence, beside enjoyment, there is much duty to be performed and adversity to be endured. Parents, therefore, by their own reason and experience, should correct the views and regulate the passions of youth—not mislead and inflame their minds by the over-weening indulgence of injudicious affection. Amusements ought not to be withheld from children; but every parent who loves his offspring so as to consult their happiness, will study to render their youthful pleasures subservient to the duties of life, and to that rational enjoyment for which life is designed. Parents who act otherwise, are the worst enemies to the happiness of their offspring, and their children will repay them with retributions of misery. It grieves me to say, that in the experience of many of you, truth speaks for itself. What are those whose youth has passed away in frolicking amusements? Have they arrived at religion? at respectability in life? at the enjoyment of happiness? They are the idle, wandering, drinking, bundling part of the town; in youth, characterised by their follies; in old age, loaded with contempt and wretchedness."

Though our people enjoy many a comfortable nap at church, whenever the parson preached upon this topic, almost every one imagined that Mr. Drone was pointing at home, and not preaching to other people only, as in ordinary cases; and on this account, anger set all dis-

position to nod at defiance. To vindicate their own conduct, also, they would abuse the parson as by far too hard upon young people. The Sippit family in particular never failed to revile him for a bigot, whose narrow, contracted mind made no allowance for the sprightliness of youth. He was of no use in the town, they said, except to give young people a dislike to religion, for he was never satisfied unless they were praying or pouring over their bodies. Religion, they would add, was never intended to make youth miserable; and, accordingly, to show that they knew much better than the parson, and would not be priest-ridden, when Mr. Drone preached upon training up children, the Sippits improved his doctrine by a tea party and frolic, which usually concluded with a bundling.

When the remarks of the Sippits were repeated to the parson, he would merely reply that probably he might be a bigot, but that the point for them to consider was whether he had told them the truth, and whether, when they were misrepresenting him, they might not be cheating themselves out of that religion which they would find very necessary when affliction or death knocked at the door; "and let me further tell you," he would say, "that a great deal of frolicking, and a life such as human beings ought to lead, are utterly incompatible. Those who give the heart to pleasure, are not lovers of God, and so it fares for them. They take the frolicking first, and leave their pouring upon the bible and prayers till a period when these may afford them neither the improvement nor peace which their situation needs." And sure enough, when Miss Sippit was lately attacked with the pleurisy, there was a sad to do in the family.

I formerly told you that Miss Dinah Goslin began to droop after Miss Sippit's tea party and frolic. This young lady, too, by dancing and bustling about to make her company comfortable, had overheated herself, and was in consequence seized with a cold, which terminated in pleuritic affection. At that period, along with the disease, the thoughts of dying naturally occurred. Now, the person who contemplates the grave, also savors to look beyond it, and from a consideration of the future, insensibly turns to a recollection of the past. But to poor Miss Sippit, the recollection of frolicking times did not link itself with the grateful and desirable hope of future enjoyment. Her pleasures had perished with

the using, and their place was occupied by a variety of thoughts which neither brightened her prospects nor soothed her mind. She would have gladly turned to evidences of her religious improvement, but memory interposed, and supplied her with the recollection of times in which a view of religion, as the essence of life and a preparation for death, made her miserable; and, as a rude intruder, was banished by amusement. And though she had formerly supposed that dying persons have only to be sorry for their sins—receive forgiveness, and then leave the world comfortably, now she was very sorry indeed, and yet a stranger to hope.

Old Mr. Sippit, who is an indulgent parent, perceiving his daughter in this state of mind and upon the brink of the grave, was very much grieved. He told her not to distress herself—she had always been a dutiful child, and was now going to a merciful father, from whom she had nothing to fear. But her own judgment made her out as a lover of pleasure and not a lover of God; and though, of her religion in general her conceptions were crude, some how or other she perceived distinctly that death introduces retributions of justice, which are not blended with the forgiving fondness of doting affection. On this account, the cheering consolations of her father were administered in vain.

