

## HANNAH MORE, “PARLEY THE PORTER” (c. 1796).

AN EDITION BY JON MILLER, THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON, SPRING 2006.

### Introduction

In the early 1790s, John Porteus, the Bishop of London, appealed to Hannah More (1745-1833), a woman well-known for her religiosity, cleverness, and writing ability, for a series of short literary works that could be published for the education of the poor. The penny reading market focussed too much on the lessons of Tom Paine, the French Revolution, and indecent profligates. England needed an author who could instruct the passionate, revolutionary rabble in the political and religious duties of their low station. More responded with her 1792 pamphlet, *Village Politics* (by “Will Chip”), which attacked Tom Paine’s radical infidelity through the mouths of fictional characters drawn to represent the honest and worthy poor. Friends and other admirers from More’s own class and the nobility “sent packets of the dialogue far and wide,” More biographer Patricia Demers writes, distributing it “to cottages, workshops, coal pits, and public houses, exactly mimicking the circulation of *Rights of Man*” (112).

Also engaged in the growth of rural Sunday schools, More understood the need for cheap materials to support the new adult literacy programs. Between 1795 and 1798, she contributed much religious and anti-revolutionary writing to a series of “Cheap Repository Tracts” that were first published by Samuel Hazard of Bath and John Marshall of London. These tracts urge the poor, through a variety of literary genres, to embrace the virtues of loyalty, patriotism, modesty, industry, temperance, and Christian resignation. The Cheap Repository Tracts were purchased and distributed in much the same way as *Village Politics*.

G.H. Spinney does not include “Parley the Porter” in his often-cited 1939 article, “Cheap Repository Tracts: Hazard and Marshall Edition.” Yet, according to the Online Computer Library Center’s WorldCat, a catalog of books and other materials in libraries

worldwide, it was published in Dublin in 1796 by William Watson, “Printer to the Cheap Repository for Religious and Moral Tracts,” as a twenty-four page chapbook under the series titles of “Cheap Repository Tracts” and “Sunday Reading.” Many original Cheap Repository Tracts appeared with the subtitle, “Sunday Reading,” so both titles indicate that Watson sold “Parley the Porter” as one of the series. There appears to be no extant copy of “Parley the Porter” in the original Hazard and Marshall edition of the Cheap Repository Tracts. Spinney did not find one, though he consulted only the collections in the British Museum and the public libraries of Bath and Bristol (312). Today, WorldCat does not find one. Yet this does not mean that such an edition never existed. Spinney describes Watson as an Irish reprinter of Hazard and Marshall editions (309). Given Watson’s role as a reprinter, “Parley the Porter” may have been published by Hazard and Marshall as a Cheap Repository Tract in 1795 or 1796. Spinney, after emphasizing “the ephemeral nature of these tracts,” notes his list should only be regarded as “preliminary” (312). This caution has been overlooked by later scholarship that regards his checklist as authoritative. If a record of a Watson reprint with no known record of a Hazard and Marshall original suggests an example of one of these most cheap and most ephemeral publications has been lost, then it may be the case that no definitive catalog can ever be constructed.

Hannah More figures as a typical and important religious conservative of the period. In his study of British conservatism, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders*, Don Herzog describes her as one of “the usual suspects” alongside “Austen, Bentham, Blake, Burke, Burney, Byron, Cobbett, Coleridge, Godwin, Hazlitt, Keats, Malthus, . . . Paine, Peacock, Price, Priestley, Ricardo, Scott, Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, Southey, Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, and more” (ix). More is

most often associated with Edmund Burke. As Anne Stott demonstrates in her essay, “Patriotism and Providence: the Politics of Hannah More,” More was “never” Burke’s “uncritical disciple” despite the common view of her as “an unswerving Burkean conservative” (39, 43). Further critical study of her conservatism, so important to the development of creative literature in both England and America, is surely justified. Stott suggests that feminist historians looking for “the most comprehensive account of More’s politics” (45) might examine More’s *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (1805; first American edition, New York and Philadelphia, 1814).

In their own day, More’s tracts were much read, discussed, and debated beyond the Sunday school. In the end, however, they may have backfired, at least in the short term, as agents of anti-Paine evangelical conservatism. While Demers insists that “we know next-to-nothing about the unmediated response of real miners, blacksmiths, masons, and carpenters,” other More scholars speculate about their reception with greater confidence (112).

