

Narrative of the life of James Allen, alias George Walton, alias Jonas Pierce, alias James H. York, alias Burley Grove, the highwayman : being his death-bed confession, to the warden of the Massachusetts state prison.

Contributors

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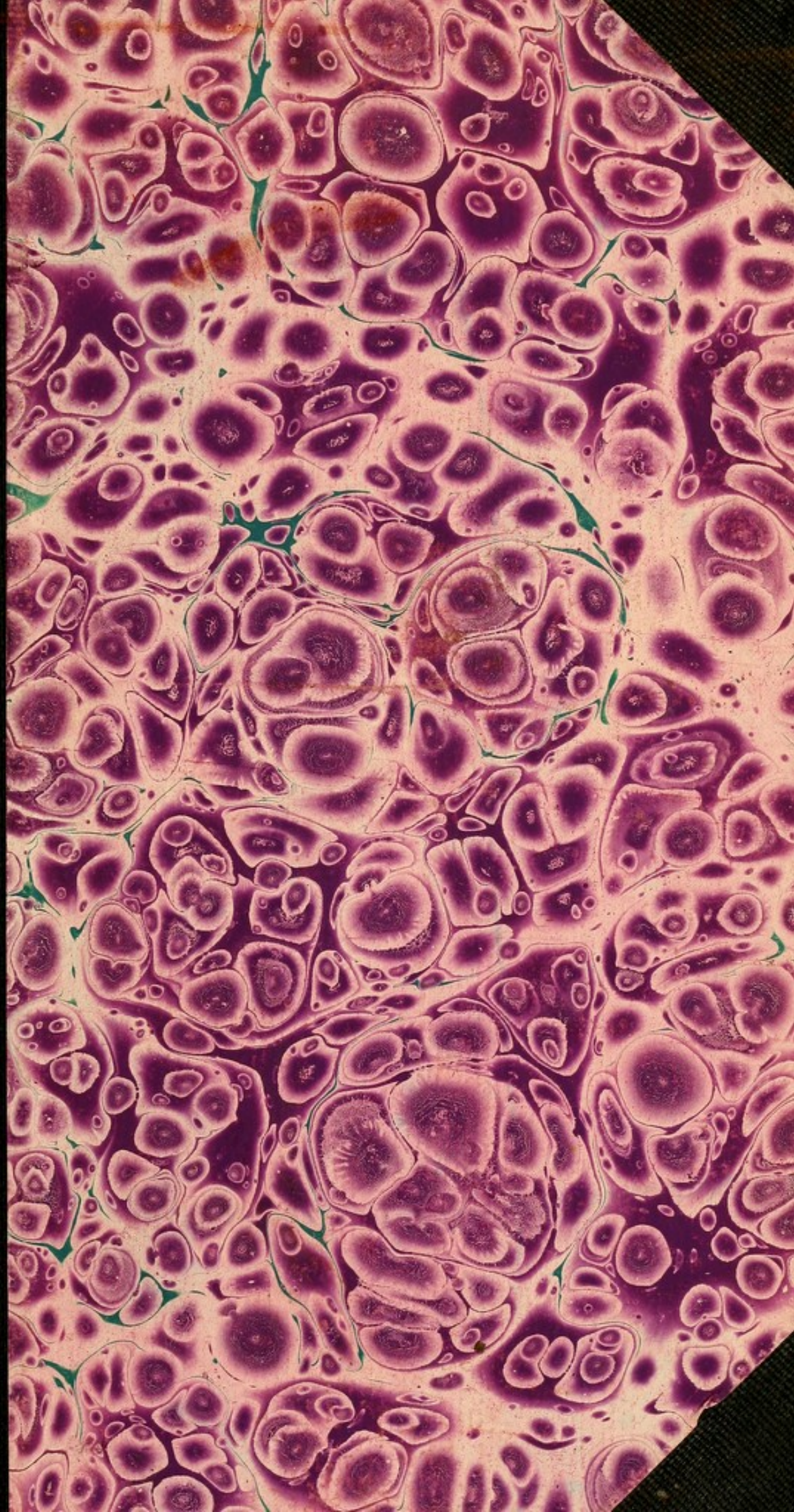
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John N. White

NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE OF JAMES ALLEN,

ALIAS

GEORGE WALTON,

ALIAS JONAS PIERCE, ALIAS JAMES H. YORK,

ALIAS BURLEY GROVE

THE HIGHWAYMAN.

BEING

HIS DEATH-BED CONFESSION,

TO THE

WARDEN OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE PRISON

BOSTON :

HARRINGTON & CO., PUBLISHERS.

1837.

L. G. 107.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year of our Lord, one thousand,
eight hundred and thirty-seven, by HARRINGTON & Co., in the Clerk's Office of the
District Court of Massachusetts.

LIFE OF WALTON, THE HIGHWAYMAN.

I WAS born in the town of Lancaster, Worcester County, and State of Massachusetts, on the 16th of November, 1809. My parents were in indigent circumstances; and it was my misfortune to lose my mother, by death, when I was three years of age. Shortly after her death, my father removed to Clarendon, Vt, and left me in the care of my grand-parent, with whom I resided until their death. I have never seen my Father since he left Lancaster for Vermont, and do not know whether he is living or not. After the death of my grand-parent, I lived with several different persons in Lancaster, and was employed at farming in summer, and attended school during the winter months. I was naturally hasty in my temper, active and ambitious, and inclined to have my own way in most respects. At eleven or twelve years of age, I lived with Capt E. Carter, a blustering and intemperate man: he treated me well when he was sober, but was fond of being late at the tavern and usually called me up to let him in when he returned home. Not liking the place I ran away from Mr Carter's, after being with him about three years, I went to Chester, Vermont, a dull place, and after remaining there a few months, returned to Lancaster again.— On being paid for my services, I received two counterfeit five dollar bank bills, which was nearly one half the whole sum due me. Whether the bills were put upon me intentionally or not, it was a serious misfortune to me at the time, and tended to sour my mind and cause distrust of the honesty of my fellow men. After this, I was employed by a man in Lancaster at the rate of twenty five cents per day. On settling at the termination of the month, he paid me all into one dollar, which sum I never afterwards received. Another affair which under my straitened circumstance, was not much calculated to soothe my already irritated feelings.

In June 1824, I went to Charlestown, Mass, and obtained a situation with a person who was employed in ship building. It was my intention to have learned the trade; but the weather being very warm, and as I was almost constantly subjected to a severe headache, I gave up all hopes of succeeding at that employment and left it in the course of a month. While at the ship yard, I was often sent into the front yard of the State Prison for water. Little did I think, at that time of being confined a prisoner within its dreary walls. On leaving the ship yard

I made several attempts to obtain employment in the Merchant Service, as a Seaman, but was in every case abruptly refused by the owners; I finally succeeded in getting employment on board a market fishing schooner, under Capt J. Smith, a pretty clever sort of a man, when not under the influence of ardent spirits, of which article he kept a full supply on hand and was not often outdone by any of the crew in the use of it. According to my usual practice, I drank but little. Capt Smith was committed to jail for debt, and did not nor has he since paid the full amount of the wages due me for services on board his vessel. Two or three days after leaving the vessel, I was requested by a man, a stranger to me, to assist him in carrying a trunk, which I presumed was his own property, to a house in Southack street, Boston. On noticing the man more closely I observed he looked rather suspicious and appeared to be acting with more than usual caution, which led me to apprehend that all was not right with respect to the trunk. I learned afterwards, that the man was Stephen Symms, an old State Prison convict, who was subsequently committed to the Prison for the third time at which place he died of consumption.—Symms gave me ten dollars, for assisting him. This was the first proceeding in which I ever had any thing to do with stolen property, and was the precursor of my future destiny.

Symms enquired where I boarded and offered to give me money any time if I would call upon him. He kept a house for the accommodation of females of ill fame who urged me to come there, but being young and having no partiality for such company, I declined accepting the invitation. About a week after the circumstance of the trunk, Symms called at my boarding house, and in conversation remarked that he knew of an opportunity, which if improved would lead to securing a fortune. We proceeded together to his residence, when he unfolded to me his place of operation, which was to break a store at the corner of Charles and Beacon streets and obtain possession of a large quantity of specie and bank bills which he thought was left in the store by the occupant. After considerable conversation, I concluded to make the attempt and between eleven and twelve o'clock of that night we proceeded to the store, which I succeeded, by means of a ladder, in entering at one of the windows, in the second story. Symms remained outside for the purpose of removing the ladder to prevent suspicion if any one should happen to pass that way while I was in the store. I carried with me a small pocket lantern, and steel, and tinder, &c. We presumed there was two or three thousand dollars in money in the store, which however we never found, if there. I broke the desk, found some silver and copper coin and found a bag, which contained sixty dollars in silver, which, together with a box, I handed out to Symms, after which we returned to his residence. We divided the spoil and I received thirty dollars, for my services. This was the first time in my life, that I ever was concerned in breaking into a building or was guilty of stealing property, except in a few instances of taking fruit or some such trifling thing.

In the course of six or seven days, after breaking into the store in Charles street, I came to the town (Charlestown), and while in the cellar kept by Jones & Sawyer, I think, I observed one of the firm take money from a pocket book which appeared to contain a large amount in bank bills. Thinking, as I had committed one crime, I might as well go on in that way, and get money more readily than by labor, I broke into the cellar that night, but found that the occupants had taken the precaution to carry the pocket book home with them, and therefore I got nothing. I told Symms what I had been doing, and he discouraged me from any further attempts on cellars, by remarking that the occupants generally took good care of their money, before locking up at night—a wise precaution, and which, if practised by every one in business, would leave but little prospect of success for those who wish to live by their wits, instead of honest industry. Symms informed me how to proceed in future to ensure success.

I again visited Charlestown—stole a bundle of cloth from on board a fishing vessel—was pursued, arrested and sentenced to six months imprisonment in the county jail at East Cambridge. This was in October, 1824, and was the first time I was ever held in confinement. I was then about fifteen years of age, and the idea of being in prison, operated very painfully upon my feelings. I verily believe that if I had been discharged after the first week of confinement, I should have been honest and steady ever after. In a short time, however, Jail scenes and the society of the depraved and vicious became familiar, and I lost, in a good degree, the tender feelings which influenced me on being first committed. There was so much mirth among those in confinement, that I soon became quite contented in my situation. Shortly after I was committed, I was removed to a room in which was confined a man by the name of Purchase, charged with burning his grand-mother and causing her death. We concerted a plan for effecting our escape:—Wm J. Young, a convict recently discharged from this prison, was also one of the party. The attempt was made, but proved unsuccessful. On being discovered we were separated. As I was young and of small stature, the Jail-keeper did not suspect me of being much interested or concerned. The truth was, however, that I performed nearly all the work in the affair.

