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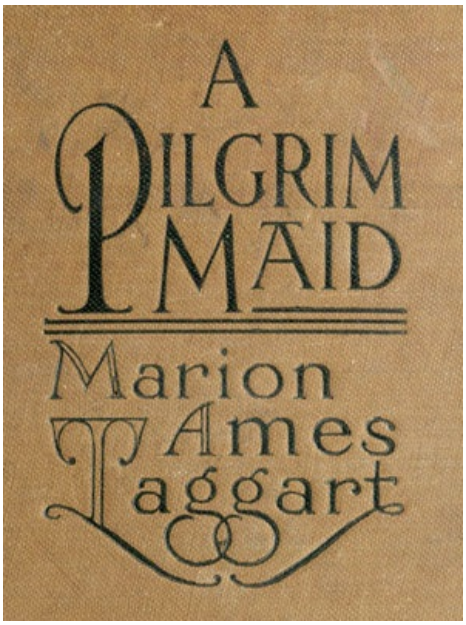

A PILGRIM MAID

A Story of Plymouth Colony in 1620

"Constance opened the door, stepping back to let the bride precede her"

A PILGRIM MAID

A Story of Plymouth Colony in 1620

BY

MARION AMES TAGGART

AUTHOR OF
"CAPTAIN SYLVIA," "THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LITTLE GREY HOUSE," "THE LITTLE GREY HOUSE," "HOLLYHOCK HOUSE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY THE DONALDSONS

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DEDICATED
TO
YOU, MY DEAR
WHO SO WELL KNOW WHY

PREFACE

This story is like those we hear of our neighbours to-day: it is a mixture of fact and fancy.

The aim in telling it has been to present Plymouth Colony as it was in its first three years of existence; to keep to possibilities, even while inventing incidents.

Actual events have been transferred from a later to an earlier year when they could be made useful, to bring them within the story's compass, and to develop it.

For instance, John Billington was lost for five days and died early, but not as early as in the story. Stephen Hopkins was fined for allowing his servants to play shovelboard, but this did not happen till some time later than 1622. Stephen Hopkins was twice married; records show that there was dissension; that the second wife tried to get an inheritance for her own children, to the injury of the son and daughter of the first wife. Facts of this sort are used, enlarged upon, construed to cause, or altered to suit, certain results.

But there is fidelity to the general trend of events, above all to the spirit of Plymouth in its beginnings. As far as may be, the people who have been transferred into the story act in accordance with what is known of the actual bearers of these names.

There was a Maid of Plymouth, Constance Hopkins, who came in the *Mayflower*, with her father Stephen; her stepmother, Eliza; her brother, Giles, and her little half-sister and brother, Damaris and Oceanus, and to whom the *Anne*, in 1623, brought her husband, Honourable Nicholas Snowe, afterward one of the founders of Eastham, Massachusetts.

Undoubtedly the real Constance Hopkins was sweeter than the story can make her, as a living girl must be sweeter than one created of paper and ink. Yet it is hoped that this Plymouth Maid, Constance, of the story, may also find friends.

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CHAPTER I

With England's Shores Left Far Astern

A young girl, brown-haired, blue-eyed, with a sweet seriousness that was neither joy nor sorrow upon her fair pale face, leaned against the mast on the *Mayflower's* deck watching the bustle of the final preparations for setting sail westward.

A boy somewhat older than she stood beside her whittling an arrow from a bit of beechwood, whistling through his teeth, his tongue pressed against them, a livelier air than a pilgrim boy from Leyden was supposed to know, and sullenly scorning to betray interest in the excitement ashore and aboard.

A little girl clung to the pretty young girl's skirt; the unlikeness between them, though they were sisters, was explained by their being but half sisters. Little Damaris was like her mother, Constance's stepmother, while Constance herself reflected the delicate loveliness of her own and her brother Giles's mother, dead in early youth and lying now at rest in a green English churchyard while her children were setting forth into the unknown.

Two boys—one older than Constance, Giles's age, the other younger than the girl—came rushing down the deck with such impetuosity, plus the younger lad's head used as a battering ram, that the men at work stowing away hampers and barrels, trying to clear a way for the start, gave place to the rough onslaught.

Several looked after the pair in a way that suggested something more vigorous than a look had it not been that fear of the pilgrim leaders restrained swearing. Not a whit did the charging lads care for the wrath they aroused. The elder stopped himself by clutching the rope which Constance Hopkins idly swung, while the younger caught Giles around the waist and nearly pulled him over.

"I'll teach you manners, you young savage, Francis Billington!" growled Giles, but he did not mean it, as Francis well knew.

"If I'm a savage I'll be the only one of us at home in America," chuckled the boy.

"Getting ready an arrow for the savage?" he added.

"It's all decided. There's been the greatest to-do ashore. Why didn't you come off the ship to see the last of 'em, Constance?" interrupted the older boy. Constance Hopkins shook her head, sadly.

"Nay, then, John, I've had my fill of partings," she said. "Are they gone back, those we had to leave behind?"

"That have they!" cried John Billington. "Some of them were sorry to miss the adventure, but if truth were told some were glad to be well out of it, and with no more disgrace in setting back than that the *Mayflower* could not hold us all. Well, they've missed danger and maybe death, but

I'd not be out of it for a king's ransom. Giles, what do you think is whispered? That the *Speedwell* could make the voyage as well as the *Mayflower*, though she be smaller, if only she carried less sail, and that her leaking is—a greater leak in her master Reynolds's truth, and that she'd be seaworthy if he'd let her!"

"Cur!" growled Giles Hopkins. "He knows he'd have to stay with his ship in the wilderness a year it might be and there's better comfort in England and Holland! We're well rid of him if he's that kind of a coward. I wondered myself if he was up to a trick when we put in the first time, at Dartmouth. This time when we made Plymouth I smelled a rat certain. Are we almost loaded?"

"Yes. They've packed all the provisions from the *Speedwell* into the *Mayflower* that she will hold. We'll be off soon. Not too soon! The sixth day of September, and we a month dallying along the shore because of the *Speedwell's* leaking! Constantia, you'll be cold before we make a fire in the New World I'm thinking!"

John Billington chuckled as if the cold of winter in the wilderness were a merry jest.

"Cold, and maybe hungry, and maybe ill of body and sick of heart, but never quite losing courage, I hope, John, comrade!" Constance said, looking up with a smile and a flush that warmed her white cheeks from which heavy thoughts had driven their usual soft colour.

"No fear! You're the kind that says little and does much," said John Billington with surprising sharpness in a lad that never seemed to have a thought to spare for anything but madcap pranks.

"Here come Father, and the captain, and dear John," said little Damaris.

Stephen Hopkins was a strong-built man, with a fire in his eye, and an air of the world about him, in spite of his severe Puritan garb, that declared him different from most of his comrades of the Leyden community of English exiles.

With all her likeness to her dead English girl-mother, who was gentle born and well bred, there was something in Constance as she stood now, head up and eyes bright, that was also like her father.

Beside Mr. Hopkins walked a thick-set man, a soldier in every motion and look, with little of the Puritan in his air, and just behind them came a young man, far younger than either of the others, with an open, pleasant English face, and an expression at once shy and friendly.

"Oh, dear John Alden!" cried little Damaris, and forsook Constance's skirt for John Alden's ready arms which raised her to his shoulder.

Giles Hopkins's gloom lifted as he returned Captain Myles Standish's salute.

"Yes, Captain; I'm ready enough to sail," he said, answering the captain's question.

"Mistress Constantia?" suggested Myles Standish.

"Is there doubt of it when we've twice put in from sea, and were ready to sail when we left Southampton a month ago?" asked Constance. "Sure we are ready, Captain Standish, as you well know. Where is Mistress Rose?"

"In the women's cabin with Mistress Hopkins putting to rights their belongings as fast as they can before we weigh anchor, and get perhaps stood on our heads by winds and waves," Captain Standish smiled. "Though the wind is fine for us now." His face clouded. "Mistress Rose is a frail rose, Con! They will be coming on deck to see the start."

"The voyage may give sweet Rose new strength, Captain Standish," murmured Constance coming close to the captain and slipping her hand into his, for she was his prime favourite and his lovely, frail young wife's chosen friend, in spite of the ten years difference in their ages.

"Ah, Con, my lass, God grant it, but I'm sore afraid for her! How can she buffet the exposure of a wilderness winter, and—hush! Here they are!" whispered Myles Standish.

Mistress Eliza Hopkins was tall, bony, sinewy of build, with a dark, strong face, determination and temper in her eye. Rose Standish was her opposite—a slight, pale, drooping creature not more than five years above twenty; patience, suffering in her every motion, and clinging affection in every line of her gentle face.

Constance ran to wind her arm around her as Rose came up and slipped one little hand into her husband's arm.

Mrs. Hopkins frowned.

"It likes me not to see you so forward with caresses, Constantia," she said, and her voice rasped like the ship's tackles as the sailors got up the canvas.

"It is not becoming in the elect whose hearts are set upon heavenly things to fawn upon creatures, nor make unmaidenly displays."

Giles kicked viciously at the rope which Constance had held. It was not hard to guess that the unnatural gloom, the sullenness that marked a boy meant by Nature to be pleasant, was due to bad blood between him and this aggressive stepmother, who plainly did not like him.

"Oh, Mistress Hopkins," cried Constance, flushing, "why do you think it is wrong to be loving? Never can I believe God who made us with warm hearts, and gave us such darlings as Rose Standish, didn't want us to love and show our love."

"You are much too free with your irreverence, Mistress Constantia; it becomes you not to proclaim your Maker's opinions and desires for his saints," said Mrs. Hopkins, frowning heavily.

"'Sdeath, Eliza, will you never let the girl alone?" cried Stephen Hopkins, angrily.

"As though we had nothing to think of in weighing anchor and leaving England for ever—and for what else besides, who knows—without carping at a little girl's loving natural ways to an older girl whom she loves? I agree with Connie; it's good to sweeten life with affection."

"Connie, forsooth!" echoed Mrs. Hopkins, bitterly. "Are we to use meaningless titles for young women setting forth to found a kingdom? And do you still use the oaths of worldlings, as you did just now? Oh, Stephen Hopkins, may you not be found unworthy of your high calling and invoke the wrath of Heaven upon your family!"

Stephen Hopkins looked ready to burst out into hot wrath, but Myles Standish gave him a humorous glance, and shrugged his shoulders.

"What would you?" he seemed to say. "Old friend, bad temper seizes every opportunity to wreak itself, and we who have seen the world can afford to let the women fume. Jealousy is a worse vice than an oath of the Stuart reign."

Stephen Hopkins harkened to this unspoken philosophy; Myles Standish had great influence over him. This, with the rapid gathering on deck of the rest of the pilgrims, served to avert what threatened to be an explosion of pardonable wrath. They came crowding up from the cabins, this courageous band of determined men and women, and gathered silently to look their last on home, and not merely on home, but on the comforts of the established life which to many among them were necessary to their existence.

There were many children, sober little men and women, in unchildlike caricatures of their elders' garb and with solemn round faces looking scared by the gravity around them.

Priscilla Mullins gathered the children together and led them over to join Constance Hopkins. She and Constance divided the love of the child pilgrims between them. Priscilla, round of face, smooth and rosy of cheek, wholesome and sensible, was good to look upon. It often happened that her duty brought her near to wherever John Alden might chance to be, but no one had ever suspected that John objected.

John Alden had been taken on as cooper from Southampton when the *Mayflower* first sailed. It was not certain that the pilgrims could keep him with them. Already they had learned to value him, and many a glance was now exchanged that told the hope that sunny little Priscilla might help to hold the young man on this hard expedition.

The crew of the *Mayflower* pulled up her sails, but without the usual sailor songs. Silently they pulled, working in unison to the sharp words of command uttered by their officers, till every shred of canvas, under which they were to set forth under a favouring wind, was strained into place and set.

On the shore was gathered a crowd gazing, wondering, at this departure. Some there were who were to have been of the company in the lesser ship, the *Speedwell*, which had been remanded from the voyage as unfit for it. These lingered to see the setting forth for the New World which was not to be their world, after all.

There were many who gazed, pityingly, awe-struck, but bewildered by the spirit that led these severe-looking people away from England first, and then from Holland, to try their fortunes where no fortune promised.

Others there were who laughed merrily over the absurdity of the quest, and these called all sorts of jests and quips to the pilgrims on the ship, inviting to a contest of wit which the pilgrims utterly disdained.

And then the by-standers on wharf and sands of old Plymouth became silent, for, as the *Mayflower* began to move out from her dock, there arose the solemn chant of a psalm.

The air was wailing, lugubrious, unmusical, but the words were awesome.

"When Israel went out from Egypt, from the land of a strange people," they were singing.

"A strange people!" And these pilgrims were of English blood, and this was England which they were thus renouncing!

What curious folk these were!

But this psalm was followed by another: "The Lord is my shepherd."

Ah, that was another matter! No one who heard them, however slight the sympathy felt for this unsympathetic band, but hoped that the Lord would shepherd them, "lead them beside still waters," for the sea might well be unquiet.

"Oh, poor creatures, poor creatures," said a buxom woman, snuggling her baby's head into her deep shoulder, and wiping her own eyes with her apron. "I fain must pity 'em, that I must, though I'm none too lovin' myself toward their queer dourness. But I hope the Lord will shepherd 'em; sore will they need it, I'm thinkin', yonder where there's no shepherds nor flocks, but only wild men to cut them down like we do haw for the church, as they all thinks is wicked!" she mourned, motherly yearning toward the people going out the harbour like babes in the wood, into no one would dare say what awful fate.

The pilgrims stood with their faces set toward England, with England tugging at their heart strings, as the strong southeasterly wind filled the *Mayflower's* canvas and pulled at her shrouds.

And as they sailed away the monotonous chant of the psalms went on, floating back to England, a

farewell and a prophecy.

Rose Standish's tears were softly falling and her voice was silent, but Constance Hopkins chanted bravely, and the children joined her with Priscilla Mullins's strong contralto upholding them.

Even Giles sang, and the two scamps of Billington boys looked serious for once, and helped the chant.

Myles Standish raised his soldier's hat and turned to Stephen Hopkins, holding out his right hand.

"We're fairly off this time, friend Stephen," he said. "God speed us."

"Amen, Captain Myles, for else we'll speed not, returned Stephen Hopkins.

"Oh, Daddy, we're together anyway!" cried Constance, with one of her sudden bursts of emotion which her stepmother so severely condemned, and she threw herself on her father's breast.

Mr. Hopkins did not share his wife's view of his beloved little girl's demonstrativeness. He patted her head gently, tucking a stray wisp of hair under her Puritan cap.

"There, there, my child, there, there, Connie! Surely we're together and shall be. So it can't be a wilderness for us, can it?" he said.

An hour later, the wind still favouring, the *Mayflower* dropped sunsetward, out of old Plymouth Harbour.

CHAPTER II

To Buffet Waves and Ride on Storms

The wind held fair, the golden September weather waited on each new day at its rising and sent it at its close, radiantly splendid, into the sea ahead of the *Mayflower* as she swept westward.

Full canvas hoisted she was able to sail at her best speed under the favouring conditions so that the hopeful young people whom she carried talked confidently of the houses they would build, the village they would found before heavy frosts. Captain Myles Standish, always impetuous as any of the boys, was one of those who let themselves forget there were such things as storms.

"We'll be New Englishmen at this rate before we fully realize we've left home; what do you say, my lassies three?" he demanded, pausing in a rapid stride of the deck before Constance Hopkins and two young girls who were her own age, but seemed much younger, Humility Cooper and her cousin, Elizabeth Tilley.

"What do you three mermaidens in this forward nook each morning?" Captain Standish went on without waiting for a reply to his first question, which indeed, he had not asked to have it answered.

"Elizabeth's mother, Mistress John Tilley, is sick and declares that she shall die," said Constance, Humility and Elizabeth being shyly silent before the captain.

"No one ever thought to live through sea-sickness, nor wanted to," declared Captain Myles with his hearty laugh. "Yet no one dies of it, that is certain. And is Mistress Ann Tilley also lain down and left Humility to the mercy of the dolphins? And is your stepmother, too, Con, a victim? It's a calm sea we've been having by comparison. I've sailed from England into France when there *was* a sea running, certes! But this—pooh!"

"Humility's cousin, Mistress Ann Tilley, is not ill, nor my stepmother, Captain Standish, but they are attending to those who are, and to the children. Father says that when he sailed for Virginia, before my mother died, meaning to settle there, that the storm that wrecked them on Bermuda Island and kept us from being already these eleven years colonists in the New World, was a wind and sea that make this seem no more than the lake at the king's palace, where the swans float."

Constance looked up smiling at the captain as she answered, but he noted that her eyes were swollen from tears.

"Take a turn with me along the deck, child," Captain Myles said, gruffly, and held out a hand to steady Constance on her feet.

"Now, what was it?" he asked, lightly touching the young girl's cheek when they had passed beyond the hearing of Constance's two demure little companions. "Homesick, my lass?"

"Heartsick, rather, Captain Myles," said Constance, with a sob. "Mistress Hopkins hates me!"

