

FIVE YEARS
IN
STATE'S PRISON;

OR,
INTERESTING TRUTHS,

SHOWING THE MANNER OF
DISCIPLINE IN THE STATE PRISONS AT
SINGSING AND AUBURN,

EXHIBITING THE GREAT CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS,
IN THE TREATMENT OF THE UNHAPPY INMATES;
REPRESENTED IN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN
SINGSING AND AUBURN.

BY HORACE LANE,

A DISCHARGED AND PENITENT CONVICT.

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." Proverbs xxvii, 12.

—•••••
FOURTH EDITION.

NEW-YORK:

Printed for the Author, by Luther Pratt & Son, 112 Eldridge-street.

1835.

C. T. L. G. H. K.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1835, by Horace Lane, author
in the office of the Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

3 / 19 / 31

P R E F A C E .



I do not undertake this work, thinking to gain fame or applause; to the contrary, I know that the greater part will ridicule me, and say, "What a vile wretch!" I have been so, am I so now? who knows? The Power, the Word, and the Spirit; three witnesses: that's enough, if I was to add another, (myself) perhaps you might doubt whether it was truth. Some will understand, and not condemn; let others consider lest they also be tempted. If I don't get fame and applause, I am in hopes of getting a few shillings, or dimes, or cents. I have buffeted the boisterous ocean twenty-two years, commencing when I was ten years of age; and many a long year have suffered the penalty of the violated law of my country, and exposed myself to the just wrath and indignation of Him, who too well knows that I write true. I do wish that some human beings who are careless about their present and eternal welfare, may take warning, and be benefited. Although you may not have run to the same excess of rioting as I have, yet you are under condemnation, except you abase yourselves, and exalt the Lord Jesus continually.

What I have here related, I have seen with my own eyes, and proved by woful experience. I could say much more, and relate from hearsay, many, and greater cruelties. But these facts are sufficient to show the tyranny and brutality of unprincipled men, when "clothed with a little brief authority:" and to show the salutary effects of Christianity, as exemplified in the character of the Hon. Judge Powers, and other worthy keepers at Auburn.

It is represented in a dialogue, because I was three years in Auburn, previous to my going to Sing Sing; the reason of which was, that after an absence of nineteen years at sea, I returned to my sister's in Saratoga; and finding her, with several children, in extreme want, through the misconduct of an intemperate husband, and being also intemperate myself, resolved to overcome evil with evil. Therefore, thinking to relieve their wants, feloniously took some articles not belonging to myself, for which I was apprehended, and sent to Auburn for the time above mentioned.

INTERESTING TRUTHS,

IN A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO DISCHARGED CONVICTS; ONE FROM THE STATE PRISON AT SINGSING, AND THE OTHER FROM AUBURN.

Scene on board a Steam Vessel on the North River.

SINGSING AND AUBURN.

Auburn. Well messmate, how goes it? you look very dull.

Singsing. The boat goes well enough, but I must confess that I do feel very dull.

Auburn. Hav'nt you and I been shipmates somewhere?

Singsing. I think I've seen you before.

Auburn. Was'nt you on Lake Champlain last war?

Singsing. Now I know you Sam. How have you been ever since?

Auburn. I do middling well now, but I've had hard times since I saw you last.

Singsing. And so have I, and not long since neither.

Auburn. Why, what's been the matter? you look more shabby than ever I saw you before.

Singsing. Did you take notice of that big house where all them poor fellows with striped clothes were at work?

Auburn. Alas! poor fellow, how long was you there?

Singsing. Two years.

Auburn. How did they use you there?

Singsing. We were all very apt to cry out with one in very ancient times, "my punishment is more than I can bear." But I tell you of a truth, I was almost in despair all the time I was in that place.

Auburn. I know what it is, messmate, I was three years in Auburn.

Singsing. You was! what for? I never should have thought that of you!

Auburn. I never should have thought it of myself, if I had not got there. I tell you that while we are giving full scope to our foolish, and deceitful, and desperately wicked hearts,

fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, not caring how, we know not where we are going; till by being led captive by the devil at his will, he leads us into a scrape, and there he leaves us: he never bails us out, or pays the penalty.

Singsing. I know that too well, by experience; but do you think you will serve that old hard master any more?

Auburn. I know I never shall.

Singsing. Beware of self-sufficiency, the great High King of spirits deals mysteriously with those that feel so confident in their own strength; and he sees that they are building on a false foundation, he throws the whole fabric of works down, and leaves the man in a worse condition than he ever was. I'll tell you how the merciful High King dealt with me, when I was going on in formal religion: I thought I was strong, but he let me know that I was weak, by bringing me into sore affliction of a long continuance. The story is this; about nine years ago I cut up a dirty caper in New London, and got put in jail; and there was a fellow put in with me, a very unreasonable disagreeable person; and he aggravated me three or four days, but mostly nights; for he would not let me sleep. So just at daylight one morning, he waked me out of a dose, and I sprung up, and caught up a bench, and hit him over the head, and very near killed him. He halloo'd murder, and the jailor, and many other people came into the prison. And now you must know the devil had got me into a scrape, and left me. I denied what I had done, saying that he fell over the stove. He told his story, and they believed him, and I was put into the dungeon. The women said he would die, and could not live. What think you must have been the situation of my mind, then in a dungeon, and a murderer? We are brave to extreme, (sailors in general) even in approaching danger, when there is the smallest hope; but let it come upon us so as we can see no hope, and then if we are spared long enough, how soon it will be "Lord have mercy upon my poor soul." That was my prayer, for I could see no hope; die he would, I thought, and hang I must; so I walked back and forth in the dungeon, and all I could say, was, "Lord have mercy on my poor soul, Lord have mercy on my poor soul;" and he heard me; the man got better, and I was bound over to the superior court, under five hundred dollars bonds; but having no friend to be my bail, I had to stay in jail eight months and eleven days; during which time I broke off many wicked and idle habits, going on strictly in formal religion. Through his having a bad character, and my morality, when the court set, they let me go.

