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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOME THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO ***



Some Three Hundred Years Ago



BY EDITH GILMAN BREWSTER

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To the children of Portsmouth this book is dedicated.

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS:

Because so little is told of the children who lived on our shores when forests were cleared for home-making, I have tried to picture here what they might have done in the midst of the true and thrilling happenings you will some day read of in our history.

I hope these tales will help you to love the more our Granite State.

Yours with much affection,

EDITH GILMAN BREWSTER.

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[\[A\]](#) Courtesy of W. A. Wilde Company

NONOWIT'S HOME

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Long before New Hampshire found its name, the deep river at its southeast was known as the Piscataqua by the Indians who could stem its strong currents, even in bark canoes.

Perhaps it was because of the fresh spring close to its salty shores, some three miles from the sea, that the red men made their encampment on the spot that was later equally attractive to men of white skins.

Nonowit, like his people, was glad to see the snows melt away during that spring of 1603. The bare branches of the oak and maple showed tufts of browns, reds, and greens. The fish stirred in the streams, and by the time that Nonowit's forest home had its roof of thick green foliage the Indians themselves were astir. For far up the river at the falls fish could be found in plenty, and that was a welcome change from the game of the winter food.

The men of the tribe were the first to start afoot for the fishing spot, while the squaws broke camp, gathered their belongings, and herded the children.

Nonowit suddenly recalled some sturdy reeds growing by the salt marsh which he thought would make fine arrow shafts. It had occurred to the boy that he might stand by the falls and shoot his fish as they bounded over. That is why he was not on the spot when the children were started on the march, and the last camp fire had been covered.

Even though he was an Indian boy, his heart thumped with fear, when at the end of the day he returned from his hunt on the marsh to a deserted camp. No answer came to his long shrill call. The sun was setting, and it was of no use to follow the trail that night, even though he had known just where his people were to go.

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He munched some scraps that had been left behind and sought the shelter of a hollow oak which had been the playhouse of the Indian girls and boys. An old owl hooted and flew from a hole above, but Nonowit had no fear of him, though he was glad the hole by which he had crawled into the oak was far above the ground. This was some protection from the wolves, which he could even then hear howling in the distance.

All night there was a beating rain, which washed away the last trace of the carefully hidden trail of the Indian travelers. When Nonowit crawled out into the sunshine the following morning, he could learn nothing of their direction. To get a wider view, he wandered through the thick forest to the river's edge, but there discovered no signs of his people. "There are so many children in the camp I might not be missed," he thought and dropped upon a rock in one little heap of loneliness.

Suddenly he sat very straight, for there beyond the Narrows he saw a monstrous thing. Could it be a huge bird with white wings spread? Over the water it seemed to be coming nearer. Instinctively he slid into a crevice between the rocks, yet without moving his gaze. Through the Narrows, under full sail, came the first ship. Nonowit seemed to become a part of the brown earth as he wriggled back into the undergrowth, never moving his wide-open eyes from this strange sight.

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Then came the rattle of chains and the voices of men. A boat was lowered, and Nonowit, safe under the cover of the low branches, saw it headed for his shore. Men with white skin and hair growing on their faces landed on the very rock on which he had been sitting. Their clothes were unlike any he had ever seen before, and their speech could not be understood. Cautiously he backed into the forest until he gained the branches of the oak in which he had slept. Yet that was unsafe, for the white men looked up into every tree, breaking the branches and tasting the sap.

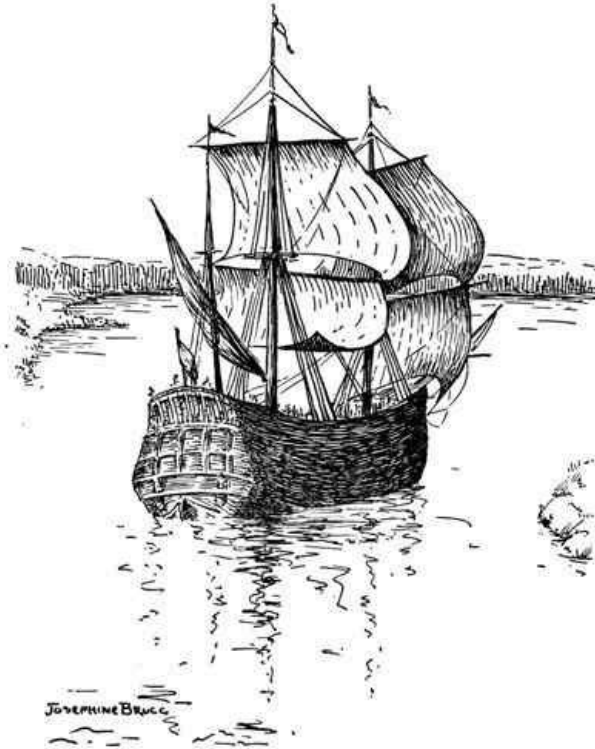
In his fright, Nonowit wriggled for safety through the very hole from which the owl had flown the night before. There from the dark hollows he watched the white men as they studied each tree. They came at last to the old oak and shook its branches. When one man even climbed far enough to look deep into the trunk, Nonowit crouched to the very ground, holding his breath. The shadows protected him and the men passed on. "Worse than wolves," thought the boy as he ventured again to his peep-hole. The white men lingered about for an hour or more, until the imprisoned little Indian felt that he might never see his people again. He would starve rather than face such creatures.

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At last, there came the sound of oars on the water. Creeping from the tree, Nonowit pushed aside the low branches to see the boatful of strangers depart. Suddenly a strong hand was clapped on his shoulder. He jumped with fear only to find himself in the grasp of his own father. Nonowit pointed hastily through the thick growth to the river, and the two watched the English vessel sail

up the stream, but history reports that Martin Pring saw no Indians when he searched the Piscataqua shores for a sassafras tree, which, he believed, held the "Elixir of Life."

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THE NEW WORLD

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Far away on the shores of France, in a little cobbled lane by the water front, Jacques swung into the rhythm of the Sailor's Hornpipe. Raoul stood in the doorway of his low-roofed house, with his violin, directing the tune and swings until he pronounced the dance correctly learned.

Just then three well-dressed gentlemen turned into the narrow way and passed on to the vessel at the wharf below. The raising of sails and shouting of orders suggested an immediate start.

Jacques' father hurried around the corner and motioned to his boy. As Jacques followed, he called back to Raoul, "I'll bring you an Indian scalp when I come home!"

The father and son then crossed the narrow plank to the deck and went below, for their business was to cook for the crew.

The distinguished-looking gentlemen, however, talked earnestly on the shore until the last sail was spread. Then one of them, no other than Monsieur Champlain, stepped aboard, and, as the gang-plank was drawn, called to his friends, "We will also mark the rivers."

And so, long ago in 1605, the French sailed to the Northwest with new hopes. The Spanish and Portuguese had returned with wonderful tales of the mines of South America. Perhaps even greater things might be found on the Northern shores.

It happened one day when the sea was smooth and the well-fed sailors had little to do, that a group of them gathered on deck with tales of the Americas: the shining gold to be found there, the wild beasts, and the wilder Indians. Jacques felt that if he had but a knife, he could conquer the whole country. In the meantime his eye rested on a sharp and ugly-looking one thrust into the belt of a rough old salt who sat astride the deck rail.

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Just then there came a lull in the tales and the old fellow, to urge on the flagging spirits, brandished his dirk and pledged it to "The best fellow yet!"

Fierce and impossible yarns followed until Jacques, as if to work off his excitement, jumped into the circle with the swing and the stamp of his newly-learned hornpipe. He danced it well and responded repeatedly to the sailors' applause. It pleased them better than any tale told, and they voted Jacques, "The best fellow yet!" True to his pledge, the old salt presented the knife with a sweeping bow. Jacques, overjoyed, at once cut his mark on the handle, and he dreamed that night of his attack on the New World. He awoke to make plans for the Indian scalps he should take to Raoul, for Indians seemed only as beasts to be slaughtered.

Days and nights of sailing passed, as well as storms and fogs. When the sun at last brought clear

horizons, the shout of "Land head!" thrilled captain, mates, and crew. No one knew just where they were, but shining peaks could be seen in the distance. At last they came to anchor, and small boats carried the men ashore. Jacques, too, was allowed to go. He clutched his knife, expecting to plunge it into the head of the first red-skin.

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A group of Indians stood on the rocks. Monsieur Champlain, the first to step ashore, greeted them with friendly signs. Jacques caught sight of an Indian boy of his own size, lurking behind. He held a bow in his hand, and a quiver of arrows was slung across his back. It was Nonowit, for they had landed on the Piscataqua shores.

The Indian boy gathered wood for the fire, and Jacques eagerly joined in the search. Soon the older folk sat about the blaze. The white men tried to ask where they had landed and what was the nature of the coast. Jacques, in his desire to learn, drew in the sand for Nonowit the picture of the ship, the point of rocks, and the coast. The Indian boy understood and added the river to the map. That aroused Monsieur Champlain, who sent an order to the ship and soon received brilliant beads and various knives from the stores on board. These he laid at the feet of the Indians and pointed to the boy's map on the sand. The red men pulled charred sticks from the fire and drew on the paper offered the full coast line, so far as they knew, even to the Merrimac River with its impeding sandbars, then not even heard of by white men.

By the time the French had started for their vessel Jacques had become sure that the many stories he had heard of the fierceness of the Indians were not entirely true, for already he had found an Indian boy a good companion. Instead of thrusting his knife into his scalp, he followed the example of his leaders and laid it at Nonowit's feet. The little red-skin, pleased with his gift, instinctively offered to Jacques his bow and arrows. These the French lad safely tucked away for Raoul, now thinking it a much finer gift than many scalps.

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Monsieur Champlain was even more pleased than Jacques to carry to his countrymen so true a map of the coast of the New World, though at that time he did not know it was to be the map of New England, nor that he had landed on the New Hampshire shore.

VISITORS FROM ENGLAND.

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Eleven years passed and Nonowit was a grown Indian who knew the forest lands along the Piscataqua and the rocky turns of the coast. But in all this time he had not forgotten the two strange experiences of his boyhood: a sailing vessel, seen in the river, and later the meeting of white men face to face. Never did his eye run along the ocean horizon without thought of those white-winged sails.

One morning in May, 1614, Nonowit paddled miles from the shore and pulled his canoe upon the rocks of a small island, the largest of a group that could be seen from the coast. Leaving his bark in safety, he crossed to the opposite shore of the island, where he first laid sticks for a fire and then threw out his line for a fish. A full catch held his attention until the tide had risen to an unusual height. Suddenly he thought of his canoe. He hastened over the rocks to find it far afloat. There he was left alone on the island with only the fish of the ocean for food and the sky to cover his head. That day and the next he watched for a stray canoe. On the morning of the third day, as he scanned the ocean to the East, he discerned a distant white speck.

Slowly it shaped itself, and he realized that once again he was watching the approach of a white man's vessel. It seemed to be heading for his very island. Nonowit watched cautiously, ready to find safety in the rocky caves in case these proved unfriendly people.

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The vessel dropped anchor and a small boat brought eight men ashore. The leader was Capt. John Smith, who had sailed from England to learn what he could of the New World, and whether it was a desirable place for colonists. As this group of small islands attracted him, he had landed to see what could be found.

Nonowit, from his hiding place, watched the astonishment of the white men when they came upon the burning coals of his fire. Then his turn of surprise came, for one face of that group was familiar to him. The features of Jacques had been stamped upon his boyhood mind, never to be erased. He now recognized the French boy who, since that first trip across the ocean, had learned his father's art of cooking and had hired out as steward to this English captain.

Springing from his cave, Nonowit appeared before the wondering men, who drew back, fearing him one of a band of hidden Indians. Suddenly, Jacques caught a glimpse of the knife, cut with his own mark, thrust into the Indian's belt. It was the very dirk he had won by his well-danced hornpipe on his voyage with M. Champlain.

After an exchange of friendly greetings, the Indian led the English party about and visited with them the smaller islands of the group. The low green bushes and bold rocky shores surrounded by the sparkling ocean so pleased Captain Smith that he gave the group his own name, calling Smith's Isles what later have been known as the Isles of Shoals.

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The seamen learned of Nonowit's lost canoe and offered to take him ashore. As they approached the mainland, the wooded coast with its lone mountain and later the safe harbor and rocky shores were most attractive to these Englishmen.

On through the Narrows they sailed, as did Martin Pring many years before. This time, Nonowit was aboard the vessel that his people watched from the bank by the fresh spring where they had made their encampment. It is near the spot where Portsmouth markets now stand. Perhaps the first marketing was done that day, for Captain Smith was ready to trade knives, beads, fish lines, and hooks for the furs the Indians offered. Jacques prepared stews and porridge for these new friends, and in turn the Indians feasted the sailors upon maize and bear meat.

After Nonowit had well described the coast lines to Captain Smith, he presented dried fish and deer meat for the journey, and to Jacques, for his own use, the skin of a bear. Although Nonowit was urged to sail with the party, he refused.

Captain Smith continued along the coast to the point now known as Cape Cod and then, returning, found others of his party whom he had left fishing at the mouth of the Penobscot River. [Pg 21]

With salted fish and furs from Indian trading, Captain Smith returned to England, elated with the charm of the New Land. He published a map of the seacoast with a vivid description of the country and presented it to Prince Charles who named the region New England, and so, ever since, it has been called.

THE SETTLEMENT

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In a little thatched cottage in old Portsmouth of Hampshire, England, Roger Low sat on a stool by his father's knee, while the light of the fire flickered over the heavy settles and on the rafters above. The man was still in his working clothes, with his hammer and saw at his side.

"This new world they tell me of, my boy, must be a wonderful place. Those Puritan leaders, Bradford and Standish three years ago, in 1620, took their followers to New England to worship as they pleased. And now the Laconia Company, of which our own Governor, John Mason, is a member, has been given a grant of land there."

"What can he do with it, father?" Roger asked.

"They say, lad, the furs of those forests and the fish of those waters would make a big business for England."

A knock at the door brought the man to his feet. On opening it, he bowed low to the gentleman waiting.

"Come in, sir, and be seated."

David Thompson took the opposite settle, quite ignoring Roger, who had risen in respect. Absorbed in his own plans this Scotchman, Thompson, broke out at once, "Low, I want you to pick up your tools and come to America with me this spring. Governor Mason wishes to make a settlement and proposes to establish a Manor on his new grant. We will pursue fur trade and fishing, and even hope to cultivate vines and discover mines."

It was an astonishing thought to this carpenter, whose son was his only companion. [Pg 23]

"I should have to take the boy with me," was his first remark, after some thoughtful moments.

"Certainly," replied David Thompson, who knew that the good workmanship of this man was worth an extra passenger. "We shall need the boys in a year or two," he added.

Final arrangements were completed, and in the spring of 1623, Roger and his father sailed with the party for New England.