"Oh, fie, Connie, how could she?" asked the captain, lightly, but he scowled angrily. There was much sympathy between him and Stephen Hopkins, neither of whom agreed with the extreme severity of most of the pilgrims; they both had seen the world and looked at life from their wider experience.

Captain Standish knew that Giles's and Constance's mother had been the daughter of an old and honourable family, with all the fine qualities of mind and soul that should be the inheritance of gentle breeding. He knew how it had come about that Stephen Hopkins had married a second

time a woman greatly her inferior, whose jealousy of the first wife's children saddened their young lives and made his own course hard and unpleasant. Prone to speak his mind and fond of Giles and Constance, the impetuous captain often found it hard to keep his tongue between his teeth when Dame Eliza indulged in her favourite game of badgering, persecuting her stepchildren. Now, when he said: "Fie, how could she?" Constance looked up at him with a forlorn smile. She knew the captain was quite aware that her stepmother could, and did dislike her, and she caught the anger in his voice.

"How could she not, dear Captain Myles?" she asked. Then, with her pent-up feeling overmastering her, she burst out sobbing.

"Oh, you know she hates, she hates me, Captain!" she cried. "Nothing I can do is pleasing to her. I take care of Damaris—sure I love my little sister, and do not remember the half that is not my sister in her! And I wait on Mistress Hopkins, and sew, and do her bidding, and I do not answer her cruel taunts, nor do I go to my father complaining; but she hates me. Is it fair? Could I help it that my father loved my own mother, and married her, and that she was a lovely and accomplished lady?"

"Do you want to help it, if by helping you mean altering, Connie?" asked Captain Myles, with a twinkle. "No, child, you surely cannot help all these things which come by no will of yours, but by the will of God. And I am your witness that you are ever patient and dutiful. Bear as best you can, sweet Constantia, and by and by the wrong will become right, as right in the end is ever strongest. I cannot endure to see your young eyes wet with tears called out by unkindness. There is enough and to spare of hard matters to endure for all of us on this adventure not to add to it what is not only unnecessary, but unjust. Cheer up, Con, my lass! It's a long lane—in England!—that has no turning, and it's a long voyage on the seas that ends in no safe harbour! And do you know, Connie girl, that there's soon to be a turn in this bright weather? There's a feeling of change and threatening in this soft wind."

Constance wiped her eyes and smiled, knowing that the captain wished to lead her into other themes than her own troubles, the discussion of which was, after all, useless.

"I don't know about the weather, except the weather I'm having," she said. "Ah, I don't want it to storm, not on the mid-seas, Captain Myles."

"Aye, but it's the mid-seas of the year, Connie, when the days and nights are one in length, and at that time old wise men say a storm is usually forthcoming. We'll weather it, never fear! If we are bearing westward a great hope and mission as we all believe—not I in precisely the same fashion as these stricter saints, but in my own way no less—then we are sure to reach our goal, my dear," said the captain cheerfully.

"Sometimes I lose faith; I think I am wicked," sighed Constance.

"We are all poor miserable sinners! Even the English Church which we have cast off and consigned to perdition, puts that confession into our mouths," said Captain Myles, with another twinkle, and was gratified that Constance's laugh rang out in response to his thinly veiled mischief.

Captain Standish proved to be a true prophet. On the second day after he had announced to Constance the coming change in weather it came. The *Mayflower* ran into a violent storm, seas and wind were wild, the small ship tossed on the crest of billows and plunged down into the chasm between them as they reared high above her till it seemed impossible that she should hold together, far less hold her course.

In truth she did not hold to her course, but fell off it before the storm, groaning in every beam as if with fearful grief at her own danger, and at the likelihood of destroying by her destruction the hope, the tremendous mission which she bore within her.

The women and children cowered below in their crowded quarters—lacking air, space, every comfort—numb with the misery of sickness and the threat of imminent death.

Constance Hopkins, young as she was, cheered and sustained her elders. Like a mettlesome horse that throws up his head and puts forth renewed strength when there rises before him a long steep mountain, Constance laughed at fear, sang and jested, tenderly helping the sick, gathering around her the children for story-telling and such quiet play as there was room for. Little Damaris was sick and cross, but Constance comforted her with unfailing patience, proving so motherly an elder sister than even Mistress Eliza's jealous dislike for the girl melted when she saw her so loving to the child.

"You are proving yourself a good girl, Constantia," she said, with something like shame. "If I die you will look after Damaris and bring her up as I would have done? Promise me this, for I know that you will never break your word, and having it I can leave my child without anxiety for her future."

"It needs no promise, Stepmother," said Constance. "Surely I would not fail to do my best for my little sister. But if you want my word fully, it is given you. I will try to be grown up and wise, and bring up Damaris carefully if you should leave her. But isn't this silly talk! You will not die. You will tell Damaris's little girls about your voyage in the *Mayflower*, and laugh with them over how you talked of dying when we were so tossed and tumbled, like a tennis ball struck by a strong hand holding a big racquet, but unskilled at the game!" Constance laughed but her stepmother frowned.

"Never shall I talk of games to my daughter," she said, "nor shall you, if you take my place." Then

she relented, recalling Constance's unselfish kindness all these dark hours.

"But you have been a good girl, Constantia. Though I fear you are not chastised in spirit as becomes one of our company of saints, yet have you been patient and gentle in all ways, and a mother to Damaris and the other small ones. I can do no less than say this and remember it," she added.

Constance was white from weariness and the fear that she fought down with merry chatter, but now a warm flush spread to her hair.

"Oh, Mistress Hopkins, if you would not hate me, if you would but think me just a little worthy of kindly thoughts—for indeed I am not wicked—the hardship of this voyage would be a cheap price to pay for it! I would not be so unhappy as I am if, though you did not love me, you would at least not hate me, nor mind that my father loved me—me and Giles!" Constance cried passionately, trembling on the verge of tears.

Then she dashed her hand across her eyes as Giles might have done, and laughed to choke down a sob.

"Priscilla! Priscilla Mullins, come! I need your help," she called.

"What to do, Constance?" asked Priscilla, edging her way from the other end of the crowded cabin to the younger girl.

Priscilla looked blooming still, in spite of the conditions to dim her bright colour.

Placid by nature, she did not fret over discomfort or danger. Trim and neat, she was a pleasant sight among the distressed, pallid faces about her, like a bit of English sky, a green English meadow, a warm English hearth in the waste of waters that led to the waste of wintry wilderness.

"What am I do to for thee, Constance?" Priscilla asked in her deep, alto voice.

"Help me get these children up into the air in a sheltered nook on deck," said Constance. "They are suffocating here."

"No, no!" cried two or three mothers. "They will be washed away, Constantia."

"Not where we have been taking them these three days past," said Priscilla. "Let me go first and get John Alden to prepare that nest of sails and ropes he made so cleverly for us two days ago."

"What doesn't John Alden do cleverly?" murmured Constance, with a sly glance. "Go then, Pris dear, but don't forget to hasten back to tell me it is ready."

Priscilla did not linger. John Alden had gotten two others to help him, and a safe shelter where the children could be packed to breathe the air they sorely needed was ready when Priscilla came to ask for it. So Priscilla hurried back and soon she and Constance had the little pilgrims safely stowed, made comfortable, though Damaris feared the great waves towering on every side and clung to Constance in desperate faith.

"What is to do yonder?" asked Priscilla of John Alden, who after they were settled came to see that everything was right with them.

"What are the men working upon?"

"I suppose it's no harm telling you now," said John Alden, "since they are at work as you see, but the ship has been leaking badly, and one of her main beams bowed and cracked, directly amidships. There has been the next thing to mutiny among the sailors, who have no desire to go to the bottom, and wanted to turn back. We have been in consultation and they have growled and threatened, but we are half way over to the western world so may as safely go on as to return. At last we got them to agree to that and now they are mending the ship. We have aboard a great jack; one of the passengers brought it out of Holland, luckily. What they are doing yonder is jacking up that broken beam. The carpenter is going to set a post under it in the lower deck, and calk the leaky upper parts, and so we shall go on to America. The ship is staunch enough, we all agree, if only we can hold her where she is strained. But you had no idea of how near you were to going back, had you?"

"Oh, no!" cried Priscilla. "Almost am I tempted to wish we had returned."

"No, no, no!" cried Constance. "No turning back! Storms, and savages, and wilderness ahead, but no turning back!"

Damaris fell asleep on Constance's shoulder, and slept so deeply that when Myles Standish, Stephen Hopkins, and John Alden came to help the girls to get the children safely down again into their cabin she did not waken, and Constance begged to be allowed to stay there with her, letting her sleep in the strong air, for the child had troubled her sister by her languor.

Cramped and aching Constance kept her place, Damaris's dead weight upon her arm, till, after a long time, her father returned to her with a moved face.

"Shift the child to my arm, Constance," he said, sitting beside her. "You must be weary with your long vigil over her, my patient, sweet Constance!"

"Oh, Father-daddy," cried Constance, quick tears springing to her eyes, "what does it matter if you call me that? You will always love me, my father?"

"Child, child, what aileth thee?" said Stephen Hopkins, gently. "Are you not the very core of my heart, so like your lovely young mother that you grip me at times with the pain of my joy in you and my sorrow for her. The pilgrim brethren would not approve of such expressions of love, my

dear, yet I think God who gave me a father's heart and you a daughter's, and taught us our duty to Him by the figure of His own Fatherhood, cannot share that condemnation. All the world to me you shall be to the end of my life, my Constance. But I came to tell you a great piece of news. The *Mayflower* has shipped another passenger, mid-seas though it is."

Constance looked up questioningly.

"I have another son, Constance. The angels given charge of little children saw him safely to us through the perils of the voyage. Do you not think, as I do, that this child is like a promise to us of success in the New World?"

"Yes, Father," said Constance, softly, sweet gravity upon her face, and tears upon her lashes. "Will he be called Stephen?"

"Your stepmother wishes him named Oceanus, because of his sea-birth. Do you like the name?" asked her father.

Constance shook her head. "Not a whit," she said, "for it sounds like a heathen god, and that I do not like, though my stepmother is a stricter Puritan than are you and I. I would love another Stephen Hopkins. But if it must be Oceanus—well, I'll try to make it a smooth ocean for the little fellow, his life with us, I mean."

"Shall we go below to see him? I will carry Damaris," said Mr. Hopkins, rising, and offering Constance his hand, at the same time shifting her burden to himself.

Damaris whined and burrowed into her father's shoulder, half waking. Constance stumbled and fell laughing, to her knees, numb from long sitting with the child's weight upon them.

At the door of the cabin they met Doctor Fuller, who paused to look long and steadily at Constance.

"You have been saving me work, little mistress," he said, putting a hand on her shoulder. "Your blithe courage has done more than my physic to hold off serious trouble in yonder cabin, and your service of hands has been as helpful. When we get to our new home will you accept the position of physician's assistant? Will you be my cheerful little partner, and let us be Samuel Fuller and Company, physicians and surgeons to the worshipful company of pilgrims in the New World?"

Constance dropped a curtsey as well as the narrow space allowed. She, as well as all the rest of the ship's company, loved and trusted this kind young doctor who had left his wife and child to follow him later, and was crossing the seas with the pilgrims as the minister to their suffering bodies.

"Indeed, Doctor Fuller, I will accept the office, though it will make me so proud that I shall be turned out of the community as unfit to be part of it," she cried.

There followed after this long days of bleak endurance, the cold increasing, the storms raging. For days at a time the *Mayflower* lay to, stripped of all sail, floating in currents, thrown up on high, driven nose down into an apparently bottomless pit, the least of man's work cut off from man's natural life, left to herself in the desert of waters, packed with the humanity that crowded her.

Yet through it all the men and women she bore did not lose heart, but beneath the overwhelming misery of their condition kept alive the sense of God's sustaining providence and personal direction.

Thus it was not strange that the little ship and her company proved stronger than the wintry storms, that she survived and, once more hoisting sail, kept on her westerly course.

It was November; for two months and more the *Mayflower* had sailed and drifted, but now there were signs that the hazardous voyage was nearly over.

"Come on deck, Con! Come on deck!" shouted Giles Hopkins. "All hands on deck for the first glimpse of land! They think 'twill soon be seen."

Pale, weak, but quivering with joy, the pilgrims gathered on the *Mayflower's* decks.

Rose Standish was but the shadow of her sweet self. Constance lingered to give the final touches to Rose's toilette; they were all striving to make some little festal appearance to their garments suitably to greet the New World.

"I can hardly go up, dear Connie," murmured Rose. "The *Mayflower* hath taken all the vigour from this poor rose."

"When the mayflower goes, the rose blooms," said Constance. "Wait till we get ashore and you are in your own warm, cozy home!"

Rose shook her head, but made an effort to greet Captain Myles brightly as he came to help her to the deck.

"What land are we to see, Myles? Where are we?" she asked.

"Gosnold's country of Cape Cod, rose of the world," said Captain Myles. "It lies just ahead. Have a care, Constance; don't trip. Here we are, then!"

They took their places in a sheltered nook and waited. The Billington boys had clambered high aloft and no one reproved them. Though their pranks were always calling forth a reprimand from some one, this time no one blamed them, but rather envied them for getting where they could see land first of all.

Sharply Francis Billington's boyish voice rang out:

"Land! Land! Land!" he shouted.

It was but an instant before the entire company of pilgrims were on their knees, sobbing, chanting, praising, each in his own way, the God who had brought their pilgrimage to this end.

That night they tacked southward, looking for Hudson's river, but the sea was so rough, the shoals around the promontories southward so dangerous, that they gave over the quest and turned back.

The next day the sun shone with the brilliant glory of winter upon the sea, and upon the low-lying coast, as the *Mayflower* came into her harbour.

"Father, it is the New World!" cried Constance, clasping her father's arm in spite of the tiny *Mayflower* baby which she held.

"The New World it is, friend Stephen. Now to conquer it!" said Myles Standish, clapping Mr. Hopkins on the shoulder and touching his sword hilt with the other hand.

CHAPTER III

Weary Waiting at the Gates

"Call Giles hither. I need help to strap these blankets to carry safely, Mr. Hopkins," said Dame Eliza Hopkins, bustling up to her husband two hours after the *Mayflower* had made anchorage.

"To carry whither, wife?" asked Mr. Hopkins, with the amused smile that always irritated his excitable wife by its detached calmness.

"Will you not need the blankets at night? Truth to tell this Cape Cod air seems to me well fit for blankets."

"And for what other use should they be carried ashore? Or would they keep us warm left on the ship?" demanded Mistress Eliza. "Truly, Stephen Hopkins, you are a test of the patience of a saint!"

"Which needs no testing, since the patience of the saints has passed into a proverb," commented Stephen Hopkins. "But with all humility I would answer 'yes' to your question, *Eliza*: the blankets would surely keep you warmer when on the ship than if they were ashore, since it is on the ship that you are to remain."

"Remain! On the ship? For how long, pray? And why? Do you not think that I have had enough and to spare of this ship after more than two months within her straitened cabin, and Oceanus crying, poor child, and wearing upon me as if he felt the hardship of his birthplace? Nor is Mistress White's baby, Peregrine, happier than my child in being born on this *Mayflower*. When one is not crying, the other is and oftener than not in concert. Why should I not go ashore with the others?" demanded Mistress Eliza, in quick anger.

"Ah, wife, wife, my poor Eliza," sighed Mr. Hopkins, raising his hand to stem the torrent. "Leave not all the patience of the saints to those in paradise! You, with all the other women, will remain on the ship while certain of the men—the rest being left to guard you—go in the shallop to explore our new country and pick the fittest place for our settlement. How long we may be gone, I do not know. Rest assured it will not be an absence wilfully prolonged. You will be more comfortable here than ashore. It is likely that when you do go ashore to begin the new home you will look back regretfully at the straitened quarters of the little ship that has served us well, in spite of sundry weaknesses which she developed. Be that as it may, this delay is necessary, as reflection will show you, so let us not weary ourselves with useless discussion of it."

Mistress Hopkins knew that when her husband spoke in this manner, discussion of his decision was indeed useless. She had an awe of his wisdom, his amused toleration of her, of his superior birth and education, and, though she ventured to goad him in small affairs, when it came to greater ones she dared not dispute him. So now she bit her lip, as angry and disappointed tears sprang to her eyes, but did not reply.

Stephen Hopkins produced from his inner pocket an oblong packet sewn in an oilskin wrapper.

"Here, Eliza," he said, "are papers of value to this expedition, together with some important only to ourselves, but to us sufficiently so to guard them carefully. The public papers were entrusted to me just before we sailed from Southampton by one interested in the welfare of this settlement. My own papers relate to the English inheritance that will be my children's should they care to claim it. These papers I must leave in your care now that I am to go on this exploring party ashore. I will not risk carrying them where savages might attack us, though I have kept them upon me throughout the voyage. Guard them well. Not for worlds would I lose the papers relating

to the community, sorry as I should be to lose my own, for those were a trust, and personal loss would be nothing compared to the loss of them."

He handed the packet to his wife as he spoke and she took it, turning it curiously over and about.

"I hope the English inheritance will one day come to Damaris and Oceanus," she said, bitterly, her jealousy of the two children of her husband's first wife plain to be seen. "Here's Giles," she added, hastily thrusting the packet into her bosom with a violence that her husband noted and wondered at.

"Father," said Giles, coming up, "take me with you."