Now when I got my liberty, I thought I had a good heart, and like the Laodiceans, thought I was rich in spiritual goods; but soon found out that the seed was sown by the way side. One day I met a man that I knew, and he, perceiving I appeared to be very religious, says to me, "do you think that your religion is good for any thing?" "O yes," says I, "I know it is." But not long after, I was tempted by a drinking, lewd woman; and I complied with the temptation, and then, you see, God gave me over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that were "not convenient," for a time, but soon brought me into sore affliction, and brought me through it, for which I feel thankful. There is no way to get along in the religion of our Redeemer, but to feel our nothingness, and exalt him, and follow his example.

Auburn. But how did you get into trouble again?

Singsing. If I tell you all the particulars, will you in return tell me how you got to Auburn, and how they used you there?

Auburn. I will, and I want to know how you was used too?

Singsing. As soon as I had complied with the temptation before mentioned, I went on from bad to worse; stealing and drinking. They caught me in a little dirty trick in New London, but they had compassion on me, and sentenced me only a fortnight to the Work-house; but I got away the first night, and started off into the country. I still often had serious thoughts about my lost religion; and I thought if I could get a wife, I should be free from temptation, and be able to go on in the good old way; accordingly I went to a place to get work; there I fell in with a young woman, and after a very short courtship, got married, but soon found out I had missed the mark of happiness, by forgetting to walk in the Spirit, and that I should not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. I was poor in health, and in circumstances, getting but little work; and at first, though my wife drank to excess, I did not give way to it, but at last, being enticed, I took a little, and that opened the door for much more, and greater folly.

Auburn. But did you not know that she would use strong drink before you married her?

Singsing. Yes, I knew that she had been subject to dissipation, but she had walked soberly some time, and said she had seen the folly of it; and, as I thought, she was no worse than I had been: my very self-sufficient religion deceived me, for I thought I was good enough to bring her over to righteousness. Never did a man come nearer to the

transgression of Adam, than I; she says to me, "I would not be so odd among folks, the family have all drank a little this morning; take a little, it won't hurt you." Alas! I yielded; but wo was with me; for I took to strong drink from that time: but it was not long before I got where I could get no more for a couple of years; and since I got out, the goodness and mercy of God has kept me from it.

Auburn. But what was your crime, that sent you to Singsing?

Singsing. It was not *one*, but *many*. If the authority had known what a bad fellow I was, they would not have given me so light a sentence. In the first place, I was unwell, and scarcely able to work; and it was seldom I could get any thing to do; and if I earned a shilling, my wife wanted two; and I was very anxious to get things to keep house with, so that I coveted almost every thing that I saw. At last I began to hook things, at one place and another. One night I was bringing along a parcel of things, and as the stage came in very late, the driver saw me, and halloo'd "watch here's a thief." No watchman heard him, and I went on boldly. This made me more bold afterwards. But you know though a rogue runs clear a long time, yet he gets catched at last. How glad I am that I got caught. Supposing the Lord had cut me down in my wickedness, I should never have had that blessed hope that I have now. All this time I kept a little bottle, and when it was empty, I would think, "well, now I will quit this hellish practice of drinking," but blinded by the god of this world, having a prospect of something to steal, I would go and get another pint, and resolve that *that* should be the last. Many times I have had such horror of conscience, that I have poured what I had in the bottle into the fire, with a firm resolution to quit: but, according to the old proverb, "I will seek it yet again," but still again with morning light pursue the road to ruin. At last, one night I was groggy, and broke into a dye shop, and lugged off a lot of clothes; and the same night I went into a house yard, and carried off a feather bed. Thinks I, I'll get ready to go to keeping house by and by; but the bed was what brought me out, for I being two thirds drunk, left it hanging on the fence, where I hired a room up stairs; and the woman of the house got up before I did in the morning; "ha ha," says she, "here's a fine prize on the fence." I heard her, and went out and owned it; says I, "I forgot to fetch it in last night." "Ah, ha," says she, "you stole it, I know that bed, it is the bed that Mr. ——— lay sick on." I was so frightened that I knew not where to fly. If I had

stood my ground, and carried the bed up stairs, she would have known nothing about it. Here you see how weak a guilty conscience is; "One shall chace a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight." I had chance enough to get away; but it was not to be so: I had run my race, and had made work enough for repentance. I was apprehended and sent to jail half drunk. But Oh! when I had taken a nap on the floor, and awoke up sober, then began my repentance; and how thankful I feel that the Lord granted me that repentance, which I believe is unto Life. [Reader, I hardly think you have been so vile as I have been, but remember you are a sinner, and have need of that "godly sorrow which worketh Life."]