First, the intended deception of the Tracts was plain from the start. Spinney notes that they were packaged to look like the material they attacked, “decked out with rakish titles and woodcuts in the guise of the genuine chapman’s pennyworth.” He then jokes they were thus “sent out, like sheep in wolves’ clothing,” to readers seeking another kind of reading material (295). Such readers, once fooled, might regard the obvious political content guardedly. Other readers may have had their suspicions aroused by the fact that they received the tract as a gift from a more-wealthy philanthropist so concerned with the state of their religious and political soul. (The Cheap Repository Tracts are generally thought, as More biographer S.J. Skedd summarizes, to have been “mainly bought by the middling and

upper classes to distribute to the poor” [ODNB, “Hannah More”].)

Second, the tracts encouraged the reading of Tom Paine through their repeated attacks on him. “Parley the Porter” contains no explicit reference to Paine, but many other tracts did. Indeed, Mona Scheuermann takes the “repeated references to Tom Paine” as the starting-point for her 2002 study of More’s political writings, *In Praise of Poverty: Hannah More Counters Thomas Paine and the Radical Threat* (4). And as Herzog explains, the “English Jacobins often snickered at the efforts of conservatives” to catechize the lower orders in antirevolutionary sentiments. Writings such as Hannah More’s Cheap Repository Tracts, he argues, only “fanned the flames of political discussion” and were thus “self-defeating” for their arousal of interest in revolutionary authors (132-133).

Finally, it is clear that the intended audience of More’s tracts would not identify much with her characters. As Scheuermann emphasizes, the “sweet, malleable poor and laboring people whom we meet in More’s stories are rather far from the poor and laboring classes that More’s class actually perceived” (38). There were many warning signs, then, for poor readers inclined to skepticism: they were packaged to look like something they were not; they were distributed by paternalist do-gooders; they protested, perhaps too much, on the subject of Tom Paine; and they represented the poor in ways they might hardly recognize.

More’s tracts, however, are well written. They have always been highly readable. Critical opinions of their political effectiveness vary, but there is consensus on this point. They were distinguished, in their own day, for a plain style. They avoid the “intemperance of language” that More deplored as characterizing most political works such as, for example, the writings of Burke (Stott 44). And, because they were written mainly for an audience of poor adults just learning to read, they proceed with great clarity and little ornamentation of narrative. As Harry B. Weiss argues toward the end of his careful 1946 study,

“Hannah More’s Cheap Repository Tracts in America”: “One thing is certain. They were readable and interesting and the tales were well told” (548). The tracts still charm modern readers. In her study of More’s complicity with an oppressive patriarchy, for instance, Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace analyzes the best-known of More’s tracts, “The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain” (1795), for many pages. At the end of her treatment, she remarks that “in summarizing this tale, it is difficult to convey its emotional appeal, for it is surprisingly effective, both emotionally engaging and satisfying” (77). She documents further critical praise in recent scholarship in an endnote (77 n28, 218).

As Weiss documents, in 1796 Hannah More was already well known to American readers of religious literature. The Cheap Repository Tracts were brought from London to America, surely, for distribution. And, beginning in 1797, they were reprinted here as well. About fifty tracts, including a forty-two tract series from B. & J. Johnson of Philadelphia, were republished before 1802. “Parley the Porter” was not one of them. It appears to have made its first American appearance in the 1803 three-volume Boston edition, *Cheap Repository Tracts: Entertaining, Moral, and Religious*. WorldCat reports an 1810 “Parley the Porter” from A. Shearman of New Bedford, Massachusetts, perhaps the first American separate edition, now commonly available in a 1980 microform reproduction from Readex Microprint, courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society. In 1814, New York’s Samuel Wood also published another early American edition, now available on the microfiche edition of the Rosenbach collection of early American children’s books. The New England Tract Society, an Andover, Massachusetts organization formed in 1814, reprinted “Parley the Porter” in 1819. The New-York Sunday School Union Society, also seeking books appropriate for poor adults struggling to achieve literacy, reprinted the allegory in 1820. In 1825, Philadelphia’s American Sunday-School Union also published it. In 1823, the New England Tract Society

moved to Boston, renamed itself the American Tract Society, and published an edition of “Parley the Porter.” And the American Tract Society appears to have kept the allegory in print into at least the 1850s. Again, it is worth emphasizing that tracts were among the most ephemeral of productions from this period; because it seems likely that some printings produced no extant copies, it may not be possible to reconstruct a full publication history for them. Yet as even this sketch of a publication history suggests, “Parley the Porter” circulated freely through America from about 1796 to the Civil War.