To relieve her mind, therefore, he next proposed to read to her the bible. This, indeed, was an employment of which he was not very fond; for he had experienced, when a boy, that it always made him dull and melancholy. But he had heard that it was of use to persons who are dying; and though he did not see exactly how it could cheer up the mind of his daughter, he was very willing to try it, however disagreeable to himself. From what I have stated, you will perceive that the old man was not very well qualified to make an appropriate selection of parts, and indeed when he was going to begin he found himself puzzled. He recollected, however, that when he and his friends had occasionally discussed religion over their wine after dinner, it was frequently remarked that the book of Proverbs contained a large fund of sound morality. It occurred to him, therefore, that, as his daughter was perplexed about her sins, he could not do better than teach her about her duty; and, according, as an introduction to spiritual relief, he read to her the first chapter.

It is not necessary to tell your readers what the first chapter of the Proverbs contain; for, as they are not going to die soon, like Miss Sippit, they do not need to be instructed; besides I am not sure that any of them have the least curiosity to know. I can assure them, however, that as the old gentleman proceeded, his daughter listened with increasing eagerness; and when he had concluded the lesson, he found that all the long speeches of Job's three comforters did not produce so much misery as the simple reading of the first chapter of Proverbs had planted in the breast of his child. She told him that it marked her character and sealed her doom. "I never," said she, "attended to the instructions of Dr. Drone: I am falling into the hands of the living God."

When things were in this state, though the Sippits did not like the parson, they were glad to send for him, and indeed I may say that in our town all who revile Mr. Drone are very anxious to enjoy his presence when adversity or death visits their families. By his instructions, the poor girl's mind became considerably composed. She was very penitent for the past and hopeful for the future, and firmly resolved if Providence spared her she would live in a very different manner. In a short time her disease assumed a favorable appearance, and she began to recover. The parson then told her that he had always viewed a death bed repentance as a suspicious kind of religion, and now it became her to prove that her penitence had not been forced out by fear. The young lady's mind was in that chastened state which every person feels when the cessation of severe affliction administers relief. She was, therefore, profuse in her professions and promises. At length, complete health returned, and with it the absence of all those gloomy thoughts which had alarmed her mind, and to-night she is going to have a large tea party and frolic to celebrate her recovery. Our old parson does not seem to be much disappointed. On mentioning to him the result of his labours, he only said, "*Education which begins with frolicking is not likely to improve into godliness; but though frolickers should live an hundred years, and rejoice in them all, let them remember the days of darkness: for they shall be many.*"

With respect to my own children I would only observe, that I have always endeavored to conduct their

education according to the directions of our worthy old parson, on which account, as well as for other reasons which were formerly stated, our townfolk account me a rather odd sort of man. The most of our people keep Mr. Drone, not to instruct them, but to preach to them upon Sundays; and, except when they are sick or dying, they take special good care. I assure you, that he attends to his own duty, without interfering with any part of their management. I, on the other hand, have been always anxious to receive from him instruction as well as preaching; and I must say for our parson, that, in following his advice about the management of youth, I have every reason to be satisfied with the result. My children, though not perhaps as white as the old crow imagined her brood to be, are strangers to those habits which have forced many of our people to accept the sympathy of the sheriff; and from their general conduct my spouse and I derive as much satisfaction as reasonable parents should expect from youth. What instructions our clergyman occasionally gave me respecting education, I may probably at some future period put upon record in the chronicles of our town.

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE.

LETTER XVI.

GENTLEMEN,—

Since I began to write my own life, a variety of events has occurred in our town: some of a pleasing and others of an afflicting kind. But the greater part of them it is not necessary to mention, for your readers would care about them just as little as our people care about the society which Saunders and a few others have begun, in order to improve the agriculture of the town. I shall therefore send you only a few brief notices, to show you how we are getting on; and first of all I may observe, that, for anything I can see, Mr. Catohem, poor gentleman, is likely to be ruined. I do not mean that he neglect his duty: but nobody will employ him: creditors now say that it is of no use either to sell property or put debtors in jail.

