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Author: Amanda M. Douglas

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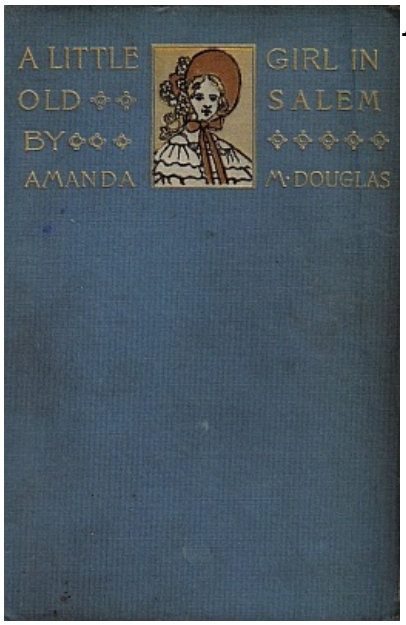

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD SALEM

BY

AMANDA M. DOUGLAS

NEW YORK
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1908

THE "LITTLE GIRL" SERIES

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD NEW YORK.
HANNAH ANN; A SEQUEL.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD BOSTON.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD PHILADELPHIA.

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD WASHINGTON.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD NEW ORLEANS.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD DETROIT.

A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD ST. LOUIS.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD CHICAGO.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD SAN FRANCISCO.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD QUEBEC.
A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD BALTIMORE.

Published, September, 1908

CONTENTS

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[1]

CHAPTER I

TWO LETTERS

The Leveretts were at their breakfast in the large sunny room in Derby Street. It had an outlook on the garden, and beyond the garden was a lane, well used and to be a street itself in the future. Then, at quite a distance, a strip of woods on a rise of ground, that still further enhanced the prospect. The sun slanted in at the windows on one side, there was nothing to shut it out. It would go all round the house now, and seem to end where it began, in the garden.

Chilian was very fond of it. He always brought his book to the table; he liked to eat slowly, to gaze out and digest one or two thoughts at his leisure, as well as the delightful breakfast set before him. He was a man of delicate tastes and much refinement, for with all the New England sturdiness, hardness one might say, there was in many families a strain of what we might term high breeding. His face, with its clear-cut features, indicated this. His hair was rather light, fine, with a few waves in it that gave it a slightly tumbled look—far from any touch of disorder. His eyes were a deep, clear blue, his complexion fair enough for a woman.

[2]

His father and grandfather had lived and died in this house. He had bought out his sister's share when she married, and she had gone to Providence. He had asked the two relatives of his father—termed cousins by courtesy—to continue housekeeping. They were the last of their family and in rather straitened circumstances. Miss Elizabeth was nearing sixty, tall, straight, fair, and rather austere-looking. Eunice was two years younger, shorter, a trifle stouter, with a rounder face, and a mouth that wore a certain sweetness when it did not actually smile.

Chilian was past thirty. He was a Harvard graduate, and now went in two days each week for teaching classes. His father had left some business interests in Salem, rather distasteful to him, but he was a strictly conscientious person and attended to them, if with a sort of mental protest. For the rest, he was a bookworm and revelled in intellectual pursuits.

The day previous had been desperately stormy, this late March morning was simply glorious. The mail, which came late in the afternoon, had not been delivered, causing no uneasiness, as letters were not daily visitors. But now the serving-man, with a gentle rap, opened the door and

said briefly:

"Letters."

Eunice rose and took them.

"An East Indian one for you, Chilian, and why—one from Boston—for you, Elizabeth. It is Cousin Giles' hand."

Elizabeth reached for it. They were both so interested that they took no note of Chilian's [3]
missive. She cut carefully around the big wafer he had used. It was a large letter sheet, quite blue and not of over-fine quality. Envelopes had not come in and there was quite an art in folding a letter—unfolding it as well.

"Really what has started Cousin Giles? I hope no one is dead——"

"There would have been a black seal."

"Oh, yes, m'm;" making a curious sound with closed lips. "They are well. Oh, the Thatchers have been visiting them and are coming out here for a week—why, on Saturday, and to-day is Thursday. Chilian, do you hear that?"

"What?" he asked, closing his book over his own letter.

"Why, the Thatchers are coming—on Saturday, not a long notice, and I don't know how many. They have had a nice time in Boston—and Cousin Giles has been beauing them round and seems to like it. He might have sent you word on Tuesday, when you were in;" and Elizabeth's tone expressed a grievance.

"And the house not cleaned! It's been so cold."

"The house is always clean. Don't, I beg of you, Cousin Bessy, turn it upside down and scrub and scour, and wear yourself out and take a bad cold. There are two guest chambers, and I suppose half a dozen more might be made ready."

"That's the man of it. I don't believe a man would ever see dirt until some day when he had to [4]
dig himself out, or call upon the women folks to do it."

Elizabeth always softened, in spite of her austerity, when he called her Bessy. The newer generation indulged in household diminutives occasionally.

"Well, there is to be no regular house-cleaning. We shall want fires a good six weeks yet."

"I don't see why Cousin Giles couldn't have said how many there were. Let me see, Rachel Leverett, who married the Thatcher, was your father's cousin. They went up in Vermont. Then they came to Concord. He"—which meant the head of the house—"went to the State Legislature after the war. He had some sons married. Why, I haven't seen them in years."

"It will be just like meeting strangers," declared Eunice. "It's almost as if we kept an inn."

Chilian turned. "When I am in Boston to-morrow I will hunt up Cousin Giles."

"Oh, that will be good of you."

He slipped his letter into the Latin book he had been going over, and with a slight inclination of the head left the room. The hall was wide, though it ended just beyond this door, where it led to the kitchen. The woodwork was of oak, darkened much by the years that had passed over it. The broad staircase showed signs of the many feet that had trodden up and down.

Chilian's study was directly over the living-room, and next to the sleeping-chamber. This part had been added to the main house, but that was years ago. Bookshelves were ranged on two [5]
sides, but the windows interfered with their course around, two on each of the other sides. There was a wide fireplace between those at the west, and under them low closets, with cushions—ancestors of useful window-seats. A large easy-chair, covered with Cordovan leather, another curiously carved with a straight narrow strip up the back, set off by the side carving. The seat was broad and cushioned. Then one from France, as you could tell by the air and style, that had been in a palace. A low splint rocker, and one with a high back and comfortable cushions, inviting one to take a nap.

The bookcases went about two-thirds of the way up and were ornamented by articles beautiful and grotesque from almost every land, for there had been seafaring men in the Leverett family, and more than one home in Salem could boast of treasures of this sort.

Chilian stirred the fire, sending a shower of sparks up the chimney, and put on a fresh log. Then he settled himself in his chair and fingered his letter in an absent way. The last time Anthony wrote he vaguely suggested changes and chances and the uncertainty of life, rather despondent for a brisk business man who was always seeing opportunities at money-making. Had he been unfortunate in some of his ventures? And it was odd in him to write so soon again. Not [6]
that they were ever frequent correspondents.

He opened the letter slowly. It was tied about with a thread of waxed silk and sealed, so he cut about the seal deliberately; he had a delicate carefulness in all his ways that was rather womanly. Then unfolding it, he began to read.

Was this what the previous letter had meant? Was Anthony Leverett nearing the end, counting his days, finishing up his earthly work, and delegating it to other hands? There was something pathetic in it, and the trust in the uprightness and honor that Anthony Leverett reposed in him touched him keenly. But this part surprised and, at first, annoyed him. He drew his fine brows in a repellent sort of frown.

"Do you remember, Chilian, when you were a lad of eighteen, in your second year at Harvard, you came to Salem to recruit after a period of rather severe study? And you met Alletta Orne, who was four-and-twenty and engaged to me. In some sort of fashion we were all related. Your father had been like a father to me in my later boyhood. And, with a young man's fervor, you fell in love with her. I was sorry then for any pain you suffered, I am glad now; for there is no one else in the wide world I would as soon trust her child and mine to.

"We had been away nearly three years, when we came back, and the baby was born in the house endeared to me by many tender recollections. You were away [7] then, but on our second visit we were the most congenial friends again. I did not think then it would be our last meeting. I had meant, after making my fortune, to return and end my days in my birthplace. My greatest interest was in the commercial house I had established. My first mate, John Corwin, took my place and sailed the vessel. Then my dear wife died, and I had only my little girl left.

"I could hardly believe six months ago that I must die. Should I return, or remain here and sleep beside the one who had filled my soul with her serene and lovely life and her blessed memory? I could not endure the thought of leaving her precious body here alone. So I chose to remain. And now I send my little girl to your care and guardianship without even consulting you. She is amply provided for, though the business this side of the world cannot be settled in some time. I send her with a trusty maid and Captain Corwin, because I do not want her to remember the end. Some day you can tell her I am sleeping beside her dear mother and that we are together in the Better Land. She has been separated considerably from me of late,—I have had to be journeying about on business,—therefore it will not come so hard to her, and though children do not forget, the sorrow softens and has a tender vagueness from the hand of time. [8]

"So I give my little girl to you. If so be you should marry and have children of your own, she will not be crowded out, I know. In the course of years,—for girls grow rapidly up to womanhood,—she may love and marry. Direct her a little here and see that no one takes her for the mere money. I want her to know the sweetness and richness of a true satisfying love."

All important papers, and a sort of diary Anthony Leverett had kept, were to come in the vessel that would bring the little girl in the charge of Captain Corwin.

Chilian Leverett sat for a long while with the letter in his hand, until the log broke in the middle and one end fell over the andiron. Then he started suddenly.

Had he been dreaming of the sweetness of the woman who had so captivated his youthful fancy, almost a dozen years agone? He never thought she had led him astray, and had no blame for her. Perhaps the love for her betrothed had so permeated her whole being that she shed an exquisitely fascinating sweetness all about. He was to her as if he had been her betrothed's younger brother. And when the engagement was confessed he allowed himself no reprehensible longing for the woman so soon to be another's. All his instincts were pure and high, perhaps rather too idealized, though there was much strength and heroism in the old Puritan blood. Right was right in those days. Lines were sharply drawn among those of the old stock. [9]

But there had been years of what one might call living for self, indulgence in studious habits and tastes and the higher intellectual life, much solitary dreaming, although he was by no means a recluse. And to have a little girl come into his life! He would have liked a boy better, he thought. The boy would be out of doors, playing with mates. And now he bethought himself how few small children there were in his branch of the Leverett line. Some of the men and women had not married. His brother and one sister had died in childhood. The first cousins were nearly all older than he, many of them had dropped out of life. A little girl! No chance to decline the trust—well, he would hardly have done that. He knew Anthony Leverett had counted on a serene old age in his native town. And he was not much past middle life. What had befallen him?

Well, there was nothing to be done. He read the letter over again. Then he turned to some papers to compose his mind. There was a stir in the next room, his sleeping-chamber. He always opened the windows and closed the door between. After the dishes were washed and the dining-room and hall brushed up, Elizabeth came upstairs and made the two beds. When he had gone to Cambridge she opened the door between. So she did not disturb him now, but crossed the hall and inspected the two guest-chambers. She had swept them a week or so ago and had settled in [10] her mind that they would do until house-cleaning time. To be sure, if she cleaned them now they would need it when the guests were gone. And Chilian had a man's objection to house-cleaning. It was hardly time to put away blankets. She wished she knew how many guests there would be.

The rooms were full of old Colonial furniture that had been in the family for generations. Every spring Elizabeth polished the mahogany until it shone. She dusted now, though there was hardly

a speck visible. The snow through the winter had laid it, and the spring rains had not allowed it to rear its head.

Chilian put on his coat presently and sallied out for his morning exercise. The family had been connected with shipbuilding to a certain extent, and there was the old warehouse where vessels came in with their precious cargoes from civilized and barbaric lands. For at the close of the Revolutionary War the men of note, many of whom had not disdained privateering, found themselves in possession of idle fleets, that with their able seamen could outsail almost anything afloat. So they struck out for new ventures in unknown seas and new channels of trade. Calcutta, Bombay, Zanzibar, Madagascar, Batavia, and other ports came to know the American flag and the busy enterprising traders.

But the old Salem that was once the capital of the state, the Salem of John Endicott and Roger Williams, of stern Puritanism, of terrible witchcraft horrors, and then of the sturdy and vigorous [11] stand in her differences with the mother country, her patriotism through the darkest days, was fast fading away, just as this grand commercial epoch was destined to merge into science and educational fame later on, and give to the world some master spirits. But as he wended his way hither and thither in a desultory fashion, one thought almost like spoken words kept running through his mind—"A little girl—a little girl in Old Salem"—for the almost two hundred years gave her the right to that eminence, and a little girl from a foreign land seemed incongruous. Not but that there were little girls in Salem, but their life-lines did not touch his. And this one came so near, for the sake of both parents he had loved.

When he came in to dinner, he had made up his mind to say nothing of his letter until the guests had come and gone. He did not wish to be deluged with questions.

He hunted up Cousin Giles the next day, who was quite a real-estate dealer, investing his own and other people's money in sound mortgages, who had been a widower so long that he had quite gone back to bachelorhood.

And he found three Thatcher cousins—a widow, a married one, and a single one, the youngest of the family, but past girlhood. He was asked to take luncheon with them and they proved quite agreeable and intelligent, and much pleased at the prospect of seeing Elizabeth and Eunice [12] Leverett.

"We have been hunting up several of the Boston relatives," said Miss Thatcher, with a kind of winsome smile. "Cousin Giles has been a good directory. We've kept in with so few of them. Father hunted up some of them while he was in the Legislature, but they are so scattered about and many of them dead. Mother was your father's cousin, I believe."

Chilian gave a graceful inclination of the head.

"Elizabeth and Eunice visited us years ago, along after the war when I was first left a widow," explained Mrs. Brent. "Henry went all through it, but was worn out, and died in '88. But I've two nice sons, who are a great comfort. Father was very good to them and me. And they're both promising farmers."

"I tell her that's a good deal to be thankful for," remarked Cousin Giles.

"It is indeed," commented Chilian.

"And I have a lad who is all for study and wants to come in to Harvard. He has been teaching school this winter. His father's quite set against it, and I don't know how it will end. He will be only nineteen in August, and his father thinks he has a hold on him two years longer."

Mrs. Drayton looked up rather appealingly.

"If his mind is made up to that, he will work his way through," said Chilian, and he thought he should like to know the boy. [13]

"You see the next two are girls and they can't help much about a farm. Father really needs him. And I seem to stand between two fires. His teaching term will end in May, but he has planned to take the school next winter. He has made quite a bit of money."

Chilian thought he would be a lad fully worth helping, and made a mental note of it. He liked the mother.

It was settled that they would reach Salem about noon in the stage, the only mode of conveyance, and they parted with a pleased friendliness.

Chilian rehearsed the interview at home to the great delight of the household. Indeed, he had been very well pleased with the prospective visitors and he felt rather thankful for the respite from the shadow the coming event was casting. A little girl! It did annoy him.

He did not allow it to interfere with his duties as host, however. The three ladies had a most delightful visit at Salem, looking up points of interest and hearing old history concerning the Leveretts. Chilian's father had jotted down many facts. There were seafaring uncles, who had brought home trophies; there were men in the family, who had died for their country if they had not filled eminent positions; others who had. How this branch of the family seemed to have dwindled away!

Serena Thatcher was more than pleased with her cousin, though she felt somewhat awed by

his attainments and his rather punctilious ways. Mrs. Brent set him down as a good deal of a Miss Nancy. But the ladies had a delightful time going over family histories and getting relationships disentangled. [14]

When the eventful day of parting came it brought a very real sorrow. They made promises that they would renew their meetings and keep each other in mind.

It was Saturday evening when the Leverett household sat around the cheerful fire in the cozy room where the small family gathered on this evening of the week with their work all done, after the fashion of the past, still strictly observed by many of the older Puritan families. The industrious ladies sat with folded hands. Sometimes Chilian read aloud from a volume of the divines who had finished their good fight.

This night he was gazing idly in the fire, the lines in his face deepening now and then.

"I suppose he *is* tired with all the talk, and rambles, and confusion of the week," Elizabeth thought, stealing furtive glances at him.

He straightened himself presently and made a pretence of clearing his throat, as an embarrassed person often does.

"I have something to tell you," he began. "I thought I would not disturb you while our relatives were here. We found enough to talk about;" with a short half-laugh. [15]

"And it tired you out, I know. We live so quietly that such an event quite upsets us," Eunice said in a gentle, deprecating tone.

"It was very pleasant," he added. "I was a good deal interested in Anthony Drayton. But this is something quite different. Can you recall that I had a letter from the East Indies the morning the word came from Cousin Giles?"

"Why, yes!" Elizabeth started in surprise. "I had really forgotten about it. Business, I suppose, with Anthony Leverett. Why, I think it is high time he came home."

Chilian sighed. "I am afraid—though I cannot see why we should fear so much to enter the other portal, since it is the destiny of all, and we believe in a better world. He was hopelessly ill when he wrote and was winding up some business matters. He is a brave man to meet death so composedly. The only pang is parting from his child."

"Oh, his little girl! Let me see—she must be eight or nine years old. What will become of her?"

"He makes me executor and guardian of the child. She was to start three weeks after his letter with Captain Corwin in the *Flying Star*. That will be due, if it meets with no mishap, from the middle to the last of April."

"But she doesn't come alone!" ejaculated Elizabeth in surprise.

"Yes. He wishes to be buried there beside his wife. And he does not want her to have the remembrance of his death. So he sends her with the woman who has been her nurse and maid the last three years, an Englishwoman." [16]

"Of all things! I wonder what will come next! We seem in the line of surprises. And it's queer they should happen together. A little girl! Chilian, do *you* like it? Why, it will fairly turn the house upside down!"

There was an accent of protest in Elizabeth's tone, showing plainly her unwillingness to accept the situation.

"One little girl can't move much furniture about;" with a sound of humor in his voice.

"Oh, you know what I mean—not actually dragging sofas and tables about, but she will chairs, as you'll see. And lots of other things. Look at the Rendall children. The house always looks as if it had been stirred up with the pudding-stick, and Sally Rendall spends good half her time looking for things they have carted off. Tom and Anstice were digging up the path the day we called, and what do you suppose they had! The tablespoons. And I'll venture to say they were left out of doors."

"There are so many of them," Chilian said, as if in apology.

"And I don't see how we can keep this child away from them. It isn't as if they were low-down people. Sally's father having been a major in the war, and the Rendalls are good stock. Let me see—what's her name? Her mother was called Letty." [17]

"Cynthia. She was named for my mother." Chilian's voice had a reverent softness in it.

"I always thought it a pretty name," said Eunice.

"And I've heard people call it 'Cyn.' I do abominate nicknames."

Elizabeth uttered this with a good deal of vigor. Then she remembered she quite liked Bessy.

No one spoke for some moments. Chilian thought of the sister, whose brief married life had ended in her pretty home at Providence, and how she looked in her coffin with her baby sheltered by one arm. The picture came before him vividly.

Elizabeth liked cleanliness and order. It was natural after a long practice in it. Chilian's particular ways suited her. Year after year had settled them—perhaps she had settled him more definitely, as he liked the way. Eunice was thinking of the little girl who had neither father or mother. She had some unfulfilled dreams. In her youth there had been a lover, and a wedding planned when he came home from his voyage. She had begun to "lay by" for housekeeping. And there were some pretty garments in the trunk upstairs, packed away with other articles. The lover was lost at sea, as befell many another New England coast woman.

She had hoped against hope for several years—men were sometimes restored as by a miracle—but he never came. So she sometimes dreamed of what might have been, of home and children, [18] and it kept her heart tender. Anthony's little girl would make a sight of trouble, she could see that, but a little girl about would be a great pleasure—to her at least. She glanced furtively at Elizabeth, then at Chilian. She could not comfort either of them with this sudden glow and warmth that thrilled through her veins.

"Well, we will be through with house-cleaning before she comes," said the practical and particular housewife. Chilian simply sighed. It was the usual spring ordeal, and did end. But who could predict the ending of the other? [19]

CHAPTER II

THE LITTLE GIRL

Down at the wharf there was much bustle and stir. Vessels were lading for various home ports, fishing craft were going out on their ventures, even a whaler had just fitted up for a long cruise, and the young as well as middle-aged sailors were shouting out farewells. White and black men were running to and fro, laughing, chaffing, and swearing at each other.

There lay the East Indiaman, with her foreign flag as well as that of her country. She had come in about midnight and at early dawn preliminaries had begun. Captain Corwin had been ashore a time or two, looking up and down amid the motley throng, and now he touched his hat and nodded to Chilian Leverett, who picked his way over to him.

"We are somewhat late," he began apologetically. "A little due to rough weather, but one can never fix an exact date."

"All is well, I hope;" in an anxious tone.

"Yes; the child proved a good sailor and was much interested in everything. I was afraid she would take it hard. But she is counting on her father's coming. I don't know how you will ever [20] console her when she learns the truth."

"And he——" Chilian looked intently into the captain's eyes.

"I suppose the end has come before this. They thought he might last a month when we left. It's sad enough. He should have lived to be ninety. But matters went well with him, and he has been an honest, kindly, upright man with a large heart. I've lost my best friend and adviser."

The captain drew his rough coat-sleeve across his face and looked past Chilian, winking hard.

"There's a sight of business when we come to that, Mr. Leverett, but now—will you go on board? The maid is a most excellent and sensible person. They are in the cabin."

"Yes," he answered and followed with a curious throb at his heart—pity for the orphaned child and a sense of responsibility he was conscious that he accepted unwillingly, yet he would do his duty to the uttermost.

Already some officials were on hand, for at this period Salem was really a notable port. Chilian passed them with a bow, followed the captain down the gangplank, stared a little at the foreign deck-hands in their odd habiliments, stepped over boxes and bales in canvas and matting full of Oriental fragrance that from the closeness was almost stifling, coming from the clear air. Then he [21] was ushered into the cabin, that was replete with Orientalism as well.

A rather tall woman rose to meet him.

"This is Mistress Rachel Winn, who has mothered the little girl for several years, Mr. Leverett, her relative and guardian, and—Cynthia——"

The child threw herself down on the couch.

"I want to go back home. I want to see my father, and Aymeer, and Babo, and Nalla. I can't stay here."

"But perhaps your father will bring them when he comes. Don't you remember he told you he lived here when he was a little boy, and what nice times he had with the cousin he loved? And the cousin is here to bid you welcome. Come and speak to him. We cannot go back at once, the ship has to unload her cargo and take in ever so many other things. See, here is Cousin Leverett."

She sat up, made a forward movement as if she would rise, but simply stared.

"Yes, I am Cousin Leverett." He began advancing and held out his hand.

"And very glad to see such an excellent traveller as you have been," said the captain. "And such a nice little girl. You are an American girl; you know your father told you that. And this is your native town. Cousin Leverett remembers you when you were very little."

"But I don't remember you;" taking no notice of the proffered hand. [22]

"Then you must get acquainted with me. And you must tell me about your life and your father, whom I have not seen in a long, long time. Let us shake hands."

She held out hers then and raised herself to her feet.

"Oh, how soft your hands are," she cried, "just like Nalla's. But they are very white. Nalla's were brown."

"And who was Nalla?"

"She used to come and play with me and make chains out of shells, and make bracelets and anklets, and dance. And she used to go to the Sahibs' house and dance with snakes. I'm afraid of them. Are you?"

"Indeed I am, of the large ones," he said at a venture.

He fancied that he felt a gentle pressure of sympathetic approval. She glanced up for an instant and her eyes transfixed him. They were a deep wonderful blue, almost black at the pupil, then raying off a little lighter. It made him think of a star in the winter midnight sky with a halo around it. The lashes were long and nearly black. Otherwise she had little claim to beauty just then. Her complexion had a tawny hue made by sun and wind, her hair was light, but it had a peculiar sunburned tint, though it was fine and abundant and hung in loose curls about her shoulders. Her nose was the only Leverett feature—it was straight, rather small, and had the [23] flexibility that betrayed passing emotions. The Leverett lips were thin, hers were full in the middle, giving a certain roundness to the mouth.

"Are there any where you live?" hesitatingly.

"Any?" Then he recalled the subject they had touched upon. "Oh, no; you seldom see them, and they are mostly harmless."

"Have you any little girls in your house?"

"No, I am sorry to say."

"There were two little English girls on shipboard at first. They went on board another vessel after a while. I liked them very much. They knew a great many things about countries. I can read, but I don't a great deal. Sometimes father would tell me about America. There are a great many countries in it, and once they had a big war. They had wars, too, in India. Why must people kill each other?"

"There seem to be reasons. A little girl could not understand them all, I think;" and how could he explain them?

"Oh, there is Captain Corwin!" She flew across the cabin with outstretched arms, which she clasped about him.

"Well, have you been getting acquainted with—he will be your uncle, I suppose. What title are you going to take with the child, Mr. Leverett?"

Chilian Leverett colored, without a cause he thought, and it annoyed him. [24]

"Are you going back to India to-day?" She was not interested in Chilian Leverett's answer.

Captain Corwin laughed heartily and patted her shoulder.

"Not to-day, nor even next week. The cargo will have to be taken off, little missy, and a new one stowed away. And I fancy there must be some repairs. I shall stay in town and run down to Marblehead. So you will see me quite often."

"And you are coming back again from India?"

"Oh, I hope so. More than once."

"You will bring father then. It is such a long while to wait;" and she sighed.

The men exchanged glances.

"I want to see him so much. Couldn't I go back with you?"

"Don't you remember I told you the other evening he might start before I reached India again? Don't you want to go ashore and see Salem? Ask Miss Rachel to get you ready."

Rachel was beckoning to her. "Let us go up on deck," she said. "It's a strange country to me as well as to you. And I fancy the men want to talk."

She crossed the cabin slowly, not quite certain what she did desire most, except to see her father.

"You will have a rather sorry task. But Captain Ant'ny would have it so. He wanted to feel that she would be among friends. He had the fullest confidence that you could manage wisely. There is a great box of papers, instructions, etc. You are appointed her guardian and trustee. I've [25] brought boxes of stuff that the officers will have to go through. But the legal matters you may take with you. He tried to make it as easy as he could. She will have considerable of a fortune, and more to come when matters get settled on the other side. A cousin of the Bannings came out,—English are great hands to keep things in the family. But it is one of the biggest importing houses out there and it owes its success to the long and wise head of Captain Anthony. They want young Banning in it and the matter was about settled when we came away, but the payments will run over several years. All these papers will be sent to you. The Bannings are upright business men, and I think you need have no fear. But the child's fortune is to be invested on this side of the water. Oh, you cannot realize what a trial it was to give up all thoughts of ending his days here."

Captain Corwin brushed some tears from his honest, weather-beaten face.

"But if he had started earlier——"

"He would not believe the trouble would prove fatal. And when it was declared there was so much to put in order. Then he could not bear to think of leaving his wife alone there, though it's only the shell after all, and, if we believe the Good Book, we shall see the real part over there that was so much to us. But he could not explain the parting to the child, though death is such a common thing out there. Yet it *is* hard to believe our own can die. We are never ready for that. [26] How you will manage——"

The customs officers had come. Captain Corwin went out to meet them. Chilian Leverett dropped into the well-worn leather-covered chair that had been fine in its day. A heavy burthen had been laid upon him. He was not fond of business. Cousin Giles might be of some assistance; he grasped at the thought as if he had been a drowning man and this the straw. And the child, somehow, was different from the average child, he felt; though he was not certain what the average child would unfold day after day. What would Elizabeth think? Eunice he could count on. Though she yielded on many points in that tacit sort of way, she was by no means an echo of her sister.

The three men entered the cabin. Chilian was no stranger to the officials, who greeted him cordially and who sympathized with Captain Anthony Leverett's untimely ending, as he was hardly past middle life.

"Why, it will be quite a change to have a child in your household," said Josiah Ward. "But if she is like mine, I advise you not to give her the run of your study. But there are two ladies to look after her;" and he smiled.

It was surmised that Mr. Ward, a widower of two years' standing, had glanced more than once in the direction of Miss Eunice Leverett.

Rachel came back at this juncture. The little girl had an accession of shyness and would only [27] nod to the strangers. Then they made ready to leave the vessel. Chilian took his japanned case of important papers; the rest of the luggage would be sent after inspection.

A primitive street it was in those days, and the fine wharves of the present were rather rude if busy places. Over beyond they could see the river,—South River,—and that was alive with various small craft.

"It seems almost like home," said Rachel Winn, pausing to take a survey. "You do not find this rural aspect in India."

"How long were you there?" asked Chilian.

"Seven years. I went out with my brother, who had just married my dearest friend. He died the third year, and she soon after married a military man. Then I took charge of a little lame boy and was mostly up in the mountains until he was sent to England, when Captain Leverett's hospitable doors opened to me. Believe me, I was sorry to leave him at this crisis. Yet it was his wish;" and she glanced at Cynthia.

"Why did we come away?" demanded the child passionately. "Oh, Rachel, are you sure father will come? It takes so long, so long;" and there were tears in her voice.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Chilian.

There was a white picket fence across the sort of courtyard that had a broad paved path leading up to the front door, bordered by shrubs that would presently be in bloom, and spaces between for smaller plants. This was the delight of Eunice's heart. A square but rather ornate [28] porch, with fluted columns, supporting the outer edge of the roof, and an elaborately carved hall-door with a fanlight overhead. The stoop stood up some five steps, and at the sides there were benches for out-of-doors comfort on summer nights. A brass knocker, with a lion's head, announced visitors. Chilian, however, let himself in with his latchkey. But both sisters met the party in the hall.

"And this is Anthony's little girl!" said Elizabeth. "Child, let me look at you——"

But the child had a perverse fit at that moment and turned away her head, to the elder's surprise and almost displeasure.

"This is Miss Winn," interrupted Chilian. "My household guardians and cousins, Miss Elizabeth and Miss Eunice Leverett. I dare say our guests feel strange to be on land, after such a long journey."

"It seems almost incredible that one can stand it, but we see them starting every few days for distant ports. My farthest journey has been to Providence; but, land alive! you don't know where that is, and it's no great distance. Will you not come and have a cup of tea or coffee?"

"Thank you. We had breakfast not long ago, it seems."

"Let me take you to your room," said Eunice. "And I hope you will soon feel at home with us. [29] We are quiet people, but we shall endeavor to make you comfortable. Cynthia, will you not shake hands with me?"

The soft, rather pleading voice attracted the child. She glanced up shyly and then held out a tiny hand hesitatingly.

"She is rather backward at first," explained Rachel, who followed the hostess up the broad stairway.

One of the guest-chambers had been set aside for their use after much discussion as to whether one or two would be needed. A smaller one opened into this, and a large closet was at the side.

"You can take off your things—I suppose your boxes, or whatever you have, will be here presently. The bureau is empty and this chest of drawers. We are rather old-fashioned people, and the house is the same as it was in the time of Chilian's father. The captain made one visit here, when the little girl was about four. It must have been hard for him to lose his wife in a strange country like that. I suppose there are not many Americans?"

"No; there are numbers of Englishwomen, wives of soldiers and traders, though I think most of them long to get home. They do not seem to take root easily."

"I shouldn't think they would, in that idolatrous country. The accounts of heathendom are appalling. And that car of Juggernaut, and drowning their poor little babies! They do not seem to make much of girl children." [30]

"Indeed, they do not, only as in some families they are wanted for wives. But the devotion of mothers to their sons is wonderful."

Rachel had laid aside a silk coat that filled Eunice with a sort of wonder, being brocaded with beautiful leaves and roses that seemed as if they must have been worked by hand, they stood out so clearly. The child appeared fantastically attired to her plainer eyes, and her slim arms were weighted with bracelets. In her dainty ears were some splendid sapphires.

"I do hope you will soon feel at home," Eunice said from a full heart, if there was a rather awkward feeling about it. Yet she liked Miss Winn's face. It had a kindly and intelligent aspect and was medium in all respects. The social lines in the town, indeed in all the Eastern towns, were not sharply defined as to mistress and maid. True, many households preferred black servants; in not a few some elderly relative looked after the household, or a bound-out girl was trained in industrious ways.

There had been some discussion as to what sphere this Miss Winn would occupy. If she was simply the attendant on an over-indulged child, an uneducated person, as many of the English maids were who came over to better their conditions or get husbands, it might be rather awkward. But the woman was certainly well-bred and used her English in a correct manner.

"Perhaps you will get to feeling more at home if you come down to the sitting-room, since there [31] is nothing to unpack;" with a faint smile.

Cynthia had been looking out of the window. "How queer it all is!" she said. "I think I do not quite like it. And how funny one feels. I want to go this way;" and she swayed from side to side.

"The motion of the vessel," interposed Rachel. "I have heard it took days to get over it."

Meanwhile, downstairs Elizabeth had studied her Cousin Chilian.

"The child is not at all pretty," she began rather sharply. "And her mother was considered a beautiful young woman, I believe."

"Yes; but a long voyage and shipboard living may not be conducive to the development of beauty. And children seldom are at that age."

"The Goodell children are pretty, I am sure, with their fine complexions. And the Bates girls. She has a furtive sort of look. Oh, I hope she isn't deceitful and untrue. Those heathen nations, I believe, are given largely to falsehood, and she has lived among them so long without any mother's care. It seems as if a pretty girl like Alletta Orne might have found some one at home to marry and reared her child in a Christian land."

"Do not let us begin by borrowing trouble. It always comes fast enough."

"And I can foresee that we shall have plenty of it. Well, I suppose it must be endured. There! my bread is light enough to go in the oven—running over, likely as not." [32]

So, when they came downstairs, Miss Elizabeth was in the kitchen, immersed in her baking interest.

A large gray cat lay curled up on a cushion. Cynthia went straight over to it, but it glanced at her with wild eyes, jumped down, and disappeared through the doorway.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in accents of disappointment, glancing up at Chilian.

"Pussy is not used to children. He always runs away from them. But I think he will like you when he gets acquainted."

She turned to the window with a swelling heart. It seemed so cold and strange. It was better on shipboard, she thought. She had come to know the sailors quite well and Missy had grown to be a great favorite with them. There was always something cheerful going on. They sang songs in their loud clear voices, or whistled merry tunes. They danced as well. She was quite used to the dancing-girls at Calcutta, and when they were at Hong Kong or other ports. But the Indian girls pleased her best.

The sailors seemed always full of fun, even in the worst of times. During some fearful storms she was safely housed in the cabin, and it amused her to see the things pitch and roll as far as their chains would allow them. Sometimes, too, they had to hold the food in their hands, but she never knew the danger of the worst storms. Rachel would not admit that she was afraid, and the [33] captain said, "Yes, we're having a stiff blow, but the *Flying Star* has weathered many a gale before." And here it was so very quiet. It looked dreary outside, with the leafless trees. She liked the toss and tumult of the waves with their snowy, jewelled crests, and the clouds scudding along the sky, which she imagined was another sea full of ships. Often they went in port and there was nothing left but the blue sky above—a great hollow vault. And when the sun shone the real sea and ocean was in flames of such splendid colors. There was no end of curious people at ports where they stopped for supplies, there was always something strange, even when they were days alone on the water. For the sunset and sunrise were never twice alike. Then the moon from its tiny crescent to the great round globe that illumined the world with her fairy richness and scattered jewels on every crested wave. She had watched it turn the other way and grow smaller and smaller until you saw it vaguely in the morning.

She was so interested in the stories they told about it, the signs and wonders they ascribed to it.

"And was it ever a real world like that we have left behind?" she asked of the captain. "Were there people in it? And land, and rivers, and growing things, and flowers?" and her wondering eyes grew larger.

"No one can tell now. Some astronomers believe it a burned-out world and the things we take for a man," laughing, "and the cow ready to jump off, are remnants of roads, and forests, and [34] mountains."

"You *can* see the man in the moon," she returned decisively. "Sometimes he laughs. And the cow has great horns. I should be afraid of them if I met such a cow. Ours are so small and tame."

"You will see large ones in Salem. But I think, for the most part, they are gentle."

She never wearied talking over the strange things. And so she came to have her head filled with wonderful lore that indeed cropped out now and then all her life long until she felt as if she had really been in fairyland.

It seemed stranger here than on shipboard. The others were going through the ceremony of getting acquainted. Rachel Winn's voice had a soft sound, with an almost foreign accent. Eunice's, though low-pitched, had a clear resonance. Now and then Chilian Leverett made a comment, or asked a question, but she was not heeding them. Her heart and mind had wandered back to her father and that wonderful land where nothing ever seemed bleak, though in long hot droughts it was arid. But there were always temples, and palaces, and picturesque huts, and women and children in gay attire, old men kneeling somewhere, praying but keeping a sharp lookout for alms.

Chilian Leverett had been watching the small face and wondering at the changes passing over it. Now he saw some tears slowly coursing down the pale cheeks, and his heart was moved with [35] infinite pity.

Suddenly a robin alighted on the limb of a tree and began picking at the buds. Then he held his head up straight, swelled out his brownish red breast, and poured forth such a volume of melody that the effort fairly made him dance with joy. Spring had surely come! It was the time of love and joy, and all things made over new.

She turned a trifle. Her face was transfigured with delight. Her eyes shone, though the tears were still wet on her cheek. [36]

CHAPTER III

A STRANGER, YET AT HOME

Rachel Winn settled herself to the new order of things more readily than the Leveretts. Or rather she seemed to take the lead in arrangements for herself and her charge. She was after all a sort of nurse and waiting-maid, though she had a fine dignity about it that even Elizabeth could not gainsay. She was to be one of the family, there could be no objection to that in the simple New England living. Though it was true, times were changing greatly since the days of war and privation, and perhaps the mingling of people from other states, the growing responsibility of being part of a great commonwealth. Servants were being relegated to a different position. Boston in a certain fashion set the pace, though Salem held up her head proudly. Were not her seaports the busy mart of the Eastern shore? Stores of finery, silks and laces, and marvellous Indian embroidery went down to Boston and the houses were enriched with choice china that in the next hundred years was to be handed down as heirlooms. Fine houses were being built, choice woods came from southern ports by vessels that believed they could find fortunes nearer [37]
home than China or India. But they could grow no spices, or coffees, or teas, and they must come from the Orient. No looms could turn out such exquisite fabrics as yet, though housewives were to be proud of their home-made drapery for a generation or two.

Chilian spent a large part of that first night inspecting his box of papers. There was a journal-like letter in which Anthony Leverett had jotted down many things he hardly dared say in his letter; indeed, there was not sufficient space. As soon as he had learned the serious nature of his disease, he had begun to put his house in order and consider the future welfare of his child. Some lines touched Chilian deeply, the trust and dependence he was not at all sure he could fulfil, but he felt he *must* rouse himself to the earnest endeavor. The father had a passionate love for his child, he was making a fortune for her, counting the years when he should return and have a home of his own, when Cynthia would grow up and marry and there would be grandchildren to climb his knees. India was no place for a woman child to grow up in, there were no chances for education or accomplishment, and next to no society. After all there was not, and never would be, such a country as the new world that had struggled so long and bravely for her independence, and now had only to go on developing her grand theories. Crowned heads might look on doubtingly, but the foundation had been laid in justice and truth and equality of right. It quite thrilled him that this man, amassing money in a far-away land, could see so clearly and have no [38]
doubts about its future greatness.

To Captain Corwin, his good, trusty friend, he had willed half the value of the *Flying Star*. The money from his part was to be invested, as the payments came in, in real estate in Salem, which was to be the shipping mart of the New England coast, at least, and run a race with New York, he thought. So with the stations at Calcutta and Hong Kong in the hands of the Bannings. And there were treasures that would answer for a wedding dowry when the time came. If possible, he would like Rachel Winn retained; he had the highest confidence in her, and she had no relatives to call her back to England. He had given her much of the family history, and described the town and the people, so that it would not seem so new and strange to her.

