

The harpooned individuals lay scattered over the floor by scores; but the agent that had dispersed and perforated them remained for weeks together an inscrutable mystery to John. At length, however, there came a luckless morning, in which our quondam companion lost hold, when busy at work, of the pointed stick; and when John next entered his store-house, the guilty harpoon lay stretched across the harpooned apples. The discovery was followed up; the culprit detected; and, on being closeted with his uncle the factor, he communicated not only the details of his own special adventure, but the particulars of ours also. And early next day there was a message sent us by a safe and secret messenger, to the effect that we would be all put in prison in the course of the week.

We were terribly frightened; so much so, that the strong point of our position—the double-dyed guilt of the factor's nephew—failed to occur to any of us; and we looked for only instant incarceration. I still remember the intense feeling of shame I used to experience every time I crossed my mother's door for the street,—the agonizing, all-engrossing belief that every one was looking at and pointing me out,—and the terror, when in my uncles',—akin to that of the culprit who hears from his box the footsteps of the returning jury,—that, having learned of my offence, they were preparing to denounce me as a disgrace to an honest family, on which, in the memory of man, no stain had rested before. The discipline was eminently wholesome, and I never forgot it. It did seem somewhat strange, however, that no one appeared to know anything about our misdemeanor: the factor kept our secret remarkably well; but we inferred he was doing so in order to pounce upon us all the more effectually; and, holding a hasty council in the cave, we resolved that, quitting our homes for a few weeks, we should live among the rocks till the storm that seemed rising should have blown by.

Marcus' Cave was too accessible and too well known; but my knowledge of the locality enabled me to recommend to my lads two other caves in which I thought we might be safe. The one opened in a thicket of furze, some forty feet above