In the cell to which I was removed was George Munroe and Samuel Williams; and in the cell opposite to the door of ours, was old Willard: the latter, an old State Prison convict, and the two former have also been confined here. They were almost constantly talking over their scrapes and boasting of the success they had met with in the acts of villany in which they had been frequently engaged. Their statements I presumed were true, and of course received them with all the credulity common to youth.

On the 16th of April, 1825, my sentence expired, and I was accordingly discharged from Jail. Destitute of money, and having no one near to assist me, I went to Boston, and bent my course towards the house of my old acquaintance, Symms. He loaned me five dollars. On the following Monday, which was the second day after my dis-

charge, I came to Charlestown, and in the night time, broke the store kept, I think, by Bridge & Orne, near the old bridge, but obtained only about one dollar in change. The next night I broke a grocery store near the head of Russia wharf, kept by Colburn, and obtained but about fifty cents in change; took nothing but coin from either place, except a glass of wine. Same night broke the store of Deblois & Tremlet, I think—entered the counting room and found a heavy roll containing about one hundred dollars in doubloons and Spanish gold. Next morning I exchanged them for other money. With a portion of the money I purchased cloth, and expended the balance in company with an abandoned female who boarded at Symms's house. In about three weeks my money was all expended, and in order to replenish my coffers, I broke a store, kept I think, by Bennet & Brown, near the head of Long wharf, and obtained about \$260 in silver, and conveyed it to my boarding house, taking the precaution to bury it in the back yard.— This was about the middle of May 1825, and the money lasted me about one month. About the latter part of May 1825, I formed an acquaintance with a man, who is now living, but whose name I do not wish to mention. He proposed to visit Worcester with me, with a view, if practicable, to break and enter the Worcester Bank. On examination however, we found it was situated rather too near a dwelling-house to make the attempt with safety, and therefore gave up the project. On our return, we broke a store in Concord, kept, as near as I can recollect, by a Mr Burr. Found no money and took nothing; merely committed a little mischief by scattering the papers about near the window by which we entered the building.

Shortly after our visit to Worcester, we went to examine the Lynn Bank; decided upon making an attempt to break it. The night we selected for that purpose, it so happened there was a meeting near by, and we could not commence operations so early as was intended. We found so much difficulty in our progress, and having commenced work late, that at daylight, we had not succeeded in forcing the lock of the vault, and were obliged, for safety's sake, to abandon the enterprise, though within sight of the money. A few nights after the attempt at Lynn, we broke a store in Boston, occupied, I believe, by a firm under the name of Brown & Train, situated near the head of Central wharf. Found about five or six dollars in money, a gold seal which we valued at fifteen dollars, some silver pencil cases, one pair of pistols and a pocket book—the whole valued at about thirty or thirty-five dollars. Not wanting the pistols then, we placed them and the pocket book along side of a man who lay asleep in a small boat at a wharf as we passed along. The man was afterwards suspected of breaking the store, arrested and examined before the Police Court. The evidence, however, not proving sufficient, he was not bound over for trial. I and my accomplice were present in court during the examination. There appeared to be much prejudice against the man in the minds of the spectators, most of whom thought him guilty, especially the constables, who remarked after he was discharged, that it was of no use to arrest a man,

for the Judge (Whitman) would not bind him over, if ever so guilty. They appeared much dissatisfied at the Judge's decision.

A few days after this affair, I secreted myself in a store on ———, just before it was closed at night and was locked in. At a proper time I ascended to the second story, broke the desk, and found a roll of bills and a watch, and joined my friend who was near, on the outside, waiting for me. We returned to Symm's and on looking over our plunder found the bills were worthless, being on broken banks amounting in all to \$600, the watch was valued at thirty dollars.— Early in June, 1825, I formed an acquaintance with William Ross, an Irishman, I think, who had but recently been discharged from this prison. He was a famous rogue, and was afterwards executed in Canada, together with two or three others of his associates for robbing a priest.

Ross came to board at Symm's. He was rather unwilling to hazard any thing in this State, as he had been twice in the State Prison here, and on a third commitment would be liable, under the severity of the laws of this State, to be sentenced for life. He and my friend therefore went to Providence, and broke a store and sold some of the goods in Boston. My friend was arrested on suspicion of having stolen goods. He stated that he received the goods. I being present at the Police Court at the time, immediately went to Symm's and informed Ross of the circumstance. He immediately left the house and proceeded to the burying-ground on the Common, to keep a look out. In about twenty minutes the officers were at the house in pursuit of him; they searched the house, but of course, did not succeed in finding him.— Ross remained on the Common three or four days; I carried him breakfast and dinner there, and at night he would go out to Roxbury. He was desirous of raising some money as soon as possible, in order to get off out of the way. He said he could raise it most readily with the pistol, on the highway. Accordingly we went on the road leading to Brighton, and remained until ten, P. M. Nothing favorable presenting itself, we returned. Next day, according to previous arrangement, we went to the woods in Roxbury, and took a station near the road.— Our conversation, while together, was principally in relation to crimes, he being well versed in the subject, while I was, as it were, but a novice. He remarked upon the most sure and safe means for successful enterprises. He considered highway robbery most likely to result favorably with respect to gain, but considered it by far the most dangerous mode of securing unlawful gains, and in his opinion, ought not to be undertaken without using every precaution for personal safety—that a man should be prepared to hazard his life in such cases, which a man of spirit should not hesitate to do, if occasion demanded it in order to raise funds.

He spoke of the severity of the criminal law against offenders on the highway, and thought on that account, highway robbery should not be followed as a profession. He gave me a history of his life: said he had escaped from the State Prisons of Maryland, New York and Massachusetts—that he had been a rogue from early life, and once robbed

his father. I inferred he had been guilty of highway robbery in former times. He was a generous hearted fellow, a good scholar, and could write and engrave well. I do not think he had ever been guilty of murder; nor do I think that any one but a coward would take human life, except in self defence. In that case I think it justifiable; and even if I was robbing a man, and found it necessary to kill him, in order to save my own life, I should not think it wrong; it would be merely acting in self defence. The first law of nature is self preservation, and this principle would justify me in any measure necessary for the preservation of life. In the course of our conversation, Ross hinted that there might be money deposited in the office of the British Consul, in Boston, and advised me to examine the place and break it if possible. As nothing of importance passed on the road, we separated about ten, P. M.; Ross remarking that he intended to leave this part of the country, and that probably we should never meet each other again in this world—which has proved to be the case. He proceeded to Lower Canada, and, as has been before stated, was executed on the gallows, in company with several others of his associates, for robbing a priest of \$8000.

I returned to Boston, and the next day reconnoitered the Consul's office, and broke and entered the building the following night. I looked over the papers in his office and desk, and took an article, which, on examination next day, proved to be the stamp or seal of His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Boston. About this time, June 16th, 1825, I fell in with my former associate, whose name I decline giving. We talked over the subject of a journey to Keene, N. H., for the purpose of reconnoitering and breaking, if practicable, the Bank in that place. Having made our arrangements accordingly, and hired a good horse and wagon, we soon left Boston for the place of our destination, carrying with us a good supply of tools, the better to enable us to effect the object of our visit. I had once visited the Bank for the purpose of getting a bill exchanged, and knew, therefore, something of the locality and interior of the establishment.

Notwithstanding the precautions we had taken, we found, on trial, that our tools were not suitably prepared to force an iron door, which protected the vault, and which I had not foreseen would be met in our progress. Discovering a contrivance of the Cashier to enable him to ascertain if any attempts had been made to force the doors of the Bank, and presuming therefore, that our proceedings would be discovered, we concluded to give up any further efforts, and therefore, after taking out of the banking room several hundred dollars in bank bills and a quantity of cents and securing them on the side of the road, started again for Boston. About daylight we were passed by the stage and several persons on the road; and on its being discovered that an attempt had been made to break the vaults of the Bank, we were suspected, pursued and overtaken same day about four o'clock, P. M.—As we drove very fast, we did not for a moment suspect the persons coming up behind us were in pursuit, and were not therefore prepared for resistance. Two men in a wagon, and one in a chaise rode

along side of us, and entering into conversation, inquired if we were going to Boston, and giving us to understand that they had a message they should like to send, and continued to approach us along side until they gained a good position for stopping us; upon which they informed us that we were suspected of breaking the Cheshire Bank, at Keene, and they should arrest us, which they did, and returned to Keene with us without delay.

I should not have been taken quite so easily a few years after this affair; but from our peculiar situation, and being a mere boy, I could not make resistance with any prospect of success. Next day we were examined at Keene, and were bound over for trial at the October term of the S. J. Court. Our bonds were set at \$600 each, and not having friends or means of our own, were committed to Jail for safe keeping. We gave information of the place where we obtained our horse and chaise; but I do not know whether the owner, Mr John Brittan of Boston, ever obtained his property again.

While in jail, we were treated well by the keeper, and kindly by the Bank officers. After being in confinement a few weeks, we made an attempt to break out, but not succeeding, were put in irons.

Some iron bars had been placed perpendicularly on the outside of our window to prevent the introduction of tools and other articles from without: these bars tended to prevent a wholesome and necessary circulation of air, and therefore we requested the Jailor to have them removed. We considered the request resonable; but the Jailor thought otherwise, and declined granting it. I threatened if they were not removed to burn them out, being secured in wood work. Shortly after, we made the experiment, and were in hopes of not only securing a better circulation of air, but of opening a passage for the more free exercise of our bodies: the fire however communicated with the wood work on the outside of the prison, which was discovered by the Jailor, and of course our hopes frustrated.

We made no further efforts to effect an escape before the day of trial. For this attempt we were chained down to the floor, but having succeeded in getting tools from outside, we finally sawed off our chains.—After this we were suffered to remain without them but were under a very strict watch.

