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# **Tales of My Time, Volume 3**

**Scargill William Pitt**

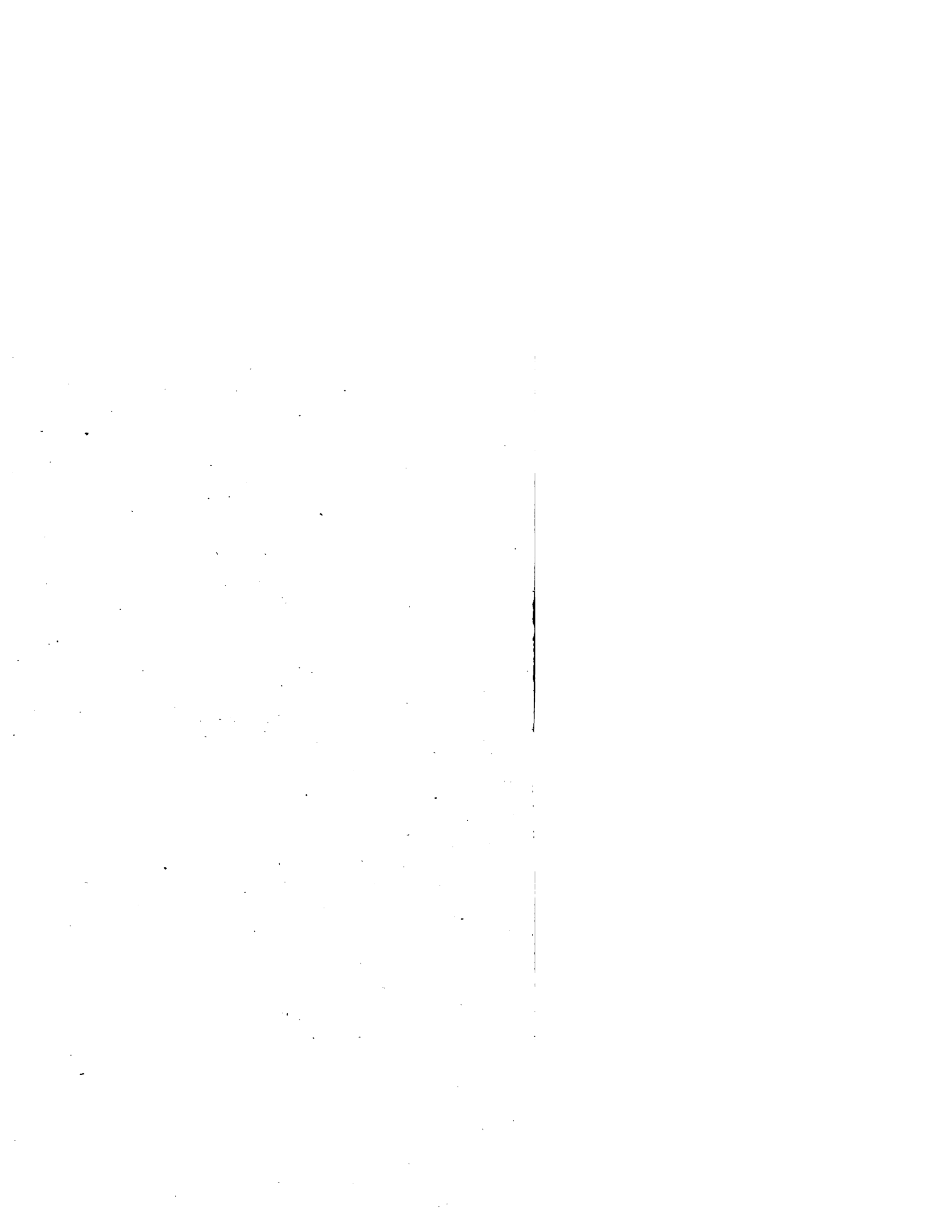
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**Author: Scargill William Pitt**

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TALES

OF

MY TIME.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF BLUE-STOCKING HALL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. III.

THE YOUNG REFORMERS.

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LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1829.

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J. B. NICHOLS AND SON,  
25, Parliament Street.

## TALES OF MY TIME.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

RISING before the sun had appeared above the horizon, I commenced my pilgrimage. The way was rough and tedious ; but though fruitful of misadventure, the hindrances which obstructed my path having had nothing to recommend them in the way of romance, I pass over a tiresome journey, and will not travel anew along the trackless regions which I had to pass.

After sundry difficulties and many interruptions, I reached the place whither I was bound, and began to act upon my orders. So unexpected was my arrival, and so secret my plans, that my object prospered. I entered on my task with caution ; exerted all my ingenuity ; arrested my man ; frightened him out of deeds and debt, and came to the end of my business in such miraculous brief space, that nothing short of "veni, vidi,

vici," seemed sufficiently flattering and epigrammatic for my good fortune. Some applause was perhaps my due, but I gave myself more than I deserved. Placing the valise which contained my treasure on a table, I turned the key in an outer door, and retiring after a day of great fatigue to an inner chamber, went to rest, longing for day, that I might commence my homeward course.