Edward Hilton and his brother William, who had been fish dealers in London, were on board with equipment for one settlement, while David Thompson had charge of the other.

From the map which Captain John Smith had made, the Piscataqua River was found. Here the coast was thoroughly studied. Thompson selected for building the very point at which Monsieur Champlain once stopped. But the Hilton brothers preferred river fishing and continued some eight miles up stream to a point of land called by the Indians, Winnichannat. It later became a part of Dover.

Thompson's location was at the mouth of a small stream, which led to the main river. He called it Little Harbor. The hillock on which he planned to build gave a commanding view of the ocean. At the west stretched a salt marsh, of great value to a plantation. [Pg 24]

Small log cabins were quickly constructed, and also a secure building for the abundant provisions. Roger worked with the men in landing barrels of pork, kegs of molasses, sacks of oats, and boxes of candles. A securely fastened door not only protected these supplies from the weather, but also kept off the prowling beasts that might find comfortable living on such food.

When the excitement of landing and the newness of this life began to wear away, the days seemed much alike. Roger asked one morning, "Father, shall we see no one but each other again today?"

"That is all, my boy, for the Plymouth Colony is many miles to the south, and there are only a few

people between that settlement and our own. The Indians are probably up river now for their spring fishing."

Roger had been eager to see an Indian, though he had hoped he might not be alone, for he rather feared them.

The days wore on with much monotony. The carpenters were busy building the Manor-house. A few men were planting only the most necessary crops. Others were making arrangements for the manufacture of salt, which was of first importance. Otherwise fish could not be preserved for the markets of England.

One day something did happen. At dusk Roger passed the cabin where provisions were stored and found the door wide open. It was a law of the settlement that that door be kept closed and barred.

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The boy darted in to see if any one was there. Peering about the kegs and boxes he met a pair of glaring, fiery eyes that glowed through the gloom between himself and the doorway. He screamed. The creature crouched. An added horror came when Roger glanced at the door and saw there the dark, stern face of a tall Indian with arrow poised. It was aimed not at Roger, but at the springing lynx. The whirr of that arrow lived in Roger's mind the rest of his days. The boy himself was almost as limp with fright as the creature that was carried by Nonowit to the main cabin. For this Indian had heard of the new settlement and had travelled miles through the forest to make friends with the white men. He was close behind Roger and heard his scream of fright when he ran into the store-house.

The settlers, resting from the day's work, were surprised at the appearance of the Indian, but still more astonished by Roger's story. John, the cook, then confessed that he had come out of the store-house with his arms full, and had forgotten to go back and close the door.

The day's excitement was not over, for that night David Thompson led into camp Captain Miles Standish of the Plymouth colony. He had a hard story to tell of the starving condition of his people. They had compared themselves with the Israelites during the famine of Egypt, yet the Hebrews had their flocks and herds left to them. "However," continued the captain, "the Lord has been good to give us the abundant fish of the sea and the spring water, which is all we have, save a few dried peas." He then added that Governor Bradford had urged him to go even as far as Piscataqua to search for food.

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"And little could we have offered him," spoke up the cook, "if the old lynx and his friends had had a night in our store-house!"

Much was then given from the ample supply of the settlement, and Captain Standish returned to Plymouth well repaid for his journey.

DANGER FOR THE COLONISTS.

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Five years had passed since Roger Low and his father had come to America to help establish the Mason Manor. Although David Thompson, the leader, had found an island in Massachusetts Bay more to his liking, still enough settlers remained at Piscataqua to make the Lower Plantation one of importance. Edward Hilton yet held what was called the Upper Plantation at Dover.

One morning, early in the summer of 1628, the Mason settlers were disturbed to find that John, the cook, had disappeared. Whether the days had become too monotonous for him and he had gone in search of adventure, or had been lost by wandering too far into the woods, no one knew. Finally Nonowit, who had become fond of Roger and had spent much time in teaching him the ways of the woods, was sent with the boy in search of the lost cook.

The two started in the direction of the Upper Plantation. Not far from the Hilton Settlement, the sound of a shot in the woods brought them to a standstill and then to the ground, where they hid in the underbrush. Through the clearing they saw a deer fall. They waited breathlessly, expecting next to see the bulky form of John shoulder his game. To their surprise, a Tarateen Indian glided over the ground to the fallen deer. As he was an enemy, Nonowit and Roger remained in hiding until they could safely continue their journey. They then carried to the plantation not only news of a lost man, but also the astonishing word that Indians were using guns in the woods.

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Such a thing was unheard of. It was against the law of the settlers to trade firearms or ammunition with the Indians. How it had been done, or by whom, was a matter that must be looked into at once. The people of the Upper Plantation had seen nothing of the cook, though that was of small moment now.

Edward Hilton felt it was of utmost importance to return at once with Roger and Nonowit to the Lower Plantation.

On arriving there, a leader from Naumkeag was found who had brought the same disastrous word that the Indians were armed. He had received a message to the same effect from Weesagascusatt. It threatened serious danger for the colonists. Just at dusk a messenger from Winnisimmet arrived at Piscataqua with the same rumor. By candle light that night a conference

of grave importance was held. The Naumkeag leader reported that a man named Morton had opened his settlement at Mount Wollaston, Mass. to all discontented servants and lawless people. He had changed the name to Merrie Mount and there he allowed reckless, dissolute living. Upon hearing of the loss of the cook, he suggested that he might be found among the merry-makers.

Worst of all, Morton had established a trade of firearms with the Indians in order to obtain a greater number of furs. With guns in such skilled and treacherous hands, the white settlers stood in great danger.

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The discussion that night resulted in an agreement to send letters, pleading for help, to Plymouth, which, though it stood in less danger, was a colony stronger than all the rest together. It was also near enough for an approach to Morton at Merrie Mount.

Roger was asked to carry the letters. With Nonowit as his guide, he started out on the following day. It was an adventurous trip, partly by land and partly by sea, for the man from Naumkeag was returning by water and carried the two along with him.

When well underway by boat, a darkened sky and wild wind drove the small vessel to the Isle of Shoals for shelter, where they found at anchor "The Whale," an English ship soon to cross the ocean. The hurricane was of short duration, and the messengers continued their journey.

Traveling afoot from Naumkeag, they soon noticed fresh footprints on the path, which suggested that someone was not far ahead of them. They continued with increased haste and added caution. Nonowit suddenly gave the signal for silence when, not far from the path, they saw through the thicket the broad shoulders of a white man eating by his camp fire. They remained silent until he turned and the jolly face of John was visible. He was doubtless on his way to Merrie Mount but allowed them to think he was merely off for a change. On learning what had happened and the message they carried, John allied himself to the two and begged to continue with them.

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After a rough journey, the three arrived at Plymouth and delivered the letters, which were most carefully considered by the men of that colony. Realizing the serious danger such a center as Merrie Mount could be to all the settlements, it was decided to send a note of warning to Morton. He, however, treated it with scorn and in the same spirit rejected a second appeal. Then, with stern determination to take the man by force, Captain Miles Standish started with his company of soldiers. He returned with Morton, who was sent as a prisoner to England on "The Whale," the very ship the travelers had found about to sail from the Isles of Shoals. The various colonies shared the expense.

Roger, Nonowit, and John finally arrived home, triumphant with the news of success. But the wrong Morton had already done the settlers was never rectified, for the Indians had learned the value and power of a gun and never again were content without firearms.

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STRAWBERRY BANK.

[Pg 32]

"Couldn't he find one anywhere, Mother?" asked Samuel.

"Why didn't he keep on looking?" persisted Richard, as the two boys braced themselves for the lurch of the vessel which was tossing on a choppy sea. Mrs. Chadborn steadied herself and continued the story they so loved.

"It was almost thirty years ago that Martin Pring sailed up the river to which we are now going. He searched the forests on either bank for a certain tree which he believed had the power to give people health and happiness. He found the deserted camp fires of the Indians, but, even though no savages disturbed his hunt, he sailed away disappointed because he could not find a sassafras tree."

"I believe I could find one there," boasted Richard, with a secret determination to do so, "for I know how they look."

This was in the early summer of 1631. It was a happy day when they landed on the New England shore close by the Mason Manor House, which had been built eight years before. Then it was the only one for many miles. Now some eighty men and women of many trades had come to settle about it and to build another which they would call the Great House.

There was much to interest Samuel and Richard in the salt works and the flakes where fish were dried, and in the fort which was built on the hillock between the Manor-house and the ocean.

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But a few days after landing, Richard, much troubled, hunted for Samuel, whom he found fishing from the rocks.

"Sam, Mother's almost sick. Father says the voyage has tired her. He thinks she's homesick, too. What can we do about it?"

Samuel dropped his pole and sighed, "I wish we could find a sassafras tree."

"We will," cried Richard, jumping to his feet. "Father will let us go with him to the place where they are working on the Great House. It is several miles away, but we can hunt the woods there

and camp with the men until they come back."

Mr. Chadborn readily consented, not knowing what plan the boys had in mind. But he warned them not to stray far, for, once lost, they were at the mercy of the Indians and the wild beasts.

They made a long search always keeping within the sound of hammers.

"I'll keep the path while you examine that tree off there," they constantly agreed, but never did they find one of the right kind. For two days they searched diligently, glad to get back to the cornmeal cakes and pea-porridge, and at night, quite as disappointed as Pring and doubtless more tired, they fell upon the bed of boughs their father had laid for them.

On the third morning Mr. Chadborn told them to keep within call, for they were to return to the Manor that day. [Pg 34]

Samuel thought quite seriously, while Richard lay on the ground discouraged.

"What is it, Sam?" cried Richard, catching a gleam in his brother's eye, and ready always to grasp at a suggestion.

"Let's make baskets out of bark from a birch tree and fill them with these strawberries for Mother."

They went to work with much energy, surprised to find how abundantly the berries grew along the banks, and returned to the Manor so full of the account of that strawberry patch that their disappointment was almost forgotten.

"Oh, Mother, see what we have found! The bank was covered with berries, even after we had picked all these!"

"Why, boys, it is just like the home-land! Surely Captain John Smith had described this Place well for Prince Charles to name it New England. Already I feel better, for this land is not so strange since home things grow here."

The boys found that even the sassafras could not have given her more pleasure. They went to bed that night before dark, contented with their search and anxious to return to the strawberry field.

For twenty years the land about the Great House was called Strawberry Bank. Though that was almost three hundred years ago and the name was afterward changed to Portsmouth, there are now many people in New England, and some outside, who know just what spot is meant when they hear of Strawberry Bank. [Pg 35]

THE BOYS' CATCH.

[Pg 36]

"Get off that boat! We can't be bothered by boys on this trip!"

Edward Godfrie, who had charge of the fisheries at Mason Manor, shouted with stern authority.

It was scarcely daybreak on a May morning in 1632. Six great shallops lay at anchor off the rocks. Five fishing boats were in readiness, while several skiffs were conveying fishermen and equipment for the day's work.

Godfrie's own boy, Hugh, and James Williams, regretfully climbed ashore.

"Leave that seine behind!" was the next order to the boatmen. The stretch of net was pitched out upon the rocks.

Every available worker at the Manor was ready to cast a line or haul a net on this trip, for the biggest catch possible was to be made that day. The Warwick, an English trading vessel of the Laconia Company, had already gone up the Piscataqua River and on her return would take a cargo of fish back to England. No later catch could be sufficiently salted and dried.

"To feed eighty people every day," grumbled Godfrie, "and keep a cargo on hand, can't be done even in these waters."

There had been little planting on this shore; so the fish already prepared for market had been eaten by the hungry settlers because of the delayed arrival of the Warwick with food supplies. Perhaps this accounts for Godfrie's irritation and anxiety for a good catch. When the last boat had started, he stepped into a skiff, picked up the oars, and pulled for the fishing fleet. [Pg 37]

Four forlorn boys, for Samuel and Richard Chadborn had joined the others, stood on the shore and watched the sails against the pink of the morning sky. The glorious air and strong salt breeze made the land seem unbearable to them. They wandered to the flakes and on to the salt works. Francis Williams, James's father, manufactured the salt.

"Get away from there, boys," he shouted, as they appeared. "A big catch comes in tonight, and we need every grain!"

Log cabins were scattered about the estate for those who did not live in the Hall. Horses, cows, pigs, sheep, and goats had their sheds or wandered about at will. However, there was no interest

in them for the boys, who sauntered back to the shore from which the boats had started.

"There are two skiffs left," suggested Hugh. "Let's go fishing for ourselves!"

"Yes!" exclaimed Sam, with a new idea. "And why not take that net and stretch it across the narrows in the little harbor? I saw the men do that one day."

It was a thought that aroused them all, perhaps because it required both daring and pluck. The net was a weighty one for their muscles, although they were stout, strong fellows for their years. [Pg 38]

James's father felt relieved as he saw them start. At least the flakes and the salt would be unmolested. However, his attitude changed at sundown when the boys had not returned.

The fishing fleet brought back a set of disappointed men, for the catch had not been what was hoped for by many pounds. Godfrie's grumbling could be heard before he landed, nor was it lessened when he reached shore to find that his boy, with the others, was missing.

The sun set and the moon rose, yet nothing had been seen of the boys. An hour later the distant splash of oars on the quiet waters and excited boy voices brought all the Manor folk to the shore. The approach was so slow that there was great fear that some one had been hurt. Yet there was an elated tone as the voices came nearer. When they were within shouting distance there came a call for help.

A half-dozen strong men jumped into their skiffs and pulled with speed. In a half-hour's time two great boat-loads of fish were pulled ashore. The boys had stretched their net at low water across a narrow part of the stream. As the tide rushed in, it brought fish in a school of unusual size, which, caught by the current, had entered the little harbor instead of the main river.

This catch made up for the loss in the day's fishing. Men and boys set to work in the moonlight to clean the fish. They then spread them on the flakes for salting and drying. [Pg 39]

Godfrie started a good cargo to the English markets, and each of the four boys carried the title of Captain for weeks to come.

THE FOREST GARDEN.

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It was the spring of 1633. Richard and Samuel had watched the distant horizon for many days. At last came the shout, "A sail! A sail!"

Later, the Warwick dropped anchor. The boys soon climbed aboard, and there they found Rebecca Gibbons, an English girl, who had started with her mother to join her father, Ambrose Gibbons, who was helping establish the New Hampshire Colony for the Mason grant. John Mason had given the name because of his home in Hampshire, England.

"Then you are going on to Newichewannock," explained Richard. "Your father has built a house there for you. At the falls they have a saw-mill. It is the only one in New England."

Samuel, who had gone ashore, then returned with a package, which he tucked into Rebecca's hands with a whisper. She secretly hid this strange parcel as the vessel started.

The Warwick left its passengers and supplies at the Great House on Strawberry Bank, and continued up the winding Piscataqua, which seemed endlessly long to Rebecca. At last a final turn brought to sight the new home, and, best of all, her father, followed by his four helpers, hurrying down to the shore.