I never, in my life, was committed to jail when I had not tools secreted in my clothing or in some other perfectly safe place, which were sufficient to insure escape by sawing off bars, grates or in some other way, except the first time when I was committed at East Cambridge.

After I was found out, however, they generally watched me so closely, that no possible chance presented itself of using them with success.—On being arraigned for trial in October, 1825, I found an indictment had been made out against me not only for breaking the Bank, but for attempting to burn the Jail. We had no counsel and were convicted: I was sentenced to five years hard labor for breaking the Bank: and ten days solitary confinement and ten years hard labor for attempting to burn the Jail. My friend and associate in the Bank affair,

received a sentence of five years for his part of that transaction. On Sunday the 23d of October, 1825, we were committed to the State Prison at Concord N. H. in pursuance of the conditions of our sentences.

There were four of us committed at that time: on our arrival, the warden, caused us to be searched, but did not succeed in obtaining but about twenty dollars, in bank bills, which I had stowed away in each side of my mouth. After being dressed in the common prison clothing we were ordered into the cells, not however before another search was made by examining our mouths and other places, to ascertain if we had any money about us.

Finding what was going on, I slipped the money from my mouth to my hand, and held it against the palm with my thumb, and again eluded discovery. Next morning my hair was cut short, and I was put to the employment of stone cutting. I soon discovered that money was useful in prison as well as outside: various articles could be obtained by means of teamsters and others, visiting the prison on business: even rum was not difficult to be got by those who wanted it.

I was received into prison under rather a bad name from the jailor at Keene and also from others; and was accordingly watched pretty close; for the first three weeks therefore, I kept quiet and orderly, after a while, thinking there might be a chance for escape, I fixed a hook upon a pole and made an attempt to scale the yard wall: I had nearly reached the top, climbing up the pole, when the sentry discovered me and hailed, threatening to fire, if I did not immediately return back. Fire away, said I, which he did, and being near, wounded me in the hip with a buck shot. The effect of the wound caused some faintness and I was unable to continue my hold upon the pole, and therefore slipped down into the yard again. The warden and several of the keepers approached me, and after a slight resistance I was secured, and placed in a cell without bed or furniture of any kind. The physician was sent for and the shot cut out. I was confined in solitary, on bread and water, about twenty days for this affair. The Governor and Council visited the prison while I was in solitary, and conversed with me in relation to my conduct. After the expiration of the twenty days, I was put to stone cutting again, and had an iron block and chain attached to my right leg. In a few days I succeeded in breaking off a part of the iron from the block, and by corroding the part separated with vinegar, deceived the officer into the belief of my story, that it was an old crack, and that the parts separated in consequence of throwing the block out of bed in the morning when getting up to dress. I wore the block until about the month of January, 1826, and thought that it had been on a sufficient time, and requested the warden to cause it to be taken off. He did not seem disposed to comply with the request, therefore I broke the chain with a stone hammer and threw the whole away. Another block and chain was attached to my leg, and I was secured to a ring-bolt in my cell, and the whole made fast with a padlock. The warden remarking, 'that he thought I was secure.' Before he had succeeded in fastening my door, I broke the padlock and freed the chain from the ring-bolt. The

warden heard me, came back, sent for his blacksmith, and made my chain secure to the ring-bolt with rivets. I remained in this situation seventeen days without bed or blankets—nothing in fact, but a stone floor to lie upon; and this was in the cold month of January.—I was stubborn, and would not send for the warden, which, if I had, and shown a proper temper of mind, I doubt not I should have been released from my unpleasant situation much sooner.

My allowance, during the time, was eight ounces of bread and a pint of water per day. When taken out, my feet were badly frozen.—I was put into another cell and made comfortable. In this cell I was closely confined most of the time till the June following.

By the carelessness of one of the officers, my cell door one morning, was left unlocked. I took the lock into my cell, made an impression of the form of the key, sent it to the blacksmith by a fellow convict, and soon had a good key of my own to be used at some period, as occasion might require. In making an attempt to get out of my cell by cutting away the stone in order to remove the hooks of the hinges, I was overheard by the deputy warden, who after a long search discovered the cause of the noise I had made. I was ordered into punishment on account thereof. While in solitary or punishment, I was not allowed bed or bedding, and was restricted to eight ounces of bread, and one pint of water per day. In this situation I was kept twelve days, and then ordered into a cell in the lower arch and made comfortable.

[It may not be improper to state in this place, that the prison in which Walton was confined, in Concord, was the old building, erected before the prisons on the Auburn plan were introduced.]

I was confined nearly four months in the cell in the lower arch, but was allowed full diet. About this time a new warden took charge of the Prison, the former warden having resigned his office. If at this time my irons had been taken off, and I been set to work in the yard, I should have behaved well; but as they showed me no favor, I was determined to give them all necessary employment to make me secure.

The latter part of October, I was permitted to go into the Prison yard, with a shackle, block and chain attached to my leg, weighing in all, about forty pounds. In this situation I remained until February, when, notwithstanding my obedience to the rules and regulations of the Prison, the warden refused to grant my request to cause the chains, &c, to be taken off. Finding he was determined not to release me, I cut the chain with a cold chisel, and threw the block into the vault. For this offence, I was put into solitary punishment again—had a small iron block fastened to one of my legs, and remained in this situation twelve days; after which I was put to work again.—Shortly after this I remonstrated with the Warden for keeping me in chains—and thought it hard that I should be treated with a severity far exceeding that of the other convicts. Under excited feelings, I remarked that he had no right to use me worse than he did others—and told him I would cut off my chains as often as he put them on, and immediately commenced putting my threat into execution, by cut-

ting off those I then had fastened to my leg. My feelings were wrought up to such a state of desperation, that I armed myself with a knife, for defence or attack, if occasion should seem to render it expedient and necessary.

The warden sent for three or four of the officers, to iron me more securely, if possible, than he did before. I drew my knife upon them, and they all ran out of the cell. The warden ordered a gun to be brought, and threatened to fire upon me unless I submitted to him.—I dared him to execute his threat, and firmly kept my position. After threatening and scolding awhile, they retired to the guard room, leaving me in possession of the cell, and of the tools they left in their retreat.

I remained in this situation four or five days, having nothing but the bare stones to lay upon. An officer now came to me, and by kind words I was induced to give up the tools and surrender myself to the authorities of the Prison. An iron shackle, weighing about two pounds, was now fastened upon my leg, and I was removed to another cell, allowed full rations, and made comfortable as circumstances would permit in such a place.

In this cell I was closely confined one year and seven days—not being allowed to go into the yard more than five times during that whole period, and then only about twenty-five minutes each time, and well guarded by three or four officers.

At the expiration of the year and seven days, the warden came to my cell, and was anxious to obtain my promise not to attempt any further measures for effecting my escape. I remarked that it was his duty to keep me in confinement, but that I should escape if possible—and would not promise to desist from making an attempt. The warden finally suffered me to go into the yard. I found that during my long confinement in the cell, they had taken the precaution to place the yard in a more secure condition, by erecting a palisade on the top of the wall, increasing the height about eight feet—making the whole height of the yard about twenty feet, instead of about twelve feet as formerly. In about two months I sawed off the shackle and made an attempt to scale the wall. An officer fired and missed me; he fired a second time with no better success. Another officer then fired, and the ball passed between my arm and head: my arm being up in the position of raising myself over the picket on the wall. As yet I was uninjured, though I had been fired upon three times. On looking around from the top of the palisade, I observed the deputy warden and a watchman proceeding to the point where I should have to land on the other side of the wall; under these circumstances, I concluded it would be of no use to proceed further, and therefore descended to the yard again; and was soon accosted by the Warden, who inquired if I had been on the wall. I told him that I had. He remarked that he was sorry that I had been making another attempt to escape. He spoke mildly to me on the subject of my conduct—ordered me into solitary punishment, and after ten days, took me out and had me placed in my former cell again.—I was confined three or four months in this cell, and not suffered to go into the yard once during the whole time.

While in the yard, prior to my last attempt to escape, I stocked my cell with a good supply of tools, intending to amuse myself by working out through the walls or floor if possible. I had a stone hammer and other tools, and secreted them under the floor out of sight.

During my last confinement in this cell, I succeeded in cutting nearly through the floor—but was finally discovered, and a close watch was kept up by officers who were well armed. Finding I was so closely watched, that no possible chance of success remained, I gave up making any further efforts at this time. The warden came into my cell one day, and discovering the hole I had made, ordered me into solitary punishment, and kept me in that state twelve days; after which, I was taken up into a large cell in the upper story of the prison, and chained to a ring-bolt in a corner of the room. A very heavy chain and a shackle were used for the purpose, and a straw bed allowed me to sleep on. My shackle was examined every day, but I soon found it was so large, that I could disengage my foot from it. Soon after the daily examination, therefore, I would release myself from the irons, and enjoy the liberty of the whole room, for exercise. During pleasant moonlight nights, I used to sit at the window of my cell—which privilege afforded me a degree of happiness that sweetened the solitude of my situation, and rendered my condition comparatively pleasant and agreeable. Whenever I heard the officers approaching my cell, I used to slip on the shackle, and they were not the wiser for the discovery I had made.

I remained in this room from May, 1828, to the November following; my shackle was then taken off, after working nearly an hour to accomplish their object! I was then set to work repairing the cell which I had formerly nearly broken through; after which a small shackle was fastened upon my leg, and I was ordered to work in the stone shed once more. About this time I began to think, from information which I had received, that there was a prospect of a change among the officers of the prison, and that the warden would not remain long. I therefore concluded to bear my troubles with a manly fortitude, and await the operation of things. In the spring of 1829, my anticipations were realised—the warden left, and his successor took charge of the prison in July of that year.

New under officers were appointed, with the exception of the overseer of the Stone Department, and of the Blacksmith's shop; and the affairs of the prison were brushed up and put into a new train.