On the other hand, our townsmen who have been allowed to go at large, have, I assure you, been active in

no ordinary degree. Between travelling to Mr. Gampus' store, (which by the bye is now pretty well emptied,) attending the courts, looking into Tipple's occasionally, visiting each other to deplore the badness of the times, and going about their ordinary business, such as hanging all day about the mill or the blacksmith's shop, they have been very seldom at home. You must not, however, imagine that our people want industry. On the contrary, they rarely go abroad without making great bargains, and in the meantime, at home, they suffer no loss; for, except during spring, haying time, and harvest, they have nothing to do upon their farms. Indeed I may say, that, in having winter and misfortune together, we have been extremely lucky, for during that season of the year our people can not only talk about their troubles at leisure, but also do a great deal to make them sit lightly. Winter is the time of good cheer, which, you may depend upon it, we have not been neglecting; and good eating and drinking, you know, are a great comfort to persons who have hard times to bewail.

Nor have the youth of our town been less actively employed. But, as I have lately explained the nature of their education, it is not very necessary to detail what they have been doing. I must remark, however, that they, as well as the old people, have been experiencing hard times and misfortunes. Miss Sippit's tea party and frolic have not passed off with all the eclat which the young lady expected. Never had a meeting of our young folks excited such high expectations, and never before was there a meeting attended with so many serious disasters. Old Stot's son Hodge, in particular, poor fellow, is not likely to get over it soon. To record calamities, is a disagreeable task; but, in the present case, it is an act of justice to our town which ought not to be omitted. It will show you that we have society as elegant and refined as any other part of the Province, and I am sure it will convince all your readers that when the children of farmers become ladies and gentlemen, they have a great deal to do and suffer, and deserve a great deal of praise.

I formerly stated that Miss Sippit, being relieved from the disagreeable necessity of preparing for death, had resolved to redeem her lost time, and celebrate her recovery by a tea party and frolic. This, of course, re-

quired a great deal of preparation and bustling about, such as borrowing a little flour here, and a little butter there; for, though we are a very genteel township, and before company make an elegant appearance, it would be foolish to suppose that our country gentlemen in general possess every thing requisite for the entertainment of a large party. Indeed I may say that the preparation extended to almost the whole town. Near every house, the fences indicated that our young gentlemen were getting their ruffled shirts in order; and the ladies, their gown or some other part of dress, for the joyful occasion.

At last the expected evening arrived, when our youngsters and Mrs. McCackle, who had been appointed mistress of ceremonies, convened in Sippit's. In commendation of this lady, I must observe that a better choice for conducting the business in genteel style, could not have been made. With the exception of Mr. Peter Longshanks, I question if there be another who knows half so much about the manner in which young people should behave in company. Under her direction, therefore, every thing was conducted with due decorum. Indeed it was the general opinion that our young ladies had never sitten so erectly nor displayed such a lady-like appearance before. The gentlemen, too, exerted themselves mightily to find out the best positions for their legs and arms, which, I assure you, is not easily discovered by a young country gentleman when he gets into a company where he thinks everybody looking at him. Upon the whole, however, Mrs. McCackle was very well pleased, and declared that as how they were the most gracefullest assembly she had ever beheld, and indeed how could it be otherwise? for all our young people and all their finery were there.

Having never myself been in such polite company, I must, of course, be ignorant of the general modes of proceeding, and therefore I shall not attempt to describe them. I understand, however, that it is the ordinary custom for the gentlemen to go about taking care of the ladies. In conformity with this order of things, Mrs. McCackle had requested old Stot's son Hodge to have the goodness to be so kind as to hand round the fried pork to the ladies. Hodge was upon the alert in an instant, and, as politeness required, determined to present it with an elegant bow, which, in our town, consists in pushing out the right foot and then bringing it back with