The next day I was taken to be tried by a justice's court; and they favoured me, not making the amount of the things I had stolen, over twenty-five dollars: and so sentenced me ninety days to jail. Then my heart rejoiced, at the thought of avoiding the State Prison. But alas! my rejoicing was short; the high sheriff did not recognize me to be an old offender at first, but he soon perceived that I had been sentenced there forty days before; and that was not the worst of it: the next night, after I got to bed, the doors were opened, and I was called out before a justice and another man who I had injured, but I knew him not. The justice asked me where I got that leather that they found in my room? I could not deny it; and told him I got it down below there, out of a currying shop. He told me that would do; and then he went to writing for half an hour. Oh! how miserable I felt all the time he was writing. "Down the river I must go," says I; "shall I have to go to States Prison?" "Don't you think you deserve it?" replied the justice.

I never felt such horrors of a guilty conscience before; even when in a dungeon as a murderer. Had I possessed worlds, I would have given them all, to have had them fall on me: the wrath of an injured, good, and merciful God, stared me in the face. Added to this, the fear of punishment, now already begun, and the fear of justly deserved eternal punishment; the lash was severe: I resolved on a plan which was also severe; my mind was in a continual frame of prayer. From the moment I resolved on this plan, I felt more easy in my mind.

Auburn. What plan was it that was so severe?

Singsing. Look at the 19th chapter of Matthew, and 12th verse, the one for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

Auburn. Wonderful! shocking! But are you sure you did it for the kingdom of heaven's sake, or was it only to

escape punishment in this world? God cannot be deceived, and will not be mocked.

Singsing. I must own that it was a complicated fear, but all the time I had it in my mind to do it, and all the time I did it, I had my mind drawn out in a frame of prayer, that it might be the means of lifting me above the cares of this world; and in a great measure it has. All I am sorry about it, is, that I did not do it twenty years before. What a blessing it has been to me already: I should have (most likely) been sentenced to seven or ten years, whereas I only got two; and now, while others, no worse than I have been, are drudging out a long sentence, I am enjoying freedom, and the good of the land. *Oh! my Father in heaven, may I be thankful to Thee every moment.*

Secured from the strongest allurements to sin,
I find in all places my heaven begin.

Auburn. But your resisting temptations will not have the same value as if you had not done this thing.

Singsing. But I have resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and as I am resolved to wage a war with it, looking to Jesus for grace, redeeming the time, running with patience the race that is set before me, I am in hopes to gain the much desired haven at last.

"To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown."

Look at the 56th chapter of Isaiah, 4th and 5th verses; what a precious promise for me, upon condition of doing those things that please Him, and keeping his Sabbaths.

Auburn. Well, let us know how you fared at Singsing, for I have heard that it is a hard place: I thought Auburn was bad enough, but I hear that Singsing is ten times worse.

Singsing. When I got there it was Sunday, about noon; rattlebang went the doors, and they shoved me into a little hole with a bit of bran bread, and a small piece of shank beef, and a few cold potatoes, there was a board and a blanket to lie on, and a tub that answered for table, chair, and privy; all that I could see else was stone and iron. What a horrid situation! the fruits of sin. The next morning I was taken out and stripped naked, and obliged to get into a large tub of cold water, for the pretence of washing; now remember I was very ill, for I had not got well yet. So they gave me the equipage of Jacob's cattle, and sent me off to picking wool; such flogging I never saw before. I thought I'd seen enough aboard of a man-of-war, but it

was'nt a beginning; the name of the keeper of the shop where I was, was Burr, and he was about as ugly to handle poor fellows, as a chesnut burr would be to handle.

Auburn. O, I know that fellow, he was turned away from Auburn for his cruelty. I have heard that when any keeper gets turned away from Auburn, if he goes to Singing, they'll employ him right off.

Singsing. The Lord makes the wicked his sword to execute his judgments upon others, often not so wicked as themselves.

Auburn. For my part I never had cause, nor inclination, to find fault with any keeper while I was in Auburn. The rules of the prison were very strict, yet there was not much flogging. Once I got a light touch of it, but it was my own fault, for I deserved it, because I was so foolish as to get into a fair conversation with a fellow that sat next to me; and I was strictly forbidden to speak to any prisoner. The keeper seemed very loth to do it, "but," says he, "it is your own fault;" and I did not blame him.

Singsing. Ah, there's a great difference when men take delight in heathenish humanity, or Christian humanity. So, as I was telling you, after a few days the keeper set me to cobbling old shoes, and I made a poor fist of it; and once in a while the tyrant would come behind me, and give me five or six lounders alongside of the head. "O," says he, "You shall have fair play; we'll try you." The tools I had to work with were very poor; the fact was, they thought I was a good strong fellow to work among stone, but there's where they missed it, for I was a large shadow, but the substance was worn out in the sea service, and taking mercury. Accordingly they turned me out to work among stone; then I got with a clever keeper, his name was Tompkins, and he put me on a cart with three others, to draw stone to fill up a dock. Oh! what misery I was in. When I got out in the morning, I would think, *how, how, how* can I stand it all night? I prayed all the time, and read my Bible all the chance I could get; what should I have done if I'd had no Bible. But I soon got changed for the worse: Mr. Marshal, the assistant keeper, met me one morning, and sent me up on the hill to Mr. Knap, and he sent me after a large sledge, and set me to breaking up rocks, but it was so heavy I could not swing it: then I got it, the keeper would come and give me five or six raps with his cudgel every half hour, says he, "I'll learn you how to act the old soldier." Oh! how I longed for night; and in the morning my bones would ache so I could hardly stir. I weathered it out about a