The late warden was kind enough to remove my shackle before he took leave of the prison, but I soon found that his successor had been particularly informed respecting my conduct. And as is an old saying, that a new broom sweeps clean, the new officers kept an especial eye upon me and did not suffer me to move about the yard without their notice. Soon after his appointment, the new warden conversed with me, remarking that he heard I was a hard character to deal with, but said that if I was disposed to conduct well and obey the officers, he would treat me kindly, and would assist me in obtaining a pardon after I had been confined a reasonable time. In the fall of the same year,

he informed me that he intended enlarging the shoe maker's apartment, and that if I had a desire to learn that trade, I could have the opportunity: not liking the stone cutting business, I gladly accepted his kind offer, and went to work in the shoe maker's shop accordingly.— During the following winter and spring, a Sabbath school was established in the prison, and the Convicts were instructed in morals and religion by gentlemen from Concord and the neighbouring towns. By the kind attention of the gentlemen, I was constantly supplied with books of an historical, biographical, moral and miscellaneous character, which entertained and instructed me during the remainder of my confinement in that institution.

In Oct. 1830, my companion in the affair of the Bank, was discharged by expiration of sentence, and I was placed in solitary to serve out the ten days awarded by court as my second sentence for attempting to burn the jail. I suffered but little depression of feelings at the separation from my old friend and companion. In fact I seldom if ever do, at any time or under any circumstances: I think it better to bear up under misfortunes and trouble than to sit and brood over them under desponding feelings. I suffer nothing, if possible, to trouble my mind.— As much as I dislike a prison, and irksome as it is to me to be under confinement and restraint, I do not and will not repine—hoping for better days or looking for some lucky time to effect an escape. So little feeling do I have in this respect, that I do not recollect ever shedding a tear over my misfortunes, excepting on the occasion of my first being committed to jail at Cambridge in this state. I soon learned however, on that occasion, that it would be useless to repine at my lot and that it was far better to look trouble hard in the face, than give up to despondency and sorrow. During the winter and spring of 1830—31, I had frequent conversation with the warden on the subject of a pardon. He promised to attend to the case. By his consent, I was permitted private interviews with one of the members of the bar, which resulted in his sending a petition to the Governor and Council for a pardon.

The Executive visited the prison and gave me an opportunity to lay my case before them personally. I thought I ought not to be held any longer under the second sentence, for I had made only a civil attempt for liberty, without intending to destroy the jail—I think the Executive concurred in this view of the case. In the fall, a petition was drawn up and signed by myself, the warden, deputy and such of the under officers as were acquainted with the facts of my case, and who had been in prison any length of time, and was laid before the Governor and Council.

In about two weeks afterwards, I was called into the warden's room, and informed that a pardon had been granted me, and that I was to be discharged forthwith. I was furnished with a decent suit of clothes three dollars in money, and, after a long and tedious confinement of six years, lacking ten days, was permitted, once more to enjoy the happiness of a state of liberty and a freedom from all restraint. A gentleman, who was a stranger to me, happening to be at the prison on busi-

ness at the time, kindly took me into his chaise, and brought me with in a few miles of my own native town, Lancaster in this state. Notwithstanding my confinement and my restlessness while in confinement, and subjected to restraints, yet on first being at large, as I looked abroad in the wide world, a feeling of loneliness tinged with a slight gloomy sensation, came over my mind. This however soon passed away and I began to feel like being a man of the world again. I visited my friends in Lancaster, obtained a small accession to my funds, and proceeded to Boston with the view and in the hope of obtaining honest employment. On my arrival, I made several efforts to get employment at stone cutting; among other places I called at the Navy Yard, where quite a large number of persons were or had been employed at that work; but was told they did not want more help. Not succeeding in obtaining work at stone cutting, and not being sufficiently well learned to get a seat at shoe making and my money getting short.—I came to the final conclusion to get a living in the best manner possible under the circumstances of my case.

Passing through Brattle street, I observed a watch maker's shop, and thought there was a chance for a raise, I first however, took the precaution to enquire of a man whom I had formerly known, whether he would take the watches if brought to him; he consented. I then with a centre bit, which I had procured, bored a hole through the window of sufficient dimensions to admit my arm and took out thirteen watches carried them to my friend, and received fifty dollars for the whole.—The watches proved to be quite ordinary, the owner or occupant of the shop, having taken away at night all those that were of a good quality. At this time I boarded with a widow woman in Lynn street; Symms was not to be found, having died in the State Prison, as I afterwards learned.

With the money obtained for the watches I purchased clothing and paid up my board bill. I now began to think seriously of following the advice given me by my old friend Ross; and finding a man at my boarding house, who entertained similar views, and who had, as I had reason to suppose, pursued such a course of life—we conferred together on the subject, and finally concluded to go on the road to make a raise: we accordingly went to Roxbury and took a station near the road side in the wood, bordering on the Norfolk and Bristol turnpike.—Soon a gentleman and lady came along in a chaise; my companion seized the horse by the bridle, when the man enquired what we wanted. I answered "your money or your life immediately." He exclaimed, "well, dont fire, dont fire," and handed me his pocket book, which on examining contained four five dollar bank bills, one of which proved to be a counterfeit on the Boston Bank.

We had prepared ourselves with a good pair of pistols before starting from Boston. In fact, I almost always, when at large, after my acquaintance with Ross, carried weapons of this description; he advised me never to be without them. On examining the wallet, I found the name of George Jones, written on a paper enclosed, and the next day it was announced in the public papers, that George Jones, one of the

Constables of Boston, was robbed on the turnpike the night before.— A few nights after the robbery of Jones, we went to Dorchester, and stopped a man who was riding in a chaise.

He appeared much alarmed, and said he had no money. I felt of his pockets and took out a wallet, but found no money in it. My companion discovering the man had a watch, demanded it; I was opposed to the proceeding, but my friend insisted, and finally kept it.— The individual appeared like a person employed as a gentleman's servant.

The papers of the following day stated that he was robbed of his watch, and fifty cents in money. The watch would not have been taken from the man, had not my associate been somewhat irritated at remarks which he heard had come from Mr Jones, who, as was understood, boasted of his receiving from me his watch, after it had been taken from him; and that he had been offered forty dollars for it a few days previous.

Two reasons induced me to return to Mr Jones his watch, on the night he was robbed. The first was, I thought it rather hard to take a man's watch, who might not feel able to supply its place by purchasing another—and secondly I was apprehensive it might possibly lead to our detection. On our return home, we had some conversation, with respect to future operations. The little success we had thus far met with "on the road," rather discouraged me. I thought the gain not equivalent to the risk we exposed ourselves to—and my associate began to entertain the same opinion. We thought there was greater probability of success, by watching the delivery of money from the Banks, and attempting a "raise" in that way. Good clothing, money and time, however, were indispensable to ensure success in such an enterprise—and my limited means were not sufficient for the undertaking.

To carry out successfully well arranged plans of roguery, capital is as essential, as it is when about to engage in any mercantile employment. The want of sufficient capital in the outset, is the principal reason why so few of those who commence such a course of life do not succeed in their undertakings. It was the principal cause of my bad luck. I was, for want of means, necessitated to precipitate myself into measures which were ill-timed and rash, and which resulted, in consequence, unfavorably.

A short time after our second effort on the highway, I was informed by a discharged convict, that a wagon was on its way from the city to the country, containing a large quantity of dry goods—that it afforded a good opportunity to make a raise, and that the goods could be disposed of to a person whose name he mentioned, residing in the city. Thinking pretty well of the plan, we hired a horse and wagon of Hobbs & Haynes, and drove to Waltham; but missing the road the wagon took, we did not fall in with it—we therefore turned back for the city again. On our way home, we discovered a wagon standing in the middle of the road, the driver of which was some way back, employed in assisting another team out of some difficulty it had got into.

We examined the contents of the wagon, and took out two good buffalo robes and a quantity of leather, in all worth about seventy dollars. We passed another wagon, which was near a tavern, and took from it four pieces of broadcloth, and one piece of cotton cloth, and drove to my companion's boarding house in Ann street, and there deposited our plunder.

A man, half drunk, observed us, and inquired what we were doing with those goods, remarking that he believed they were stolen. Upon this, my friend, who was pretty well in for it, knocked the fellow down. He got on his feet again and ran towards the residence of Mr Constable Shute, who lived near by. Suspecting trouble was brewing, and that we should soon probably be looked after, I began to put the bundles into the wagon again. In the mean time, the occupant of the house and my friend, took to their heels and cleared out.

Before I had succeeded in getting all the articles into the wagon, Mr Shute made his appearance, in company with another person.—He inquired what I was doing with the goods, and received for answer that they were my own, and that I had a store in Charlestown. He wished to know in what part of Charlestown my store was situated, and was answered, near the Canal Bridge. He inquired what I was doing with the leather. I informed him I was going to carry it home for another person. He did not then notice the buffalo robes, they being under the cloth. Mr Shute then left the wagon in charge of two persons as keepers, and went in to search the house, leaving me outside. In fact, not being certain that the goods were stolen, he had not then arrested me.

While he was looking about the rooms, I went in, put on a cloak and came out, took up a bundle of the cloth and looking at it, remarked that I was satisfied the goods were stolen, and should carry them down to Mr Shute's house. Suiting the action to the word, I immediately jumped into the wagon and drove off. The men in charge, not thinking I was the person who pretended to own the goods, and thinking, doubtless, I had been sent out by Mr Shute, to convey the goods to his house. I had rode but a few rods, however, before they discovered their error, and the cry, "stop that wagon," sounded in my ears. Having a smart horse, I drove rapidly over the Warren Bridge, through Charlestown, and around the Milk-row road, to East Cambridge, where I secreted myself and wagon in a hollow in the rear of a meeting-house, and there remained till twelve o'clock, at midnight. After which, I drove through the city, to the house of an acquaintance in South Boston—told him what I had to dispose of, and he took the cloth, but declined receiving the leather and robes. From thence I went over to the city, and leaving the wagon under a shed on the corner of Pleasant street, proceeded to the residence of another acquaintance, gave him as a present the remaining articles, not left at South Boston, and requesting him to return the horse and wagon to the owners, went to my boarding house. The person to whom I gave the robes and leather, was observed, while carrying the articles to his residence, and suspicions were excited that he came by them dishonestly. He

imprudently drove the wagon to the house of an Irishman, instead of the stable of the owner, was suspected, arrested, and finally bound over for trial. With the money received for articles I sold, I supplied myself with clothing, and had some funds remaining, and was about leaving Boston. Being in want of a cloak, and perceiving one hanging outside of a store in Ann street, I took it, threw it over my shoulders, and walked off. A man who witnessed the transaction, ran, and laying hold of me, asked if it was my cloak. I told him it was. He remarking, however, that he thought he had the best claim to it, conveyed me into his store and sent for an officer. While the persons in the store were standing guard over me, I drew my pistol and presented it to the breast of one of them—but said nothing, well knowing the consequences that might result from making a threat under such circumstances; one of the men instantly sprang back, and I improved the opportunity to make my exit from the shop. The other man followed me, and jumping upon my back, with the aid of the officer, who came in at the critical time, secured me and conducted me to the Police Court, where I was bound over for trial for stealing the cloak and attempting to commit a murder. Securities were required in the sum of \$1500, and for want thereof I was committed to jail.