An earlier American Tract Society publication of “Parley the Porter” states the source for the text and, assuming they prepared later editions from their own earlier editions, this may also be the source for the text presented below. The Society claims to have prepared their editions from a multi-volume, “handsomely printed” 1821 London edition in the preface to undated, multi-volume edition of More’s tracts, probably published in the 1830s, titled *Stories for the Young* (7).

While this same volume appears to have been offered under an alternate title, *Cheap Repository Tracts*, the packaging of More’s work as children’s literature points up the significant role they had in the development of the genre in America. More’s tracts were not written for children, but they were written for the newly literate. This appears to have recommended them, in the eyes of teachers and publishers, as appropriate children’s books. Samuel Griswold Goodrich, the notable literary publisher and one-time Whig Senator from Massachusetts, pioneered a new style of children’s literature in his immensely popular “Peter Parley” books, a series of titles that began in 1827. Goodrich did not draw his pseudonym from this allegory, but he did revere More and credit her, in autobiographical works such as “Peter Parley’s Own Story” (1863), as his primary inspiration (172-176).

The preface to *Stories for the Young* quotes an unnamed source – perhaps their 1821 edition – to tell the story of the Cheap Repository Tracts in parti-

san language. Here More is called not by Bishop Porteus alone, but by letters coming "by every post" to lend her pen to the battle against "the infidel and licentious works" represented by "Paine and kindred spirits" (5). This expression of political sympathy suggests the American Tract Society may have had similar political motives for the dissemination of More's works.

If the American Tract Society endorsed More mainly for her antidemocratic and evangelical teachings, this alone does not account for their interest in "Parley the Porter." They had plenty more choices for these themes alone. And the More scholarship's neglect of this particular allegory suggests the American Tract Society's regard for "Parley the Porter" may have been more idiosyncratic than their regard for more famous tales such as "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." Given the American Tract Society's interest in the antebellum American temperance movement, their special attention to "Parley the Porter" may have been in response to the role of an alcoholic beverage in the allegory's climax. In apology for the dated political references in these republished works, this Preface notes:

These productions almost necessarily contain frequent allusions to the state of things existing at the time in Great Britain—such as her national customs, laws, government, and church establishment; the depression of the lower classes; and the allowed moderate use of exciting beverages—which the Committee of the American Tract Society would by no means commend; but as the instructions of the series are adapted to the moral and spiritual wants of man in all time, and many of the evils assailed still exist, and are still fostered among us by a corrupt literature to which perhaps no more appropriate antidote exists, they have judged it well to issue the series in all its original vivacity and force. (8)

In other words, that "Parley the Porter" hardly advocates the "moderate use of exciting beverages" may have dis-

tinguished this particular tract over so many others.

"Parley the Porter" can be read as a temperance tract. "The Well-Conducted Farm," an important temperance tract of the 1820s, also appears in this *Elegant Narratives*. Just as Parley must know his place to protect the master of the castle, so must all Americans subordinate their passions to preserve the mastery of reason. As in much antebellum American fiction, the "social glass" figures as a common stimulant to one of many common passions that always threaten the rule of reason. Parley's drink is much like the "first drop" of American temperance fiction. A short period of intoxication – however slight – opens the door for more lasting periods of passionate and unreasonable behavior. Here alcohol is, literally, a "gateway drug." And in the logic of antebellum temperance literature, anyone who voluntarily impairs his reason with even a so-called "harmless" indulgence fails to appreciate the seriousness of the temptations around him. The social glass always entices, and it always threatens to wrack self-mastery.

This following text comes from *Elegant Narratives*, a bound volume of about two dozen consecutively-numbered American Tract Society publications. In addition to "Parley the Porter," the volume also includes the More standards, "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain" and "'Tis All For the Best," as well as a number of other conspicuously English tracts. The style of the book's interior and exterior, with its stamped cloth boards and "elegant" features such as gilt pages, heavier endpapers, and gilt cover ornamentation suggests this collection was produced in the late 1840s or early 1850s.

This collection appears to mainly include tracts printed for individual distribution. They are consecutively numbered (e.g., "Narrative III," "Narrative IV") on the title page. And they are separately paginated. A few have the minimal publication information, so often found on individual tracts, at the foot of the final page (here, "Published by the American Tract Society"). On the other

hand, most – including "Parley" – have a small printer's note ("Eleg. Narr.") in the lower left-hand corner of the first page. This may be the only suggestion that this is nothing more than a bound volume of separately-printed tracts. Earlier, out-of-stock tracts could have been reprinted (with the "Eleg. Narr." mark) for binding with newer tracts on hand.

