

saints who were not allowed to enter the tent of the wicked. fired by that bewildering and amazing performance, he daily, after the wonderful sight, practised walking on rails, on fences, on fallen trees, and on every narrow foothold which he could find, as a careful preparation for a final feat and triumph of skill on his mothers clothes line. in an evil hour, as he sat one sunday in the corner of his fathers pew, his eyes rested on the narrow ledge which formed the top of the long foot bench. satan can find mischief for idle boys within church as well as without, and the desire grew stronger to try to walk on that narrow foothold. he looked at his father and mother, they were peacefully sleeping; so also were the grown up occupants of the neighboring pews; the pew walls were high, the minister seldom glanced to right or left; a thousand good reasons were whispered in his ear by the mischief finder, and at last he willingly yielded, pulled off his heavy shoes, and softly mounted the foot bench. he walked forward and back with great success twice, thrice, but when turning for a fourth tour he suddenly lost his balance, and over he went with a resounding crash hats, psalm books, heavy bench, and all. he crushed into hopeless shapelessness his fathers gray beaver meeting hat, a long treasured and much loved antique; he nearly smashed his mothers kid slippered foot to jelly, and the fall elicited from her, in the surprise of the sudden awakening and intense pain, an ear piercing shriek, which, with the noisy crash, electrified the entire meeting. all the grown people stood up to investigate, the children climbed on the seats to look at the guilty offender and his deeply mortified parents; while the minister paused in his sermon and said with cutting severity, i have always regretted that the office of tithingman has been entirely insufficient to sustain the great weight of the heavy machine. in danvers, one of these useless though ornamental structures hung within eighteen inches of the preachers nose, on a slender bar thirty feet in length; and every sunday the children gazed with fascinated anticipation at the slight rod and the great hexagonal extinguisher, thinking and hoping that on this day the sounding board would surely drop, and put out the minister. in fact, it was regarded by many a child, though this idea was hardly formulated in the little brain, as a visible means of possible punishment for any false doctrine that might issue from the mouth of the preacher. another pastime and source of interest to the children in many old churches was the study of the knots and veins in the unpainted wood of which the pews and galleries were made. age had developed and darkened and rendered visible all the natural irregularities in the wood, just as it had brought out and strengthened the dry woody, close, unaired, penetrating scent which permeated the meeting house and gave it the distinctive church smell. the children, and perhaps a few of the grown people, found in these clusters of knots queer similitudes of faces, strange figures and constellations, which, though conned sunday after sunday until known by heart, still seemed ever to show in their irregular groupings a puzzling possibility of the discovery of new configurations and monstrosities. the dangling, dusty spiders webs afforded, too, an interesting sight and diversion for the sermon hearing, but not sermon listening, young puritans, who watched the cobwebs swaying, trembling, forming strange maps of imaginary rivers with their many tributaries, or outlines of intersecting roads and lanes. and if little yet once, hate evil, or shearjashub chanced, by principles. it might be that he was resolved to take the consequences, and wear them like a hair shirt, as the only means of recovering his self esteem. no; whatever penance, voluntary or involuntary, westray might undergo, lord blandamer could only look on in silence. his object had been gained. if westray felt it necessary to pay the price, he must be let pay it. lord blandamer could neither inquire nor remonstrate. he could offer no compensation, because no compensation would be accepted. the little party were nearing the house when a servant met them. there is a man come over from cullerne, my lord, he said. he is anxious to see mr westray at once on important business. show him into my sitting room, and say that mr westray will be with him immediately. westray met lord blandamer in the hall a few minutes later. i am sorry to say there is bad news from cullerne, the architect said hurriedly. last nights gale has strained and shaken the tower severely. a very serious movement is taking place. i must get back at once. do, by all means. a carriage is at the door. you can catch the train at lytchett,