Afterwards, I was indicted for stealing the goods from the wagon. In about two weeks after my commitment, I was tried and convicted of stealing the cloak and the articles from the wagon, but acquitted of an attempt to murder.

I was sentenced to two days solitary confinement, and two years hard labor in the State Prison, and was conveyed to that place on the 16th of December, 1831. Green, the man who received the robes &c, was convicted of stealing them though entirely innocent of the offence; he knew nothing of the affair, and only received them as a present from me. He was aware, to be sure, from what I told him, that the articles were stolen; and if he had been convicted of receiving stolen goods, the sentence would have been just. He was sentenced to the State Prison, for one year. He was discharged, committed on another offence, and was received into the State Prison a second time, under a sentence of five years for larceny, before my sentence expired. While in the institution, on my first commitment. I was employed at the manufacturing of hats, was punished but twice, and got along as comfortably and pleasantly as could be expected, while in confinement and subjected to the restraints of rigid rules and regulations. During my confinement, I enjoyed an opportunity of reading many books, principally of a moral and religious character, attended the Sunday School, and daily morning and evening services in the chapel.

On the 17th December, 1832, after receiving kind advice and the best wishes of the chaplain and warden I was discharged. The warden was unwell at the time and sent for me to visit him at his house, which is situated in the front yard of the prison. He conversed with me for about half an hour, endeavoring to persuade me to be honest and obtain a living by honest industry. I remarked that it was doubtful what course I should pursue, and that it was hard to leave off old tricks. In fact, I did not intend to lead an honest life.

I was furnished with four dollars and a good suit of clothes, which, together with the sum of eight dollars and a half, which I carried to the Prison, was all the money I received on being discharged from this place. I was now once more at liberty, and free to roam the world over. But I did not go out of Prison with feelings of a moral character, by any means. I was determined to take any course that would most easily and readily fill my pockets.

On the day of my discharge from Prison, I purchased, at a hard ware store, a pair of pistols, of six inch barrel, and gave five dollars for them; and on the second day, purchased powder and lead, and moulded balls for my pistols. I also exchanged the clothes furnished me by the government of the Prison, for a different suit, at an old clothes shop, and commenced boarding with an old acquaintance.

On the second night after my discharge, I proceeded to Brighton, and watched the travellers on the road and remained until ten or eleven P. M. and returned to the city, not finding a good chance to do anything. Next day I walked around the city, and did not go on the road again until the next Saturday night, December 21st, 1837; the weather being unpleasant most of the time. On that day I went to Roxbury, about sunset, stationed myself near the woods, in the turnpike leading to Dedham. I wore an olive green straight bodied coat, and had on a hat and a camblet cloak with a standing collar, over my inside garments. About half an hour past sunset, I observed a wagon coming from the direction of Boston or Roxbury street, travelling towards Dedham. I was then moving towards the city. On the wagon passing me, I eyed the man who was driving, pretty close, and was at a stand whether to stop him or not, as he did not have the appearance of one who would be likely to have much money about him. On looking more carefully, however, I discovered, what I took to be dry goods, and then concluded he was a country store keeper. Upon this, I ran behind the wagon until it reached the foot of the hill, which it was then descending; on its arrival at this point, I went alongside and requested the man to give me a ride? he answered "well I dont know." I then seized the reins, and taking out one of my pistols, demanded his money or his life: he looked with apparent astonishment, and as though he would have said, you must be deranged. I repeated the demand. Turning pale, and apparently much frightened, he said with a trembling voice, "well you may have it." He made a mistake, and put his hand into the pocket containing silver change—observing it, I remarked, "your pocket book, sir;" upon which he put his hand into another pocket, and reached me his pocket book—much agitated.—I was in some haste, having perceived a man approaching, and only about twelve rods distant. He was descending the hill towards the valley. I received the money, however, before he came up. As he neared the wagon, I stepped back, and he passed between myself and the person in the wagon. After the man on foot passed, I stepped on one side of the road, and told the man I had robbed to drive on, which he did, without making any remarks. I tarried a short time to watch his movements. He drove to the top of the hill quite fast, and then looked

back. I then started upon the run, and soon came up with the man on foot, who had gained some distance ahead—not certain that he did not suspect my business with the man in the wagon, I walked alongside of him, and remarked that it was a pleasant evening—he answered with a regular voice, and said “yes.” I passed him and reached the city in about twenty or thirty minutes; having ran nearly all the way, being, naturally, very swift on the foot. I did not use a horse on that day or night: having walked out and ran back. In fact, I had not, up to that time, nor did I until the Monday following, hire a horse of Mr. Symonds, or of any other person from the day I left the State Prison. On returning to my boarding house, I privately examined the pocket book, and found sixty dollars in good bank bills, a counterfeit three dollar bill, on the Washington Wesley Bank—of what State I did not notice; and also a note of hand, the writing of which was nearly obliterated. As I could not discover the names on the note, I burnt it up, together with the spurious bill and the pocket book.

In order to get the bills I had obtained off my hands, I purchased some articles of clothing, and had the remainder changed for other money; so, that in the course of two hours, I had not a dollar remaining of the bills I took from Mr. Boyden, the person robbed. Next morning, Sunday, I was informed of the robbery of Mr. Boyden, on the Dedham Turnpike. I merely made a little enquiry as to the circumstances, being of opinion, that, in such cases, the least there is said, the better for the guilty. I called at the guard room of the State Prison the same morning, and handed the Warden a book, which I had promised to leave for one of the convicts. I have since learnt that the robbery committed the night before, had not been heard of at the Prison. I presumed they would suspect me when they heard of the affair, and therefore went over early in the morning. On Monday morning, called at Mr. Symonds’ stable, hired a good saddle horse, and gave my name Burley Grove; told him I was a drover, and was going to Brighton to see about some cattle.

In Cambridge, I called on a young man who had been a convict in prison, and after conversing with him about half an hour proceeded to Brighton. It was rather a dull day and not much doing. I saw Mr H. the contractor for supplying rations at the prison: concluding he had not much money, thought it not worth while to talk with him; in fact, I saw no one whom I thought worth following, and therefore returned the horse to the stable in the city and paid for the use of him.—I handed the money to Mr Symonds personally, who remarked, that he should like to have me call whenever I wanted a horse.

I remained pretty quiet several days, merely looking around the market and noticing the proceedings of the market men and others to ascertain if any one had money.

One day, observing a man with his pocket book open, paying away money, and finding he had, apparently, a large sum on hand, in bank bills, I enquired of those near by, who he was; and ascertained, by their answers, who he was and where he belonged. In the afternoon, I hired, of Mr Symonds, the same beast I rode on Monday—the

Harriet mare, and went to Watertown. In the edge of the evening, I began to return towards the city, and finally stopped, as near as I can recollect, by the Arsenal, secured my horse in a small piece of woods.— In about two hours three or four wagons, near together, made their appearance on the road. The one I was looking out for, was in the rear and drawn by two horses.

The wagons were heavy loaded, and therefore moved moderately along and particularly while ascending a rising ground in front of where I lay. I approached the man driving the horses, and presenting a pistol demanded, his money or his life. Upon this a man from the rear of the wagon, the same person I had seen with the money in the morning, came towards me and asked what was the matter. The driver informed him I was going to rob him. He then ran towards the wagons, hallooing, "here is a man got a pistol."

The driver then handed me his wallet. I had mistaken the man I was looking after, from whom I was in hopes of obtaining the pocket book.

After receiving the wallet, I ordered the man to pass on, went into the woods, mounted my horse and rode home to the city.

On examining the contents of the wallet, I found but six or seven dollars. After burning the wallet I got the money exchanged. About Christmas, I fell in with a man then recently discharged from Prison.— We agreed to make an effort to introduce some tobacco into the Prison. We found a boat on the north side of the wall, in which we conveyed ourselves to the Prison wharf, on the south side; and I deposited the tobacco, rolled up in a newspaper in the barn, in a chest used for keeping the meal for the oxen. In the bundle I deposited two small pieces of paper on each of which was written information for the benefit of several of my friends in Prison.

The articles I have since understood, were found by an officer the next morning, and the contents of the written papers were used on my first trial at Dedham for highway robbery. On our return with the boat the tide had fallen so much, that we were obliged to leave it far below the place from whence we took it. The situation of the boat, I afterwards learnt, was cause of suspicion on the part of the warden, that it had been used by the persons who lodged the tobacco in the barn of the Prison. This offence, depositing prohibited articles on the premises of the Prison, with intent that the convicts may receive them, is, by statute, punishable by confinement and hard labor two years in State Prison.

A few days after this affair, while at a cabinet maker's shop in Cambridge street I met with a man by the name of Wade, then recently discharged from the State Prison. He remarked that he was acquainted in the town of Foster, R. I. and that there was a Bank in that town which might in his opinion, be easily entered. He wanted me to go with him and make an attempt. I did not care much about going with him, for I never was pleased with the looks of the fellow; however I thought I was able to take care of myself, but concluded, if Wade should be apprehended, he would tell all he knew in a short

As he urged me very hard, I finally consented to join him in the expedition. Wade was boarding at the time at Alden's, I think, in Dedham; and I agreed to meet him the next day at that place, which I did. He hired a horse and wagon in Dedham, and we rode the first day, to a town beyond Providence, and the succeeding day arrived at Foster. We had obtained a twenty dollar bill which we intended to get exchanged at the Bank in Foster, and which by so doing, would offer an opportunity of observing the state of the Banking room, vault and accessible points of the building. It so happened however, that at the time of our visit, the cashier was under the necessity, from illness of transacting the Bank business at his private residence. On examining the Banking house outside, and finding it was unfavourably located to ensure success in an attempt to enter it forcibly, we relinquished the object, returned to Providence, and put up at Wakefield's tavern, over Sunday and until Monday.