We cannot know why the American Tract Society decided to invest so much in the production of an elegant volume of humble tracts usually sold by the hundred and distributed for free. It may be edifying, however, to speculate on the question.

If readers did not recognize Hannah More as an "elegant" writer, then, in a reverse of the late 1790s' marketing strategy, at least her "sheep" are dressed here in the elegant clothing that might seduce a purchaser looking for a different kind of reading material. There is little indication, however, that More failed to please the elegant of antebellum America; she is often praised, for example, in George P. Morris's *New-York Mirror*, an important arbiter of literary elegance.

Consideration of this edition in the context of the American temperance movement suggests another possible audience willing to pay "elegant" money for "cheap" tales. The temperance movement of the 1840s is characterized by a movement of reformed drinkers from the egalitarian, lower-class Washingtonian societies to more hierarchical, middle-class fraternal organizations such as the Sons of Temperance. While temperance had been a favorite cause for religious leaders since the 1820s, it had extra appeal, in the late 1840s, to men and women who had recently risen – with the help of a teetotal lifestyle – from cheapness to elegance. So this elegant "Parley" may have appealed to readers who could now afford to thus cherish the reading material of a lower-class young adulthood.

Outside the temperance organizations, other groups of Americans are known to have to been experiencing new prosperity around 1850. Most antebellum readers would recognize

“Parley the Porter,” which quotes and invokes the King James Bible frequently, as an allegory in the tradition of John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678). Church historians such as Richard Cawardine have described the rising wealth and influence, during the 1840s and 1850s, of evangelical groups such as the Methodists. The American Tract Society could have had such readers in mind with this edition.

An elegant edition of humble tracts might have appealed to elegant readers who remembered humble beginnings. It also makes sense, however, to imagine this elegant “Parley” as marketed mainly to long-wealthy readers who, like some of Hannah More’s late eighteenth-century backers, longed for a world where employees and servants knew the “proper duties” of their low station. It is not hard to imagine how such tales for the poor might most please the rich. So perhaps this expensive bound edition of More tracts sold mainly to longtime benefactors of the American Tract Society who were pleased to procure a book that would sit well on the shelves of their respectable studies, or look good in the pastor’s Sunday-School library.

#### *Note on the text*

Source of this text: Hannah More, “Parley the Porter.” *Elegant Narratives*. New York: American Tract Society, [1850?]. 1-16. See “Introduction” for more details.

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#### Narrative IV. Parley the Porter. By Mrs. Hannah More. [Illustration.]

There was once a certain gentleman, who had a house, or castle, situated in the midst of a great wilderness, but enclosed in a garden. Now, there was a band of robbers in the wilderness, who had a great mind to plunder and destroy the castle; but they had not succeeded in their endeavors, because the master had given strict orders to “*watch without ceasing*.” To quicken their vigi-

lance, he used to tell them that their care would soon have an end; that though the nights they had to watch were dark and stormy, yet they were but few; the period of resistance was short--that of rest, eternal.

The robbers, however, attacked the castle in various ways. They tried at every avenue; watched to take advantage of every careless moment; looked for an open door, or a neglected window. But though they often made the bolts shake, and the windows rattle, they could never greatly hurt the house, much less get into it. Do you know the reason? It was because the servants were never off their guard. They heard the noises plain enough, and used to be not a little frightened, for they were aware both of the strength and perseverance of the enemy. But what seemed rather odd to some of these servants--the gentleman used to tell them, that while they continued to be afraid, they would be safe; and it passed into a sort of proverb in that family, “Happy is he that feareth always.” Some of the servants, however, thought this a contradiction.

One day when the master was going from home, he called his servants all together, and spoke to them as follows: “I will not repeat to you the directions I have so often given you; they’re all written down in THE BOOK OF LAWS, of which every one of you has a copy. Remember, it is a very short time that you are to remain in this castle; you will soon remove to my more settled habitation, to a more durable house, not made with hands. As that house is never exposed to an attack, so it never stands in need of any repair; for that country is never infested by any sons of violence. Here you are servants; there you will be princes. But mark my words, and you will find the same truth in THE BOOK OF MY LAWS: whether you will ever attain to *that* house, will depend on the manner in which you defend yourselves in *this*. A stout vigilance for a short time, will secure you certain happiness for ever. But everything depends on your present exertions. Don’t complain, and take advantage of my absence, and call me a hard master, and grumble that you are placed in the