fortnight with Mr. Knap, and then got into worse hands. He was a youngish fop, his name was Lent, he put me to the wheelbarrow, but I believe it was Mr. Wolsey, the head keeper's orders; for he seemed to have more compassion than any of the rest, but he let them (the keepers) have too much of their own way. That was supposed to be easy work, but I tell you, I never suffered so much in my life as I did during that time; I had such pains in my bones that I could hardly stir, and if I stopped a moment, even to tie up my shoe, if the keeper saw me I was sure to get a flogging. I was very near putting an end to my mortal existence, I was tempted to do it, but thanks be to Him that kept me from it. You know how they have to march, one after another, close together, so as one's belly touches the other's back; and we had a long hill to go down three times a day. I was so lame in my bones I could not steady myself, and I would stagger about and tumble on the others, and then I would get two or three raps over the head with a cudgel. I could not help but cry almost all the time, and the more I cried, the more they beat me. One day as I was crying in my cell, for sorrow, along came Mr. Half a keeper, and with a jeering laugh, says he to me, "What are you laughing about?" I gave him no answer, and he went off. I was so hungry that I would watch every chance I could get, to pull up some grass, or weeds, to eat; this is the truth, and there was enough others did so too, while the assistant keeper was selling barrels of provision for swill. I'll tell one of his zealous tricks; I was in a habit of applying to the doctor now and then, and that made Mr. Marshal very angry; one day as I was in the hospital, he came up to me, and found two potatoes, and a little bit of bread, in the lining of my coat; he made me come down and strip off my shirt, and he made a short prayer before he flogged me; says he, "I wish the Lord would take you out of the world." But the Lord did not answer his prayer the way he wanted him to; but came very near putting it on his own head; for not long after that, he had a fit of sickness; and I heard that he was glad to send for a minister to pray for him. I prevailed on the doctor to grant me extra rations; and Mr. Marshal had to order the cook to give it to me; so he had to give me something: accordingly, when I went into my cell to dinner, I found a little tub with about a pint of burnt boiled rye coffee-grounds: I was glad of it, I had it every day but Sundays, for about six weeks, and I was sorry when they stopped it.

Auburn. I perceive that I have been in paradise, when I

hear your story. But did not the prisoners eat all in a room together, prepared for the purpose?

Singsing. O no, we eat in our cells. As we passed in, in rotation to the prison, we passed close to the kitchen, and there is a hole in the wall, and a roller fixed to set the little tubs on; and a man turns a wheel, and each one catches his tub off as they shove them out; the keeper over the cooks stands there very handy by, and if any prisoner takes a tub that don't suit him, (the keeper) he gets a rap or two with a cudgel. Sometimes a prisoner gets a tub with no meat in it, sometimes no bread, or very little; sometimes, may-be, one or two potatoes, which very often happens, through the neglect of the cooks; yet if he looks to the keeper to be righted, chance if he dont get a rap or two with his cudgel.

Auburn. What do you mean by their cudgels? our keepers in Auburn carried nothing but a little switch.

Singsing. Our keepers used to carry quite large clubs. There were so many heads cut open, and so many bloody faces, when spectators came along, that I suppose they got ashamed of it. I got my head cut shockingly, twice. One time there was about twenty men loading a very large stone on the truck; I had a crowbar, but the men's legs were so close together, I could not get it under the stone, and Mr. Huff, the keeper, looked around and saw that my bar was not under, and he sprung at me, and O what a beating I got; the blood ran to the ground. After that, I perceived that the keepers did not carry clubs, but something full as bad, a piece of hard wood about two feet long, and two inches wide, and three quarters of an inch thick; the corners were sharp, and they'd cut a fellow's head open quicker. This they carried as a rule, to measure stone with: (any way to blind the eyes of the humane public.)

Anburn. Well it serves us right; for my part I know that I deserved punishment, for I did contrary to a better understanding. How shall I escape eternal punishment? it seems that I have gone so far in the broad road, that I can never get into the narrow road again.

Singsing. Are you not willing? that shows plainly that you can. What said the Lord to the ruler whose daughter was dead?—"Only believe, for all things are possible to him that believeth;" But prove your faith by works, according to the gospel plan, "for the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." How can a man have a pure heart except the holy spirit cleanse it? Read the Bible diligently and prayerfully, and follow its directions, confessing and for-

saking your sins; the Lord is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins;" and let us be humble in heart and soul, and be sure we shall receive the spirit of truth, which shall guide us into all truth; and if we watch the operations of that spirit which works internally on the heart, and follow its directions, we shall undoubtedly have a good conscience, and that "faith which worketh by love, and purifies the heart, and gives us the victory over sin, death, and the grave."