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The house was a substantial one. There were also a barn, other small buildings, and a fine well, all surrounded by a palisade which protected the family from wild animals and hostile Indians. [Pg 42]

The saw-mill kept a busy hum on the logs, making boards for immediate use. Many were also to be shipped to England on the returning vessel. Ambrose Gibbons and his men spent their time otherwise: in search for useful ores or minerals, or trading for furs to be sent back to the Laconia Company, who, in turn, kept the colonists supplied from English stores. Perhaps for these reasons the gardens were quite neglected, and so Rebecca's strange little parcel proved a double treasure.

Her spinning done with the spirit of a true pioneer, Rebecca explored the surrounding woods and soon knew them quite as well as the nooks and corners of her own dooryard. In one spot there grew a thick undergrowth, through which she crept and discovered a small clearing so closely shut in that it would never have been suspected.

"This is the spot for my secret," she declared and began to pull the grass by the roots. The next day she returned with spade and rake, and her mysterious package. It was to be a buried treasure, for here she opened her bundle and planted in various holes the kernels of yellow Indian corn which Samuel had given her.

"There!" she exclaimed, as she patted the loose earth. "This is to be my own secret, till I am quite ready to tell. Then I will surprise them."

The home people were too much occupied with their own interests to give attention to Rebecca's play-time. The Newichewannock Indians, whose settlement was near by, were camping elsewhere for the summer, so that no one even guessed the garden, or knew how well it was growing. [Pg 43]

Some struggling grape vines and a few vegetables had been planted within the palisade, but small attention had been given to them. In fact, so little gardening had been done that the Autumn brought anxious days. No English vessel had come in, nor had the grain from Virginia arrived in Boston, where it was to be ground at the wind-mill and sent on to Strawberry Bank.

The meal-chest at the Newichewannock home was almost empty, and except for fish and game the food supply was low. The situation became serious. Ambrose Gibbons started, one crisp fall morning, for the Bank, hoping to obtain food of some sort. He took one man with him, while the other three with their axes started for a distant point to fell trees, not returning until night.

Rebecca ran off for awhile that afternoon to inspect her garden, which was now filled with a surprising growth of ripening corn.

"It might be picked at once," she whispered to herself. "But I think I will leave it for a big surprise. Father may not be able to get us food."

Quite elated over her splendid crop, she hastened back to the house. She was surprised to find the gate of the palisade open and still more astonished to see a tall figure in the kitchen. [Pg 44]

Her frightened mother was showing the empty meal-chest to a fierce looking Indian. Rebecca did not then know it was Rowls, the Sagamore of the Newichewannock Camp. He had returned

ahead of his people with a small but hungry band of Indians.

"He has come for food, dearie, but I cannot make him understand that we have nothing."

Rowls straightened himself and by motions again ordered Mrs. Gibbons to get him food. At the same time he showed a fine beaver skin for exchange. Empty cupboards and barrels were opened, but the fierce creature believed the food was hidden and raised his knife as a threat. At this a sudden thought struck Rebecca. With energy she motioned for him to wait. Then she darted to her secret garden, where she tore the precious ears from the stalks until her arms were full. Fearing for her mother in the meantime, she flew back to the house to find that Rowls had patiently waited.

It was what he wanted. With a satisfied grunt, he took the corn and presented Rebecca with the most beautiful beaver skin she had ever seen. After the Sagamore had gone and the palisade gate was bolted, Rebecca explained her secret garden to her surprised mother.

She then for the first time realized the disappointment of not bringing in her own crop, should her father return without food. But just then a whistle was heard outside the gate, and Ambrose Gibbons was admitted, bowed over with a heavy sack of grain, for the Virginia supply had that morning reached Strawberry Bank.

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Soon after these events a grist-mill was established at Newichewannock, and gardens became a matter of more careful consideration.

THE FUR TRADE

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The winter had passed since Rebecca Gibbons had traded her corn crop for a beaver skin. That piece of fur had become a much-beloved treasure to Becky. It covered her rag dolls in the daytime and served her as a blanket many a cold night.

The winter had been a rough one, filled with severe hardships. In spite of their knowledge of New England winters, even the Indians in their encampment close at hand suffered. Hostile tribes had at times surrounded the house a hundred strong. Added to these troubles there was a great scarcity of provisions, so that a longing for warmer days was coupled with an anxious hope for the returning English vessel. Supplies of all kinds were sadly needed.

One cold raw day in May, Rebecca wandered into the woods to gather early spring flowers. She suddenly realized that, in spite of her usual care, she had strayed beyond the sound of the buzzing mill. Searching in vain for a familiar spot, she at last shouted for help. No sound was heard in reply. She dropped to the ground, frightened by the thought of the many awful things that might happen. Was that a shadow at her feet? She started suddenly to find standing behind her a silent Indian squaw, with a pappoose strapped to her back. Without a word the woman turned and Rebecca followed, for she had recognized a squaw of the neighboring camp. It was a long walk home. As they passed the Newichewannock Camp, four forlorn shivering little Indians who had been huddling over the dying coals caught her attention.

Rebecca was stirred by the misery of their cold and hunger, quite forgetting how near her own household were to this same misery. On reaching home, determined to show her thanks for this safe return, the little girl hunted out her fishing pole and started for the river. She hoped to make a catch for these hungry people. She reached the rocks and cast her line like a true fisherman.

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"Captain Neal will feel mean enough when he gets here and finds us all starved to death," she murmured as she jerked her pole only to find her line had caught and broken. Finally, with the disappointment of no fish, she was turning toward the house when a white gleam on the water caught her eye. It was from the sail of the Pide-Cowe, the English vessel just rounding the bend.

Rebecca dashed home with the news. That afternoon cornmeal, salt, beef, butter, sweet oil, oatmeal, and candles were landed within the palisade. There were men's coats, waistcoats, and children's coats, stockings, blankets, rugs, flannel and cotton cloth, as well as fish hooks and lines, lead, hammers, pewter dishes, and iron kettles.

Indians, gay in fringes and beads, arrived on the scene with loads of fur: otter, mink, fox, and beaver for trade. Ragged squaws and shivering papposes followed. Captain Neal and his sailors mingled with hearty good cheer among them, while the white settlers acted as tradesmen, happy in the relief which this vessel had brought them.

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Rebecca was wild with excitement. She knew this meant food for everybody. Each box and barrel was turned and inspected by Miss Becky. She poked over the piles of clothing and tried on the children's coats and even the men's coats, anything in fact that struck her fancy. Some bright beaded things caught her eye. Pulling at the English shag, she drew from the bottom of a pile a queer little garment labeled "Pappoose coat." After searching and tugging, she produced five of different sizes. Then her eye fell on the group of timid little creatures still clinging to their mother.

Rebecca knew that at this trading all the furs would go to buy food. Her wise little head thought, "These coats would make them so comfortable!" Perched on a salt-cask close to the pile she was

soon absorbed in her own plans, which were quickly completed. Jumping down she excitedly ran to explain them to her mother, who had been watching the trading from the doorway of their home. Becky stood on tip-toe, awaiting her mother's decision. After a moment's thought, it came. The child rushed indoors and soon returned with her still beautiful beaver-skin.

"Captain Neal," she cried, before she had fairly reached him. "How many of these pappoose coats will you trade for this beaver?"

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"You may have all for such a skin as that," he exclaimed as he stroked the soft fur.

With the five coats in her own possession, proud little Becky begged her mother's help. Together they fitted them to the five smallest Indian children. Trading ceased for a moment, while all eyes turned to the funny sight of these wild little creatures in English clothing. The settlers and seamen laughed aloud, while even the stolid faces of the old warriors looked pleased.

COATS, SHIRTS, AND KETTLES.

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During the winter of 1637-8, at least three feet of snow remained on the ground from November 4th until March 5th. Broken ice was still in the rivers, when in March a coaster started from Boston with Mrs. Wheelwright and her five children and also friends of hers with their children.

Little Thomas, quite as round as the small iron kettle which he carried under his plump arm, trudged up the plank to the deck.

"Mother, see what Tom has!" exclaimed Susan with some disgust.

"Never mind, child," came the tired reply. "That kettle was forgotten in packing, and, if it pleases him, do let him keep it."

There were children enough on board to make the party a merry one in spite of the sharp cold winds. The vessel turned northward, rounded the coast to the Piscataqua River, and pushed its way among the ice chunks even into Great Bay, not stopping until it came to the foot of the falls in Squamscot River.

The Rev. John Wheelwright and several of his followers had already spent the winter about Piscataqua. The rough cabins, now built for their families, were not so comfortable nor so well furnished as the home Rebecca Gibbons had found at Newichewannock.

The children were delighted with the wild woods. The month gave them some warm spring-like days, and they soon established a play camp for themselves not far from the cabins. Edward and Joseph built a wigwam pointed at the top like those of the Squamscot Indians who camped along the river.

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"Look," cried Susan with delight as she rested three poles together at the top, "this will stand over our fire, and we can swing Tom's kettle from it."

But Tom and the kettle were missing. At last he was found in the curled roots of an old oak, scratching the picture of an Indian on the rough surface of his treasured kettle, which he was persuaded to use for the new play. The fun went with zest until Susan was called into the house.

"There, dear," explained her mother, passing her an armful of woolen stuff, "you must take my needle and finish this seam, while I prepare these birds for a stew. This is the last of six shirts your father wished completed soon."

Susan seated herself by the fireside on a stool, which was merely a tree stump, for their furniture was of the roughest kind. Her mother quickly plucked the feathers from the wild fowl that had just been brought in and prepared them for the kettle that hung on the crane over the hearth fire.

"Oh, may we have that little one, Mother, for our camp?" begged Susan. "We want to make a stew out there in Tom's kettle."

Her mother consented and laid the bird aside, while Susan watched carefully to see just how the stew was made. When it began to boil, her mother picked up the sewing and told her to run and play again.

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The children soon had a fire crackling and the fowl stewing. They sat delightedly about it, planning many fine uses for the little black kettle with its three short legs. Then Edward and Joseph started on a scouting trip, but returned later with eyes that told of something more real than play.

"We've found an Indian boy, a real one, Susan, lying on the ground as if he were sick."

"Then," replied Susan quickly, "take him some of our broth. I am sure it will help him. There it is, just as good as mother's," she exclaimed, as she gave a final taste and poured out a bowlful.

Some half dozen children followed the boys and soon circled about a frightened Indian lad stretched on the ground. In a trice, Susan had propped him up and was feeding him with the stew, which seemed to revive him. Soon he allowed the children to lead him back to their wigwam, where he dropped again to the ground. They brought him food from the house, and then

to amuse him they showed their black kettle and pointed out the Indian Tom had scratched on its side. Though the lad said nothing, his fear was gone, and his eyes were wide with interest. Suddenly a shadow fell across the path, and the little Indian's face brightened. There stood a full-grown Indian of the Piscataqua tribe. It was Nonowit, though these children did not know him. The little fellow was his son, Assacon, who had lost his father on this hunting trip and had become exhausted for want of food.

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Not only Nonowit, but other Indians began to arrive at the new settlement. White men landed on the shore with loads of woolen shirts and heavy coats like those sent on the English vessels; even iron kettles were lifted from their boats.

The next day, which was April 3rd, 1638, Wehanownowit, Sagamore of the Piscataquas, Pummadockyon, his son, and Aspamabough arrived with many of their tribe. The Squamscot Indians and others gathered together with the white men in their clearing by the river.

The questioning children begged of their fathers to know what it all meant. They were told that, as the men of the Plymouth colony had thought it just and kind to pay the Indians for the use of their lands, so Mr. Wheelright had urged the men of the New Hampshire settlement to do the same.

A deed was made out to the Indians, promising the land of a certain district for settlement by the white men, but reserving the privilege for the Indians to hunt and fish there. Payment was to be made in money as well as coats, shirts, and kettles. The white men signed their names, but the Indians could not write. The children then saw Wehanownowit with the point of a wild goose quill make his mark of a man holding a tomahawk. Pummadockyon drew a man with a bow and arrow, and Aspamabough, who also signed the deed, drew for his mark an arrow and bow. And thus a friendly feeling was established between the natives and the colonists at the time of this settlement, which grew to be the town of Exeter, named for the one in England.

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When the coats, the shirts, and the kettles of varying sizes were shouldered, the Indians started homeward. The children then hurried back to their camp and soon found that their own play-kettle was gone. After many inquiries it was learned that in the confusion of things someone had caught it up and tossed it upon the pile of kettles offered to the Indians. The children were bitterly disappointed and sorely missed the loved plaything. Nor could another be spared from the limited home supply.

Weeks went by, and the children still played in their camp. One day, while all were gone on a play-search for food, Joseph was left on guard in a hollow tree with merely a peep-hole through which to watch. He heard the cracking of a twig; to his surprise, something moved cautiously through the bushes. It was a real Indian boy. He crept to the wigwam door, peeped in, and then thrust in his arm. Joseph could not tell whether it was to take or to leave something. As the lad turned, he proved to be Assacon. Before Joseph could scramble from the tree, the Indian was gone, frightened perhaps by the voices of the returning children. Together they hurried to the wigwam, and there in the center stood the little black kettle with the same picture that Tom had scratched upon it. Assacon had found it in his own camp. In some way he had secured it and, in appreciation of their goodness to him, had traveled some ten miles to return it.

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WINNICUNNET.

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In the days when no lines were drawn between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the General Court of Massachusetts had an eye open for a stretch of salt-marsh a few miles north of the Merrimac River, near the sea. The forests were so thick that feeding places for the cattle were difficult to find. Here on these marshes salt was added to the food, which in those days was considered a most valuable possession. For that reason it was agreed that three men from Newbury and Ipswich should build a house on the edge of the marsh.

So on an October day in 1638 they went in a shallop up the winding Winnicunnet River. Where Hampton now stands, they built of logs the Bound House, to make good the claim of Massachusetts to the marsh.

Soon others followed, and the little settlement of Winnicunnet grew up in the wilderness, miles from other neighbors, except the Indians who had pitched their wigwams in the vicinity. Their trails along the river and over the marshes to the sea were used by the white men in hunting and fishing.

In this same wilderness Elizabeth dwelt in a cabin of logs, yet not without playmates or playthings. Chewannick, an Indian boy who lived in a wigwam, came often to play with her, and the little black lamb that was born in the spring was given to Elizabeth for her very own. As soon as she found it was hers, she called Chewannick within the palisade to see the little black thing with legs like sticks.

"When it is old enough to be sheared," she explained, "I shall help to do that myself. Then my mother will help me to card its nice black wool, and we will spin it into long threads. I shall then weave a thick cloth, which will make me a warm winter cloak."

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Chewannick stood with wide-open eyes understanding by Elizabeth's motions much of what she

was telling him. Together they made the little creature a comfortable bed in the big yard outside the cabin.