He was not asking all this as a favor. Chilian was touched by the provision made for himself, which it would be quite impossible to decline, he saw. True it would break in upon his leisurely, student life, yet he felt he could not in honor refuse to accept the trust.

Rachel Winn studied the arrangements of the rooms at their disposal. Her young mistress was not a child taken out of benevolence or relationship. She must have her standing from the very beginning, and she fancied Elizabeth was inclined to consider her a sort of interloper. [39]

"If it makes no difference, I will take the small room," she announced to her. "There are some pieces of furniture on the vessel that Captain Leverett particularly wished her to keep, and as she grows older she will cherish them——"

"That great room for such a child!" In her amazement, Elizabeth spoke without thought. She was not used to seeing children set in the very forefront. In her day, indeed, yet in some families the large open garret was considered the place for children.

"You see, she was used to it at home—over there, I mean;" with a nod of the head. "Her father's room was one side, mine on the other. Of course, in a way I shall share it with her. I will keep it in order and look after her clothes, and sew for her. But I prefer the smaller one."

Elizabeth was aghast. One of the best spare chambers, with the furnishings that had come from England a hundred years before. On the other side she and Eunice shared a plainly appointed room with some of their very own belongings. There was still another, but the closet was small. She had asked Chilian where they should be placed and he had chosen this. It was his house, of course——

Whether it would have ended in a discussion could not to be told, for at that moment a dray drove up with some boxes and a piece of furniture so wrapped and protected that it was quite impossible to guess at its name. [40]

Chilian came out and ran lightly down the stairs; and then called Elizabeth.

"Where had the boxes better go? They will have to be unpacked, I suppose;" helplessly.

"There are more to come," announced the man. "Enough to set up housekeeping, if the right sort of things are in them;" and he gave a short laugh.

Miss Winn came downstairs. "Isn't there a garret to the house?" she asked, looking from one to the other. "I packed them up, but I can hardly tell——"

"Yes; we could store half the vessel's contents in it. Well, not exactly that. A ship's hold is a capacious place. Yes, the boxes might go there. Have you any idea what this is?"

"A sort of desk and bookcase. A very handsome thing the captain set great store by."

The men shouldered the boxes and Elizabeth convoyed them. Silas was spading up the garden and came at the call.

It was a work of some labor to get the article out of its secure casings. It disclosed a very handsome piece of furniture in the escritoire style, carved and inlaid not only with beautiful woods, but much silver. Chilian surveyed it with admiration.

"That must stand in the parlor," he decided. "But some one must come and help. I'm afraid I am not sufficiently robust. Silas, see if you can't find the Uphams' man. He was working there a short time ago."

"If there's more to come, it is hardly worth while to clear up," began Elizabeth. "I hope it will soon follow." [41]

Chilian directed the two men, who found it still quite a burthen. Elizabeth opened the parlor shutter unwillingly, and the men set it in the middle of the floor.

There were two large rooms held almost sacred by both sisters. They were separated by an archway, apparently upheld on each end by a fluted column. Both rooms had a wide chimney-piece, the mantel and its supports elaborately carved and painted white. Two windows were in each end, draped with soft crimson curtains. The floor was polished, with a rug laid down in the centre. It was furnished in a manner that would have delighted a connoisseur, but Elizabeth did not admire the conglomeration. They were family relics and seemed to have little relation with one another, yet they were harmonious. There was a thin-legged spinet, with a Latin legend running across the front of the cover, which was always down. The chairs were not made for lounging, that was plain; and the sofa, with its rolling ends and claw feet, had been polished until the haircloth looked like satin. A dead and gone Leverett bride had imported that from London.

When the East Indian article had been consigned to an appropriate space, it looked as much at home as if it had lived there half a century. Then the parlor was shut up again, the mat in the hall shaken out, the front door bolted. Miss Winn had asked for a hammer and chisel that she might open one of the boxes. [42]

"Take Silas. That is a man's work," said Chilian.

Cynthia was in the sitting-room, where it was still chilly enough to have a fire. Eunice was knotting fringe for a bedspread, and it interested the child wonderfully. She was not a little shocked to find a child of nine knew nothing about sewing, had never hemmed ruffles, nor done overseam, or knit, or it seemed anything useful.

"Why, when I was a little girl of your age I could spin in the little wheel."

"What did you spin?"

"Why, thread, of course, linen thread made from flax."

"Were you a truly little girl?" in surprise.

"Why, child, don't you know anything?" Then Miss Eunice laughed softly and patted the small shoulder, looking kindly into the wondering eyes. There was no hurt in her tone and the words rather amused.

"I know a great many things. I can read some Latin, and I know about Greece and its splendid heroes who conquered a good deal of the world. There was Alexander the Great and Philip of Macedon. And Tamerlane, who conquered nearly all Asia. And—and Confucius, the great man of China, who was a wise philosopher, and wrote a bible——"

"Oh, no; not a bible!" interrupted Miss Eunice, horrified. "There is only one Bible, my dear, and that is the Word of God." [43]

"But the other is the bible of the Chinese, and some of them believe Confucius was a god."

"That is quite impossible, my dear;" in a rather decisive, but still gentle tone.

"And there is Brahma, and Vishnu, and there are ever so many gods in India. The people pray to them. And temples. When they want anything very much, they go and pray for it. There was a woman whose little son was very ill, and if he lived he was going to be a great prince, or something, and she gathered up her precious stones and her necklace and took them to the temple for the god. Father sent an English doctor, but they wouldn't let him see the little boy. He was so pretty, too. I used to see him in the court."

"And did he live?" Miss Eunice asked, much interested.

"No; he didn't. And the father beat her for losing the jewels."

"You see, those gods have no power."

"Did you ever pray for anything you wanted very much?"

Cynthia's bright eyes studied the placid face before her.

"Yes," the lips murmured faintly.

"And did you get it?"

A flush stole over the puzzled countenance.

"My dear, God doesn't see as we do. And He knows what is best for us, and gives us that. [44]
Maybe our prayer wasn't right."

"How can you tell when a prayer is right or wrong?" inquired the young theologian.

"Why, you have to leave that to God;" in a low, resigned tone.

"I didn't want to come here. I wanted to stay with father. I didn't know there was any one beside, and I do not believe any one will ever love me so well. But he promised to come when the business was all done. So I prayed to the God of father's Bible, and I went to the temple with Nalla and put down a half-crown—it was all the money I had. But"—her eyes filled with tears and her voice had a break in it—"father begged so, and I came. But if Captain Corwin does not bring him next time I shall go back. I can't live without him."

The mild blue eyes of Miss Eunice filled with tears as well. She was not sure this had been the wisest course. The absolute truth was always best. But she temporized also in a vague fashion.

"Yes; you can tell then. And you may come to like us so well you may stay content."

"Oh, if he comes! Then it will be all right. And you think I ought to pray for that?"

It was a cruel strait for Miss Eunice and staggered her faith. She was not to lead astray or harm "one of the least of these." But the child *was* a heathen with no real knowledge of the true God. Like a vision almost, Miss Eunice looked back at her own childhood, and the awful, [45]
overshadowing power she believed was God, who wrote down every wicked thought and wrong deed, and would confront her with them at the Judgment Day. She prayed nightly, often in the night, when she woke up, and she was no surer of God's love than this little heathen child.

"It is right to pray for the things we want, but to be resigned if God doesn't see fit to give them to us."

"Then the prayers are thrown away. And do you know just what God is?"

"My dear!" in a shocked tone, "no one can tell. It is one of the mysteries to be revealed when we see Him as He truly is at the last day. A little girl cannot understand it. I do not, and I have sought the truth many years. Now I am trusting, because I feel assured He will do what is right. Tell me something about your life with your father."

"Oh, things were so different there. Houses, and there were always servants, so you didn't ever need to fan yourself. Babo and Nalla were always about. Babo used to take me out in a chair that had curtains around and a big umbrella overhead. Sometimes Chandra went with him. And the streets were funny and crooked, and houses set anywhere in them. I liked going up in the mountains best, it wasn't so hot. And the trees were splendid, and beautiful vines and flowers of all sorts. Mrs. Dallas went the last time. She had two girls and a big boy. I did not like him. He [46]
would pinch my arms and then say he didn't. I liked the girls, one was larger than I. And we swung in the hammocks the vines made. Only I was afraid of the snakes, and there are so many everywhere. Alfred liked to kill them."

She shuddered a little and glanced about the room with dilated eyes.

"They come into your houses sometimes. Nalla used to catch them and sling them hard on the ground, and that stunned them. And we used to make wreaths of the beautiful flowers. Agnes Dallas knew so many stories about fairies, little people who come out at night, when the moon shines, and dance round in rings. They slip in houses, and the nice ones do some work, but the wicked ones sour the milk, and spoil the bread, and hide things. And, sometimes, they change children into a cat, or a rabbit, or something, and it is seven years before you can get your own shape again. Do you have them here?"

"There is no such thing. That is all falsehood," was the decisive comment.

"But—Agnes knew of their coming. And she had seen them dancing on the grass. But if you speak or go near them, they disappear."

Miss Winn came out to the sitting-room.

"Oh, you are here," she said. "I thought you were out of doors. You ought to take a run. What a wonderful garret you have upstairs, Miss Eunice. But I am afraid we shall fill it up sadly. There were so many things to bring. I do not believe we shall find use for half of them. I want a few [47]
mouthfuls of fresh air. I suppose I can walk up the street without danger of getting lost if I turn

square around when I return? Don't you want to come, Cynthia?"

Cynthia was ready.

"You had better wrap up warm. It gets chilly towards night."

"It was a long stretch on shipboard. We stopped at several ports, however. But I am glad to be on solid ground. Come, child."

She had brought down a wrap and hood. Cynthia was glad of something new, though she liked Miss Eunice.

They turned a rather rounding corner and went on to a sort of market-place, where sweepers were gathering up the débris after the day's sales. They glanced about the city. Salem had made rapid strides since the grand declaration of peace, but at the end of the century it was far from the grandeur the next twenty years would give it.

"There are no palaces and no temples," said Cynthia, rather complainingly. "And how white all the people are. Do you suppose they have been ill?"

"Oh, no; they have been housed up during the winter, and the climate is cold. And, you know, they are of a different race. This part, New England, was settled mostly from old England."

"Are you going to like it, Rachel?" [48]

"Why—I don't quite know. You can't tell at once about a strange place."

"Miss Eunice is nice. But she has some queer ideas."

"Or is it a little girl, named Cynthia Leverett, who has queer ideas that she has brought largely from a far-off country?"

The child laughed. Then she saw some girls and boys playing tag in the street, laughing and squealing when they were caught, or when they narrowly missed. And some empty carts went rattling by, with now and then a stately coach, or a man on horseback, attired in the fashion of the times. The sun suddenly dropped down.

"We had better turn about," declared Miss Winn. "It will not do to be late for supper."

The walk had not been straight, but her gift of locality was good. They passed the market-place again, made the winding turn, and found the lighted lamps gave the house a cheerful aspect.

Miss Eunice had put away her knotting and begun to lay the cloth when Elizabeth entered, her face clouded over.

"I'm sure I don't see why Providence should send this avalanche upon us to destroy our peace and comfort," she began almost angrily. "The Thatchers' visit was pleasant, though that made a sight of clearing up afterward. And we had hardly gotten over that when this must happen. I was going to put that white quilt in the frame, but the garret will be turned upside down for no one [49] knows how long! Such a mess of stuff, and more coming. There's enough in this house without any more being added to it."

"But it was natural Captain Anthony should want his child to have something belonging to him, maybe her mother, too. And goodness knows there's room enough in the garret. It isn't half full with his traps, and there's some of ours. And there's the loft over the kitchen."

"Well, we want some place to dry clothes in rainy weather. And when I sweep I want to move things about, not sweep just in front of them, and have the dust settle in rows behind. Chilian didn't know what a lot there would be, though he might have looked it over on the ship. When it is all through, the house will need a thorough cleaning again. And what *do* you think, Eunice! She's going to put the child in that big bed and she sleep in the little one! The best room in the house! I'm sorry they have it."

Eunice was roused a little.

"That doesn't seem the proper thing. But maybe she thought—I do suppose the child has had the best of everything."

"I don't believe in pampering children. And I don't altogether like the woman. I do wonder if we will have to keep her. A girl of nine is old enough to look after herself, and begin to keep her own clothes and her room in order." [50]

"It's been very different out in India. And I do suppose Anthony was over-indulgent, she having no mother to train her."

"We'll have our hands full, Eunice, when the tussle really begins."

"Oh, I do not think she will be hard to manage. She seems rather shy——"

"Those eyes of hers ain't so deep for nothing. She hasn't the Leverett mouth, and those full lips are wilful and saucy, generally speaking. Letty Orne was a pretty girl, as I remember. Strange, now, when you come to think of it, that the child should have been born in this house. But she'll never have any beauty to spare, that's certain. For the land sakes, Eunice, look at the time and you dawdling over the table. I'm tired as a dog after a long race."

Elizabeth dropped into a chair. In her secret heart Eunice knew that when her sister was tired out she was fractious; she loved her too well to say cross words.

"Shall we have fish or cold meat?" she asked mildly.

"Oh, I don't care! Well, fish. There will be meat enough for to-morrow's dinner if it isn't meddled with."

The fish was salted down in the season, soaked a little, laid in spiced vinegar for a few hours, cut in thin slices, and was very appetizing. Eunice went about with no useless flutter, she stepped lightly and never made any clatter with dishes. The tea china, thin and lovely, the piles of white [51] bread and brown, molasses gingerbread and frosted sugar cake, stewed dried fruit and rich preserves, made an inviting-looking table. Chilian came in and made himself neat, as usual, then the guests.

Cynthia was very quiet. Twice Miss Winn answered a question for her. She scarcely ate anything. Then she said wearily:

"I am so tired and sleepy. Can't I go to bed?" [52]

CHAPTER IV

UNWELCOME

Miss Winn and her charge went down to the ship the next morning with Chilian Leverett. Elizabeth inspected the rooms. She was not meddlesome, nor over-curious generally, but with a feeling of possessorship and responsibility in the house, she wanted to know how far she could trust the newcomers. The beds were well made, but closets and drawers were rather awry. She did begrudge the best chamber, and wondered whether it would not be possible to change them about presently. True, they seldom had guests.

Then a new load of boxes came, with two trunks, and several more pieces of furniture. The latter were left standing in the hall. The garret had been a sort of fetich with Elizabeth. There were dried herbs hanging to the rafters in their muslin bags, so as not to make a litter and mostly for the fragrance. There was not a cobweb anywhere. On one side of the sloping roof were ranged their own trunks and chests, two of cedar, in which woollen clothes and blankets passed the summer, securely hidden from moths. In one gable were miscellaneous household articles, a few chairs good enough to be repaired, a more than century-old cherry table, spinning-wheels, a [53] bedstead piled high with a feather bed, and numberless pillows, for Elizabeth thought it her duty to make a new pair every year, as they kept a flock of geese that spent their days in a small cove on South River.

The interloper boxes could make a row down the cleared side. That left the centre, the highest part, clear for drying clothes, which probably would not be needed until winter. But careful Elizabeth planned ahead for every emergency. True, the emergency did not always fit the plans, but it gave her tense spirit a rest.

The Salem air was fragrant, with all manner of sweet springtime odors—the ship was not. Things that had been stored in the hold came up with a certain old smell and a little mustiness. First, Cynthia held her nose and made a wry face. But it was delightful to run about and exchange greetings with the sailors, who seemed merry enough over their work.

"Well, missy," said the captain, catching her in his arms as she ran, "how do you like living on dry land? You haven't lost your sea legs yet, that's plain."

"It's very queer. There are just tiny leaves coming out on the trees, and a few curious white flowers, little bells, coming up in the garden, and crocus in pretty colors. But I don't like it very much. Miss Eunice is nice and has such a soft voice. And the houses are so funny and shut up, and there are no servants about, nor any one praying on the corners and holding out a basin for [54] rice; and no piles of fruit for sale."

"No; this isn't the time of year for fruit;" and there was a funny twinkle in the captain's eye. "Just wait until August and September."

Cynthia considered. "That is three and four months away. Father will be here then;" with a child's confidence.

"And there are berries earlier, and cherries, and then some sugar pears. Oh, you will be feasted. And you'll like Cousin Leverett, when you come to get acquainted with him. You will go to school, too, and know lots of little girls. You won't want to go back to India."

"Unless father shouldn't come. Oh, he surely will, because, you see, I'm praying ever so many times a day."

"That's right;" with a cheerful nod.

"When are you going back?"

"In about a month, I calculate."

She sighed and looked out over the great stretch of waters. "What is that long point down there?" she asked suddenly.

"That's Salem Neck, and there is Winter Island. They are always building ships down there and turn out some mighty fine ones. And fishing; there's a sight of cod, and haddock, and mackerel, and all the other fish in season. They salt them and take them half over the world. And there's a rope-walk you'd enjoy seeing, leastways you would if you were a boy. And there are some stores. [55] We have lots of goods consigned to the Merrits. Salem's a big place, now I tell you!"

"Bigger than Calcutta?"

"Sho' now! Calcutta can't hold a candle to it."

The captain's cabin was being dismantled for repairs and cleaning. She glanced in it. How many days she had spent here! Everything was in disorder, yet there was a certain home remembrance that touched the child's heart, and brought tears to her eyes.

"Oh, are you here?" It was Chilian Leverett's voice, and he held out his hand. She looked so bright now and there was a little color in her cheeks, an eager interest about her. He was afraid she was going to be a rather dull child.

"Yes; it's almost like home, you know; only when we lived here it wasn't so topsy-turvy."

"Did you feel queer when you woke up this morning?" thinking it his duty to smile.

"Oh, I didn't know where I was. It seemed as if I was being smothered in something. And it didn't toss and rock. Oh, there were some birds singing." She laughed gleefully. "Then I saw Rachel, and it came to me in little bits, but it seems such a long, long while since yesterday morning."

"Where is Miss Winn? I want to see her a moment." [56]

"She has been looking over some things as they came up from the hold," said the captain. "Oh, here she is!"

Chilian took her aside for a moment. It was necessary for him to go in to Boston and he wanted to make a few suggestions, so that any of Elizabeth's strictures might not offend. He began to perceive the child and her attendant were not exactly welcome guests.

"How long do you suppose she will stay?" Elizabeth had asked of him rather sharply. "For, when we are once settled, I do not think there will be any real necessity for keeping Miss Winn."

She had been considering it at intervals through the night, and was impatient for what she called an understanding.

Chilian had often given in to her on points that did not really affect him. He hated to bicker with any one, especially women.

"My dear Elizabeth," he began, "the child has been consigned to my charge until she comes of age. I should not have chosen the guardianship, but it seems there is no other relative who can attend to all matters as well. She is to be no dependent, only for whatever love we choose to give her. Anthony has made an ample allowance for her, indeed such a generous one that it irks me to accept it. If it makes too much work for you and Eunice, we will have some help. Miss Winn is to look after her, that was her father's wish; so there will be no change. Of course, it alters our quiet [57] mode of living, but perhaps we were getting in too much of a rut and needed some shaking up;" smiling gravely. "Try and make it as comfortable for them as you can. There is plenty of room in the house for us all."

Then there was nothing before them but acceptance. In a way she had known it, but there was a vague idea seething in her mind that if the maid could be dismissed, she and her sister could train the child in a better manner, and instil some Salem virtues in her that yet held a little of the old Puritanic leaven; like industry, economy, forethought. She still believed in the strait and narrow pathway.

That Chilian should take the matter so philosophically *did* surprise her. To him there seemed something so pitiful in the hope held out to the little girl, yet after all could it have been managed any more wisely? She would not know what the acute pang of death was. And her longing would become less, there would be a vagueness in her sorrow that would help to heal it. This would be her home. He had been living all these years for himself, was it not time that he espoused some other motive? That he began to be of real service?

He finished his talk with Miss Winn. Cynthia was hopping over some coils of cable, and he watched her agile, graceful movements, half smiling. [58]

"Come and tell me good-bye," he said, holding out his hand. "I am going in to Boston."

"In a vessel?"

"No; though I suppose that would be possible. I am late for the stage, and must go on horseback."

"Where is Boston?"

"Oh, some eighteen miles—rather southerly. It is a big city, and the capital."

"When are you coming back?" with a daintily anxious air.

"Oh, by supper-time."

"Well;" nodding.

"What shall I bring you?"

"Nothing at all. We have twice too much now, Rachel says. Only—be sure to come back."

"If I did not, what then?"

"If you did not come back, I should go to India with Captain Corwin. I like Miss Eunice a little, but your other lady doesn't want me," she replied with a frankness that was amusing, it was so free from malice.

"Good-bye until to-night, then."

She put her hand in his. Then she reached up tiptoe. "Kiss me," she said. "Father always did and he said, 'Be a good girl.'"

"Be a good girl." Chilian kissed the soft red lips and then went his way. There was not much caressing in the restrained New England nature of that day, especially among those who had grown up with few family ties. His mother had died while he was yet quite a boy. [59]

"Let us go back now," said Rachel presently. "I believe I have found all our goods. Miss Leverett will be appalled."

The child repeated the word. "What does it mean?" she asked.

"Astonished, surprised."

"Why, *they* have a houseful of things;" in protest.

"Then there is the less room for ours."

"But there is ever so much room in the garret."

"I almost wish we were going to live by ourselves in a little house, like some we saw yesterday."

"Who would cook the dinner and wash the dishes?"

"Oh, I could;" laughing.

"Only us two? It would be lonesome."

"We are not likely to."

"Don't go straight home. Let us find the market again. I didn't half see it last night."

"It wasn't night exactly. Yes—we must learn to find our way about, for we cannot stay in all the time. This is Essex Street. Let us turn here."

The market was in its glory this morning. The stalls were ornamented with branches of evergreens, the floors sifted over with sawdust. There were vegetables and meats, but no great variety. There was no sunny south, no swift train to send in delicious luxuries. The cold storage of that day was being buried in pits and being brought out to light as occasion required. [60]

There were other stalls, with various household stores. Iron-holders, tin kettles, whiskbrooms, pins (which were quite a luxury), crockery ware even. Wagons had come in from country places and customers were thronging about them.

The people interested Miss Winn, and the chaffering, the beating down in prices, was quite amusing. Here a woman was measuring some cotton goods from her chin to the ends of her fingers; here sat a cobbler doing odd jobs while some one waited. Altogether it was very entertaining, and it was dinner-time when they reached home.

"Mr. Leverett has gone to Boston," announced Miss Leverett. "We must have our dinner without him."

"Yes, he was down on the ship," said Miss Winn. "Do you often go to Boston?"

"I am much too busy to be gadding about," returned Elizabeth sharply; "though we have connections there, and I once spent several years in the city."

"I don't suppose it is at all like London. Eastern cities are so different—and dirty," she added.

"Boston is very nice, quite a superior place, but we do not consider it much above Salem," Miss Elizabeth said, with an air. "We have nearly all of the East India trade. To be sure, there is Harvard at Cambridge, and that calls students and professors. Cousin Chilian is a graduate. He could have been an accepted professor if he had chosen." [61]

Then the conversation languished. They were hardly through dinner when the next relay of goods arrived.

"Cynthia's desk must go upstairs, I suppose. Her father had it made for her birthday. Will Silas unpack again? There is a small cabinet of teakwood that is beautifully carved. If you could find room in the parlor for that. There were many other fine pieces that will no doubt be sold, and it seems a great pity."

Elizabeth acquiesced rather frigidly, adding, "It is fortunate the house is large, but one seems to accumulate a good deal through generations."

Cynthia went up in the garret with Miss Winn and was full of interest over the old Leverett treasures. Here was the cradle in which Leverett babies had been rocked, an old bit of mahogany nearly black with age.

"How funny!" cried Cynthia, springing into it, and making a clatter on the floor.

"Don't, dear! Miss Elizabeth may not like it," said Miss Winn.

"As if I should hurt it!" indignantly.

"It is not ours."

"But we sit on their chairs, and sleep in their beds, and eat at their table," returned the child. "Do you suppose they do not want us?"

"Our coming is Mr. Leverett's affair, and he is your guardian, so whatever home he provides is right." [62]

"Well, we can have a home of our own when father comes?"

"Oh, yes; when he comes."

"Well, then I shall not mind;" decisively.

Still she peered about among the old things. There were some iron fire-dogs, a much-tarnished frame, with a cracked glass that cut her face in a grotesque fashion, old dishes and kitchen furniture past using, or that had been supplanted by a newer and better kind.

"Oh, dear! this is an undertaking!" declared Miss Winn, with a sigh. "I do not believe you will ever use half these things; there are stuffs enough to dress a queen."

It was beginning to grow dusky before she was through, though the sky was overcast, and there would be no fine sunset. Indeed, the wind blew up stormily. Cynthia had been viewing the place from the windows in the four gables, though she had to stand on a box. There were South River and the Neck and the shipping—the men, hurrying to and fro, looking so much smaller that it puzzled Cynthia. And there was North River winding about, and over beyond the great ocean she had crossed. There was old St. Peter's Church, the new one was not built until long afterward, and smaller places of worship. There was the small beginning of things to be famous later on. [63]

The wind began to whistle about and it grew cool, so they were glad to go down to the cheerful sitting-room, where a fire was blazing on the hearth.

"We shall have a storm to-night," said Miss Eunice, "our three days' storm that usually makes its appearance about this time. Didn't you 'most perish upstairs? And what did you find to interest you?"

Cynthia had brought a stool and sat close to Miss Eunice, leaning one arm on her knee.

"Oh, so many queer things. You don't mind if I call them queer, do you?"

"Oh, no; they *are* queer. And when we are dead and gone some one will call ours queer, no doubt. But we haven't many. When father died we were on a farm just out of Marblehead. Things were mostly sold at a vendue, for the two boys were going in the army. That was back in '78. Mother and we two girls went to her mother's at Danvers. Elizabeth took up sewing, but there were hard times, for the war stretched out so long, and it did seem as if the Colonies would never gain their cause. But they did. Brother Linus was killed, and later on I had a dear friend lost at sea. Mother died, and we were sort of scattered about till we came here. Cousin Chilian was very good to us. So you see we haven't much to leave, but then we haven't any descendant;" and she gave a soft little laugh. "Elizabeth has mother's gold comb, set with amethysts, and a brooch, and I have the string of gold beads and some rings. A cousin in London sent them to grandmother." [64]

"Eunice, you might set the table," said Elizabeth, rather sharply. "I'm making some fritters. They will taste good this cold night."

"Couldn't I help?" asked Rachel.

"Oh, you must be tired enough without doing any more. It's a good thing you have all your belongings housed. The garret doesn't leak."

"Yes, I am thankful. I really did not think there was so much."

There was a savory fragrance in the sitting-room. Chilian came in, looking weary with his long

ride.

"It is almost wintry cold," he said, holding his hands to the fire. "Have you had a nice day, little girl?"

"Yes;" glancing up with a smile.

They did justice to Bessy's nice supper. Chilian had seen Cousin Giles, who sent remembrances to them all, and was coming up some day to see Letty Orne's little girl. Chilian found there was a good deal of business to do. For a while his days of leisure and ease would be over.

Then he brought out a Boston paper and read them some of the news. Miss Eunice went on with her fringe. Elizabeth was knitting a sock for Chilian out of fine linen yarn, spun by herself, and she put pretty open-work stitches all up the instep. For imported articles were still dear, and there was a pride in the women to do all for themselves that they could. Cynthia leaned her head [65] on Rachel's lap and went asleep.

"Do hear that rain! The storm has begun in good earnest."

It was rushing like a tramp of soldiers, flinging great sheets against the closed shutters, and the wind roared in the chimney like some prisoned spirit.

"Wake up, Cynthia, and say good-night."

Elizabeth watched the child. Her theory was that children should be put to bed early and not allowed to lie around on any one's lap. There was always a tussle of wills when you roused them. She drew herself up with a kind of severe mental bracing and awaited the result, glad Chilian was there.

Rachel toyed with the hair, patted the soft flushed cheek, and took the hands in hers.

"Cynthia," she said gently, "Cynthia, dear, wake up."

The child roused, opened her eyes. "I'm so tired," she murmured. "Will we never be done crossing the wide, wide ocean? And where is Salem?"

"We are there, dear, safe and housed from the storm. You have been asleep on my knee. Come to bed now. Say good-night."

She stood the little girl up on her feet and put one arm around her.

It was against Elizabeth Leverett's theories that any child should go off peaceably, with no snarling protest. Chilian raised his book a little, hoping in the depths of his soul there would be [66] no scene.

"Say good-night."

No child of Puritan training, with the fear of the rod before her eyes, could have done better. She said good-night in a very sleepy tone, and slipped her arm about Rachel's waist as they left the room together.

No one made any comment at first. Then Eunice said, in what she made a casual tone:

"She seems a very tractable child."

"You can't tell by one instance. Children of that age are always self-willed. And allowing a child to lie around one's lap, when she should have said her prayers and gone to bed at the proper hour, is a most reprehensible habit. And I don't suppose she ever says a prayer."

Eunice thought of the daily prayers for her father's safe journey. Would that be set down as a sort of idolatry?

Chilian picked up his papers; he had grown fastidious, and rarely left his belongings about to annoy Elizabeth. Eunice rolled up her work and dropped it in the bag that hung on the post of her chair, straightened up a few things, stood the logs in the corner and put up the wire fender, so there should be no danger of fire; while Elizabeth set all things straight in the kitchen.

Cynthia meanwhile was undressed and mounted the steps to the high bed. Then she flung her [67] arms about Rachel's neck.

"Oh, come and sleep in my bed to-night!" she cried pleadingly. "It's so big and lonesome, that I am afraid. I wish it was like your little bed. They were so cunning on the ship. I don't like this one, where you have to go upstairs to get in it. Oh, do come!"

And Elizabeth Leverett would have been shocked if she could have seen the child cuddled up in her attendant's arms. Theoretically, she believed Holy Writ—"He hath made of one blood all nations." Practically she made many exceptions. [68]

CHAPTER V

The northeast storm was terrific. The wind lashed the ocean until it writhed and groaned and sent great billows up on the land. The trees bent to the fierce blasts; many storms had toughened them and perhaps taught them the wisdom of yielding, since it must be break or bend. Silas sat in the barn mending tools and harness and clearing up generally; Elizabeth spent most of the first day clearing up the garret again, and looking with a grudging eye on the new accession of boxes, and sniffing up the queer smell disdainfully.

"One can't have the windows open," she ruminated, "and the smell must go through the house. I don't believe it will ever get out."

More than one family in Salem had stores from the Orient. Many of them liked the fragrance of sandalwood and strange perfumes. "God's fresh air was good enough for her," said Elizabeth.

Eunice had finished her fringe and brought out some patchwork in the afternoon—a curious pattern, called basket-work. The basket was made of green chintz, with a small yellow figure here and there. It had a handle from side to side, neatly hemmed on a white half square. The upper [69] edge of the basket was cut in points and between each one was a bit of color to represent or suggest a possible bud of some kind. One had pink, different shades of red, and a bright yellow. She had seven blocks finished and they were in the bottom of the box. Eunice took them out for the little girl, who spread them on the floor.

No one was thinking at that day of the mills that would dot New England, where cotton cloths, calicoes, and cambrics would be turned out by the bale. These things had to be imported and were costly. One could dye plain colors that were used for frocks and gowns, and some of the hand looms wove ginghams that were dyed in the thread beforehand.

"It will take forty-two blocks," said Miss Eunice. "Six one way, seven the other."

"Then what are you going to do with it?" asked the child eagerly.

"Why, quilt it. Put some cotton between this and the lining, and sew them together with fine stitches."

"And then——"

"Why"—Eunice wondered herself. There were chests of them piled away in the garret—Chilian's mother's, and those they had made to fill in the moments when housework was finished. She had a quiet sense of humor, and she smiled. What were they laying up these treasures for? Neither of them would be married, most of their relatives were well provided for. [70]

"Well, some one may like to have them;" after a pause. "You must learn to sew."

"Patchwork?"

It was absurd to pile up any more.

"You see," said the child, "no one needed them over there;" inclining her head to the East. "You have a little bed and a pallet, and it is warm, so you do not need quilts. And the poor people and the servants have a mat they spread down anywhere and a blanket, but you see, they sleep with their clothes on."

Eunice looked rather horrified.

"But they change them! They would—why, there would be soil and vermin."

"They go to the river and bathe and wash them out. They sling them on the stones in a queer way. But some of them are very dirty and ragged. They are not like the English and us, and don't wear many clothes. Sometimes they are wrapped up in a white sheet."

"It is a very queer country. They are not civilized, or Christianized. I don't know what will become of them in the end."

"It's their country and no one knows how old it is. China is the oldest country in the world."

"But, my dear, there was the garden of Eden when God first created the world. Nothing could be older than that, you know. Two thousand years to the flood, and two thousand years to the coming of Christ, and some people think the world will end in another two thousand years." [71]

"I don't see any sense in burning it up, when there are so many lovely things in it;" and Cynthia's eyes took on a deep, inquiring expression. "That was what the chaplain used to say. Father thought it would go on and on, getting wiser and greater, and the people learning to be better and making wonderful things."

"My dear, what the Bible says *must* be true. And it will be burned up. You have a Bible?"

"The chaplain gave me a pretty prayer-book. It is upstairs."

"We do not believe in prayer-books, dear." The tone was soft, yet decided. "We came over here, at least our forefathers did, that we might worship God according to the dictates of our conscience. We tried to leave the prayer-books and the bishops behind, but we couldn't quite. You must have a Bible and read a chapter every day. Why, I had read it through once before I

was as old as you."

Cynthia simply stared. Then, after a pause, she said:

"Did you sew patchwork, too?"

"When I was eight I had finished a quilt. And I learned to knit. I knit my own stockings; I always have. And I braided rags for a mat. Mother sewed it together."

"And your clothes—who made those?" [72]

"Well—mother made some. But a woman used to come round fall and spring and make for the girls and boys, though father bought his best suit. He had one when he was married; it was his freedom suit as well——"

"Why, was he a prisoner?" the child interrupted.

"Oh, no;" smiling a little. "Boys had to be subject to their fathers until they were twenty-one. Then they had a suit of clothes all the way through and their time, which meant they were at liberty to work for any one and ask wages. He had been courting mother and they were married soon after, so it was his wedding suit. He had outgrown it before he died, so he had to get a new one. Mother sold that to a neighbor that it just fitted."

"Tell me some more about them." Cynthia was fond of stories. And this was about real folks, not the fantastic legends she had heard so often.

"Well—he and mother worked, she had been living with a family. Girls did in those days, and were like daughters of the house. Father went to work there. They were married in the spring and in the fall he took a place on shares; that is, he had half of everything, and they divided up the house. A year or so afterward it was for sale, and he bought it, and we were all born there, and there was no change until he died. That was a sad thing for us. He'd been buying some more land, and the place wasn't clear. Another man stood ready to buy it, and mother thought it best to [73] sell. You see there was a good deal of trouble between us and England, who wanted to get all the money she could out of the Colonies, and wasn't willing to send troops to protect us from the Indians, and we had to sell our produce and things to her, and presently the Colonies wouldn't stand it any longer, and there was war. Some people were bitterly opposed to it, some favored it. Then we wouldn't take the tea she insisted on our buying, and there was the Stamp Act. And Salem really made the first armed resistance. You must go out some nice day to North Bridge. The British troops marched up from Marblehead to seize some arms they heard were stored here. General Gage sent them. But the people had word, for a Major Pedrick rode up to give the alarm, and they hid them in a secure place. Colonel Leslie headed the British troops to make the search. But the people of Salem turned out strong and met the colonel and declared that he was marching on private property, not on the King's highway, that the lane and the bridge were private property, where he had no right. You see, war had not been declared and the people had a right to defend their own. So they would not allow them to cross the river and make a search. But, finally, they agreed, if the draw over the river could be lowered and they allowed to march a few rods, they would withdraw. Of course, they saw nothing suspicious and came back, keeping their word. Otherwise, I suppose, that would have been the first battle of the war. We were not [74] living here then, but Cousin Chilian's father lived in this very house."

"And the arms were really there!" Cynthia drew a long breath.

"Oh, yes! They were ships' cannon going to be mounted for protection. Some day Cousin Chilian may take you over to the bridge and tell you all about it. There was a romance about a girl said to be in love with a British officer, but you are too young for such stories."

If she had not been, the entrance of Elizabeth and Miss Winn would have checked the garrulity of Eunice. Cynthia had been laying down the small diamond-shaped pieces, making a block.

"Why do you let the child muddle over those pieces, Eunice? The carpet may not be clean," said Elizabeth sharply.

"And it is getting dark, so we had better put them all up. Mercy! how it still rains. Why, it seems as if there would be another flood."

"That can never happen. We have the promise."

"That the whole world will not be destroyed. But parts of it may suffer. You and Cynthia are fortunate not to be in it;" and Eunice raised her eyes to them, with a certain thankfulness.

It had not stopped yet in the morning, but the wind was veering to the south, the air was not so cold and the rain much gentler. Cynthia wandered about like an unquiet spirit. It was cold up in their room. Chilian had proposed a fire, but Elizabeth had negatived it sharply. [75]

"There ought to be room enough in the dining-room and keeping-room for two extra people," she said decidedly.

He felt sorry for the little girl with her downcast face, as he met her on the landing.

"Don't you want to come and visit me?" he asked, in an inviting tone.

"Oh, yes!" and the grave little face lightened.

The blaze was brighter here than downstairs, she felt quite sure. And the room had a more cheerful look. The table was spread with books and papers, and, oh, the books that were on the shelves! The curious things above them suggested India. There really was the triple-faced god she had seen so often, carved in ivory, and another carving of a temple. She walked slowly round and inspected them. Then she paused at a window.

"How much it rains!" she began. "I don't see how so much rain can be made. When is it going to stop?"

"I think it will hold up this afternoon and be clear to-morrow, clear and sunny."

"I like sunshine best. And little rains. This has been so long."

"And we haven't much to amuse a child. When it clears up we must find some little folks. Does it seem very strange to you?" [76]

"I haven't lived with big women much, except Rachel. And the houses are so different. You get things about, and the servants pick them up. There are so many servants. Sometimes there are white children, but not many. Their mothers take them back to England. Or they die."

She uttered the last sadly, and her long lashes drooped.

He wondered a little how she had stood the climate. She looked more like a foreigner than a native of Salem town.

"What did you do there?" He hardly knew how to talk to a little girl.

"Oh, a great many things. I went to ride in a curious sort of cart—the natives pulled it. Then the children came and played in the court. They threw up balls and caught them, ever so many, and they played curious games on the stones, and acrobatic feats, and sung, and danced, and acted stories of funny things. Then father read to me, and told me about Salem when he was a little boy. You can't really think the grown-up people were little, like you."

"And that one day you will be big like them."

She pushed up her sleeve. They were large and made just big enough for her hand at the wrist, not at all like the straight, small sleeves of the Puritan children. After surveying it a moment, she said gravely: [77]

"I can't understand *how* you grow. You must be pushed out all the time by something inside."

"You have just hit it;" and he smiled approvingly. "It is the forces inside. There is a curious factory inside of us that keeps working, day and night, that supplies the blood, the warmth, the strength, and is always pushing out; it even enlarges the bones until one is grown and finished, as one may say. And the food you eat, the air you breathe, are the supplies."