Gloom and discontent were upon his brow. Giles's face was fast growing into a settled expression of bitterness. His stepmother's dislike for him, and for his sister, Giles bore less well than Constance. The natural sweetness of the girl, her sunny hopefulness, led her ceaselessly to try to make things pleasant around her, to be always ready to forget and begin again, hoping that at last she might win her stepmother's kindness. But Giles never forgot, consequently never could hope that the bad situation would mend, and he returned Mistress Eliza's dislike with compound interest. He was a brave lad, capable of strong attachments, but the bitterness that he harboured, the unhappiness of his home life, were doing him irreparable harm. His father was keenly alive to this fact, and one of his motives in coming to the New World with the Puritans, with whose strict views he by no means fully sympathized, was to give Giles the opportunity to conquer the wilderness, and in conquering it to find a vent for his energy, happiness for himself.

Mr. Hopkins turned to the boy now and sighed, seeing that he had heard his stepmother's expression of hope that *her* children would receive their father's English patrimony. But he said only:

"Take you with me where, Giles?"

"Exploring the country. I am too old, too strong to stay here with the women and children. Besides, I want to go," said Giles, shortly.

"But few of the men are to go, my son; you will not be reckoned among the weaklings in staying," said Mr. Hopkins, laying his hand upon the boy's shoulder with a smile that Giles did not return. "Enough have volunteered; Captain Standish has made up his company. You are best here and will find enough to do. Have you thought that you are my eldest, and that if we met with savages, or other fatal onslaught, that you must take my place? I cannot afford to risk both of us at once. You are my reliance and successor, Giles lad."

The boy's sullen face broke into a piteous smile; he flushed and looked into his father's eyes with a glance that revealed for an instant the dominant passion of his life, his adoring love for his father.

Then he dropped his lids, veiling the light that he himself was conscious shone in them.

"Very well, If you want me to stay, stay it is. But I'd like to go. And if there is danger, why not let me take your place? I should not know as much as you, but I would obey the captain's orders, and I am as strong as you are. Better let me go if there's any chance of not returning," he said.

"Your valuable young life for mine, my boy? Hardly that!" said Stephen Hopkins with a comradely arm thrown across the boy. "I shall always be a piece of drift from the old shore; you will grow from your youth into the New World's life. And what would my remnant of life be to me if my eldest born had purchased it?"

"You are young enough, Father," began Giles, struggling not to show that the expression of his father's love moved him as it did.

Mistress Eliza, who had been watching and listening to what was said with scornful impatience, broke in.

"Let the lad go. He will not be helpful here, and your little children need your protection, not to speak of your wife, Mr. Hopkins."

At the first syllable Giles had hastened away. Stephen Hopkins turned on her. "The boy is more precious than I am. It is settled; he is to stay. Take great care of the packet I have entrusted to you," he said.

For four days the ship's carpenters had busied themselves in putting together and making ready the shallop which the *Mayflower* had carried for the pilgrims to use in sailing the shallow waters of the bays and rivers of the new land, to discover the spot upon which they should decide to make their beginning.

The small craft was ready now, and in the morning set out, taking a small band of the men who had crossed on the *Mayflower*, as much ammunition and provisions as her capacity allowed them, to proceed no one knew whither, to encounter no one knew what.

Constance stood wistfully, anxiously, watching the prim white sail disappear.

Humility Cooper and Elizabeth Tilley—the cousins, who, though Constance's age, seemed so much younger—and Priscilla Mullins—who though older, seemed but Constance's age—were close beside her, and, seated on a roll of woollen cloth, sat Rose Standish, drooping as now she always drooped, often coughing, watching with her unnaturally clear eyes, as the girls watched, the departure of the little craft that bore their beloved protectors away.

The country that lay before them looked "wild and weather-beaten." All that they could see was woods and more woods, stretching westward to meet the bleak November sky, hiding who could

say what dangers of wild beasts and yet more-savage men?

Behind them lay the heaving ocean, dark under the scudding clouds, and which they had just sailed for two months of torture of body and mind.

If the little shallop were but sailing toward one single friend, if there were but one friendly English-built house beside whose hearth the adventurers might warm themselves after a handclasp of welcome! Desolation and still more desolation behind and before them! What awful secrets did that low-lying, mysterious coast conceal? What could the future hold for this handful of pilgrims who were to grapple without human aid with the cruelties of a severe clime, of preying creatures, both beast and human?

Rose Standish's head bent low as the tipmost point of the shallop's mast rounded a promontory, till it rested on her knees and her thin shoulders heaved. Instantly Constance was on her knees before her, gently forcing Rose's hands from her face and drawing her head upon her shoulder.

"There, there!" Constance crooned as if to a baby. "There, there, sweet Rose! What is it, what is it?"

"Oh, if I knew he would ever come back! Oh, if I knew how to go on, how, how to go on!" Rose sobbed.

"Captain Myles come back!" cried Constance, with a laugh that she was delighted to hear sounded genuine.

"Why, silly little Rose Standish, don't you know nothing could keep the captain from coming back? Wouldn't it be a sorry day for an Indian, or for any beast, when he attacked our right arm of the colony? No fear of him not coming back to us! And how to go on, is that it? In your own cozy little house, with Prissy and the rest of us to help you look after it till you are strong again, and then the fair spring sunshine, and the salt winds straight from home blowing upon you, and you will not need to know how to go on! It will be the rest of us who will have to learn how to keep up with you!"

"Kind Constance," whispered Rose, stroking the girl's cheek and looking wistfully into her eyes as she dried her own. "You keep me up, though you are so young! Not for nothing were you named Constantia, for constant indeed you are! I will be good, and not trouble you. Usually I feel sure that I shall get well, but to-day—seeing Myles go——. Sometimes it comes over me with terrible certainty that it is not for me to see this wilderness bloom."

"Just tiredness, dear one," said Constance, lovingly, and as if she were a whole college of learned physicians. "Have no fear."

Mistress Hopkins came in search of them, carrying the baby Oceanus with manifest protest against his weight and wailing.

"I have been looking for you, Constantia," she said, as if this were a severe accusation against the girl. "You are to take this child. Have I not enough to do and to put up with that I must be worn threadbare by his crying? And what a country! Your father has been tormenting me with his mending and preparation for this expedition so that I have not seen it as it is until just now. Look at it, only look at it! What a place to bring a decent woman to who has never wanted! Though I may not have been the fine lady that his first wife was, yet am I a comfortable farmer's daughter, and Stephen Hopkins should not have brought me to a coast more bleak and dismal than the barrens of Sahara. Woods, nothing but woods! And full of lions, and tigers, and who knows what other raving, raging wild vermin—who knows? What does thy father mean by bringing me to this?"

Constance pressed her lips together hard, a burning crimson flooding her face as she took the baby violently thrust upon her and straightened his disordered wrappings, reminding herself that his mother was not his fault.

"Why as to that, Mistress Hopkins," said Priscilla Mullins in her downright, sensible way, "Mr. Hopkins did not bring you. We all came willingly, and I make no doubt that all of us knew quite well that it was a wilderness to which we were bound."

"There is knowing and knowing, Priscilla Mullins, and the knowing before seeing is a different thing from the knowing and seeing. Stephen Hopkins had been about the world; he even set sail for Virginia, which as I understand is somewhere not far from Cape Cod, though not near enough to give us neighbours for the borrowing of a salt rising, or the trade of a recipe, or the loan of a croup simple should my blessed babe turn suffocating as he is like to do in this wicked cold wind; and these things are the comforts of a woman's life, and her right—as all good women will tell thee before thou art old enough to know what the lack is in this desolation. So it is clear that Stephen Hopkins had no right to bring me here, innocent as I was of what it all stood for, and hard enough as it is to be married to a man whose first wife was of the gentry, and whose children that she left for my torment are like to her, headstrong and proud-stomached, and hating me, however I slave for them. And your father, Constantia Hopkins, has gone now, not content with bringing me here across that waste o' waters, and never is it likely will come back to me to look after that innocent babe that was born on the ocean and bears its name according, and came like the dove to the ark, bearing an olive branch across the deluge. But much your father cares for this, but has gone and left me, and it is no man's part to leave a weak woman to struggle alone to keep wild beasts and Indians from devouring her children; and so I tell you, and so I maintain. And never, never have I looked upon a scene so forsaken and unbearable as that gray woodland that the man who swore to cherish me has led me into."

Constance quite well knew that this hysterical unreason in her stepmother would pass, and that it was not more worth heeding than the wind that whistled around the ship's stripped masts. Mistress Eliza had a vixenish temper, and a jealous one. She frequently lashed herself into a fury with one or another of the family for its object and felt the better for it, not regarding how it left the victim feeling.

But though she knew this, Constance could not always act upon her knowledge, and disregard her. She was but a very young girl and now she was a very weary one, with every nerve quivering from tense anxiety in watching her father go into unknown danger.

She sprang to her feet with a cry.

"Oh, my father, my father! How dare you blame him, my patient, wise, forbearing father! Why did he bring you here, indeed! He—so fine, so noble, so hard-pressed with your tongue, Mistress Hopkins!—I will not hear you blame him. Oh, my father, my dear, dear, good father!" she sobbed, losing all sense of restraint in her grief.

Suddenly on hearing this outburst, Mistress Hopkins, as is sometimes the way of such as she, became as self-controlled as she had, but a moment before, been beside herself. And in becoming quiet she became much more angry than she had been, and more vindictive.

"You speak to me like this?—you dare to!" she said in a low, furious voice. "You will learn to your sorrow what it means to flout me. You will pay for this, Constantia Hopkins, and pay to the last penny, to your everlasting shame and misery."

Constance was too frightened by this change, by this white fury, which she had never seen before in her stepmother, to answer; but before she could have answered, Doctor Fuller, who had strayed that way in time to hear the last of Dame Eliza's tirade, Constance's retort, and this final threat, took Constance by the arm and led her away.

"Quiet, my dear, quiet and calm, you know! Don't let yourself forget what is due to your father's wife, to yourself, still more to your conscience," he warned her. "And remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath."

"Oh, it doesn't, Doctor Fuller, indeed it doesn't!" sobbed Constance, utterly unstrung. "I've tried it, tried it again and again, and it only makes the wrath turn the harder upon me; it never turns it away! Indeed, indeed I've faithfully tried it."

"It's a hard pilgrimage for you at times I fear, Constance, but never turn aside into wrong on your part," said the good doctor, gently.

"Oh, I'm sorry I flared up, I am sorry I spoke angrily. But my father! To blame him when he is so patient, and has so much to endure! Must I beg his wife's pardon?" said Constance, humbly.

Doctor Fuller concealed a smile. Sorry as he was for Constance, and indignant at her stepmother's unkindness, it amused him to note how completely in her thoughts Constance separated herself from the least connection with her.

"I think it would be the better course, my dear, and I admire you for being the one to suggest it," he answered, with an encouraging pat on Constance's sleeve.

"Well, I will. I mean to do what is right, and I will," Constance sighed. "But I truly think it will do no good," she added.

"Nor I," Doctor Fuller agreed with her in his thoughts, but he took good care not to let this opinion reach his lips.

CHAPTER IV

The First Yuletide

Constance had a tender conscience, quick to self-blame. She was unhappy if she could impute to herself a fault, ill at ease till she had done all that she could to repair wrong. Although her stepmother's dislike for her, still more her open expression of it, was cruelly unjust and prevented all possibility of love for her, still Constance deeply regretted having spoken to her with lack of respect.

But when she made humble apology for the fault and begged Mrs. Hopkins's pardon with sweet sincerity, she was received in a manner that turned contrition into bitterness.

Dame Eliza looked at her with a cold light in her steely blue eyes, and a scornful smile. Plainly she was too petty herself to understand generosity in others, and construed Constance's apology into a confession of fear of her.

"Poor work spreading bad butter over a burnt crust," she commented. "There's no love lost between us, Constantia Hopkins; maybe none ever found, nor ever will be. I don't want your fair words, nor need you hope your father will not one day see you, and that sullen brother of yours, as do I. So waste no breath trying to get around me. Damaris is fretting; look after her."

Poor Constance! She had been so honestly sorry for having been angry and having given vent to

it, had gone to her stepmother with such sincerity, hoping against hope, for the unnumbered time, that she could make their relation pleasanter! It was not possible to help feeling a violent reaction from this reception, to keep her scorned sweetness from turning to bitterness in her heart.

She told the story to Giles, and it made him furiously angry.

"You young ninny to humble yourself to her," he cried, with flashing eyes. "Will you never learn to expect nothing but injustice from her? It isn't what we do, or say; it is jealousy. She will not let our father love us, she hates the children of our mother, and hates our mother's memory, that she was in every way Mistress Eliza's superior, as she guesses, knowing that she was better born, better bred, and surely better in character. I remember our mother, Con, if not clearly. I'm sorry you have not even so much recollection of her. You are like her, and may be thankful for it. I could trounce you for crawling to Mistress Hopkins! Learn your lesson for all time, and no more apologies! Con, I shall not stand it! No matter how it goes with this colony, I shall go back to England. I will not stay to be put upon, to see my father turned from me."

"Oh, Giles, that could never be!" cried Constance. "Father will never turn from us."

"I did not say from *us*; I said from *me*," retorted Giles. "You are different, a girl, and—and like Mother, and—several other reasons. But I often see that Father is not sure whether he shall approve me or not. It will not be so long till I am twenty-one, then I shall get out of reach of these things."

Constance's troubled face brightened. To her natural hopefulness Giles's twenty-first birthday was far enough away to allow a great deal of good to come before it.

"Oh, twenty-one, Giles! You'll be prospering and happy here before that," she cried.

"But I must tell no more of troubles with my stepmother to Giles," she added mentally. "It will never do to pile fuel on his smouldering fires!"

The next day when Constance was helping Mistress Hopkins with her mending, she noticed the oilskin-wrapped packet that her father had left with his wife for safe keeping, tossed carelessly upon the hammock which swung from the side of the berth which she and her stepmother shared, the bed devised by ingenuity for little Damaris.

"Is not that packet in Damaris's hammock Father's packet of valuable papers?" Constance asked. "Is there not a risk in letting them lie about, so highly as he prizes them?"

She made the suggestion timidly, for Dame Eliza did not take kindly to hints of this nature. To her surprise her stepmother received her remark not merely pleasantly, but almost eagerly, quick with self-reproach.

"Indeed thou art right, Constantia, and I am wrong to leave it for an instant outside the strong chest, where I shall put it under lock and key," she said, nevertheless not moving to rescue it. "I have carried it tied around my neck by a silken cord and hidden in my bosom till this hour past. I dropped it there when I was trying to mend Damaris's hammock. Thanks to you for reminding me of it. What can ail that hammock defies me! I have tried in all ways to strengthen it, but it sags. Some night the child will take a bad fall from it. Try you what you can make of it, Constantia."

"I am not skilful, Stepmother," smiled Constance. "Giles is just outside studying the chart of our voyage hither. Let me call him to repair the hammock. We would not have you fall at night and crack the pretty golden pate, would we, Damaris?" The child shook her "golden pate" hard.

"That you would not, Connie, for you are good, good to me!" she cried.

Mistress Hopkins looked on the little girl with somewhat of softening of her stern lips, yet she felt called upon to reprimand this lightness of speech.

"Not 'Connie,' Damaris, as thou hast been often enough told. We do not hold with the ungodly manner of nicknames. Thy sister is Constantia, and so must thou call her. And you must not put into the child's head notions of its being pretty, Constantia. Beauty is a snare of the devil, and vanity is his weapon to ensnare the soul. Do not let me hear you again speak to a child of mine of her pretty golden pate. As to the hammock if you choose to call your brother to repair it for his half-sister I have nothing against the plan."

Constance jumped up and ran out of the cabin.

"Giles, Giles, will you come to try what you can do with Damaris's sleeping hammock?" she called.

"What's wrong with it?" demanded Giles, rising reluctantly, but following Constance, nevertheless.

"I don't know, but Mistress Hopkins says she cannot repair it and that the child is like to fall with its breaking some night," said Constance, entering again the small, close cabin of the women. "Here is Giles, Mistress Hopkins; he will try what he can do," she added.

Giles examined the hammock in silence, bade Constance bring him cord, and at last let it swing back into place, and straightened himself. He had been bent over the canvas with it drawn forward against his breast.

"I see nothing the matter with the hammock except a looseness of its cords, and perhaps weakness of one where I put in the new one. You could have mended it, Con," he said, ungraciously, and sensitive Constance flushed at the implication that her stepmother had not required his help, for she never could endure anything like a disagreeable atmosphere around

her.

"Giles says 'Con,'" observed Damaris, justifying herself for the use of nicknames.

"Giles does many things that we do not approve; let us hope he will not lead his young sister and brother into evil ways," returned her mother, sourly. "But thou shouldst thank him when he does thee a service, not to be deficient on thy side in virtue."

"You know Giles doesn't need thanks for what he does for small people, don't you, Hop-o-my-Thumb?" Giles said and departed, successful in both his aims, in pleasing the child by his name for her, and displeasing her mother.

Two hours later Constance was sitting rolled up in heavy woollens like a cocoon well forward of the main mast, in a sheltered nook, reading to Rose Standish, who was also wrapped to her chin, and who when she was in the open, seemed to find relief from the oppression that made breathing so hard a matter to her.

