

tually intend to imprison us ; and, after delivering themselves to this effect, they fairly bolted, leaving Finlay and myself to bring up the rear at our leisure. My well-laid plan was, in short, found unworkable, from the inferior quality of my materials. I returned home with a heavy heart, somewhat grieved that I had not confided my scheme to only Finlay, who could, I ascertained, do braver things, with all his timidity, than the bolder boys, our occasional associates. And yet, when, in passing homewards through the dark lonely woods of the Hill, I bethought me of the still deeper solitude and gloom of the haunted cave far below, and thought further, that at that very moment the mysterious being with the cloven feet might be traversing its silent floor, I felt my blood run cold, and at once leaped to the conclusion that, save for the disgrace, a cave with an evil spirit in it could be not a great deal better than a prison. Of the prison, however, we heard no more ; though I never forgot the grim but precious lesson read me by the factor's threat ; and from that time till the present,—save now and then, by inadvertently admitting into my newspaper a paragraph written in too terse a style by some good man in the provinces, against some very bad man his neighbor,—I have not been fairly within wind of the law. I would, however, seriously advise such of my young friends as may cast a curious eye over these pages, to avoid taking any such lesson as mine at first-hand. One half-hour of the mental anguish which I at this time experienced, when I thought of my mother and uncles, and the infamy of a prison, would have vastly more than counterbalanced all that could have been enjoyed from banqueting on apples, even had they been those of the Hesperides or of Eden, instead of being, what they were in this case, green masses of harsh acid, alike formidable to teeth and stomach. I must add, in justice to my friend of the Doocot Cave, that, though an occasional visitor at Marcus, he had prudently avoided getting into this scrape.

Our long vacation came at length to an end, by the appointment of a teacher to the subscription school ; but the arrangement was not the most profitable possible for the pupils.