It was most necessary to have the high fence built about the house to protect the garden from foxes and other prowling creatures, and to keep the wolves and the bears away from the cattle and sheep at night. Through the day, the gate stood open. The cows and sheep wandered off to the marsh grass, and the children came and went as they wished, but before the sun went down, every creature was driven home, and the children were safely inside when the gate was barred. When Elizabeth petted her little black lamb at night, she could hear the howl of the wolves through the woods and often the growl of a bear just outside the enclosure.

One day when the children were outside the palisade, Chewannick attempted to climb it. Elizabeth laughed and declared he could not do it. He then fastened a prop between the closely planted posts and tried again, but he could not spring with enough force to get over. Again and again on succeeding days he tried, determined at every failure to reach the top some day.

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Late one afternoon as the cows came wandering in at their usual hour, the children watched the sheep huddle together. Elizabeth noticed that the little black lamb was not with them.

"And the sheep came from the woods, not the marsh," she added after her first word of surprise.

"Come, Chewannick, we must find my lamb!"

Unnoticed by her mother, who was busy in the yard, Elizabeth led the Indian boy over the well trodden path to the woods. Already the sun had dropped, but on and on the children went until they paused to listen. From the far-distance came a faint cry like that of a child.

"It is my precious, black woolly lamb!" cried Elizabeth, frantically. "It is in the thorn bushes!"

Farther still they pushed into the woods, hardly noticing how dark the shadows were growing. The cry seemed close at hand.

"Yes, here's my darling lamb!" Elizabeth tugged at the poor little thing, caught by its woolly fleece in the long sharp thorns of a bush.

"Help, Chewannick, pull hard!"

Great tufts of black wool were left on the bush, but the frightened little creature was freed at last.

The woods seemed very dark by that time, as they half pulled, half carried the lamb homeward. Darker still it grew. Howls could be heard in the distance. The children hurried on. Suddenly a wolf barked on their very trail. They were then within sight of the house, but with horror they saw that the gate was closed. The hastening wolf had caught the scent of the lamb. The children tried to shout, but they could make no sound.

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Chewannick bounded ahead. With desperate force he sprang upon the fence, grasped the top, and fairly fell over the other side. He had the door unbarred for Elizabeth and the lamb, as the fiery eyes of the wolf could be seen but a few rods up the path. The gate was closed in time to shut the creature out, while Elizabeth's surprised mother caught up her little girl as if she feared the wolf might even then spring through the bolted door.

THE CRYSTAL HILLS.

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Those who sailed the sea came always to these shores with accounts of the white and shining hills seen far back over the land. From other travelers were gathered wonderful tales of lakes stocked with delicate fish, fine forests rich in game, and fair valleys abounding in fruits, nuts, and vines.

The immediate needs of the settlements held most of the colonists close to their homes, but the spirit of adventure was too strong for Darby Field. It was soon reported among the few households of Exeter that he was going to explore the country to the North, an enterprise which was of great interest to them all. He hoped to find gold and precious stones added to all the other wonders. It was thought that a trip of a hundred miles might take him to the river of Canada, or perhaps to the Great Lakes.

Susan, Edward, Joseph, and all the other children stood about with wide-eyed wonder at the courage and daring that could carry one so far into an unknown wilderness. With two Indians as companions, and a pack strapped to his back, Darby Field waved his good-bye to the group of settlers and started off.

For some forty miles they traveled past lakes large and small, over Indian trails, and through pathless forests. From this time on they seemed to be tramping upward. Field felt sure that they had reached the lower slopes of the shining hills so often seen from the sea.



At last they climbed to a moss-grown level. Here they found an encampment of some two hundred Indians, who proved to be friendly. The travelers rested and looked about. Not far away appeared [A] "a rude heap of massive stones, piled upon one another a mile high, on which one might ascend from stone to stone, like a pair of winding stairs."

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Darby Field was moved by the charm of that peak which seemed to be the highest of all. When he expressed a determination to climb to the top, the Indians, horrified at the thought, begged him for his life to refrain. It was, they assured him, Agiochook, the abode of the Great Spirit whom they could see in the clouds about the summit. His voice could be heard in the thunder of the storms from cliff to cliff. The winds were manifestations of His power. His gentleness was revealed through the sunset colors that lingered on the slopes. This sacred mountain had never been climbed by an Indian. Now they begged the white man not to risk his life.

In spite of this warning, Darby Field persisted in his plan. A group of Indians accompanied him to within eight miles of the top. There they waited for his return, for this daring act was of great concern to them. The two Indians who had followed Field from home took courage by his example and held to the party, which was undoubtedly the first that ever climbed our Mount Washington.

From the summit they saw waters to the westward, which they thought to be the great lake from which the Canada river flows. To the North, the country was said to be [A] "daunting terrible, full of rocky hills as thick as mole hills in a meadow, and clothed with infinite thick woods." Perhaps the outlook was too terrible for adventure, for after they had picked up clear shining stones which proved to be crystals, they descended the mountain and presented themselves safe to the waiting Indians. Then instead of continuing their explorations, they decided to return home.

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After an absence of eighteen days, they reached home. On a cold night in June of 1642, the grown folk and children gathered about a blazing hearth to hear of the country that lay to the North.

The travelers reported a wonderful trip of at least a hundred miles from home. They felt sure that their discovery of the Great Lakes [A] "wanted but one day's journey of being finished," but for lack of sufficient provisions they had been obliged to return. The glistening stones were passed on to the wondering children, and Field announced that he had gone as far as the Crystal Hills,—the name at one time of the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

[A] Quoted from Jeremy Belknap's History of New Hampshire, Chapter I.

THE DENMARK CATTLE.

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The thread dropped from the spinning wheel as Elizabeth earnestly leaned forward in the firelight, that late afternoon of May in 1643.

"Uncle Richard, is there any school for boys—"

"Sh! here comes your father!" whispered her uncle.

Francis Norton, absorbed in thought, entered the large east room of Mason Manor house and wandered to the window, where he scanned the ocean distance for a sail. Elizabeth silently picked up her thread.

"Things have become serious, Richard," exclaimed Norton. "Since Mason's death, few supplies have come from England, as you know, and the amounts due the workers here have long been unpaid. I am here to manage the Mason affairs and consequently get the blame, yet my own interests are at stake. My boy must be educated—"

"Oh, I say, Father, six cows are missing!" It was a rugged, healthy boy who burst into the room. "They have wandered off somewhere, and now it's milking time. Shall I hunt them up?"

Norton continued his conversation, quite ignoring his son, who respectfully awaited his father's reply.

"There is a school at Cambridge, near Boston. The only one I know of in New England. A Charlestown minister, John Harvard, left eight hundred pounds for it a few years ago—"

"Don't lose those cows, Francis," interrupted his brother-in-law. "They are a valuable lot, a Denmark breed sent over by Mason, while I was a boy."

Jacob then caught a nod of assent from his father and cast a quick glance at his sister, Elizabeth, whose wheel was again whirring busily. She jumped to her feet. [Pg 65]

"May I go too, father?" she cried.

He gave his consent absent-mindedly and then turned to the subject in question.

Meantime the girl and boy chased off together.

"I believe the cows have wandered through the woods to the salt-marsh," declared Elizabeth; so they turned in that direction, following a crooked path for a long time. At last a breaking of the bushes opened a way to the discovery of five of the cows. The children were pushing on for the sixth, when a distant shout was heard on the opposite shore of the marshy stream. There in the mud and mire stood a horse and rider. Each step plunged them deeper and brought them nearer to the stream.

"Is this the ford?" the stranger called.

Jacob at once saw he had mistaken a cow-path for a trail.

"Back, quick!" cried the frightened children. "You cannot cross there!"

The horse, about to plunge again, turned suddenly, while the children shouted the direction to the ford, much farther up the stream.

The last cow had by that time appeared. Driving the six ahead, Jacob and Elizabeth wondered together who the strange rider might be, and then turned their discussion to family affairs which kept the home atmosphere constantly clouded. [Pg 66]

"Elizabeth, I must find some way to go to school," declared Jacob, "but I know father cannot send me now. They say all the furs, lumber, and fish that have been sent from here to England cannot cover the expense of these people. What can be done?"

"We must find a way, Jacob," replied Elizabeth thoughtfully, "for you to go to that Cambridge school called Harvard College. All boys ought to be educated." She gave no thought to herself, for in those days girls were taught only home interests.

Still deep in conversation, the children reached home to find that the same stranger, caught so dangerously on the marshes, had arrived at the Manor. He brought Francis Norton a written message, which had come by way of Boston from a newly-arrived English ship.

Norton, standing at the door while the rider waited, read the word and exclaimed—

"So we're to shift for ourselves! The owners of the Mason property can no longer be responsible for their New Hampshire estate."

Many settlers who had come for the purpose of furthering the interests of this estate were involved in this crisis. With no returns from England and back dues long unpaid, the situation seemed hard and serious. Some of the occupants claimed the land they lived upon; some the creatures they cared for; but the most daring of all was the plan of Francis Norton. [Pg 67]

Jacob heard it first and hurried the astonishing news to Elizabeth, whom he found at the well.

"Beth, father is going to drive a hundred oxen to Boston, almost sixty miles! He is to sell them there! What is more, we are all to go with him!"

This crafty plan was actually carried out. It was a long, slow journey, but successfully made. The cattle sold in Boston at twenty pounds sterling a head, the current price of that day, which brought Norton a snug little sum. He did not return to Strawberry Bank, but established a home

THE CUT OF THE HAIR.

So many settlers had come to New Hampshire that, as early as 1641, the need of a government was felt, and therefore Massachusetts was asked to extend her law to this colony. It was then arranged for two deputies to represent New Hampshire life in the General Court of Massachusetts.

On a summer's day in 1649, at the boat-landing not far from the Great House, the power of this General Court was under discussion by Jonathan Low and Thomas Berry, as they threw their lines into the river and waited for the fish to bite.

"The Court can make a man do anything!" remarked Jonathan. Thomas seemed to doubt it.

"My father has told me," continued Jonathan, "that not more than four years ago Mr. Williams bought an African slave from Captain Smith. The General Court considered it wrong for a man to own a slave and made Mr. Williams give him up. Then they sent the black man home to Africa."

"Hush, here comes Mr. Williams now! Who is that with him?"

"That," replied Jonathan, "is Ambrose Gibbons. They are both magistrates."

Evidently the men were talking on the same subject that was interesting the boys, for, as Ambrose Gibbons stepped into his boat, he remarked emphatically, "The Court has the power to control this evil. Hugh Peters returned to England a few years ago and announced before Parliament that he had not seen a drunken man, nor heard a profane oath during the six years he had spent in the colonies. We can surely then control this ungodly habit that is threatening to corrupt us."

The boys were alert to find out what the evil might be.

"As magistrates," replied Williams, "we control undue pride and levity of behavior. We oblige the women to wear their sleeves to their wrists and close their gowns about their throats. Our men must now overcome this sinful habit of wearing the hair long."

Gibbons picked up his oars, remarking, "We will enforce the law after we have met the governor and deputies, as is planned." He pushed off his boat, and Williams walked thoughtfully away, while the boys agreed that the Court was a power.

For several days the matter remained in Jonathan's mind. He noticed as never before the trig little cuffs about his mother's wrists, and the narrow collar that enclosed her throat. He was so troubled by the long hair that swept his father's shoulders that, at last, one afternoon he talked the matter over with his mother as she sat by the open door. They both knew Roger Low to be a determined man and slow to accept new customs.

Little Mary was playing with her dolls under the spreading lilac bushes. She glanced at the two as they talked earnestly together and caught bits of the conversation, but continued with her play. After an early tea Jonathan and his mother wandered down by the river, while Roger Low, the father, weary with a hard day's work, settled himself in his big chair and soon dropped to sleep.

Little Mary had put her dolls to bed and, feeling much alone, snuggled close to her sleeping father. Looking at the long locks as they hung from his bent head, she recalled the afternoon's conversation.

"His hair is too long," she thought. "Jonathan says it is not right to wear long hair."

Stepping to the shelf she took down the scissors and quickly gave a delicious snip to her father's thick locks. Another snip-snap and more hair fell. The sleeping man roused a little, but finding only his little Mary playing about him, nodded off again. His head this time fell in a more favorable position for Mary to continue the clipping, which she did most thoroughly.

It was dark when her mother returned and passed her sleeping husband to put Mary to bed.

Just what happened in that home the next day I cannot tell you, but Roger Low appeared to the towns-people with closely cut hair, an astonishing example, just as the proclamation of the magistrates was announced.

It read as follows:

[A]"For as much as the wearing of long hair, after the manner of ruffians and barbarous Indians, has begun to invade New England, we, the magistrates do declare and manifest our dislike and detestation against the wearing of such long hair, as against a thing uncivil, and unmanly, whereby men do deform themselves and do corrupt good manners. We do, therefore, earnestly entreat all elders of this jurisdiction to manifest their zeal against it, that such as shall prove obstinate and will not reform themselves, may have God and man to witness against them."

CYNTHIA'S BEAR

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"Yes, we have given up the name of Strawberry Bank," exclaimed Richard Chadborn, as he settled back before the bright firelight on a sharp October evening in 1653. His brother Samuel had just returned from his clearing in Rhode Island, and was eager to know all that had happened in the years of absence.

"The townsmen petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts," Richard continued, "to change the name to Portsmouth, 'it being the river's mouth and good as any in the land'."

But the name of Strawberry Bank had caught the ears of Hannah and small Sam, who rushed to the spot begging for the story of the first berries picked there by these very men when they were boys.

Uncle Samuel pulled the two children to his knees, offering instead a true bear story.

"Now, all this happened," he explained, "to my Cynthia and John, your cousins, way down in Rhode Island. They had been to the edge of the clearing and had gathered a basket of fine blackberries for their mother.

"Just what I want for a pasty,' she told them, 'and so well picked that I will make you a gingerbread man for dinner.'

"Their eyes shone like the berries, as their mother pulled the molasses pitcher from the shelf. But there was not a drop in it.

"Our very last,' she reported, as she looked into the keg in the corner.

"The shine went out of their eyes until Cynthia suggested that she and John go to the neighbors and borrow some. Their mother hesitated, for the children had never been there alone, but those little things looked so disappointed that she let them go.

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"Well, they got there all right, I suppose, and had the pitcher filled. They started home, probably talking about their gingerbread dolls, when little John called out eagerly, 'See the big dog, sister; he is coming right to us!'

"Cynthia knew that the creature was a bear. The sight of him so startled her that she jerked the pitcher and spilled a great spot of molasses on the ground.

"The bear was very near by that time and ran for the molasses.

"Run, Johnny, run!' Cynthia cried, pulling him on. She stopped a moment later to pour out more molasses for the hungry bear, who was already chasing after them.