"But you go on eating and breathing. Why don't you go on growing?"

There was a curious little knot in her forehead where the lines crossed, and she raised her eyes questioningly to him. What wonderful eyes they were!

"I suppose it is partly this: You employ your mind and your body and they need more nourishment. Then—well, I think it is the restraining law of nature, else we should all be giants. In very hot countries and very cold countries they do not grow so large."

He could not go into the intricacies of physiology, as he did with some of the students.

"You did not go to school?"

"Oh, no!" She laughed softly. "The native schools were funny. They sat on mats and did not have any books, but repeated after the teacher. And, sometimes, he beat them dreadfully. There were some English people had a school, but it was to teach the language to the natives. And then Mr. Cathcart came to stay with father. He had been the chaplain somewhere and wasn't well, so [78] they gave him a—a——"

"Furlough?" suggested Chilian.

"Yes; father sent him out in one of the boats. He began to teach me some things. I could read, you know. And I could talk Hindostani some—with the children. Then I learned to spell and pronounce the words better. He had a few books of verses that were beautiful. I learned some of them by heart. And Latin."

"Latin!" in surprise.

"He had some books and a Testament. It was grand in the sound, and I liked it. There were many things, cases and such, that I couldn't get quite straight, but after a little I could read, and then make it over into English."

When he was eight he was reading Latin and beginning French. Some of the Boston women he knew were very good French scholars, though education was not looked upon as a necessity for women. It seemed odd to him—this little girl in Calcutta learning Latin.

"Let us see how far you have gone." Teaching never irked him when he once set about it.

He hunted up a simple Latin primer.

"Come around this side;" and he drew her nearer to him. There had been no little girls to train and teach, and for a moment he felt embarrassed. But she took it as a matter of course, and he could see she was all interest. [79]

It had been, as he supposed, rather desultory teaching. But she took the corrections and explanations with a sweetness that was quite enchanting. And she could translate quite well, in an idiomatic fashion. Really, with the right kind of training she would make a good scholar.

"Oh, you must be tired of standing," he said presently. "How thoughtless of me. I have no little chairs, so I must hunt one up, but this will have to do now. That will be more comfortable. Now we can go on."

She laughed at her own little blunders in a cheerful fashion, and made haste to correct them. And then he found that she knew several of the old Latin hymns by heart, as they had been favorites of the English clergyman.

They were interrupted by a light tap at the door. He said "Come"; and turned his head.

It was Miss Winn.

"Pardon me. We couldn't imagine where Cynthia was. Hasn't she been an annoyance?"

"Oh, no; we have had a very nice time."

"But—had you not better come downstairs. Miss Eunice is sewing her pretty patchwork again."

"Oh, let me stay," she pleaded. "Do I bother you?"

It crossed his mind just then that in the years to come more than one man would yield to the sweet persuasiveness of those eyes. [80]

"Yes, let her stay. She is no trouble. Indeed, we are studying."

Miss Winn was glad of his indorsement. Miss Elizabeth had been "worrying" for the last ten minutes. She had crept softly up to the garret, quite sure she should find the child in mischief. Then she had glanced into the "best chamber," but there was no sign of her there.

"Very well," replied Miss Winn.

Cynthia drew a long breath presently.

"Oh, you are tired!" he exclaimed. "Run over to the window and tell me how the sky looks. I think it doesn't rain now."

She slipped down, stood still for a moment, then turned and clapped her hands, laughing deliciously.

"Oh, there is blue sky, and a great yellow streak. The clouds are trying to hide the sun, but they can't. Oh, see, see!"

She danced up and down the room like a fairy in the long ray of sunshine that illumined the apartment.

"Oh, are you not glad!" She turned such a joyous face to him that he smiled and came over to the window that nearly faced the west.

"Better than the Latin?"

"Well—I like both;" archly.

He raised the window. A warm breath of delightful air rushed in, making the room with the fire seem chilly by contrast. He drew in long reviving breaths. Spring had truly come. To-morrow the swelling buds would burst. [81]

"We must have a little Latin every day. And occasionally a walk in the sunshine. Twice a week I go down to Boston, but the other days will be ours."

"I like your room," she said frankly. "But what sights of books! Do you read them all?"

"Not very often. I do not believe I have read them all through. But I need them for reference, and some I like very much."

He wanted to add, "And some were a gift from your dear father," but he could not disturb her happy mood.

"Suppose we go down on the porch. It is too wet to walk anywhere."

"Oh, yes;" delightedly. "And to-morrow I will go down to the vessel again and see Captain Corwin. I do not want it to rain any more for weeks and weeks."

"No, for days and days. Weeks would dry us all up, and we would have no lovely spring flowers."

"And a famine maybe. Do the very poor people sometimes starve?"

"I do not think we have any very poor people, as they do in India. We are not overcrowded yet."

The rain had beaten the paths and the street hard, and it looked as if it had been swept clean. In spite of it all there were cheering evidences of spring. [82]

"There are some children in that house," she exclaimed, nodding her head.

"Yes, the Uphams. There are two girls and two boys, the oldest and the youngest, who isn't much more than a baby. Bentley Upham must be about twelve. Polly is next, but she is a head taller than you. Then there's Betty. I am glad there will be some little girls for you to play with."

She looked eager and interested.

"Will you come in to supper? Chilian, you ought to know better than to be standing in this damp air. And that child with nothing around her!"

"The air is reviving, after having been housed for two days." But he turned and went in, leading the child by the hand.

The long, bleak New England coast winter was over, though it had lingered as if loath to go. Springs were seldom early, no one expected that. But this one came on with a rush. The willows donned their silver catkins and then threw them off for baby leaves, the lilac buds showed purple, the elms and maples came out in bloom, and the soft ones drew crowds of half-famished bees to their sweet tassels. The grass was vividly green, iridescent in the morning sun, with the dew still upon it. Snowdrop, crocus, hepatica, and coltsfoot, wild honeysuckle, were all about, the forsythia flared out her saucy yellow, the fruit buds swelled. Parties were out in the woods hunting trailing arbutus that has been called the darling of northern skies, that lies hidden in its [83] nest of green leaves, silent, with no wind tossing it to and fro, but betrayed by its sweetness.

There were other signs of spring at Salem. The whole town seemed to burst out in house-cleaning. Parlor shutters were thrown open and windows washed. Carpets were beaten, blankets hung out to air, those that had been in real use washed. Women were out in gardens with sunbonnets and gloves, a coat of tan not being held in much esteem, and snipped at roses and hardy plants. Men were spading and planting the vegetable gardens, painting or white-washing fences. All was stir and bustle, and tired folk excused themselves if they nodded in church on Sunday.

Cynthia made pilgrimages to the *Flying Star* that had been her home for so long. The storm had wrought great havoc with some of the shipping, and big boys were out gathering driftwood. The *Gazette* had some melancholy news of "lost at sea." But Captain Corwin thought he had weathered worse storms.

"She is picking up mightily," he said to Miss Winn, nodding toward Cynthia. "Shouldn't be surprised if she favored her mother, after all. Only them eyes ain't neither Orne nor Leverett. Don't let her grieve too much when the bad news comes."

Eunice and Chilian had taken her to call on the Uphams. And though she was quite familiar at [84] home, here she shrank into painful shyness and would not leave Eunice's sheltering figure.

"Children get soonest acquainted by themselves," declared Mrs. Upham. "I suppose you will send her to school. If she's not very forward, Dame Wilby's is best. She and Betty can go together. Why, she isn't as tall as Betty—and nine, you said? Granny was talking the other day about the time she was born. She's a real little Salem girl after all, though she's got a foreign skin, and what odd-colored hair! We've started Polly to Miss Betts. I want her to learn sewing and needlework, and she's too big now to company with such children. Why, I was almost a woman at twelve, and could spin and knit with the best of them. Miss Eunice, I wish you'd teach her that pretty openwork stitch you do so handy. Imported stockings cost so much. They say there's women in Boston doing the fancy ones for customers. But I tell Polly if she wants any she must do them herself."

Mrs. Upham had a tolerably pleasant voice. She always talked in monologues. Betty edged around presently and would have taken Cynthia's hand, but the child laid it in Miss Eunice's lap, and looked distrustful.

Chilian was as glad as she when the call ended. He did not seek the society of women often enough to feel at home with them, though he was kindly polite when he did meet them. [85]

"Did you ask about the school?" was the inquiry of Elizabeth that evening.

"Yes; she thinks Dame Wilby's the best for small children. And Cynthia knows so little that is of real importance, though she reads pretty well," said Eunice.

"Yes, she must get started. I shall be glad when the *Flying Star* is off and she isn't running down there with the men. I don't see what's got into Chilian to think of teaching her Latin. It had enough sight better be the multiplication table."

So she proposed the school to Chilian. She had a queer feeling about his fancy for the child. She would have scouted the idea of jealousy, but she would have had much the same feeling if he had "begun to pay attention" to some woman. The other matters had reached a passable settlement. The "best chamber" was tidily kept, the little girl well looked after to see that she troubled no one. Miss Winn kept her clothes in order, but they had a decidedly foreign look, and

of materials no one would think of buying for a child. But the goods were here, and might as well be used.

Miss Winn had made a few alterations in the room—softened the aspect of it. She longed to take out the big carved bedstead, but she knew that would never do. She made herself useful in many unobtrusive ways, gardened a little, was neighborly yet reserved. [86]

"I don't know what we would do if she were a gossip," Elizabeth commented.

She broached the subject of the school to Chilian.

"Why, yes," he answered reluctantly. "I suppose she ought to go. She's curiously shy with other children."

"She talks enough about that Nalla, as if they had been like sisters."

"You can notice that she always preserves the distinction, though."

"There's no use bothering with that Latin, Chilian. Next thing it will be French. And she won't know enough figuring to count change. Girls don't need that kind of education."

"But some of them have to be Presidents' wives. And some of them wives to men who have to go abroad. French seems to be quite general among cultivated people."

"It's hardly likely she'll go abroad. And she needs to be like other people. I don't see what you find so entertaining about her. And you couldn't bear children in your room!"

"She isn't any annoyance. Then she is so deft, so dainty. She touches books with the lightest of fingers. She will sit and look at pictures, and it quite surprises me how much she knows about geography."

"And nothing much about her native country. She can't tell the difference between Pilgrims and Puritans. And she didn't know why we came over here, and why it was not the same God in [87] England, and if all the gods in India were idols. Chilian, you shouldn't encourage her irreverence. It looks pert in a child."

"She will get over these ways as she grows older and mingles with other children."

"That is what I am coming to. She ought to begin at once. Betty Upham goes to Dame Wilby. Her mother considers it excellent for small children. She could go with Betty and there would be no fear of her trailing off no one knows where."

Of course, she ought to go to school. He could manage a big boy on the verge of manhood very well. But this woman-child puzzled him. She seemed very tractable, obedient in a certain sense, yet in the end she seemed to get, or to take, her own way. Suppressing one train of action opened another. She had a sweet way of yielding, but a strong way of holding on. A little thing made her happy, yet in her deepest happiness there was much gravity. His theories were that certain qualities brought to pass certain results. He forgot that there were no such things as pure temperaments, and that environments made second nature different from what the first might have been. The child puzzled him by her contrariety, yet she was not a troublesome child.

"Well;" reluctantly.

"I'll see the Dame. And we will start her on Monday."

He nodded. [88]

Elizabeth had another point to gain. She looked over her trunk of pieces. Here were several yards of brown and white gingham, quite enough for a frock without any furbelows. With the roll in her hand she tapped at the partly open door. Rachel had laid out on the bed several white frocks, plain enough even for Salem tastes.

"Cynthia's going to school on Monday," she announced. "And I thought this would make her a good school frock. It won't be dirtysome. You see children here *do* dress differently. You'll get into the ways."

Rachel looked at the gingham. "I shouldn't like it for her," she said quietly. "Her father always wanted to see her in white. That is new every time it is washed. These things fade and then look so wretched. Beside she will only outgrow these frocks."

"Children here keep their white frocks for Sundays," was the decisive reply.

"She may as well wear these out. They were made last summer. She has not grown much meanwhile. I should like to keep her in the way her father desired."

"Then she must have a long-sleeved apron to cover her up. This will make two. For those white things make an endless sight of washing."

"I have been considering that," said Rachel Winn quietly. "I wear white a good deal myself. I noticed a small house on Front Street where there were nearly always clothes on the lines, and I [89] stopped in to inquire. I felt it was too much laundry-work for your woman through the summer. This Mrs. Pratt is very reasonable and does her work nicely. So I have made arrangements with her. Captain Leverett made a generous allowance for incidental expenses."

What Elizabeth termed Miss Winn's "independence" grated sorely upon her ideas of what was owing to the head of the house, which was herself. It was always done so quietly and pleasantly one could hardly take umbrage. Cynthia was not exactly a child of the house. She was in no wise dependent on her newly found relatives. Chilian had made that understood in the beginning, when he had chosen the best chamber for them.

"You don't need to take boarders," she had replied tartly.

"I don't know as we are to call it that. I am the child's guardian and answerable for her comfort and her welfare. The perfect trust confided in me has touched me inexpressibly. I didn't know that Anthony Leverett held me in such high esteem. And if I choose to put this money by until she is grown—it will make such a little difference in our living——"

"Chilian Leverett, you are justly entitled to it," she interrupted with sharp decision. "He's right enough in making a fair provision for them—no doubt he has plenty. But I don't quite like the boarder business, for all that." [90]

"We must get some one to help you with the work."

"I don't want any more help than I have. Land sakes! Eunice and I have plenty of leisure on our hands. I wouldn't have a servant around wasting things, if she paid me wages."

They had gone on very smoothly. Eunice had found her way to the child's heart. But then Eunice had lived with her dream children that might have been like Charles Lamb's "Children of Alice." Elizabeth might have married twice in her life, but there was no love in either case, rather a secret mortification that such incapables should dare to raise their thoughts to her. But she had some strenuous ideas on the rearing of children, quite of the older sort. Life was softening somewhat, even for childhood, but she did not approve of it. [91]

CHAPTER VI

GOING TO SCHOOL

Elizabeth Leverett interviewed Dame Wilby beforehand. The woman came half a day on Monday to wash and she hardly knew how to spend half an hour, but when she found Miss Winn was going, she loftily relegated the whole business to her.

Dame Wilby lived in an old rambling house, already an eyesore to the finer houses in Lafayette Street, but the Dame was obstinate and would not sell. "It was going to last her time out. She was born here when it was only a lane, and she meant to be buried from here." Once it had been quite a flourishing school; but newer methods had begun to supersede it. It was handy for the small children about the neighborhood, it took them over the troublesome times, it gave their mothers a rest, and kept them out of mischief. And the old dames were thorough, as far as they went. Indeed, some of the mothers had never gone any farther. They could cast up accounts, they could weigh and measure, for they had learned all the tables. They could spell and read clearly, they knew all the common arts of life, and how to keep on learning out of the greater than printed books—experience. [92]

Dame Wilby might have been eighty. No one remembered her being young. Her husband was lost at sea and she opened the school, worked in her garden, saved until she had cleared her small old home, and now was laying up a trifle every year. She was tall and somewhat bent in the shoulders, very much wrinkled, with clear, piercing light blue eyes and snowy hair. She always wore a cap and only a little line of it showed at the edge of her high forehead. Her frocks were made in the plainest style, skirts straight and narrow, and she always wore a little shoulder shawl, pinned across the bosom—white in the summer, home-dyed blue in the winter.

Some children were playing tag in the unoccupied lot next door. The schoolroom door opened at the side. There were two rows of desks, with benches for the older children, two more with no desks for the A B C and spelling classes. The rest they learned in concert, orally. The dame had a table covered with a gray woollen cloth, some books, an inkstand, a holder for pens and pencils, and the never-failing switch.

"Yes," she answered to Miss Winn's explanation. "Miss Leverett was telling about her. I was teaching school here when she was born, and then the captain took her away to the Ingies again." Most folks pronounced it that way. "Rather meachin' little thing—I s'pose it was the climate over there. They say it turns the skin yellow. Let's see how you read, sissy?"

She read several verses out of the New Testament quite to the dame's satisfaction. Then about [93]
spelling. The second word, in two syllables, floored her. Had she ciphered? No. Did she know her tables? No. The capital of the state? That she could answer. When the war broke out? When peace was declared?

"I'll ask Cousin Leverett," she answered, in nowise abashed by her ignorance. "He tells me a great many things."

"You must study it out of books. I s'pose she's going to live here? She's not going back to the

Ingies? I heard the captain was coming home."

"He is settling up his affairs," was the quiet answer.

Dame Wilby looked the child all over.

"You'll sit on that bench," she said. Then she rang the bell and the children trooped in, staring at her. The little boys—four of them—were on the seat back of her, on her seat she made the fifth. Betty Upham was in the desk contingent.

They repeated the Lord's prayer in concert. Then lessons were given out. The larger girls read.

"You can come and read with this class;" nodding to Cynthia.

She was not a regularly bashful child, but she flushed as the children stared at her. They sometimes wore their Sunday white frock one or two days at school. Cynthia was so used to her clothes, cared so little about them that they were rarely in her mind. But this universal attention annoyed her. [94]

"'Tend to your books, children."

Cynthia acquitted herself finely, rather too much so, the dame thought. She would talk to her about it. A girl didn't want to read as if she was a minister preaching a sermon.

Then she was given a very much "dog's-eared" spelling-book to study down a column. Another class read some easy lesson; a story about a dog that interested her so much that she forgot to study. While the older children were doing sums one little boy after another came up to the desk and spelled from a book. One's attention wandered and the dame hit him a sharp rap. Tables followed, eight and nine times; dry measure, and then questions were asked singly. Some few missed. Cynthia followed the spelling where they went up and down. Then the larger ones were dismissed for recess.

"Cynthy Leverett, come up here and see how many words you can spell. You ought to be ashamed, a big girl like you staying behind in next to the baby class."

Cynthia's face was scarlet. Alas! She had been so interested watching and listening she had not studied at all. But the words were rather easy and she did know all but two.

"Now you take the next line and those two over again. See if you can't get them all learned by noon."

The next little girl, who could not have been more than six, missed a number. She had a queer drawl in her voice. [95]

"What did I tell you, Jane Mason? And you have missed more than two. Hold out your hand!"

The switch came down on the poor little hand with an angry swish. Cynthia winched.

"Now you go back and study. No going out to play for you this morning. Jane Mason, you're the biggest dunce in school."

The two other girls did better. Then the bell rang and the girls came in with flushed and laughing faces.

Cynthia studied her two words over until they ceased to have any meaning. At twelve they were all dismissed.

"Isn't she a hateful old thing?" said Janie Mason, when they were outside of the door. "I wish I was big enough to strike back. I don't like school anyhow. Do you?"

"I—I don't know. I have never been before."

Several of the other girls swarmed around her with curious eyes.

"What a pretty frock!" began Betty Upham. "I suppose it's your Sunday best, with all that work."

"Betty said you were an Injun," said another. "I never saw an Injun who didn't have coarse, straight, black hair, and yours is lightish and curls. I'd so love to have curly hair."

"I'm not the kind of Indians you have here," she returned indignantly. "I was born right here in Salem. I've lived in Calcutta and in China, and been to Batavia, and ever so many places." [96]

"Then you ain't an Injun at all! Betty, how could you?"

"Well, that's what some of them said. Maybe your mother was an Injun!" looking as if she had fixed the uncertain suspicion.

"No, she wasn't. She lived here part of the time. She was born in Boston."

They glanced at each other in a kind of upbraiding fashion.

"And you had to be put with the little children! Aren't there any schools in that place you came from? It's a heathen country. Our minister prays for it. Don't you have any churches either? What do people do when they are grown up if they never go to school?"

"Are you coming stiddy?"

"Is Mr. Chilian Leverett your real relation?"

"Oh, tell me—have you any other frock as pretty as this? My sister Hetty has a beautiful one, all lace and needlework. She's saving it to be married in."

"Martha, I dare you to a race!"

Two girls ran off as fast as they could. Betty Upham caught Cynthia's arm.

"I didn't say you were a real Injun. Debby Strang always gets things mixed up. But it is something queer——"

"East India;" in a tone of great dignity. [97]

"Where the ships are coming from all the time? Is it prettier than Salem?"

"It's so different you can't tell. We do not have hardly any winter. And there are vines and flowers and temples to heathen gods, and the people *are* yellow and brown."

"Do you suppose you will ever grow clear white?"

Cynthia had half a mind to be angry. Even Miss Elizabeth was fair, and Miss Eunice had such a soft, pretty skin.

"There, that's your corner. You're coming this afternoon?"

"Oh, I suppose so."

Miss Elizabeth was all bustle and hurry. It was clouding up a little. It hadn't been a real fair day, and the hot sun had dried the clothes too quick. She liked them to bleach on the line, it was almost as good as the grass. And Miss Drake couldn't stay and iron, they had sickness over to the Appletons and she had to go there. Everything was out of gear.

"I'd help with the ironing, if you would like," said Miss Winn.

"Well, the ironing isn't so much;" rather ungraciously. "You see, there were four blankets. I never touch an iron to them, but shake them good and fold them, and let them lay one night, then hang them on the line in the garret. The bulk of it was large. And a good stiff breeze blows out wrinkles. The wind hasn't blown worth a Continental;" complainingly. [98]

"Did you like the school?" Miss Winn inquired in the hall.

"No, I didn't. And I don't seem to know anything;" in a discouraged tone.

"Oh, you will learn."

It was warm in the afternoon. Two of the boys were decidedly bad and were punished. They positively roared. Cynthia spelled, and spelled, and studied—"One and one are two," "one and two are three," and after a while it dawned on her that it was just one more every time. Why, she had known that all the time, only it hadn't been put in a table.

It grew very tiresome after a while. She asked if she couldn't have recess with the big girls, but was sharply refused. In truth the good dame grew very weary herself, and was glad when five o'clock came and she could go out in the garden and recruit her tired nerves.

The stage was stopping at the door. Oh, how glad she was to see Cousin Leverett. He smiled down in the flushed face.

"How did the school go?" he asked.

She hung her head. "I don't like it. I have to be with the little class because I don't know tables, but I learned all the one times. That was easy enough when you came to see into it. But—nine and nine?"

"Eighteen," he answered promptly.

"And you answered it right offhand!" She gave a soft, cheerful laugh. "Oh, do you suppose I shall ever know so much?" [99]

"There was a time when I didn't know it."

"Truly?" She looked incredulous.

"Truly. And I had quite hard work remembering to spell correctly."

"I studied two lines. This morning I missed two words, but this afternoon I knew them all. And I can't write on the slate. The pencil wabbles so, and then it gives an awful squeak that goes all over you. And I can't do sums. And there's all the tables to learn. And I don't like the teacher. I wish Miss Eunice could teach me. Or maybe Rachel might."

"I might help you a little. But you read well?"

"She said it was too—too"—she wrinkled up her forehead—"too affected, like a play-actor."

"Nonsense!" he cried disapprovingly. "We will see about some other school presently. Would you like to take a walk with me? I'm tired of the long stage-ride."

"Oh, so much!" She caught one hand in both of hers and gave a few skips of joy.

"Let us go over to the river."

Of course, he should have gone in and announced their resolve. But he was so used to considering only himself, and he realized that it must have been a tiresome day to her. They went over Lafayette Street, which was only a lane, and then turned up the stream.

Oh, how sweet the air was with the odorous dampness and the smell of new growths, tree and [100] grass. The sun, low in the west, slanted golden gleams through the tree branches which chased each other over the grassy spaces, as if they were quite alive and at merry-making. There were sedgy plants in bloom, jack-in-the-pulpit, and what might have been a lily, with a more euphonious name. Iridescent flies were skimming about, now and then a fish made a stir and dazzle. Squirrels ran up and down the trees and chattered, robins were singing joyously, the thrush with her soft, plaintive note. She glanced up now and then and caught his eye, and he felt she was happy. It was a delightful thing, after all, to render some one truly happy. Perhaps children were more easily satisfied, more responsive.

"Oh," he said presently, "we must go back or we will lose our supper, and Cousin Elizabeth will scold."

"I shouldn't think she would dare to scold you;" raising wondering eyes.

"Why not?" He wondered what reason she would give.

"Because you are a man."

"She scolds Silas."

"Oh, that is different."

"How—different? We are both men. He is quite as tall as I."

"But you see—well, he is something like a servant. She tells him what to do, and if he doesn't do it right she can find fault with it. But you are—well, the house is yours. You can do what [101] pleases you."

"Quite reasoned out, little one;" and he laughed with an approving sound.

"It's curious that you scold people you like, and other people may do the same thing and—is it because you don't dare to? If it is wrong in the one place, why not in the other?"

"Perhaps politeness restrains us."

"I don't like people to scold. Miss Eunice never does."

"Eunice has a sweet nature. Doesn't Miss Winn ever scold you?"

"Well—I suppose I am bad and wilful sometimes, and then she has the right. But when you do things that do not matter——"

Miss Winn was walking in the garden. Cynthia waved her hand, but walked leisurely forward.

"I couldn't imagine what had become of you."

"It was my fault," interposed Chilian. "I met her at the gate and asked her to go for a walk."

"And with that soiled apron!"

"That came off the slate. I hadn't any desk. It was hard to hold it on my knee."

"You might have come in for a clean one. Run upstairs and change it."

But she was destined to meet Cousin Elizabeth in the hall. The elder caught her arm roughly.

"Where have you been gadding to, bad girl? Didn't you know you must come straight home [102] from school? Here we have been worried half to death about you, and I'm tired as a dog, trotting 'round all day. You deserve a good whipping;" and she shook her. She would have enjoyed slapping her soundly. But Chilian entered at that instant.

"She is going upstairs for a clean apron," he said. "I took her off for a walk."

"She might have asked whether she could go or not," snapped Elizabeth. "She's the most lawless thing!"

"It was my place. Don't blame the child!"

"Well, supper's ready."

She didn't have her apron on quite straight and her hair was a little frowsy. Elizabeth had proposed it should be cut short on the neck for the summer, but Miss Winn had objected.

"Such a great mop! No child wears it!"

Cynthia came in quietly and took her place. After her first cup of tea Elizabeth thawed a little, enough to announce that two of the Appleton children were ill, they thought with scarlet fever.

Chilian expressed some sympathy.

"And how was the school, Cynthia? We thought you might have been kept in for some of your good deeds, as children are so seldom bad."

"I—I didn't like it," she answered simply.

"Children can't have just what they like in this world," was Elizabeth's rejoinder. [103]

"Nor grown people either," was Chilian's softening comment. Then he changed the subject. He had seen Cousin Giles, who proposed to pay them a visit, coming on some Saturday.

"Have you any lesson to learn?" he asked of Cynthia. "If so, bring your book and come to my room."

"Oh, thank you!" Her face was radiant with delight.

Where had she left her book? Dame Wilby had told her to take it home and study. Surely she had brought it—oh, yes! she had put it just inside the gate under the great clump of ribbon grass. If only Cousin Elizabeth's sharp eyes had not seen it. But there it was, safe enough.

She was delighted to go to Cousin Chilian's room, though she never presumed. She seemed to have an innate sort of delicacy that he wondered at.

The spelling was soon mastered. It was the rather unusual words that puzzled her. Then they attacked the tables and he practised her in making figures. Like most children left to themselves, she printed instead of writing.

"Oh!" she cried with a wistful yet joyous emphasis, "I wish I could come to school to you. And I'd like to be the only scholar."

"But you ought to be with little girls."

"I don't like them very much."

Then Miss Winn came for her. "You are very good to take so much trouble," she said. [104]

"Oh, I like you so much, so much!" she exclaimed with her sweet eyes as well as her lips.

He recalled then the day on board the vessel, when she had besought in her impetuous fashion that he should kiss her. She had never offered the caress since. She was not an effusive child.

Her position at school was rather anomalous. A younger woman might have managed differently. There was a new scholar that rather crowded them on the bench. And the boy back of her did some sly things that annoyed her. He gave her hair a twitch now and then. One day he dropped a little toad on her book, at which she screamed, though an instant after she was not at all afraid. Of course, he was whipped for that, and for once she did not feel sorry.

"You're a great ninny to be afraid of a toad not bigger than a button," he said scornfully. "I'll get you whipped some day to make up for it, see if I don't."

Thursday was unfortunate and she was kept in for some rather saucy replies. When she returned they were in the sitting-room and had been discussing some household matters. She surveyed them with a courageous but indignant air.

"I've quit," she exclaimed. "I'm not going there to school any more."

She stood up very straight, her eyes flashing.

"What!" ejaculated Cousin Elizabeth.

"Why, I've quit! She wanted to make me say I was sorry and beg her pardon, and she [105] threatened to keep me all night, but I knew some of you would come, at least Rachel."

"And I suppose you were a saucy, naughty girl!"

"What happened?" asked Chilian quietly.

"Why, you see—I went up to her table with the figures I had been making on my slate. I'd done some of them over three times, for Tommy Marsh joggled my elbow. Then I went back to my seat. We're crowded now, and I went to sit down and sat on the floor. I do believe Sadie Green did it on purpose—moved so there wasn't room enough for me to sit. And Tom laughed, then all the children laughed, and Dame Wilby said, 'Get up, Cynthy Leverett,' and I said 'My name isn't Cynthy, if you please, and I haven't any seat to sit on if I do get up.' And then the children laughed again, and I don't quite know what did happen, but I was so angry. Then she said all the children should stay in for laughing. She called me to the desk and I went. The slate was broken and I laid it on the table. Then she said wasn't I sorry for being saucy, and I said I wasn't. It was bad enough to fall on the floor, for I might have hurt myself. Then she took up her switch, and I said: 'You strike me, if you dare!' Then she pushed me in a little closet place, and there I staid until after school was out. Then she said, 'Would I tell Miss Leverett to come over?' and I said Mr. Leverett was my guardian and I would tell him, but I wasn't coming to school any more, and that [106]

Tommy Marsh pinched me and pulled my hair, and called me wild Indian. And so—I've quit. You can't make me go again. I'll run away first and go on some of the boats."

There was a blaze of scarlet on her cheeks and her eyes flashed fire, but she stood up straight and defiant, when another child might have broken down and cried. Chilian Leverett always remembered the picture she made—small, dark, and spirited.

"No," he exclaimed, "you need not go back." Then he rose and took her hand that was cold and trembling. "You will not go back. Let us find Miss Winn——"

"Chilian!" warned Elizabeth.

He led Cynthia from the room, up the stairs. Miss Winn sat there sewing. She clasped her arms about him, he could fairly feel the throb in them.

"Oh," she cried with a strange sort of sweetness. "I love you. You are so good to me, and I have told you just the truth."

Then she buried her face on Miss Winn's bosom.

Chilian went downstairs. He laughed, yet he was deeply touched by her audacity and bravery.

"Elizabeth," he announced; "I will see Mrs. Wilby. Let the matter die out, do not refer to it. I did not think it quite the school for her. We will find something else."

"Chilian, I must make one effort for you and her. Going on this way will be her ruin. I should insist upon her going back to school and apologizing to Mrs. Wilby. I wouldn't let a chit like that [107] order what a household of grown people should do and make them bow down to her. You will be sorry for it in the end. You have had no experience with children, you have seen so few. And a man hasn't the judgment——"

His usually serene temper was getting ruffled, and with such characters the end is often obstinacy.

"If she is to make a disturbance here, become a bone of contention with us, I will send her away. Cousin Giles is taking a great interest in her. There are good boarding-schools in Boston, or she and Miss Winn could have a home together under his supervision. There is enough to provide for them."

"And you would turn her over to that half-heathen woman!" in a horrified tone. "Then I wash my hands of the matter. Send her to perdition, if you will." [108]

CHAPTER VII

CHANGEFUL LIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD

Elizabeth Leverett busied herself about the supper. She felt as one does in the threatening of a thunderstorm, when the clouds roll up and the rumbling is low and distant and one studies the sky with presentiments. Then it comes nearer, flirts a little with the elements, breaks open and shows the blue that the scurrying wind soon hides and the real storm bursts. She had believed all along that it must come.

She was not an ungracious or a selfish woman outside of her own home. She was good to the sick and the needy, she gave of her time and strength. In the home there was a sense of ownership, of the self-appropriation so often termed duty. Everything had gone on smoothly for years. She had settled that Chilian would not marry. Such a bookish man, whose interests lay chiefly with men, did not need a wife when there was some one at hand to make him comfortable. And that he surely was. He understood and enjoyed it. He had only to suggest to have. Her affection for him was like that for a younger brother. Even Eunice could not minister so well for his comfort, though, like Mary of Bible lore, she often added a delicate pleasure in listening to [109] matters or incidents that interested him.

Elizabeth had settled to the idea of a little heathen soul that she was to lead aright. Missionary work in godless lands had not made much advance and, having no mother, who was there to warn her of the great peril of her soul? Seafaring men were not much given to thought of the other world. Perhaps there was some grace for them in the hours of peril, she had heard they prayed to God in an extremity; and there was the dying thief. But on land no one had a right to count on this.

The child had changed everything. Even Eunice seemed to have lost the sharp distinction. Miss Winn belonged to the ungodly, that was clear—though she was upright, honest, neat, and in some ways sensible. But her ideas about the child were foreign and reprehensible—dangerous even. The child was no worse than others, not as bad as some, for she had either by nature or training a delicate respect for the property of others. She never meddled. She asked few questions even when she stood by the kitchen table and watched the mysteries of cake and pie making and the delicacies of cooking. It was the right to herself that annoyed Elizabeth. People had hardly begun to suspect that children had any rights.

"But if she went away? If she was swallowed up in the vortex of the more populous city"—greater, Salem would not have admitted. "If the child's soul was finally lost, would she be quite clear? Would she have done all that she could for her salvation?" [110]

She thought of it as she prepared the supper. She surveyed the inviting-looking table and then rang the bell. Eunice brought in a handful of flowers. Chilian came—and Miss Winn.

"Cynthia has gone to bed, she does not want any supper," was her quiet announcement.

Elizabeth would have sent her to bed supperless, and approved of a severer punishment.

Miss Winn asked some questions about Boston.

"I have quite a desire to see it," she added.

Yes, she would no doubt plan for a removal. Then the child would be forever lost. And a Leverett, too, come of a strong God-fearing family!

The child, when she had hidden her face on Rachel's bosom, gave some dry, hard sobs that shook her small frame. Rachel smoothed her hair, patted the shoulder softly, and said "Dear" in a caressing tone. Then had come a torrent of tears, a wild hysterical weeping. She did not attempt to check it, but took Cynthia in her arms as if she had been a baby.

"I'm not going to that school any more," she said brokenly, after a while.

"What happened, dear?"

Cynthia raised her head. "It was very mean, as if I had done it on purpose! Why, I might have hurt myself;" indignantly. [111]

"How was it?" gently.

And then the story came tumbling out. She saw a certain ludicrous aspect in it now, and laughed a little herself. "I couldn't help being saucy. And I thought she was going to strike me. Tommy Marsh began to laugh first. The slate broke——"

"Are you quite sure you were not hurt?"

"Well, my arm hurt a little at first, but it is all well now. But I shan't go back to school,—no, not even to please Cousin Leverett, and I like him best of any one."

"I'm going down to supper, dear. Shall I bring up yours?"

"I don't want any. I couldn't eat anything. And I can't have Cousin Elizabeth's sharp eyes looking at me. Oh, I'm glad I am not her little girl! I like you a million times better, Rachel;" hugging her rapturously. "I think I'd like to have a glass of milk. And may I lie on your little bed?"

"Yes, dear."

She was asleep when Rachel came up and it was past nine when she woke, drank her milk, and went to bed for the night.

How gaily the birds were singing the next morning, and the sunbeams were playing hide-and-seek through the branches that dance in the soft wind. All the air was sweet and the little girl couldn't help being light-hearted. She sang, too; not measured hymns of sorrow and repentance, but a gay lilt that followed the bird voices. And she went down to breakfast and said her good-morning cheerfully. [112]

"That child has the assurance of the Evil One," Elizabeth thought.

Cynthia waylaid Cousin Chilian as he was going down the path.

"I meant what I said yesterday. I won't go to that school any more. If there was some other—only—only I wish you could teach me until I could get up straight in all the things, so the other children wouldn't laugh when I made blunders. I suppose it does sound funny;" and a smile hovered about the seriousness.

"We will consider another school," he returned kindly, smiling himself at the remembrance of the tempest of yesterday.

She persuaded Rachel to go out to walk and they went over to the bridge. She had been so interested in the story of it. Before it had faded from the minds of men it was to be splendidly commemorated as a point of interest in the old town.

"I like real stories," she said. "I don't understand about the war, but it is fine to think the Salem men made the British soldiers go back when all the while the cannon and other arms were hidden away. You don't mind, Rachel, if the Colonists did beat England, do you? I'm a Colonist, you know."

"That is long ago, and we are all friends now. I think the Colonists were very brave and persevering and they deserved their liberty. I have heard your father talk about the war." [113]

"Oh, when do you suppose he will come? It seems so long to wait."

Rachel smiled to keep the tears out of her eyes.

Chilian Leverett made a call and a brief explanation to Dame Wilby. She admitted she had been hasty, but the children were unusually trying. She was getting to be an old body and maybe she hadn't as much patience as years ago. Cynthia said so many odd things that the children *would* giggle. She was slow in some things, and it seemed hard for her to learn tables, but she was not a bad child.

So the tempest blew over. Elizabeth preserved a rather injured silence, but Eunice was cheerful and ready to entertain Cynthia with stories of the time when she was a little girl. Chilian arranged for her to spend most of the mornings with him when he was at home. She liked so very much to hear him read. The histories of that time were rather dry and long spun out, but he had a way of skipping the moralizing and the endless disquisitions and adding a little more vividness to people and incidents. It inspired him to watch her face changing with every emotion, her eyes deepening or brightening, and the slight mark in her forehead where lines of perplexity crossed. Then they would talk it all over. Often he was puzzled with her endless "whys" that he could not rightly explain to a child's limited understanding. Sometimes she would say, "Why, I would have [114] done so," and he found her course would be on the side of the finest right, if not what was considered feasible.

The spelling was a trial when the words were a little obscure. And though she had a wonderful knack of guessing at things, she surely was not born for a mathematician. He had a fine, quick mind in that respect. But the Latin was a delight to her and she delved away at the difficult parts for the sake of what she called the grand and beautiful sound. His rendering of it enchanted her.

"I don't see any sense in educating her like a boy," declared Elizabeth. "And she can't do a decent bit of hemming. She ought to work a sampler and learn the letters to mark her own clothes. We did it before we were her age. Chilian thinks you can hire people to do these things for you, but it seems so helpless not to be able to do them for yourself. Housekeeping is of more account than all this folderol. She can never be a college professor."

"But women *are* keeping schools," interposed Eunice.

"They don't teach Latin and all kinds of nonsense. That Miss Miller was here a few days ago to see if we didn't want our niece—folks are beginning to call her that—to see if we did not want her to take lessons on the spinet. I was so glad she did not appeal to Chilian, though he was out. I said, 'No,' very decidedly, 'that she had a good many things to learn before she tackled that.' And [115] she said she ought to be trained while her fingers were flexible, and I said I thought washing would make them flexible enough. And there's fine ironing."

"There's no need of either for her," protested Eunice.