Auburn. But how can our wicked hearts believe on the Lord Jesus?—for St. Paul says that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Singsing. Search the Scriptures, seek to receive the truth of them, and pray to God to reveal his Son to you, and above all remember, that by doing the will of God the doctrine of his Son shall be revealed to you. St. John's gospel, chap. vii., ver. 16. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psalm cxix. 9. "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." It is utterly impossible for man to describe the feelings a soul has, effectually wrought upon by the Holy Spirit; our Lord could not do it by example nor precept, nor by all the wonderful miracles he wrought before the apostles' eyes. But he says "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. "And again, I have many things to say to you yet, but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come he shall guide you into all truth." John xvi. 12, 13. My telling you, or if the apostle John was personally here present, and was to tell you that God is love, you might believe it, but that would not be the cause of your feelings, it might be the means, but God himself must be the cause.

Auburn. Well, I have read my bible through seven times, and it seems all very good, but when I come to St. John's gospel, and his epistles, there is so much about love in his writing, they seem insipid to me.

Singsing. You may read them as long as you live, and as long as you are carnally minded they will seem so; "Know ye not that the carnal mind is enmity against God? for it is not subject to the will of God, neither indeed can be. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Cor. ii. 14, "Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt us in due time."

Auburn. Was there many died while you was in Singing prison?

Singsing. Yes, with the cholera, I believe about one hundred and fifty; I counted nine, and seven, and five or six a day, for a fortnight. It was shocking to see the poor fellows carried along to their graves, and to see them taken two or three of a day right along-side of me, and in the night to be awakened five or eight times, by the hammer nailing up coffins; it was a dismal sound in their cells, and to hear them rapping on their iron doors, (you know how they rap with their spoons on the door, when they want a keeper,) and groaning when they were taken, how awful a sound! I believe there was some died before the keeper could get to their assistance.

Auburn. Was you not much alarmed about yourself?

Singsing. I don't know that I was. The reason I was not so much alarmed as I think I ought to have been, was because I felt perfectly reconciled to my lot, I don't remember that I had any anxious desire to come out into the world again, yet I would rather have died than to remain there; for I was much dissatisfied with my scanty allowance of victuals, yet I don't believe my belly was my god, for I felt reconciled to the will of the God of heaven. But I did not feel the necessity of being starved to death. When the cholera began to rage in the prison, we were kept in from work, and they ranged us along in the stone cutters' shops. The head keeper came in with a very important air, and said to the prisoners, "Your rations will be cut short, you will get no meat to-day; we'll stop the disease where it is." But God had determined otherwise, yet the green bay tree continued to flourish. I read much the 91st Psalm during the cholera, and I don't know that ever I felt less concerned about death in my life. Poor old fellow! there was an old man that turned grindstone, and he was a very wicked man, he was taken, one day, not more than a foot from me, and he squatted down all at once, and looked up very pitifully to the keeper, and said, "I am very sick." "Go to the hospital then," said the keeper; and that's the last I saw of him. The old saying is, "one's meat is the other's poison," but here it is reversed, for the poor old man's poison was my meat, for I had it easy the rest of my imprisonment, through his death, for I got his place to turn grindstone. Then I remembered what an old negro told me when I was about ten years old, in New-York. "Boy," said he, "if you look for pleasure, you bring you self to de grindstone." How droll that I should be so glad to get to it. During the cho-

lera I got my head cut open again by Mr. Haff, the keeper ; I believe he was an intemperate man, for he showed it by his actions, and when I was near him, I thought I could smell it pretty strong too. One morning we had been out to empty our tubs, and I was the leader of the company, and Mr. Haff stood some fifteen or twenty rods off, and he beckoned which way he wanted me to go ; but as there was another company between him and me, and I being near sighted, I did not see him, and the first I knew was his cudgel over my head, and the blood ran freely again. Some time before the cholera, the company I belonged to was opening a new quarry, and making a road down the hill to the prison. I, with my wheelbarrow, was wheeling dirt and stone down on the road, in as much misery as I could move, with grunting and groaning ; Oh what would I have given for fifteen minutes, yea, five minutes respite, it seemed as if I must give it up every moment. In my severest agony the head keeper came along, and he heard me groaning, and he had compassion on me, and told me to ask Mr. Haff to put me to shoveling. I blessed the Lord for that respite, but it did not last long ; I expect Mr. Marshal told Mr. Haff to put me back to the wheelbarrow again. How different ! the cholera, which put an end to the earthly troubles of so many of my fellow prisoners, and accomplished their final change, at the same time put an end to the chief of my troubles, and gave me occasion and time to reflect, and to extol and praise the God of Heaven for his long suffering, and merciful dealings towards me. How shall I humble myself enough ? How shall I praise him enough ? How shall I adore him enough ? How shall I love him enough ? Here Lord I give myself to thee, 'tis all that I can do. Now, after I got to turning grindstone, I had to go about a quarter of a mile from the quarry to the prison, three or four times a day, to the blacksmith's shop, with tools, to get them sharpened, and there's a small building on the way, where Mr. Marshal deposits provisions to sell for swill. As I was going up the hill one morning, as the sentry turned his back to walk from me, I slipped into the swill house, and filled my cap and my bosom with good pieces of pork, and got out without being detected ; if I had been caught I should have been flogged severely ; then I lived well for three or four days : but I was obliged to carry it about me, for the deputy keeper was searching the cells and tubs, and every where, and if he could find the smallest bit of bread, or a potatoe, he would flog the fellow that he supposed had hid it.

Auburn. That was large business; the state paid him well for it, I suppose.