a scrape upon the ground, at the same time bending the body forward with suitable solemnity. Now, it unfortunately happened that the young gentleman's shoes, which he had sent to the mending, were not ready in time; but in order to be at the frolic, he had put on a new pair of his fathers, which the old man had carefully fortified with an abundant supply of hobnails, and scarcely had the poor fellow entered upon his box, when a shriek from Miss Sippit admonished him that he had begun his scrape at her shin, and was subjecting her satin slipper to an unmerciful visitation. In such a case it was natural for him to draw back his foot as fast and as far as possible; but, in his haste, it escaped him that where the head goes one way and the feet another, there is always a violation of the order of nature, and before he was aware, he had placed the fried pork, melted and unmelted, in the young lady's lap, and was himself fast following. Emergency, however, will, at times, produce wonderful exertion. One powerful effort relieved him from the apparent danger. But no man can think of two things at once; and, of course, he who is falling forward does not consider that there may be danger behind. Hodge only thought of getting back from the young lady, but in his haste to retreat, forgetting to take his legs with him, he unfortunately overturned the tea table and its contents upon Mrs. McCauckle's new poplin. Whether this unusual combination of accidents had produced a sudden convulsion of nature, or whether Hodge had been dining upon cabbage, which, you know, are a windysome kind of food, I cannot tell; but the poor fellow, in falling, made a lengthy apology, which scandalized the whole assembly of young ladies amazingly; and, indeed, no wonder; for such a speaker was never introduced into any genteel company, and much less allowed to lift up his voice.

Hodge is a stout-hearted fellow, and can bear with perfect equanimity any ordinary trial, such as losses upon a bargain or getting himself capiased; but here was an accumulation of sore adversities—adversities, too, which brought with them the loss of character. One spring placed the door between him and the rest of our young ladies and gentlemen, and since that time he has never been seen by any of them.

When matters in Sippit's were restored to a little order, the young people agreed to get on with the fro-

licking, and accordingly Driddle was called; but the old man, having been obliged to fill himself with tea instead of grog, was seized with the belly ache very badly. Here was a real disappointment, for you may depend upon it that a fiddler with the belly ache has got other concerns to mind than either music or dancing. As Miss Sippit's piano was out of order, all hop seemed to be gone, when young Kickit recollected that he had seen Mrs. McCackle sing and dance at the same time. He therefore proposed that she should officiate in the place of old Driddle, and as a compliment to the old lady he insisted that he should open the ball with her. Mrs. McCackle, from the recollection of her damaged poplin, was not in a very tuneful mood; still she was willing to gratify the young folks, and no less willing to display her own talents. To it, accordingly, they went; and an elegant couple they must have been, I assure you. Kickit is one of our tallest young fellows, with legs like rafters, and as nimble as Peter Longshanks. Mrs. McCackle, too, is a handsome figure, only, not being a native of our town, she is a little differently formed. Nature, in the construction of the upper part of her frame, had forgotten that legs are an indispensable appendage, and, afterward, in order that the whole might be of a reasonable longitude, she was necessitated to add such extremities as suited the case.

Of the exhibition of this uncommon couple, you must not expect me to give you an account, for I am not very far seen in the dancing myself, and besides I was not there. I can only say, that in the opinion of our young people, between singing, and turning, and wheeling, and shuffling, and leaping, and skipping, it was truly enchanting. But just when delight was wound up to rapture, Kickit's foot, in one of his high leaps, thought of taking a look into Mrs. McCackle's pocket, and afterward, like every other violent possessor, positively refused to renounce its claims. Now, it would be unreasonable to expect that any lady would either sing or dance with a gentleman's foot in her pocket. I must, however, do young Kickit the justice to say, that he was still, if possible, more ready than ever to gratify the delighted spectators. Having parted with one foot, he was even anxious to make the other do the business of two; and the more eager Mrs. McCackle became to withdraw from the enchanting scene, the more earnest he was upon the

dance, and hopped around the old lady with surprising diligence, till at last a wrong step, from the want of the music, brought them both to the floor.

After a specimen of such superior style, none of the youngsters was willing to exhibit. They therefore agreed to disperse; but scarcely had they left Mr. Sippit's, when the violent rain of last week overtook them, and subjected the gumflowers and other finery of the town to a sweeping destruction.

Our young ladies and gentlemen, you see, are, as well as their parents, meeting with hard times. Still, great as their misfortunes and disappointments are, it is well for them that they are not in the hands of my neighbour Seantoreest. Saunders declares that if his foot had been in old Stot's shoe instead of kicking Miss Sippit's shins and tearing her slipper, he would have broken the leg of the brazen-faced limmer. The old vagabond Driddle, he says, with his fiddling and drinking and corrupting the youth, deserves to be fed upon tea all the days of his life; and as for the rest of the ne'er-to-dowells, instead of letting them off with the loss of their trumpery, he would have applied a cudgel to their back and sent them home with their buttocks bare; and then, instead of junketing about the town, they would be glad to stay home and wear homespun, like other decent folk.