midst of a howling wilderness without peace or security. Say not, that you are exposed to temptations without power to resist them. You have some difficulties, it is true; but you have many helps, and many comforts to make this house tolerable, even before you get to the other. Yours is not a hard service; and if it were, ‘the time is short.’ You have arms, if you will use them; and doors, if you will bar them; and strength, if you will use it. I would defy all the attacks of the robbers without, if I could depend on the fidelity of the people within. If the thieves ever get in and destroy the House, it must be by the connivance of one of the family. *For mere outward attack can never destroy this castle, if there be no traitor within.* You will stand or fall, as you regard this fact. If you are finally happy, it will be by my grace and favor; if you are ruined, it will be your own fault.”

When the gentleman had done speaking, every servant repeated his assurance of attachment and firm allegiance to his master. But among them all, not one was so vehement and loud in his professions as old Parley, the Porter. Parley, indeed, it was well known, was always talking, which exposed him to no small danger; for as he was the foremost to promise, so he was the slackest to perform. And, to speak the truth, though he was a civil-spoken fellow, his master was more afraid of him, with all his professions, than he was of the rest who professed less. He knew that Parley was vain, credulous, and self-sufficient; and he always apprehended more danger from Parley’s impertinence, curiosity, and love of novelty, than even from the stronger vices of some of his other servants. The rest, indeed, seldom got into any difficulty of which Parley was not the cause, in some shape or other.

I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that though Parley was allowed every refreshment, and all the needful rest which the nature of his place permitted, yet he thought it very hard to be forced to be so constantly on duty. “Nothing but watching,” said Parley; “I have, to be sure, many pleasures, and meat sufficient, and plenty of chat in virtue of my office; and I pick up a good deal of

news of the comers and goers by day; but it is hard that night I must watch as narrowly as a house-dog, and yet to let in no company without orders, only because there are said to be a few straggling *robbers* here in the wilderness, with whom my master does not care to let us be acquainted. He pretends to make as vigilant through fear of the robbers; but I suspect it is only to make us mope alone. A merry companion, and the mug of beer, would make the night pass cheerly." Parley, however, kept all these thoughts to himself, were uttered them only when no one heard; for talk he must. He began to listen to the nightly whistling of the robbers under the windows, with rather less alarm than formerly; and was sometimes so tired of watching, that he thought it was even better to run the risk of being robbed once, than to live always in fear of robbers.

There were certain bounds in which the gentleman allowed his servants to walk and divert themselves at all proper seasons. A pleasant garden surrounded the castle, and a thick hedge separated this garden from the wilderness which was infested by the robbers, in which they were permitted to amuse themselves. The masters advised them always to keep within these bounds. "While you observe this rule," said he, "You will be safe, and well; and you will consult your own safety, as well as show your love to me, by not venturing even to the extremity of your bounds. He who goes as far as he dares, always shows a wish to go farther than he ought, and commonly does so."

It was remarkable, that the nearer these servants kept to the castle, and the farther from the *hedge*, the more ugly the wilderness appeared. And the nearer they approached the forbidden bounds, their own home appeared more dull, and the wilderness more delightful. And this the master knew when he gave his orders; for he never either did or said anything without a good reason. And when his servants sometimes desired an explanation of the reason, he used to tell them they would understand it when they came to the *other house*; for it was one of the pleasures of

that house, that it would explain all the mysteries of this; and any little obscurities in the master's conduct, would then be made quite plain.

Parley was the first that promised to keep clear of the *hedge*; and yet was often seen looking as near it as he dared. One day he ventured close up to the hedge, put two or three stones one on another, and tried to peep over. He saw one of the robbers strolling as near as could be on the forbidden side. This man's name was Flatterwell, a smooth, civil man, whose words were softer than butter, having war in his heart. He made several low bows to Parley.

Now Parley knew so little of the world, that he actually concluded all robbers must have an ugly look, which should frighten you at once; and course, brutal manners, which would at first sight show they were enemies. He thought, like a poor ignorant fellow as he was, that this mild, specious person could not be one of the band. Flatterwell accosted Parley with the utmost civility, which put him quite off his guard; for Parley had no notion that he could be an enemy, who was so soft and civil. For an open foe, he would have been prepared. Parley, however, after a little discourse, drew this conclusion, either that Mr. Flatterwell could not be one of the gang, or that, if he was, the robbers themselves could not be such monsters as his master had described; and therefore it was folly to be afraid of them.