On Sunday, we fell in with several discharged convicts from the Massachusetts State Prison; one of whom told Wade he believed I was the person who had committed the robberies near Boston. He had been in the State Prison at Concord N. H. and knew me well.

On Monday, we returned to Dedham, and I was anxious to secure an opportunity of proceeding directly to Boston without delay, and offered the stage-man, who was going in with a private party, one dollar, which was double the usual price as I understood, to take me on with him at the time, but he declined for the reason that the stage was expressly taken up for the occasion, by a private party.

I put up at Alden's Tavern, and retired to my chamber for the night, between nine and ten P. M. Between the hours of eleven and twelve, I think it was, I was awaked by the ringing of bells, and concluded it was an alarm of fire. Being a stranger in the place, I did not, at first, get up; but on seeing the light from the fire I arose, dressed and proceeded to the bar room, and was informed by a female present, that Bride's Stables were on fire. Until I saw the fire from the window of the bar room, I did not know where those stables were or in what direction they lay from my lodging place.

During the ride from and to Foster, R. I. Wade conversed with me relative to the burning of Bride's Stables, a year or more previous to that time. From his remarks, I was well satisfied that he was the author of the fire, and from his remark at that time, respecting the rebuilding of the Stables, and that they were ready to be burnt again, I also concluded that he communicated the fire on the occasion when I was present in Dedham. For myself, I had nothing to do with the transaction. I never formed any plan of the kind, nor did I ever have any conversation respecting the burning of those Stables with any person except Wade.

I never communicated fire to any building, or any fire, with intention to burn a building, except the jail in Exeter, which building, however, I did not intend to destroy. On the morning succeeding the night in which the Stables were burnt, I started early and walking past the scene of the fire, proceeded on foot to Boston.

A day or two after my return from Foster, I observed a market man with a pocket book, apparently well filled with bank bills. I made enquiry respecting him, and concluded he would go to Chelsea that evening, where he resided. In the hope of falling in with him, I hired the Harriet mare, of Mr. Symonds, giving him to understand that I was going to Brighton; instead of which, I crossed in the Ferry Boat to Chelsea, and rode as far as Lynn, returning back to Chelsea in the edge of the evening, about the time I presumed the man I was in pursuit of, would be on the road home. I secured my horse in a lane, threw my cloak over him, to prevent his color being observed and known, and took a station behind a fence on the Salem Turnpike, about a mile and a half distant from Chelsea Bridge. After waiting nearly two hours, a covered wagon passed, but I did not go near it.—Finally, the wagon I was looking out for, came along, and it contained two men, one of whom was the person I had seen in the market during the day. I recognized him by his dress. I immediately walked from my position to the wagon, seized the reins of the bridle, presented my pistol and demanded “his money or his life.” At this moment, the other man, a stranger to me, sprang out of the wagon and ran off—entering the same lane where my horse was tied. I immediately advanced towards the man who remained in the wagon, Mr. John Fenno, jr, and as I neared him, he sprang towards me, seizing me by the shoulders; I stepped back a little, to give him a chance to reach the ground, which I presumed was his intention. We struggled a short time, and I began to think he was attempting to hold me, and that his partner Mr. Payson, was after my horse. As I could not well clear myself of him, I endeavored to fire my pistol near his ear, not intending, however, to kill him; but did not much care whether I shot of a part of his ear or not.

The pistol was discharged rather sooner than I intended, and when I had elevated it about as high as his breast. The man appeared some frightened and fell, as I thought, on his back. I concluded he was shot through the breast. I thought, on his attacking me, that I had a different man to deal with from any I had previously met on the highway. After he fell, I ran to the place where my horse was secured, mounted and rode back a short distance to ascertain what was the situation of the man I had fired upon. On observing him rise up, I concluded he was not much injured, and felt, therefore, quite pleased.

I have since learnt, that the ball grazed the lower part of the right breast, but did not go through the skin; causing, however, rather a severe shock at the time, and a consequent recoil of my opponent. I immediately rode to the city, returned my horse to the stable, paid for the use of him and returned to my boarding house. I thought but little, if anything, more of this affair, than of others of a similar character which I had been engaged in. A reward of one hundred dollars was offered for the apprehension of the man who attempted the robbery.—Notwithstanding this, I remained in the city, though I was inactive for several days. I was not aware of being suspected. [He was suspected, however, by an officer of the Prison, an acquaintance of Mr. Fen-

no's, who soon called on Mr. F. and after receiving a description of the man, gave it as his opinion, that the villian was no other than George Walton, and urged Mr. Fenno to take every necessary measure to ensure his arrest ; knowing that he was a bold, daring and reckless fellow, and a very dangerous man to be at large in the community.]

A few days after my affair with Mr Fenno, John Wade, as I have since been informed, communicated his suspicions as to the robber of Mr. Boyden, to a person of his acquaintance, residing in Dedham ;—upon which, they came to Boston, and Wade sought out my boarding house, which at that time was in West Boston, and conducted the man to it. Discovering, from a window, the approach of Wade, with a stranger in company, I left the house, requesting the persons within, if any one called for me, to say that I did not board there,—they were so informed, and went off. I shortly after returned to the house again. The evening of the next day, Wade made another call at the house and found me at home. Requesting a private interview, we retired to a private room together. Here he proposed a plan for making a “raise”—said he was short of funds, and thought a store, which he mentioned, situated on India street could be entered, and that we might succeed in obtaining a large quantity of money, which, he had been informed, was deposited there ; and that the clerk of the store would participate in the undertaking.

The interview resulted in an agreement to make an effort, and we decided to have a horse and sleigh in readiness for the occasion.

Wade, doubtless, thought he had laid a fine trap in which he intended I should be second.

He did not think, I presume, that I suspected his motives and object. I agreed, to be sure, to accompany him ; but had no intentions of fulfilling my agreement. On his taking leave at the door of my boarding house, I went immediately into my sleeping room, secured my clothing, and entering the house next to that in which we had the interview together, took a good position for observing his movements. In about half an hour, he made his appearance, accompanied by several of the police officers and other persons. The house was surrounded and every part of the premises searched, as I was afterwards informed, but they did not succeed in obtaining their object.

Finding I was suspected, I began to make preparations to leave the city. I found a vessel bound to the West Indies, and bargained with the captain to take me as a passenger, advanced twenty-five dollars of my passage money—placed some of my articles on board and returned to my boarding house in Butolph street, for the remainder. As the vessel was ready and was to sail in a very few minutes, I ran to the house, began collecting the remaining articles of my property—when in about ten minutes, several of the police officers entered the house and secured me without much difficulty. My pistols were secured at the time, in an out house or stable, and I had therefore no means of defence. I was confined in jail, and next day was examined and bound over for trial, for attempting to rob Mr Fenno, and also for robbing Mr Boyden on the Dedham Turnpike. Not being able to

give sureties, I was committed accordingly. I made no effort while in jail to effect my escape. On the 21st of February, 1834, I was convicted and sentenced to confinement and hard labor in the State Prison for twenty years, for attempting to rob Mr. Fenno;—and was committed to the State Prison, at Charlestown, on the same day pursuant to sentence. I was now in the State Prison again, after the short period of seventy three days from the time of my first discharge therefrom. I was put to work at shoe making, and was continued in this employment until after I was indicted by the Grand Jury for Suffolk County, for robbing Mr. Boyden. It appearing evident to the Government of the Prison that I was concerting measures to effect, if possible, my escape; I was, on the day I intended making an effort, taken from the yard, and placed in close confinement, in a cell in the second arch, west wing of the old Prison.—The object in placing me there, was to keep me away from any possible intercourse with other convicts, and particularly those with whom I had been intimate at Concord, N. H.; who sympathized in my situation; being under an indictment for a capital offence.

While in my cell, before trial for the robbery of Mr. Boyden, there was a short time, when I felt that I had as lief die as live in confinement, and therefore formed a plan for terminating my existence. I inserted a piece of iron into a small drill hole, made when the stone was quarried, and fastened to it my suspenders;—having fixed a noose, I placed it around my neck, mounted on my bucket and swung off.—I felt no sensation of pain, and knew nothing until I found myself laying upon the floor of the cell. I found, on recovering my strength sufficiently to rise, that my suspender parted and I fell to the floor—animation not having been entirely suspended, I came too, and found myself in the situation described. I cursed my hard fate, and thought of making another attempt to destroy myself; but having no convenience then, I concluded to give it up for that time. I began to think, too, the breaking of my suspender a good omen: for I had previously tried its strength, and found it would sustain my weight, and hoped, therefore, that some good luck might be in store for me in the future, and that possibly I might succeed in effecting my escape from Prison. On being put into close confinement, I was told that such measures would be taken, to ensure my safe keeping, that it would be scarcely possible to effect an escape; and therefore I had better remain peaceable and quiet.

I was placed under the especial care and supervision of the Deputy Warden, who was, if possible to be always present when my cell was to be unfastened—one of the under officers was also present on these occasions; and if the object was to give me food, change the utensils in my cell or sweep it out, a convict was employed under the eye of the officer to perform that duty. If I was permitted to exercise in the arch, into which my cell opened, an officer was also with me, and usually kept a strict eye on all my movements. In order to render my situation the more secure, I was removed, alternately, every twenty four hours, from one cell to another; two cells, in particular, being fitted up

for my especial accommodation. The cells in the arch were seldom occupied ; and never, I think, while I was in close confinement—so that I was alone, except when visited by the Warden, the Chaplain, or some one of the officers designated to furnish my supply of food, look after my safety, or for some other purpose. The object in fitting up two cells for my use, was to afford a good opportunity to inspect the vacant one, and also to afford me, by the change, fresh and wholesome air. Under an arrangement of so rigid a character, it would seem to have been the extreme of folly to attempt an escape, more especially, as I was informed that any proceedings on my part for attaining such an object would lead to more severe and rigorous measures for my security. In this situation I remained some time quiet, thinking over, however, various plans and expedients for regaining my liberty.

Though very closely watched at all times, and especially whenever my cell door was opened, yet, I began to think an escape possible.