Mistress Hopkins came toward them in furious haste, her mouth open as if she were panting, one hand pressed against her breast.

"Constantia, confess, confess, and do not try to shield thy wicked brother!" she cried.

"'Constantia, confess—confess and do not try to shield thy wicked brother'"

"Confess! My wicked brother? Do you mean the baby, for you cannot mean Giles?" Constance said, springing to her feet.

"That lamb of seven weeks! Indeed, you impudent girl, I mean no such thing, as well you know, but that dreadful, sin-enslaved, criminal, Gile——"

"Hush!" cried Constance, "I will not hear you!"

There was a fire in her eyes that made even Mistress Eliza halt in her speech.

"Giles Hopkins has stolen your father's packet, the packet of papers which you saw in the hammock and reminded me to put away," she said, more quietly. "I shall leave him to be dealt with by your father who must soon return. But you, you! Can you clear yourself? Did you help him steal it? Nay, did you call him in for this purpose, warning him that he should find the packet there, and to take it? Is this a plan between you? For ever have I said that there was that in you two that curdled my blood with fear for you of what you should become. Not like your godly father are you two. From elsewhere have you drawn the blood that poisons you. Confess and I will ask your father to spare you."

Constance stood with her thick wrappings falling from her as she threw up her hands in dumb appeal against this unbearable thing. She was white as the dead, but her blue eyes burned black in the whiteness, full of intense life.

"Mistress Hopkins, oh, Mistress Hopkins, consider!" begged Rose Standish, also rising in great distress. "Think what it is that you are saying, and to whom! You cannot knowingly accuse this dear girl of connivance in a theft! You cannot accuse Giles of committing it! Why, Captain Myles is fonder of the lad than of any other in our company! Giles is upright and true, he says, and fearless. Pray, pray, take back these fearful words! You do not mean them, and when you will long to disown them they will cling to you and not forsake you, as does our mad injustice, to our lasting sorrow. What can be more foreign to our calling than harsh judgments, and angry accusations?"

"I am not speaking rashly, Mistress Standish," insisted Dame Eliza.

"Not yet three hours gone Constantia saw lying in Damaris's hammock a valuable packet of papers, left me in trust by her father. I asked her to mend the hammock, which was in disorder, but she called her brother to do the simple task. No one else hath entered the cabin at my end of it since. The packet is gone. Would you have more proof? Could there be more proof, unless you saw the theft committed, which is manifestly impossible?"

"But why, good mistress, should the boy and girl steal these papers? What reason would there be for them to disturb their father's property?" asked Rose Standish.

"I have heard my uncle say, who is a barrister at home, that one must search for the motive of a crime if it is to be established." She glanced with a slight smile at Constance's stony face, who neither looked at her, nor smiled, but stood gazing in wide-eyed horror at her stepmother.

"Precisely!" triumphed Dame Eliza. "Two motives are clear, Mistress Standish, to those who are not too blinded by prejudice to see. Those Hopkins girl and boy hate me, fear and grudge my influence with their father. Would they not like to weaken it by the loss of papers entrusted to me, a loss that he would resent on his return? There is one motive. As to the other: you do not know, but I do, and so did they, that part of these papers related to an inheritance in England, from which they would want their half-brother and sister excluded. Needs it more?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cried Rose Standish, as Constance groaned. "To any one knowing Giles and Constance this is no more than if you said Fee, fi, fo, fum! They plotting to weaken you with their father! They stealing to keep the children from a share in their inheritance, so generous as they are, so good to the little ones! Fie, Mistress Hopkins! It is a grievous sin, you who are so strict in small matters, a grievous sin thus to judge another, still more those to whom you owe the obligation of one who has taken their dead mother's place."

Constance began to tremble, and to struggle to speak. What she would have said, or what would have come of it, cannot be known, for at that moment the Billington boys, John and Francis, came hurtling down upon them, shouting:

"The shallop, the shallop is back! It is almost upon us on the other side. Come see, come see! Dad is back, and all the rest, unless the savages have killed some of them," Francis added the final words in solo.

The present trouble must be laid aside for the great business in hand of welcome.

Poor Constance turned in a frozen way to follow Rose and her stepmother to the other side of the ship.

Her father—her dear, dear, longed-for father—was come back. He might be bringing them news of a favoured site where they would go to begin their new home.

At last they were to step upon land again, to live in some degree the life they knew of household task and tilling, walking the woods, drawing water, building fires—the life so long postponed, for which they all thirsted.

But if she and Giles were to meet their father accused of theft! If they should see in those grave, kind, wise eyes a shadow of a doubt of his eldest children! Constance felt that she dared not see him come if such a thing were so much as possible.

But when the shallop was made fast beside the *Mayflower* and Constance saw her father boarding the ship among the others of the returning expedition, and she met the glad light in his eyes resting upon her, all fear was swallowed up in immense relief and joy.

With a low cry she sprang to meet him and fell sobbing on his shoulder, forgetful of the stern on-lookers who would condemn such display of feeling.

"Oh, father, father, if you had never come back!" she murmured.

"But I have come, daughter!" Stephen Hopkins reminded her. "Surely you are not weeping that I have come! We have great things to tell you, attacks by savages, some hardships, but we have brought grain which we found hidden by the Indians, and we have found the right place to establish our dwelling."

Constance raised her head and dried her eyes, still shaken by sobs. Her father looked keenly at the pale, drawn face, and knew that something more than ordinary lay behind the overwhelming emotion with which she had received him.

"Poor child, poor motherless child!" he thought, and the pity of that moment went far in influencing his subsequent treatment of Constance when he learned what had ailed her on his arrival.

Now he patted her shoulder and turned toward the middle of the ship's forward deck where his comrades of the expedition were relating their experiences, and displaying their trophies.

Golden corn lay on the deck, spread upon a cloth, and the pilgrims who had remained with the ship were handling it as they listened to John Alden, who was made the narrator of this first report, having a ready tongue.

"We found a pond of fresh water," he was saying, "and not far from it cleared ground with the stubble of a gathered harvest upon it. Judge whether or not the sight was pleasant to us, as promising of fertile lands when the forests were hewn. And we came upon planks of wood that had lately been a house, and a kettle, and heaps of sand, with handmarks upon it, not long since made, where the sand had been piled and pressed down, into which, digging rapidly, we penetrated and found the corn you see here. The part of it we took, but the rest we once more

covered and left it. And see ye, brethren, there have we the seed for our own next season's harvest, the which we were in such doubt of obtaining from home in time. It is a story for night, when we have leisure, to tell you of how we saw a few men and a dog, who ran from us, and we pursuing, hoping to speak to them, but they escaped us. And how later on, we saw savages cutting up great fish of tremendous size along the coast, and how we were attacked by another savage band one night. But all this we reserve for another telling. We came at last into a harbour and found it deep enough for the *Mayflower* on our sounding it. And landing we marched into the land and found fields, and brooks, and on the whole that it was a fit country for our beginning. For the rest it is as you shall decide in consultation, but of our party we are all in accord to urge you to accept this spot and hasten to take possession of it as the winter cometh on apace."

"Let us thank God for that He hath led us into a land of corn, and guided us for so many weary days, over so many dreary miles," said William Brewster, the elder of the pilgrims.

John Carver, who was chosen on the *Mayflower* as their governor, arose and out of a full heart thanked God for His mercies, as Elder Brewster had recommended.

The *Mayflower* weighed anchor in the morning to carry her brave freight to their new home. The wind set hard against her, and it was the second day before she entered Plymouth harbour, as they resolved to name their new habitation, a name already bestowed by Captain Smith, and the name of their final port of embarkation in England.

No sign of life met them as the pilgrims disembarked. Silently, with full realization of what lay before them, and how fraught with significance this beginning was, the pilgrims passed from the ship that had so long been their home, and set foot—men, women, and children—upon the soil of America.

A deep murmur arose when the last person was landed, and it happened that Constance Hopkins was the last to step from the boat to the rock on which the landing was made, and to jump light-heartedly to the sand, amid the tall, dried weeds that waved on the shore.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow," said Elder Brewster, solemnly. The pilgrim band of colonists sang the doxology with bowed heads.

Three days later the shores of the harbour echoed to the ring of axes, the sound of hammers, as the first house was begun, the community house, destined to shelter many families and to store their goods.

"Merry Christmas, Father!" said Constance, coming up to her father in the cold of the early bleak December morning.

"S-s-sh!" warned her father, finger upon lip. "Do you not know, my daughter, that the keeping of Christmas is abjured by us as savouring of popery, and that to wish one merry at yuletide would be reckoned as unrighteousness among us?"

"Ah, but Father, you do not think so! You do not go with all these opinions, and can it be wrong to be merry on the day that gladdened the world?" Constance pleaded.

"Not wrong, but praiseworthy, to be merry under our present condition, to my way of thinking," said Stephen Hopkins, glancing around at the drab emptiness of land and sky and harbour beyond. "Nay, child, I do not think it wrong to rejoice at Christmas, nor do I hold with the severity of most of our people, but because I believe that it will be good to begin anew in a land that is not oppressed, nor torn by king-made wars and sins, I have cast my lot, as has Myles Standish, who is of one mind with me, among this Plymouth band, and we must conform to custom. So wish me Merry Christmas, if you will, but let none hear you, and we will keep our heresies to ourselves."

"Yet the first house in the New World is begun to-day!" laughed Constance. "We are getting a Christmas gift."

"A happy portent to begin our common home on the day when the Prince of Peace came to dwell on earth! Let us hope it will bring us peace," said her father.

"Peace!" cried Constance, with a swift and terrified remembrance of the accusation which her stepmother had threatened bringing against herself and Giles.

CHAPTER V

The New Year in the New Land

The new year came in bringing with it a driving storm from the Atlantic. The hoary pines threw up their rugged branches as if appealing to the heavens for mercy on the women and little children without shelter on the desolate coast. But the gray heavens did not relent; they poured snow and sleet down upon the infant colony, coating the creaking pines with ice that bent them low, and checked their intercession.

As fast as willing hands could work, taking it in continuous shifts by night as well as day, the community house went up. But the storm was upon the colonists before the shelter was ready for

them, and even when the roof covered them, the cold laughed it to scorn, entering to wreak its will upon them.

Sickness seized one after another of the pilgrim band, men and women alike, and the little children fought croup and pneumonia, nursed by women hardly more fit for the task than were the little victims.

Rose Standish, already weakened by the suffering of the voyage, was among the first to be prostrated. She coughed ceaselessly though each violent breath wracked her frail body with pain. A bright colour burned in her cheeks, her beautiful eyes were clear and dilated, she smiled hopefully when her companions in exile and suffering spoke to her, and assured them that she was "much, much better," speaking pantingly, by an effort.

The discouragement with which she had looked upon the coast when the *Mayflower* arrived, gave place to hope in her. She spoke confidently of "next spring," of the "house Captain Myles would build her," of all that she should do "when warm weather came."

Constance, to whom she most confided her plans, often turned away to hide her tears. She knew that Doctor Fuller and the more experienced women thought that for this English rose there would be no springtime upon earth.

Constance had other troubles to bear as well as the hardships and sorrows common to the sorely beset community. She seemed, to herself, hardly to be a young girl, so heavily weighted was she with the burden that she carried. She wondered to remember that if she had stayed in England she should have been laughing and singing like other girls of her age, skating now on the Sherbourne, if it were frozen over, as it well might be. Perhaps she might be dancing, if she were visiting her cousins in Warwickshire, her own birthplace, for the cousins were merry girls, and like all of Constance's mother's family, quite free from puritanical ideas, brought up in the English Church, so not debarred from the dance.

Constance had no heart to regret her loss of youthful happiness; she was so far aloof from it, so sad, that she could not rise to the level of feeling its charm. Dame Eliza Hopkins had carried out her threat, had accused Giles of the theft of his father's papers, and Constance of being party to his wrong-doing, if not actually its instigator.

It had only happened that morning; Constance heavily awaited developments. She jumped guiltily when she heard her father's voice speaking her name, and felt his hand upon her shoulder.

She faced him, white and shaken, to meet his troubled eyes intently fastened upon her.

"The storm is bad, Constance, but it is not warm within. Put on your coat and come with me. I must speak with you," he said.

In silence Constance obeyed him. Pulling over her head a hood that, like a deep cowl, was attached to her coat, she followed her father into the storm, and walked beside him toward the marshy shore whither, without speaking to her, he strode.

Arrived at the sedgy ocean line he halted, and turned upon her.

"Constance," he began, sternly, "my wife tells me that valuable papers which I entrusted to her keeping have disappeared. She tells me further that she had dropped them—carelessly, as I have told her—into the hammock in which your little sister slept and that you saw them there, commenting upon it; that you soon called Giles to set right some slight matter in the hammock; and that shortly after you and he had left her, she discovered her loss. What do you know of this? Tell me all that you know, and tell me the truth."

Constance's fear left her at this word. Throwing up her head she looked her father in the eyes, nearly on a level with her own as she stood upon a sandy hummock. "It needs not telling me to speak the truth, Father. I am your daughter and my mother's daughter; it runs not in my blood to lie," she said.

Stephen Hopkins touched her arm lightly, a look of relief upon his face.

"Thank you for that reminder, my girl," he said. "It is true, and Giles is of the same strain. Know you aught of this misfortune?"

"Nothing, Father," said Constance. "And because I know nothing whatever about it, in answering you I have told you all that I have to tell."

"And Giles——" began her father, but stopped.

"Nor Giles," Constance repeated, amending his beginning. "Giles is headstrong, Father, and I fear for him often, but you know that he is honourable, truth-telling. Would your son *steal* from you?"

"But your stepmother says no one entered the cabin after you had left it before she discovered her loss," insisted Stephen Hopkins. "What am I to think? What do you think, Constance?"

"I think that there is an explanation we do not know. I think that my stepmother hates Giles and me, especially him, as he has the first claim to the inheritance that she would have for her own children. I think that she has seized this opportunity to poison you against us," said Constance, with spirited daring. "Oh, Father, dear, dear Father, do not let her do this thing!"

"Nay, child, you are unjust," said her father, gently. "I confess to Mistress Eliza's jealousy of you, and that there is not great love for you in her. But, Constance, do you love her, you or Giles? And that she is not so base as you suspect is shown by the fact that she has delayed until to-day to tell me of this loss, dreading, as she hath told me, to put you wrong in my eyes. Fie for shame, Constance, to suspect her of such outrageous wickedness, she who is, after all, a good woman, as

she sees goodness."

"Father, if the packet were lost through her carelessness, would you not blame her? Is it not likely that she would shield herself at our cost, even if she would not be glad to lower us, as I am sure she would be?" persisted Constance.

"Well, well, this is idle talk!" Stephen Hopkins said, impatiently. "The truth must be sifted out, and suspicions are wrong, as well as useless. One word before I go to Giles. Upon your sacred honour, Constantia Hopkins, and by your mother's memory, can you assure me that you know absolutely nothing of the loss of this packet of papers?"

"Upon my honour and by my mother's memory, I swear that I do not know so much as that the packet is lost, except as Mistress Hopkins says that it is," said Constance. Then with a swift change of tone she begged:

"Oh, Father, Father, when you go to Giles, be careful, be kind, I pray you! Giles is unhappy. He is ill content under the injustice we both bear, but I with a girl's greater submission. He is ready to break all bounds and he will do so if he feels that you do not trust him, listen to his enemy's tales against him. Please, please, dear Father, be gentle with Giles. He loves you as well as I do, but where your distrust of me would kill me, because I love you, Giles's love for you will turn to bitterness, if you let him feel that you are half lost to him."

"Nonsense, Constance," said her father, though kindly, "Giles is a boy and must be dealt with firmly. It will never do to coddle him, to give him his head. You are a girl, sensitive and easily wounded. A boy is another matter. I will not have him setting up his will against mine, nor opposing discipline for his good. It is for him to clear himself of what looks ill, not resent our seeing the looks of it."

Constance almost wrung her hands.

"Oh, Father, Father, do not go to Giles in that way! Sorrow will come of it. Think how you would feel to be thus suspected! A boy is not less sensitive than a girl; I fear he is more sensitive in his honour than are we. Oh, I am but a girl, but I know that I am right about Giles. I think we are given to understand as no man can how to deal with a proud, sullen boy like Giles, because God means us to be the mothers of boys some day! Be kind to Giles, dear Father; let him see that you trust him, as indeed, indeed you may!"

"Let us go back out of the storm to such shelter as we have, Constance," said Stephen Hopkins, smiling with masculine toleration for a foolish girl. "I have accepted your solemn assurance that you are ignorant of this theft, if theft it be. Be satisfied that I have done this, and leave me to deal with my son as I see fit. I will not be unjust to him, but he must meet me respectfully, submissively, and answer to the evidence against him. I have not been pleased of late with Giles's ill-concealed resistance."

This time Constance did wring her hands, as she followed her father, close behind him. She attempted no further remonstrance, knowing that to do so would be not only to harm Giles's cause, but to arouse her father's quick anger against herself. But as she walked with bent head through the cutting, beating storm, she wondered why Giles should not be resistant to his life, and her heart ached with pitying apprehension for her brother.