Flatterwell began, like a true adept in his art, by lulling all Parley's suspicions asleep; and instead of openly abusing his master, which would have opened Parley's eyes at once, he pretended rather to commend him in a general way, as a person who meant well himself, but was too apt to suspect others. To this Parley assented. The other then ventured to hint by degrees, that though the gentleman might be a good master in the main, yet he must say he was a little strict, and a little stingy, and not a little censorious. That he was blamed by the *gentleman in the wilderness* for shutting his house against good company; and his servants were laughed at by people of spirit, for submitting to the gloomy life of the castle, and the in-

sipid pleasures of the garden, instead of ranging in the wilderness at large.

"It is true enough," said Parley, who was generally of the opinion of the person he was talking with, "my master is rather harsh and close. But, to own the truth, all the barring, and locking, and bolting, is to keep out a set of gentlemen, who, he assures us, are *robbers*, and who are waiting for an opportunity to destroy us. I hope, no offence, sir, but by your livery, I suspect you, sir, are one of the gang he is so much afraid of."

*Flatterwell*. Afraid of me? Impossible, dear Mr. Parley. You see I do not look like an enemy. I am unarmed: what harm can a plain man like me do?

*Parley*. Why, that is true enough. Yet my master says, that if we were once to let you into the house, we should be ruined, soul and body.

*Flatterwell*. I am sorry, Mr. Parley, that so sensible a man as you are so deceived. This is mere prejudice. He knows we are a cheerful, entertaining people; foes to gloom and superstition; and therefore, he is so morose, he will not let you get acquainted with us.

*Parley*. Well, he says you are a band of thieves, gamblers, murderers, drunkards, and atheists.

*Flatterwell*. Don't believe him; the worst we should do, perhaps, is, we might drink a friendly glass with you to your master's health; or play an innocent game of cards just to keep you awake, or sing a cheerful song with the maids: now is there any harm in all this?

*Parley*. Not the least in the world. And I begin to think there is not a word of truth in all my master says.

*Flatterwell*. The more you know us, more you will like us. But I wish there was not this ugly hedge between us. I have a great deal to say, and am afraid of being overheard.

Parley was now just going to give a spring over the hedge, but checked himself, saying, "I dare not come on your side, there are people about, and every thing is carried to my master." Flatterwell saw by this, that his new friend was kept on his own side of the hedge by fear, rather than by principle,

and from that moment he made sure of him.

"Dear Mr. Parley," said he, "if you will allow me the honor of a little conversation with you, I will call under the window of your lodge this evening. I have something to tell you greatly to your advantage. I admire you exceedingly. I long for your friendship; our whole brotherhood is ambitious of being known to so amiable a person."

"O dear," said Parley, "I shall be afraid of talking to you at night, it is so against my master's orders. But did you say you had something to tell me to my advantage?"

*Flatterwell.* Yes, I can point out to you how you may be a richer, a merrier, and a happier man. If you will admit me to-night under the window, I will convince you that 'tis prejudice and not wisdom which makes your master bar his door against us; I will convince you that the mischief of a *robber*, as your master scurrilously calls a us, is only in the name; that we are your true friends, and only mean to promote your happiness.

"Don't say *we*," said Parley, "Pray come alone, I would not see the rest of the gang for the world; but I think there can be no great harm in talking to *you* through the bars, if you come alone; but I am determined not to let you in. Yet I can't say but I wish to know what you can tell me so much to my advantage; indeed, if it is for my good, I ought to know it."

*Flatterwell.* (*Going out, turns back.*) Dear Mr. Parley, there is one thing I had forgot. I cannot get over the hedge at night without assistance. You know there is a secret in the nature of that hedge; you in the house may get over to us in the wilderness, of your own accord; but we cannot get to your side by our own strength. You must look about to see where the hedge is thinnest, and then set to work to clear away here and there a little bough for me; it wont be missed; and if there is but the smallest hole made on your side, those on ours can get through; otherwise we do but labor in vain. To this Parley made some objection, through the fear of being seen. Flatterwell replied, that the

smallest hole from within would be sufficient, for he could then work his own way. "Well," said Parley, "I will consider of it. To be sure I shall even then be equally safe in the castle, as I shall have all the bolts, bars, and locks between us, so it will make but little difference."