"Run, Johnny, run!' she cried again, anxious not to lose a moment for those little short legs, and so the two kept on. When the last drop of molasses was poured out, and Cynthia had dropped the pitcher for the bear, little John stubbed his toe and fell just before the turn of the path to the cabin.

"Now it happened," explained Uncle Samuel, "that a few minutes before this accident word had reached me that two bears had been seen in the woods that morning, and I had rushed home to say that the children must not go out. Before I had finished speaking, their mother had grabbed the gun from the wall and had dashed down the path.

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"I tore ahead with my musket. We made the turn as the bear was bounding away from the well-licked pitcher after the children.

"They had no gingerbread dolls that day, but later I brought them home a fine bearskin rug, on which they now sit for their bedtime stories."

THE WITCHES OF 1656.

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Strawberry Bank had not only taken the name of Portsmouth, but other changes had also crept in. In place of logs, houses were built of bricks burned in the dooryard; or else were constructed of frames of oak, often with pitched roofs that sloped to the ground.

It was in such a house as this that Hannah Puddington lived. Old Buff, her large, yellow cat, would sometimes run to the ridgepole and from there watch for the river boats as they returned with fresh fish.

One April morning Old Buff hungrily followed little Hannah to the landing, where she went with her mother to secure a fresh supply of fish to salt and dry, as well as some to cook at once.

As they returned, Goodman Trimmings stopped them to tell of the sad condition of his wife. "She

has surely been bewitched by Goody Walford, whom she met in the woods. When she first came home, she could not speak. Her breathing troubled her, but later she complained that her back was as a flame of fire and her limbs numb with cold. Goody Walford told her that she would take a long journey but would never return, and then the witch seemed to vanish in the shape of a cat. My wife has since been very ill."

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Goodwife Puddington listened with alarm. "How frightful to find witchcraft on our own shores! Charlestown and Salem have been so invaded by it. There even children have been accused." Fearfully she grasped little Hannah by the hand and hurried home.

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When the fish were well cooked, Mrs. Puddington laid one temptingly on a hot pewter plate and covered it.

"There, Hannah, take this to Goodwife Trimmings. It may tempt her appetite. Yes, little Jacob may go with you."

Old Buff followed the two children down the grassy path and through a short stretch of woods to the neighbor's. As they returned, Hannah saw a queer looking figure digging roots in the woods. Her waistcoat and petticoat were red; her old apron green. She wore a black hat over a white linen hood tied under her chin. It was Goody Walford. Friendly Old Bluff darted to her side, while Hannah seized Jacob's hand and ran for home. Her haste and fright moved the little fellow to howls and tears.

"Stop," commanded Hannah, "you must not cry, for then they will say that I have bewitched you, and may be they will hang me as they do the Salem witches."

He caught her meaning, though he did not fully understand, and manfully gulped back his sobs.

Another fear came. Hannah had seen the old witch stretch out her hand and stroke the soft, yellow fur of Old Buff.

"She might have bewitched him," thought the little girl, "but I'll tell no one."

At noon Hannah's father came in with more trouble to tell of Goody Walford. Her husband would not let her feed his cattle for fear she would bewitch them.

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After sunset Goodwife Evans, frightened by the reports, came to the Puddington house and begged that she might stay for the night.

"I am followed by a yellowish cat wherever I go. I am sure 'tis the witch work of Goody Walford. Oh, don't open that door!" she cried. "It will come in." She dropped trembling to the settle.

Little Hannah's fright was quite as great in her secret fear that Old Buff might be the witch-cat. She gasped when she saw her father take his gun from the wall.

"We'll put an end to these witch-cats," he declared, and stalked out.

Hannah held her breath in fear. She heard no shot, however. At last her father came in and

looked over his gun.

"It wouldn't work," he muttered.

"There is more witchwork going on inside this house," his wife remarked as she looked over his shoulder at the gun. "Your new stockings that I finished last week have holes in them already."

When on the following morning a large hole was found under the door that led to the shed, the family blame was directed to Old Buff. He was without doubt the yellowish cat that had followed Goodwife Evans. Hannah had not seen her dearly loved pet since she had left him in the woods the day before. She feared to have him come home, yet her heart yearned for Old Buff.

That day it was discovered that much of the homemade soap stored under the pitch of the roof had disappeared.

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"Cat-witchery it surely is!" declared Mrs. Puddington.

Little Hannah, miserably unhappy, tossed in her bed that night. Perhaps she slept a little. She was, however, quick to awake upon hearing a cry at her window. Like a flash she bounded out of bed, pushed up the sash, and pulled in her own dear Buff.

"You're not bewitched, I know you're not, my dear Old Buff. You wouldn't cry in that same old way if you were! Come quick and let me hide you so you won't get shot!"

She pushed the cat under the bedclothes and in her happy relief dropped to sleep.

In the morning Old Buff, proud and dignified, sat like a king before the kitchen fire, while at his feet lay the body of the huge rat he had killed. It was the rat that had eaten the stockings, had gnawed the door, and had carried off the soap, afterward found in the walls. Old Buff was the hero of the house.

This strange experience of the Puddington household was told throughout the village. Some were satisfied that witchery was no longer to be feared, but others still held their belief. In course of time, however, the witch acts believed of Jane Walford were forgotten.

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THE WOLVES OF PORTSMOUTH.

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John Hinkson led his saddled horse from the stable one September morning in 1662. Things had gone hard with John, for taxes were due, and bills were demanding immediate payment. As he needed money at once, he was now starting for Exeter to borrow, if possible, from his brother Peter, until his grist-mill should bring him the fall returns.

As he mounted the horse, his wife opened the door.

"John," she asked, "if you go to Peter's home, do not fail to ask Miranda for a bottle of her pine syrup. I ought not to be without it, for already little Anthony has a heavy cold. When shall you be back?"

"I must return on Wednesday," John replied, "for there is to be a town-meeting that afternoon." Then, adjusting his gun, he called, "Good-bye," and was off.

When Wednesday came, and the townsmen had gathered at their meeting, John Hinkson was not there. Thomas Keats, whose home was on the outskirts of Portsmouth, reported that Hinkson had passed his house on the way to Exeter a day or two before, but had not yet returned. Richard Webster remarked that he had just spoken with Mrs. Hinkson at her gate. She was looking anxiously for John. Their boy was seriously ill, and she needed the medicine John would bring. She was equally worried lest in his delay night should overtake him, when there was grave danger of attack by wolves. Another townsman emphatically declared:

"It seems as if measures should be taken immediately to overcome this pest of wolves. There is no safety in the woods after dark, and even our door-yards are in danger from straggling beasts. Since Portsmouth has grown to be a town of a hundred inhabitants, though we are widely scattered, we ought to be able to make some headway against them."

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The meeting was then called to order, and that very question was placed under formal discussion.

Meanwhile, John Hinkson had reached Exeter, only to find that his brother was crippled for funds and could give him no help. He obtained the syrup that his sister-in-law had made from the pine sap and, after indulging in a short visit, made an early start for home.

The roads were very rough, and the horse loosened a shoe on the way. His progress was so slow that darkness had overtaken Hinkson by the time he had reached the isolated home of Thomas Keats on the edge of Portsmouth.

The rider kept on his way, hoping that the distant cries he heard might not come nearer. He was less than half a mile from Keats' home when the howl of the wolves became more distinct. Soon he knew that a pack was on his trail. The horse seemed to sense his master's fear and dashed forward. At a bend in the path Hinkson turned and caught the gleam of the fiery eyes in full speed behind him. He fired, and the pack stopped to devour the fallen leader, while the horse

plunged on. Again Hinkson's good aim brought another wolf to the ground, but a few of the pack, mad with the taste of blood, kept on in hot pursuit. Hinkson brought down a third and dodged a fourth that sprang at the horse's flanks. Again the wolf jumped and would have crippled horse and rider had not the crack of another gun sounded upon the frosty air. It belonged to Thomas Keats, then on his way home from town meeting. The wolves, frightened by the double-attack and weakened in numbers, slunk away into the woods.

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"This is a lucky shot for you, Hinkson," called Keats. "The town today voted a bounty of five pounds for every head, provided the nearest neighbor would stand witness that they were shot within the town's boundaries. I'm that neighbor, and I'll stand witness for you." Then, as John Hinkson fastened his bloody trophies to the saddle, Keats added, "The heads must be nailed to the meeting-house door."

The two men parted and later Hinkson rode into his own dooryard, where he found an anxious little wife.

She begged for the pine syrup, for her little Anthony was choking with croup. One glance at the saddle told of the story yet to be heard, but not until an hour of troubled watching had passed could she listen. The little boy then rested in comfortable sleep, and John related to his wife his exciting adventure with the wolves, adding, "I have brought home four heads, which give me twenty pounds bounty. With my good eye and my steady gun, I can yet relieve the town of an even greater number, and taxes at least will be paid."

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THE KING'S FORT.

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Little Peter White was so filled with the pride he took in his older brother Thomas that he had no thought for himself.

Thomas was just sixteen years old, which was a very important matter that June of 1666, when King Charles the Second of England ordered the harbors of the New England colonies fortified.

Although the King's Commissioners had had some trouble with the General Court, nevertheless, the Governor and Council of Massachusetts had appointed a committee to visit the New Hampshire settlements and determine upon the most suitable place for a fort. The eastern point of Great Island, now known as New Castle, had been the spot selected. The matter of building had been left to the decision of the townsmen of Portsmouth.

Now it happened that little Peter was feeding his pet rabbits with plantain just outside the doors of the town-meeting that afternoon of June 19th. As the dignified men adjourned from the gathering, they still discussed the measures adopted for the erection of the fort. Peter's sharp ears overheard the mystic words "sixteen years." Had not his Thomas reached that wonderful age? They must be speaking of him. Peter caught every word that followed, and although the conversation was not about his Thomas, it was of utmost interest to Peter.

With a white rabbit under one arm and a brown bunny bulging from the other, Peter ran full tilt down the beaten path to his snug home on the river bank, where Thomas was weeding the garden.

"Oh, Tom," cried the little fellow excitedly, "you are to help build the King's Fort at Great Island, because you are sixteen years old." This surprising news was explained a few minutes later when the boys' father returned from the meeting.

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Eager to learn what was meant, Tom rested on his rake with an inquiring look in his eyes. Mrs. White, who from within the house had caught Peter's words, had come to the rose-arbored doorway, while Peter, still hugging his rabbits, called, "Tell them, father."

"It has been voted," explained Abram White, "that every dweller in this town, above the age of sixteen years, shall promise a week's work on the new fort before next October. He must be there from seven in the morning until six at night and will be paid three shillings a day. The King has sent eleven guns, six pounders, to defend the fort."

"Just think, Tom, you're to work on the King's fort!" exclaimed little Peter, fairly bursting with brotherly pride, for a direct order from the King seemed to the little boy a great honor.

"That will mean another pound for Harvard," replied practical Tom as he bent again to the rake.

Harvard College, the only institution of learning in the country at that time, was the ambition of many a growing lad in the remote districts.

When the call actually came for Tom to work on the fort, Peter announced, "I'll do the home work while Tom's away. I'll weed the gardens and drive the cows to pasture."

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"You'll be my right-hand man," declared his father with a gentle slap on the little fellow's back.

For six days Tom had taken the early start, rowing down the river to Great Island and then at a brisk pace crossing it to the ocean side, where fortifications were being erected for protection from attack by sea. On the last morning his father, whose week was just beginning, accompanied

him.

Peter in consequence felt himself doubly important as the only man at home. In the forenoon as he was passing the boat-landing, he chanced to see the basket containing the dinners which had been forgotten.

"They must have it," thought Peter and stepped into the one remaining boat, which he pushed into the stream.

Peter had had little experience alone on the water. So interested was he in watching the boat swing into the current of the outgoing tide, that he did not notice the darkening clouds above. Soon there came a flash followed by the deep roll of thunder. The swift Piscataqua tide held the boat amid stream, and the small arms could turn it neither to the right nor the left. Flash and roar repeatedly followed each other. The boat swung past the usual landing on Great Island and on down the river. As the wind tossed the water into white-caps, Peter, who had long before pulled in the oars, clung frightened to the sides. On sped the small craft until it had rounded the curve to the great ocean beyond.

Dinner time had come for the men at the fort, but Tom and his father, with nothing to eat, stood on the rocks, watching the ocean toss in this yet rainless storm. [Pg 88]

Suddenly a little boat swept into sight from the river. Above its side was seen a small head too far away to be recognized. Instantly the two watchers, with the same thought, dashed for a boat drawn up on the shore. Pushing it off, they jumped in and grasped the oars. With strong, even strokes they made steady headway, while the stray boat plunged on and out into the sea. It was a mighty pull even for sturdy arms, but nearer and nearer they came until they saw the pale, frightened face of their own little Peter. With redoubled energy, they overtook the little fellow and held his boat while he scrambled into theirs, announcing, as he lifted the lunch basket over, "I was bringing your dinner to you."

Thankfully they carried him safe to shore, where together they ate with relish the rescued dinner.

Early that afternoon Peter's father took him home to relieve the anxiety he knew the boy's mother must be feeling.

When Tom returned that night with his newly-earned shillings, he passed half of them over to Peter. [Pg 89]

"There, Pete, put them aside for college. Harvard will want such a man as you will make."

Peter went to bed that night, happy with the new thought that he, himself, might some day go to college.

LITTLE JANE'S GENTIANAS.

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"Have you never seen a fringed gentian?" asked little blue-eyed Jane. "If you will go down that path with me, I'll show you where they grow."

Benjamin was about to follow, when his father reined in his horse at the gate and called, "Come, Ben, we must start for home!"

"Never mind," whispered little Jane, "I'll bring one to you at the meeting-house on the Sabbath."

John Cutts lifted his boy to the horse's back, and with the bag of meal behind the saddle they started homeward over beaten paths through the woods to the clearing, some two miles from the settlement. This happened as long ago as 1671, when the fire on the hearth was the only kind used. Benjamin was glad to get close to it this cold fall night, as he listened to his father's account of the many wolves shot that week, whose heads, Benjamin knew, would be hung on the meeting-house door until the captors received their bounty.

On Sunday morning John Cutts examined his musket closely, for he dared not start to meeting without it. Indians as well as wolves were feared. His wife sat on the horse behind him, and Benjamin rode before. Traveling over the narrow paths, they passed but few people on their way.

Sunday was a day of fear for Benjamin, for outside the church door was built a large wooden cage which held the stocks, while a pillory was constructed on top, both of which were to hold in most uncomfortable positions those who disturbed the meeting.

Inside the church his mother sat on one side, his father on the other. Benjamin was always left at the back with a row of boys under the piercing eye of Nicholas Bond, the tything man, who kept strict order with his rod and an occasional nod to the cage outside. [Pg 91]

On this particular morning when Benjamin dropped into his seat at the end of the row and near the door, he thought seriously of the whispered word he had overheard outside.