All that long day of darkening storm and anxiety Constance did not see Giles. That signified nothing, however, for Giles was at work with the men making winter preparations which could not be deferred, albeit the winter was already upon them, while Constance was occupied with the nursing for which the daily increase of sickness made more hands required than were able to perform it.

Humility Cooper was dangerously ill, burning with fever, struggling for breath. Constance was fond of the little maid who seemed so childish beside her, and gladly volunteered to go again into the storm to fetch her the fresh water for which she implored.

At the well which had been dug, and over which a pump from the ship had been placed and made effective, Constance came upon Giles, marching up and down impatiently, and with him was John Billington, his chosen comrade, the most unruly of all the younger pilgrims.

"Well, at last, Con!" exclaimed Giles. "I've been here above an hour. I thought to meet you here. What has kept you so long?"

"Why, Giles, I could not know that you were awaiting me," said Constance, reasonably. "Oh, they are so ill, our poor friends yonder! I am sure many of them will go on a longer pilgrimage and never see this colony established."

"Lucky they!" said Giles, bitterly. "Why should they want to? Nobody wants to die, and of course I am sorry for them, but better be dead than alive here—if it is to be called alive!"

"Oh, dear Giles, do you hate it so?" sighed Constance. "Nothing is wrong?" she added, glancing at John Billington, longing to ask her question more directly, but not wishing to betray to him the trouble upon her mind.

"Never mind talking before John," said Giles, catching the glance. "He knows all about it; I have told him. Have you cleared yourself, Sis, or are you also under suspicion?"

"Oh, dear Giles," said Constance again. "You are not—Didn't Father believe?—Isn't it all right?" She groped for the least offensive form for her question.

"I don't know whether or not Father believed that I am a thief," burst out Giles, furiously. "Nor a

whit do I care. I told him the word of a man of honour was enough, and I gave him mine that I knew nothing about his wife's lies. I told him it seemed to me clear enough that she had made away with the papers herself, to defraud us. And I told him I had no proof of my innocence to give him, but it was not necessary. I told him I wouldn't go into it further; that it had to end right there, that I was not called upon to accept, nor would I submit to such a rank insult from any man, and that his being my father made it worse, not better."

"Oh, Giles, what did he say? Oh, Giles, what a misfortune!" cried Constance, clasping her hands.

"What did he say?" echoed Giles. "What do you think would be said when two such tempers as my father's and mine clash? For, mark you, Con, Stephen Hopkins would not stoop to vindicate himself from the charge of stealing. *Stealing*, remember, not a crime worthy of a gentleman."

"Oh, Giles, what crime is worthy of a gentleman?" Constance grieved. "Is there any dignity in sin, and any justice in varnishing some sins with the gloss of custom? But indeed, indeed, it is cruelly hard on you, Giles dear. Tell me what happened."

"The only thing that could happen. My father forgets that I am not a child. He flew into that madness of anger that we know him capable of, railed at me for my impertinence, insisted on my proving myself innocent of this charge, and declared that until I did, with full apology for the way I had received him, I was no son of his. So—Good day, Mistress Constantia Hopkins, I hope that you are well? I once had a sister that was like you, but sister have I none now, since I am not the son of my reputed father," said Giles, with a sneer and a deep bow.

Constance was in despair. The bitter mockery in Giles's young face, the bleak unhappiness in his eyes stabbed her heart. She knew him too well to doubt that this mood was dangerous.

"My own dear brother!" she cried, throwing her arms around him. "Oh, don't steel yourself so bitterly! Father loves you so much that he is stern with you, but it will all come right; it must, once this hot anger that you both share is past. You are too alike, that is all! Beg his pardon, Giles, but repeat that your word is enough to prove you innocent of the accusation. Father will see that, and yield you that, when you have met him halfway by an apology for hard words."

"See here, Con, why should I do that?" demanded Giles. "Is there anything in this desolation that I should want to stay here? I've had enough of Puritans; and Eliza is one of the strongest of them. Except for your sake, little Sis, why should I stay? And I will one day return for you. No, no, Con; I will sail for England when the ship returns, and make my own fortune, somewhere, somehow."

"Dame Eliza is not what she is because she is a Puritan. She is what she is because she is Dame Eliza. Think of the others whom we all love and would fain be like," Constance reminded him. "We must all be true to the enterprise we have undertaken, and——"

"Look here, sweet Con," John Billington interrupted her. "There is nothing to hold Giles to this dreary enterprise, nor to hold me, either. I am not in like plight to him. If any one accused me, suspected me as your father has him, and still more my father did it, I'd let these east winds blow over the space I'd have filled in this settlement. I'm for adventure as it is, though my father cares little what Francis and I do, being a reckless, daring man who surely belongs not in this psalm-singing company. Giles and I will strike out into the wilderness and try our fortunes. We will try the savages. They can be no worse than white men, nor half as outrageous as your stepmother. Why, Con, how can you want your brother tamely to sit down under such an insult? No man should be called upon to prove himself honest! Giles must be off. Let your father find out for himself who is to blame for the loss of the papers, and repent too late for lending ear to his wife's story."

Constance stared for a moment at John, realizing how every word he said found a ready echo in Giles's burning heart, how potent would be this unruly boy's influence to draw her brother after him, now, when Giles was wounded in his two strongest feelings—his pride of honour, his love for his father—and she prayed in her heart for inspiration to deal wisely with this difficult situation.

Suddenly the inspiration came to her. She found it in John's last words.

"Nay, but Jack!" she cried, using Francis's name for his brother, disapproved by the elders who would have none of nicknames. "If needs be that Giles must leave this settlement, if he cannot be happy here, let him at least bide till he has cleared his name of a foul stain, for his honour's sake, for the sake of his dead mother, for my sake, who must abide here and cannot escape, being but a girl, young and helpless. Is it right that I should be pointed out till I am old as the sister of him who was accused of a great wrong and, cowardlike, ran away because he could not clear himself, nor meet the shame, and so admitted his guilt? No! Rather do you, John Billington, instead of urging him to run away, bend all your wit—of which you do not lack plenty!—to the ferreting out of this mystery. That would be the manly course, the kind course to me, and you have always called yourself my friend. Then prove it! Help my brother to clear himself and never say one more word to urge him away till he can go with a stainless name. Our father does not doubt Giles, of that I am certain. He is sore beset, and is a choleric man. What can any man do when his children are on the one hand, and his wife on the other? Be patient with our father, Giles, but in any case do not go away till this is cleared."

"She talks like a lawyer!" cried John Billington with his boisterous laugh "Like——what was that play I once saw before I got, or Father got into this serious business of being a Puritan? Wrote by a fellow called Shakespeare? Ah, I have it! Merchant of Venison! In that the girl turns lawyer and cozzens the Jew. Connie is another pleader like that one. Well, what say you, Giles, my friend? Strikes me she is right."

"It is not badly thought of, Constance," admitted Giles. "But can it be done? For if Mistress

Hopkins has had a hand in spiriting away those papers for her own advantage and my undoing, then would it be hard to prove. What say you?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried Constance. "Truth is mighty, good is stronger than evil! Patience, Giles, patience for a while, and let us three bind ourselves to clear our good name. Will you, will you promise, my brother? And John?"

"Well, then, yes," said Giles, reluctantly; and Constance clasped her hands with a cry of joy. "For a time I will stay and see what can be done, but not for long. Mark you, Con, I do not promise long to abide in this unbearable life of mine."

"Sure will I promise, Connie," assented John. "Why should I go? I would not go without Giles, and it was not for my sake first we were going."

"Giles, dear Giles, thank you, thank you!" cried Constance. "I could not have borne it had you not yielded. Think of me thus left and be glad that you are willing to stand by your one own sister, Giles. And let us hope that in staying we shall come upon better days. Now I must take this ewer of water to poor Humility who is burned and miserable with thirst and pain. She will think I am never coming to relieve her! Oh, boys, it seems almost wicked to think of our good names, of any of our little trials, when half our company is so stricken!"

"You are a good girl, Connie," said John Billington, awkwardly helping Constance to assume her pitcher, his sympathy betrayed by his awkwardness. "I hope you are not chilled standing here so long with us."

"No, not I!" said Constance, bravely. "The New Year, and the New World are teaching me not to mind cold which must be long borne before the year grows old. They are teaching me much else, dear lads. So good-bye, and bless you!"

"'Twould have been downright contemptible to have deserted her," said Giles and John in the same breath, and they laughed as they watched her depart.

CHAPTER VI

Stout Hearts and Sad Ones

Constance turned away from the boys feeling that, till the trouble hanging over Giles was settled, waking or sleeping she could think of nothing else. When she reached the community house she forgot it, nor did it come to her as more than a deeper shadow on the universal darkness for weeks.

She found that during her brief absence Edward Tilley's wife had died; she had known that she was desperately ill, but the end had come suddenly. Edward Tilley himself was almost through with his struggle, and this would leave Humility, herself a very sick child, quite alone, for she had come in her cousins' care. Constance bent over her to give her the cooling water which she had fetched her.

"Elizabeth and I are alike now," whispered Humility, looking up at Constance with eyes dry of tears, but full of misery. "Cousin John Tilley was her father, and Cousin Edward and his wife but my guardians, yet they were all I had." Elizabeth Tilley had been orphaned two weeks before, and now John Tilley's brother, following him, would leave Humility Cooper, as she said, bereft as was Elizabeth.

"Not all you had, dear Humility," Constance whispered in her ear, afraid to speak aloud for there were in the room many sick whom they might disturb.

"My father will protect you, unless there is someone whom you would liefer have, and we will be sisters and meet the spring with hope and love for each other, together."

"They will send for me to come home to England, my other cousins, of that I am sure. Elizabeth has no one on her side to claim her. But England is far, far away, and I am more like to join my cousins, John and Edward Tilley and their kind, dear wives where they are now than to live to make that fearful voyage again," moaned Humility, turning away her head despairingly.

"Follow John and Edward Tilley! Yes, but not for many a day!" Constance reassured her, shaking up the girl's pillow, one deft arm beneath her head to raise it.

"Sleep, Humility dear, and do not think. Or rather think of how sweetly the wind will blow through the pines when the spring sunshine calls you out into it, and we go, you and I, to seek what new flowers we may find in the New World."

"No, no," Humility moved her head on the pillow in negation. "I will be good, Constance; I will not murmur. I will remember that I lie here in God's hand; but, oh Constance, I cannot think of pleasant things, I cannot hope. I will be patient, but I cannot hope. Dear, dear, sweet Constance, you are like my mother, and yet we are almost one age. What should we all do without you, Constance?"

Constance turned away to meet Doctor Fuller's grave gaze looking down upon her. "I echo Humility's question, Constance Hopkins: What should we all do without you? What a blessed

thing has come to you thus to comfort and help these pilgrims, who are sore stricken! Come with me a moment; I have something to say to you."

Constance followed this beloved physician into the kitchen where her stepmother was busy preparing broth, her *Mayflower* baby, Oceanus, tied in a chair on a pillow, Damaris sitting on the floor beside him in unnatural quiet.

Dame Eliza looked up as the doctor and Constance entered, but instantly dropped her eyes, a dull red mounting in her face.

She knew that the girl was ministering to the dying with skill and sympathy far beyond her years, and she remembered the patient sweetness with which Constance, during the voyage over, forgiving her injustice, had ministered to her when she was suffering—had tenderly cared for little Damaris.

Dame Eliza had the grace to feel a passing shame, though not enough to move her to repentance, to reparation.

"Constance," Doctor Fuller said, "I am going to lay upon you a charge too heavy for your youth, but unescapable. You know how many of us have been laid to rest out yonder, pilgrims indeed, their pilgrimage over. Many more are to follow them. Mistress Standish among the first, but there are many whose end I see at hand. I fear the spring will find us a small colony, but those who remain must make up in courage for those who have left them. I want you to undertake to be my right hand. Priscilla Mullins hath already lost her mother, and her father and her brother will not see the spring. Yet she keeps her steady heart. She will prepare me such remedies as I can command here. Truth to tell, the supply I brought with me is running low; I did not allow for the need of so many of one kind. Priscilla is reliable; steady in purpose, memory, and hand. She will see to the remedies. But you, brave Constance, will you be my medical student, visiting my patients, lingering to see that my orders are carried out, nursing, sustaining? In a word do what you have already done since we landed, but on a greater scale, as an established duty?"

"If I can," said Constance, simply.

"You can; there is no one else that I can count upon. The older men among us are dying, leaving the affairs of the colony to be carried on by the young ones. In like manner I must call upon so young a girl as you to be my assistant. The older women are doing, and must do, still more important work in preparing the nourishment on which these lives depend and which the young ones are not proficient to prepare."

Doctor Fuller looked smilingly toward Dame Eliza as he said this, as if he feared her taking offence at Constance's promotion, and sought to placate her.

Mistress Hopkins gave no sign of knowing that he had turned to her, but she said to Damaris, as if by chance: "This broth may do more than herb brews toward curing, though your mother is not a physician's aid," and Doctor Fuller knew that he had been right.

A week later, though Humility Cooper was recovering, many more had fallen ill, and several had died.

It was late in January; the winter was set in full of wrath against those who had dared array themselves to defy its power in the wilderness, but the sun shone brightly, though without warmth-giving mercy, upon Plymouth.

There was an armed truce between Giles and his father. The boy would not beg his father's pardon for having defied him. His love for his father had been of the nature of hero-worship, and now, turned to bitterness, it increased the strength of his pride, smarting under false accusation, to resist his father.

On the other hand Stephen Hopkins, high-tempered, strong of will, was angry and hurt that his son refused to justify himself, or to plead with him. So the elder and the younger, as Constance had said, too much alike, were at a deadlock of suffering and anger toward each other.

Stephen Hopkins was beginning his house on what he had named Leyden Street, in memory of the pilgrims' refuge in Holland, though only by the eyes of faith could a street be discerned to bear the name. Like all else in Plymouth colony, Leyden Street was rather a matter of prophecy than actuality.

Giles was helping to build the house. All day he worked in silence, bearing the cold without complaint, but in no wise evincing the slightest interest in what he did. At night, in spite of the stringent laws of the Puritan colony, Giles contrived often to slip away with John Billington into the woods. John Billington's father, who was as unruly as his boys, connived at these escapades. He was perpetually quarrelling with Myles Standish, whose duty it was to enforce the law, and who did that duty without relenting, although by all the colonists, except the Billingtons, he was loved as well as respected.

Early one morning Constance hurried out of the community house, tears running down her cheeks, to meet Captain Myles coming toward it.

"Why, pretty Constance, don't grieve, child!" said the Plymouth captain, heartily.

"Giles hath come to no harm, I warrant you, though he has spent the night again with that harum-scarum Jack Billington, and this time Francis Billington, too."

"Oh, Captain Standish, it is not Giles! I forgot Giles," gasped Constance.

"Rose?" exclaimed the captain, sharply.

Constance bent her head. "She is passing. I came to seek you," she said, and together she and the captain went to Rose's side.

They found Doctor Fuller there holding Rose's hand as she lay with closed eyes, breathing lightly. In his other hand he held his watch measuring the brief moments left, in which Rose Standish should be a part of time. Mary Brewster, the elder's wife, held up a warning finger not to disturb Rose, but Doctor Fuller looked quietly toward Captain Standish.

"It matters not now, Myles," he said. "You cannot harm her. There are but few moments left."

Myles Standish sprang forward, fell upon his knees, and raised Rose in his arms.

"Rose of the world, my English blossom, what have I done to bring thee here?" he sobbed, with a strong man's utter abandonment of grief, and with none of the Puritan habit of self-restraint.

"Wherever thou hadst gone, I would have chosen, my husband! I loved thee, Myles, I loved thee Myles!" she said, so clearly that everyone heard her sweet voice echo to the farthest corner of the room, and for the last time.

For with that supreme effort to comfort her husband, disarming his regret, Rose Standish died.

They bore Rose's body, so light that it was scarce a burden to the two men who carried it as in a litter, forth to the spot upon the hillside whither they had already made so many similar processions, which was fast becoming as thickly populated as was that portion of the colony occupied by the living.

But as the sun mounted higher, although the March winds cut on some days, then as now they do in March, yet, then as now, there were soft and dreamy days under the ascending sun's rays, made more effective by the moderating sea and flat sands.

The devastating diseases of winter began to abate; the pale, weak remnants of the *Mayflower's* passengers crept out to walk with a sort of wonder upon the earth which was new to them, and which they had so nearly quitted that nothing, even of those aspects of things that most recalled the home land, seemed to them familiar.

The men began to break the soil for farming, and to bring forth and discuss the grain which they had found hidden by the savages—most fortunately, for without it there would have been starvation to look forward to after all that they had endured, since no supplies from England had yet come after them.

There was talk of the *Mayflower's* return; she had lain all winter in Plymouth harbour because the Pilgrims had required her shelter and assistance. Soon she was to depart, a severance those ashore dreaded, albeit there was well-grounded lack of confidence in the honesty of her captain, Jones, whom the more outspoken among the colonists denounced openly as a rascal.

Little Damaris was fretful, as she so often was, one afternoon early in March; the child was not strong and consequently was peevish. Constance was trying to amuse her, sitting with the child, warmly wrapped from the keen wind, in the warmth of the sunshine behind the southern wall of the community house.

