

on to its close, ere we could quite make up our minds regarding the adventure, when at length I agreed to lead ; and, after arranging the plan of the expedition, we broke into the orchard under the cloud of night, and carried away with us whole pocketfuls of apples. They were all intolerably bad,—sour, hard, baking-apples ; for we had delayed the enterprise until the better fruit had been pulled ; but though they set our teeth on edge, and we flung most of them into the sea, we had “snatched,” in the foray, what Gray well terms “a fearful joy,” and had some thought of repeating it, merely for the sake of the excitement induced and the risk encountered, when out came the astounding fact, that one of our number had “peached,” and, in the character of king’s evidence, betrayed his companions.

The factor of the Cromarty property had an orphan nephew, who formed at times a member of our gang, and who had taken a willing part in the orchard foray. He had also engaged, however, in a second enterprise of a similar kind wholly on his own account, of which we knew nothing. An out-house pertaining to the dwelling in which he lodged, though itself situated outside the orchard, was attached to another house inside the walls, which was employed by the gardener as a store-place for his apples ; and finding an unsuspected crevice in the partition which divided the two buildings, somewhat resembling that through which Pyramus and Thisbe made love of old in the city of Babylon, our comrade, straightway availing himself of so fair an opening, fell a-courting the gardener’s apples. Sharpening the end of a long stick, he began harpooning, through the hole, the apple heap below ; and though the hole was greatly too small for admitting the finer and larger specimens, and they, in consequence, fell back disengaged from the harpoon, in the attempt to land them, he succeeded in getting a good many of the smaller ones. Old John Clark the gardener,—far advanced in life at the time, and seeing too imperfectly to discover the crevice which opened high amid the obscurity of the loft,—was in a perfect maze regarding the evil influence that was destroying his apples.