After a careful examination of my cell, I discovered that the walls of the old Prison were not so well constructed as those of the new building, which is now the place of confinement for all the convicts out of the Hospital. Tools, however, were necessary to ensure success in any attempt to break out—nothing, in fact, could be accomplished without them, and as none were within my reach, how to obtain them was the important question. One day, while enjoying my walk in the arch for exercise, accompanied by the officer, as usual, I succeeded by a rapid movement, unobserved by the officer, in disengaging from a cell door, one of the fastenings, and threw it on to my hammock ;—shortly after, I stepped into my cell and was locked up. The article secured was a piece of iron, which, though crooked, yet was calculated to be of considerable service to me. The iron was not missed, as the door to which it belonged was seldom fastened. I found means to secure the iron in such a way as to keep it from the eye of the inspecting officer. Having made all arrangements within my power, on the night of the 13th—14th of Sept'r, 1834, I made a final effort and succeeded in moving a heavy stone, which was supposed to be well secured by irons, &c., by moving it nearly half its length into my cell, and forcing it on one side sufficiently to fill up the opening for light and air to my cell—by so doing, I had a passage for my body about nine inches wide, and twenty two inches in height—the stone filling the space between the two small openings for the admission of light and air. Through this space of twenty two by nine inches, I passed into the yard, succeeded in obtaining an old great coat to protect me from the observation of any one I might meet on the road ; crossed one of the bridges leading to the city, and directed my course without delay, to the house of an acquaintance residing at West Boston, where I was readily supplied with money and clothing.

In a short time I crossed Craigie's bridge to Cambridge. The toll-man was apparently asleep at the time, and I reached Lexington before daylight, where I secreted myself in the woods, and remained during the day,—apprehending I should be closely pursued.

In the evening I recommenced my journey passing through Concord, Harvard and to Lancaster, where I rested in the woods during the day,

and within hearing of the old town clock, which had sounded so often in my ears when a boy. Many incidents and associations of that interesting period of life were brought to mind as I lay ruminating on the past, reflecting on the present and speculating on the future.

While passing through Harvard I entered a house the door of which was not fastened, and found some bread, butter, and cheese. After eating what I wanted, I threw the fragments on to the wood pile and travelled on. The inmates of the house did not discover me nor know that I was about their premises.

From the position selected as my resting place in Lancaster, I could see several horses feeding in a pasture: about ten P. M. I caught one of them, went to the house, near by, obtained a saddle and bridle and rode until near day light. I then entered a house, found some grain for the horse and food for myself, unseen by the occupant, and rode on again until I discovered a good situation in the woods for resting during the day. In this way, riding nights and resting days, I travelled about two hundred miles taking the route through Keene N. H. towards Vergennes, Vt, and obtaining food for myself and provender for my horse, without much expense on my part.

On the road, I exchanged my horse for another, and received forty dollars for the difference in value, after which I commenced travelling in the open day and shortly reached Burlington, Vt. at which place I broke a store and obtained sixty dollars, but took no goods.

At Burlington, I sold my horse for thirty dollars, and proceeded, on foot, to St Albans, walking nights and resting during the day. From St. Albans, I went to Swanton Falls, where I also broke a store and found ninety-six dollars, in money, and supplied myself with many articles of clothing, suitable for the approaching cold season. I now entered Lower Canada, and proceeded direct to Montreal, at which place I arrived in about ten days from the period of my escape from this institution. During this short time, I had done considerable business; and besides having been safely and comfortably placed beyond the reach of my pursuers, I found myself in the possession of nearly two hundred dollars on my arrival at Montreal. I put up at a house called the Italian Hotel, and remained there nearly a month visiting the Theatre, walking about the city and amusing myself in the best way I could. Finding however, that a life of inactivity was not well suited to my restless and uneasy disposition, and finding too, that my funds were getting low; I commenced active operations and broke a store owned by the "Inland Forwarding Company," and obtained ninety dollars, in silver. I now changed my residence, and took lodgings at a private house in the city to avoid being under suspicion, if possible. I used my specie as occasion demanded, and kept a good look out for chances to make another raise. Observing a man expose his pocket book and bank bills to view, while in a public house, I entered the building in the night, through a window—in the hope of obtaining it. He had taken the precaution, however, to carry it with him to his sleeping-room, and I found only ten dollars. The doors and window shutters, in the front part of the stores in Montreal, are mostly covered with tin or sheet iron, particularly those stores containing valu-

able property. Experiencing great difficulty in penetrating this covering for their protection, I found it necessary to examine the back part of the buildings. Here I observed that the security was made to rest, principally, on high board fences, (one of those that I scaled was nearly thirty feet high, by my estimation), and that the windows were not so well guarded. I therefore, generally, made this part of the building my point of attack. Driving business somewhat vigorously, the inhabitants began to find that some person among them was getting rather troublesome, and concluded that a Yankee or an Englishman, was prowling about the city. Their talk and fuss, however did not disturb me much. I kept at work, and in the course of the five or six months that I remained in the place, I broke and entered about fifteen stores.— From many of them I obtained but five or ten dollars, in others a larger sum, but in no instance over ninety dollars in money. My depredations were so frequent and became so numerous, at last, that the people were much excited on the subject; and I often heard the remark: "It was no Canadian that broke that store, but a Yankee".

In the month of February, one evening while at a house, of no very respectable standing, a dress maker of respectable character, came in with some articles she had been making for a female resident in the dwelling. After receiving her pay for the work, an Irishman present noticing that the dress maker appeared to have considerable money in her pocket book, rallied her on the subject, and insisted on her treating the company in the room. To escape his importunities, the girl complied with the request; after which, another Irishman thrust his hand into her pocket or bag, and took the pocket book.

I insisted on his returning it to the owner. He enquired who I was, and was disposed to bluster at my remark. I immediately drew a pistol, and presenting it at his breast, threatened to blow him through if he did not return the money without delay. Upon this he handed the pocket book to me, and the girl receiving it from my hands, immediately left the house. I then passed into another house, and when about retiring from it, I met the Irishman who insulted the dress maker, at the foot of the stairs, with a sharp pointed shoe makers' knife in his hand, which, without saying a word, he plunged into my head, back of my left ear, and cutting the ear some in its passage. At first I thought he struck me with his fist, and therefore drew a pistol upon him, which he suspecting, immediately darted out of my reach; it being dark he succeeded in getting out of my way entirely.

On obtaining a light, it was found he had stabbed me, and that the knife was still in my head, having penetrated nearly three inches, and was finally pulled out by the teeth of a person present, the handle having slipped off. On its being taken out, I became rather faint, but soon revived again by the use of cold water. At the time of receiving the wound in the head, I also received a small wound in the eye, which must have been caused, I think, by stumbling against the edge of a counter. I was perfectly sober at the time; in fact, I was rarely, if ever, intoxicated in my life. My drink was usually wine or strong beer, principally the latter; while in Montreal I seldom used spirit of any kind.

I went directly to the Medical Hall and had my wound examined by

the physicians. They advised me to enter a complaint against the Irishman, which I did ; and he was arrested and committed to jail, and remained about a month ; but as I did not appear against him he was finally discharged.

I remained under the care of the physicians about three weeks ; and it was nearly three weeks before I was able to leave the house. At one period during my illness, my case, in the opinion of the physician, was considered very doubtful. The knife took an oblique direction, and was near cutting the main artery.

In March, my wound was sufficiently healed to enable me to recommence operations again.

Having ascertained how, or in what manner I could dispose of jewelry, if some could be obtained—I accordingly reconnoitered a store for that purpose ; and about half past eight, P. M., one evening, I entered the back yard of a Jewellers store, before the gate was closed, and secreted myself in such a manner as to remain unobserved by the occupants. After they left the store, and between eleven and twelve, P. M. I succeeded in gaining an entrance through a back window, and passed into the front part of the building, when I secured and brought away with me, property to the amount of two thousand dollars ; mostly in gold watches, ornaments, &c.—Many of the articles were tied up in my pocket handkerchief, and when passing along the street I was hailed by a watchman, and ordered to submit my bundle for examination. I remarked to him that he might be a robber ; he then informed me that he was one of the city watchmen. I told him I should not take his word for that. He then said, I must see what you have got there. Taking out a pistol and placing it at his breast, I threatened to let him know what that contained if he did not move off. He remarked that he could get enough to take me, and commenced hallowing to his comrades, upon which, I was soon out of his way. I soon found the man who agreed to take the property, and bargained with him to receive fifty per cent on the first cost. I agreed to deliver the property in Burlington, and he was to pay me soon after he reached New York, whither both of us were bound. In about two days after robbing the jewelry store, finding I was suspected, and that affairs began to wear a threatening aspect, I took measures for decamping—employed an Irishman to convey me in a sleigh across the St. Lawrence, on the ice ; after crossing which, I took stage for Burlington, giving out word that I was bound to New York ; though my intention was to go to that place by way of Boston, Mass. A reward of two hundred pounds, or about eight hundred dollars, was offered for the property, and apprehension of the robber. At Burlington, I advised my friend to proceed, without delay, with the jewelry to New York, while I would take the direct route to Boston, and from thence to the place of his destination. I expected to be pursued, and hoped by the arrangements made, to secure the safe arrival of the property, and succeed, myself, in eluding the vigilance of the Canadians, who, on arriving at Burlington, would loose the track of me. Accordingly, I proceeded by stage conveyance to Lancaster, my native place, and remained at the house of a relative during the night of the 28th of March. Next morning

being Sunday, I recommenced my journey, and proceeded on foot to Stow, or Lincoln, where I took a horse from a stable and rode to Boston; arriving in the city between the hours of nine and ten, A. M. of Monday, March 30, 1835, and put up my horse at the stable of a friend, in Cambridge street, near West Boston Bridge. On the road from the place where I stole the horse, I lost from my pocket, one of my pistols and a silver snuff box, by the jolting of the horse. When I arrived at the stable, I was noticed by an individual who had formerly known me, when together in the State Prison. Hoping, doubtless, to obtain a part of the large reward offered for my apprehension and return to the State Prison, he gave information of my being in Boston. The result of his information was my arrest, by a man from Charlestown, who was on the look out for me. He accomplished his object by approaching me in the rear, as I was proceeding from a shop to the stable, and springing upon my back, secured my arms, and by having assistance near at hand, caused me to be conducted, without delay, in a close carriage to this place, where I arrived at half past eleven, A. M. same day, March 31, 1835. If I had not been taken as I was, I should, probably, have left the city for the South, in the course of twenty minutes. Finding that I was finally taken, and no prospect of a successful resistance presenting itself, I made up my mind at once, to submit with as good a face as possible.