"Little Jane is lost. There are several searching parties out!"

"This is the morning," thought Benjamin, "that little Jane was going to bring me the gentians. I wonder if anyone would think of searching that path for her!"

He glanced at the unusual number of wolves' heads hung on the door and thought of those still living in the woods. The guns stacked by the doorway suggested lurking Indians. His fear for little Jane's safety so increased that he became restless and soon received a sharp rap on the shins from the tything man.

It was during the long prayer when all heads were bowed that his fear for Jane became greater than his fear of the cage. Could it be that Nicholas Bond was nodding? Benjamin slipped from his seat, crept out the door, and flew down the road outside. The risk was great, for if he should be caught, the horror of the cage awaited him.

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He was soon out of sight of the church and had turned down the gentian path without meeting any one. He knew enough of woodcraft to break a branch here and turn a stone there to mark his way. The gentians were found, and some had been picked, but Jane answered none of his shouts. He returned the same way until he found a branching path.

"She might have taken that by mistake," he thought.

It was a long search before Benjamin came upon the little girl asleep on the ground, with her hands full of gentians. "Oh, Jane, Jane, wake up and come quickly! The wolves or the Indians might find us!"

Together they ran down the path to the turn and up the right one to the church, which they reached just as the people came out, troubled by the disappearance of Benjamin. A searching party came from the opposite direction, and Jane's father caught his little girl up in his arms, while Benjamin told his part of the story. His father proudly patted him on the back and swung him up on the saddle, but little Jane scrambled to her feet and darting to his side reached up her plump little hand, exclaiming, "I picked these gentians for you, Benjamin!"

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THE CHURCH LAW

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It was now 1675. Four years had passed since Jane Fryer gathered the gentians for Benjamin. Her father, Jonathan Fryer, had moved from the neighborhood of the meeting-house far up the river-side, where he found better land for cultivation. He still held a strong church interest and built for his family a small shed at the rear of the meeting-house. Here they could warm themselves by a hearth fire before the service in the unheated building and take a hot dinner before the long walk home.

Jane was now an energetic girl of ten. One February afternoon she rested her bucket of water on the icy edge of the well as she watched her father striding homeward down the hill slope. As he reached her, he picked up the heavy bucket and entered the house, where his boy Tom was placing a huge log on the fire, and his wife stood ready to fill the kettle with water and hang it on the crane. Jane had followed her father and waited with expectant silence until Jonathan Fryer announced—

"I am going to Boston!"

"Father!" exclaimed Tom.

"This winter?" asked his wife, while Jane embraced her dearly loved father as if he were off for the moon. Boston was fifty-eight miles away.

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"I have just attended town-meeting," he explained. "The sixty pounds which we have pledged to Harvard College annually must be paid. There are also town matters for consultation." [Pg 96]

As it was February, Jonathan Fryer decided to travel on horseback by an inland route to Boston.

During his absence, the family had cause for anxiety in the weather. Storms and a moderating temperature were bad, for Jonathan Fryer had frozen rivers to cross.

On the night of the second Saturday after his departure, he returned weary and exhausted from a hard and perilous trip. Jane had spent many hours watching for her father and was eager to make him comfortable. She hung about him with every attention, and laughed when he nodded with sleep.

"Father, you must go to bed, for if your head should tip like that in the meeting-house, the cage would await you."

It had been decreed that the old wooden cage before the church door should punish—"those who use tobacco or sleep during public exercise."

The next morning Jonathan Fryer arose aching in every limb. His family begged him to break his custom of attending meeting, but his strong spirit asserted itself, and he was ready at the usual time. With a basket of dinner, the four started afoot at an early hour that they might be well warmed before meeting.

Mr. Moody, famous for his long sermons, had preached some forty minutes when a lusty snore brought the already straight listeners to an alert posture. It awoke the sleeper himself, no other than Jonathan Fryer. The preaching continued to its customary length of an hour or more. Then silently, shamed beyond endurance, Jonathan, his goodwife, his Tom, and his Jane, sought shelter in their small house. Words were useless. They knew what would follow.

The tramp of four tything men was soon heard crunching the ice. Some eight or ten men with that title had been chosen to "look after the good morals" of the neighbors of their home district. [Pg 97]

Tything-man Eliot was the spokesman as the four stood to administer justice.

"We regret, Goodman Fryer, that since you have disobeyed the strict orders of the Church, not only by sleeping, but also by disturbing the meeting with an audible snort, we must comply with our laws and place you in the stocks, within the cage built for that purpose."

There was no chance for reply, for like a tiger Jane pounced before these men of dignity and burst forth, "It is not right. My father, in service for the town, has faced great hardships and almost lost his life. That he came to meeting at all, he should be thanked. If you place him in the stocks, you shall place me there too!"

Her flashing eyes and angered face seemed to burn themselves into the stolid four as she stamped her foot for emphasis. The spokesman turned and quietly remarked to his companions, "There is need for further council!" They left. Jane threw herself into her father's arms. He dropped his head.

"My daughter, this conduct doubles the insult to the Church. Your action is unrighteous, though well meant. Your father's disgrace was great enough, but this from a child to our worthy tything men cannot be overlooked. There was need for further council."

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No greater punishment could have been given Jane than these words from her father. The barley-cakes, porridge, and cheese were left untouched by the shame-faced group.

Soon the heavy steps were again heard. The moment of suspense was stinging. The door opened and the tything men entered. The same spokesman, perhaps the gentlest of the four, began:

"Goodman Fryer, it is deemed best that the punishment to be administered to your untamed daughter for her unruly tongue shall be determined by her parents. It is left to their discretion. Yet there is truth in her words. The council of the Church commends you for your recent service to the town and grants you pardon for your unseemly conduct in the meeting."

PEACE OR WARFARE

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Since the days when Nonowit had welcomed the English to his shores and had taught Roger Low the ways of the wood, there had been little serious trouble between the white man and the red.

The New Hampshire coast was at this time fortified against an enemy from over the seas, but the homes were rarely protected by palisades, save the larger ones used as garrison houses, where the neighbors gathered in case of an attack by Indians. Up to this time, however, there had been but little need of the garrisons.

Roger Low had become the father of Jonathan, and even Jonathan now had a boy Robert, for some fifty years had passed since Robert's grandfather had crossed the ocean to this land. The Portsmouth house in which the three lived had been the scene of Jonathan's boyhood and recalls the time when his little sister, Mary, cut off her father's hair.

The winter months of 1675 had passed. Frightful stories of Indian troubles were coming to the ears of the colonists. Robert Low had loved to sit on his grandfather's knee and in the warm light of the hearth fire to listen to stories of Indian life and of Nonowit, of whom nothing had been heard for many years.

The two were sitting by the fire one evening, when Jonathan Low, leaving them alone, had gone to Exeter for the night. A neighbor happened in. His face was grave, and he shook his head in doubt as he seated himself on the opposite settle.

"Philip, that chief in Massachusetts, the son of Massasoit, is a dangerous fellow. He is turning his Indians against the white men. And have you heard what has happened on the Saco River, at our east?"

Robert was alert for a new story, though his interest was now mingled with a sense of fear.

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"The squaw of the sachem Squando," continued the caller, "was crossing the river in a canoe with her pappoose, when two sailors upset the craft just for the sport of it. The child sank, but the mother dived to the bottom and brought it up alive. Later the child died, and Squando is now rousing the Indians of the east against the colonists. With Philip south of us and Squando, a chief of wide influence, at the east, we stand in great danger."

"Yet peace must exist between the white man and the red," confidently replied the grandfather, "for Passaconaway, the great sachem of the Penacooks, that wonderful chieftain, fifteen years ago urged peace when he called the river and the mountain Indians together at Pawtucket Falls. At a great dance and a feast held there Passaconaway spoke to his people and bade them live in peace, for it was the only hope for the race. They might do some harm to the English, but it would end in their own destruction. This the Great Spirit had said to him. Then," continued Roger Low, "he gave up his chieftainship to his son Wonolancet, who has heeded his father's warning, as have other tribes about us. They had faith in old Passaconaway, who had the power to make water burn and trees to dance. He could even turn himself into a flame. Yet he accepted our Christianity as preached by John Eliot and finally, the Indians say, he was carried in a sleigh drawn by wolves up the slope of our highest mountain, whence he rose toward the heaven of the white man in a chariot of fire."

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The neighbor again shook his head doubtfully and bade them good-night. Little Robert, torn by the fears of the Indian raids, and his grandfather's assurance of peace, lay awake many hours. His grandfather was breathing heavily in his sleep, when Robert distinctly heard a footstep outside. Thinking his father might have returned, he hurried to the window in time to see the figure of an Indian. The little boy threw himself upon his sleeping grandfather in fright. As the old gentleman awoke, a heavy knock was heard at the door.

"'Tis an Indian, grandfather," shrieked the boy.

At that moment the outline of the Indian's face was seen at the window which he was trying to open. Roger Low jumped from his bed, seized his gun, and stood ready for an attack. The Indian spoke. Low dropped his gun and listened. Something more was said outside, Grandfather hastily unbolted the door. "Was he mad?" He seemed eager to meet the Indian. Then Robert heard his

grandfather cry, "Nonowit!" for the old-time friend had at last come back.

They stirred the fire and seated themselves to hear Nonowit's story of peace and trouble between whitemen and Indians. Robert gained no promise of peace. However, the friendliness of such a powerful Indian as Nonowit was reassuring, and he dropped to sleep in his grandfather's arms.

SUSANNA'S RESCUE

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A Tale of 1675

Toby Tozer dropped the rock which would have completed his house of stones, as he saw a sail tacking across the river straight to his point at Newichewannock.

"Look, Susanna! Here comes Mistress Lear, and she has brought Henry with her," he cried excitedly.

Susanna hurried up the bank to carry the news. She was a sturdy girl of eighteen, with neither home nor people. The little group at the settlement took care of her, and she gratefully served them all.

Hearing of the arrival, Mistress Tozer hurried to the shore, bidding Susanna notify the few neighbors and invite them all to her home for the day. Spinning, weaving, and other household cares were always pushed aside for such an occasion as a visit.

"And may we keep her for days, Jacob?" Mrs. Tozer asked anxiously of Mr. Lear, who was then pushing off his boat.

"Just an over-night trip," he called. "I'm on my way to Dover and will come around for her on my return." [Pg 103]

Already the good-wives, with knitting in hand, were gathering to greet Mistress Lear. Some fifteen or more, including the children, were soon settled about the Tozer fireplace, eager to learn of the happenings in Portsmouth.

"How dared you come so far, Mistress Lear, when the Indians are committing such terrible deeds? Since King Philip has stirred up the creatures in Massachusetts, even the settlements of Maine have felt their treachery."

By this time Susanna had caught the winks and nods of Toby and Henry, who were tired of sitting primly on the settle.

"Shall I draw you a bucket of water, Mistress Tozer?" asked Susanna, as eager as the boys for an excuse to get out to the open. She glanced at the boys, who followed to help her. Secretly she held the fear of an Indian attack and, for days, had been keeping watch over the river. [Pg 104]

"My great-grandfather, Ambrose Gibbons, dug this well!" exclaimed Henry, knowingly, as Susanna let down the bucket. "His little girl, Becky Gibbons, was my grandmother, and she traded some corn for a beaver skin with the Indians."

Since Susanna and Toby seemed interested, Henry continued his story as they turned to the shore. "Almost all the Indians were friendly in those days," he added.

"But they are not now," replied Susanna. Her alert eye, at that moment, had caught a distant movement of paddles on the water. As a nearer view brought the dreaded Indians to sight, she cried, "Run for your lives, boys!"

The frightful feathered savages were gliding straight toward the point.

The two children made a mad dash for the house. Susanna, ahead, broke into the peaceful group gathered there.

"Indians! Run! Out the back door, over the fence to the Knight's house! Don't let them see you!"

Susanna slammed the front door and threw her full weight against it, while the women in mad haste rushed through the narrow doorway and scrambled over the fence to the more secure protection of the neighboring house. A moment later the howling Indians slashed their tomahawks into the door which Susanna, to gain time for the others, still held. The savages now forced the door open. The girl was thrown to the floor by the blow, and the Indians, thinking her dead, rushed through the house. Finding it deserted, they dashed through the back door on toward the neighboring house. Shot after shot from this direction startled the pursuing Indians and made them realize that their party was too small to face such fire. They then wheeled about and struck for the canoe. [Pg 105]

After a long and fearful waiting, Mrs. Tozer crept cautiously back to her home, sure that Susanna had been carried off captive. No, there she lay on the floor by the door. Could it be that she moved? Her eyes opened. Mrs. Tozer dropped to her side and, with the assistance of those who had followed, brought her quick relief. The girl was tenderly cared for, and in time she entirely recovered her strength.

When Henry Lear returned to Portsmouth, he told a tale of Newichewannock life wilder than the stories of his grandmother's day.

TO THE GARRISON HOUSE!

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One September day in 1675, near their home on the Upper Plantation, now known as Dover, Betty Haines, a girl of ten, stood in the cornfield with her little apron outstretched to hold the ears of ripe corn her father was plucking. Suddenly her brother Joseph, twice her age, bounded over the meadow and into the field.

"Father," he cried excitedly, "the Indians have made an attack at Newichewannock. They are likely to be down upon us at any moment. The garrison house is our only safety."

His mother, at the door of their home, caught Joseph's alarming words and took immediate command of the situation. The rest of the family hurried in from the cornfield and followed her directions.

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"Get your heavy coat, Joseph! Betty, pack the bread into that basket and ask your father to bring down our heaviest blankets!"

"I hope nothing will happen to this nice home of ours," sighed Betty as her father on their departure locked the door.

"Nor to our corn either," he added, with a thought of the winter's food.

Soon they established themselves in the largest home of the neighborhood, which stood open in such a moment of need. Mrs. Haines, ready and capable, did her part for the neighboring families assembled there, while Mr. Haines and Joseph lent their aid to strengthen the fortifications of timber outside and to erect a sentry box on the roof, where guard was to be kept night and day.

As Joseph Haines took his turn to guard, the first night of alarm, Betty crept up to the roof after him and immediately cried, pointing across the river, "Look there, Joe!"

A small glow of fire, seen in the distance, soon brightened the whole sky with flames.

"Work of the Indians!" muttered Joe. When word was brought the next day that two houses and three barns with a large quantity of grain had been burned that night by the Indians, Betty implored her brother, "Oh, don't let them burn our house, Joe!"

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"No, little Betty, I'll see that they do not," he declared with determination.

Later the report reached Dover of six houses burned at Oyster River (a neighboring village) and two men killed. The young men of Dover rose with indignation at the insults of the Indians and begged Major Waldron, commander of the militia, to grant them permission to protect the town in their own way. This request granted, some twenty of them, Joseph Haines in the number, armed themselves and scattered through the woods, hoping in that way to find the lurking savages who were doing their mischief in small groups.