"Oh, you don't know. There might be a war again. And a trouble about money. I'm sure there is talk enough and the country raising loans all the time, one party pulling one way, one the other. People are getting awfully extravagant nowadays. Patty Conant gave seven dollars a yard for her new black silk, and there were twelve yards. It broke pretty well into a hundred, and there was some fancy gimp and fringe and the making. Of course, there's going to be two weddings in the family, and I don't suppose Patty will ever buy another handsome gown at her time of life. Abner brought her home that elegant crape shawl, with the fringe and netting nearly half a yard deep. Maybe 'twas a present, she let it go that way."

"Of course, there's money enough among the Conants," Eunice commented gently.

"As I said—one can't always tell what will come to pass, nor how much need you may have for your money. But I'm thankful my heart is not set on the pomps and vanities of this world. And children ought to be brought up to some useful habits."

It was a fact that Cynthia did not take to the useful branches of womanly living. She abhorred [116] hemming—and such work as she made of it! Miss Eunice groaned over it.

"But you ought to have seen what I did two or three weeks ago," and she laughed with a gay ring. "Such stitches! When I made them nice on the top, they were dreadful underneath, and the cotton thread was almost black. What is the use of taking such little bits of stitches?"

"Why—they look prettier. And—it is the right thing to do."

"But you know Rachel can hem all the ruffles. And Cousin Elizabeth said ruffles were vanity. I'd like my frocks just as well to be plain."

"There would have to be nice stitches in the hem."

"Rachel didn't sew when she was little. A great lady took her to Scotland, to wait on her, to get her shawl when she was a little cool, and fan her when she was warm, and carry messages, and drive out in the carriage with her. They had servants for everything. And then—she was ten years old—she sent her to a school, where she learned everything. But she doesn't know all the tables and a great many other things."

"But she knows what fits her for her station in life."

Cynthia looked puzzled. "What is your station in life?" she asked with an accent of curiosity. [117]

"Oh, child, it is where you are placed; and the work of life is the duties that grow out of it—and your duty towards God."

Cynthia dropped into thought.

"Then my duty now is to study. I like it; that is, I like a good many things in it. And when my father comes home it will be changed, I suppose. You can't stay a little girl always."

"But you will have to learn to keep house," returned Eunice.

"Oh, I'll have some one to do that. Men never have to cook or keep house. Oh, yes; all the cooks on the ship were men. Wasn't that funny!" she continued.

She laughed with so much innocent merriment that Miss Eunice laughed too.

"I suppose you have to do various things in your life," she sagely remarked, after a pause.

"Then you must learn to do the various things now."

"I believe I won't ever get married. I'll live with father always, and we will have some one to keep the house, and Rachel will make the clothes. And I'll read aloud to father. We'll have a carriage and go out riding, and talk about India. I remember so many things just by thinking them over. Isn't it queer, when for a long time they have gone out of your mind? Oh, dear Cousin Eunice, what makes you sigh?" [118]

Cousin Eunice took off her glasses, wiped them vigorously, and then wiped her eyes.

"It is a bad habit I have." But she was thinking of the dream of the little girl that could never come true.

The two days in the week that Chilian went into Boston were long to Cynthia. She sat in his room and studied. He had given her a small table to herself and a shelf in a sort of miscellaneous bookcase. He found that she never trespassed and that she did really study her two hours, sometimes longer when the task was not so easily mastered. There *was* some of the old Leverett blood in her, but it had a picturesque strain. She placed every book at its prettiest, and her papers were gathered up and taken down to the kitchen when she was done with them. She was beginning to write quite well.

Then in the afternoon she went to walk with Rachel to show her the curious places Cousin Leverett had told her about. And there were still beautiful woods around the town, where they found wild flowers and sassafras buds.

Elizabeth was very much engrossed. She had cleared the garret spick and span, scrubbed up the floor, wiped off her quilting frames, and put in her white quilt, rolling up both sides so she could get at the middle. There was to be a circle, with clover leaves on the outside. Then long leaves rayed off from the exact middle. She had all the patterns marked out. When that was done [119] a wreath went around next—oak leaves and acorns.

She had groaned over the time the little girl devoted to Latin, but she never thought all this a waste of precious hours. She would never need it and she could not decide upon any relative she would like to leave it to. There was one quilt of this pattern in Salem and, though white quilts were made, few could afford to spend so much time over them. There were knitted quilts, with ball fringe around four sides, and the tester fringed the same way. Old ladies kept up their habits of industry in this manner when they were past hard work.

Eunice had finished her basket quilt and it was really a work of art. But she was out in the flower garden a good deal in the early morning and late afternoon. Cynthia sometimes kept her company, but she was not an expert in gardening science. In the evening they sat out on the porch, and a neighbor called perhaps. Or she walked over to South River if it was moonlight. And, oh, how beautiful everything was!

But it was not all quilting with Miss Elizabeth. In July wild green grapes were gathered for preserves. Cynthia thought it quite fun to help "pit" them. You cut them through the middle and with a small pointed knife took out the seeds. She tired of it presently and did not cut them evenly, beside she was afraid of cutting her thumb.

Cousin Elizabeth went about getting dinner, which was quite a simple thing when Chilian was [120] away, and at night they had a high tea.

"I'll cut them," said Eunice, "and you can pick out the seeds. But maybe you are tired;" with a glance of solicitude.

"Yes, I'm tired, but I'm going to keep straight on until dinner-time," she answered pluckily.

"You are a brave little girl."

But Cousin Elizabeth said, "Well, for once you have made yourself useful."

There was a great point of interest just then for the people on this side of the town. Front Street was the old river path that had followed the shore line. One end was known now as Wharf Street, and was beginning to be lined with docks. Up farther to what is now Essex Street there had stood a house with a history. Its owner had been a Tory, and just before the war broke out he entertained Governor Gage and the civil and military staff. Timothy Pickering had been summoned to the Governor's presence, but he kept his Excellency so long in an indecent passion that the town-meeting had to be adjourned. Troops were ordered up from the Neck and for a

while an encounter seemed imminent. Later, when the Colonists were in the ascendency, Colonel Browne's estate was confiscated, and after the close of the war it was turned over to Mr. Elias Derby. Now he was removing it to make way for a much finer residence and, being a notably patriotic citizen, he did not enjoy the stigma of a Tory house. Parts were carried away as [121] curiosities, and there were some beautiful carvings and fine newel posts that found a place in new homes as mementoes. Afterward, Mr. Derby built the handsomest and costliest house in Salem, with grounds laid out magnificently.

Then came a very busy time. There was preserving that every housewife attended to for winter use, pickling of various kinds, for there was no canning stock in those days to eke out. There were some queer fruits from India, and preserved ginger in curious jars that are highly esteemed to this day, but they were luxuries. Then a house-cleaning season, not as bad as the spring, but still bad enough. And flower seeds to be saved, garden seeds to be dried, so the beautiful quilt was rolled up in a thick sheet and put away for the present.

The little girl had made quite friends with the Upham children and went over there to tea all alone, but she felt very strange. They played tag and blind-man's buff, but Cynthia thought puss in the corner the most fun. Bentley was a nice big boy and very well mannered. Polly talked over her school and brought out her needlework, which was to be the bottom of a white frock. It would be only two yards round and she had almost a yard worked. Then she was making a sampler, with an oak and acorn vine around it, and it was to have four different kinds of lettering on it. [122]

"I don't know when I shall get it done," she said with a sigh.

Betty declared Dame Wilby was crosser than ever and Priscilla Lee wasn't coming back, nor Margaret Rand, and she was coaxing mother to let her go elsewhere.

After a while Cynthia declared she must go home. Cousin Chilian had said he would come for her, but the clock was striking nine and he had not come. He sometimes *did* forget.

Bentley took his hat and walked beside her in quite a mannish way.

"I do hope you will come again," he said. "You were so pleasant when you were caught, and I do hate to have girls saying all the time, 'Now that isn't fair,' and squirming out."

"But if you're playing you must take the best and the worst. I liked puss in the corner and didn't mind being the left-out pussy. I thought it was quite fun to hunt a corner again."

Then they met Cousin Chilian, who had been playing a rather prolonged game of chess with a visitor. But Bentley kept on with them, and said good-night with a polite bow, adding, "She must come again, Mr. Leverett, we had such a very nice time."

"And wasn't he nice!" exclaimed the child eagerly. "He is like some of the grown-up men. I like big boys much better than the little ones." [123]

He smiled to himself at that.

Now there came cool nights and mornings, but the world was beautiful in its turning leaves, the fragrance of ripening fruit, and the late gorgeous-colored flowers. They took delightful walks and found so many curious places. Sometimes Bentley Upham met them and joined in their walks and talks. He thought the little girl knew a great deal. And that she had been in India, and China, and ever so many of the islands, was wonderful.

"Don't you ever sew?" he asked one afternoon, as they were rambling about.

"I don't like it much;" and she glanced up with fascinating archness. "I suppose I shall have to some day, but Cousin Leverett thinks there is time enough."

"I'm glad you don't," in a hearty tone. "I don't have any good of Polly any more. What with her white frock, and some lace she is making for a cape, and forty other things, she never has time for a game of anything, or a nice walk. And she doesn't care about study, though her lessons are so different. I don't know another girl who studies Latin, and it's so nice to talk it over. How rapidly you must have learned."

He looked at her in admiration.

"Oh, I knew some of it before I came here. There was a chaplain in Calcutta who was—well, not exactly ill, but not well; and father took him with us on the vessel when he went for certain [124] things, and he staid with us afterward. He used to read aloud, and it sounded so splendid! Then he taught me. But Cousin Leverett said it wasn't quite right, so I am going over it. And he is teaching me a little French."

"You know they think women don't need to know much beside housekeeping and sewing. I just hate to hear about ruffles cut on the straight or bias, and I couldn't tell what Dacca muslin, or jaconet, or dimity was to save myself. And eyelet work and French knots and run lace—that's what the big girls who come to see Polly talk about. But I like books, and studies, and different countries. I'd like to travel. But I don't know that I want to be a sea captain."

They found some queer old houses that were odd enough. Mr. Leverett said they were almost two hundred years old, and that at first the place kept the old Indian name, Naumkeag. But the Reverend Francis Higginson gave it a new name out of the Bible—"In Salem also is His tabernacle." The early pilgrims built a chapel at once.

"How close the houses are!"

It was a row that had survived the hand of improvement. There was a huge central chimney-stack, big enough for a modern factory, and the house seemed built around it. The second story overhung the first, and in some of them were small dormer windows looking like bird houses. And [125] the little panes of greenish glass seemed to make windows all framework.

Cynthia was much interested in the Roger Williams house, and the story of the old minister.

"Why, I thought religion made people good and pleasant——" Then she checked herself, for often Cousin Elizabeth was *not* pleasant. And she seemed more religious than Cousin Eunice. And Cousin Chilian rarely scolded or said a cross word—he never talked about religion, but he went to church on Sunday; they all did. She studied the Catechism, she could learn easily when she had a mind to, but she didn't understand it at all. She shocked Elizabeth by her irreverent questions. There was the old horn-book primer with—

"In Adam's fall
We sinned all."

"I don't see how that could be when we were not there!" she said almost defiantly.

"It means the nature we inherited."

"But I don't think that fair!"

"You don't know, you never can understand until you are in a state of grace. Don't ask such impertinent questions. You are a little heathen child."

Then she asked Cousin Chilian what "a state of grace" meant. [126]

"I think it is the willingness to do right, to be truthful, kindly, obliging. It is all comprised in the Golden Rule—to love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself, not to do anything to him that you would not like to have done to yourself, and to do to him whatever you would like him to do for you. That is enough for a little girl."

"That sounds like Confucius," she said thoughtfully.

But she went back to Roger Williams when Bentley said he was one of his heroes.

"What did he do?" she asked, interested.

"Well, he founded the City of Providence. And if William Penn is to be honored for founding a city of brotherly love, Roger Williams deserves it for establishing a city where different sects should agree without persecuting each other. You see, they banished him from Salem back to England because he thought a man had some right to his own opinions, so long as he worshipped God. So he went to Providence instead. He walked all the way with just his pocket compass to guide him, and how he must have worked to make a dwelling-place for himself and his friends in the dead of winter! There were some Quakers already there, who had been banished from other settlements, and they all resolved to be friendly. Yes, I call him a hero!"

Cynthia studied the house with the little courtyard and the great tree shading it. [127]

"Polly said it was the Witch House," she remarked.

"That was because there were trials for witchcraft. You are too young to hear about that," Chilian said decisively, with a glance at Bentley. [128]

CHAPTER VIII

SORROW'S CROWN OF SORROW

Occasionally they went down to the warehouse, and while Chilian was busy some of the captains or mates would speak to her. They knew about her father and one sad fact she did not know. For she had settled in her mind that Captain Corwin would bring him back and that it would take a long, long while. So she tried to be content and if not teasing or fretting was one of the ways of being good, she tried her utmost to keep to that. She was too brave to tell falsehoods to shield herself from any inadvertent wrongdoing, even if Cousin Elizabeth did sometimes say:

"You ought to be soundly whipped. To spare the rod is to spoil the child."

She thought if anybody ever did whip her she should hate him all the rest of her life. Servants and workmen were beaten in India, and it seemed degrading. She did not know that Cousin Chilian had insisted that she should never be struck. He was understanding more every day how her father had loved her, and finding sweet traits in her unfolding.

She liked these rough bronzed men to touch their odd hats to her and call her Missy. Some of them had seen her in Calcutta and knew her father. And when she said, "It takes a long, long [129] while to go there and come back, but when Captain Corwin brings him he is going to live here

and will never go to sea any more"—"No, that he never will, missy;" and the sailor drew his hand across his eyes.

Oh, how full the wharves were with shipping! Flags and pennons waved, and white sails; others, gray with age and weather, flapped in the wind. She liked to see them start out; she always sent a message by them in the full faith of childhood. And there were the fishermen in the cove lower down. Fishing was quite a great business.

Cousin Giles had made his visit and spent two whole days down in the warehouse, when they had not taken her. But she helped Cousin Eunice cut the stems of the sweet garden herbs for drying, and the others for perfumery. There was lavender, the blossoms had been gathered long ago, and sweet marjoram and sweet clover. She always gathered the full-blown rose leaves and sewed them up in little bags and laid them among the household stores. Everything was so fragrant. Cynthia thought she liked it better than sandalwood and the pungent Oriental perfumes.

Then came the autumnal storms, when the vessels hugged the docks securely at anchor. The house was chilly all through and fires were in order. Some two or three miles below there was a wreck of an East Indiaman, and for days fragments floated around. Some lives were lost, and the [130] little girl shuddered over the accounts.

All the foliage began to turn and fall. The late flowers hung their heads. It had been a beautiful autumn, people said to pay up for the late spring.

There had been a little discussion about a school again.

"She seems so small, and in some things diffident," Chilian said. "The winters are long and cold, and she has not been used to them. Cousin Giles thinks her very delicate."

"She isn't like children raised here, but she's quite as strong as common. She oughtn't be pampered and made any more finicking than she is. A girl almost ten. What is she going to be good for, I'd like to know?"

Cousin Giles had not made much headway with her. He was large and strong with an emphatic voice, and a head of thick, strong white hair, a rather full face, and penetrating eyes. He had advised about investments, though he thought no place had the outlook of Boston. But Salem was ahead of her in foreign trade.

Chilian Leverett felt very careful of the little girl. For if she died a large part of her fortune came to him. He really wished it had not been left that way. There was an East India Marine Society that had many curiosities—stored in rooms on the third floor of the Stearns building. It had a wider scope than that and was to assist widows and orphans of deceased members, who [131] were all to be those "who had actually navigated the seas beyond Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Horn, as masters or supercargoes of vessels belonging to Salem." To this Anthony had bequeathed many curiosities and a gift. There was talk of enlarging its scope, which was begun shortly after this.

Matters had settled to an amicable basis in the Leverett house. Rachel had won the respect of Elizabeth, who prayed daily for her conversion from heathendom and that she might see the claims the Christian religion had upon her. Eunice and she were more really friendly. She made some acquaintances outside and most people thought she must be some relation of the captain's. She had proved herself very efficient in several cases of illness, for in those days neighbors were truly neighborly.

Cynthia did shrink from the cold, though there were good fires kept in the house. This winter Chilian had a stove put up in the hall, very much against Elizabeth's desires. Quite large logs could be slipped in and they would lie there and smoulder, lasting sometimes all night. It was a great innovation and extravagance, though wood seemed almost inexhaustible in those days. And it was considered unhealthy to sleep in warm rooms, though people would shut themselves up close and have no fresh air.

Then the snow came, but it was a greater success in the inland towns, and there were sledding and sleigh-riding. The boys and girls had great times building forts and having snowballing [132] contests. But the little girl caught a cold and had a cough that alarmed her guardian a good deal and made him more indulgent than ever, to Elizabeth's disgust.

She was not really ill, only pale and languid and seemed to grow thinner. She was much fairer than any one could have supposed and her eyes looked large and wistful. Chilian put some pillows in the big rocking-chair and tilted it back so that she could almost lie down on it.

"You are so good to me," she would say with her sweet, faint smile.

Bentley came in now and then of an evening, and she liked to hear what they were doing at school. Polly, too, made visits; they had a half-holiday on Saturday. She always brought some work, and Elizabeth considered her a very industrious girl. She was going to a birthday party of one of her mates.

"What do they do at parties?" inquired the little girl.

"Oh, they play games. There's stagecoach. Everybody but one has a seat. He blows a horn and sings out, 'Stage for Boston,' or any place. Then every one has to change seats. Such a

scrambling and scurrying time! and the one who gets left has to take the horn."

"It's something like puss in the corner."

"Only ever so many can play this. Then there's 'What's my thought like?' That's rather hard, but funny. I like twirling the platter. If you don't catch it when it comes near you, you must pay a [133]
forfeit. And redeeming them is lots of fun, for you are told to do all sorts of ridiculous things. Then there's some goodies and mottoes and you can exchange with a boy. But Kate Saltonstall's big sister had a party where they danced. Eliza wanted some dancing, but her mother said so many people did not approve of it for children."

"And don't you have some one to come and dance for you?"

"Oh, what a queer idea! The fun is in dancing yourself with a real nice boy. Some people think it awfully wrong. Do you, Miss Winn?"

"No, indeed. When I was a child in England we went out and danced on the green. Everybody did. And when there were doings at the great houses—like Christmas, and weddings, and coming of age—the ladies, in their silks and satins and laces, came down in the servants' hall and danced with the butler and the footmen, and my lord took out some of the maids. I don't think dancing hurts any one."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Miss Winn. They are talking of having a dancing-class in school. I hope mother will let me join it."

"And they teach it in schools there."

"And why shouldn't they here?" said Polly.

To be sure. Cynthia was much interested and made Polly promise to come again and tell her all about it. Old Salem was awakening rapidly from her rigid torpor. [134]

"I wonder if I could ever have a party," she said to Cousin Leverett that evening. "When father comes home we might have what they did at the Perkinses when they went in their new place—a house-warming. Is that like a party?"

"About the same thing."

"Cousin Elizabeth thinks it wicked. Wouldn't she think dancing wicked?"

"I am afraid she would."

Cynthia sighed. No, she couldn't have a party here.

She waited quite eagerly for Polly's account. The little girl was in her own room. Miss Winn had gone out to get some medicine. Cynthia tried to be well sometimes, so she would not have to take the nauseous stuff. No one had invented medicated sugar pills at that time. She liked Cousin Elizabeth's cough syrup.

Polly was overflowing with spirits.

"Oh, I want to be big, right away. Bella Saltonstall was there and she's going into company next winter, she says. And she showed us some of the dancing steps and they just bewitch you. It's like this"—and Polly picked up her frock in a dainty manner and whirled about the vacant spaces in the room.

"But doesn't it tire you dreadfully? The girls in India stand still a great deal more and just sway about. They come in and dance for you."

"Tire you! Oh, no. That's the great fun, to do it yourself. Bella said it was—ex—something, and [135]
the word is in the spelling-book, but I never can remember the long words. Oh, I just wish I was fifteen and wasn't going to school any more. And then there's keeping company and getting married, and having your setting out. School seems stupid. There were two boys who wanted to come home with me, but mother said Ben must. Then I wished—well, I wished he was in college. He wants to go. Father says Mr. Leverett has infected him with the craze."

"If I was a boy, I'd like to go. Cousin Leverett is going to take me to Harvard next summer when they have their grand closing time."

"I'd rather be a girl and have a nice beau."

Plainly Polly had been saturated with dissipation.

Spring was suggesting her advent. The days were longer. The snow was disappearing.

"Oh, Cousin Leverett, look—there are some buds on the trees!" she cried.

"Yes. You can see them at intervals through the winter. They are wise little things, and swell and then shrink back in the cold."

"I'm so glad. I can soon go out. I get very tired some days. I like summer best."

"Yes. I do hope we shall have an early spring."

She looked up with smiling gladness.

That afternoon she had fallen asleep in the big chair. How almost transparent she was. The long lashes lay on the whiteness of her cheek—yes, it was really white. And there was very little color in her lips. [136]

Abner Hayes came up from the warehouse with some papers the *Ulysses* had just brought in.

"That the captain's poor little girl?"

"Yes; she's asleep. She hasn't been very well this winter, but the first nice balmy day I shall take her out driving. I've been almost afraid to have the air blow on her."

"Yes, she ought to live and enjoy all that big fortune. It's a thousand pities the captain couldn't have come back and enjoyed it with her. But we must all go when our time comes. You never hear a hard word said about him, and sure's there's a heaven he is in it."

Chilian held up his finger. Then he signed a paper that had to go back, and asked if the cargo of the *Ulysses* was in good shape.

Elizabeth called him downstairs after that. There was a poor man wanting some sort of a position and Chilian promised to look out for him. He had been porter in a store, but the heavy lifting made him cough. He would have to get something lighter.

When he returned Cynthia was standing by his table, white as a little ghost. He almost dropped into the chair.

"Was I dreaming, or did that man say my father couldn't come back to Salem, that he—that he was——" [137]

She swayed almost as if she would fall. He drew her down on his knee and her head sank on his shoulder. She was so still that he was startled. How many times he had wondered how he would get her told. Perhaps it had been wrong to wait.

"My little girl! My little Cynthia——"

"Wait," she breathed, and he held her closer. He had come to love her very much, though he had taken her unwillingly.

"Is it true? But no one would say such a thing if it were not. I had been asleep. I woke just as he said that. Perhaps I had been dreaming about our being together. And it seemed at first as if my tongue was stiff and I couldn't even make a sound. Did he go to heaven without me?"

Oh, what should he say to comfort her! She had so many feelings far under the surface.

"My little dear," and his voice was infinitely fond, "I want to tell you that he loved your mother tenderly. No one could have been better loved. In the course of a few hours she was snatched away from him. You were so little—five years ago. I doubt if there was ever a day in which he did not think of her. When you are grown and come to love some one with the strength of your whole heart, you will understand how great it is. And when the summons came for him his first thought was that he should see her, and with the next he must find a new home for his little girl, so he gave you to me. It is very hard just now, but you must think how happy they are together. [138] Perhaps they both know you are here, where you will be cared for and made happy, for we all love you. Every one has not the same way of showing love, but Cousin Elizabeth has done everything she could for you this winter. And we don't want to lose you. You won't grudge them a few years together in that happy place?"

"Oh, are you quite sure there *is* a heaven?"

Oh, Cynthia, you are not the first one who has asked to have it certified.

"Yes, dear; very sure," in the tone of faith.

"He loved mother very much?"

"Yes."

There was a long silence. He felt the slow beating of her little heart.

"Then I ought to be content, since he gave me to you, when he knew he was going away."

"It would have been very sad if you had been left alone there. Out of his great love he planned it this way, thinking the tidings would not come so hard after a while. And now you can always recall him as you saw him last and just think, in a moment of time God called and he stepped over the narrow space that seems such a mystery to us and met *her*. I wish we didn't invest death with so much that is painful, for it is God's way of calling us to a better land where there are no more partings. Sometime you and I will go over to them." [139]

"I shouldn't feel afraid with you," she commented simply.

When the tea bell rang she asked to be carried to her room and laid on Rachel's little bed. He kissed her gently and turned away.

The next was his day in Boston. But late in the afternoon, after Miss Eunice had been visiting her an hour or so, she went to the study and sat by the window, where she could see him come. He glanced up and she waved her hand daintily. All day he had been wondering how he should

find her.

"I haven't coughed but a very little to-day," she exclaimed. "Cousin Elizabeth made some new syrup. And the doctor was in. He said I was a little lazy, that I must be more energetic."

"I've been ordering a new carriage to-day. The old one was hardly worth repairing. And when you are stronger I think I'll buy a gentle pony and we can go out riding. You would not be afraid after a little?"

"Not with you."

Her confidence was very sweet.

"I'm going down to tea to-night. I was down at noon."

"Oh, you are improving. I hope there will come some warm weather and balmy airs."

"It was beautiful last spring. You know I never saw a real spring before."

She was bearing her loss and her sorrow beautifully. All day she had been thinking of the joy of those two when they met on the confines of that beautiful world. It made heaven seem so near, so [140] real. Sometimes the tears came to her eyes. She was Cousin Chilian's little girl, so why should she feel lonely!

Once in a number of years spring comes early. It did this time, at the close of the century. People shook their heads and talked about "weather-breeders," and mentioned snow as late as May, when fruit trees had been in bloom. But nature had turned over a bright, clear leaf, that made the book of time fairly shine.

The carriage came and Cynthia was taken out. Miss Elizabeth wrapped her up like a mummy, and would put a brick, swathed in coverings, in the bottom for her feet. He had taken the ladies out occasionally, but of late years the sisters had been so busy they had little time for pleasure, they thought.

They crossed North Bridge and went up Danvers way. Oh, how lovely it was with the trees in baby leaf, and some wild things blossoming. And even then industry had planted itself. There on the farther bank of Waters River was the iron mill, where Dr. Nathan Read invented his scheme for cut nails. And he built a paddle-wheel steamboat that was a success before Robert Fulton tried his. And they passed the Page house, where General Gage had his office, and Madam Page had tea on the roof, because they had promised not to use tea in the house.

That amused Cynthia and he also told her of the woman, when tea first came to the country, [141] who boiled the leaves and seasoned them, passing them around to her guests, who didn't think they were anything much in the vegetable line and too expensive ever to become general.

Birds sang about them, flocks of wild geese had started on their northward journey. What a wonderful world it was! And her father had been a boy here in Salem village, had lived in Cousin Chilian's house in the father's time, and her mother had been married in the stately parlor. Why, she could dream of their being real guests of the place. How odd she should come to live here. The life in India would be the dream presently.

She was very tired when Chilian lifted her out of the carriage and took her upstairs. Rachel put her to bed for a while and gave her a cup of hot tea—mint and catnip—which was a great restorer, or so considered, in those days. She came down to supper and was quite bright.

Every day she improved a little. Eunice said she was getting 'climated.

Elizabeth wondered if she had any deep feeling. She had expected to see her "take on" terribly. Chilian begged her not to disturb the child's faith that both parents were in heaven.

"Letty Orne, that was, might have been one of the elect, but sea captains are seldom considered safe in the fold, as children of grace. I never heard that he had any evidence. And [142] 'tisn't safe to count on meeting them unless you've had some sign."

"We must leave a good many of these things to God. His ways are better than our short-sighted wisdom."

Elizabeth was never quite sure of Chilian. So much study, and reading, and college talk, and the new theories, and what they called discoveries, were enough to unsettle one's faith, and she feared for him. Younger children than Cynthia had gone through the throes of conviction—she had herself, and she longed to see her in this state.

But the child was quite her olden self. What with the change of climate and her illness she was many shades fairer, and her hair was losing its queer sunburned color. Her thin frame began to fill out, her face grew rounder, and her smile was sweetness itself.

"But she hasn't grown a mite since she came. Leverett people are all of a fair size. I don't know a little runt among them," persisted Elizabeth.

"I wish I could grow," she sighed in confidence to Chilian.

"Never mind. Then you will always be my little girl," he would answer consolingly. [143]

CHAPTER IX

LESSONS OF LIFE

Even Chilian wondered that the little girl took the death of her father so calmly. Elizabeth called it unnatural and questioned whether the child had any deep feeling.

"I don't believe she's shed a tear. And, Eunice, the child ought to go in black."

The child was trying to get used to changed ideas. If her mother was glad and happy, now that they were again united, why should she be sorry? It seemed selfish to her as if she grudged them the joy. And Cousin Chilian was trying every way to entertain her, to help her on to perfect recovery. Sometimes, when she sat alone in the study, the soft eyes would overflow and the tears course silently down her cheeks. She never cried in the tempestuous way of some children. But she knew now she had counted a good deal on their having a home together. Rachel would keep the house and she and her father would take walks and have a garden, where she could cut flowers and have them in the house. Cousin Elizabeth said they made a litter. And now she should never go down to the wharf and see him standing on the deck, and wave her hand to him, as she [144] used when he went on short journeys in India. They would have a low carry-all and ride around, as she would tell him all she had learned about Salem. And they would have people in to drink tea and have pretty dishes on the table. Perhaps he would give her a party. But she didn't know any children, except the Uphams. It might be better to go to school so that she could get acquainted.

Chilian was a good deal startled about the black garments.

"She is so little and thin," he objected. "I never did like children in black; it seems as if you weighted them down with woe. And he has been dead so many months now."

"But one ought to pay decent respect to a custom sanctioned by all civilized people. There will be a talk about it. Folks may think it our fault."

"I do not believe half a dozen people would notice it. It's only a custom after all. I never did like it. We will see how she feels about it."

"Chilian, you make that child of as much importance as if she was a woman grown. You will have your hands full by and by. She will think every one must bow down to her and consult her whims and fancies."

"We will see;" nodding indifferently.

He didn't want her around in garments of woe. Very gently he mentioned the subject.

She glanced up out of sweet, entreating eyes. She had been standing by him, looking over a [145] very choice book of engravings.

"Yes," she returned. "Rachel spoke of it. And you know there are some people who wear white, and some who put on yellow. Black isn't a nice color. Do you like it?"

He shook his head.

"It is the inside of me that aches now and then, when I think I shall never see him come sailing back, that I must be a long while without him until I go to their land. But he must be very happy with mother, and that is what I think of when I feel how hard it is;" and the tears stole softly down her cheeks. "I have Rachel and you, and he said you would always love me and care for me. But I try not to feel sorry, and if I had on a black frock I couldn't help but think of it all the time. Then I should be sorry inside and outside both, and is it right to make yourself unhappy when you believe people have gone to heaven?"

She said it so simply that he was deeply moved. She had been alone with her sorrow all this time, when they had thought her indifferent.

"You need not wear black—I wish you would not. I want you to get real well and happy. And you are a brave little girl to think of them and refrain from grief."

She wiped away the tears lest they should fall on the book.

"At first it was quite dreadful to me. I couldn't say anything. Then I remembered how we used [146] to talk of mother, as if she was only in the next room. And then I sit here and think, when the sky is such a splendid blue and there come little white rifts in it, as if somewhere it opened, I can almost see them. Can't people come back for a few moments?"

"Only in dreams, I imagine."

"I can *almost* see them. And they are so glad to be together. And I know father says, 'Cynthia will come by and by.' But twenty years, or thirty years, is a long while to wait."

Perhaps she wouldn't need to wait so long, he thought, as he noted the transparent face.

"And now I should be sorry to go away from you," she said, with grave sweetness.

"I think your father meant you should stay a long while with me when he gave you to me;" and he pressed her closer to his heart.

So she did not wear mourning, to Elizabeth's very real displeasure. There was no further talk about the school, but she did try to sew a little and began the sampler. Cousin Eunice was her guide here. She brought out hers that was over fifty years old, and all the colors were fading.

"I wonder if I shall live fifty years," she mused.

Driving about was her great entertainment. You could go to Marblehead, which was a peninsula. There were the fishery huts and the men curing and drying fish. Sometimes they took passage in one of the numerous sailing vessels and went in and out the irregular shore, and saw [147] Boston from the bay. It seemed in those times as if it might get drowned out, there was so much water around it.

"And if it should float off out to sea, some day," she half inquired, laughingly.

He was glad to hear her soft, sweet laugh again.

She thought she liked Salem best, and even now people began to talk of old Salem, there had been so many improvements since the time Governor Bradford had written:

"Almost ten years we lived here alone,—
In other places there were few or none;
For Salem was the next of any fame
That began to augment New England's name."

And then it went by the old Indian name and was called Naumkeag. And she found that it was older than Boston, and had been the seat of government twice, and that Governor Burnett, finding Boston unmanageable, had convened the General Court here for two years. That was in 1728, and now it was 1800.

"But no one lives a hundred years," she said.

"Oh, yes; there are a number of persons who have lived that long. Now and then a person lives in three centuries, is born the last year of one, goes through a whole century, and dies in the next one."

"What a long, long while!" she sighed.

And there was the old Court House where the Stamp Act was denounced. She wanted to know all about that, and he was fond of explaining things, the sort of teacher habit, but there was [148] nothing dogmatic about it. Here were houses where the Leveretts had lived, third or fourth cousins who had married with the Graingers, and the Lyndes, and the Saltonstalls, and the Hales. It is so in the course of a hundred or two years, when emigration does not come in to disturb the purity of the blood.

The little girl really began to improve. Her hair was taking on a brighter tint and in the warm weather the uneven ends curled about her forehead in dainty rings, her complexion was many shades fairer, her cheeks rounded out, and her chin began to show the cleft in it. She was more like her olden self, quite merry at times.

The summer went on as usual. Gardening, berry-picking, and she helped with the gooseberries, the briery vines she did not like. There were jars of jam and preserves, rose leaves to gather, and all the mornings were crowded full. Often in the afternoon she went up in the garret to see Miss Eunice spin—sometimes on the big wheel, at others with flax on the small wheel. She liked the whirring sound, and it was a mystery to her how the thread came out so fine and even.

Elizabeth had taken the white quilt out of its wrappings, it did not get finished the summer before. A neighbor had let her copy a new pattern for the border that had come from New York. And she heard there had been imported white woven quilts with wonderful figures in them. [149]

"Then one wouldn't have to quilt any more. Shan't you be glad, Cousin Elizabeth?"

"Glad!" She gave a kind of snort and pushed the needle into her finger, and had to stop lest a drop of blood might mar the whiteness. "Well, I'm not as lazy as that comes to, and I don't see how they can put much beauty in them. You can change blue and white and show a pattern, but where it is all white! Why, you couldn't tell it from a tablecloth."

It was warm up in the garret, and what with drying herbs, and the sun pouring on the shingles, there was a rather close, peculiar air. Cynthia stood by the open window, where the sweet summer wind went by, laden with the fragrance of newly cut grasses and the silk of the corn that was just tasselling out. The hills rose up, tree-crowned; white clouds floated by overhead, and out beyond was the great ocean that led to other countries—to India she thought of so often.

Oh, how the birds sang! She was so sorry Cousin Eunice had to sit and spin, when there was such a beautiful world all around, and Cousin Elizabeth pricked her fingers quilting. She heard her sigh, but she did not dare look around. She had that nice sense of delicacy, rather unusual in a child. But then she wasn't an everyday child.

"Cynthia," called Rachel from the foot of the stairs, "don't you want to go out for a walk?

They've been unloading the *Mingo*, and they have a store of new things at the Merrits'." [150]

That was the great East India emporium.

"Oh, yes!" She skipped across the floor and ran downstairs lightly.

"That child's like a whirlwind," exclaimed Elizabeth crossly.

"But we ought to be glad she's so much better. I was really afraid in the spring we wouldn't have her long."

"Oh, the Leverett stock is tough."

"But her mother died young."

"Of that horrid India fever. No, I didn't truly think she would die. If she had, I wonder where all the money would go? Chilian is awful close-mouthed about it. But it would have to go somewhere. 'Tisn't at all likely he'd leave word for it to be thrown back in the sea."

"No; oh, no."

"There's some talk about missionaries going out to try to convert the heathen. But Giles thinks it would cost more than it would amount to. Giles has got way off; seems to me religion's dying out since they've begun to preach easy ways of getting to heaven and letting the bars down here and there. There's no struggle and sense of conviction nowadays; you just take it up as a business. And that child talks about heaven as if she'd had a glimpse of it and saw her father and mother there. Letty Orne was a church member in her younger days, but I don't believe the [151] captain ever was. And they who don't repent will surely perish."

Eunice sighed. She could never get used to the thought that thousands of souls were brought into the world to perish eternally.

Cynthia tied on her Leghorn hat. It did have some black ribbon on it, and the strings were passed under her chin and tied at one side. That and her silken gown gave her a quaint appearance, rather striking as well.

They walked down the street and turned corners. There was quite a procession of ladies bound for the same place. If they had been all buyers, Mr. Merrit would have made quite a fortune. But he was glad to have them come. They would describe the stock to their neighbors, and perhaps decide on what they wanted for themselves.

"Ah, Miss Winn!" exclaimed a pleasant-faced woman. "And that is Captain Leverett's little girl? Why, she looks as if she was quite well again. We heard of her being so poorly. I suppose the shock of her father's death was dreadful! Poor little thing! And she's to be quite an heiress, I heard. What are they going to do with her? Won't she be sent to Boston to school?"

"Oh, I think not. Mr. Leverett has been teaching her a little."

They had fairly to elbow their way in. Long counters were piled with goods. Silks, laces, [152] sheerest of muslins embroidered beautifully, lace wraps, India shawls, jewelry, caps, collars, handkerchiefs, stockings, slippers that were dainty enough for a Cinderella.

And all down one side were ranged tables, and jars, and vases, and articles one could hardly find a name for. Such exquisite carving, such odd figures painted and embroidered on silk, birds the like of which were never seen on land or sea, dragons that flew, and crawled, and climbed trees, and disported themselves on waves.

"Oh, it looks like home," cried Cynthia, for the moment forgetting herself. And she kept sauntering round among the beautiful things, her heart growing strangely light, and her pulses throbbing with a sort of joy.

She was almost hidden by a great pile of tapestry. The Indians had found some secrets of beauty as well as France, if they did make it with infinite pains. And this was made with the little hand-looms and joined together so neatly and the colors blended so harmoniously that it was like a dream. Only the little girl did not like the dragons and strange animals. She had never seen any real ones like them. They were in the stories Nalla used to tell.

Then some one else spoke to Miss Winn. "Is your little charge here?" she asked. "I'm quite anxious to see her. I've called twice on the Leveretts, and really asked for her once when they said she was quite ill. But I saw her out in the carriage with—isn't it her uncle? No? And she's to [153] be very well to do, I've heard. The idea of the Leverett women undertaking to bring up a child! They're good as gold and some of the best housekeepers in Salem, but I dare say they'll teach her to knit stockings, and make bedquilts, and braid rag mats, and do fifty-year-old things—make a regular little Puritan of her. I knew her mother quite well before she was married. Doesn't seem as if we were near of an age and went to school together. But some of the Ornes married in our line. And I was married when I was seventeen, and now I'm a grandmother. How the years do fly on! And she had to die out in that heathen land; he too. Wasn't it odd about sending her here beforehand? I do want to see her."

"She is somewhere about, interested in all these foreign things." Miss Winn was not quite sure of the chattering woman. She had learned that the Leverett ladies were exclusive, whether from inclination or lack of time. They asked their minister and a few old family friends in to tea on rare

occasions, and then it was cooking and baking and cleaning up the choice old silver and dusting and polishing, and the next day clearing up. Everything out of the routine made so much extra work. Among the few English-speaking people in India there had been a sort of free and easy sociability.

Cynthia meanwhile had slipped around the end of the counter and came up to them. She [154] wanted to see the woman who had been to school with her mother. Then her mother was a little girl, perhaps no older than she. Did she like it? Cynthia wondered.