I now inform you that I have arrived at the end of the first book of the chronicles of our town; and, for a number of reasons, winter must return before I enter upon the second. In the first place, I have resolved to make the ensuing summer the busiest of my life. The exertions of you Halifax gentlemen to promote the agriculture of the Province, have suggested to me a great many improvements, which my present system of farming needs. These I have resolved to make; and when my neighbours are lamenting the badness of the times, and executing the present determination to raise nothing upon their farms till the prices rise, I will banish all discouraging thoughts by working a little harder; and if better times come, or if bad times continue, my good crop will be in readiness to meet them.

Secondly, I have got myself a great deal of ill will from many of the neighbours, who say that I have made them and our whole town a laughing stock to the rest of the Province. Old Grub, in particular, is very anxious about the mending of the trowsers. He says that the high dignity of his office ought to have been treated

with greater reverence; and that, as clouting the covering of his nether extremities was no part of his magisterial duty, I had no right to meddle with it. He says also that things in our town are coming to a fine pass, when even the lame despise dignities; and he hopes to see the day, that, when worthy gentlemen are sitting upon the bench to maintain the honour of the town, Mephibosheth, and others like him, will be sitting in the stooks, as a warning to revilers.

That the worthy gentlemen should be offended, has grieved me sorely. In vindication of myself I must say that the story of the trowsers was told expressly for the purpose of showing his care to maintain the high dignity of his office; for this honourable member of the bench does not always mend his trowsers in bed. But the truth is, that some of our young ladies happening to pass his house, and resolving to pop in and see what old Squire Grub was doing, the worthy gentlemen descried them coming, and buried the unseemly parts of his frame among the blankets, which was, surely, more becoming the high dignity of his office than if they had found him in his ordinary way, as my neighbour Saunders expresses it. Indeed, he is, in many respects, as I may by and bye show you, a pattern of industry and economy, worthy of imitation.

Our reverend old parson, too, is not altogether satisfied. He says that, touching the matter of the swine, I have allowed my waggery to overrun my judgment: that albeit he did nourish and maintain a few of those unclean beasts for the sustenance of himself and his household, it was not for edification to hold up his labours among them as a spectacle to the world, and much less to place them before his public ministrations. Now, I positively assert that Mr. Drone is not even related to the Tulliber family. He does not feed pigs for sale—he has no delight in feeding them, and, in dividing his labours would, if possible, place the people of our town before them. But when our folks starve him, necessity has no law; pigs must be reared, and, of course, the feeding of the town limited to the remnants and husks of his time.

In the third place, I have got a character to maintain, and must take care not to lose it, as persons who are perpetually writing very generally do. Trudge, the pedlar of our town, is just come from Halifax with a large assortment of notions and news. Among other

things he tells me that when he and Tug the truckman were taking a glass of grog together, they were both of opinion that my letters were a very clever thing; and farther, that a number of their friends were going to use their influence with government to get me a pension. This, you may be sure, was very gratifying to me; for every decent man likes to be respected by respectable persons, such as Trudge and his acquaintance Tug. At the same time I must confess that when Trudge told me the news, I had some misgivings about its truth, both because pedlars are privileged talkers, and also because when he was speaking about the pension, he was persuading my spouse to purchase a great bargain of a shawl, which would cost her only ten dollars. On this account, when my old woman was telling him that the first ten dollars of the pension should go for a shawl, I resolved not to believe all that he had said till I should learn the truth of it from some other quarter. Still I was very anxious to believe. You may judge, then, how much I was gratified when Saunders came running over with the Chronicle, and, in the speech of that worthy, clever-spoken, sensible gentlemen, the Honourable the Attorney General, pointed out to me the following words: "Turn where you will, folly and extravagance stare you in the face. That GENTLEMAN, Mephibosheth Stepsure, had given us a picture of ourselves, which, he was sorry to say, was too true; but he did not approve of its being hung up in the newspapers for all the world to look at. But he should be obliged to him if he would go to every door in the province, and sound his reproofs in their ears. For his own part, he was surprised to see our extravagance in dress. The east and the west—the north and the south—the whole world was ransacked, to collect the rags which were to be thrown upon a young woman's back."