"The *corps diplomatique* must hide their diminished heads in future," thought I, "and bow to my superior generalship. I shall rise to the highest pinnacle in my uncle's favour, when I give him a detail of my achievements. I shall shew him that what appeared delicate, difficult, and intricate to ordinary minds, was rendered easy of accomplishment through *my* genius, which has overcome every obstacle; I shall henceforward *command* the estimation which I have hitherto failed to *win*."

Soothed and self-complacent, I commended myself to Morpheus, and never unclosed my eye-lids till the full day-light appeared to chide my laziness. My first waking impulse was to take a look at my dear valise; so starting up,

and opening the door of communication between my bed chamber, and the outer apartment which served as my sitting room, I sprang forward to the table on which I had placed the portmanteau, but saw it not. Wild with dismay, I ran to and fro from room to room, overturning whatever came in my way, in the agony of fruitless search. The valise was gone; I tried the door which was locked just as I left it, but I now perceived that I had left the window, which had no fastening, entirely unprotected, and a short ladder would suffice to gain its height on the outside.

I put on my clothes, roused the people of the house, and searched everywhere, but all in vain. I could not gain any tidings of my property. No language can paint my situation. After having accomplished my purpose so completely, and rejoiced in the consequences of my success by anticipation, till my sanguine spirit had reached the summit of its wishes, here was a merciless crush which destroyed the whole fabric of my hopes. What carelessness! what childish absurdity, to leave the valise in the



outer apartment! Was there ever such folly? All my address and industry were fruitless. I could never boast of either in the recovery of that which I had lost again, through the most shameful absence of common sense.

My misfortune arose entirely from that same confidence in my own ability which had always been my bane; and what was worse than any censure incurred for my stupid conduct, I might be suspected of inventing this story of a robbery, and being the real thief myself. "Such an unworthy thought will not cross my uncle's mind," said I, "but others will accuse me, and I shall blush, and look guilty at the bare apprehension."

I threw myself into a chair, and sat for some time like one arrested by a stroke of the palsy. I was overwhelmed; but at length reviving from this torpor, I dashed out of the house, told of my loss to all I met, and set every engine at work, which gave me the smallest chance of regaining the stolen booty. I posted placards; offered rewards; but to no purpose. What was to be done? I could not return to Quebec, and yet not to do so, opened the door of suspi-

cion very reasonably on my motives. Sometimes I thought of going into the woods and living henceforward amongst the Indians. At other times I resolved to employ the money with which I had been supplied for my expedition, in making the best of my way to Glendruid, where, like the prodigal, I would confess my sins, ask forgiveness, and endeavour to appease my uncle by writing a true statement of all that had happened.

But would my tale be believed? Ought I not boldly go in person and relate the facts, trusting to the effect of truth upon a generous mind? Harassed and tortured in suspense and uncertainty, I lingered, still hoping for tidings, and doubtful what course to pursue, when within two days of the time which I prescribed to myself as the utmost limit of my delay before something must be done, a packet of letters was put into my hands from Quebec.

I dreaded to break the seal, expecting to find a scolding for my silence, or perhaps a command to hasten my return. On opening it I found merely a kind line from my uncle,

hoping soon to see me, and inclosing a letter directed in the hand-writing of my sister Maria, and sealed with black wax. A cold shuddering seized my limbs, and I held the letter for some time unfolded, as if a secret presentiment revealed its contents. At length I was in possession of the dreadful fact that I had lost my mother.

I was now, indeed, destined to taste the bitter waters of affliction, and thought that I should lose my senses. The preceding circumstances had humbled my pride, and lowered my spirits. The upbraiding of conscience now became intolerable. I could neither eat nor sleep, and fever quickly raged through every pulse. The news of my beloved mother's death, which made me now too keenly sensible how dear she was to my soul, was conveyed without particulars, in the following brief communication from my younger sister :

“ My pen almost refuses the sad office, yet must I endeavour to overcome the stupor which weighs down every faculty, to inform my once dear Albert of his angelic mother's departure

from a world in which sorrow has been the portion of her latter days.

“She is gone to a brighter scene, and will reap the reward of faith and hope; but our inconsolable father requires unceasing attention, and I can write no more. Ere long you shall hear from me again, and yet how can I tell whether even this dreadful event will have power to awaken your dormant affection. Adieu.

“Your affectionate, but broken hearted,  
“MARIA.”

I read this short letter over and over, till my brain was on fire. A note which had been slipped into it evidently after my uncle had written in the cover, spoke a friendly word of condolence from him, and urged me to lose no time in setting out, adding, that a confidential clerk should be sent to finish any negotiation which I might leave imperfect. Nothing could be kinder, but I was not in a condition to avail myself of this considerate conduct. I could not shed a tear, and gasped for breath. I tried to write, but my hand trembled, and my mind wandered. I found it impossible to collect my