Just at dusk Joseph, with one companion, took his position in the woods near his own home.

"Hist!" came from his friend after long, patient watching. The two were alert, for five stealthy figures were seen to cross the meadow and linger in the cornfield. Three of them began to pick the corn, while two, approaching the house, gathered sticks for a fire which they lighted. Their purpose seemed to be to roast the corn, but the fire was built dangerously near the house.

Joseph and his friend had become separated from their companions. No signal could be given without arousing the suspicion of their enemies. After a whispered consultation, they cautiously crept out of the woods and into the shadow of the house. From there they suddenly rushed upon the two Indians by the fire, striking them down with the butts of their guns. Those in the cornfield, hearing the commotion, ran for the woods and escaped.

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Mr. Haines, seeing the firelight in the direction of his house, started at once from the garrison, not knowing that Betty quietly followed him through the darkness, even slipping through the big gateway without being seen.

The fire had already caught the house, while the young men were occupied in binding the prisoners. Mr. Haines dashed to the well for water and returned to find his Betty beating the flames with a broom.

Mrs. Haines, missing Betty and suspecting that she had followed her father, was on the spot by the time Joseph had turned his attention from the prisoners to find that the house had been saved from the flames.

Word of the efficient guard at Dover was reported by the escaping Indians, and no further attack was made at that time.

The Indian raids had told heavily upon the colonists in the region of the Piscataqua. Scattered gardens had been devastated; homes built by great effort had been destroyed in a night; family circles had been broken by death, or by capture, and the colony had suffered the loss of strong young men who were its mainstay.

John Stevens had been crippled by the tomahawk of an Indian; his whole family and that of his brother had been swept out of existence by the same cruel hands, and all that was left was his home and one little nephew, David.

"This country is ours now, David, and we must hold it," he would say to the manly little fellow, who was already facing the responsibilities of life, though with arms too young to swing the axe or to steady the plough.

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Glancing at the sturdy little boy, John Stevens, unable to leave his chair, looked through the open doorway to his cleared land and his forests, and wondered how, to say nothing of protecting the country, he could keep the boy and himself alive. "David," he cried on sudden thought, "the garden shall be yours and the forest mine. We will each do what we can. I still have a strong arm left to me and a sharp knife. The red oaks can be felled and sawed at the mill. Here in my chair with my knife I can shape the short boards into hogshead staves. The town accepts them for taxes at twenty-five shillings a thousand."

"Perhaps," added David, "Mr. Cutt, the merchant, will have use for some."

Together the man and the boy, before the open door, planned for the coming days until the twilight had settled into night.

The simple home was remote, and neighbors rarely dropped in. David took the necessary trips to the Bank, as the upper end of the town by the river was still called, or to the South End, where the Great House stood with many smaller homes of the town to the south of it. Always the little boy started with this injunction:

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"Learn all you can, David, of town affairs. Inquire about the doings of the General Court. This is our country, David, and we must know what happens."

The cutting of staves proved to be a means of meeting their simple daily needs. The abundant forests everywhere prevented a demand for the shipment of staves to other ports; so it was an exultant David who came home one fall day with the word that Mr. John Cutt, the wealthy merchant of Portsmouth, wanted all the staves John Stevens could make. They had proved the best of the kind that Mr. Cutt had yet found. With the little that David could do on the garden the two managed to make a living. Yet all this effort to live was held before David as a small matter compared with the life of the country.

"You must remember, David," his uncle impressed upon him, "that the country must live whether we are here or not, and its life, lad, depends upon what we can do for it while we are here."

With this quickened interest in the big country, of which he could see so small a part, David returned from town early in January of 1680, with stirring news for his uncle.

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"Listen to this, Uncle John," he cried, excitedly, "Our King in England has seen fit to separate New Hampshire from the government of Massachusetts, and he has appointed our Mr. John Cutt as President. The Royal Charter is already here!"

John Stevens leaned forward, as if to grasp the thought.

"Say it again, David, every word." Then, after the boy had repeated the news, his uncle slowly shook his head.

"It is a heavy responsibility for us, lad. We have but four small towns in New Hampshire. Yet I have confidence in the honored gentleman appointed to lead us."

Actually to withdraw from the rule of Massachusetts required time, during which period David never returned home without bringing some interesting news. One day it was, "Uncle John, Portsmouth has seventy-one men who can vote; Dover has sixty-one; Hampton, fifty-seven; and Exeter, twenty." At another time he announced, "There is to be an important meeting in March, to which every town of New Hampshire is to send three representatives except Exeter, which sends two."

On the 16th of March, the day of the General Assembly, John Stevens sent the boy off to town for the whole day.

"Learn everything for me, David," was his parting command. "Do not miss a thing. And David," he added, impressively, placing his hand on the boy's shoulder, "Remember always that this is your New Hampshire." Then he counted the hours for the boy's return.

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When David reached the town he found three other boys of his own age eagerly watching for a sight of the gentlemen attending the Assembly. Choosing an advantageous spot on the roadside, David and his companions swung themselves to the low, spreading branches of an oak, where they patiently waited.

"Here they come," called Sam Cutt, who had already seen these gentlemen arrive at his father's house.

As the solemn procession of representatives from New Hampshire's four small towns passed on their way to the meeting-house, David slid from his branch to the ground and in an erect position bared his head and held his hat to his heart until they had passed.

"Oh, see the sissy!" cried one boy from the tree, pointing to David, when the riders had moved along. David's face flushed, but with unusual self-command he replied.

"Did you not know that those men are taking care of our province, which is yet very small, and that this is for us all a very serious and important meeting that they are attending?"

The surprised boys who had expected to see David slink away, slid down from the branches, caught with interest in what he continued to tell them of town and even state affairs. They asked questions which he could answer. "Now I tell you," he added with authority, "you must remember always that this is your New Hampshire." David's knowledge of his country had so deeply impressed and interested the boys that, when the General Assembly adjourned, four hatless lads stood in respect as the members passed, who honored them with a salute.

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When, at the close of the day, David reached home he threw off his coat and warmed his hands by the fire exclaiming.

"You should have seen the dignified gentlemen, uncle. There were a dozen or more of them who rode from Mr. Cutt's estate to the meeting-house. They wore fine clothes, and swords at their sides, and shining buckles on their shoes and knee bands. The Rev. Mr. Moody preached a sermon to them after he had offered a long prayer. Then the gentlemen voted to write a letter to the General Court of Massachusetts. Sam Cutt told me all about it. He had asked his father what had happened there. And, uncle, in this letter they thanked the Court for the care and kindness given us while we were under its rule. They explained that we did not seek this change. It was only because it was the King's wish that we were willing to accept the plan. Then they begged the Court for the benefit of its prayers and blessing in this separation. Sam said that it was all very solemn. Uncle," David continued, after a pause, "I kept feeling all day long, 'This is my New Hampshire!'"

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THE BOWL OF BROTH

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One September day Mrs. Elizabeth Heard opened the door of her house on the Cocheco River, in Dover, and first looking cautiously about, a habit bred by fear of lurking Indians, stepped out with a bowl of hot broth, which she was about to carry to a neighbor who was ill.

The Heard house was a garrison with a protecting wall built about it, the gate of which, Mrs. Heard at this moment noticed had been carelessly left open. A few months of peaceful living had caused the younger members of the family to grow careless of the once needed caution. Now about to pass through this gateway the quick movement of a shadow beyond the well, caught her eye. Bravely approaching the spot, she discovered, crouching there, a young Indian whose face instantly told more of fear than of daring. Instinctively her mother-heart felt sorry for him, and she offered him the bowl of hot broth. He drank it eagerly and then begged her to hide him. Without a moment's hesitation, she led him to the garret of her house and there in a corner concealed him under a pile of blankets. It was fortunate for her scheme that her family of ten, five boys and five girls, was off on a fishing trip.

Later, on their return, they brought the news of a large capture of Indians made in the town that day. Mrs. Heard said nothing of the one then hidden under their own roof.

After the children had been tucked into bed, and she had made the rounds of the rooms to be sure that all were sleeping, she crept to the garret and signaled to the Indian that his moment of escape had come. Noiselessly and swiftly he made his way out.

Some thirteen years passed, and the children of the Heard family were well grown. One June day in 1689, Mrs. Heard, three of her sons, a daughter and some friends, had taken a river trip to Portsmouth and were returning by night. As they approached Dover, where their home still stood, they heard many unusual sounds.

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"I fear the Indians may be in the town, Benjamin," remarked Mrs. Heard to her oldest son, with some alarm.

"Perhaps," replied Benjamin, "we had better go right to the Waldron's garrison, since it is so near. I see lights there."

The party, filled with fear, hastened to the house suggested and knocked at the outer gate.

"Let us in!" they pleaded. No answer, however, came from the home within. Benjamin then climbed the wall and looked over the top. To his horror, he saw an Indian, armed with a gun, standing in the open doorway of the house. Benjamin had not been seen, and the confusion within had drowned the cries outside. Jumping down, he started his party with utmost speed to their own garrison house. They had not gone far, before, to his dismay, he realized that his mother was



He returned to the scene of their peril to find his mother, exhausted by fright, still at the gate. She was lying there unable to move. [Pg 120]

"Go," she implored him in a whisper, "and help the others to safety! I will come as soon as my strength returns." At that moment a cry of fear from the others, and his mother's last urgent appeal drove Benjamin to their rescue while his brave mother was left to her fate.

Recovering a little, Mrs. Heard crept to some protecting bushes where she lay until daylight, when the gate opened, and an Indian with a pistol approached her. He paused and looked at her very hard. Silently he left but returned immediately, for another keen look. This time, his grim savage face still unmoved, he grunted—

"Good squaw kept Indian boy safe! Indian no forget!" Then he ran yelling to the house, with some word for his friends who seemed to be there in numbers.

Soon after the Waldron house burst into flames. Not until the house had burned to the ground, and the Indians had gone, could Mrs. Heard gather strength enough to move. She feared the same sad end for her own home, but, to her surprise, she found it standing unharmed. Surely she had received her blessing for the bowl of broth and aid to the Indian lad, for her family and the friends, who had succeeded in reaching the house, reported that they had been free from attack through the horrors of that night, which were long remembered by the people of Dover.

THOMAS TOOGOOD OUTWITS AN INDIAN

An Incident of 1690.

"There, you clumsy thing, you've stepped in the cat's saucer and spilled the milk. Be gone from here," and the crabbed old aunt, who kept house for the Toogoods, switched her broom after Tom as he moved good-naturedly out the back door.

Thomas Toogood was overgrown, and awkward, and seemed always to be doing the wrong thing. He now sauntered out to the shed, where his father was feeding the cows and his sister tossing grain to the hens.

"Tom," said his father, pointing to a gun in the corner, "I traded some corn for a gun for you, in Dover yesterday. They say that wild ducks are now found on the Cocheco. Thought you might like to try for them."

Tom picked up the gun, looked it over, and said, "All right," but the look of pleasure on his face told that it was the first gun he had ever owned. [Pg 122]

"Now that you have a gun," spoke up his sister joyfully, "you can take me to the quilting party in Dover, next week. All our friends are to be there."

Tom had reasons of his own for wishing to attend that gathering, but he was especially pleased to be considered manly enough to play the part of escort. Though Dover was but a few miles away, it was never safe to take even that trip without a gun for protection.

With his father's suggestion of ducks in mind, Thomas picked up his new gun and whistled his way along the path to the river, where he kept his canoe. As he pushed his bark into the stream, he thought that he might now appease his aunt's anger by a brace of fine ducks for dinner.

Two hours later poor Tom, dripping wet, with one small bird in his hand, faced the assembled family in the home kitchen.

"Where is your gun?" asked his father immediately.

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"At the bottom of the river," replied the boy. "I was reaching for my duck, and the canoe upset."

"Oh, Tom, you'd upset a sailing vessel if you stepped on it!" came from his sister. "Now you can't take me to the quilting party. It is just too bad!"

"You go over to neighbor Roger's and chop his wood," ordered Tom's father with disgust in his tone. "I told him one of us would do it, for he is bad in his limbs."

After changing his clothes, Tom started off to the Roger's home, a good two miles through the woods. The family attitude had dampened his usual good spirits, and his sister's words had stung. An afternoon's work of wood splitting brought cheer, at least to the forlorn neighbors, and Tom started home again whistling.

It was a bad habit, in those days, to make one's presence known in the woods, and in this case Tom's whistling proved most serious, for suddenly, he realized that three dusky figures were creeping up the hill slope behind him. Quick as could be, he bounded up the crest of the hill and over the other side; but quite as quickly came one of the three Indians in hot pursuit. The other two, confident of their companion's speed, waited below for him to return with his prisoner.

Tom was too heavy to run far, and soon the Indian had him in his ugly clutch.

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"Name?" asked the Indian, taking Tom by the shoulders.

"Thomas Toogood," was the boy's frightened reply.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian. Then, appreciating Tom's clumsiness, the Indian loosened his grasp for a moment to straighten some cords with which to bind his captive. As the red man stooped with gun under his arm, for an instant he turned his back. Tom, for once in his life not slow, in a flash seized the gun and aimed it at the Indian.

"You shout for help, and I'll shoot," he cried, backing away, and then with more dexterity than hitherto seemed possible, Tom continued to back with gun still pointed at the Indian, who muttered, "Tom no good, no good!"

Once out of momentary danger, before the Indian could signal to the others, Tom had plunged into the thicket and taken a short cut home. He was again in possession of a gun, and he had met an adventure which must command the respect of the family and prove to his sister his worth as an escort.

THE ESCAPE

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"This, my little Dick, is a fine holiday for us," exclaimed Mrs. Waldron as she lifted her baby from his hooded crib. "Your father has promised an outing, and you shall go with us to the farm far up the river. Some day, my little boy, you shall gather the strawberries there yourself, and play in the hay, and hunt for eggs."

As she tossed her baby while she chatted, he seemed to be caught in mid-air by the tall soldierly gentleman who had entered. After a moment of play, Mrs. Waldron turned soberly to her husband.

"Now, Richard, will you use every argument possible to persuade Madam Ursula Cutt to return with us to Portsmouth? The French have so stirred the Indians in the East that it is not safe for her to remain on that remote farm."

"She has insisted," protested Col. Waldron, "that the haying must be done first. Until the crop is safely stored, it will be hard to start her. However, the weather has been warm and dry, so it may even now be done. Our boat is ready, can you go soon?"

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It was a wonderful July day in 1694. Mrs. Waldron followed her husband down the garden slope to the sparkling river and had already passed little Dick into his arms while she stepped into the boat. A servant, hurrying over the arbored path, announced—

"Your friends from the Manor have arrived and are waiting to see you."

"Oh, Richard," came in disappointed tones from Mrs. Waldron, "we cannot take our trip. They have come so far we must offer them at least a day's hospitality."