"This is Captain Leverett's little daughter," Rachel announced rather stiffly.

"My—but you don't favor your mother at all. I'm Mrs. Turner and I knew her off and on. We lived about thirty miles above here. Then her folks died and she went to Boston, but she used to be at the Leveretts' a good deal. I married and came here. I'm living up North River way and have a house full of children—like steps—and one grandchild, and I'm just on the eve of thirty-seven. I've one little girl about your age, but she's ever so much bigger. I'd like you to be friends with her. The next older is a girl, too. Why, you'd have real nice times if the old aunties were willing. Do they keep her strict? And she's going to be a considerable heiress, I heard. I wonder where her eyes came from? They're not Leverett eyes, and her mother's were a clear blue, real china blue, but then there's different blues in china," and she laughed. "Sad about the captain, wasn't it? He should have lived to enjoy his fortune, and now his little girl will have it all. I must come and scrape acquaintance for the sake of my girls. You'd like them, I know, they're full of fun. We're not strait-laced people—that's going out of date."

Then she passed on. They wandered about a little more among the vases and jars and the [155] paintings on silk. The air was heavy with sandalwood, and attar of rose, and incense. The fragrance seemed never to die out of those old things that became family heirlooms.

"Come," Rachel said, taking her by the hand. It was quite late in the afternoon now, and the shadows of everything were growing longer. She could not understand why it was at first, but now she knew. And the sun would be round there in Asia presently. In her secret heart she still believed the sun went round and the earth stood still, for in the movement people *must* slip off. But then what held it in the air? Cousin Chilian had a globe, but you see there was a strong wire through the middle, fastened to the frame at both ends. Perhaps the earth was fastened somewhere! She liked to make it revolve on its axis, and in imagination she crossed the oceans, and seas, and capes, and found her father again.

The stage had just come in. They paused on the corner, waiting for Cousin Chilian. Some one was with him—yes, it was Cousin Giles Leverett.

"Well, little woman," he began, "so I find you out here meandering round, and so much improved that I hardly know you. We were afraid in the winter you were going to slip away and leave all this fortune behind you, never having had a bit of good of it. But you look now as if you had taken a new lease. And you are positively growing!" [156]

Chilian smiled at the remark. He had begun to think so himself. And she looked so pretty just now with the pink in her cheeks and the soft tendrils of hair about her forehead, the eager, luminous eyes. He reached out and took her hand.

"Have you been inspecting old Salem, and did you find any queer things?" Cousin Giles asked.

"Oh, there was a great shipload of goods from India and it seemed almost as if you were walking through the booths at home, only there were no natives and no beggars or holy men——"

"Tut! tut! child; they are not holy men who are too lazy to move and waiting for other people to fill their mouths. If they were here we'd make them work or they'd have to starve. They're talking about missionaries being sent out to convert them. I heard a rousing sermon on Sunday, but it didn't loosen my purse-strings. Your greatest missionary is work, good hard labor, clearing up and planting. Suppose those old *Mayflower* people had sat down and held out their hands for alms. Do you suppose our Indians would have filled 'em with their corn, and fish, and game? Not much. They'd tied 'em to a tree and set fire to 'em." When Cousin Giles was excited he made elisions of speech rather unusual for a Boston man. "They went to work and cut down trees, and built houses, and raised farm and garden truck, and made shoes and clothes, and roads and bridges, and built cities and towns, and shamed those countries thousands of years old. And now [157] we're trying to help them by bringing over their goods and selling them."

"And creating extravagance, Elizabeth would say," returned Chilian, with a sort of humorous smile.

"Oh, you might as well keep the money going as to hoard it up in an old stocking, so long as it is honestly yours. We're getting to be quite a notable country, Chilian Leverett."

They turned into Derby Street, and Cousin Giles paused to survey the garden.

"You've lots of things to enjoy here," he said. "I don't know but it's a sensible thing to take the good of what you have as you go along. And little Miss here will have enough without your adding to the store. You men of Salem ought to begin to do some big things—build a college."

"Oh, I think our young men would rather go to Harvard. We don't want to rival you. We shall be the biggest New England seaport. We'll divide up the glories."

Elizabeth was so taken by surprise that she was rather cross. She liked things planned beforehand. Now the tablecloth must come off. This one had been on since Sunday and it had two darns in it. And the old silver must come out.

"I don't believe Cousin Giles would ever notice," Eunice said. "And I do think the china prettier than that old silver."

"Well, it has the crown mark on it and the Leveretts owned it before they came from England. [158] Giles' folks had some of it, too, but the Lord only knows what he's done with his. I dare say servants have made way with it, or banged it out of shape. Anybody can have china. Come, do be spry, Eunice."

Cynthia went upstairs and had her hair brushed and a clean apron put on, though the other was not soiled.

"Rachel, what is an heiress?" she asked.

"Why—some one, a woman, who inherits a good deal of money."

"Does she have to wait until she is a woman?"

"Why, no. Yes, in a way, too. She can have the money spent upon her, but she can't have it herself until she is twenty-one."

Cynthia wondered how it would seem to go and spend money, buy ever so many things. But she really couldn't think of anything she wanted, unless it was a house of her very own, and books, and pretty pictures, not portraits of old-fashioned men and women. And a pony and a dainty chaise. But then—she was such a little girl, and she wouldn't want to leave Cousin Chilian.

Elizabeth made delicious cream shortcake for supper. Cousin Giles said everything tasted better up here, perhaps it was the clear salt water. There were so many fresh ponds and streams around Boston. But there were big plans for drainage and for docking out. Then Elizabeth was such a fine cook.

The two men sat out on the stoop in the summer moonlight and Cynthia thought Cousin Giles [159] really quarrelled trying to establish the superiority of Boston. Then they talked about investments and Captain Leverett, and Giles said, "Cynthia will be one of the richest women of Salem. Chilian, you'll have to look sharp that some schemer doesn't marry her for her money."

"You must come to bed, Cynthia," declared Rachel. Through the open window they could hear Cousin Giles' voice plainly.

The men went the next morning to consider an investment Chilian had in view. It had been thought best to divide the sums coming in between Salem and Boston. Then they walked about and saw the improvements, the new docks being built to accommodate the shipping, the great fleet of boats, the busy ship-yard, the hurrying to and fro everywhere. It was not merely finery, but spices and articles used in the arts. Gum copal was brought from Zanzibar. Indigo came in, though they were trying to raise that at the South.

And when Giles saw the new streets and fine houses, and Mr. Derby's, that was to cost eighty thousand dollars, he did open his eyes in surprise. Though he said rather grudgingly:

"It's a shame for one little girl to have all that money. There should have been three or four children. Fifty years ago the Leveretts had such big families they bid fair to overrun the earth, and now they've dwindled down to next to nothing. Chilian, why don't you marry?" [160]

"The same to yourself. Are you clinging to any old memory?"

"Well, not just that. I don't seem to have time. Now you are a fellow of leisure. Get about it, man, and hunt up a wife." [161]

CHAPTER X

A NEW DEPARTURE

Cynthia Leverett was making great improvement in every respect. She was no longer the thin, wan little thing that had come from India. She had outgrown her clothes, which was a good sign, Eunice said.

Elizabeth made a stand for good wearing ginghams and plain cloths for winter.

"There's that gray cloth of mine that's too nice to hack around for every day. I could have it dyed, I suppose, but I've two nice black stuff dresses beside my silk, and that other one Chilian gave me that must have cost a sight of money; it's thick enough to almost stand alone. I can't bear those sleazy stuffs that come from India. But I've wished more than once that I had the money it cost, out at interest. And the cloth——"

"It isn't a very pretty color," ventured Eunice timidly.

"What does that matter for a child? It won't show dirt easily. And it is settled that she is going to school, I'm thankful to say." [162]

The dress in question was not a clear, pretty gray, but had an ugly yellow tint.

"She certainly is rich enough to buy her own clothes, or have them bought for her. I'd dip that dress over a good deal darker brown. You know Chilian didn't like it for you, and he will not for her."

Eunice was amazed at her own protest. The child had always been prettily attired. And more attention was being paid to children's clothes she noticed in church on Sunday, and after she had indulged in such sinful wanderings, she read the chapter in Isaiah where the prophet denounced the "round tires like the moon, the bonnets and the head bands, the mantles, and wimples, and crisping pins, and changeable suits of apparel," and other vanities, and predicted dire punishments for them.

Mrs. Turner had called according to her proposal. She brought her little daughter Arabella, commonly called Bella. Cousin Chilian was out in the garden with Cynthia, and received her with his usual kindly cordiality, inviting them to walk into the house. The parlor shutters were tightly closed, and Mrs. Turner abhorred state parlors. Hers was always open, for guests were no rarity.

"Why can't we sit out here a spell? It is so delightful to have this garden in view. And your clematis is a perfect show. Then let the children run around and get acquainted. How are the ladies?" [163]

She seated herself on the bench at the side of the porch.

"I will call them," he said. "But—hadn't you better walk in?"

"Oh, we can't stay very long. I've been waiting for the ladies to return my last call, but we were down in this vicinity, so I stopped. You see, I don't always stand on ceremony. And we have been so interested in your little girl. I saw her in Merrit's with Miss Winn."

He summoned the ladies, and then he returned to the guests. The children were both down the path—Bella talking and gesticulating, and Cynthia laughing.

Mrs. Turner was in nowise formal. She talked of Mr. Turner's business—he was a shipbuilder—of the rapid strides Salem was making; indeed one would hardly know it for old Salem of the witch days. And people's ideas had broadened out so, softened from their rigidity, "though some of the old folks are thinking the very trade we are so proud of is going to ruin our character and morals, and fill us with pride and vanity. But I say to Mr. Turner the people did their hard work and bore their deprivations bravely all through the Revolution, and we can't go back and make their lot easier by depriving ourselves of comforts, or even pleasures."

There might be some casuistry in that, but there was truth as well. [164]

Then he asked if she knew of any nice schools for girls. Where did hers go?

"Oh, to Madam Torrey's. That's up Church Street. Maybe it would be too far in bad weather, though our girls don't mind it. Alice is thirteen, but she's been there since she was eight, and Bella has been going these two years. The boys are at the Bertram School, and your neighbor Bentley Upham goes there. He's a nice boy. But Madam Torrey is a fine woman. She has an assistant, and a woman comes in to teach the French class. Then—I don't suppose everybody will approve of this, but there is going to be a dancing-class out of school hours, yet no one is compelled to send their children to that. There's fine needlework, too, and fancy knitting, indeed about all that it is necessary for a girl to know. And the children are all from good families; that is quite an important point."

"I think I must walk over and see her."

"Do. I am sure you will be pleased. The walk will be the only objection. Isn't she delicate?"

"She wasn't well last winter. She took a cold. She was not used to our bleak winters. And there was her father's death. She had counted so much on his return."

"It was very sad. She looks well now."

Then the ladies made their appearance. Elizabeth apologized for Chilian not asking her into the parlor. "It looked inhospitable." [165]

"It was my fault. The stoop was so tempting. A shady porch in the afternoon is a luxury. We take our sewing out there; that is, Alice and I, and sometimes the guests. How lovely your vines are! And your garden is a regular show place, quite worth coming to see if there were no other charm. And, Miss Leverett, I hear you have been making the most beautiful white quilt there is in Salem."

"Oh, no. But as nice as any. And it was a sight of work. I don't know as I'd do it again. I've no chick or child to leave it to."

"May I come over some day and see it? Not that I shall do anything of the kind. With four big boys to mend for and the two girls, I have my hands full."

Then they talked about putting up fruit and making jellies, and Mrs. Turner said she must go

over to the Uphams. She heard that Polly was getting to be such a nice, smart girl, and had worked the bottom of her white frock and a round cape to match. Then she called Bella.

"Oh, can't I go over with them?" pleaded Cynthia.

Cousin Chilian nodded. Elizabeth rose stiffly and went in. Eunice pulled out her knitting. It was so lovely here. There were the warmth and perfume of summer and the rich fragrance of ripening fruits and grass mown for feed, not snipped with a lawn-mower, such things had not been heard of even in the rapidly improving Salem. [166]

"There are some countries where people live out of doors nearly all the time," began Eunice reflectively. "Well, they do a good deal in India. But I think this is in Europe. And this is so lovely, so restful. But I'm afraid you have affronted Elizabeth by not insisting Mrs. Turner should walk into the parlor. Though really—we had not returned her last call. I do wish Elizabeth could find some time to get out. I don't see why there should be so much work."

"Couldn't you have some one to help?"

"Well, it isn't just the cooking and kitchenwork. And no one could suit her there. She's up in that old garret toiling, and moiling, and packing away enough things to furnish an inn. We shall never want them. And there's your mother's, and some of your grandmother's, blankets."

"The New England thrift is rather too thrifty sometimes," he commented dryly.

Cynthia staid after Mrs. Turner made her adieus. Indeed, as it was nearing supper-time, he walked over for her. She and Betty were in the wide-seated swing and Ben was swinging them so high that Betty, used as she was to it, gave now and then little squeals. Chilian held up his hand and Ben let the "cat die," which meant the swing stopping of itself.

"Oh, Mr. Leverett, can't Cynthy stay to tea? I'll run and ask mother."

"Not to-day. She had better come home now."

"Oh, dear!" cried Bentley disappointedly. [167]

"Yes, I had better go. And I've had such a lovely time. Cousin Chilian, can't I come over again?"

How pretty she looked with her shining eyes, her rosy cheeks, and her entreating lips! What would she coax out of men as she grew older!

"Oh, yes; any time they want you."

"Well, we'd like her every day!" cried Ben eagerly. "And isn't it splendid that she's grown so well and strong, and can run and play, and have good out-of-doors times? Though I used to like it in the winter up in your room, and Mr. Price said he never knew a boy to improve so in Latin."

Bentley made a graceful bow to Mr. Leverett.

"Oh," said Cynthia, skipping along in exuberant joy, "children are nice, aren't they? You can't have much fun alone by yourself, and the days are so long when you go in to Boston."

"I wonder if you would like to try school again?"

"Yes, I think I would;" after a pause. "You see," with a gravity that sat oddly upon her, "I'm not so afraid as I was, and I have more sense. And I know things more evenly than I did. I can write now quite well, and I know most of the tables, though division does bother me. And I can spell all but the very difficult words. I don't think any one would laugh at me now."

"No, they wouldn't," he answered decisively.

"I shouldn't like little boys, but I wouldn't mind them as big as Bentley. And, oh, I wish we had a swing. And they have a real sailors' hammock, such as they have on shipboard. It's delightful [168] under the trees."

"I think we can manage that."

"Well, if your head isn't tousled!" cried Elizabeth. "It looks like a brush heap. Get it fixed, for supper is all ready. Why didn't you stay?" the last ironically.

"Cousin Chilian thought I had better not. They did want me to."

"Are you sure they *wanted* you to?"

"Why, yes," she answered in ignorance of the sarcasm.

She walked up and down the garden path with Cousin Chilian and asked about the school, was glad when she found Bella and her sister Alice went there. Now and then she gave two or three skips and pulled on the hand she held so tightly. He had never seen her in quite such glee, and how charming she was!

"Chilian, bring that child in out of the dew. Next thing she'll be in for a winter's cold," said the severe voice.

The interview with Madam Torrey was very satisfactory. Chilian asked Miss Winn to go out and buy what was needed and get it made. They went over to Mrs. Turner's one day and took the

school in on their way.

"When it rains Silas can take you and come for you. I think the walk will not tire you out."

"Oh, no; I don't get tired out now." [169]

It was Miss Winn's place to look after the child, of course, but Elizabeth felt in some way defrauded. She wished Cynthia had been poor and dependent upon them. Then she would stand a chance to be brought up in a useful manner.

Chilian took her to school the first morning. Miss Winn was to come for her. She had been rather shy at first. But Bella Turner told the girls about her, how she had been born in Salem, and gone to Calcutta when only a few months old, come and gone again in her father's ship, and he was Captain Leverett, and then returned to America. He was to come afterward, but he had died. And Mr. Chilian Leverett, who was something in Harvard College, was her guardian. And she was to have ever so much money when she was a young lady.

Any other child might have been spoiled by the attentions lavished upon her. The girls thought her curly hair so pretty, and her hands were so small, with their dainty, tapering fingers. Then she found one of the girls, Lois Brinsmaid, lived in Central Avenue, so there was no further question of troubling any one. Cousin Chilian had given her a good foundation for study and she was eager for knowledge of all sorts, except that of the needle.

Then autumn began to merge into winter and there were storms and bleak winds, and some days she staid at home. She caught light colds, but Chilian and Miss Winn were very watchful. [170]

She went to the Turners one afternoon and staid to tea, and the big boys hovered about her like bees. She was not forward or aggressive, but there was a sort of charming sweetness about her. When she raised her lovely eyes they seemed to appeal to every heart, though they never went very far with Cousin Elizabeth.

One day she came home and found the house in a great state of excitement. Elizabeth had started to go down into the cellar with both hands full. She had been a little dizzy for several days, and meant to take a dose of herb tea, boneset being her great stand-by, when she could find time. Whether it was the vertigo, or she slipped, she lay there unconscious, and they sent for Doctor Prescott.

Silas and the doctor carried her upstairs, and the latter brought her out of the faint. But when she started to stand up, she toppled over and fainted again.

"There's something quite serious. Let us carry her up to her room, and you women undress her. Her legs are sound, so the trouble is higher up."

Then he found her hip was broken, a bad thing at any time of life, but at her age doubly so. And he sent for Doctor Lapham to help him set it. It was very bad. They were still there when Chilian came home.

"I'm afraid she's laid up for a year or so;" and the doctor shook his head ominously.

"Do your very best for her," besought Chilian. [171]

He said to Eunice, "Now you must have some one. You can't carry on the house alone."

"If it is the same to you, Chilian, I'd rather have a nurse. There's Mother Taft, who is good and strong, and used to nursing. She's willing to help about a little, too."

"Just as you think best. I want every care taken of her."

For a month it was a very serious matter. They thought the spine was somewhat injured as well. And Elizabeth knew they could never get on without her.

"I expect I shall find the house in such a state when I do get about, it will take me all summer to right it. You never were as thorough as I could wish, Eunice."

Miss Winn begged that she might be of service. She had so little to do, or to think about, that time hung heavy on her hands, now that Cynthia was in school. For then school hours were from nine to five. And the child was getting so handy caring for herself. She curled her hair and put on her clothes, brought her shoes down every evening for Silas to black, and sometimes wiped the tea dishes while Miss Winn washed them. Somehow there didn't seem so much work to do. Eunice didn't always have two kinds of cake for supper, nor a great shelf full of pies for Silas to take home. There was plenty of everything and no one complained.

They found Mother Taft invaluable. She was about the average height, and had long arms, and strength according. Then she had a most excellent way with her. When Elizabeth groaned that they never could get on without her, and she must be up and about before everything went to "wrack and ruin," Mother Taft said: [172]

"The kitchen looks like a new pin. There's no signs of ruin that I can see. Meals are good, cake fine, house clean. When you get downstairs you'll think you haven't been out of the harness more'n a week."

"A likely story," Elizabeth moaned.

Cynthia went through March very successfully, but with the first warm spell in April she caught a cold and coughed, and Chilian was almost wild about her, his nerves having been worn somewhat by Elizabeth's mishap. But after ten days or so she came around all right and was eager for school again.

She was sitting in her old place by the window late one afternoon and he had been reading some poems to her—a volume lately come from England.

"Cousin Chilian," she said, "will you tell me what true relation we are?"

"Why, what has put that in your head?"

"I want to know." She said it persuasively.

"Well, it isn't very near after all. My father and yours were cousins. My father was the son of the oldest brother, your father the son of the youngest, that stretched them quite far apart. When I wasn't much more than a baby Anthony came to live with us, and was like an elder brother to me. Father was very fond of him. But he would go to sea and he made a fine sailor and captain. [173] Then he was married from here, and you were born here."

"The girls sometimes say, 'your uncle.' I wonder if you would like to have me call you uncle?"

Something in him protested. He could not tell what it was, unless an odd feeling that it made him seem older. He wished he were ten years younger, and he could give no reason for that either.

"I think I like the 'cousin' best;" after some deliberation.

"And it is so lovely to be dear to some one, very dear. I like Rachel, she's been almost a mother to me, and I like Cousin Eunice for her sweet ways. But I've no one of my very own, and so—I'm very glad to be dear to you. It is like a ship being anchored to something safe and strong."

She came and put her arms about his neck and kissed him. He drew her down on his knee. She was her mother's child, and her mother had been dear to him, his first love, his only love so far.

Oh, how would the garden get made and the house cleaned, the blankets and the winter clothing aired and put away, those in use washed? Eunice and Miss Winn went up in the garret one day and swept and dusted, not giving a whole week to it.

"Now," said Mother Taft, "I'm going to take a holiday off. I'm tired of puttering round in the sick room, and she's so much better now that she doesn't keep one on the jump. And I'm going to [174] wash them there blankets and you can pack them away, so there'll be one thing less to worry about."

"But Silas' wife would come and do it. And a holiday! Why don't you go off somewhere——"

"I want to do it."

And do it she did. Some way the house did get cleaned. "After a fashion," Elizabeth said. And the garden was made. Chilian and Eunice trimmed up roses. Cynthia and Miss Winn planted seeds. There were always some things that wintered over—sweet Williams, lilies of various sorts, pinks, laurels, some spiræas, snowball and syringas, hosts of lilacs that made a fragrant hedge. Cynthia thought it had never been so lovely before. She wore a nosegay at her throat, and in her belt just a few; she had the fine taste that never overloaded. She and Cousin Chilian used to walk up and down the fragrant paths after supper and no one fretted at them about the dew. Sometimes Rachel or Eunice would bring out a dainty scarf. And how many things they found to talk about. She loved to dwell on the times with her father, and it seemed as if she remembered a great deal more about her mother than she did at first, but she never imagined it was Cousin Chilian's memory that helped out hers.

She had enjoyed the school very much. There were no high up "isms" or "ologies" for girls in those days. She learned about her own country, for already there were some histories written, [175] and the causes that led to the war. Some of the girls had grandmothers who had lived through those exciting years, and made the relation of incidents much more interesting than any dry written account that was mostly dates and names. What heroes they had been! And the old *Mayflower* story and John Alden, and others who were to inspire a poet's pen.

Then there was the dread story of the witchcraft that had led Salem astray. Cousin Chilian would never have it mentioned, and had taken away several books he did not want her to see. But the girls had gone to some of the old places, where witches had been taken from their homes and cast into jail, the Court House where they had been tried, and Gallows Hill, that most people shunned even now.

One rainy evening, after her lessons had been studied, Cynthia went downstairs. Rachel had been fomenting her face for the toothache and was lying down. Cousin Chilian had gone to a town-meeting, and the house seemed so still that she almost believed she might see the ghost or witch of the stories she had heard. No one was in the sitting-room, or the kitchen proper, but she heard voices in what was called the summer kitchen, a roughly constructed place with a stone chimney and a great swinging crane. Here they did much of the autumn work, for Elizabeth was quite a stickler for having a common place to save something nicer. [176]

Mother Taft always smoked a pipe of tobacco in the evening. "It soothed her," she said, after

her tussle of fixing her patient for the night, "and made her sleep better."

"And it's my opinion if Miss 'Lisbeth could just have a good smoke at night 'twould do her more good than the doctor's powders."

"Why, Cynthy!" Cousin Eunice exclaimed.

"I was lonesome. Rachel's gone to sleep, Cousin Eunice—were there such things as witches over a hundred years ago?"

Eunice glanced at Mother Taft. Witchcraft was a tabooed subject, yet it lingered in more than one imaginative mind, though few would confess a belief in it.

"Well, people may talk as they like, but there's many queer things in the world. Now there's that falling sickness, as they call it. Jabez Green has two children that roll on the floor, and froth at the mouth, and their eyes bulge most out of their heads. They're lacking, we all know. But when they come out of the fit they tell queer things that they saw, and I do suppose it was that way then. They do act as if they were bewitched."

We know this misfortune now as epilepsy, but medical science in the earlier century did not understand that, nor incipient insanity.

"It was very strange," said Eunice rather awesomely. "And Mr. Parris was a minister and a [177]
good man, yet it broke out in his family."

"But he had them slaves, and in their own land black people do awful things to each other. But it was strange; again, after his wife was accused, Governor Phipps ordered there should be no more punished and all set free, and then the thing stopped."

"And it wasn't real witchcraft?" said Cynthia.

"Well, I wouldn't undertake to say. There were witches in Bible times and they kept themselves mighty close, for they were not to be allowed to live. And Saul had a hard time getting anything out of the witch of Endor, you know, Miss Eunice."

Eunice nodded. They were trenching on forbidden ground.

"My grandmother believed in them and she was a good God-fearing woman, too. You see what made it worse for Salem was their sending so many here for trial from the places round. Grandfather lived way up above Topsfield, had a farm there and 'twas woods all around. No one troubled them then, but afterward—well, they'd cleared the woods and built a road and new houses were put up around, for some people were glad enough to get out of Salem. There was a woman named Martha Goodno, who had been in prison, and people were shy of her. Grandmother had two cows, and folks turned them out in the woods then. One of them went in Martha's garden, but she spied her out and drove her off before much damage was done. The [178]
fence had been broken down and she laid it to the cow, but people said it had been down for days. Well, something got the matter with the cow. She gave good rich milk and mother saved it for butter. But when she churned there came queer streaks in it that looked like blood. She doctored the cow, although it seemed well enough. One day a neighbor was in and the same thing happened. 'Throw some in the fire,' said the neighbor, 'and if you hear of any one being burned you'll know who is the witch.' So grandmother threw two dippers full in the fire and she said it made an awful smell. The rest she dumped out of doors, she wouldn't feed it to the pigs. About an hour afterward another neighbor came in. Grandmother made a salve that was splendid for burns and cuts. 'Mis' Denfield,' she says, 'won't you come over to Martha Goodno's and bring your pot of salve. She's burned herself dreadfully drawin' the coals out of the oven, set her dress on fire just at the waist.' So mother went over and found it was a pretty bad, sure enough burn, and she was groaning just fit to die. Mother spread a piece of linen and laid it on and left her some salve. 'What did I tell you?' says mother's neighbor, and they nodded their heads. But the queer thing was that after that the cow was all right and she never had any more trouble.

"After she was well she took a spite against another neighbor, who used to spin flax and sell the thread. Then her flax took to cutting up queer, and would break off, and turn yellow, and [179]
trouble her dreadfully. Mother was there one afternoon when it bothered so. 'Just throw a handful in the fire,' says mother. 'Fire's purifying;' and she did. They sent to mother again for salve, for Martha had scalded her right hand. Then the folks talked it over and a letter was written and tucked under her door, warning her to move, and the next-door man bought the place. I've heard grandmother tell this over—she lived to be ninety, and she was a good Christian woman, and she never added nor took away one iota. There, I oughtn't have told all this before the child; she's white as a ghost."

"You must go to bed this minute," exclaimed Eunice. "I'll go up with you." [180]

CHAPTER XI

THE VOICE OF A ROSE

There were some marvellous ghost stories in those days, and haunted houses as well. The society of Psychical Research would have found many queer things if it had existed at that time. The sailors spun strange yarns over the power we call telepathy now. Many of the families had a retired captain or disabled first mate, or supercargo, who had seen mysterious appearances and heard warning voices. And it recalled to the little girl some of the stories she had heard in India that she pieced out of vague fragments. Maybe there were curious influences no one could explain.

Elizabeth improved a little. She had been moved from cot to bed, but now they packed her in a big chair and pushed her over to the window where she could see the vegetable garden and the chicken yard. They had not had very good luck at the hatching this season. The hens had missed Elizabeth's motherly care. She had trained them to an amusing habit of obedience, and the little chickens were her delight. Was she never to be out among them again? [181]

One day Cynthia came up with two roses in a glass, most exquisite ones at that.

"Cousin Elizabeth," she began, "do you remember the little rosebush you put in my garden last summer? We thought it would die. It came out beautifully in the spring and these are the first roses that bloomed. I thought you ought to have them. Are you never going to get well enough to walk around the garden? Cousin Eunice has kept it so nice."

Elizabeth Leverett's heart was touched and she swallowed over a lump in her throat. She had taken up the rose from a place where it had been smothered with those of larger growth and given it to the child who had begged for "a garden of her very own." She had not supposed it would live. And that Cynthia should bring her the firstfruits!

"I'm obliged to you," she returned huskily. "They are very beautiful." And she wondered the child had not given them to Chilian.

"I wish you liked a few flowers every day," the little girl said wistfully.

"Well—I might;" reluctantly.

"They are so lovely. The world is so beautiful. It's very hard to be ill in summer, in winter one wouldn't mind it so much. But I am glad you can sit up."

Was it tears that Elizabeth winked away?

She had many serious thoughts through these months of helplessness. She had always measured everything by the strict line of duty, of usefulness. There was a virtue in enduring [182] hardness as a good soldier, and the harder it was the more virtue it held in it. Her room was plain, almost to bareness. There had been a faded patchwork top quilt at first, until Mother Taft insisted upon having something nicer. But it had to be folded up carefully at sundown, when the likelihood of calls was over. And she did put one of the new rugs on the floor.

"That's beginning to go," Mrs. Taft said. "Some one will catch their foot in it and have a bad fall."

"It could be mended, I suppose."

"Yes. There's a new one needed in the kitchen. I'll sew it up for that. Land sakes! you've got enough in this house to last ten lifetimes!"

Friends came in to sit with her and brought their work. Sometimes she sewed a little, but drawing out her needle hurt her back after a while. She read her Bible and Baxter's "Saints' Rest" And she wondered a little what the other world would be like. She had never thought of heaven with joy—there was the judgment first. And now that she could begin to sit up it did prefigure recovery.

Most schools had kept open all the year round, but now the higher ones were giving a month's vacation. Altogether it had been a happy year to Cynthia. She had really been adored at school. Her frocks were admired, she let the girls curl her hair, usually she wore it tied in a bunch behind—not unlike the queue. Then she had some rings that she coaxed Rachel to let her wear, it [183] was such a pleasure to lend them to the girls. She was learning what was considered necessary for a girl in those days; a good deal more with Cousin Chilian. She kept her love for the Latin and often read to him. She began to draw and paint flowers, she joined the dancing-class, which was a delight to her; but Chilian suggested she should not mention it to Elizabeth. She pirouetted up and down the path like a fairy, and he loved to watch her.

There had been parties among the girls, but he would rather not have her go, it was a bad thing for children to be up so late. She went to take tea now and then. The Turners were very fond of her and the Uphams wanted her once a week. She wondered if she might ever ask any one to tea.

Then they planned what they would do in this wonderful vacation. Go off for day's rides, take sails up and down, there were so many places. She was brimming over with joy.

Chilian was called up in the night by Mother Taft.

"She's had a stroke. And she seemed so smart yesterday. She even laughed over some school stories Cynthia told. That child's brought her flowers every morning, and she's softened so much to her. I really think she's been getting religion, as one may say, and being prepared." [184]

Chilian heard the stertorous breathing. The eyes were half open and rolled up, her face was drawn. He took the hand. It was cold and heavy.

"I'll go for the doctor. I think the end has come."

Dr. Prescott said the same thing, adding with a slow turn of the head, "She will not last long."

What should he do with Cynthia? He remembered how careful her father had been to shield her. She must not see Elizabeth, she must not confront death in this awesome fashion.

When they came to breakfast he said:

"Cynthia, wouldn't you like to go in to Boston with me this morning?"

"Oh, it would be splendid!" She clapped her hands in delight.

"Well, Rachel must get you ready. We will take the stage. It goes early now."

Of course, she was full of excitement. It had been planned as one of the month's outings, but to take it as the first! Cousin Chilian was always thinking up such nice things.

"Oh," she cried, tying the big Leghorn hat down, making a great bow under her chin, "I must get my flowers for Cousin Elizabeth."

When she came in she would have flown upstairs, but Rachel stopped her.

"Miss Elizabeth is asleep. She had a bad spell in the night and the doctor doesn't want her disturbed. I'll take them." [185]

"Oh!" She looked disappointed. "Tell her good-bye and that I was sorry not to come in and say it. And give her the flowers. I hope she will be better to-night."

What a great thing it was to go off in the stage! It was a fine morning with an easterly breeze. To be sure, the roads were dusty, but travellers were not so dainty in those days. Cynthia had a dust cloak of some thin material that shielded her white frock. There were three men and two women. They sat on the middle seat, two of the men on front with the driver, the other back with the ladies. Presently the driver blew a long toot on his horn and they came to a little town with a tavern, as they were called then, at its very entrance.

Two of the passengers left, one came in. The horses had a drink and on they went over hill and dale, through great farms, where there were not more than two or three houses in sight. The stage stopped for a man who gave a loud halloo, and he climbed in. Then the horn gave another loud signal.

So it went on. Some places were very pretty, great fields of corn waving in the sunshine, potatoes, stubble where grain had been cut, stretches of woodland, high, rather rough hills, then towns again. The sun went under a cloud, which made it pleasanter. The passengers changed now and then. One woman told her next neighbor "she was goin' in to Boston to shop, because things were cheaper now. She always went after the rush was over. There were cambrics, she [186] heard, for one and ninepence, and cotton cloth home-made was so much cheaper than the imported, but you had to bleach it. And little traps that you couldn't get at a country store."

Cynthia was tired and sleepy when they reached their journey's end, which was Marlborough Street, where Cousin Giles had an office.

"Well! well! well!" he ejaculated in surprise. "Why, Miss Cynthia Leverett, I'm glad to see you. Have you come to town to shop?"

Chilian made a little sign. "She has a whole month's vacation and we are going to fill it up with journeys, taking Boston first."

"That's right. We shall have lots to show her. You'll hardly want to go back to Salem. It was a long warm ride, wasn't it? Chilian, take off her hat. Don't you want a drink?"

"I am thirsty," she admitted.

He fixed a glass of lemonade, and lemons were dear at that period—scarce, too. While she was sipping it, being refreshed in every pulse, the two men went down to the end of the room for a talk.

"She's dreadfully disfigured," Chilian said in a low tone. "And Elizabeth wasn't a bad-looking woman. The doctor thinks she can't live but a few days, her body is growing cold rapidly. I'd like to have the child out of it all. Death is a great shock and very mysterious to a child." [187]

"Oh, I'll be glad to keep her, if she will stay content. I wish you could have brought that woman with you. Poor Elizabeth! How Eunice will miss her. Chilian, you've been like a son to those women. Women ought to marry and have children of their own, but children are not always kind. Yes. After you're rested we'll go home. I'm going to change my office, get nearer to the business centre, only this is so pleasant with a nice outlook."

"You ought to retire."

"Oh, what would I do? Like that Roman fellow, buy a farm? I don't know a bit about farming and don't want to. There's so much going on here."

Presently they returned to the little girl, who was quite refreshed, and then they went out, as it would be dinner-time presently. Cousin Giles lived in Cambridge Street in quite an imposing row, though it had no such spacious grounds as at Salem.

An immaculate black man opened the door and took the men's hats. "Ask Mrs. Stevens to come down," Cousin Giles said.

Mrs. Stevens seemed a great lady. Eudora Castleton's mother was like this, always looking as if she was dressed for a party. She had a pretty silk gown, with some ruffles about the bottom, short enough to show her clocked silk stockings. The waist was short also, the square neck filled in with lace, and great balloon sleeves—so large at the top they came almost up to her ears. [188]

"This is the little girl who came from India, that I told you about, and who is going to be a great lady some day. When she gets older we'll have to have her down here to Boston, and give balls and parties for her, and pick out a fine lover for her; hey, Cynthia?"

Cynthia turned scarlet.

"I think you must be warm and tired with the long stage ride; wouldn't you like to come upstairs with me?"

Cynthia rose as Cousin Chilian looked approval, and followed up the stairway, where her feet sank in the carpet. There were several rooms, with the air blowing through delightfully, and there was fragrance everywhere from vases of flowers.

Mrs. Stevens took off her hat and inspected her. She was going to be a big heiress and a pretty girl in the bargain, piquant with a slightly foreign look, though perhaps it was more in her manner.

"Susan," she called to a girl sewing in the next room, "come and wash this little visitor's hands and face. She has come all the way from Salem this morning. I wish we had a fresh frock for you, but we have no little girls."

The voice was so soft and charming that Cynthia looked up with a kind of admiring smile.

Susan took off her frock, bathed her face and hands with some perfumed water, brushed out her hair, and said, "What lovely hair you have, and so much of it. A queen might envy you!" [189]

The idea of a queen wanting anything she had! Oh, how nice and refreshed she felt.

Susan shook out the frock and put it on again, pulled out the sleeves, smoothed the wrinkled skirt, and took her in the next room.

"It rests one so much. Are you hungry? We shall have dinner in half an hour."

"Oh, no," Cynthia said. "And—and I am very much obliged to Susan."

"Come and sit here. Tell me how the aunties are—the one with the broken limb."

"I think she isn't so well. Yesterday she was so much improved. The doctor was there this morning."

"Poor lady! She has been ill a long while. And you are quite at home in Salem, I suppose? You had a long journey. Did you like India?"

"Father was there;" with a sweet, attractive simplicity. "And some of it was very beautiful. Oh, I almost froze the first winter here, but last winter I didn't mind. And the sleigh-riding was splendid."

"Are there many little girls to be friends with?"

"Oh, I go to a nice school. And we have so many funny plays and dancing once a week. I didn't tease about it, though I wanted to go, and Cousin Chilian said I might. It's queer, but in India they come and dance for you, and you pay them. But it is lovely to do it for yourself;" and she made some graceful motions with her hands, while her beautiful eyes were alight with emotion, as if she heard the music. [190]

"Did you ever want to go back?"

"At first. But when I heard that father had gone away, he had meant to come to Salem, but——" she made a pause, "mother was there in India. Only the bodies, you know, the other part that thinks and feels is in heaven. He wanted mother so much. He used to talk about her. And now I am going to live in Salem with Cousin Chilian all my life long."

How simply sweet she was, with no self-consciousness.

Then they were summoned to dinner. The elegant black servant waited on them, and that suggested India again. They went out on a back porch and sat in the shade. Cousin Giles found an opportunity to explain the matter to Mrs. Stevens, and after that the men went out for a while.

Quite in the afternoon there were calls from stylishly-dressed ladies, and cake and cool drinks were brought in. Then Cousin Chilian told her that he would like her to stay all night and he would come in to-morrow.

She didn't want to a bit. "Why, I would be very quiet and not disturb Cousin Elizabeth," she said, with beseeching eyes.

"Will you not do it to please me?"

She choked down a great lump. "Oh, yes," she answered in a low tone, without looking up. But it seemed very queer to her to be left this way.

There was company in the evening—quite a party playing cards. She had a pretty story book to [191]
read until Susan came to put her to bed. And what a delightful little bed it was, like her little pallet at home, so much nicer than the big bed at Salem.

She would not show that she was homesick, for so many nice things were being done for her. A note came from Chilian—Cousin Elizabeth was very ill, and he hoped she would be content. Some clothes were sent for her, some of her very best ones, and she was glad to have them.

There were so many things to see in Boston, really much more than at Salem. They were putting up some fine public buildings. And there was Bunker Hill and Copp's Hill, and, down near the bay, Fort Hill. There seemed little rivers running all about and submerged lands.

There were many other entertainments and her days were full. Mrs. Stevens sent out some cards and seven or eight young girls came in and chatted quite like the grown-up ladies, asking her about Salem, and being not a little surprised that she had lived in India. They had a pretty sort of half tea, cakes and delicacies after the thin bread and butter, and a most delightful cool drink that seemed to have all flavors in it. One of the girls played on the spinet afterward. So she had her first party at Cousin Giles', instead of Salem.