Who would have believed that lame Boshy would ever be called a GENTLEMAN at a public meeting of the grandees of the Province? To say nothing of my own feelings, my old woman is wonderfully pleased, and says that honour will not be brought to shame by meeting with Mephibosheth Stepsure: that I am not like Puff and others of our poor gentry, who wear five coats and nothing in their pockets but an account from Mr. Ledger or a summons to the court. On the contrary, that having arrived at great respectability, I have some-

thing which will help to maintain the dignity of my character. Even I, myself, too, am beginning to think myself possessed of more dignity than I was formerly aware of; and I have a kind of notion that when I get myself seated in style, with a table before me covered with a green cloth reaching down to the floor, so as to keep my feet out of the way, I shall make a very respectable looking gentleman. My spouse seems to think that now when I am become somebody, reading the Chronicles of our town at every man's door would confer upon me more notoriety than honour, and, upon the whole, I am rather inclined to shift the business, for I am no great hand at the running; and, you know, it would be necessary to get away very nimbly from every door as soon as they were read. Old Trot, when he is going after the news, could do it very well; but the poor man is getting feeble, and could neither run very fast nor stand much beating.

Could the clever-spoken, sensible gentleman, the Honorable the Attorney General, be induced to comply with the plan of my neighbour Saunders, it would do the business completely. Saunders is delighted with his speech. He declares that it is as good as one of parson Drone's best sermons, and that the decent gentleman understands the ne'er-to-do wells of our town better than they understand themselves. But to put the speech in the papers, he thinks, will do them no good, as they never read anything from one end of the year to the other, except, perhaps, an advertisement at the store or the blacksmith's shop. Could the worthy gentleman, however, be induced to come to our town, and say the same things over again, by advertising a cattle show or a town meeting at Tipple's, our people will turn out to a man; or, he says, that, though it be no credit to a decent farmer to be a constable, he and the rest of the hard-working, homespun neighbours, will get themselves sworn in to catch the villains and force them to the meeting; and as he will then be clothed with authority and have the law upon his side, his staff of office shall be faithfully used to command attention and to apply the doctrine. He thinks, also, that, as our females will of course be there to see that their husbands get full justice when the doctrine is applied, it would not be amiss to tender them a word of exhortation too; not that he wished to have any hand in the application, but

he thinks that when their husbands are receiving instructions about industry, a few hints upon the subject of economy might be useful to themselves. Nothing, he says, has prevented our town from being one of the wealthiest places in the world but want of industry and want of economy.

But, as the execution of Saunders' plan is rather to be desired than expected, there is still another scheme which would be equally successful. Were every person who could stand an examination upon the Chronicles, to be made a magistrate or a militia officer, the most of our people would soon have them by heart.

Gentlemen, after telling you so many truths about the people of our town, I must now beg leave to say a few words to your readers. Some of them, I have been told, are a good-humoured, laughing sort of folks; and others are just as crusty and angry at the Chronicles of our town. To the former I would observe, that they have a right to laugh at themselves as much as they please, and when they get their laugh out to reform as fast as they can; but when they meet with their angry neighbours they should remember that laughing is a very serious thing, and ought to be tempered with a great deal of gravity, for no man in a passion likes to be laughed at. As for your crusty readers, they have just as good a right to be angry, and far more reason. I would advise them, therefore, to make themselves more angry still, which they may easily do, by telling everybody their complaints and receiving the consolation which their case deserves; and when they have thus learned that everybody is laughing at them, instead of continuing their displeasure against the exposure of folly, they might transfer their rage to the tools who needed to be exposed. For my own part, I am sorry that the Chronicles have affronted them; very sorry, indeed, that their neighbours should be laughing at them; for I must say that all your readers would be a very decent sort of folks if they had only good management. They are not willing to be like lame Meph, whom everybody despised—nor like lame Boshy, whom nobody cared about; but, before they have well fixed themselves upon a wood lot, and raised a few potatoes, they wish to be like

MEPHIBOSHETH STEPSURE, GENT.