Regretfully they turned and cordially received their guests. The plans for entertainment crowded out all thought of the river trip and a day on the farm.

The farm two miles up the river belonged to Madam Ursula Cutt. It was a busy place, while the Waldrons were detained at home that July morning. Madam Cutt was over-seeing her household affairs as well as keeping a watchful eye on the hay-makers at work in the field. The maid at the washtub remarked, as her mistress stepped to the door with basket and scissors to gather flowers.

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"Dover has felt the fury of the Indians. They may yet come down the river!"

"It may be well for us to move into town as soon as the haying is done," Madam Cutt replied, and passed on to the garden.

The maid rinsed the white linen and lifting a basketful stepped out to spread it on the grass to dry. With the awful fear of Indians still on her mind, she peered through the trees to the river, half expecting to see the dreaded creatures bounding up the bank.

The clothes were spread on the green when her piercing gaze caught a strange movement of the water. A second look discerned the curve of a canoe. Madam Cutt was off in the flower garden. The hay-makers were in the fields. There was scarcely a moment in which to find shelter. Darting into the grape arbor, the maid then crept behind bushes and through uncut grass to the river slope around the bend. At last she was hidden from the farm-site. On she sped with all haste toward the town. There was a gap of water to be crossed. She found a boat and pulled at the oars in the direction of Portsmouth.

While the Waldrons and their guests in the Portsmouth home were gaily chatting at the table, cries of "The Indians! The Indians!" were shrieked through the hall, and the terrified girl in working clothes rushed in exhausted.

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As soon as she recovered her voice, she poured forth brokenly, "The Indians—I ran—They didn't see me!"

"But Madam Cutt, where is she?" asked Col. Waldron.

"She was in the garden! She must be killed! There was no time! I hid in the bushes, crept over the meadow, and ran to the point, where I found a boat!"

Col. Waldron ordered his horse and in a short time had gathered a force and hastened to the farm. It was all too true. The Indians had made their attack. Madam Ursula Cutt had been killed and robbed of her jewels. The three hay-makers had been shot, and their scalps taken for trophies.

But little Dick, who might have been there, was safely rocked in his own cradle that night and saved to become Secretary Waldron, an important man in New Hampshire history.

THE DEFENSE AT OYSTER RIVER

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Thomas Bickford viewed with satisfaction his house and fortress now complete. Building in 1694 was attended with many difficulties, as John and William, his sons, well knew, for they had helped.

"Boys, you've worked well. A holiday for you tomorrow," promised their father.

Early the following morning the boys started off on an exploring tour, for they had but recently come to the Oyster River shores, several miles north of Portsmouth where they had lived with their grandmother.

The river had much to interest the boys. At night they returned home filled with excitement over the large hollow oak they had found almost a mile below.

"It was just like a house, father. We planned the rooms and played there all day."

"And saw no Indians?" their father inquired with some anxiety.

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"Yes, on the opposite bank we saw several creeping up the river, but we had a fine hiding place."

The boys little knew that on that 17th day of July, some two hundred Indians were stealing cautiously up the Oyster River, on both sides, to the Upper Settlement. Their plan was to divide into small groups and attack each house at sunrise, the next morning. A single shot was to be the signal.

On the following day by some mistake the shot was given before the Indians were ready.

"What does that mean?" exclaimed Thomas Bickford, who from his home had heard the crack of a gun far up the river on that early morning of July 18th. Instantly he recalled the stealthy Indians

that the boys had seen the previous day, and he sensed immediate danger.

"Quick!" he called to his wife and boys. "Run to the boat! I believe the Indians are afoot!"

Hurrying into their clothes, they rushed to the river and jumped into the boat. Bickford passed them the oars. [Pg 131]

"Down the stream," he pointed, "and get around the bend as soon as you can! The savages are up the river!"

"You are not coming?" they asked in alarm as he remained on shore.

"No, that house is not to be lost, if I can save it!"

There was no time for argument. He pushed the boat into the stream and darted back to the house, bolting the gates of the palisade and then the door as he entered. He grabbed his gun and placed his bullets and powder-horn in readiness. He then dashed upstairs quickly returning with an armful of clothing, which he spread out upon chairs and tables. At that moment the shots of the Indians struck the house.

A horrible fear for the safety of his family brought a shudder to Thomas Bickford, yet, though alone in the house, he bravely began its defense.

"Steady there, shoot!" he shouted as if he had a house full of men to command. He then pulled on an old red soldier's coat and flashed past the window in view of the Indians peering through the chinks outside the palisade. With another loud command and a remark in a different tone of voice, Bickford tore off the coat, pulled on a fur hat, and came again to view at the window. This he continued to do with frequent changes of costume and constant shooting and shouting until the Indians lost courage and fled for safety fearing an armed band would soon rush out upon them. [Pg 132]

Their flight brought but a moment of relief. The house, perhaps, was safe, but what of the family?

Not until late in the day did Thomas Bickford dare start forth in search of them. He crept along the shore in the dusk, fearing each moment the shot of some lurking Indian. On and on he went, yet he found no trace of his people. At last he came upon the hollow oak that the boys had described as their playhouse. Here he paused, for a sound came from within.

"Can that be a hiding place of the savages?" he asked himself in alarm and quickly turned his course. Suddenly there came from the oak a stifled whisper, "Father!"

The family had but just escaped the sight of the Indians that morning, and here in the hollow tree they had crouched in fear all the long day. Now, startled lest the sound they heard outside was the tread of a redman, the boys peeped through a knothole and saw their father.

To find each other was joy enough for one moment. The next brought the whisper:

"Is the house saved?"

After dark all crept cautiously out to the hidden boat, and later in the shelter of their home they listened breathlessly to the story of its wonderful defense.

THE ATTACK AT THE PLAINS

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"Scamper! The raindrops will get there before you!" Mrs. Jackson scattered her children like a flock of chickens to the green to gather up the whitened linen which had been spread to dry on that long remembered June day of 1696.

"There, Samuel, do stop that nonsense, for the rain will soon be here!" she laughed in spite of herself, as the round freckled face of her boy on hands and knees appeared with a grin from beneath a sheet.

The laughter of all three children increased when the cows and sheep, in mid-afternoon, came hurrying to the barns, as if they, too, were afraid of a sprinkle.

Mrs. Jackson gave a troubled glance skyward at the on-coming storm and then at the trembling cattle, which had doubtless been frightened by something worse. [Pg 134]

Samuel, Betsey, and Peggy had glorious romp together after supper, but neither father, nor mother, nor even Uncle Jack, could be persuaded to tell them a bedtime story, for something seemed to trouble them all. The children went early to bed. Betsey whispered, as they climbed to the feathers, "I heard father say that we'd stay here one more night. Do you suppose the Indians are coming?"

However, not even the dreaded word, Indian nor the booming of the thunder storm outside could keep those sleepy eyes open.

Downstairs the older members of the family and several neighbors gathered about the wide fireplace, glad of the warmth that chilly June night. With sober faces they discussed the rumors of

terrible deeds the Indians had committed in Dover, a few miles up the river.

"Some are lurking about us," declared Mr. Jackson, "for no storm would so frighten the cattle. 'Tis not the first time they have come home bruised and bleeding."

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"Tomorrow night," added his brother, "the settlers here at the Plains must go to the garrison house for safety. An attack may come at any moment."

Little Samuel was the first to open his eyes the following morning, thinking it a glorious sunshine that gave such a brilliant light outside. Suddenly a snap and a crackle brought him to his feet. He found the barn ablaze. A war-whoop from the Indians then aroused the household.

While father and Uncle Jack armed themselves with such implements as they had at hand, mother gathered the children together to go with her to the garrison house. About to leave the house she missed her wallet, which she had left, and ran upstairs to get it. She came down to find the children gone.

"Perhaps they have started ahead," she thought, and hurried out.

The children, left alone for a moment, frightened and bewildered had run out the front door, for at the back of the house were the Indians, yelling and shrieking. Samuel had crawled into a familiar hiding place under the cinnamon rose bushes, while Betsey and Peggy had hidden beneath the low branches of the lilac, so completely concealed that they did not even see their mother come out of the same door a moment later.

Here the children remained until the barns were smouldering ashes, and the Indians had fled. Samuel was the first to creep from his hiding-place and dash to the side of his father, whom he saw at the front door. Betsey and Peggy followed, calling, "Where's mother?"

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"Is she not with you?" asked their surprised father, grasping his children by the hands in his thankfulness to find them alive, for the Indians had left a desolated spot.

"Here comes Uncle Jack from the garrison house. He will tell us where mother is," cried Peggy hopefully. They all hastened to meet him, only to learn that their mother had not been seen since she left home.

"Did the Indians carry her off?" cried little Samuel, choking back a sob.

Betsey relieved that awful thought by exclaiming, "Here comes Captain Shackford with his soldiers. They will find her."

The little group gathered about the sturdy Captain, who had been summoned from the Bank, two miles away. With his militia, he had reached the Plains too late to meet the Indians. Seeing the destruction they had caused, he inquired in which direction they had fled and started in pursuit.

"Bring back my mother!" pleaded little Samuel, running after the captain, who nodded doubtfully.

It was soon learned that four people were missing from this little group of settlers; several were injured and many had been killed. Nine barns and five dwellings had been burned.

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"We have a house left to us," sighed Peggy, "but what is that without mother?"

There was no time, however, for even the children to mourn their loss; so many things were needed from their home for those without homes, that they were kept busy for several hours carrying pillows, blankets, and other things of comfort to the injured ones.

Suddenly little Samuel cried, "Here comes Captain Shackford back again," for the Captain was then emerging from the woods across the clearing with his militia carrying kettles, lanterns, blankets, and other things the Indians had taken as plunder.

"Oh!" cried Betsey with joy, straining her gaze for a moment. "Mother is with them!"

The children dashed across the Plains, in wild delight to escort their mother home. Her friends gathered about and with the children still clinging to her heard how the Captain had seen a feathery blue smoke some four miles from the Plains and, approaching it, had found that the Indians were cooking their breakfast behind the protection of their captives, who were tied to the trees. The soldiers suddenly rushed upon the Indians, who escaped. However, the plunder and, best of all, the four prisoners were safely brought back.

Since then many a bedtime story by the hearth-fire has been told of that spot, which to this day is known as Breakfast Hill.

THE STRAWBERRY FIELDS OF EXETER

[Pg 138]

On a June afternoon in 1697, the silent forests about the little village of Exeter felt an almost imperceptible stir of life, for through it there stealthily crept an Indian chief, followed by one and then another of his frightful band. Each dressed in tawny skins like the creatures of the wood and with adornment of feathers from the very birds, they seemed but a part of the forest life. No smoke of the camp fire floated through the green boughs, for in utmost secrecy these Indians

took concealed positions to spring, in the early morning, upon the unguarded inhabitants of the town before they were astir.

Now it happened on that same afternoon while the sun shone alluringly upon the open fields, Patience Nutter dropped her wearisome patchwork and looked out of the window. A speck of red in the grass outside the house caught her attention. Her stint was not finished by several squares, yet the temptation of that strawberry was too great. Laying aside her work, she stepped out and popped the luscious red berry into her mouth. Beyond it she found a cluster of berries ripe and juicy. Step by step she was led into the open field fairly riotous in its growth of nodding red strawberries. It seemed as if she could not pick them fast enough.

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"Patience!" came a call from the house. The little girl turned to see her mother in the doorway, holding up the unfinished piece of patchwork. Reluctantly she returned.

"Mother," she cried, as she entered the house, "will you go with me for some berries after I have finished my sewing? The field is full of them."

"Yes, child, we need some for supper. While you are sewing, I will step into Mrs. Wiggin's, for she will be glad to know that the berries are fully ripe."

Mrs. Nutter's news of the berries was of interest to Mrs. Wiggin and her daughters, who picked up their baskets to start for the field at once.

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Anthony Wiggin, who was sorting his papers at his desk, shook his head with the warning:

"It is a great risk you run to go into that open field without a guard. Indians may even now be prowling about the woods."

Nevertheless the women started off for the strawberries. Little Patience, with the strip of patchwork dangling from her pocket, joined them so quickly that one could almost believe some large stitches had been taken on that last square.

When Anthony Wiggin had finished his work and each paper had been placed in its proper pigeon hole, he closed his desk.

"Hm," he muttered, glancing from the window at the women and children in the field, "they do not sense the danger we constantly live in, now that the French have stirred up the Indians. I believe I will frighten them with a shot, just as a warning."



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He picked up his gun from the corner where it was kept in constant readiness and, stepping to the door, sent a bullet over the heads of the strawberry pickers, whizzing into the woods beyond.

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Baskets and berries were dropped by the pickers in their fright and haste to get home, for their fears had been aroused by the words of Anthony Wiggin before they left the house. Patience, who

had not sensed a possible danger, had wandered near to the woods where the berries were more abundant. Even after the sound of the gun, she lingered for a few more strawberries.

The shot acted like magic upon the inhabitants of Exeter, who took it for an alarm of danger. Men dropped plough or rein and seized their guns. Women followed with powder-horns and bullets. In less time than one could believe, an armed body was in the village centre ready to protect their homes.

That gun-shot carried its force still farther, for there in the woods beyond the strawberry field lay the Indians in ambush.

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"We are discovered," reported their leader. The savages then bounded into the open to make their attack, only to find themselves faced by an armed body of men. Firing a few shots, the Indians then made a hasty retreat. One, however, seeing Patience running for home and yet not halfway across the field, dashed after her, caught the child in his arms, and followed the retreating band.

"Patience! Patience!" shrieked her mother. "She is captured! Oh, save her!" and the woman turned imploringly to her townsmen.

They started in an almost hopeless pursuit, for the speed of an Indian in the woods is hard to cope with. Some dropped out of the chase, but the swiftest and more persistent men kept at it, Anthony Wiggin in the lead.

Hours of agonizing horror then passed for Patience's mother as she pictured her own little girl in the cruel clutches of the savages. She could feel no possible hope of rescue.

In the meantime the men continued a long and wearying chase, when suddenly a distant glimpse of an Indian was seen through the clearing. Anthony Wiggin, still ahead, sent a shot and soon after came upon little Patience alone in the woods.

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It seems the Indians had stopped to parley, and when they renewed their flight, Patience had been picked up by the last savage in the line. As he roughly seized her, she caught at the patchwork dropping from her pocket and found her needle still in it. Her indignation had by this time risen beyond her fear. Quickly she thrust the needle so far into the Indian's neck that he instinctively dropped the child to pull it out. She ran back over the path they had followed, just as Wiggin's shot was heard. The Indian ran for his life.

As the full rising moon outlined the forest-tops to the people of Exeter, a triumphant shout came from the woods, and Patience, proudly shouldered by Anthony Wiggin, was placed in her mother's arms.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SOME THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO ***

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