

## CHAPTER VII.

“Whose elfin prowess scaled the orchard wall.”

ROGERS.

SOME of the wealthier tradesmen of the town, dissatisfied with the small progress which their boys were making under the parish schoolmaster, clubbed together and got a schoolmaster of their own; but, though a rather clever young man, he proved an unsteady one, and regular in his irregularities, got diurnally drunk, on receiving the instalments of his salary at term-days, as long as his money lasted. Getting rid of him, they procured another,—a licentiate of the Church,—who for some time promised well. He seemed steady and thoughtful, and withal a painstaking teacher; but coming in contact with some zealous Baptists, they succeeded in conjuring up such a cloud of doubt around him regarding the propriety of infant baptism, that both his bodily and mental health became affected by his perplexities, and he had to resign his charge. And then, after a pause, during which the boys enjoyed a delightfully long vacation, they got yet a third schoolmaster, also a licentiate, and a person of a high, if not very consistent religious profession, who was always getting into pecuniary difficulties, and always courting, though with but little success, wealthy ladies who, according to the poet, had “acres of charms.” To the subscription school I was transferred, at the instance of Uncle James, who remained quite sure, notwith-