"Certainly not," said Flatterwell, who knew it would make all the difference in the world. So they parted, with mutual protestations of regard. Parley went home, charmed with his new friend. His eyes were now clearly opened as to his master's prejudices against the *robbers*; and he was convinced there was more in the name, than in the thing. "But," said he, "though Mr. Flatterwell is certainly an agreeable companion, he may not be so safe an inmate. There can, however, be no harm in talking at a distance, and I certainly won't let him in."

Parley, in the course of the day, did not forget his promise to thin the hedge of separation a little. At first he only tore off a handful of leaves, then a little sprig, then he broke away a bough or two. It was observable, the larger the breach became, the worse he began to think of his master, and the better of himself. Every peep he took through the broken hedge, increased his desire to get out into the wilderness, and made the thoughts of the castle more irksome to him.

He was continually repeating to himself, "I wonder what Mr. Flatterwell can have to say so much to my advantage. I see he does not wish to hurt my master, he only wishes to serve me." As the hour of meeting, however, drew near, the master's orders now and then came across Parley's thoughts. So to divert them, he took THE BOOK. He happened to open it at these words, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." For a moment his heart failed him. "If this admonition should be sent on purpose," said he, "--"but no, 'tis a bugbear. My master told me that, if I went to the bounds, I should get over the hedge. Now, I went to the utmost limits, and did not get over." Here conscience put in, "Yes, but it was because you were watched." "I am sure," continued Parley, "one may always stop where one will; and this is only a trick

of my master's to spoil sport; so I will even hear what Mr. Flatterwell has to say so much to my advantage. I am not obliged to follow his counsels, but there can be no harm in hearing them."

Flatterwell prevailed on the rest of the robbers to make no public attack on the castle that night.

"My brethren," said he, "you now and then fail in your schemes, because you are for violent beginnings, while my soothing, insinuating measures, hardly ever miss. You come blustering, and roaring, and frighten people, and set them on their guard. You inspire them with terror of *you*, while my whole scheme is, to make them think well of *themselves*, and ill of their master. If I once get them to entertain hard thoughts of him, and high thoughts of themselves, my business is done, and they fall plump into my snares. So let this delicate affair alone to me. Parley is a softly fellow, he must not be frightened, but cajoled. He is the very sort of man to succeed with, and worth a hundred of your sturdy, sensible fellows. With them we want strong arguments, and strong temptations; but with such fellows as Parley, in whom vanity and sensuality are the leading qualities, (as, let me tell you, is the case with far the greater part,) flattery, and the promise of ease and pleasure, will do more than your whole battle array. If you will let me manage, I will get you all into the castle before midnight."

At night the castle was barricaded as usual, and no one had observed the hole which Parley had made in the hedge. This oversight arose that night from the servants neglecting one of the master's standing orders,--to make a nightly *examination* of the state of the castle. The neglect did not proceed so much from willful disobedience, as from having passed the evening in sloth and diversion; which often amounts to nearly the same.

As all was very cheerful within, so all was very quiet without. And before they went to bed, some of the servants observed to the rest, that, as they heard no robbers that night, they thought they might soon begin to remit something of their diligence in bolting, and barring;

that all this fastening and locking was very troublesome; and they hoped the danger was now pretty well over. It was rather remarkable that they never made this sort of observations but after an evening of some excess, and when they had neglected their private business with their master. All, however, except Parley, went quietly to bed, and seemed to feel uncommon security.

Parley crept down to his lodge. He had half a mind to go to bed too; yet he was not willing to disappoint Mr. Flatterwell, so civil a gentleman. To be sure, he *might* have bad designs, yet what right had he to suspect anybody who made such professions, and who was so very civil. Besides, "it is something for my advantage," added Parley. "I will not open the door, that is certain; but as he is to come alone, he can do me no harm through the bars of the windows; and he will think I am a coward, if I don't keep my word: no, I will let him see that I am not afraid of my own strength: I will show him I can go what length I please, and stop short *when* I please." Had Flatterwell heard this boastful speech, he would have been quite sure of his man.

About eleven, Parley heard the signal agreed upon. It was so gentle as to cause little alarm. So much the worse. Flatterwell never frightened any one, and therefore seldom failed of any one. Parley stole softly down, planted himself at his little window, opened the casement, and spied his new friend. It was pale star-light. Parley was a little frightened, for he thought he perceived one or two persons behind Flatterwell; but the other assured him that it was only his own shadow, which his fears had magnified into a company. "Though I assure you," said he, "I have not a friend but what is as harmless as myself."