"Tell me a story, Constance," begged Damaris, though it was not "a story," but several that Constance had already told her. "Make a fairy story. I won't tell Mother you did. Fairy stories are not lies, no matter what they say, are they, Connie? I know they are not true and you tell me they are not true, so why are they lies? Why does Mother say they are lies? Are they bad, are they, Connie? Tell me one, anyway; I won't tell her."

"Ah, little Sister, I would rather not do things that we cannot tell your mother about," said Constance. "I do not think a fairy story is wrong, because we both know it is make-believe, that there are no fairies, but your mother thinks them wrong, and I do not want you to do what you will not tell her you do. Suppose you tell me a story, instead? That would be fairer; only think how many, many stories I have told you, and how long it is since you have told me the least little word of one!"

"Well," agreed Damaris, but without enthusiasm. "What shall I tell you about? Not a Bible one."

"No, perhaps not," Constance answered, looking lazily off to sea. Then, because she was looking seaward, she added:

"Shall it be one about a sailor? That ought to be an interesting story."

"A true sailor, or a made-up one?" asked Damaris, getting aroused to her task.

"Do you know one about a real sailor?" Constance somewhat sleepily inquired.

"Here is a true one," announced Damaris.

"Once upon a time there was a sailor, and he sailed on a ship named the *Mayflower*. And he came in. And he said: How are you, little girl? And I said: I am pretty well, but my name is Damaris Hopkins. And he said: What a nice name. And I said: Yes, it is. And he said: Where is your folks? and I said: I don't know where my mother went out of the cabin just this minute. But my sister was around, and my brother Giles was here, fixing my hammock, 'cause it hung funny and let me roll over on myself and folded me hurt. And my other brother couldn't go nowheres 'tall, because he was born when we was sailing here, and he can't walk. And the sailor man said: Yes, there were two babies on the ship when we came that we didn't have when we started, and show me your hammock. And I did, and he said it was a nice ham——Constance, what's the matter? I felt you jump, and you look scared. Is it Indians? Connie, Connie, don't let 'em get me!"

"No, no, child, there aren't any Indians about," Constance tried to laugh. "Did I jump? Sometimes people do jump when they almost fall asleep, and I was just as sleepy as a fireside cat when you began to tell me the story. Now I am not one bit sleepy! That is the most interesting story I have heard almost—yes, I think quite—in all my life! And it is a true one?"

"Yes, every bit true," said Damaris, proudly.

"And the sailor went into the cabin, and saw your hammock, and said it was a nice one, did he? Well, so it is a nice one! Did your mother see the man?" asked Constance, trying to hide her impatience.

"No," Damaris shook her head, decidedly. "Mother was coming, but the man just put his hand in and set my hammock swinging. Then he went out, and Mother was stopping and she didn't see him. And neither did I, not any more, ever again."

"Did you tell your mother about this sailor?" Constance inquired.

"Oh, no," sighed Damaris. "I didn't tell her. She doesn't like stories so much as we do. I tell you all my stories, and you tell me all yours, don't we, Constance? I didn't tell Mother. She says: 'That's Hopkins to like stories, and music, and art.' What's art, Connie? And she says: 'You don't get those idle ways from my side, so don't let me hear any foolish talk, for you will be punished for idle talk.' What's that, Connie?"

"Oh, idle talk is—idle talk is hard to explain to you, little Damaris! It is talk that has nothing to it, unless it may have something harmful to it. You'll understand when you are old enough to make what you do really matter. But this has not been idle talk to-day! Far, far from idle talk was that fine story you told me! Suppose we keep that story all to ourselves, not tell it to anyone at all, will you please, my darling little sister? Then, perhaps, some day, I will ask you to tell it to Father! Would not that be a great day for Damaris? But only if you don't tell it to any one till then, not to your mother, not to any one!" Constance insisted, hoping to impress the child to the point of secrecy, yet not to let her feel how much Constance herself set upon this request.

"I won't! I won't tell it to any one; not to Mother, not to any one," Damaris repeated the form of her vow. Then she looked up into Constance's face with a puzzled frown.

"But you wouldn't tell a fairy story, because you said you didn't want things I couldn't tell mother! And now you say I mustn't tell her about my story!" she said.

Constance burst out laughing, and hugged Damaris to her, hiding in the child's hood a merrier face than she had worn for many, many a day.

"You have caught me, little Damaris!" she cried. "Caught me fairly! But that was a *fairy* story, don't you see? This isn't, this is true. So this is not to be told, not now, do you see?"

Damaris said "yes," slowly, with the frown in her smooth little brow deepening. It was puzzling; she did not really see, but since Constance expected her to see she said "yes," and felt curiously bewildered. However, what Constance said was to her small half-sister not merely law, but gospel. Constance was always right, always the most lovable, the most delightful person whom Damaris knew.

"All right, Connie. I won't tell anyone my sailor-man story," she said at last, clearing up.

"Just now," Constance supplemented her. "Some day you shall tell it, Damaris! Some day I shall want you to tell it! And now, little Sister, will you go into the house and tell Oceanus to hurry up and grow big enough to run about, because the world, our new world, is getting to be a lovely place in the spring sunshine, and he must grow big enough to enjoy it as fast as he can? I must find Giles; I have something beautiful, beautiful to tell him!"

She kissed Damaris before setting her on her feet, and the child kissed her in return, clinging to her.

"You are so funny, Constance!" she said, in great satisfaction with her sister's drollery in a world that had been filled with gloom and illness for what seemed to so young a child, almost all her life.

"Ah, I want to be, Damaris! I want to be funny, and happy, and glad! Oh, I want to be!" cried Constance, and ran away at top speed with a rare relapse into her proper age and condition.

CHAPTER VII

The Persuasive Power of Justice and Violence

John Billington had been forced reluctantly to work on the houses erecting in the Plymouth plantation.

He was not lazy, but he was adventuresome, and steady employment held for him no attraction. Since Captain Standish and the others in authority would deal with him if he tried to shirk his share of daily work, John made it as bearable as possible by joining himself to Giles in the building of the Hopkins house. Constance knew that she should find the two boys building her

future home, and thither she ran at her best speed, and Constance could run like a nymph.

"Oh, Giles!" she panted, coming up to the two amateur carpenters, and rejoicing that they were alone.

"Oh, Con!" Giles echoed, turning on his ladder to face her, half sitting on a rung. "What's forward? Hath the king sent messengers calling me home to be prime minister? Sorry to disappoint His Royal Highness, but I can't go. I'd liefer be a trapper!"

"And that's what your appointment is!" triumphed Constance. "You're to trap big game, no less than a human rascal! Oh, Giles and Jack, do hear what I've got to tell you!"

"But for us to hear, you must tell, Con!" John Billington reminded her. "I'll bet a golden doubloon you've got wind of the missing papers!"

"We don't bet, Jack, but if we did you'd win your wager," Constance laughed. "Damaris told me 'a true story,' and now I'm going to tell it to you. Fancy that little person having this story tucked away in her brain all these weary days!"

And Constance related Damaris's entertainment of her, to which John Billington listened with many running comments of tongue and whistled exclamations, but Giles in perfect silence, betraying no excitement.

"Here's a merry chance, Giles!" John cried as soon as Constance ended. "What with savages likely to visit us and robbers for us to hunt, why life in the New World may be bearable after all!"

Giles ignored his jubilant comment.

"I shall go out to the *Mayflower* and get the packet," he said. "It is too late to-day, but in the morning early I shall make it. I suppose you will go with me, Jack?"

"Safe to suppose it," said John. "I'd swim after you if you started without me."

"Won't you take Captain Standish? I mean won't you ask him to help you?" asked Constance, anxiously. "It is sufficient matter to engage him, and he is our protector in all dangers."

"We need no protection, little Sis," said Giles, loftily. "It hath been my experience that a just cause is sufficient. We have suspected the master of the *Mayflower* of trickery all along."

Constance could not forbear a smile at her brother's worldly-wise air of deep knowledge of mankind, but nevertheless she wished that "the right arm of the colony" might be with the boys to strike for them if need were.

It was with no misgiving as to their own ability, but with the highest glee, that Giles and John made their preparations to set forth just before dawn.

They kept their own counsel strictly and warned Constance not to talk.

There was not much to be done to make ready, merely to see that the small boat, built by the boys for their own use, was tight, and to tuck out of sight under her bow seat a heavy coat in case the east wind—which the pilgrims had soon learned was likely to come in upon them sharply on the warmest day—blew up chillingly.

John Billington owned, by his father's reckless indulgence, a pistol that was his chief treasure; a heavy, clumsy thing, difficult to hold true, liable to do the unexpected, the awkward progenitor of the pretty modern revolver, but a pistol for all its defects, and the apple of John's eye. This he had named Bouncing Bully, invariably spoke of it as "he", and felt toward it and treated it not merely as his arms, but as his companion in arms.

Bouncing Bully was to make the third member of the party; he accompanied John, hidden with difficulty because of his bulk, in the breast of his coat, when he crept out without disturbing his father and Francis, to join Giles at the spot on the shore where their flat-bottomed row boat was pulled up.

He found Giles awaiting him, watching the sands in a crude hour glass which he had himself constructed.

"I've been waiting an hour," Giles said as John came up. "I know you are not late, but all the same here I have stood while this glass ran out, with ten minutes more since I turned it again."

"Well, I'm here now; take hold and run her out," said John, seizing the boat's bow and bracing to shove her.

"Row out. I'll row back," commanded Giles as he and John swung over the side of the boat out of the waves into which they had waded.

They did not talk as they advanced upon the *Mayflower* which lay at anchor in the harbour. They had agreed upon boarding her with as little to announce their coming as possible. As it chanced, there being no need of guarding against surprise, there was no one on deck when the boys made their boat fast to the ship's cable, and clambered on deck—save one round-faced man who was swabbing the deck to the accompaniment of his droning a song, tuneless outside his own conception of it.

"Lord bless and save us but you dafted me, young masters!" this man exclaimed when Giles and John appeared; he leaned against the rail with the air of a fine lady, funny to see in one so stoutly stalwart.

"I didna know ye at sight; now I see 'tis Master Giles and Master John Billington, whose pranks was hard on us crossing."

"You are not the man we want," said Giles, haughtily, trusting to assurance to win his end. "Fetch me that man who goes in and about the cabin at times, the one that stands well with Jones, the ship's master."

This last was a gamble on chance, but Giles felt sure of his conclusions, that the captain was at the bottom of the loss of the papers, the actual thief his tool.

"Aye, I know un," said the man, nodding sagely, proud of his quickness. "'Tis George Heaton, I make no doubt. The captain gives him what is another, better man's due. Master Jones gives him his ear and his favour. 'Tis George, slick George, you want, of that I'm certain." He nodded many times as he ended.

"Likely thing," agreed Giles. "Fetch him."

The deck cleaner departed in a heavy fashion, and returned shortly in company with a wiry, slender young man, having a handsome face, a quick roving eye, crafty, but clever.

"Ah, George, do you remember me?" asked Giles. "Don't dare to offer me your hand, my man, for I'd not touch it."

"I may be serving as a sailor, but I'm as good a gentleman born as you," retorted Heaton, flushing angrily.

"Decently born you may be; of that I know nothing. Pity is it that you have gone so far from your birthday," said Giles. "But as good a gentleman as I am you are not, nor as anyone, as this honest fellow here. For blood or no blood, a thief is far from a gentleman."

George Heaton made a step forward with upraised fist, but Giles looked at him contemptuously, and did not fall back.

"No play acting here. Give me the papers you stole out of my stepmother's care, out of my little sister's sleeping hammock, weeks agone," said Giles, coolly. "Your game is up. For some reason the child did not tell us of your act till now; now she hath spoken. Fortunately the ship hath lingered for you to be dealt with before she took you back to England. Hand over the papers, Heaton, if you ever hope to be nearer England than the arm of the tree from which you shall hang on the New England coast, unless you restore your booty."

Heaton looked into Giles's angry eyes and quailed. The boy had grown up during the hard winter, and Heaton recognized his master; more than that, he had the cowardice that had made him the ready tool of Captain Jones—the cowardice of the man who lives by tricks, trusting them to carry him to success—who will not stand by his colours because he has no standard of loyalty.

"I haven't got your father's papers, Giles Hopkins," he growled, dropping his eyes.

"You could have said much that I would not have believed, but that I believe," said Giles. "Do you know what Master Jones did with them when you gave them over to him, you miserable cat's paw?"

"How about giving the cat to the cat's paw, Giles?" suggested John, grinning in huge enjoyment of George Heaton's instant, sailor's appreciation of his joke and the offices of "the cat" with which sailors were lashed in punishment.

"I hope it will not be necessary. If Captain Standish comes with a picked number of our men to get these papers, there will be worse beasts than the cat let loose on the *Mayflower*. Lead me to the captain, Heaton, and remember it will go hard with you if you let him lead you into denial of the crime you committed for him," said Giles, with such a dignity as filled rollicking John, who wanted to turn the adventure into a frolic, with admiration for his comrade.

"Stand by you and Jones will deal with me. Stand by him and you threaten me with your men, led by that fighting Standish of yours. Between you where does George Heaton stand?" asked Heaton sullenly, turning, nevertheless, to do Giles's bidding.

"You should have thought of this before," said Giles, coolly. "There never yet was wisdom and safety in rascality."

Captain Jones, whose connection with the pilgrims was no more than that he had been hired by them to bring them to the New World, was a man whose honesty many of his passengers mistrusted, but against whom, as against the captain of the *Speedwell* that had turned back, there was no proof.

He was coming out of his cabin to his breakfast when Heaton brought the boys to him; he started visibly at the sight of Giles, but recovered himself instantly and greeted the lads affably.

"Good morning, my erstwhile passengers and new colonists," he said. "I have wondered that at least the younger members of your community did not visit the ship. Welcome!" He held out his hand, but neither Giles nor John seemed to see it.

"Master Jones," said Giles, "there is no use wasting time and phrases. This man, at your orders, stole out of the women's cabin on this ship the papers left by my father in his wife's care. He has given them up to you. The story has only now—yesterday—come to our knowledge. Give me those papers."

"What right have you to accuse me, *me*, the master of this ship?" demanded Captain Jones, blustering. "Have a care that I don't throw you overboard. Take your boat and be gone before harm comes to you!"

"You would throw more than us overboard if you dared to touch us," returned Giles. "Nor is it

either of us to whom harm threatens. Come, Master Jones, those papers! My father, none of the colony, knows of your crime. What do you think will befall you when they do know it? Hand us the papers, not one lacking, and we will let you go back to England free and safe. Refuse——Well, it's for you to choose, but I'd not hesitate in your place." Giles shrugged his shoulders, half turning away, as if after all the result of his mission did not concern him.

John saw a telepathic message exchanged between the captain and his tool. The question wordlessly asked Heaton whether the theft of the papers, their possession by the captain, actually was known, and Heaton's eyes answering: "Yes!"

Captain Jones swallowed hard, as if he were swallowing a great dose, as he surely was. After a moment's thought he spoke:

"See here, Giles Hopkins, I always liked you, and now I father admire you for your courage in thus boarding my ship and bearding me. I admit that I hold the papers. But, as of course you can easily see, I am neither a thief nor a receiver of stolen goods. My reason for wanting those papers was no common one. I am willing to restore to you those which relate to your family inheritance, your father's personal papers, but those which relate to Plymouth colony I want. I can use them to my advantage in England. Take this division of the documents and go back with my congratulations on your conduct."

"I would liefer your blame than your praise, sir," said Giles, haughtily, in profound disgust with the man. "It needs no saying that my father would part with any private advantage sooner than with what had been entrusted to him. First and most I demand the Plymouth colony documents. Get the papers, not one lacking, and let me go ashore. The wide harbour's winds are not strong enough for me to breathe on your ship. It sickens me."

Captain Jones gave the boy a malevolent look.

"A virtue of necessity," he muttered, turning to go.

"And your sole virtue?" suggested Giles to his retreating back.

Captain Jones was gone a long time. The boys fumed with impatience and feared harm to the papers, but George Heaton grinned at them with the utmost cheerfulness. He had completely sloughed off all share in the theft and plainly enjoyed his superior's discomfiture, being of that order of creatures whose malice revels in the mischances of others.

It proved that the captain's delay was due to his reluctance to comply with Giles's demand. He came at last, slowly, bearing in his hand the packet enveloped in oilskin which Giles remembered having seen in his father's possession.

"I must do your bidding, youngster," he said angrily, "for you can harm me otherwise. But what guarantee have I, if I hand these papers to you, that you will keep the secret?"

"I never said that the secret would be kept; I said that you should suffer no harm. An innocent person is accused of this theft; the truth must be known. But I can and do promise you that you shall not be molested; I can answer for that. As to guarantee, you know my father, you know the Plymouth pilgrims, you know me. Is there any doubt that we are honourable, conscientious, God-fearing, the sort that faithfully keep their word?" demanded Giles.

"No. I grant you that. Take your packet," said Captain Jones, yielding it.

"By your leave I will examine it," said Giles unfastening its straps.

"Do you doubt me?" blustered the captain.

"Not a whit," laughed John with a great burst of mirth, before Giles could answer.