At this stage of the narrative, Walton being subjected to a severe cough, and feeling unable to continue any further dictation of the events of his life, requested it might be finished by those to whose authority he was subjected, and who were in possession of almost every fact of importance relating to his life, from the day of the date of his arrest in March, and his return to Prison.

It appears that the persons who proceeded to Boston for arresting him, on information being given of his being in the city, took a secret position on the scaffold for storing hay; and while there overheard a conversation between Walton and a man formerly a convict in this prison. Walton appeared to be showing his pistol, and remarked in their hearing, upon the course he should pursue if any one attempted to arrest him. Shortly after this conversation, he left the stable, was followed and closely watched, and arrested pretty much as he himself described. On his return to prison, he was held in close confinement in one of the large cells of the old prison, during the day, and at night secured in a cell in the New Prison, and had leg chains secured upon both ancles. In this way he was confined and rendered secure, until after he had twice been tried, for the capital crime of highway robbery, before the Supreme Judicial Court at Dedham.

The first trial took place at the February term, 1835, and the second at the November term, 1836, of that Court. In neither trial could the Jury agree upon a verdict. While in confinement in the Jail at Dedham, in November, Walton made a desperate effort to effect his escape. At the moment of his door being opened by the keeper, he sprang forward, and reached the bottom of the stairs almost at a leap. The keeper, a most determined man, followed, and almost at the same moment, and by as rapid a movement, seated himself on the shoulders of

his prisoner. A guard, whom the keeper had taken the wise precaution to station at the outer door of the Jail, rushed in, and with uplifted musket, appeared in the act of bringing its butt down upon the head of the prisoner. At this stage of the proceedings, Walton looked up from under his load and calmly remarked, "I believe there has been no harm done." The keeper permitted him to get up, and returned him safely to his narrow quarters, where he was confined until remanded to this institution. This part of the narrative is from recollection, as given by Walton on his return to this place.

It appearing quite evident that no further proceedings would be had against Walton on account of the robbery of Mr. Boyden, and that he would not, probably, be subjected to another trial, he was permitted to go into the yard, free from his chains; and was put to work at hating, his former business. There is no reason to suppose, that after his return from Dedham, on the 4th of November, 1836, that he ever concerted any measures for effecting his escape. His conduct, after his return; was generally correct and obedient. That he would have made further attempts, and desperate ones too, to effect his escape, if his life had been continued, no one acquainted with his determined character and daring courage, would for a moment doubt.

He often remarked to the writer, that his natural disposition was such a restless and uneasy character, that he could not survive a five years sentence. He has been heard to say, that if offered the best farm in the Commonwealth, he would not accept it on condition of spending his days upon it.

Walton's health was generally good, nearly up to the 6th of February last, on which day he was admitted as a patient in the hospital, affected with influenza—a disease then extensively prevailing among the convicts. Notwithstanding the efforts of the skilful Physician of the Institution, Walton's disease could not be checked: it finally settled with a consumption, which terminated his existence on the 17th of July, 1837.

During the early part of his confinement in this prison, Walton professed to be a disbeliever in the existence of a Supreme Being.—He had, however, too much good sense to continue long to cherish such sentiments. Having, in early life, read much of the infidel sentiments of some of the French writers on the subject of the truths of the Christian religion, and having occasionally attended the infidel meetings of Kneeland, his mind was deeply imbued with the poison emanating from those sources. He long entertained the dark notion of the eternal annihilation of the soul after death; and it was not until a few days prior to his decease, that brighter and more correct views flashed across his fading vision. At one period, he believed nothing of Scripture but what was strictly historical: he thought, to be sure, the Bible a good book, and that its lessons of morality had better be followed than neglected. Still he considered it the work of priestcraft, and of men who had sinister motives and designs in view in urging its extension.

He thought, that on selfish grounds alone, a man had better be a christian than an infidel; and often remarked, that if permitted to live

his life over again, he would be an honest man—merely that he might be happier in this world.

It was feared, that so strongly had he become wedded to his infidel sentiments, that he would leave the world in that state of mind, and go to his last account with all his sins unrepented of, and unforgiven. Bad as had been his conduct in life, yet there was a something about him which interested, in more than a usual manner, the feelings of the Philanthropist and the Christian in his behalf. Their efforts to enlighten his mind and raise him to higher and nobler views than dark infidelity could afford, were untiring ; and they had the happiness at last to find them not unsuccessful.

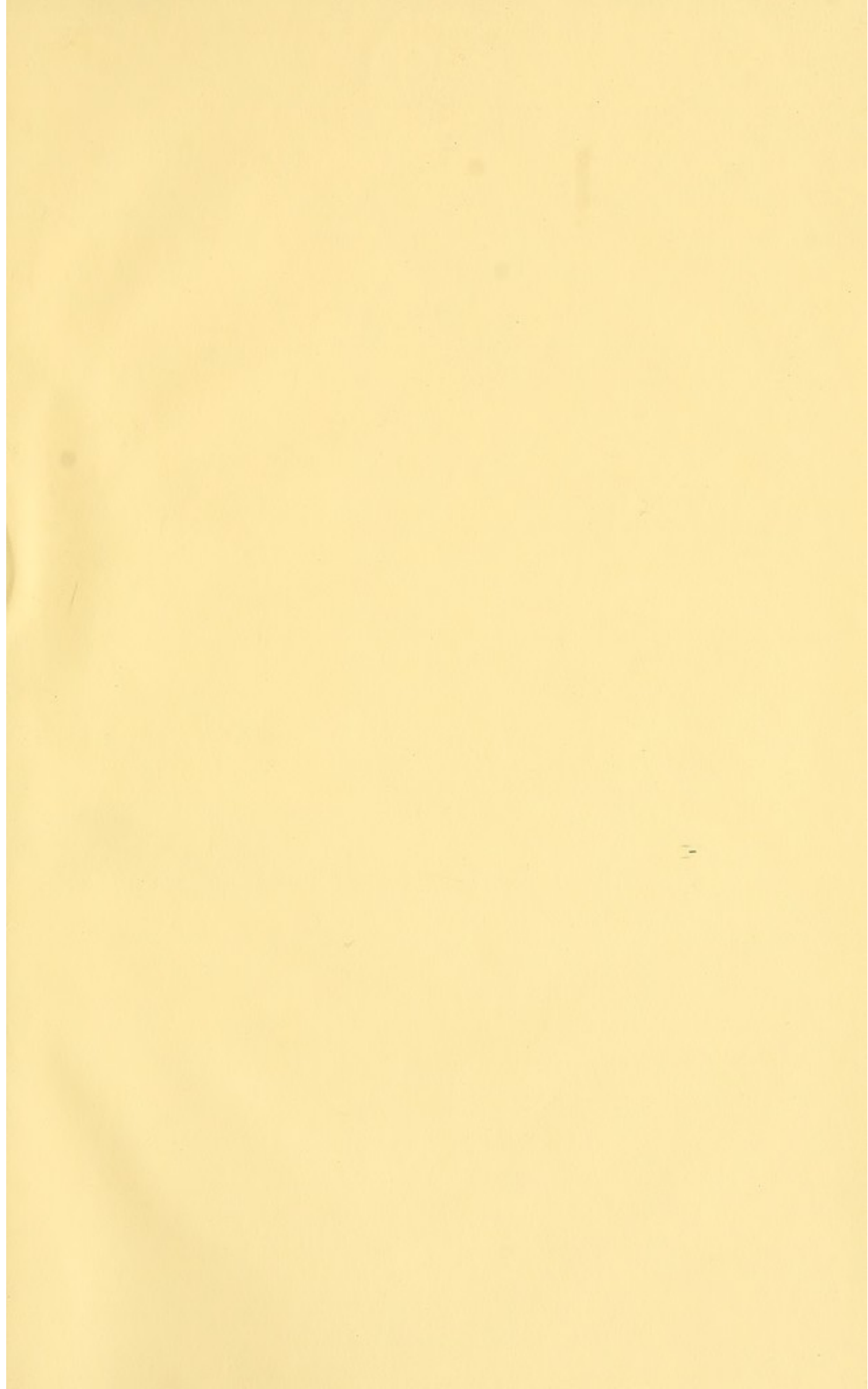
The last two or three days of his earthly existence, he suffered great distress of mind on account of his past conduct in life, and also on account of the infidel sentiments he had so long entertained and professed. Besides exhorting those of his fellow convicts who were in attendance upon him to lead an upright and virtuous life in future, he hastily dictated the following remarks, which he requested might be communicated to the convicts.

“Tell them to repent before they come to a dying bed—tell them to embrace Jesus. and place their trust and confidence in him—tell them of the distress of my mind in consequence of my past conduct, and of the infidel sentiments I have heretofore entertained ; and tell them too, that it is not through the fear of death itself, that I have been induced to change my mind, but that it is the fear of consequences after death—tell them I put my trust and confidence in God, resting on the merits of the Redeemer. I have been a great sinner. O God have mercy upon me—blessed Jesus have mercy upon me.

“I now find that my real and best friends are those whose opinions I have heretofore thought but little of or despised. They only can afford me consolation in my present condition.” He closed the remarks by exclaiming, “O God, forgive me for all the injuries I have done to my fellow men.”

On the morning preceding the day of his death, he solemnly declared that he took no part, nor had he any concern whatever in the burning of the Stables in Dedham, owned by the Citizens' Line Stage Company. He wished to have it known that he made this declaration on his dying bed. He further remarked, that from conversations he had with Wade, previous to the fire, he believed that Wade, was the incendiary, on both occasions of the burning of the stables in Dedham.

Walton also declared the narrative dictated by him to the Warden of the State Prison, to be a true and correct history of all the events of his life, of any importance, as far as he could recollect them. Thus closes the history of a man, who in the short period of his existence, was more deep and bold in crime, than is known to have been the case with any young man of equal age, in this part of our country. Born in obscurity, and with but a limited education, he yet possessed a mind, which had it been properly cultivated and disciplined, would undoubtedly have placed him in a higher and far more useful sphere than that which was his lot to fill during his short journey through this world.





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