They now entered into earnest discourse, in which Flatterwell showed himself a deep politician. He skillfully mixed up in his conversation a proper proportion of praise on the pleasures of the wilderness, of compliments to Parley, of ridicule on his master, and of abusive sneers on the BOOK in which the master's laws were written. Against

this last he had always a particular spite, for he considered it as the grand instrument by which the master maintained his servants in allegiance; and when they could once be brought to sneer at the BOOK, there was an end of submission to the master. Parley had not penetration enough to see his drift.

"As to THE BOOK, Mr. Flatterwell," said he, "I do not know whether it be true or false; I rather neglect than disbelieve it. I am forced, indeed, to hear it read once a week, but I never look into it myself, if I can help it."

"Excellent," said Flatterwell to himself, "that is just the same thing. This is safe ground for me; for whether a man does not believe in THE BOOK, or does not attend to it, it comes pretty much to the same, and I generally get him at the last."

"Why cannot we be a little nearer, Mr. Parley?" said Flatterwell; "I am afraid of being overheard by some of your master's spies, the window from which you speak is so high; I wish you would come down to the door."

"Well," said Parley, "I see no great harm in that. There is a little wicket in the door, through which we can converse with more ease and equal safety. The same fastenings will still be between us."

So down he went, but not without a degree of fear and trembling.

The little wicket being now opened, and Flatterwell standing close on the outside of the door, they conversed with great ease.

"Mr. Parley," said Flatterwell, "I should not have pressed you so much to admit me into the castle, but out of pure disinterested regard to your own happiness. I shall get nothing by it, but I cannot bear to think that a person so wise and amiable should be shut up in this gloomy dungeon, under a hard master, and a slave to the unreasonable tyranny of his BOOK OF LAWS. If you admit me, you need have no more waking, no more watching." Here Parley involuntarily slipped back the bolt of the door. "To convince you of my true love," continued Flatterwell, "I have brought a bottle of the most delicious wine that grows in the wilderness. You

shall taste it, but you must put a glass through the wicket to receive it; for it is a singular property in this wine, that we of the wilderness cannot succeed in conveying it to you of the castle, without you hold a vessel to receive it."

"O, here is a glass," said Parley, holding out a large goblet, which he always kept ready to be filled by any chance comer. The other immediately poured into the capacious goblet a large draught of that delicious, intoxicating liquor, with which the family of the Flatterwells have, for near six thousand years, gained the hearts and destroyed the souls of all the inhabitants of the castle, whenever they have been able to prevail on them to hold out a hand to receive it.

This the wise master of the castle knew well would be the case, for he knew what was in men; he knew their propensity to receive the delicious poison of the Flatterwells, and it was for this reason that he gave them THE BOOK of his LAWS, and planted a hedge, and invented the bolts, and doubled the locks.

As soon as poor Parley had swallowed the fatal draught, it acted like enchantment. He at once lost all power of resistance. He had no sense of fear left. He despised his own safety, forgot his master, lost all sight of the house in the other country, and reached out for another draught, as eagerly as Flatterwell held out the bottle to administer it.

"What a fool I have been," said Parley, "To deny myself so long."

"Will you now let me in?" said Flatterwell.

"Aye, that I will," said the deluded Parley. Though the train was now increased to near a hundred robbers, yet so intoxicated was Parley, that he did not see one of them except his new friend. Parley eagerly pulled down the bars, drew back the bolts, and forced open the locks, thinking he never let in his friend soon enough. He had however just presence of mind to say, "My dear friend, I hope you are alone."

Flatterwell swore he was. Parley opened the door--in rushed, not Flatterwell only, but the whole banditti, who always lurk behind in his train. The

moment they had got sure possession, Flatterwell changed his soft tone, and cried out in a voice of thunder, "Down with the castle; kill, burn, and destroy."

Rapine, murder, and conflagration, by turns, took place. Parley was the very first whom they attacked. He was overpowered with wounds. As he fell, he cried out, "O, my master, I died a victim to my own belief in thee, and to my own vanity and impudence. O that the guardians of all the castles would hear me with my dying breath repeat my master's admonition, that attacks from without will not destroy, unless there is some confederate within. O that the keepers of all other castles would learn from my ruin, that he who parleys with temptation, is already undone; that he who allows himself to go to the very bounds, will soon jump over the hedge; that he who talks out of the window with the enemy, will soon open the door to him; that he who holds out his hand for the cup of sinful flattery, loses all power of resisting; that when he opens the door to one sin, all the rest fly in upon him, and the man perishes, as I now do."

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