"Why should we doubt you? Haven't you shown us exactly what you are?"

Giles turned over the papers one by one. None was missing. He folded them and replaced them in their case, buckling its straps.

"All the papers are here," he said. "John, we'll be off. This is our final visit to the *Mayflower*, Master Jones—unless I ship with you for England. Good voyage, as I hear they say in France. Hope you'll catch a bit of Puritan conscience before you leave the harbour."

Captain Jones followed the boys to the side of the ship where they were to reëmbark in their rowboat. At every step he grew angrier, the veins swelled in his forehead which was only a shade less purple-red than his cheeks. His defeat was a sore thing, the disappointment of the plans which he had laid upon the possession of the stolen documents became more vividly realized with each moment, and the fact that two lads had thus conquered him and were going away with their prize infuriated him.

Giles had swung himself down into the boat and was shipping the oars, but John halted for a moment in a stuffy corner to gloat over the captain's empurpled face and to dally with a temptation to add picturesqueness to their departure. The temptation got the upper hand of him, though John usually held out both hands to mischief.

He drew Bouncing Bully from his breast and levelled it.

"Stop! Gunpowder!" screamed the captain, choking with fear and rage, and pointing at a small keg that stood hard by.

"I won't hit it," John grinned, delightedly. "Let's see how *my* gunpowder is." With a flourish the mad boy fired a shot into the wall of the tiny cabin, regardless of the fact that the likely explosion of the keg of gunpowder would have blown up the *Mayflower* and him with her.

The captain fell forward on his face, the men who were at work splicing ropes in the cubby-like cabin cowered speechless, their faces ashen.

John whooped with joy and fled, leaping into the rowboat which he nearly upset.

"What?" demanded Giles. "Who shot? Did he attack you, Jack?"

"Who? No one attacked me. I shot. Zounds, they were scared! In that pocket of a cabin, with a keg of gunpowder sitting close," chuckled John.

"What in the name of all that's sane did you do that for?" cried Giles. "Scared! I should say with reason! Why, Jack Billington, you might be blown to bits by this time, ship, men, yourself, and all!"

"I might be," assented Jack, coolly. "I'm not. Giles, you should have seen your shipmaster Jones! Flat on his face and fair blubbering with fear and fury! He loves us not, my Giles! I doubt his days are dull on the *Mayflower*, so long at anchor. 'Twas but kind to stir up a lively moment. Here, give me an oar! Even though you said you would row back, I feel like helping you. Wait till I settle Bouncing Bully. He's digging me in the ribs, to remind me of the joke we played 'em, I've no doubt; but he hurts. That's better. Now for shore and your triumph, old Giles!"

CHAPTER VIII

Deep Love, Deep Wound

Constance had escaped from Humility Cooper and Elizabeth Tilley who had affectionately joined her when she had appeared on her way to the beach to await Giles's return.

Constance invented a question that must be asked Elder Brewster because she knew that the girls, though they revered him, feared him, and never willingly went where they must reply to his gravely kind attempts at conversation with them. "I surely feel like a wicked hypocrite," sighed Constance, watching her friends away as she turned toward the house that sheltered the elder.

"What would dear little Humility say if she knew I had tried to get rid of her? Or Elizabeth either! But it isn't as though I had not wanted them for a less good reason. I do love them dearly! I must meet Giles and hear his news as soon as I can, and it can't be told before another. Mercy upon us, what *was* it that I had thought of to ask Elder Brewster! I've forgotten every syllable of it! Well, mercy upon us! And suppose he sees me hesitating here! I know! I'll confess to him that I was wishing I was in Warwickshire hearing Eastertide alleluias sung in my cousins' church, and ask him if it was sinful. He loves to correct me, dear old saint!"

Dimpling with mischief Constance turned her head away from a possible onlooker in the house to pull her face down into the proper expression for a youthful seeker for guidance. Then, quite demure and serious, with downcast eyes, she turned and went into the house.

Elder William Brewster kept her some time. She was nervously anxious to escape, fearing to miss the boys' arrival. But Elder Brewster was deeply interested in pretty Constance Hopkins, in whom, in spite of her sweet docility and patient daily performance of her hard tasks, he discerned glimpses of girlish liveliness that made him anxious and which he felt must be corrected to bring the dear girl into perfection.

Constance decided that she was expiating fully whatever fault there might have been in feigning an errand to Elder Brewster to get rid of the girls as she sat uneasily listening to that good man's exposition of the value of alleluias in the heart above those sung in church, and the baseness of allowing the mind to look back for a moment at the "shackles from which she was freed." Good Elder Brewster ended by reading from his roughened brown leather-covered Bible the story of Lot's wife to which Constance—who had heard it many times, it being an appropriate theme for the pilgrim band to ponder, sick in heart and body as they had been so long—did not harken.

At last she was dismissed with a fatherly hand laid on her shining head, and a last warning to keep in mind how favoured above her English cousins she had been to be chosen a daughter in Israel to help found a kingdom of righteousness. Constance ran like the wind down the road, stump-bordered, the beginning of a street, and came down upon the beach just as the boys reached it and their boat bumped up on the sand under the last three hard pulls they had given the oars in unison.

"Oh! Giles, oh, Giles, oh Jack!" cried Constance fairly dancing under her excitement.

"Oh, Con, oh, Con! Oh, Constantia!" mocked John, hauling away on the painter and getting the boat up to her tying stake.

"What happened you? Have you news?" Constance implored them.

"We heard no especial news, Con," said Giles. "I'm not sure we asked for any. We have this instead; will that suffice you?"

He took from his breast the packet of papers and offered it to her.

"Oh, Giles!" sighed Constance, clasping her hands, tears of relief springing to her eyes. "All of

them? Are they all safe? Thank Heaven!" she added as Giles nodded.

"Did you have trouble getting them? Who held them? Tell me everything!"

"Give me a chance Constantia Chatter," said Giles, using the name Constance had been dubbed when, a little tot, she ceaselessly used her new accomplishment of talking. "We had no trouble, no. We found the thief and made him confess what we already knew, that he was the master's cat's paw. Jones had to disgorge; he could not hold the papers without paying too heavy a penalty. So here they are. Why don't you take them?"

"I take them?" puzzled Constance, accepting them as Giles thrust them into her hand. "Do you want me to put them away for you? Are you not coming to dinner? There is not enough time to go to work before noon. The sun was not two hours from our noon mark beside the house when I left it."

"I suppose I am going to dinner," said Giles. "I am ready enough for it. No, I don't want you to put the papers away for me. You can do with them what you like. I should advise your giving them to Father, since they are his, but that is as you will. I give them into your hands."

"Giles, Giles!" cried Constance, in distress, instantly guessing that this meant that Giles was intending to hold aloof from a part in rejoicing over the recovery.

"Give them to Father yourself. How proud of you he will be that you ferreted out the thief and went so bravely, with only John, to demand them for him! It is not my honour, and I must not take it."

"Oh, as to honour, you got the first clue from Damaris, if there's honour in it, but for that I do not care. I did the errand when you sent me on it, or opened my way. However it came about I will not give the papers to my father. In no wise will I stoop to set myself right in his eyes. Perhaps he will say that the whole story is false, that I did not get the papers on the ship, but had them hidden till fear and an uneasy conscience made me deliver them up, and that you are shielding your brother," said Giles, frowning as he turned from Constance.

"And I thought now everything would be right!" groaned the girl—her lips quivering, tears running down her cheeks. "Giles, dear Giles; don't, don't be so bitter, so unforgiving! It is not just to Father, not just to yourself, to me. It isn't *right*. Giles! Will you hold this grudge against the father you so loved, and forget all the years that went before, for a miserable day when he half harboured doubt of you, and that when he was torn by influence, tormented till he was hardly himself?"

"Now, Constance, there is no need of your turning preacher," Giles said, harshly.

"If you like to swallow insult, well and good. It does not matter about a girl, but a man's honour is his chiefest possession. Take the papers, and prate no more to me. My father wanted them; there they are. He suspected me of stealing them; I found the thief. That's all there is about it. What is there to-day to eat? An early row makes a man hungry. Art ready, Jack? We will go to the house, by your leave, pretty Sis. Sorry to see your eyes reddening, but better that than other harm."

Constance hesitated as Giles went up the beach, taking John with him. For a moment she debated seeking Captain Standish, giving him the papers, and asking him to be intermediary between her father and this headstrong boy, who talked so largely of himself as "a man," and behaved with such wrong-headed, childish obstinacy. But a second thought convinced her that she herself might serve Giles better than the captain, and she took her way after her brother, beginning to hope, true to herself, that her father's pleasure in recovering the papers, his desire to make amends to Giles, would express itself in such wise that they would be drawn together closer than before the trouble arose.

It was turning into a balmy day, after a chilly morning. Though only the middle of March the air was full of spring. In the community house, as Constance entered, she found her stepmother, and Mrs. White—each with her *Mayflower*-born baby held in one arm—busily setting forth the dinner, while Priscilla and Humility and Elizabeth helped them, and the smaller children, headed by Damaris, attempted to help, were sharply rebuked for getting in the way, subsided, but quickly darted up again to take a dish, or hand a knife which their inconsistent elders found needed.

Several men—Mr. Hopkins, Mr. White; Mr. Warren, whose wife had not yet come from England; Doctor Fuller, in like plight; John and Francis Billington's father, John Alden and Captain Myles Standish, as a matter of course—were discussing planting of corn while awaiting the finishing touches to their carefully rationed noonday meal.

"If you follow my counsel," the captain was saying, "you will plant over the spot where we have laid so many of our company. Thus far we hardly are aware of our savage neighbours, but with the warm weather they will come forth from their woodlands, and who knows what may befall us from them? Better, say I, conceal from them that no more than half of those who sailed hither are here to-day. Better hide from their eyes beneath the tall maize the graves on yonder hillside."

"Well said, good counsel, Captain Myles," said Stephen Hopkins. "God's acre, the folk of parts of Europe call the enclosure of their dead. We will make our acre God's acre, planting it doubly for our protection, in grain for our winter need, concealment of our devastation."

Suddenly the air was rent with a piercing shriek, and little Love Brewster, the Elder's seven-year-old son, came tumbling into the house, shaking and inarticulate with terror.

Priscilla Mullins caught him into her lap and tried to sooth him and discover the cause of his fright, but he only waved his little hands frantically and sobbed beyond all possibility of guessing

what words were smothered beneath the sobs.

"Elder Brewster promised to let the child pass the afternoon with Damaris," began Mrs. Hopkins, but before she got farther John Alden started up.

"Look there," he said. "Is it wonderful that Love finds the sight beyond him?"

"'Look there,' said John Alden"

Stalking toward the house in all the awful splendour of paint, feathers, beads, and gaudy blanket came a tall savage. He had, of course, seen the child and realized his fright and that he had run to alarm the pilgrims, but not a whit did it alter the steady pace at which he advanced, looking neither to left nor to right, his arms folded upon his breast, no sign apparent of whether he came in friendship or in enmity.

The first instinct of the colonists, in this first encounter with an Indian near to the settlement was to be prepared in case he came in enmity.

Several of the men reached for the guns which hung ready on the walls, and took them down, examining their horns and rods as they handled them. But the savage, standing in the doorway, made a gesture full of calm dignity which the pilgrims rightly construed to mean salutation, and uttered a throaty sound that plainly had the same import.

"Welcome!" hazarded Myles Standish advancing with outstretched hand upon the new-comer, uncertain how to begin his acquaintance, but hoping this might be pleasing. "Yes," said the Indian in English, to the boundless surprise of the Englishmen. "Yes, welcome, friend!" He took Captain Standish's hand.

"Chief?" he asked. "Samoset," he added, touching his own breast, and thus introducing himself.

"How in the name of all that is wonderful did he learn English!" cried Stephen Hopkins.

"Yes, Samoset know," the Indian turned upon him, understanding. "White men ships fish far, far sunrise," he pointed eastward, and they knew that he was telling them that English fishermen had been known to him, whose fishing grounds lay toward the east.

"'Tis true; our men have been far east and north of here," said Myles Standish, turning toward Stephen Hopkins, as to one who had travelled.

"Humphrey Gilbert, but many since then," nodded Mr. Hopkins.

"Big chief Squanto been home long time white men, he talk more Samoset," said Samoset. "Squanto come see——." He waved his hand comprehendingly over his audience, to indicate whom Squanto intended to visit.

"Well, womenfolk, you must find something better than you give us, and set it forth for our guest," said Stephen Hopkins. "Get out our English beer; Captain Myles I'll undertake, will join me in foregoing our portion to-morrow for him. And the preserved fruits; I'm certain he will find them a novelty. And you must draw on our store of trinkets for gifts. Lads—Giles, John, Francis—help the girls open the chest and make selection."

Samoset betrayed no understanding of these English words, maintaining a stolid indifference while preparations for his entertainment went on. But he did full justice to the best that the colonists had to set before him and accepted their subsequent gifts with a fine air of noble condescension, as a monarch accepting tribute.

Later with pipes filled with the refreshing weed from Virginia, which had circuitously found its way back to the New World, via England, the Plymouth men sat down to talk to Samoset.

Limited as was his vocabulary, broken as was his speech, yet they managed to understand much of what he told them, valuable information relating to their Indian neighbours near by, to the state of the country, to climate and soil, and to the people of the forests farther north.

Samoset went away bearing his gifts, with which, penetrating his reserve, the colonists saw that he was greatly pleased. He promised a speedy return, and to bring to them Squanto, from whose friendship and better knowledge of their speech and race evidently Samoset thought they would gain much.

The younger men—Doctor Fuller, John Alden and others, needless to say Giles, John, and Francis Billington, under the conduct of Myles Standish—accompanied Samoset for a few miles on his return.

The sun was dropping westward, the night promising to be as warmly kind as the day had been, and Constance slipped her hand into her father's arm as he stood watching their important guest's departure, under his escort's guardianship.

"A little tiny walk with me, Father dear?" she hinted. "I like to watch the sunset redden the sands, and it is so warm and fine. Besides, I have something most beautiful to tell you!"

"Good news, Con? This seems to be a day of good things," said her father, as Constance nodded hard. "The coming of yonder Indian seems to me the happiest thing that could well have befallen us. Given the friendship of our neighbouring tribes we have little to fear from more distant ones, and the great threat to our colony's continuance is removed. Well, I will walk with you child, but not far nor long. There is scant time for dalliance in our lives, you know."

They went out, Constance first running to snatch her cloak and pull its deep hood over her hair as a precaution against a cold that the warm day might betray her into, and which she had good reason to fear who had helped nurse the victims of the first months of the immigration.

"The good news, Daughter?" hinted Mr. Hopkins after they had walked a short distance in silence.

Constance laughed triumphantly, giving his arm a little shake. "I waited to see if you wouldn't ask!" she cried, "I knew you were just as curious, you men, as we poor women creatures—but of course in a big, manly way!" She pursed her lips and shook her head, lightly pinching her father to point her satire.

"Have a care, Mistress Constantia!" her father warned her. "Curiosity is a weakness, even dangerous, but disrespect to your elders and betters, what is that?"

"Great fun," retorted Constance.

Her father laughed. He found his girl's playfulness, which she was recovering with the springtide and the relief from the heavy sorrow of the first weeks in Plymouth, refreshing amid the extreme seriousness of most of the people around him. "Proceed with your tidings, you saucy minx!" he said.

"Very well then, Mr. Stephen Hopkins," Constance obeyed him, "what would you say if I were to tell you that there was news of your missing packet of papers?"

Stephen Hopkins stopped short. "I should say thank God with all my heart, Constance, not merely because the loss was serious, but most of all because of Giles. Is it true?" he asked.

"They are found!" cried Constance, jubilantly, "and it was Giles himself who faced the thief and forced him to give them up. It is a fine tale!" And she proceeded to tell it.

Her father's relief, his pleasure, was evidently great, but to Constance's alarm as the story ended, his face settled into an expression of annoyance.

"It is indeed good news, Constance, and I am grateful, relieved by it," he said, having heard her to the end. "But why did not Giles tell me this himself, bring me the recovered packet? Would it not be natural to wish to confer upon me, himself, the happiness he had won for me, to hasten to me with his victory, still more that it clears him of the least doubt of complicity in the loss?"

"Ah, no, Father! That is just the point of his not doing so!" cried Constance. "Giles is sore at heart that you felt there might be a doubt of him. He cannot endure it, nor seem to bring you proofs of his innocence. I suppose he does not feel like a boy, but like a man whose honour is questioned, and by—forgive me, Father, but I must make it clear—by one whose trust in him should be stronger than any other's."

"Nonsense, Constantia!" Stephen Hopkins exploded, angrily. "What are we coming to if we cannot question our own children? Giles is not a man; he is a boy, and my boy, so I shall expect him to render me an account of his actions whenever, and however I demand it. I'll not stand for his pride, his assumption of injured dignity. Let him remember that! Thank God my son is an honest lad, as by all reason he should be. But though he is right as to the theft, he is wrong in his arrogance, and pride is as deadly a sin as stealing. I want no more of this nonsense."