Singsing. You are right, but how dear it costs the poor prisoners. I do not say all, for there were many poor puny creatures, such as tailors, shoemakers, weavers, and wool-pickers, and they made them their rule, and cut the others short, because some had not much appetite. Sometimes those poor fellows would get a chance to give some of their victuals to another, or another would take it out of their tub, passing along on the galleries, without speaking a word to each other; if they were seen, they were flogged.

Auburn. How is it possible there can be so much difference in the rules of two prisons in one state, where the law is the same? In Auburn the rules are strict, but they are so calculated for the comfort of the prisoners, that very few are disposed to break them. I don't remember that ever I heard a prisoner say he was hungry while I was there, we all eat in a large room prepared for the purpose; the tables were furnished with necessary articles, such as plates, knives and forks, spoons, salt and pepper, and a reasonable quantity of wholesome coarse diet. Then there would be two or three half hogshhead tubs full of hot soup, and two waiters to every table, to pass back and forward, and if a prisoner held up his right hand, the waiter had to supply him with mere of whatever he had a mind to take, if he had it; and if he held up his left hand, the waiter was obliged to take from him what he did not want; and the prisoners sitting next each other, by looking towards the keeper, could have any thing they had a mind to. You talk of your plank bed, and your two or three small blankets! we have in Auburn good canvass hammocks, put nicely on frames, and in the winter four good large thick home-made blankets, and plenty of good stoves, kept well a going in cold weather. But one night we were all, most shockingly alarmed, by the cry of fire, and to our extreme surprise and dread, it was within the prison walls, right close to the windows, where there were, I suppose, one hundred and eighty men locked up in their cells; an awful situation! no retreat, and the vivid blazes streaming upon the window sashes! Oh! the shrieks and cries were doleful! it can be better imagined than told; but the keepers let us out just as the smoke began to fill the cells; my heart fairly trembled with gratitude, for that deliverance. But while the rest were making such a lamentable noise, I did not utter a word: but I walked back and forward in my cell, and said to myself, have I got to be burnt up? Lord have mercy on me. We worked all night, with

engines, passing along water, and put the fire out. It did some considerable damage; and when we went in to breakfast, the head keeper, Judge Powers, made a very pleasant speech, in which he thanked the prisoners for their exertions and good behaviour. This Judge Powers was one of the most benevolent and tender-hearted men that ever I saw, for one in authority; he was elected a member of congress, and when he made his farewell speech, he faltered, his heart was so full he could scarcely speak. "Who—who—do—I—leave—behind?—Six hundred—of—my—my—fellow—creatures—whom I—must meet at the bar of God. I could shake hands with every one of you; I'll meet you in the Hall;" and so he did, he went out of the chapel, and as we came down stairs, he shook hands with every one of us; and he left a humane set of keepers behind him. The deputy was made head keeper, a fine man, as sharp as a hawk. I do like to see good order in any institution; violaters of any good law (and we don't think that many bad laws concerning criminals, is meant to be made in this country,) ought to be punished promptly, according to that law. But when a man is punished half to death for three potatoes, or a bit of cold mush, or a bit of meat or bread, and that for covetousness sake, because the keeper wants to sell it for swill, to enrich himself, to fill his pockets; for shame on such work! What! pinch a poor miserable afflicted fellow-creature's belly to show grand in the world? His gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against him. I suppose that the generality of our law makers think that good Christian keepers would be too favourable to the prisoners; let no man think so, such ought to have rule over men of this description; they would be the most likely to keep a clear conscience towards God, and have respect to the laws of their country: for instance, look at the character of Judge Powers as a Christian, and look at the good order of Auburn prison when he left it.

Singsing. Well, if they will shut their eyes against Christianity and humanity both, let them suffer the consequence. I have no doubt but there are many prisoners in Singing that will stand on sure ground in the great day, while some of the keepers that think they stand firm now, may fall, to rise no more.

Auburn. Did they give you any money when you came out? and what sort of clothes did they give you?

Singsing. O yes, money; yes; Mr. Marshal gave me two dollars, and a suit of old clothes that would scarcely hang together,

Auburn. I fared better than you did then, I got three dollars, and the keeper gave me my pick of all the clothes in the clothes room, to take a suit, and gave me a change of shirts, and waistcoats, and stockings, and handkerchiefs.

Singsing. I think it would be for the credit of the country, to give poor fellows a chance after they have served so long. There are many that are turned out of Singsing so poorly clothed that no one will have them in their houses; for my part, I had hard work to get a lodging in New-York, and then I got into such a lowlived place, that I got full of German ducks, (lice) and when I got out in the country, (for I could get nothing to do in New-York, the captains of ships that wanted hands would not look at me,) I was obliged to pull my shirt off every night for fear of lousing the bed, and strip my shirt off after they all got to bed, and wash it; till at last I told a young fellow my situation, and he gave me an old shirt that lasted me till I got another. Now what if the authority was to see to it, that poor fellows going out of prison so, were a little better provided for; if some of them should not make a good use of it, it would not impoverish them, and the Lord would bless them in the deed. But when I consider the dealings of Providence towards me, I should rather be astonished that I have been permitted to pass on in the world not more chastised, than to take it amiss that I have thus been chastened through a life of such repeated, continual, aggravating transgressions and folly; wherefore am I not consumed? It is because the Lord's compassion faileth not, because his mercy has followed me hitherto: and shall I now refuse to tell to all around what a merciful God has done for me? no, God forbid! I confess to the world that I have been worthy of many stripes, but thanks be to his holy name, he has hitherto beaten me with few. O how my heart is drawn out with gratitude to God, when I reflect that in his providence he has kept me from getting rich. When I lived in the East Indies, I had a fair chance to do so, and though it was my foolish wicked heart that kept me from it, yet it is altogether likely that if I had been wise enough to get rich, I should never have been foolish enough to get religion; for we know that the wisdom of God is folly to the world. Affliction renders the creature tasteless, and the world barren; and dispels the intoxicating juice of carnal pleasures, and sensual delights; and brings us to the feet of Jesus.