Notes came from Cousin Chilian, and at last the welcome news that he was coming down for her.

She had come to like Cousin Giles very much. He was so different from Chilian—breezy and [192]
rather teasing—and, oh, what would Cousin Elizabeth have said to his fashion of getting things about, putting papers or books on chairs, mislaying his glasses and his gloves, and she would think the fine furniture, and the servants, and the little feasts awfully extravagant.

Poor Elizabeth! She had never come back to consciousness. She had shrunk intensely from the last moment when she would have to face death and the judgment, though she had been striving all her life to prepare for it. But God had mercifully spared her that, the two worlds had touched and merged with each other and left her to God.

There had been a quiet funeral, though it was well attended, but the coffin was closed and a pall thrown over it, for the poor face had never recovered its natural look.

All this was softened to Cynthia, as she sat with Cousin Chilian's arm about her. She had the sweet remembrance of that last day, and the smile that somehow had made the wrinkled face pretty. It had been thoughtful and tender in Cousin Chilian to spare her the rest.

They went over to Cambridge and he took her through the place that was to be so much grander before she was done with life. And here was the house where he had lived through the week, going home to spend Sundays, for his father was alive then. And he told her stories about old Boston, some quaintly funny, but she was rather proud that Salem had been the first capital [193]
of the State.

"I've had such a nice time," she said with her adieu. "Every day has been full of pleasure. I thank you both very much."

She was to come again, and again, they rejoined cordially.

"What a nice child!" Cousin Giles said. "She doesn't seem to consider what an heiress she is. And she's enough like Chilian to be his own child. He always had that dainty way with him, like a woman, and everything must be fine and nice, yet he never was ostentatious. She'll make a charming young woman. I wish I could persuade Chilian to come to Boston."

Chilian had driven in with the carriage. There had been a shower in the night and the travelling was delightful. He had missed his little girl so much, yet he knew it had been better to save her the poignancy of the sad occurrence. So her father had thought in his trusting appeal. [194]

CHAPTER XII

CHANGES IN THE OLD HOUSE

There was not as much change in household affairs as Cynthia supposed there would be. Elizabeth had been laid by so long that her place at the table had been filled by Eunice. Indeed, the former had an unfortunate habit of running out in the kitchen to see to something, then returning, pouring a cup of tea, passing some article of food, then disappearing again. It had grown on her, the belief that she must be everywhere or something would go wrong. It did annoy Chilian. And no one hustled up the dishes when you had eaten the last crumb of cake. He liked to

linger over the table.

Eunice was very glad to see her. Rachel took her wrap and her parcel upstairs, for supper had been waiting. Eunice poured the tea, Rachel passed the eatables, and they were both eager to hear how it had fared with the little girl.

"It's been just splendid! Mrs. Stevens is—well, she is grand, and, oh, you ought to see the beautiful gowns she wears; but she doesn't hold you way off. You can come up close and lean on her shoulder or her lap. They were both so good. And, look! Cousin Giles would buy me these two [195] rings;" and she held up her hand laughingly. "And an elegant necklace. I told him there were so many things here that were my mother's, but he wouldn't mind. And slippers! There's white, and a kind of gray, and a bronze, and a red pair. The little girls wear them when they come from school and go out to companies. Oh, Cousin Chilian, doesn't any one play on the spinet? I'd like to learn."

"It's very old. It was mother's. I think we must have a new one. And you can learn."

"Oh, I shall be so glad."

Mrs. Taft was out in the kitchen. "Now you all go your ways," she began. "'Taint nothing to clear off the supper table."

They sat out on the front porch. But through the talk Cynthia kept thinking of poor Cousin Elizabeth and feeling sorry she had not enjoyed more of the pleasures of life. Was there so much real virtue in making life hard and cold? But there were some girls in school who were very much afraid of dancing and reading story-books.

Truth to tell, as Chilian listened, he came to experience a queer feeling—he would have scouted the idea of jealousy about Cousin Giles, but that he should have devoted himself so much to her and taken her about, wanted to buy trinkets for her and all that! There was still a week of vacation left. They would go somewhere to-morrow. [196]

He had asked Mrs. Taft to stay with them.

"Well, I can't exactly promise. You see, I like to 'wrastle' with things and fight off the worst. Though I hadn't much hope of 'Lisbeth when the doctor said her spine was hurt. That's a kind of queer hidden thing that even doctors can't see into. And the poor creature suffered a good deal. My, but she was spunky and was bound not to die, and I fought for her all I could. But the last few weeks there was a change. She liked Cynthy to come in with the posies and say something bright. And now it's all done and over, and she was a good upright woman in the old-fashioned way. So I'll stay a spell till Miss Eunice gets used to the change, and when I see another good fight somewhere, you mustn't have hard feelings if I go."

They went out the next morning and found a boat going up to Plum Island. It was like going to sea to go around Rockport Point. Captain Green declared "he wan't much on passengers, but he had a nice cabin and an awning on the for'ard deck, and there was a woman and some children whose husband living up there had bespoke passage."

It was a fine day with the right sort of wind. Oh, how splendid it was as they went out oceanward. She had been on the water such a very little since her long voyage.

Mrs. Halcom had three children and a baby. She was a plain, commonplace body, who had been living up to North Salem, but her folks were Newburyport people and she should be glad to [197] get in sight and sound of them once again. Chilian had brought a book along, Ben Johnson's Plays, and now and then he met with such a charming line or two he must read it to her. There were some new poets coming to the fore as well, but he knew most of the older ones. Oh, he must get back his youth for her sake. Cousin Giles was ever so much older.

She was interested in the ship as well and talked to Captain Green. He had so many funny nautical terms, provincialisms, that she had to inquire what some of the words meant. For most of the early people of New England had not dropped into the careless modes of speech that were to come later on and be adopted as a sort of patois. They read their Bibles a good deal and the older divines, and if their speech was a little stilted it had a certain correctness. Then Chilian Leverett was rather fastidious in this respect.

The wind filled the sails and they skimmed along merrily. Now the sea was green and so clear you could see the fish disporting themselves. Then the sun tinted it with gold and threw up diamond, amethyst, and emeralds, taunting one with treasures.

There are new names along the coast, though a few of the old ones remain. They passed Gloucester, Thatcher's Island, rounded Rockport, where in the inside harbor they had to unload part of their cargo. Then on to Plum Island, where the rest were set ashore and the woman and [198] her children. Some few things were taken on board, but they were to stop at Gloucester, going down for the return cargo.

They walked about a little and bought some ripe, luscious dewberries and fruit.

"How queer it would be to live on an island and have to take your boat when you went anywhere," and Cynthia laughed gayly.

"People do, farther up. There are a great many islands on the coast of Maine, and fishermen

are living on them."

"And in Boston Harbor Cousin Giles took us out. It's funny that they don't float off. Do they go 'way down to the bottom of the sea?"

"I think they must. Sometimes one does disappear."

"Suppose you were living on it. And you saw the water coming up all around you and you couldn't get away——"

Her eyes filled with a kind of terror.

"Oh, you would have some boats."

"But if it happened in the night?"

"We won't go and live on an island," he said with a smile.

It was rougher going back, but not bad enough to cause any alarm. The wind had died down, but the swells were coming in. They stopped at Gloucester and took on some boxes and great planks, and several pieces of furniture. [199]

"There's enough old truck in Salem now," declared Captain Green ungraciously. "'F I had my way I'd turn it out on the Common and put a match to it. Now there's the Hibbins—came over in 1680 and brought their housen goods. There wan't any way of makin' 'em then but just outen rough logs. An' now the old granma'am's died and 'twas her mother's, I b'lieve, and Mis' Hibbins she's just gone crazy over it. And they're buildin' a fine new house. Strange how Salem's buildin' up! Those East Ingy traders do make lots of money. But before I'd have that old truck in my nice new house!" And the captain gave a snort of disdain.

He did not dream that before another hundred years had passed there would be comparative fortunes made in the old truck.

"We'll be a little late gettin' in, but there'll be a moon. Lucky wind ain't dead agin us."

How good the supper tasted, for Cynthia was very hungry. And then they went on and on, hugging the shore, the captain said, until it was a kind of shadowy waving blur, but on the other side most beautiful. It made her think of coming from India, but she was glad to see the vague outline of the shore.

The captain was much surprised that she had been such a traveller. He had been to New York and all around Long Island, and up as far as Nova Scotia. The Bay of Fundy was wonderful, with its strange dangerous tides. [200]

"We will go there another summer," Chilian said, holding her hand, and she returned the soft pressure.

"I was 'most afraid something had happened." Eunice had gone down the street to meet them. "But it's clear as a bell and no wind to speak of, and the captains of the coasting vessels know every inch of the way."

"Only just lovely things happened. It's been splendid. But I'm hungry again. Can't I have a second supper?"

How different she looked from the little girl who had come to him for care and friendship. And he had been rather unwilling to accept her. She was growing tall, and—yes, really pretty.

They had one more excursion to Winter Island. Why, it seemed as if they were building ships enough for the whole world. And there were the fisheries, and the curious musical singing, not really words, but sort of detached sounds that floated off in a weird kind of way.

After that school again. She was glad to see the girls, and Madam Torrey gave her a warm welcome, saying, "Why, Miss Cynthia, how tall you have grown!"

"I'm very glad," she said smilingly. "All the Leveretts are tall, but I don't ever want to be very large."

"And she had really been to Boston! Was it so much handsomer than Salem? They had a real theatre, and parties, and balls. Sadie Adams' big sister was going to spend the whole winter there." [201]

Chilian Leverett decided to alter his house a little. The two rooms at the back had always seemed crowded up, though Elizabeth preferred a separate one so long as they connected. But he had the memory of the poor drawn face, as he had seen it the morning of her seizure. Wouldn't Eunice recall it as well?

"I think I will make some alterations," he announced to her. "I'll push that upstairs room out over the summer kitchen and make it a good deal larger. While they are doing it, Eunice, you had better go over the other side and let Mrs. Taft take your room."

She assented, though she thought the house and the rooms were large enough for the few people in it. Cynthia was interested in her studies, and the girls, and the new books coming in. For now Sir Walter Scott was having a great hearing, and there were some new poets.

It was not expected that people would be at all gay when there had been a death in the family, so Cynthia felt compelled to decline her few invitations. The new room was finished and made much brighter with the two added windows. The walls were painted a soft gray, with a warm tint. There were yards and yards of new rag carpet up in the garret, sewed in bagging to keep out moths. Of course, it might as well be used. The old bedstead was taken out and though the one [202] substituted was quite as old, it was very much prettier, with its carved posts and the tester frame from which depended white curtains. Some of the other furniture was changed and it made a very pretty room, so Eunice came back to it very much pleased, though not quite sure so much comeliness was best for the soul.

At Christmas Chilian took the little girl down to Boston on a special invitation. There were two visitors a little older than herself, one whose father was a representative from the State, the other from New York.

Washington was not much thought of in those days. Other cities had yielded their claims unwillingly, and there had been much talk of its being set in a morass. Mrs. President Adams had described her infelicities very graphically. The rooms were not finished, and she took one of the parlors for an adjunct to the laundry to dry the wash in. New York considered itself the great head for fashion and gayety, Boston for education and refinement, and she too, had quite an extensive port trade.

But Giles Leverett thought the little girl from Salem was quite as pretty and well bred as Boston girls, and really she never seemed at loss now, and was seldom overtaken with a fit of shyness. They had a gay, happy time, with a regular dancing party, which filled Cynthia with the utmost delight.

And though the winter seemed cold and bleak spring came again, as it always does. Mrs. Taft [203] had gone away to another bad case. Eunice and Miss Winn kept the house. There had been quite an entertaining episode with Miss Winn. A very prosperous man, who lived up on the North side, and had a fine house and five children, asked her to be his wife, thinking she would make such an excellent mother for girls. It was supposed at that time that no woman could refuse a good offer of marriage.

"Consider it well," said Mr. Leverett. "I don't know how we could give you up, and, of course, you could not take Cynthia. Her father made a generous provision for you, and I think he chose wisely for his child. But——"

"I don't know that I want to begin over again," and she gave a peculiar smile. "Five seems quite an undertaking when you have had only one. And you have taken so much the charge of her."

"But you see, now she will need a woman's guidance more than ever. She has outgrown childhood. I see the change in her every day. Eunice could not supervise her clothes and her pleasures, times have changed so much. I want her to be very happy and have a life like other girls——"

She thought she could give up the prospect good as it was, won by that persuasive voice. And she had come to really love Miss Eunice, who was blossoming in a new phase now that there was nothing to restrain her natural sweetness. [204]

"I promised her father to do the best I could for her. I love her very much. I enjoy the home here. I do not think I could be any happier. And I am so used to owning myself that I do not feel disposed to give up my liberty. If I had no prospect, I might consider it. And Cynthia will need some one as she grows older to see that she makes the right sort of acquaintances and guide her a little."

"Then since all is agreeable we can count on your staying. You cannot imagine my own thankfulness;" and he pressed her hand cordially.

"Isn't it funny!" cried Cynthia. "Why, Margaret Plummer goes to Madam Torrey's, but she is very—well, I don't know just how to describe it, only she said once that they would all make the house too hot to hold a step-mother. And, oh, dear Rachel, I couldn't bear to have anybody ugly to you. And then you know we couldn't give you up. Cousin Chilian said so, and Miss Eunice cried."

Miss Winn winked some tears out of her eyes, though she tried to smile. It was very comforting to a woman without kith or kin to feel so welcome in a household.

Cynthia was sitting on the step of the porch one May night when the moon was making shifting shadows through the trees and silvering the paths. Chilian was studying the face, and wondering a little what was flitting through the brain that now and then gave it such intentness. [205]

"What are you thinking about?" he asked.

"Oh, Cousin Chilian!" She flushed a lovely, rosy glow. "Building an air castle."

"Is it very airy? So far that it would be a journey for another person to reach it?"

"Oh, part of it is near by. The other is what could be, maybe;" wistfully.

"Can't I hear about it?"

"Cousin Chilian, why are the parlors always shut up, and why don't you have people coming and going, and saying bright things, and talking about the improvements and—and Napoleon and

the wars in Europe, and the new streets and houses, and, oh, ever so many things?"

He looked at the tightly closed shutters. In his father's time there were visitors, discussions, playing at whist and loo, and little suppers. She wouldn't care for that, of course. Yet he remembered that she had been interested in the talks at Boston.

"Why, yes; the rooms could be opened. Only we have grown so at home in the sitting-room, and you and I in the study."

"At the Dearborns' they keep the house all open and lighted up, as they do in Boston. And they ask in young people and have plays, and charades, and funny conundrums——"

Oh, she was young and should have this kind of life. How should he set about it? He must ask Miss Winn. But he ventured rather timidly, for a man. [206]

"Would you like—well, some girls in to tea? They ask you so often. And there is no reason why we should all be hermits."

She sprang up and clasped her arms about his neck.

"Oh, I just should. At first when Cousin Elizabeth went away, and the lessons were difficult, and it was winter, but now everything seems so joyous——"

"Why, yes; we must talk to Miss Winn about it, Cynthia," and his voice dropped to a tender inflection. "I want you to feel this is your home and you must have all the joy and pleasures of youth. You need never be afraid. I've been a rather dull old fellow——"

"Oh, you're not old. You're not as old as Cousin Giles, and ever so much handsomer. The girls at school think," she flushed and paused, "that you were so good to get me the pony and the pretty wagon." She was going to say something much more flattering, but delicacy stopped her.

"My dear," he said gravely, "I was glad to make you the gift, but I want you to know that there is a considerable sum of money of your own, and your father wished you to enjoy it. Whatever you want and is proper for you to have, I shall be glad to get, and to do. For I have no little girl but you."

"Would it be wicked and selfish if I said I was glad?"

The arms tightened a little. How soft they were! And her hair brushed his cheek. It always seemed to have a delicate subtle perfume. [207]

"No, dear. You and I are curiously alone in the world. I haven't a first cousin, neither have you."

"And a whole houseful of folks is so nice," she said wistfully.

He had been very well content with his books and his college friends. But women were different, at least—those who shut out everybody narrowed their lives fearfully.

"We will try and have some."

"And you must like it. If you do not, the greatest pleasure will be taken out of it for me."

"I shall like it;" encouragingly.

"How good you are to me. Father said I must love you and obey you, for you would know what would be best for me."

Then they sat in silence, the contentment of affection.

He spoke to Miss Winn the next day. Afterward they went into the parlor and opened the shutters. It was stately, grand, and gloomy.

Before Anthony Leverett had thought of sending his little girl to his care he had forwarded to Chilian a gift "for old remembrance' sake," he said, of a very handsome Oriental rug. Floors of the "best rooms" had been polished until you could see your shadow in them. Chilian did not like the noise or the continual trouble. So he laid down the rug and bought one for the other room. But [208] the heavy curtains, with their silken linings, staid up year after year. He noticed those at Giles' house were much lighter and in soft colors. And his furniture was not so massive.

"I wish we could change things a little. That old sofa might go up in the new room. It was grand enough in my father's time, with its borders of brass-headed tacks, and its flat, hard seat. Two of these chairs might come up in my room."

"I wish we could find a place for the lovely sort of cabinet that Cynthia's father sent over. I keep it covered from dust and scratches. She will be glad to have it when she has a house of her own."

"One of the rooms ought to be hers—well, both," he added reflectively.

"The rugs are elegant. Yes, lighter curtains would change it a good deal. How very handsome the mantels are with all their carving."

They would have adorned a modern house. They went nearly up to the ceiling with small shelves and nooks, on which were vases and ornaments such as bring fortunes now.

"And—about the party?"

"Oh, that will be only a girls' tea—her schoolmates where she has been. Next year will be time enough for the party;" with a little laugh.

So the two spacious rooms were quite remodelled and modernized, and the gloomy appearance was a thing of the past. Why shouldn't he spend his money on her? There was no one else. [209]

He had not lost sight of Anthony Drayton. The father had been exigent. Anthony, being the eldest, must take the farm when he was done with it. The lad had worked his time out. Cousin Chilian had offered him enough to take him to a preparatory school where he would be fitted for college. He had come in to Boston and Chilian had been attracted to the manly young fellow.

Cynthia was more than delighted with the privilege of the tea party.

"Some of the girls have brothers, but I don't know them very well. I like Bentley, but he is away at school. And I'd rather have just girls."

Her admiration of the parlor knew no bounds, and it gratified him.

She had been taking lessons on the spinet, but the painting was a great rival. And this was old, thin, and creaky.

"I have found a much better one in Boston, and the dealer wants this because it was made in London in 1680. How strenuous some people are over old things. It has no special interest that I know of, and is comparatively useless."

The new ones were really the beginning of pianofortes and this one was very sweet in tone.

Chilian had been very greatly interested in the changes. He began to cultivate his neighbors a little more. Indeed improvements were taking place in the town. New streets were laid out, old [210] ones straightened, fine new houses built. There seemed a sudden outburst of commercial grandeur. Furnishings of the richest sort were eagerly caught up by the shoppers, who did not think it necessary to go to Boston and buy goods that had come in port here. Many of the old wooden houses were replaced with brick, and the beautiful doorways, windows, roofs, and porches still attract craftsmen and architects from different sections of the country, while illustrators find rich material in old Colonial doorways.

Miss Winn consulted Mrs. Upham as to what was proper for a girls' tea.

"Miss Cynthia is old enough now to begin with friends in a simple manner. The family have lived so quietly that I have not gained much experience in such matters, and Miss Eunice doesn't feel equal to managing it. Of course, Miss Cynthia is quite an heiress and will go in with the best people."

"As the Leveretts always have. There's been many a cap set for Chilian Leverett and it's been a wonder to every one that he hasn't married. But there's time enough yet."

She came over and admired the parlors without stint.

"You see," she said confidentially, "Miss Elizabeth was no hand for company. Some of the older people did the same, shut up the best rooms lest they should get faded, or something scratched, [211] or worn. And I suppose he kept giving in; then there was his going in to college, and that's a sort of man's life. I'm glad he has had something to stir him up. He has been to several town-meetings. They are talking up improvements. It's a fine thing to have so many vessels flying Salem flags in different ports; nigh on to two hundred registered, husband said. But I told him there ought to be some home interest as well. We must not let Boston get so far ahead of us, nor forget the young people are to be the next generation."

"And young people want some pleasure. I do not see how they stood so much of the gloomy side twenty years ago. I was that surprised when I first came here."

"Well, there had been a good many things, and all that witchcraft business. Puritan ways grew sterner and sterner. I can't say that people were really the better for it, in my way of thinking, and the Saviour talked a good deal about loving and helping people. He didn't stop to make them subscribe to all sorts of hard things before he worked a miracle. But we were going to talk about the tea."

"Yes; about what time now? I want Cynthia to have it just right and proper;" laughing.

"They come—we'll say about four. They will want to run around and see things, and I'd have supper about five and they'll sit over it, and talk, and laugh. Suppose I send my 'Mimy over to pass things and wait. You would not want Miss Eunice to do it, and you will have other things on [212] your hands."

"Oh, thank you. You are very kind about it."

"Well, I've had a girl to grow up and be married, and Polly's to leave school this summer, and next winter she will be setting up for a young lady. Little cookies and spicenuts are nice and two kinds of cake. You never give them real tea, you know, though it's called a tea party. And some cold chicken, or sliced ham. I'd spread the plates of bread, it's so much less trouble. They'll be sure to enjoy everything. A lot of girls always do have a good time." [213]

CHAPTER XIII

A TASTE OF PLEASURE

Cynthia was full of joy, running down to the gate to meet and greet guests. They came in groups of twos and threes, having called for each other. There were fifteen in all—the girls she knew best, who were nearest her own age, and at most of the houses she had been made a welcome guest. Indeed, more than one mother was glad to have her daughter good friends with Miss Cynthia Leverett, who was to be a rich young woman, and whose trustee in Boston lived in fine style.

Yet it was not exactly that money was so much thought of either, though it was always esteemed an excellent thing. Somehow it was rather relegated to the men. A father had an idea that his daughters would marry well, so business opportunities, and often the homestead, went to the sons. Here was an undivided fortune. And now it was hardly likely Chilian Leverett would marry, so she might come in for that.

The house had always been considered rather gloomy, as even on state occasions not much light was allowed in the parlors. Some of the girls had been gently advised to notice if there had [214] been changes made.

Cynthia led them upstairs to take off their things. They were rather particular about complexions in those days. Some of the summer hats were really ornate sunbonnets, others were the great poke shape with a big bow on top and wide strings that were allowed to float on a hot day, so as not to get crushed by the warmth under the chin. They had long muslin sleeves to pull over their arms, indeed some of them were finished with mittens, so that the hands might not get tanned.

The girls wore rather scant straight skirts, tucked up to the waist, or with needlework at the bottom, or two or three tiny ruffles. The stockings were not always white, oftener they matched the color of the slippers that were laced across the instep. The necks were cut square, often finished with a lace berthe. Some old families have handed these down and kept them laid away in rose leaves and lavender, and they are so sweet that when they are shaken out they perfume the room.

Cynthia wore a white gauzy frock made over blue silk that was soft as a pansy leaf. It had blue satin stripes and she was very glad she had the pretty blue slippers to match. Then almost every girl had a coral necklace, or was allowed to wear grandmother's gold beads. Some had their hair tied up high on their heads with a great bow, and maybe the family silver or gold comb put in [215] artistically. Chilian liked the little girl's to hang loose, and now it was down to her waist.

It was said the Holland wives of centuries ago took their visitors through their wardrobes and displayed their silk and velvet gowns. And when England passed some sumptuary laws that no one below titled rank should wear silk, the good wives of traders lined theirs with silk and hung them up in grand array to gratify their visitors or themselves.

"You have so many lovely things," said a girl enviously. "I haven't but one silk frock, and that was Mary's until she outgrew it. And mother's so choice of it; she thinks it ought to last and go to Ruth."

"Why, you see, so many things came from India," apologized Cynthia, almost ashamed of having so much. "And there's a boxful upstairs, but I think I like the white muslins best, they look so pretty when they are clean, and you don't have to be so careful."

"Do you ever get scolded when accidents happen?"

"Well, not much. Cousin Eunice is so sweet. Cousin Elizabeth was more particular."

"And Miss Winn?"

"Oh, my dear Rachel loves me too much," the child said laughingly.

There were so many odd and pretty things that they staid up until all the girls had come—not one of them declined. Then they went down to the parlors.

"Cousin Chilian said this back room was to be mine. That lovely desk and the cabinet were my [216] own mother's. And the table is teakwood. The chair father had carved for me, and that big portrait is father. This case has miniatures of them both, but it is too big ever to wear."

"What a pity!"

It was a beautifully engraved gold case, set with jewels.

"Well, you are a lucky girl! And you can have all these yourself. You just don't have to share them with anybody. Is the room truly yours?"

"Why, it is to put my things in, but anybody can come in it, and we can go in the other room. Most of those articles were Cousin Chilian's father's and mother's, and the great clock in the hall came over in 1640. It's funny;" and she laughed. "Old furniture and quilts and things never get

cross and queer as folks sometimes do."

"Well, they're not really alive."

"And they last so much longer than folks."

They had not inspected all the things when Miss Winn invited them out to supper. She took the head of the table, and began to talk so that they should not feel embarrassed. The lovely old china was on the table, and two vases of flowers that looked as if they were set with gems. 'Mimy passed the plates of bread and butter and cold meats and cottage cheese, and after a little they all began to talk as if it was recess at school. [217]

Mr. Chilian Leverett passed through the sitting-room and thought it was really an enchanting sight, and that Cynthia was the prettiest girl of them all.

People had not thought up ice cream in those days, but they made lovely custards, baked in cups with handles, and a tiny spoon to eat them with. They were the last of the tea.

Then they went into the front parlor, which was the larger and played fox and geese, and blind-man's buff in a ring. Oh, Elizabeth, it was enough to disturb your rest to have those merry feet twinkle over the beautiful rug, when you scarcely dared walk tiptoe for fear of crushing the soft pile. But they had a grand, good time.

Then Mr. Leverett brought in Cousin Eunice, who had a bit of white at her neck and wrists, and a lavender bow on her cap. She had protested against the bow, but Miss Winn had carried her point.

Mr. Leverett set them to doing some amusing things he had resurrected from his own boyhood. Catches on words, such as "Malaga grapes are very good grapes, but the grapes of Oporto are better." And then, "A hen, a hen, but not a rooster. Can you say *that?*" They were greatly puzzled and looked at Cynthia, who was silently smiling, saying it over in every manner, until at last one girl almost shrieked out, "*That,*" and there was a chorus of laughter.

At nine o'clock they were bidden to come home. Some of them were sent for and those who lived near together went in a group. Ben Upham came for his sisters. [218]

"I don't see why they couldn't have had boys," said Ben to Polly. "Ever so many of us would have been glad to come."

"Well, we didn't have any real boys' plays. But the supper was elegant. And 'Mimy waited so nicely. Cynthia's going to have the back parlor for hers, and Mr. Leverett has bought a new spinet. And she has the most beautiful things——"

"Oh, yes, I've seen those;" rather impatiently.

"And Mr. Leverett's just splendid!"

"I always told you so;" somewhat grumpily. "But I'd rather be up in the study with him and Cynthy than to go to half a dozen parties."

"Oh, we weren't in the study at all."

"No, that isn't for girls." So he had scored one, after all.

It was the general verdict when the tea party was talked over that Cynthia Leverett was in a fair way of being spoiled. A man didn't know how to bring up a girl, and, of course, Miss Winn let her have her own way. Miss Eunice had given in to her sister so long that she gave in to every one else.

Friends went to call and found the children had not exaggerated. Now and then a neighbor was asked in to supper, and found Cynthia a nice, modest girl, with no airs of superiority.

They had some journeys about. They went up to the bay of Fundy and cruised around, chatting with fishermen and French settlers in their odd costumes, looked at their funny little huts, and were amazed at the children rolling round in the sand and the sun. Cousin Chilian talked to them, but their language was a sort of patois difficult to understand. [219]

After that Cynthia was much interested in the French and English war. And the whole country was watching the Corsican who had made himself master of half of Europe.

"It is a wonderful world," Cynthia said when they were safe in the study again. "And I wonder if it is narrow and selfish to be glad that you are just you?"

He was amused at the idea. But he couldn't recall that he had ever been anxious to change with any one.

"And that *you* are just *you*. I couldn't like any one else as well, not even Cousin Giles, and I do like him very much."

Chilian felt a rise of color stealing up his cheek. The preference was sweet, for Cousin Giles was extremely indulgent to her, and he was not a child enthusiast either.

In those days no one supposed parents and friends were put in the world purposely for children's pleasure. They didn't even consider they came for *their* pleasure. It was right to have

them, they were to be the future men and women, workers, legislators, and homemakers. They didn't always have easy times, nor their own way, and they were not thought to be wiser than [220] their parents, even in the choice of professions for life. But there were many fine brave fellows among the boys, and the girls went on, making pretty good wives and mothers. If life did not bring them just what they wished, they accepted it and did the best they could.

Anthony Drayton came to make Cousin Chilian a visit and pass an examination for Harvard. With a little help he had worked his way through the academy. He was one of the brave, resolute boys, and, though it grieved him to go against his father's wishes, he had decided for himself.

"I really could not bury myself on a farm," he confessed. "I want a wider life, I want to mix with men and take an interest in the country. Not that I despise farming, and if one could branch out and do many new things, but to keep on year after year in the old rut, corn and potatoes, wheat and rye—just as grandfather did. What is the use of a man living if he can't strike out some new ways? Maybe I'd been willing to go to the new countries, but father was just as opposed to that."

He was a fresh, fair lad, with eyes of the Leverett blue, a strong, fine face, not delicate as Cousin Chilian's. His hair was not very dark, but his brows well defined, and with the eyelashes much darker than the hair. His voice had such a cheerful uplift.

"You have quite decided then?" Chilian wondered if he could ever have gone against his [221] father's wishes, but in that case father and son had similar tastes.

"Oh, yes; I've nothing farther to look for, and I'm willing to leave my share to the other children. I know I can make my way, and I'm ready to work and wait."

His voice had such a nice wholesome ring that it inspired you with faith in him.

Cousin Eunice took a great fancy to him. They talked over the visit of years ago. It seemed to her as if it had just been the beginning of things.

One sister was grown up and "keeping company," the other a nice handy girl. The next brother would be a great help—he cared nothing for books. Both of the Brent cousins were married, one living on the farm with his mother, the other having struck out for himself. And Miss Eliza Leverett was weakly. Like many women of that period, when all hope of marrying and having a home of her own was past, she sank down into a gentle nonentity and dreamed of Cousin Chilian. Not that she had expected to captivate him, but life with some one like that would set one on the highest pinnacle.

He thought Cousin Cynthia—they were always cousins, to the fourth generation—was the sweetest, daintiest, and most winsome thing he had ever seen—and so she was, for his acquaintance with girls had been limited. They looked over the old treasures in the house and thought it wonderful any one should ever go to India and return without being wrecked. They [222] walked about the lovely garden, and he was amazed at her familiarity with flowers and plants he had never seen.

Then she took him over to the Uphams, for an old friend came in to play checkers with Cousin Chilian. Polly was bright and merry, but somehow Ben seemed rather captious. Anthony listened with surprise at the bright sayings they flung at one another.

The next day he and Cousin Chilian went over topics for examination. His reading had not been extensive but thorough. In mathematics he was excellent. But he found some time to chat with Cynthia, and they both walked down to the warehouse with Cousin Chilian.

What a sight it was! He had read of such things, but to see the hundreds of busy men, the great fleet of vessels, the docks piled with all kinds of wares, the boxes and bales lying round in endless confusion. And the great ocean, lost over beyond in the far-off sky.

When the two had gone up to Boston, Cynthia felt very lonely. She had been sipping the sweets of unspoken admiration. She saw it in the eyes, in the deference, as if he was almost afraid of her, in the sudden flush when she turned her eyes to him. It was a new kind of worship.

She went over to the Uphams. Polly had been having her sampler framed. The acorn border was very pretty in its greens and browns. Then a stiff little tree grew up both sides, about like [223] those that came in the Noah's Ark later on. And between these two trees was worked in cross-stitch:

"Mary Upham is my name,
America is my nation;
Salem is my dwelling place,
And Christ is my salvation."

"Isn't the frame nice?" she asked. "I made father two shirts and he gave me the frame and the glass. Peter Daly made it. And the frame is oiled and polished until the grain shows—well, almost like watered silk. Gitty Sprague has a beautiful pelisse of gray watered silk. And now I have one thing for my house. I'm beginning to lay by."

"Your house!" Cynthia ejaculated in surprise.

"Why, yes—when I'm married. You have such lots of things, you'll never have to save up."

Cynthia was wondering what she could give away. Not anything that was her father's or her mother's.

"I'll paint you a picture. You do so much better needlework than I that I should be ashamed to offer you any."

"And the girls will give me some, I know. I'd fifty times rather have the picture. What a nice young fellow that cousin is! I'm glad his name isn't Leverett. There's such a host of them. But I don't like Anthony so well." [224]

"That was father's name. It's quite a family name. It always sounds good to me."

"And is he going to Harvard?"

"Yes; even if he can't get in right away."

"That's nice, too. It's quite the style for young men to go to college. Some of them put on a sight of airs, though. He doesn't look like that kind."

"He isn't," she returned warmly. "He is going to work his way through."

"Oh! Hasn't he any father?"

"Yes; but his father will not do anything for him. I think it is real grand of him."

Polly nodded, but she lost interest in the young man.

Bentley walked home with Cynthia. It was afternoon, so he did not really need to.

"I suppose that cousin isn't going to live with you?" he asked presently.

"Oh, no; he will have to live in Boston."

"And come up here for Sundays?"

"Why, I don't know. That would be nice. I think I am growing fond of company."

"Well, I can come over;" half jocosely.

"Oh, I meant other people;" innocently.

"Then you don't care for my coming?"

"Yes, I do. Oh, do you remember that winter I was half sick and how you used to come over and read Latin? And I used to say it to myself after you." [225]

That delighted him. He didn't feel so cross about the young fellow, but he half hoped he wouldn't pass, and have to go back to New Hampshire for another year.

They sat on the stoop and chatted until the old stage stopped and Chilian alighted.

"Oh!" the young girl cried, "where did you leave Anthony?"

"With Cousin Giles. The examinations will begin to-morrow."

It was near supper-time and Ben rose to go. Sometimes they asked him to stay to supper, but to-night they did not.

Then an event happened that took Cynthia's entire interest for a while. This was the return of Captain Corwin. He came up the walk one day—quite a grizzled old fellow it seemed, with the sailor's rolling gait—and looked at her so sharply that she had a mind to run away.

"Oh, Captain Anthony's little girl," he cried. "You have forgotten me. And it ain't been so long either."

She thought a moment and turned from red to white. Then she stretched out both hands and cried, her eyes and voice full of tears:

"Oh, you couldn't bring him back!"

"No, little Missy. He'd shipped for the last time before I'd reached there and gone to a better haven. He was the best friend I ever had. But he knew it long afore, and that was why he wanted [226] you safe with friends."

"I know now." She brushed the tears from her eyes.

"And I hope you've been happy."

"I waited and waited at first. Sometimes I wished I was a bird. Oh, wouldn't we have a lovely time if we could fly? And one time in the winter I was quite ill—it was so cold and I did get so tired of waiting. Then Cousin Chilian told me he had gone to mother and I knew how glad she would be to see him. I had some nice times. Cousin Chilian loved me very much. So did Cousin Eunice. I think Cousin Elizabeth would if she had lived longer, but she went away, too. Oh, I've done so many things—studied books, and taken journeys, and made friends, and painted pictures, flowers, and such. And I've tried to paint the sea, but I can't make it move and seem like a real sea."

"Oh, Missy, how smart you must be!"

"There are so many things I don't know," she laughed. "And now tell me about yourself and why you did not come back."

"We had a pretty fair journey all along first. But as we were nearing Torres Strait an awful storm took us, and we were driven ashore almost a wreck and lost two of our men. After a while we got patched up and set sail again, but I was afraid we would never reach harbor. Howsomever we did, in a pretty bad condition. Poor *Flying Star* seemed on its last legs and 'twasn't sea legs either. Then I went up to Hong Kong and cruised around, buying stuff and selling it elsewhere. The *Flying Star* was patched up again, but she wasn't thought safe for a long journey. But there was plenty of work near at hand. Of course, I knew all about your father, and that the word must have reached you, but I hated mortally to come back and face you. But after a while the hankerin' for old Salem grew upon me. And there was the *Aurora* wantin' a captain, for the man who brought her out died of a fever. So says I, 'I'm your man, and I've been over often enough to know the ropes, the islands, and p'ints of danger and safe sailing.' So here I be once more. But jiminy Peter! I should hardly 'a' knowed little old Salem. Why, she looks as if she was going to outsail all creation!" [227]

"Oh, we're getting very grand. New streets, and splendid new houses, and stores, and churches. Why, Boston isn't very much finer."

"Don't b'lieve Boston harbor can show tonnage with her! And where's first mate?"

"I don't know, but he will be in soon. Oh, there's Rachel. Rachel, come here to an old friend."

The captain shook hands heartily. "Why, you don't seem to have changed a mite, only to grow younger and plump as a partridge."

It had all to be talked over again and in the midst of it supper was ready, and there was Miss Eunice's surprise. Cynthia could hardly eat, the long journey and the dangers seemed such a strange thing now. Had she really come from India, or was it all a dream? [228]

Yes, old Salem was almost fading out of the minds of even middle-aged people. There were curious stories told about witches and ghosts, but the real witchcraft was dying out of mind and the old houses that had been associated with it were looked upon as curiosities. Public spirit was being roused. In 1804 the East India Marine Society left the Stearns house and moved to the new Pickman Building in Essex Street. People began to send in curiosities that had been stored away in garrets: models of early vessels, articles from Calcutta, from the islands about the Central and South Pacific, cloths, and cloaks, and shawls, and implements.

The captain was quite sure Winter Island had grown larger—perhaps it had, by docking out. And he declared the streets looked like London, with the gayly gowned women, the stores, the carriages, for a number of handsome late ones were to be seen. There were a few fine young men on the promenade and they were attired in the height of fashion, as the society men of New York and Philadelphia. They were still paying attention to business and devoting the evenings to pleasure. Descendants of the strict old Puritans met to play cards and have dances and gay times with the young ladies. In the afternoon a cup of tea would be offered to callers, or a piece of choice cake and a glass of wine—often home-made. There were few excesses. [229]

Many were still wearing the old Continental attire, yet you saw an old Puritan gentleman, with his long coat, his high-crowned hat, black silk stockings, and low shoes with great steel buckles.

Anthony was very much interested in the captain, whose best friend had been Anthony Leverett. He was proud of the name, and Cynthia's story was like a romance to him. He was taken up quite cordially by Cousin Giles, and very cordially by Mrs. Stevens, who had a liking for young men when they were well-mannered. He had managed to enter Harvard, with some studies to make up. Chilian Leverett insisted he should do no teaching this year, and offered him enough to see him through, but he would only accept it as a loan.

Bentley Upham was a year ahead and had a good standing, but he felt a little jealous of the young country fellow—"bumpkin" he would have liked to call him, but he was not that. A young man received at Mr. Giles Leverett's, and who sometimes escorted Mrs. Stevens to an entertainment, was not to be ignored.