With what propriety I can say with one of old "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." But this may be only the letter of religion: but

thanks be to God, though my chastening was not joyous, but grievous, I have been so exercised thereby, that it wrought out the peaceable fruits of righteousness in my soul; and I know I can say by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Lord. Did not David know this, although he was an Old Testament saint, when he said "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray." When he said "I hate and abhor every evil way, and thou hast put gladness in my heart more than when their corn and wine increased:" and all his actions showed that he was humbled under the mighty hand of his offended God, with a deep sense of his guilt. He felt that he had offended the mighty God who had exalted him from a shepherd, to be king over his chosen people. Thanks be to God for the wonderful example of mercy exhibited in the affair of David. Now if it is required according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not, surely David had much to repent of, for he had had much honour given him, and the Lord required deep humility from him, which he was not slack in performing, when he said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord," and when he confessed before the great congregation to the Lord, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, &c."

Take courage, my soul, and be strong; and look unto God's dealings with thee, for his ways can stand the strictest search, as through them all, even in the afflicting hand, Fatherly kindness, and eternal love, shine forth. Now I see what I never saw before, that afflictions sanctified, are indulgencies, and trials the special gifts of Heaven: and I do not wonder that all the saints are, I say not punished, but privileged with them, of one kind or other; since they here keep sin less, and for them accumulate eternal weights of glory in the other world. My not looking into the Divine Wisdom, and to the extent of the promises, has made me have very odd thoughts of afflictions, and conclude them to be the signs of Divine displeasure. I have been ready to question my interest in God, and found it difficult to understand the word of truth. But now I see that though sometimes he sends afflictions to chasten his saints for sin, and curb their carnal affections, yet at other times he sends them to improve the soul, and exercise every grace in his chosen. Why then do I not, like the great apostle of old, glory in tribulation, which, where grace is in exercise, sets all the wheels of the spirit in motion. Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience hope; and hope being no way ashamed to confess her confidence in Him who has

shed his love abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost, gives a heavenly boldness. Should I then be disconsolate, when the Lord Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners? Not that I would boast of being a sinner, but surely I have been the chief of sinners, the very one whom the Lord came to look after.

Who would not rejoice to find an immense treasure which they were looking for? yea and find it in the possession of their most inveterate enemy, and to recover it, and have it made their own. Just so my soul is of an immense value, and it was in the hands of the great enemy of the Saviour, the devil: and when I felt his galling yoke, and his heavy chain, I used the means the God of glory had prescribed, repentance towards him, and faith in the Lord Jesus, and although the physic was long in operation, at last it worked, and O what joy in heaven! Christ rejoiced! the angels rejoiced, and the redeemed in heaven from this earth rejoiced! and glory to God, I have rejoiced ever since; and if I hold out faithful, with what ecstasy shall I rejoice by and by. A little patience, and I am past every one of my troubles, and possessed of all the transports of perpetual day. Whatever is food for the soul, surely affliction is physic. Had I looked a little more towards God, and into myself, it would have been my wisdom, but true wisdom can never shine where saving grace does not dwell. I have been saved from dangers, the relation of which, must astonish!

I am a standing monument of singular mercy. When numbers were dropping down around me, when instruments of death were rattling thick around me, like the hail from the thunder cloud, and falling like drops of rain, I was preserved among the gasping, groaning, and dying. And for a few days since, I have had a kindly remembrance of my singular preservation, and Heaven's peculiar mercy. But Oh! the thrilling thought! how soon have I forgot my kind deliverer, and have shown not the least gratitude to God, but have returned to sin, and proceeded from bad to worse. Had any person been the means of my preservation, I had most likely displayed so much of the grateful man, as never to have forgotten it: but it was God! and I displayed so much of the sinner; the abandoned sinner, as not to remember it! never to acknowledge it! I pursued my sinful practices, as if my life had at first been given, and preserved when in danger, for no other purpose. I was an enemy to God, I was hungry, and he has given me bread, I was thirsty and he has given me drink; I was in disease, and he has recovered me, in danger, and he has preserved me: therefore if I continue

still his enemy, he will heap coals of fire on my head, while his kindness shall be renowned for ever. When mercies have no effect, judgments shall without fail have most terrible effects at last, since I am a child of many mercies, may gratitude write them on my heart for ever.

Reader, you may rejoice that you may not have been so desperate a violator of God's commandments as I have. But I think that I also have great reason to rejoice, not that I have sinned, but that the Lord has not cut me down in my sins. The Lord says, when much is forgiven, they will love much. Now who can doubt the truth of his words? and if they be true, I think I ought to rejoice; and I do rejoice; have I been a great sinner, my Lord is a great Saviour; he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Repentance, what is that? I can tell you what it is, if you make a wrong calculation in doing some business or other, are you not sorry? that's repentance. But that won't do, I mean that repentance which makes me rejoice. What! is it well? I am sorry, because I am under the sentence of eternal condemnation, and I am afraid of hell-fire: well now I am sure that can't be it, for that frightens me wonderfully; but have you a heart-felt sorrow for slighting, and forgetting, and abusing, and neglecting to obey the commands of your Creator and your Preserver, who has fed you, and caused the earth to bring forth? By His power all things that ever you enjoyed, considering that at the same time you were going on in the paths of vice and folly; this is a repentance, which, though it may slay the natural man, yet it will raise up a spiritual man that shall rejoice as long as he is humble. The labourer gets weary and tired, and wants to rest his weary body, but the harder we work in the spirit (i.e.) pray and sing, if we feel a desire in our hearts to serve God, the more we revive. "God is love," says the sun, "when he sends his illustrious light to illuminate all the planets, and the moons that are attached to them, and causes them to reflect light from one to another; and again he proclaims the same, when he presses his softening rays on our cold frozen earth, after a long winter, and causes it to revive, and to bring forth all manner of food, fruit, and herbs, to sustain every living thing he has created on it." "God is love," says the dumb brute, the ox, the horse, the mule, and the ass, when he comes forth with humbleness, to labour under the lash all the day long, and night too, if it is required of him, for the benefit of man; and what is his reward? just enough to keep him alive, except the owner wants to fat him to sell; and shocking to mention, I have known many farmers who are too stingy, or

lazy, to build shelter to keep their animals from the inclemency of the weather, and still, through the goodness of God, receive their chief comforts from them. In short, we cannot open our eyes, but every thing we see proclaims aloud, "God is love;" and alas! where is man's love? self, self, self, very little of it reaches beyond self. But there are some that love God, and surely they are they that can say, "I am the man that hath seen afflictions by the rod of his wrath, happy is the man whom the Lord chasteneth this side the grave." Manasseh, all the time he reigned in Judah, though it was a land of light, never knew God till he was taken among the thorns, bound in fetters, and carried to Babylon, where he prayed, was heard, pardoned, and liberated; and then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God; just so I never knew God till I was detected, bound in fetters, and laid sore; and through long continued afflictions my stubborn heart was brought low: yet all these debasing means would have been insufficient, of itself, without something more. The blessed word of God, the book of inspiration, accompanied with the measure of the same spirit that those had that wrote that book, this was the means of breaking my poor proud heart; a desirable distress, that discloses and magnifies heavenly excellencies, and diminishes earthly vanities. When much of the world gets into the mind, then little of God is there; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Affliction is also a time of solitude for the man that sitteth alone, but God sitteth as a salvatory in the family even in the family of heaven, and comforts them with his own children: in no place better, then, in the profound depth of affliction, does the heir of future glory see the love, the goodness, the mercy, and the wisdom of God; the excellence of religion, the beauty of divine things, the danger of prosperity, the deceitfulness of riches, the vanity of created things, and the happiness of the world to come. I wish I could convince the careless sinner of the great and important means of prayer: there cannot be one step taken towards the divine life without prayer; God says he will be sought unto by the human family for these things: "What things?" says one. Every thing that we enjoy that has any solid lasting comfort in it, must come from the Father of light: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find." O incomparable privilege, to be allowed to pour out our complaints into the ear of God, to cast our care on him, to plead the performances of the promises, and devolve the burden of our sorrows and necessities on his sympathy and all-sufficiency! The prayer

of faith has won more numerous and more noble victories than all the mighty conquerors, since war was taught among the nations. Prayer is the key of heaven: Elijah prayed, and it was locked; and again he prayed and it was opened: it is the terror of hell which will put up with any thing but prayer, the ambassador of the renewed soul, the trumpet of faith, the support of the work, the employ of the expectant of glory, and the daily exercise of the Christian.

Although it is the duty of a Christian to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer; yet, sinner, you must begin to pray: you know it is your duty: if you never prayed before, now, before you shut this pamphlet, if you have no disposition, pray God to give you a spirit of prayer. If man never had an inclination to drink strong drink, yet he may get into company where they are drinking, and he may think they feel wonderful well through their jollyness, and be tempted to take a little; and the first glass will create a desire for another, and so he goes on till he gets to be a perfect drunkard: just so you may suppose the Christians, when they get together to worship God, and drink in largely of his heart-reviving Spirit, must feel well, and so they do; and although the Spirit does not keep them to such a high degree of animation that causes them to shout glory while they are at their daily business, yet their minds are (if Christians,) in a frame of prayer all the day long, and they never get the horrors.

The first means of all joy among the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, was prayer, and although we seem to enjoy many things here on earth, if we do not adore the Giver, and feel continually a thankfulness in our minds, they will be turned into curses, when we are called to render up an account before Him; be sure your sins will find you out: if they don't find you out in this life, as mine has me, the word of God declares that the finally impenitent, and stubborn, and prayerless sinner shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the glory of His power. Oh fellow traveller to eternity, begin to pray now! now there is a great reward; look at the mighty, wonderful works of the great Creator: What! to dwell with him in eternal glory, is it not worth asking for? and if you pray, depart from iniquity."

THE END.