The captain staid in port nearly two months and Cynthia experienced her old fondness for him, if he was a little uncouth and rough. They went down to see the *Aurora* off and she recalled the day she had said good-bye to the *Flying Star*, that was to bring back her father. [230]

As for her she was very busy learning to play and to paint. It was a young lady's accomplishment, but she really did very well. There were girls' teas, and now and then a small dance that began at seven and ended at nine, but boys were invited generally. Miss Polly Upham was quite in the swim, as we should say now. Mothers expected their daughters to marry, and how could they if they did not see young men? But there was a certain propriety observed, and very little playing fast and loose with the most sacred period of life, with the greatest God-given blessing—Love. [231]

CHAPTER XIV

IN GAY OLD SALEM

The next winter Cynthia was fairly launched on society. There was no regular coming out in almost bridal array, with a grand tea and a houseful of flowers. When a girl left school she expected to be invited out and to give little companies at home. Almost the first thing, she was asked to be one of the six bridesmaids at Laura Manning's wedding.

The Mannings had one of the splendid new houses on Chestnut Street, with spacious grounds before the houses grew so close together. Avis Manning was still in school, Cynthia was between the two in age. Mr. Manning was connected with the East India trade and an old friend of the Leverett family. It had begun by Cynthia being invited to a girls' tea, and Mrs. Manning had taken a great fancy to her. Laura was not very tall, and they did not want any one to dwarf the bride.

Every one was to be in white, the bride in a soft, thick silk, and she was to have a court train. The maids were to be in mull or gauze, as a very pretty thin material was called. The Empress Josephine had brought in new styles that certainly were very becoming to young people. The [232] short waist and square neck, the sleeve puffs that had shrunk so much they no longer reached the ears, the short curls around the edge of the forehead arranged so the white parting showed, the dainty feet in elegant slippers and choice silk stockings that could not help showing, for the skirts were short. Pretty feet and slim ankles seemed to be a mark of good family.

"Will I do?" Cynthia stood before Cousin Chilian with a half-saucy smile. Around her throat she wore a beautiful Oriental necklace, with pendants of different fine stones that sparkled with every turn of the head. There were match pendants in her ears, and just back of the rows of curls was a jewelled comb.

She was a pretty girl without being a striking beauty. But her eyes would have redeemed almost any face, and now they were all aglow with a wonderful light.

He looked his admiration.

"Because if *you* don't like me——"

There was a charming half-coquettish way about her, but she never made a bid for compliments.

"What then?" laughing.

"I'd stay home and spoil the wedding party. I know they couldn't fill my place on a short notice."

He thought they couldn't fill it at all, but he said almost merrily, "You need not stay at home."

Cousin Eunice said she looked pretty enough for the bride. Miss Winn had attended to her toilette, and now she wrapped a soft silken cloak about her and Cousin Chilian put her in the [233] carriage. He was all in his best, ruffled shirt-front, light brocaded silk waist-coat, and there were lace ruffles about his hands.

One feels inclined to wonder at the extravagance of those days, when one sees some of the heirlooms that have come down to us. But their handsome gowns went through several seasons, and then were made over for the daughters. And they did not have their jewels reset every few months.

Such a roomful of pretty girls! Youth and health and picturesque dressing make almost any one pretty. Miss Laura looked fine, but she paused to say, "Oh, Cynthia, what an elegant necklace!"

"Father had it made for mother," she replied simply.

They patted and pulled a little, powdered, too.

Miss Willard, the great mantua-maker of that day, who superintended the dressing of brides, saw that everything was right. The young men came from their dressing-room, and they began to form the procession. Both halls were illuminated with no end of candles, and guests were standing about. Mr. Lynde Saltonstall took his bride-to-be, and they let the white train sweep down the broad stairway, then Avis Manning and Ed Saltonstall followed. They were not much on knick-names in those days, but he had been called Ed to distinguish him from some cousins.

Cynthia and a cousin came next, and there were several other relatives. It was a beautiful [234] sight. The bride walked up to the white satin cushion on which the couple would kneel during the prayer, the maids and attendants made a semicircle around her, and then the nearest relatives. The old white-haired minister had married her mother.

Then there was kissing and congratulation and Mrs. Saltonstall had her new name, though Avis said she liked Manning a hundred times better.

"Then you wouldn't accept my name?" said Ed, but he looked laughingly at Cynthia.

"Indeed I wouldn't! I don't want any one's name at present. I'm going to be the only daughter

of the house a while," she returned saucily.

"I wonder if I ought to go on and ask all the maids?" There was such a funny anxiety in his face that it added to the merriment.

"You needn't ask this one," said Ward Adams, and Cousin Lois Reade blushed scarlet, though they all knew she was engaged.

"But I'm going to dance with every maid. And just at twelve I'm going to hunt for a glass slipper."

His look at Cynthia said he needn't hunt very far, and she blushed, which made her more enchanting than before.

They all laughed and talked, the older men teasing the bride a little and giving her advice as to how she should break in her new husband. Young people's weddings were expected to be gay and every one added his or her mite. The fine new house was duly admired. On one side it was all one [235] long room, beautifully decorated. On the other a library, for books were beginning to come in fashion, even if you were not a clergyman or a student. Then a kind of family sitting-room, with a large dining-room at the back. Some of the fine old houses were taken for public purposes later on.

They went out to refreshments and the bride cut the cake with a silver knife. Large suppers were no longer considered the style, but there was a bountiful supply of delicacies. They drank health and long life to the bride and groom, and good wishes of all kinds.

The black waiter, in white gloves and white apron, stood in the hall to deliver boxes of wedding cake as the older people took their departure. And then the fiddlers began to tune up. There were two minuets to take in all the party. Cynthia and Mr. Jordan were in the head one, with the bride. He was a little stiff and excused himself, as he wasn't much given to dancing. It didn't matter so much in the minuet.

Then they paired off any way. Mr. Ed Saltonstall caught Cynthia's hand.

"I'm just dying to dance with you, and this is the basket quadrille. Jordan dances like a pump handle, but he's a good fellow. Now let us have something worth while. I know you dance beautifully."

"How do you know?" piquantly.

"I'd like to be nautical and impertinent, but I'm afraid you'd report me to Mr. Leverett. Oh, it's [236] in you, in every motion. Aren't you glad you didn't live in those old Puritan days when you would have been put in the stocks if you had skipped across the room? Come."

That *was* dancing. Not a halt nor an ungraceful turn, but every curve and motion was as perfect as if they had danced together all their lives. She gave two or three happy sighs. Her cheeks were like the heart of a blush rose; she never turned very red when she ran or skipped, and never looked blowsy.

Another person watched and thought her the prettiest thing in the room, and was very glad she belonged to him.

"I'm sorry I have to dance with some one else and it's Lois Reade. Adams would like to kick me, I know, and she would be twice as happy with him. That is the price you pay for assisting your brother into matrimony. Next time there shall not be but one bridesmaid, and I'll dance with her all the evening."

"Next time? Will he be married twice?" she asked demurely.

"Oh, you witch! You are the most delicious dancer—it almost seems as if you were sipping some very fine wine——"

"And it went to your head," she laughed.

"Head and heels both. I'm extravagantly fond of it with a partner like you. You'll go to the assemblies this winter?" [237]

"Oh, I don't know."

"Is Mr. Leverett very—he's your guardian, and somehow I stand just a little in awe of him. He is so polished, and knows so much, and is he going to be very exclusive?"

"Why——" She didn't quite understand, but she looked out of such lovely eyes that all his pulses throbbed.

"Take your places."

She was standing there alone when Mr. Adams asked her. That was only fair play. Mr. Saltonstall was in the same set and he gave her hand a squeeze when he took her, crumpled it all up in his, and she flushed daintily.

He could not dance with her again until the very last. That was a "circle" in which you balanced and turned your partner and went to the next couple, but some way you returned to

your own. There were various pretty figures in it. Once or twice she was a little confused, but he seemed always on the watch for her.

The music stopped and the fiddlers were locking their cases. The dancers went out to the supper-room again.

"I'd rather dance than eat. I believe I could dance without music. Would you like to try?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" with a frightened look that made him laugh. [238]

Mr. Leverett came, and Mr. Saltonstall was all polite deference. He wished he could be invited to call, but how was it to be managed?

Then Cynthia went upstairs to put on her cloak. The bride kissed her, and said she was glad to have had her, and when they gave their house-warming she must be sure to come.

"I've had such a lovely time. Thank you ever so much."

"I'm the obliged one," was the reply.

If she had not been in the carriage she must have danced all the way home. There was music in her head and a "spirit in her feet." She hardly heard what Cousin Chilian was saying, only after they entered the house and she slipped out of her wrap, with his good-night, he said, "You are a very pretty girl, Cynthia." Of course, he should have had more sense than to foster a girl's vanity.

The next morning she asked him about the assemblies.

"They are very nice dancing parties. Only the best people go and no sort of freedom or misbehavior is tolerated. I think I'll take out a membership."

"Oh, do, please do," she entreated.

The elegant wedding was talked of for days. Girls called on Miss Leverett—it seemed funny to be called that. She was asked to join a sewing society that made articles of clothing for the widows and children of drowned sailors, and there were many of them on the New England coast. [239] Her tender heart was moved by the pathetic tales she heard.

"Dear Cousin Eunice," she said one day, "I went with one of the committee to see a poor sick woman who is in awful destitution. There are three small children, and when she is well she goes out washing. They send her driftwood and old stuff from the ship-yards, and one of the companies pays her rent. But you should see the things! Such ragged quilts that hardly hold together, and one little boy was without stockings. There are so many things up in the garret that you will never use——"

"Likely, dear, but they are Chilian's."

"He said I might ask you, that he was willing. Can't we go up and find some? What is the use of their being piled up year after year, and people in need? Ah, if you could see the poor place!"

Miss Eunice went unwillingly. The thrift of New England did often shrivel into penuriousness. She and Elizabeth were in the habit of putting away so many partly worn articles for the time of need.

"Those old blankets and quilts——"

"Elizabeth thought they would do to cover over."

"But there are so many better ones. And some on the closet shelves that have never been used. Why, there is enough to last a hundred years."

"Oh, no;" with an alarmed expression.

"And even I shall not last a hundred years. No one does." [240]

"Oh, yes. I knew a woman who lived to be one hundred and four."

"Did she come to want?"

"She had a good son to take care of her."

"And you have Cousin Chilian. I read somewhere in the Bible—I wish I could remember the chapters and verses, 'While we have time let us do good unto *all* men.' I suppose that means those who haven't been frugal and careful, as well as the others."

"We can't tell just what every sentence means."

"But we can help them. And here is a poor woman who doesn't go to taverns;" smiling tenderly and with persuasive eyes.

They picked out enough for a wagon-load. Some of Cousin Chilian's clothes that would do to cut over, old woollen blankets, and a variety of articles.

"Let us put them all in this chest."

"We might need the chest."

"Oh, no, we won't. They will be so much easier to carry that way. Silas could drive down there. And, oh, you can't imagine how much good they will do."

Cynthia went down to see afterward, and the poor woman's gratitude brought tears to her eyes.

"They will be a perfect God-send this winter," she said. "I've been frettin' as to what we should do. I've never begged yet. Well, the Lord is good."

Then there came another source of interest. Polly Upham was "keeping company." A nice, steady young man in the ship-chandlery business, with a little money saved up, whose folks lived [241]
at Portsmouth. He came regularly on Wednesday night and Sundays to tea. They went to church in the evening, and that certified it to the young people. Betty had left school and was trying her hand at housekeeping. Louis, the little fellow, was a big boy.

Alice Turner was engaged also, and certainly very much in love if she considered the young man a paragon. Cynthia compared them all with Cousin Chilian, and it wasn't a bit fair.

She met Mr. Saltonstall at a small party, where they played games and had forfeits.

It was odd, she thought, how the girls chose him in everything. She didn't choose him once. He spoke of it afterward.

"Why, I thought some of the others ought to have a chance," she explained with winning sweetness. "But if it had been dancing!" and she laughed, and that reconciled him.

Then Mrs. Lynde Saltonstall gave her house-warming. It was a simple dwelling and not very large, but it was pretty as a picture. And young people didn't expect to rival their fathers and mothers in the start.

They had dancing, and that was enough. They were all young people, and two of the fiddlers were there. They had a gay time and a nice supper.

"I think Ed is smitten with Cynthia Leverett," Laura remarked to her husband. "He seemed to feel annoyed that they had sent Miss Winn in the carriage for her. She's a lovely dancer." [242]

"It wouldn't be a bad thing for Ed. She has lots of money that just turns itself over on interest. And her trustee has been buying up some choice Boston property for her. She's pretty and has charming manners and comes of a good family."

Then Mrs. Stevens asked her to come in to Boston for a few days. She was going to have a little dancing party.

"My dear, you'll dance yourself to death," said Cousin Eunice.

"Oh, no. It isn't as hard as cleaning house or washing, as some of the poor women do. And it is tiresome to practise on the spinet, hour after hour—counting time and all that. If I was a girl of twenty years ago I'm afraid I should be chasing up and down some old garret, spinning on the big wheel."

Cousin Eunice laughed, too. Cynthia always made commonplaces seem amusing, she accented them so with her bright face.

They were very glad to have her in Boston. Chilian took her in on Saturday and staid with her until Monday morning. On Sunday Anthony Drayton was invited in to dinner. He had improved very much. The country air had been effaced. And he was a gentleman by instinct, and acquired cultivation readily.

"And a fine fellow!" said Cousin Giles, rubbing his hands. "He's decided to go in for law presently, and it will be a most excellent thing. I don't know but I'll have to adopt him, as you did [243]
Cynthia."

Anthony hovered about the young girl. She had been cultivating her voice the last year. It was a sweet parlor voice, adapted to the old-time songs. Mrs. Stevens had a book of them and she sang most cheerfully.

"Oh, I wish you were going to stay over another Sunday," he exclaimed wistfully. "But I shall come in on Tuesday evening. I don't dance, but Mrs. Stevens is so kind to me, I've met several of the first men in the city here."

"Oh, I am glad you are coming."

It was a very sincere joy and she could not keep it out of her face, did not try to. And it was such a sweet face that she raised to his. He had a sudden unreasonable wish that he was five years older and settled in business, but then—she was very young.

Mrs. Stevens said to her on Monday, after she had read a note over and glanced up at her rather furtively, "There's a friend of yours coming Tuesday night—a friend from Salem that I hope you will be glad to see."

"From Salem——"

"Mr. Saltonstall. He was in here a fortnight or so ago. His mother and I used to be great

friends. I happened to ask him if he knew the Leveretts, and he told me about his brother's marriage, that you were one of the bridesmaids." [244]

"Oh, yes. Laura Manning was one of the older girls at Madam Torrey's. They had just gone in their new house and the wedding was splendid. And I liked Mr. Edward Saltonstall so much. He is a most beautiful dancer. I'm so glad he is coming. You see I don't know many of the new dances, and I shouldn't so much mind making a break with him."

She looked up in her sweet, brave innocence as she uttered it.

"You are not in love with him, little lady, and he is very much smitten with you," Mrs. Stevens ruminated. "But you shall have the chance."

"I've always liked Ed," she continued. "He's a nice, frank, honest fellow, pretty gay at times, but not at all in the dissipated line, just full of fun and frolic. So I asked him down, and here he says he will come," waving her note. "I look out for men who dance. I do like to see young folks have a good time. The older people can play cards."

It seemed rather odd that at eight o'clock not a soul had come. At home they would be beginning the fun by this time. Then a sudden influx of girls, some she had met before—two or three young men—and then young Saltonstall, who had been counting the moments the last half hour.

"I am so glad to see you. It was such a surprise."

He could see it in her face, hear it in her voice. He really was afraid of saying something foolish—something that would be no harm if they were alone. [245]

"I've known Mrs. Stevens a long while. And Mr. Giles Leverett. It's queer—well, not quite that either—that I've known you such a little while. I always thought of you as a child, though I've seen you drive your pony carriage."

"Mrs. Stevens is delightful."

Then there was another relay, quite a number of young gentlemen. The black fiddlers in the hall began to tune up.

There were two very handsome girls and beautifully gowned. All of them looked pretty in dancing attire. Then a quadrille was called. There were just eight couples.

Of course, Mr. Saltonstall took her. The rug was up and the floor had been polished. The dancing was elegant, harmonious.

"The next is the Spanish dance. You will like that. The windings about are like the song words to the music."

"But—I don't know it;" and she shrank back.

"Oh, you'll get into it. You are the kind that could pick up any step. You make me think of a swallow as it darts round. If it made a mistake no one would know it."

"Oh, I'd rather not;" entreatingly.

"Don't spoil the set."

She rose up and let him lead her out. She had a way of yielding so quickly, when it was right and best, very flattering to a man in love and easily misread. [246]

If dancing had been art instead of nature, something by rote instead of a segment of inner harmony, she could not have succeeded so well. He warded off the few blunders, and at the third change she had another well-bred partner. But she was glad to get back to him. The joy shone in her dangerous eyes.

There were some new dances coming in. One of the girls from New York and her escort waltzed up and down the room in a slow-gliding manner that was the poetry of motion. She was fascinated, enchanted, and she knew she could do it herself.

"We'll try it sometime," Saltonstall said.

Mr. Leverett came in, bringing Anthony Drayton with him. He knew he was late, but he didn't dance, and he had earned five dollars copying that evening. But he must see Cynthia.

"Oh, I thought you would not come!"

Then she had been giving a thought to him out of her happy time!

"I was detained. Are they all well, or didn't Cousin Chilian come down?"

"Oh, no."

They were being marshalled out to supper.

"You'll have to content yourself with me," said Mrs. Stevens to Anthony, and he accepted smilingly. But she placed Cynthia next, so he could have a little talk with her. He was getting on so well, and she was glad for him.

Some one wanted Miss Tracy to waltz again. Then they had a galop, and the party broke up. [247] Anthony said good-night, and that he was coming up on Saturday. Then Saltonstall drew her into a little nook in the hall that made a connection with another room when it was open. Mrs. Stevens had smiled over its uses.

"Cynthia, my darling, I must tell you this," and his voice seemed to throb with emotion. "I want the right to come and visit you as lovers have, for I love you, love you! I am coming to see Mr. Leverett and ask his permission. I do nothing but dream of you day and night. You are the sweetest, dearest——"

"Oh, don't! don't!" She struggled in the clasp. "Oh, I can't—I——" and he felt her slight body tremble, so he loosed it.

"Forgive me. I wanted you to know so no one can take you from me. I want to see you often. Oh, love, good-night, good-night!"

He pressed a rapturous kiss upon her hand and was gone. She slipped through to the dining-room and took a glass of water.

"You look tired to death, little country girl," said Uncle Giles, and he kissed her on the forehead. [248]

CHAPTER XV

LOVERS AND LOVERS

"Take me home with you, Cousin Chilian," she pleaded, when he came in the next day.

"But I thought"—he studied her in surprise.

"I want to go home," she interrupted, and her under lip had a quiver in it that would have disarmed almost any one, persuaded as well.

"Why, yes. Didn't you enjoy the party?" He felt suddenly at loss, he was not used to translating moods with all his knowledge.

"Oh, it was delightful! And some such pretty girls. There were new dances. And Mrs. Stevens *is* charming. Anthony came over a little while."

In spite of inducements held out, she would go. Cousin Giles was almost cross about it.

"I'm so glad to get back," she said to Rachel. "One feels so safe here."

"Was there any danger?" laughed the elder.

Cynthia's face was scarlet. It wasn't danger exactly, but she felt better under Cousin Chilian's wing. And she was her bright gay self all the evening. [249]

But how to get her story told? For if Mr. Saltonstall came and asked for her company, as they termed it then, and not being warned, he should consent——

They sat by the study fire. It had turned out cold and cloudy, with indications of snow. He had a lamp near him on the small table, and read and thought, as his glance wandered dreamily over the leaping flashing blue and yellow flames. If it stormed for one or two days, she could not have come home.

She rose presently and came and stood by him, laid her hand lightly on his shoulder. She was a young lady now, and it was hardly proper to draw her down on his knee.

"Cousin Chilian;" hesitatingly.

"Well, dear?" in an inquiring tone.

"There is something I ought to tell you, and I want to ask you—to—to do—oh, I hardly know how to say it. Mr. Saltonstall came down; he and Mrs. Stevens are old friends——"

Ah, he knew now. This young man had dared to invade the virginal sweetness of her soul, to trouble the quiet stream of girlhood. He was roused, strangely angry, for all his placid temperament.

"I couldn't help it—just before he went away—and I couldn't have dreamed of such a thing——"

Then she hid her head down on his shoulder and cried.

"Dear—my dear little girl—oh, yes, it would have to happen sometime. And—he loves you." [250]

"Oh, that isn't the worst;" illogically, between her sobs. "He is coming to ask you if he may—and I don't want him to come that way. I just want it as it was before. Polly Upham can't think or talk of anything but her intended, and it gets tiresome. He doesn't seem so very wonderful to me. And wouldn't it weary you to hear me praising some one all the time?"

"I think it would," he answered honestly, yet with some confusion of mind.

"So I don't want it;" with more courage in her voice. "I want good times with them all. And I don't see how you can come to love any one all in a moment."

Was he hearing aright? Didn't she really want the young man for a lover? He was unreasonably, fatuously glad, and the pulses, that were chilled a moment ago, seemed to race hot through his body.

"It was not quite marriage?" a little huskily.

"He wanted to ask if he might have the right to come, and he said he loved me, and, oh, I am afraid——"

She was trembling. He could feel it where she leaned against him. He took sudden courage.

"And you do not want him to come in that way? It would most likely lead to an engagement. And then I should have to listen to his praises continually. Yes, it would be rather hard on me;" and he laughed with a humorous sound. [251]

It heartened her a good deal. She was smiling now herself, but there were tears on her cheek.

"And you won't mind telling him; that is not *very* much, that——"

"I think you are too young to decide such a grave matter, Cynthia," he began seriously. "And you ought to have a glad, sweet youth. There is no reason why you should rush into marriage. You have a pleasant home with those that love you——"

"And I don't want to go away. I feel as if I would like to live here always. You are so good and indulgent, and Cousin Eunice is so nice, now that she doesn't seem afraid of any one. Were we all afraid of Cousin Elizabeth? And we have such nice talks. She tells me about the old times and what queer thoughts people had, and how hard they were. And about girls whose lovers went away to sea and never came back, and how they watched and waited, and sometimes we cry over them. And the house is so cheerful, and I can have all the flowers I want, and friends coming in, and, oh, I shall never want to go away, because I shall never love any one as well as you."

That was very sweet, but it was a girl's innocence, and her face did not change color in the admission.

"Well, I will explain the matter to Mr. Saltonstall. I am glad you told me, otherwise I should hardly have known your wishes on the subject. And now we will go on having good times [252] together, and count out lovers."

"Yes, yes." She gave his hand a squeeze and was her own happy self, not feeling half as sorry for the man who would come to be denied as he did.

It snowed furiously the next morning, and sullenly the day after. Then it was cold, and she said half a dozen times a day she was so glad she came home.

She did not see Mr. Saltonstall when he called, and she really did miss him at two little companies. Then she wondered if she oughtn't give one, she had gone to so many.

"Why, yes," Cousin Chilian answered. She might have turned the house upside down so long as she was going to stay in it.

Then she wondered if she ought to invite *him*. Mrs. Lynde and she were very good friends, and she should ask Avis, of course. They spoke—they were not ill friends.

Chilian considered. "Yes, I think I would," he made answer.

They had a merry time and danced on the beautiful rugs, and had a fine supper. And Mr. Saltonstall was glad to be friends. She *was* young and presently she might think of lovers. He would try and keep his chance good.

Anthony came now and then and spent a Sunday with them. He loved to hear Cousin Chilian read Greek verses, but the pretty love odes seemed to mean Cynthia, and he used to watch her. [253] Then Ben Upham was a visitor as well, and used to play checkers with her, as that was considered quite a good exercise for one's brains.

Polly would be married in the spring, Alice Turner in June. The Turners were always besieging her for a two or three days' visit, and the Turner young men hovered round her. She never seemed to do anything, she never demanded attention, but when she glanced up at them, or smiled, they followed her as the children did the Pied Piper. She might have led them into dangerous places, but she was very simple of heart. Yet the danger was alluring to them.

Polly came to her for a good deal of counsel. When there were two patterns of sleeves, which should she take?

"Why, I'd have the India silk made with this and the English gingham with that—you see it will iron so much easier. Miss Grayson does up the puffs on a shirring cord, then you can let them out in the washing."

"That's a fine idea. You do have such splendid ideas, Cynthy."

"They are mostly Rachel Winn's," laughed the young girl.

They had a capable woman in the kitchen now. Cynthia should have been mastering the high art of housekeeping, people thought, instead of running about so much and driving round in the pony carriage with Miss Winn, or a girl companion. Of course, there was plenty of money, but one never quite knew what would happen. [254]

John Loring was building his house as people who could did in those days. They would not be able to finish it all inside, and there was a nook left for an addition when they needed it. Polly was to have some of grandmother's furniture, and John's mother would provide a little. Corner cupboards were quite a substitute in those days for china closets, and window-seats answered for chairs. But there was bedding and napery, and no one thought of levying on friends. Relatives looked over their stock and bestowed a few articles. Cynthia thought of the stores in the old house and wished she might donate them. She did pick out some laces from her store, and two pretty scarfs, one of which Polly declared would be just the thing to trim her wedding hat, which was of fine Leghorn. So she would only have to buy the feather.

They haunted the stores and occasionally picked up a real bargain. Even at that period shoppers did not throw their money broadcast.

"Cynthia Leverett is the sweetest girl I know," Polly said daily, and Bentley was of the same opinion.

They were to stand at the wedding.

"And I want you to wear that beautiful frock that you had when Laura Manning was married. I shall only have two bridesmaids, you and Betty, but I want you to look your sweetest." [255]

And surely she did. They had a very nice wedding party and the next day Polly went to her own house and had various small tea-drinkings, and she arranged them for Saturday so Bentley could come up. They were wonderfully good friends, but Cynthia felt as if she had outgrown him. In her estimation he was just a big friendly boy that one could talk to familiarly. Anthony was more backward in the laughter and small-talk.

Then there was the college degree. There was no such great fuss made over commencement then, no grand regattas, no inter-collegiate athletics, for it was a rather serious thing to begin a young man's life and look forward to marriage.

He went straight to Mr. Chilian. It was the proper thing to be fortified with the elders' consent. Of course, he would not marry in some time yet, but if he could be her "company" and speak presently—they had been such friends.

Chilian studied the honest young fellow, whose face was in a glow of hope. So young to dream of love and plan for the future!

"You are both too young;" and his voice had a bit of sharpness in it. "Cynthia is not thinking of such things."

"But one *can* think of them. They begin somehow and go into your very life. I believe I've loved her a long while."

"I think neither of you really know what love is. No, I cannot consent to it. I want her to go on having a good free time without any anxiety. I have some right to her, being her guardian." [256]

"But—I will wait—I didn't mean to ask her immediately."

"We are going on a journey presently. I cannot have her disturbed with this. No, your attention must be devoted to business for the next two years."

He drew a long breath. "But you don't mean I must break off—everything?" and there was an unsteadiness in his voice.

"Oh, no. Not if you can keep to the old friendliness."

Then Chilian Leverett dropped into his easy-chair and thought. The child had grown very dear to him, she was a gift from her father. A tumultuous, uncomprehended pain wrenched his very soul. To live without her—to miss her everywhere! To have lonely days, longer lonely evenings when the dreariness of winter set in. And yet she had a right to the sweet, rich draught of love. But she did not need it amid all the pleasures of youth. Let her have two or three years, even if it was blissful thoughtlessness. But he must put her on her guard. A young fellow soon changed his mind. The old couplet sang itself in his brain:

"If she be not fair for me,
What care I how fair she be?"

Did he get over his early love and forget? We all say, "But ours was different." [257]

How to find the right moment? Ben did not come over. She was very busy with this friend and that, youth finds so *many* interests. But one evening, when they were sitting on the porch in the moonlight, the young fellow walked slowly along, glanced at them, halted.

She flew down to the gate.

"Oh, Ben, what has happened?" she cried, the most bewitching anxiety in her face. "Why, you have not been in—for weeks."

"Not quite two weeks." Had it seemed so long to her? To him it had been months.

"Oh, come in. Cousin Chilian will be glad to see you."

The radiant cordiality in her face unnerved him.

"And you?" Yes, he must know.

"Do you have to ask that question?"

The sweet, dangerous eyes said too much, but the smile was that of amusement.

So they walked up the path together. Mr. Leverett greeted him in a friendly manner.

"I thought I ought to come in and say good-bye. I'm going off on some business for father, and may not be back for several weeks."

"That sounds as if you needed an apology for coming at all," she commented with half-resentful gayety.

He flushed and made no immediate reply. [258]

"And we are going to take a journey as well. Up somewhere in Maine. Mr. Giles Leverett insists we shall, for our health, but I think it is our delightful company. He has to go to look after a large estate where some people think of founding a town. Isn't it funny?" and she gave her bewitching laugh that was like the notes of silver bells, soft, yet clear. "They must go off and build up new places. And some people are going West, as if there wasn't room here. Have you noticed that we are overcrowded?"

"Well, sometimes along the docks it looks that way."

"I like a good many people. Often Merrits' is crowded, and it's funny to catch bits of sentences. And at Plummer's as well. Did you ever read right across the paper, one line in each column, and notice the odd and twisted-up sense it made? That's about the way it sounds."

How bright and charming she was! Ben could not keep his eyes from her radiant face. Was she really a coquette, Chilian wondered. Yet she was so simple with it all, so seemingly careless of the effect. That was the danger of it.

He lingered like one entranced. Poor young lad! Chilian began to feel sorry for him.

She walked down to the gate with him, and hoped they would have a nice time when autumn came, if he meant to stay in Salem.

A young man not in love would have called her a bright, merry, chatty girl. He went away with the consciousness that she liked him very much. Chilian asked her if she did. [259]

She glanced up wonderingly.

"Why—he is nice, and being Polly's brother makes it—well, more familiar. Then we can talk about Anthony. I believe he didn't like him much at first, but he does now."

Oh, how could he put her on her guard! She was not dreaming of love. Saltonstall's fancy had died out—no doubt this would, too. Lad's love. Was it worth ruffling up the sunny artlessness? But he would watch the young men closer now that he knew the danger line.

He said simply to himself that he could not give her up to any one else so soon. There would be a long life of joy and satisfaction to her, and he knew she would not grudge him these few years. Then, too, he was quite certain she had not even had an imaginary fancy for these two men—Ben was nothing but a boy.

Anthony Drayton was to join them. Miss Winn was to be Cynthia's companion. Mrs. Stevens had refused to trust her precious self to any wilds, and bear and wolf hunts, though Mr. Giles declared they were not going to take guns along. He was not an enthusiastic hunter. As for Chilian, such sport did not attract him.

The journey was partly by stage, partly on horseback, and one or two days they left the ladies at the tavern where they stopped. Cynthia was charmed and amused at the uncouthness of the people and their dialect in some places, and positive good breeding in others. Anthony unearthed a college chum who was tally man at a sawmill. The new town was really making progress. A small chapel had been started, a schoolhouse built. And twenty years later it was a pretty town; in fifty years an enterprising city. [260]

"Anthony's going to be a first-class fellow. I should like to have such a son. Chilian, you and I should have married and have sons and daughters growing up. But at my time of life I should want them grown up. And smart, as well. I always feel sorry for the fathers of dull lads, when they have plenty of means to educate them. Yes, I should want mine to have a good supply of brains."

Chilian Leverett enjoyed the change very much and the breath of spruce and pine was invigorating. But there was a little nervous feeling about Cynthia. Cousin Giles was somewhat of

a lady's man, and he was on the continual lookout that Cynthia should not tire herself unduly, that she be assisted over the rough places, that she should have the best of everything. He was almost jealous at times.

But Cynthia moved about gayly, serenely, full of merry little quips, seizing the small ridiculous events with such a sense of amusement that she inspirited them all. And he could not notice that she paid any more attention to Anthony than either of her seniors. There was such a genuine [261] frankness in all she said and did, a charm of manner that was just herself, and had none of the arts of society, but came from a heart that overflowed with spontaneous warmth, but was not directed to any particular person.

Cousin Giles declared he was sorry to get back to Boston. He could not remember when he had enjoyed such a good time. Then in a business way it had been a success, which added to his satisfaction.

They really had to stay in Boston one night. They would fain have kept Cynthia for a week, but she said she was tired of just changing from one frock to another, and longed for more variety.

"And I'm so glad to get back home again," she cried delightedly. "I've had a splendid time, and I like Anthony ever so much. Cousin Giles was so nice and fatherly. He ought to adopt Anthony and give him his name, and that would always make me think of father. But after all, home is best. Oh, suppose I was a waif, just being handed from one to another!"

She looked frightened with the imaginary lot. She expressed emotions so easily.

"You couldn't have been;" hoarsely.

"Cousin Chilian, if you had not been in the world, or if you hadn't been willing to take me—I don't think father knew much about Cousin Giles—why, I must have gone to strangers."

There were tears in her eyes, and a sweet melancholy in her voice. [262]

She had so much to tell Cousin Eunice that it seemed really as if she had taken the journey with them. She put on Jane's faded gingham sunbonnet and gave her voice a queer nasal twang, and talked as some of the women did up there in the wilderness, who thought a city "must be an awfully crowdy place an' she jes' didn't see how people managed to live in it. An' as fer the sea, give her dry land every time."

Then she talked the French-English patois of the emigrants from Canada, and told of their funny attire, and their log huts, sometimes with only one big room, with a stone chimney in the centre, and sawed logs for seats.

"They did that in Salem nigh on to two hundred years ago," said Cousin Eunice.

"How much people do learn by living," remarked the little girl sagely.

Then the olden round began. Being asked out to tea and inviting in return, sewing bees, quilting parties when some girl was making an outfit. And though the elders shook their heads at such a waste of time, they went out to walk in the afternoon and stopped in the shops that were making a show on Essex Street and Federal Street. There was Miss Rust's pretty millinery parlor —it had a sofa in the front room and a table with an embroidered cover that Cynthia had sent her. They talked of new styles and colors, and were aghast at the thought that royalty sometimes had as many as twenty hats and bonnets. She made pretty old lady caps as well, and she did love [263] to hear the young girls chatter. And Molly Saunders was still baking gingerbread, that had delighted them as school children, and no one made such good spruce and sassafras beer.

One evening at a dance she had a great surprise. Some one said, "Miss Cynthia Leverett, Mr. Marsh."

A rather tall, ruddy, good-looking fellow, with laughing eyes and an unmistakable sailor air, held her dainty hand and studied her face.

"Oh, you don't know me!" in the jolliest of tones. "And I should know you if you had been cast ashore on a rocky island and I were looking at you through a spyglass. You haven't changed in the main, only to grow prettier. You were a poor pale little thing then."

"Oh, I can't think!" She flushed and smiled. Something in the hearty voice won her.

"At Dame Wilby's school. And the bad boy who sat behind you—Tommy Marsh."

"Oh! oh! And that day I sat on the floor!" She laughed gayly. She did not mind it a bit now.

"Wasn't it funny? And the way you just sat still with the school in an uproar. You standing up there and 'sassing' back the old dame! Such a mite of a thing, too. My! but you were a plucky one!" in admiration. "And you never came to school after that. I ought to get down on my knees and beg your pardon for the sly pinches I gave you, and the times I tweaked your curly hair. I've [264] half a mind to do it."

"Oh, no!" and she made a funny gesture of alarm, and both laughed.

"And I've been over there to India, where you came from, and found some people who knew your father. I've been to sea seven years, three on this last cruise, and when the *Vixen* is repaired and refitted I'm going out again as first mate. One of these days I shall be a captain."

How proud and strong he looked. Why, one couldn't help liking him.

"I wonder if I might dance with you?"

"Oh, do you dance? I thought sailors—and there are no girls——" and she blushed at her incoherence.

"I think we do a little. Where did you get the Sailor's Hornpipe from? We're sorry about not having girls, but we make it answer. And when you get in the doldrums, or becalmed, it stirs up your blood. Oh, they are taking their places."

Ben was in the same quadrille. Every time he touched her hand he gave it a pressure that made her cheeks rosier. Altogether it was a delightful evening.

Cousin Chilian came for her. He had found she preferred it.

"Oh, Cousin Chilian, I've had such a funny adventure. Perhaps you can recall the little boy I really hated that week I went to the dame's school. Well, he is a nice big fellow now, and we had a talk, and he has been to Calcutta and seen people who knew father. I want him to come so we [265] can have a good long talk, and won't you ask him? You'll like him, I know. I'll find him and bring him to you, and you can ask him to come while I'm putting on my things."

She hunted him up and he was very pleased to meet Mr. Leverett. She gave them quite a while, for she was chatting with the girls about some weddings on the tapis.

She gave Mr. Marsh her hand and a smile that would have set almost any masculine heart beating. It must have been born with her, though it was pitifully appealing in the childhood days. Now the true, sweet nature shone through it, lending it a fascinating radiance.

Mr. Leverett said he should be glad to have him call while he was in port, and the young man thanked him and said he should give himself the pleasure.

"And when he does come," said the little lady in her half-coaxing, half-imperious way, "can't we have him up in the study? You see, it does very well for half a dozen of us to be down in the parlor, but it gets kind of stiff and not cheerful with just one. And you'll like to talk to him."

He assented readily. Ben always came up in the study, though now he would rather have been alone with Cynthia. There were some things he meant to say, if he ever had a chance, in spite of youth and guardianship. [266]

Mr. Marsh did not lose much time considering. The very next week he called.

They found him a nice, agreeable, well-informed young man, a true sailor lad, and like many a Yankee boy, he kept adding to his stock of knowledge where-ever he went. He had drawn some useful charts of seaports and islands he knew about, their products and climates, and really his descriptions were as good as a geography.

"There's no doubt Salem has the lead in the foreign trade, but we're going to be pushed hard the next few years. Other cities have found out the profit in it. But we've some of the best captains, and that's what I mean to be myself."

At Calcutta they still held a warm remembrance of Captain Anthony Leverett. And Marsh thought it quite a wonderful thing that the little girl had gone back and forth and braved all the perils. He told them of a pirate ship they had once battled with and the rich stores they had taken from her. The prisoners had been left on an island.

"But—how would they get to their homes?" she asked.

"Oh, that wasn't our lookout. They'd have done the same thing to us if they could, maybe worse. Occasionally vessels are wrecked, and sometimes it is months before a ship goes that way and sees their signal."

Yes, she was glad nothing of the kind had happened to her. And Chilian, watching the little [267] shiver, gave thanks also.

Thomas Marsh enjoyed these evenings wonderfully. He was always glancing at Cynthia to see if what he said met with her approval. It seemed so strangely sweet to be thrilled at the tones of her voice and the touch of her hand. And when she looked up and smiled, the blood surged to his brain. He was quite a favorite with the girls, but no other one had that power over him.

Of course, they met here and there at the different companies—he never went unless she was sure to be there, and if he asked she answered frankly. Cousin Chilian took her down to see the *Vixen*, which was nearly ready for her new cruise. He was very proud of her, so was Captain Langfelt, and they had some tea in the cabin. But some sudden knowledge came to Chilian Leverett, and he was sincerely glad the young man was going away.

The evening Thomas Marsh came in to say good-bye, she was alone.

"You'll find Miss Cynthia up in the study," said Jane, and thither he went two steps at a time. She had on a soft gown, and he thought she looked like some lovely flower as she rose to greet him.

"I believe we are to sail to-morrow. Stores and cargo are all in, and now the captain is in haste

to be off. Come down about eleven in the morning and wish me God-speed, a safe journey, and a happy return." [268]

"Yes. We were talking of it to-day. Oh, I hope you will have all, though a great many things happen in three years." Neither of them, indeed no one, could have predicted what was to happen in those eventful three years.

They discussed the pleasant times, the girls and boys who had grown up and married during the whole seven years of his absence. Oh, how sweet and pretty she was! He envied the boys like Bentley Upham and two or three others who had business at home—but no, he never could have been anything but a sailor.

Then he rose to go. He stood holding her hand and the red and white kept flitting over her face, her eyes were so soft and dark. They would haunt him many a night on the deck.

"It's best that I am going so soon," he began in a rather tremulous voice. "Do you remember what your uncle was reading the other day about the man who wanted to be lashed to the mast when they passed the Syrens? It would be that way with me if I staid much longer. I—I wouldn't be able to help loving you, and I doubt whether it would be a good thing for either of us. I've tried all along to keep it to a plain, honest like, but I know now it is more than that. I shall take away with me the remembrance of the sweetest girl in all the world, and I have no right to spoil her life. But sometimes maybe you'll think of a far-away lad, who sends you his love and the best wishes for your happiness with the man you will love best of all." [269]

Then he pressed her hand to his lips and went slowly down the stairs. She heard the door shut. And, foolish girl, she sat down and cried, and there Cousin Chilian found her, and had to listen and absolve.

"No," he said, "it would not do for you to have a sailor lad. Your tender heart would break with the anxiety. He's a nice, upright fellow, and he will never shirk a duty. But you——" What should he say to her?

"I want to stay here. Oh, I wonder if you will like me when I get as old as Cousin Eunice, and the world will change and improve and I shall be queer and old-fashioned?"

He held her in his arms, but he was shocked to find what was in his own heart. [270]

CHAPTER XVI

PERILOUS PATHS

Avis Manning's "Company" was one of the events of the season. She was a full-fledged young lady, and knowing she could have her choice of the young men of Salem, was rather difficult to capture. She and her brother-in-law were very good friends, but not lovers. And Laura, who knew where his fancy lay, counselled him to go slowly, though she was quite sure he would win in the end.

"You see, she is like a child to Mr. Chilian Leverett, and he is loath to part with her. But all girls do marry sooner or later, and he isn't selfish enough to want her to stay single. If he was not so much older he might marry her—they are not own cousins, you know."

"He marry her! Why, he's getting to be quite an old man," and there was a touch of disdain in his tone. "But there's half a dozen others——"

"It's queer, but she isn't a flirt. She's one of the sweetest of girls—she was, at school. And with her fortune she might hold herself high. They say the Boston trustee has doubled some of it that he invested."

"I wish she hadn't a cent!" the young man flung out angrily. [271]

"Well, money is not to be despised. She'll get a little tired by and by, and long for a home and children of her own, as we all do. And if you haven't found any one else——"

"I never shall find any one like her;" gloomily.

"Oh, there are a great many nice girls in the world."

Avis knew all the best people in Salem, it was not so large, after all. And they came to the beautiful house and made merry, played "guessing words"—what we call charades, quite a new thing then—and it made no end of merriment. Of course, Cynthia was in them, was arch and piquant, and delighted the audience. Then they had supper and more dancing. One of the Turner boys, Archibald, hovered about Cynthia like a shadow. There was Ben Upham, but Edward Saltonstall warded them off to her satisfaction. But Bella Turner was shortly to be married, and Archie would have her for that evening surely.

She and Mr. Saltonstall were very good friends. He was a little older than the others, and grown wary by experience. But it was queer that half a dozen girls were pulling straws for him and here was one who did not care, would not raise a finger, but, oh, how sweet her smiles were.

"If you are a bridesmaid the third time, you will never be a bride," said some of the wiseacres.

Cynthia tossed her proud, dainty head and laughed over it to Cousin Chilian. He looked a little grave.

"Would you mind if I were an old maid? I wouldn't really be *old* in a long while, you know. And you will always want some one. If anything should happen to Cousin Eunice, how lonely you would be." [272]

"Yes, if you went away."

"I don't care for any of them very much. I like Mr. Saltonstall the best. He isn't quite so young, so—so sort of impetuous. And the boys get jealous."

Then it was likely to be Mr. Saltonstall, after all! Was he going to be narrow and mean enough to keep her out of what was best in a woman's life? But he looked down the dreary years without her. He could not attach himself to the world of business as Cousin Giles did. Some of these young fellows might come into a sort of sonship with him—there was Anthony Drayton.

Why was it his soul protested against them? He did not understand the deep underlying dissent that made a cruel discordance in his desire for her happiness.

Mr. Saltonstall walked home from church with her and Miss Winn. And he came in one evening to ask some advice. He had cudgelled his brain for days to find just the right subject. That ended, they had a talk about chess—that was becoming quite an interest in some circles. There were several moves that puzzled him.

"Come in some evening and talk them over," said Mr. Leverett. [273]

Edward Saltonstall wondered at the favor of the gods and accepted. Not as if he was in any vulgar hurry, but he dropped in, politely social, and asked if he should disturb them. Chilian had been reading Southey's "Thalaba."

"Oh, no. We often read in the evening," said Cynthia.

She was netting a bead bag, an industry all the rage then among the women. They really were prettier than the samplers. But she rose and brought the box of chessmen, while he rolled the table from its corner.

"Will I disturb you if I stay?" she asked.

"Not unless it interferes with Mr. Saltonstall's attention," said Chilian, then bit his lip.

"Oh, I do not think it will;" smilingly.

"You are very good to bother with a tyro. I'd like to be able to play a good game. Father is so fond of it, and Lynde seldom comes in nowadays—family cares;" laughingly.

They led off very well. Saltonstall was wise enough to try his best, though out of one eye he watched the dainty fingers threading in and out among the colored beads, and could not help thinking he would rather be holding them and pressing kisses on the soft white hand. Then he made a wrong play.

"We may as well turn back," said Mr. Leverett, "since the question at stake is not winning, but improving." [274]

"You are very good," returned the young man meekly.

This time they went on a little further, but the result was the same. So with the third game.

"Of course, I could let you win," Mr. Leverett began, "but that wouldn't conduce to the real science of the game which a good player desires. But you do very well for a young man. I should keep on, if I were you."

"And annoy you with my shortcomings?"

"Oh, it will not be annoyance, truly. Come in when you feel like it."

"Thank you." Then he said good-night in a friendly, gentlemanly manner, and Cynthia rose and bowed.

After that she gathered up her work and said good-night. Chilian sat and thought. Edward Saltonstall was a nice, steady young fellow; that is, he neither gamed, nor drank, nor went roystering round in the taverns jollying with the sailors, as some of the sons of really good families did. He would not have all his fortune to make, and his father's business was well established. The sons would take it. The two daughters were well married. What more could he ask for Cynthia? She was not so young now and would know her own mind.

Yet it gave his heart a sharp, mysterious wrench, a longing for what he was putting away, the essence of the solemn ideals of love that run through the intricate meshes of the human soul. He knew that he loved her, that he wanted her for his very own, and his conscience told him it was not right. Of all her admirers he liked this one the best. Under other circumstances he would have considered him an admirable young man. [275]

Saltonstall dropped in now and then, not too often. He did not mean to startle any one with his purpose, but to let it grow gradually. Still, at the last assembly of the season, his attentions were somewhat pronounced. It was partly her doings, she was sheltering herself from other rather warm indications.

A few days later she went over to Polly Loring's with her work. Polly's bag had somehow gone wrong. Cynthia had to cut the thread and ravel out a round. The baby was to be admired as well as the chair seat Polly had begun in worsted work, which was the new accomplishment. And they talked over various matters: who had new gowns, new lovers, and new babies. But every time she came almost to the subject so near her heart, Cynthia made an elusive detour. Then she ventured out straight with her question.

"Cynthia, are you going to take Ed Saltonstall?"

Cynthia's face was scarlet.

"He hasn't asked me, he hasn't even asked Cousin Chilian," but her voice was not quite steady.

"How do you know? It was talked of at the assembly—the two men were a good deal together. And if you don't mean anything, Cynthia, you'll get yourself gossiped about, and you'll spoil some [276]
lives," declared Polly spiritedly. This thing had been seething in her mind, and she was going to have it out at the risk of breaking friendship.

"I don't want to spoil any one's life. And I've never really kept company with any one."

The keeping company was the great test. When the young man came steady one night in the week, to Sunday tea, and went to church with the girl alone, the matter was as good as declared.

"But—well, I don't know how you've done it, but they hang about you and it does upset them. First it's one, then it's another. You ought to know. You ought to settle upon one and let the others alone."

Polly had acquired a good deal of married wisdom, and she really did love Cynthia. Ben loved her, too.

"But suppose I didn't want any of them?" and Cynthia tried to laugh, but it was a poor shadowy attempt.

"Oh, nonsense! You don't mean to be an old maid. No girl does. But it is time you stopped playing fast and loose with hearts. Now there's Ben. You know he's loved you this long while. And we all like you so. Last fall he quite gave up and went to see Jenny Willing. She'll make a good wife and she's a nice girl, though she hasn't your fortune. Mother's been trying to make him believe that you are looking higher."

"Oh, Polly—I never scarcely think of my fortune," Cynthia interrupted, her face full of distressful color.

"Well, I'm not saying that you do. Ben's getting along first-rate. He has a college degree and [277]
father isn't poor. I know several girls who would jump at a chance for him. Of course, we would *all* rather have you. Then at Avis Manning's party you gave him the sweetest of your smiles, and lured him back."

Oh, she recalled it with a kind of shame. It was to keep off Archie Turner and Mr. Saltonstall. And then for a while he had grown troublesome. If they could be merely friends!

"The thing is just here, Cynthia. I know I'm speaking plainly and you may get angry. If you don't want Ben, let him alone. A young man begins to think of a home and a wife of his own, and when he likes a girl very much—yes, I will say it, she can make or mar. She can take him away from some other nice girl. And people now are beginning to say you are a flirt. I think Jenny will make Ben a nice wife, and if you don't want him——"

"Oh, Polly, I don't want any of them. You can't think how delightful life is with Cousin Chilian. I couldn't be as happy anywhere else, or with any other person. I can't make myself fall in love as all of you girls have, and think this one or that one perfect. Something must be wrong with me. And I'm very sorry. I'm not a bit jealous when they take to other girls. Why, I'd be glad to be Jenny's bridesmaid if she wanted me to."

Cynthia paused and mopped the tears from her cheeks. Polly was a little subdued. Cynthia was taking this so meekly. But she said rather spitefully, "You had better marry Mr. Leverett." [278]

Ah, Polly, it was a dangerous seed to fling at a young girl. And it dropped on a bit of out of the way fruitful soil.

Cynthia rose quietly. She was very pale. She began to roll up her work.

"Now I think you can go on with it," she said. "If you get in trouble again, let me know."

Then the two friends looked at each other until the tears came into their eyes.

"I'm very sorry," murmured Cynthia in a broken voice.

"But you see——"

"Yes. I understand. I hope Ben will be very happy."

Afterward Polly sat down and cried. She knew Ben loved Cynthia so. They had counted on having her in the family. But she felt quite certain now that Ed Saltonstall would get her. And he was a flirt, going with every pretty girl, every new girl for a little while.

Cynthia went home in a very sober mood. Why had they all cared so much about her? They had nice attractive qualities, but why could they not look at her just as she looked at them! She did not know very much about men and that with them pursuit often merged into the strong desire for possession, which she did not understand. But she did not want to be blamed. She would have [279] none of them. Cousin Chilian was more to her. If he seldom danced and was never very gay, there were so many other requirements to life; there was something in his nature to which hers responded readily.

Then suddenly she seemed to have lost the clue. She experienced a season of bewilderment. Was Cousin Chilian meaning she should take Mr. Saltonstall for a lover? He surely gave him opportunities he had given no other. Sometimes he excused himself and went out. There were some difficulties with the mother country that men were discussing. She really felt a little awkward at being left alone with Mr. Saltonstall. Not only that, but it awoke a strange terror in her soul that he should come so near; it was as if her whole being rose in arms.

Occasionally Chilian spoke of her marriage—he had always said she was too young, in a protesting manner. So on one occasion she gained courage.

"Do you mean—that is—you would like to—have me married, Cousin Chilian?"

Married! It was as if she had given him a stab. And yet was not that just the thing he had been thinking of?

"Why, you see, Cynthia," he made his voice purposely cold, "I am much older than you. I may die some day. Cousin Eunice will no doubt go before me, and you would not like to go on alone. Then Giles is older even than I. One has to think of these things. Yes, it would be nice to know [280] you were happily settled."

"And why couldn't a woman live alone as well as a man? I could have Miss Winn, and a housekeeper, and a man——"

"It's a lonely life for a woman."

"But why not for a man?"

"Oh, well, that is different. Only a few men do. And they grow queer and opinionated."

A fortnight ago she would have protested and said, "You are not old, you are not opinionated," in her eager, girlish manner. Now she was hurt, and she could not tell why; so she kept silent.

And she began to note a change in him. The delightful harmony in which they had lived fell below the major key into minors, that touched and pierced her. He did not come so often to listen to her music, to ask her for a song, to watch while she painted some pretty flower, to go around with her training roses, or cutting them for the house. She put a few of them everywhere; she did not like great bunches, only such things as grew in clusters, lilacs and syringas and long sprays of clematis. She missed the little walks around, and the dear talks they used to have.

She felt somewhat deceitful in planning adroitly. She made Miss Winn go to church with her, and when they came home with Mr. Saltonstall they sat on the porch together. A girl thinking of a lover would have asked him in. Then she went down to Boston, and Anthony came over as often [281] as he could. Surely there was no danger with him.

All this time Chilian Leverett was having a hard fight with himself. He was really ashamed of having been conquered by what he called a boy's romantic passion. He could excuse himself for the early lapse; he was a boy then. His honor and what he called good sense were mightily at war with this desire that well-nigh overmastered him. True, men older than he had married young wives. But this child had been entrusted to him in a sacred fashion by her dying father; he must place before her the best and richest of life, even if it condemned him to after-years of joyless solitude.

For it was not as a father he loved her, though he had played a little at fatherhood in the beginning. She was so companionable, they had so many similar tastes. He was so fond of reading to an appreciative listener, and even as he sat in the darkness, when she did not know he was alone in the study, he could see her lovely eyes raised in their tender light. He thought this her unusual wisdom and discernment, never dreaming it had been mostly his training and her receptiveness. And to think of the house without her! Why, going out of it in her wedding gown would be almost as if she had been laid in her shroud and shut away. Of course, he could not have her here and see her love another.

Giles Leverett's dream was much happier. In his mind he saved her for his favorite. When [282] Anthony was through—and he was putting in law, with the classics—he would take him in his office, where he would find much business made to his hand. The house was big enough for them all, and he had grown curiously interested in young people. Anthony was very fond of his sweet, fascinating cousin—they all were. He did not know whether there was any one in Salem quite good enough for her. Saltonstall was a rather trifling fellow, whose fancies were evanescent.

But Mr. Ed Saltonstall had a good friend in Mrs. Stevens, and she counselled him not to be too ardent in his pursuit. She said pleasant little things about him without any effusiveness. She considered his friendship with her very charming—young men were not generally devoted to middle-aged women. Once she shrewdly wondered why he had not made some errand down.

Altogether it was a pleasant visit, though Cynthia kept revolving her duty, if such there was in the case. A blind, mysterious asking for something haunted her, something it would be sad to miss out of her life.

Then she came home alone in the stage. There was a property dispute going on, where Mr. Leverett was an important witness for a friend. When the stage stopped, Rachel and Jane both ran out and gave her a joyful welcome.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Cousin Eunice, "we are so glad to get you back. You are the light *of* the [283]
house, isn't she?" glancing at the other. "Even Chilian has been mopey, though I think he isn't well. He is getting thin, too, and goodness knows he had no flesh to lose. Oh, my dear, I hope you will never go away again while I live;" and she gave a long sigh as the girl left the room.

She came down presently in a cheerful light frock and began to tell Cousin Eunice and Jane what she had seen and heard. She was in the full tide of this, eager, bright, and flushing when Chilian entered. He greeted her rather languidly. Yes, he had grown thinner, and Cousin Giles was putting on too much flesh and growing jollier. Chilian did not look well and an ache went all over Cynthia's body, every nerve being sympathetic. He was not silent, however; he asked questions, but she thought he was hardly paying attention to the answers. He remained down in the sitting-room and read his *Gazette*, now and then making some comment, or answering some query of Cousin Eunice. It was not nine yet when he rose and said, "He was very tired; if they would excuse him, he would go to bed."

They all went presently. She was glad to be alone in the room, glad there was no moon, and she turned her face over on the pillow and cried softly. After all, life was a riddle—two ways and not knowing which to take, both having a curiously lonely ending. Could she not bear it better alone? If he should go away as her father had done, if she should stay here in the old house, and [284]
then Cousin Eunice would fold her hands in that silent clasp, Rachel would slip into old womanhood, Jane would marry, she was keeping company now. There would be other Janes and she——

On the other hand would be love, marriage, children maybe, a pleasant home. Living along side by side, as other people did.

She did not try to shut out either vision. Which should she take? Was life just for one's self?

She was not morbid. It was only in religion that people took out their very souls and examined them for lurking sins; the days' duties were what must be accomplished, whether or no. She knew she was not very religious, the deep things seemed beyond her grasp. And there was a certain joyousness in her love for sunshine, flowers, people, and all the attractive things of life. She was deeply grateful, she raised her heart in thankfulness to God for every good gift. And now she took up the daily duties cheerfully. It was not their fault the shadow had fallen over them.

Some days afterward she was rambling around aimlessly, when she met a girl friend, and they chatted about various matters.

"Oh," exclaimed the friend, "there'll be another wedding in the autumn, and Betty Upham is keeping steady company. I used to have an idea that you and Ben would make a match——" [285]

"It's Jenny Willing," she interrupted. "And I am heartily glad."

"You were all such friends;" looking puzzled.

"And I hope we will go on being friends. I have always liked Jenny."

"She was awfully afraid you'd cut her out. You know he did fancy you first. I think she would have been very unhappy if she had missed him. I don't see what there is about you, Cynthia;" studying her intently. "You are pretty, but there are some handsome girls in Salem. And they run after Ed Saltonstall as if there was no other man in town. And my advice to you is to seize on him, for I think your chance best. He's an awful flirt, though. I think good-looking men always are."

Cynthia flushed. Why should these things be profaned by foolish gossip.

Polly came over one afternoon. She had accomplished the bag and was proud enough of it. And she announced Bentley's engagement.

"They will be married in the early fall; they are not going to build, but have part of that double house of Nelsons'. She'll make a fine, economical wife, and that is what men need who are trying to get along. Assemblies and all that are not the thing for prudent married people."

"And one gets tired of them." She had a feeling just then that she should never want to dance any more. [286]

Cynthia was glad to have him settled, glad Jenny Willing had the man she loved.

And the last time he had come back to her she had held up her finger to him thoughtlessly, to shield herself from some other pointed attentions. It had been a mean thing to do. But she had

only meant it for that evening, and he had gone on importunately. She was ashamed of it now. Yes, she had better marry; then no one would be pleading for favors, mistaking a simple smile for deeper meaning. Was her smile different from that of other girls?

She watched Cousin Chilian narrowly. Was the old dear freedom between them gone? He seemed rather abstracted. He did not call her into the study, he went out oftener of an evening. Mr. Saltonstall would pass by, then turn and walk up the path and sit down on the step. This would occur several times a week. He asked her to ride with him, but she shrank from that. She went over one evening on special invitation, when Chilian was to play chess with the father. Mrs. Saltonstall took her in quite as if she was one of the family, and really was very sweet to her. And the old gentleman was fatherly.

That seemed to settle it for her, rather the fact that sank deeper in her mind every day that Cousin Chilian wished her to marry and that this young man was his preference. She allowed him to come a little nearer, to hold her hand, to take nameless small freedoms, and he was always delicate. [287]

Would he be satisfied without all she could not help withholding? Would it be right to give him a half love? But then how could she help loving Cousin Chilian, who had been so tender to her in childhood? She would be gladly content to stay without any nearer tie between them; of course, that other could not be thought of.

One night Mr. Saltonstall asked her in a manly fashion. And suddenly a great white light shot up in her heart, and loving one man she knew she had no right to deceive another, to live a deception all her life long, to cheat him—yes, it was that. Better a hundred times to live out her flawed life alone.

"Oh, I cannot," she murmured. "I—I"—she choked down the strangling sob.

"My little darling, give me the opportunity to teach you what love really is. You do not know." [288]

CHAPTER XVII

THE FLOWERING OF THE SOUL

Cynthia had said coldly that she did not wish to marry at present, perhaps never. "I have been trying to love you to—to please some one else, and it is a compliment for you to ask me. But any woman ought to be sure before she makes a life-long promise. I must be honest—with you, with myself."

Something in the solemn tone awed him. He had not been looking at the serious side of love. She was pretty, bright, and winsome, with a good deal of Puritan simplicity, a great power of enjoyment and difficult to win. He liked to do the winning himself. He liked to find some new qualities in girls, and Cynthia, with all her daintiness, had many sides that surprised one. She had been brought up by a man—that made the difference.

"We will wait a little," he said. "Talk to your cousin about it. I think it will all come right. You are the first woman I ever desired to marry, and I have been fond of girls, too."

That would have flattered some women. She said good-night in a strained, breathless tone, and vanished through the door. He sat and thought. There was no other lover, he was quite sure. [289]

She went to bed at once. She did not cry, she was somehow stunned at this revelation about herself, for she had resolved to accept him and this sudden protest told her that it was quite impossible. If Cousin Chilian was disappointed, if he was tired of her, there was a warm welcome in Boston.

She did not sleep much. Rachel noted her heavy eyes, and the expression as if she might be secretly upbraiding fate. What if Mr. Saltonstall had been trifling?

Chilian went up to his study. He felt languid, he nearly always did now. He took a book and sat by the open window. Two tall trees hid the prospect, except a space of blooming garden. To-day a small outlook pleased him, for his life was to be made narrower. She would come and tell him—shut the golden gate forever. He could not, would not, enter their paradise. Let him keep quite on the outside.

She came in a soft, white gown that clung to her virginal figure. The swelling-out period had passed, even sleeves had collapsed to a small puff, and for house wear the arms and neck were left bare.

The book was a Greek play. The letters danced before her eyes as she stood there. He looked off the book, but not up at her.

"Cousin Chilian, I want to tell you"—her voice had the peculiar softness that one uses to try to cover the hurt one cannot help giving—"Mr. Saltonstall was here last evening. He has asked me to marry him." [290]

It seemed to her the silence lasted moments. Then he said in an incurious tone, "Well?"

"I—will you be angry or disappointed when I confess that I cannot, that I do not love him."

"Oh, Cynthia, child; what do you know about love?" he said impatiently.

"Enough to know that it would be wrong to take a man's love and give him nothing in return." Now her voice was steady, convincing.

He had a sudden thought. Like a vision the stalwart form of the young sailor rose before him. He had carried admiration, yes, love in his eyes. What if he had carried more than that away?

"Cynthia, is there some one else, some one you *could* love——"

"There is some one else." Her tone was very low, but brave. That admission would settle the matter.

"Are you to wait three years for him?"

"For whom?" in surprise.

Then he glanced up. Her face, that had been lily-white, was flushed from brow to neck. What was there in the beautiful, entreating eyes?

"Cynthia?" All his firmness gave way.

His arm stole softly around her, drew her a trifle down. "Tell me! Tell me!" he cried, yet he had [291]
no idea he was asking her to lay her heart bare. There was still the boy Anthony.

"Cousin Chilian, if a woman loved very much, would it be a shame to her if, unasked, she——"

Her head sank down on his shoulder. He felt the warm, throbbing breath on his cheek. He drew her closer. Did the slim, palpitating body betray its secret?

"Oh, Cynthia, child, the most precious thing in all the world to me, tell me that I will not have to give you to another, that I may keep you to myself. For I cannot comprehend how so great a joy could come to me. And whether I would have the right to take your sweet young life, that should be replete with the joys of youth, with the gladness that is its proper birthright."

"If I gave it to you? If I could never have given it to any other?"

He drew her down closer, and the gentle yielding, the sort of rapturous sigh, answered him better than any words. He pressed kisses on the unresisting lips, kisses that then were sacred to affianced lovers and husbands.

Was it an hour or half a lifetime? He inclined her to his knee as he had when she was a little girl, but at length he came back to his senses.

"Cynthia," he began with tender gravity, "there are many points to consider. Do you know that
I am more than double your age——" [292]

"Don't tell that to me. Isn't love as sweet?"

Could he deny it in the face of that ravishing smile, those appealing eyes.

"Still—the world will think about it. And you are a rich young woman, you could take your pick of lovers——"

"But they are all so troublesome," she interrupted. "And one gets affronted with the other. And if I picked very much I might be called a flirt, perhaps I have been. I didn't want them, only to dance and be merry with, and there are so many pretty girls in the world—enough for all of them."

He smiled a little and it gave her a heartache to see how thin he had grown, and there were new creases in his forehead that had been so fair and smooth.

"And if some day you should repent?"

"I'm not going to repent. Why should one when one gets the thing one wanted?"

There was a touch of the old brightness in her tone. Had she really wanted him?

"I've been very naughty with all these lovers, haven't I? But no one came near enough to really ask me that question until last night, though Mr. Marsh thought he would if he were going to stay. And Cousin Chilian, I had made up my mind truly, I thought, for I liked Mr. Saltonstall very much, and it seemed to me you wanted me to——" Her voice died away in pathos.

"I did. Oh, you must know the worst of me. When I found you were growing into my very heart, [293]
and I began to feel jealous of the young men, I took myself in hand as a most reprehensible old fellow. But I found you had entwined yourself in every fibre of my heart, and it was hard indeed to uproot you."

"And you really tried?" Her tone was upbraiding.

"I tried like an honest, upright man. I shall never be ashamed of the effort. I would not mar or spoil your life. You see you might have loved some of these brave young lads. You might have

been very happy with them."

"Oh, you can't have but one husband;" in laughing gayety.

He flushed at her mischief.

"I wonder when you began to love me? And what has made you so cold and distant, as if you were taking your affection away?"

"I was—I was—Heaven forgive me! I was learning to live without you; to go back to a life more solitary than it was before you came. And, Cynthia, you were not altogether a welcome guest. I did not know what to do with a little girl. I was set in my ways. I did not like to be disturbed. I could have sent a boy off to school. And Elizabeth thought it a trouble, too. You must read your father's letter and see the trust he reposed in me. But you were such a strange, shy little thing, and so delicate in all your ways. You never touched an article without permission, you handled [294] books so gently, you never made dog's-ears, or crumpled a page. And that winter you were ill—and the faith you had in his return. How many times my heart ached for you. After that I could not have given you up, and I fell into a sort of belief that it would go on this always. When the lovers began to come, I found I must awake from my delusion. And then I knew that an oldish fellow could love a sweet girl in her first bloom, but that it would be a selfish, unpardonable thing."

"Not if she loved him!" She raised her face in all its sweet bravery of color.

"But it was his duty to let her see what pleasure there was in the world for youth; it was the promise to her dead father, who had confided his treasure to him. And even now he hesitates, lest you shall not have the best of everything."

"I shall have the best;" with winning confidence.

"I loved your mother. I was a young lad, and she some five years older. I suppose I was like a young brother to her, because your father, her lover, had been here so much. And somehow, you slipped into the place where there never had been any other."

"It must have been kept for me," she said gravely. "And now I give you warning that I shall never go out of it. No place could ever be so dear as this house with all its memories. I am glad you knew and loved my mother."

It came noon before they were talked out, or before they had settled only one point, about [295] which she would have her way. She wrote a pretty note to Mr. Saltonstall, reiterating some things she had said the evening before, and acknowledging that when she had tried to accept him, she had found her heart was another's, "and you are worthy of a woman's best love," she added, which did comfort him.

Still it puzzled him a good deal, but he finally settled upon Anthony and thought it a rather foolish choice. No doubt but that Giles Leverett was back of it all.

They told Cousin Eunice and Miss Winn. The former cried for sheer joy. She seemed older than her years, but she was well and bid fair to live years yet.

"Then you will never go away. I could not live without you, and as for Chilian——"

"It would only be half a life," returned the lover, and he kissed Cousin Eunice.

Miss Winn hardly knew whether to be pleased or not. She liked Mr. Saltonstall very much for his gayety, good humor, and fine presence, and then he had the divine gift of youth to match hers. Would she not tire of Chilian Leverett's grave life? [296]

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PASSING OF OLD SALEM

After all, they were foolish lovers. She did not hoard up any sweetness. If he could not look forward to so many years, she must give him a double portion. That was her only regret about him, and she never confessed that.

He was surprised at himself. If she had loved another, the wound of loneliness must have bled inwardly until it sapped his life. Oh, how daintily sweet she was! Every day he found some new trait.

"You see," she explained to Miss Winn, "we shall all keep together. Father trusted you to the uttermost, and you have been nobly loyal. I couldn't do without you. And no one could look so well after Cousin Eunice, who will keep growing older."

That was true enough. She was very well content in her home, and at her time of life did not care to try a new one. Cynthia was almost like a child to her.

Meanwhile matters had not gone prosperously with old Salem, England had claimed her right

of search, against which the country strongly protested. The British government issued orders, and the French Emperor decrees, forbidding ships of neutrals to enter the ports, or engage in [297] trade with their respective enemies. This crippled the trade of Salem. Then there had been the embargo, which for a while closed the ports. But the town went on improving. Fortunes had been made and now were being spent. But much of the shipping lay idle. Yet the social life went on, there was marrying and giving in marriage.

Of course, there was some gossip about the Saltonstall fiasco. No one, at least very few, supposed a sensible girl would give up such an opportunity to settle herself. Miss Cynthia would no doubt use her best efforts to get him back. She seemed superbly indifferent to the gossip.

At first Chilian insisted upon an engagement of some length, so that she might be sure of the wisdom of the step. But she only laughed in her charming fashion, and declared she would not give up the old house, much more its owner.

But they had a quiet wedding, with only the choicest friends, and then they went to Boston to escape the wonderings. Cousin Giles was really displeased.

"It's an unfair thing for an old fellow like you to do. And you had money enough of your own; her fortune should have gone to help some nice young fellow along. Why, really Cynthia has hardly outgrown childhood. You might have been her father!"

"Hardly!" returned Chilian dryly. [298]

On their return the house was opened and really crowded with guests. Cynthia was in her most splendid attire. Happiness had certainly improved Chilian Leverett, he had gained some flesh and looked younger. The most beautiful belongings had been brought out to decorate the rooms.

"For I am not going to have them stored away for possible grandchildren," she declared gayly.

And the guests had a charming welcome. The younger girls were truly glad she had made her election, and no one could deny that she was very much in love with her husband. Neither had need to marry for money, since both had fortunes. And they wished her health and happiness with all their hearts.

Jane had said to her, "Mis' Leverett, there's an old adage:

"'Change the name and not the letter,
You marry for worse and not for better.'"

Cynthia laughed. "I'm not going to let signs or omens trouble me. And I haven't even changed my name, so the letter cannot count. And it is one of the good old Salem names. It was my dear father's."

One incident touched Cynthia deeply. Eunice took her up in the garret one day and exhumed from a chest the beautiful white quilt of Elizabeth's handiwork. Pinned to one corner was a card, "For my little Cynthia."

"Only a few days before she had her stroke she made me write this and go up and pin it on the [299] quilt. Maybe she'd had a warning, people do sometimes. I supposed she'd leave it to Chilian. Oh, my dear, she'd be so glad to have you go on in the old house if she could know."

Eunice wiped the tears from her eyes. Cynthia bent over and kissed among the stitches the poor fingers had toiled at day after day, sorry for the toil, glad for the love that came at the last.

The Leverett house opened its doors with a generous hospitality. People, men at least, began to think of something beside money-making, and some fine plans were broached. Chilian Leverett seemed to grow younger. Cynthia should not miss the joys of youth out of her life. He did something more than dance minuets, for her sake he essayed quadrilles. The exquisite motion with her, her dainty hand in his, or at times resting on his shoulder, filled him with an all-pervading delight.

"Chilian, do you realize that you are a really beautiful dancer?" she said one evening after they had returned from a small company.

"Then I must have caught it from you. In my youth dancing was considered frivolous."

"And in India you hire the men and women to dance for you, and follow the enchanting motions with your eye. But it is so warm out there."

She had been playing one evening when she started up, exclaiming, "Let us try that new thing —the waltz. It is just made for two people very much in love." [300]

"It is?" He smiled in the eager face. It was said that she could twist him around her finger. "Why, we have no music."

"I can sing the measure, just la, la!" and she started the melody. There were two long paths of moonlight through the wide-open shutters. Moonlight and sunshine were welcome visitors. She held out her hands. Just that way she had charmed others, and he yielded to the seductive influence. For, oh, she was so young and sweet.

It was a little awkward at first, but they soon found the steps. It was rather slow and graceful,

not the mad whirl of later times. It *was* considered rather reprehensible, but between husband and wife it was right enough. They found it very fascinating.

After a while a sort of grave, sweet seriousness came over her. She liked to sit in the study and have him read poetry to her while she sewed. She had never loved sewing, but now she had taken a fancy to it. Dainty little lacey things, with the softest of muslins, treasures that had come from India. For there were stacks of towels and sheets and useful articles, so why should she bother about them?

Jane was married and a middle-aged, homeless widow was very glad to come. Miss Winn took the head of the housekeeping, and Cousin Eunice was very willing. [301]

Then there came to them both a little son. Women often dream of babies of their own, but men have so many outside interests. There really were people at that time who thought children a boon and blessing of the Lord. Chilian Leverett was amazed, rendered speechless with joy. His own little son, Cynthia's little son, the life and love of both hearts. His cup of joy and thankfulness ran over. For he had never imagined there could be such perfect bliss. He thought over the time when the little girl had come, and he had not wanted her. Now she had brought him life's choicest blessing.

Meanwhile events ran on which were to thrill all hearts and make stirring history. For war had been declared.

Handsome, pleasure-loving Edward Saltonstall volunteered in the army. Perilous times there were on the northern frontier, dreadful losses, few gains, until suddenly the Lake battles changed the aspect and won the splendid victories that thrilled every heart.

But Salem's almost meteoric prosperity came to a sudden halt, for there was war on the high seas as well. The whole mercantile marine was refitted and turned out to win what it might in other channels. Privateering was held right enough in those days.

There was the electrifying capture of the *Guerrière* and her being towed into Boston with Captain Dacres as a prisoner, and another to be quite as famous, that of the *United States* and the *Macedonia*, where the American loss seemed incredibly small. Other splendid victories as [302] well. But it was not until February, 1815, after nearly four years of struggle and war, that peace was again declared with the Colonies as victorious. America had won her right to the liberty of the seas, as well as that of the land.

But the supremacy of trade no longer could be claimed for Salem. Other ports were built up, other markets opened. Cities saw the advantage of foreign trade. American products were shipped hither and thither. No one city had the monopoly.

But romances flourished all the same and were to be handed down to other generations. There was the old Forester house, with its legends, its lovely gardens, and fine pictures. And the beautiful house of Elias Hasket Derby, in which he had lived but such a short time. No one felt rich enough then to undertake such a costly establishment, and finally the estate came into possession of the city, and the big area was named Derby Square, and a commodious market built and a Town Hall. When that was opened President Monroe made a visit to Salem, and was enthusiastically received there, citizens thronging to see him. The next day Judge Story entertained him, and Mr. Stephen White, of Washington Square, gave a ball in his honor. The Leveretts were among the guests, and Captain Edward Saltonstall, who had won promotions by brave conduct under General Harrison, but was now a private citizen and a fine-looking man, with a new bevy of girls as eager for his attentions as the others were seven or eight years [303] before.

There was another guest who claimed, or at least received, a good share of attention. This was the naval Captain Marsh, who had been in the encounter between the *Macedonia* and the frigate *United States*, Captain Decatur, which was considered one of the greatest of the naval battles. For his bravery then and afterward, he had been promoted and was now a captain in command of a fine vessel.

Cynthia was delighted to see him; but she said he must visit them to talk over matters and the wonders that had happened to him. She would not dance any, although she was in the grand march with her husband. Mr. Saltonstall she saw quite frequently. His parents were quite old people and he was devoted to them.

She wondered at times if any old fancy kept him single. If so, she was sincerely sorry. For she had been very, very happy with the husband of her love. And in the household there were two merry, frolicking boys, and a sweet little girl, with her mother's eyes.

Captain Marsh did come and he was delighted with his visit. The little boys climbed over him as if they had known him always. He told the story of the terrific battle at the Canaries, and many another battle that had left him unscathed.

"And I used to think if I came back to old Salem and found you unmarried, it would go hard with me if I could not win you," he said to Cynthia in his cordial, manly fashion. "And I confess to [304] you now if Dame Wilby had struck you that day at school, I should have rushed at her like a tiger. I like that remembrance of you standing there so brave and defying."

They both laughed over it.

She had changed very little. Chilian said she grew younger with the birth of every baby. She was happy and merry, truly the light of the house, and Cousin Eunice was the happiest grandmother in all of Salem. Miss Winn shared their joys—so far there had been no sorrows.

Chilian grew a little stouter with advancing years, which really improved him. He took a warm interest in the new projects. There was the Essex Historical Society, gathering portraits and relics of the older Salem, and the East India Marine Society was enlarging its scope. The new Salem was to be curiously intellectual, historic, and one might say antiquarian. Modernized and transformed in many respects, it still has the old-time fragrance of sandalwood and incense when the chests in the old garrets are turned over for fine things that came from India a century before.

Cousin Giles aged more rapidly, but then he was considerably older than Chilian. He did adopt young Anthony, and insisted upon his taking the name of Leverett, and a share of the business burthens. And he married quite to the approval of the elder man, though not such an heiress as [305]
Cynthia.

And no one was dreaming that the little boy born in Union Street in 1804 was to add such interest and lustre to his native town that the scenes of his curious wizard-like romances were to be settled upon by those interested in them and handed down as actual occurrences. Do we not all know Hester Prynne and Mr. Dimmesdale, Phebe and Hephzibah and Judge Pyncheon, and weird old Dr. Grimshawe, and many another that have flitted through the pages of Hawthorne's strange romances, leaving Salem the richer by the memories?

There was another little girl who was to grow up and take a great interest in all these things, and finally to see the old Leverett house pass away, after its more than two hundred years. But it was a new and doubly interesting Salem then, with its several evolutions that have passed and gone.

She lived a long and happy life, this little girl who came back to her birthplace consigned to Chilian Leverett's care, and won his love that never changed, or grew any less. Her sons never tired of the old reminiscences. Many of the old houses were still standing. Here President Washington had been entertained; here the artist Copley had lived and painted portraits that are heirlooms; Justice Story and his gifted son, poet and artist; Prescott, the historian, and many another of whom the country is proud to-day, and civilians whose fine thought and noble work [306]
have made the city a Mecca for intellectual tourists, and a beautiful and interesting abiding-place for her citizens, a town of three striking epochs that linger not only in tradition but in history.

Transcriber's Notes

Obvious punctuation errors were corrected.

The remaining corrections made are indicated by dotted lines under the corrections. Scroll the mouse over the word and the original text will appear.

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