"Oh, Father dear," cried Constance, wringing her hands with her peculiar gesture when matters got too difficult for those small hands. "Please, please be kind to Giles! Oh, I thought everything would be all right now that the packet was recovered, and by him! Be patient with him, I beg you. He is not one that can be driven, but rather won by love to do your will. If you will convey to him that you regret having suspected him he will at once come back to be our own Giles."

"Have a care, Constantia, that in your anxiety for your brother you do not fall into a share of his fault!" warned her father. "It is not for you to advise me in my dealing with my son. As to trying to placate him by anything like an apology: preposterous suggestion! That is not the way of discipline, my girl! Let Giles indicate to me his proper humility, his regret for taking the attitude that I am not in authority over him, free to demand of him any explanation, any evidence of his character I please. No, no, Constance! You mean well, but you are wrong."

Thus saying, Mr. Hopkins turned on his heel to go back to the house, and Constance followed, no longer with her hand on her father's arm, but understanding the strong annoyance he felt toward Giles, and painfully conscious that her pleading for her brother had done less than no good.

CHAPTER IX

Seedtime of the First Spring

Giles Hopkins and John and Francis Billington slept in the new house, now nearly finished, on Leyden Street. Therefore it happened that Stephen Hopkins did not see his son until the morning after the recovery of the papers.

"Well, Giles," said his father, with a smile that Giles took to be mocking, but in which the father's hidden gratification really strove to escape, "so you played a man's part with the *Mayflower* captain, at the same time proving yourself? I am glad to get my papers, boy, and glad that you have shown that you had no share in their loss, but only in their return. Henceforth be somewhat less insolent when appearances are against you; still better take care that appearances, facts as well, are in your favour."

"Appearances are in the eye of the on-looker," said Giles, drawing himself up and flushing angrily, though, had he but seen it, love and pride in him shone in his father's eyes, though his tone and words were careless, gruff indeed.

"If Dame Eliza is to be the glass through which you view me, then it matters not what course I follow, for you will not see it straight. Nor do I care to act to the end that you may not suspect me of being fit for hanging. A gentleman's honour needs no proving, or else is proved by his sword. And whatever you think of me, I can never defend myself thus against my father. A father may insult his son with impunity."

"But a boy may not speak insultingly to his father with impunity, Master Giles Hopkins," said Stephen Hopkins, advancing close to the lad with his quick temper afire. "One word more of such nature as I just heard and I will have you publicly flogged, as you richly deserve, and as our community would applaud."

Giles bowed, his face as angry as his father's, and passed on cutting the young sprouts along the road with a stick he carried. And thus the two burning hearts which loved each other—too similar to make allowances for each other when the way was open to their reconciliation—were further estranged than before.

In the meantime Constance, Priscilla, and the younger girls, were starting out, tools in hand, baskets swinging on their arms, to prepare the first garden of the colony.

"Thank—I mean I rejoice that we are not sent to work amid the graves on the hillside," said Priscilla, altering her form of expression to conform with the prescribed sobriety.

"Oh, that is to be planted with the Indian corn, you know," said Constance. "It grows high, and will hide our graves. Why think of that, Prissy? I want to be happy." She began to hum a quaint air of her own making. She had by inheritance the gift of music, as the kindred gift of love and taste for all beauty, a gift that should never find expression in her new surroundings.

Presently she found words for her small tune and sang them, swinging her basket in time with her singing and also swinging Humility Cooper's hand as she walked, not without some danger of dropping into a sort of dance step.

This is what she sang:

> Over seas lies England;
> Still we find this wing-land;
> Birds and bees and butterflies flit about us here.
> Eastward lies our Mother,
> Loved as is no other,
> Yet here flowers blossom with the springing year.
>
> We will plant a garden,
> Eve-like, as the warden
> Of the hope of men unborn, future of the race;
> Tears that we were weeping,
> Watering our keeping,
> Till we make the New World joy's own dwelling place.

Priscilla Mullins stopped short and looked with amazement on her younger companion.

"Did you make that song, Constance?" she demanded, being used to the rhyming which Constance made to entertain the little ones.

"It made itself, Pris," laughed Constance.

"Well, I'm no judge of songs, and as to rhyming I could match cat and rat if it was put to me to do, but no more. Yet it seemeth me that is a pretty song, with exactly the truth for its burden, and it trippeth as sweetly as the robin whistles. Do you know, Constance, it seems to me to run more into smooth cadences than the Metrical Psalms themselves!" Priscilla dropped her voice as she said this, as if she hoped to be unheard by the vengeance which might swoop down on her.

Constance's laugh rang out merrily, quite unafraid.

"Oh, dear Prissy, the Metrical Version was not meant to run in smooth cadences!" she cried. "Do you see why we should not sing as the robin whistles, being young and God's creatures, surely

not less than the birds? Priscilla Mullins, there is John Alden awaiting us in the very spot where we are to work! How did he happen there, when no other man is about?"

"He spoke to me of helping us with the first heavy turning of the soil," said Priscilla, exceedingly red and uncomfortable, but constrained to be truthful. "Oh, Constance, never look at me like that! Can I help it that Master Alden is so considerate of us?"

"Sure-ly not!" declared Constance emphatically. "What about his returning home, Pris? He was hired but as cooper for the voyage, and would return. Will he go, think you?"

"He seems not fully decided. He said somewhat to me of staying." Poor Priscilla looked more than miserable as she said this, yet was forced to laugh.

"I will speak to my father and Captain Standish to get them to offer him work a-plenty this summer, so mayhap they can persuade him to let the *Mayflower* sail without him—next week she goes. Or perhaps you could bring arguments to bear upon him, Priscilla! He never seems stiff-necked, nor unbiddable." Constance said this with a great effect of innocence, as if a new thought had struck her, and Priscilla had barely time to murmur:

"Thou art a sad tease, Constance," before they came up with John Alden, who looked as embarrassed as Priscilla when he met Constance's dancing eyes.

Nevertheless it was not long before John Alden and Priscilla Mullins were working together at a little distance apart from the rest, leaving Constance to dig and rake in company with Humility Cooper, Elizabeth Tilley, and the little girls. Thus at work they saw approaching from the end of the road that was lost in the woods beyond a small but imposing procession of tall figures, wrapped in gaudy colored blankets, their heads surmounted with banded feathers which streamed down their backs, softly waving in the light breeze.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, Connie, they are savages!" whispered Damaris looking about as if wishing that a hole had been dug big enough to hide her instead of the small peas which she was planting.

"But they are friendly savages, small sister," said Constance. "See, they carry no bows and arrows. Do you know, girls, I believe this is the great chief Massasoit, of whom Samoset spoke, promising us his visit soon, and that with him may be Squanto, the Indian who speaks English! Don't you think we may be allowed to postpone the rest of the work to see the great conference which will take place if this is Massasoit?"

"Indeed, Constance, my back calls me to cease louder than any savage," said Humility, her hand on her waist, twisting her small body from side to side. "I have been wishing we might dare stop, but I couldn't bring myself to say so."

"You have not recovered strength for this bending and straining work, my dear," said Constance in her grandmotherly way. "Priscilla, Priscilla! John Alden, see!" she called, and the distant pair faced her with a visible start.

She pointed to the savages, and Priscilla and John hastened to her, thinking her afraid.

"Do you suppose it may be Massasoit and Squanto?" Constance asked at once.

"Let us hope so," said John Alden, looking with eager interest at the Indians. "We hope to make a treaty with Massasoit."

"Before you sail?" inquired Constance, guilelessly.

"Why, I am decided to cast my lot in with the colony, sweet Constance," said John, trying, but failing, to keep from looking at Priscilla.

"Pris?" cried Constance, and waited.

Priscilla threw her arms around Constance and hid her face, crying on her shoulder.

"My people are all dead, Connie, and I alone survive of us all on the *Mayflower*! Even my brother Joseph died; you know it, Connie! Do you blame me?" she sobbed.

"Oh, Prissy, dear Prissy!" Constance laughed at this piteous appeal. "Just as though you did not find John Alden most likeable when we were sailing and no one had yet died! And just as though you had to explain liking him! As though we did not all hold him dear and long to keep him with us! John Alden, I never, never would sit quiet under such insult! You funny Priscilla! What are you crying for? Aren't you happy? tell me that!"

"So happy I must cry," sobbed Priscilla, but drying her eyes nevertheless. "Do you suppose those savages see me?"

"I am sure of it," declared Constance. "Likely they will refuse to make a treaty with white men whose women act so strangely! My father is going to be as glad of your treaty with Priscilla as of the savage chief's treaty, an it be made, Master Alden."

"What is it? What's to do, dear John Alden?" clamoured Damaris, who never spoke to John without the caressing epithet.

The young man swung her to his shoulder, and kissed the soil-stained hand which the child laid against his cheek.

"I shall marry Priscilla and stay in Plymouth, not go back to England at all! Does that please you, little maid?" he cried, gaily.

Damaris scowled at him, weighing the case.

"If you like me best," she said doubtfully.

"Of a certainty!" affirmed John Alden, for once disregarding scruples. "Could I swing up Priscilla on my shoulder like this, I ask you? Why, she's not even a little girl!"

And confiding little Damaris was satisfied.

By this time the band of savages had advanced to the point of the road nearest to where the girls and John Alden were working.

"We must go to greet them lest they find us remiss. We do not know the workings of their minds," said John Alden, striding down toward them, followed by the somewhat timorous group of grown and little girls, Damaris clinging to him, with one hand on Constance, in fearful enjoyment of the wonderful sight.

"Welcome!" said John Alden, coming across the undergrowth to where the savages awaited him. "If you come in friendship, as I see you do, welcome, my brothers."

"Welcome," said an Indian, stepping somewhat in advance. "We come in friendship. I am Squanto who know your race. I have been in England; I have seen the king. I am bring you friendship. This is Massasoit, the great chief. You are not the great white chief. He is old a little. Take us there."

"Gladly will I take you to our governor, who is, as you say, much older than I, and to our war chief, Myles Standish, and to the elders of our nation," said John Alden. "Follow me. You are most welcome, Massasoit, and Squanto, who can speak our tongue."

The singular company, the girls in their deep bonnets to shade them from the sun, the Indians in their paint and gay nodding feathers, the children divided between keen enjoyment of the novelty and equally keen fear of what might happen next, with John Alden the only white man, came down into Plymouth settlement, not yet so built up as to suggest the name.

Governor Carver was busied with William Bradford over the records of the colony, from which they were making extracts to dispatch to England in the near sailing of the *Mayflower*. John Alden turned to Elizabeth Tilley.

"Run on, little maid, and tell the governor and elders whom we bring," he said.

Elizabeth darted into the house, earning a frown from the governor for her lack of manners, but instantly forgiven when she cried:

"John Alden and we who were working in the field are bringing Your Excellency the Indian chief Massasoit, and Squanto, who talks to us in English wonderful to hear, when you look at his feathers and painted face! And John Alden sent me on to tell you. And, there are other Indians with them. And, oh, Governor Carver, shall I tell the women in the community house to cook meat for their dinner, or shall it be just our common dinner of porridge with, maybe, a smoked herring to sharpen us? For this the governor should order, should not he?"

Governor Carver and William Bradford smiled. As a rule the younger members of the community over which these elder, grave men were set, feared them too much to say anything at which they could smile, but the greatness of this occasion swept Elizabeth beyond herself.

"I think, Mistress Elizabeth Tilley, that the matrons will not need the governor's counsel as to the feeding of our guests," said Governor Carver kindly. "Tell Constantia Hopkins to bid her father hither at his earliest convenience. I shall ask him to make the treaty with Massasoit, together with Edward Winslow, if it be question of a treaty, as I hope."

Elizabeth sped back and met the approaching guests. She dropped a frightened curtsy, not knowing the etiquette of meeting a band of friendly savages. But as they paid no attention to her, her manners did not matter, and realizing this with relief she joined Constance at the rear of the procession and delivered her message.

"Porridge indeed!" exclaimed Mistress Hopkins when Elizabeth Tilley repeated to her the governor's comment on her own suggestion as to the dinner for the Indian guests. "Porridge is well enough for us, but we will set the savages down to no such fare, but to our best, lest they fall to and eat us all some night in the dark of the moon, when we are asleep and unprotected! Little I thought I should be cooking for wild red men in an American forest when I learned to make sausage in my father's house! But learn I did, and to make it fit for the king, so it should please the savages, though what they like is beyond my knowledge. Sausage shall they have, and whether or no they will take to griddle cakes I dare not say, but it's my opinion that men are men, civilized or wild, and never a man did I see that was not as keen set on griddle cakes as a fox on a chicken roost. It will be our part to feed these savages well, for, as I say, men are men, wild or English, and if you would have a man deal well by you make your terms after he hath well eaten. Thus may your father and Elder Brewster get a good treaty from these painted creatures. Get out the flour, Constantia, and stir up the batter. Humility and Elizabeth, fetch the jar of griddle fat. Priscilla Mullins, what aileth thee? Art sleep-walking? Call a boy to fetch wood for the hearth, and fill the kettle. Are you John-a-Dreams, and is this the time for dreaming?"

"It's John-dream at least, is it not, Prissy?" whispered Constance, pinching the girl lightly as she passed her on her way to do her share of her step-mother's bidding.

Later Constance went to summon the guests to the community house for their dinner. They came majestically, escorted by the governor, Elder Brewster, William Bradford, Stephen Hopkins, the weighty men of the colony, with Captain Standish in advance, representing the power of might. What the Indians thought of these Englishmen no one could tell; certainly they were not less appreciative of the counsel of the wise than of the force of arms, having reliance on their own

part upon their medicine men and soothsayers.

What they thought of the white women's cooking was soon perfectly apparent. It kept the women busy to serve them with cakes, to hold the glowing coals on the hearth at the right degree to keep the griddle heated to the point of perfect browning, never passing it to the burning point. The Indians devoured the cakes like a band of hungry boys, and Mistress Hopkins's boasted sausage was never better appreciated on an English farm table than here.

The young girls served the guests, which the Indians accepted as the natural thing, being used to taking the first place with squaws, both young and old.

The homebrewed beer which had come across seas in casks abundantly, also met with ultimate approval, though at first taste two or three of the Indians nearly betrayed aversion to its bitterness. There were "strong waters" too, made riper by long tossing in the *Mayflower's* hold, which needed no persuading of the Indians' palates.

After the guests had dined Giles, John, Francis, and the other older boys, came trooping to the community house for their dinner.

When they discovered that Squanto spoke English fairly well they were agog to hear from him the many things that he could tell them.

"Stay with us; they do not need you," they implored, but Squanto, mindful of his duties as interpreter, reluctantly left them presently. Massasoit and his other companions returned with the white men to the conclave house, which was the governor's and Elder Brewster's home.

"I go but wish I might stay a little hour," said Squanto. He won Mistress Eliza's heart, with Mistress White's, by his evident friendliness and desire to stay with them.

After this Damaris and the children could not fear him, and thus at his first introduction, Squanto, who was to become the friend and reliance of the colony, became what is even more, the friend of the little children.

CHAPTER X

TREATIES

The girls of the plantation were gathered together in Stephen Hopkins's house. The logs on the hearth were ash-strewn to check their burning yet to hold them ready to burn when the hour for preparing supper was come and the ashes raked away.

Dame Eliza Hopkins had betaken herself to William Bradford's house, the baby, Oceanus, seated astride her hip in her favourite manner of carrying him; she protested that she could not endure the gabble of the girls, but in truth she greatly desired to discuss with Mistress Bradford, of whom she stood somewhat in awe, the events portending. She was secretly elated with her husband's coming honour, and wanted to convey to Mistress Bradford that, as between their two spouses, Stephen Hopkins was the better man.

Constance, sitting beside the smothered hearth fire, might be considered, since it was at her father's hearthstone the girls were gathered, as the hostess of the occasion, but the gathering was for work, not formalities, and, in any case, Constance was too preoccupied with her task to pay attention to aught else.

Only the older girls were bidden, but little Damaris was there by right of tenancy. She sat at Constance's feet, worshipping her, as she turned and twisted their father's coat, skilfully furbishing it with new buttons and new binding.

"May Mr. Hopkins wear velvet, Constance?" asked Humility Cooper, suddenly; she too had been watching Constance work. "Did not Elder Brewster exhort us to utmost plainness of clothing, as becomes the saints, who set more store upon heavenly raiment than earthly splendour?"

Constance looked up laughingly, pushing out of her eyes her waving locks which had strayed from her cap; she used the back of the hand that held her needle, pulled at great length through a button which she was fastening upon her father's worn velvet coat.

"Oh, Humility, splendour?" she laughed. "When I am trying hard to make this old coat passing decent? Isn't it necessary for us all to wear what we have, willy-nilly, since nothing else is obtainable, garments not yet growing on New World bushes? I do believe that some of the brethren discussed Stephen Hopkins's velvet coat, and decided for it, since it stood for economy. It stood for more; till a ship brings supplies from home, it's this, or no coat for my father. But since he has been selected, with Mr. Edward Winslow, to make the treaty with Massasoit, he should be clad suitably to his office, were there choice between velvet and homespun."

"What does he make to treat Mass o' suet, Constance? What is Mass o' suet; pudding, Constance?" asked Damaris, anxiously, knitting her brow.

Constance's laugh rang out, good to hear. She leaned forward impetuously and snatched off her little sister's decorous cap, rumpled her sleek fair hair with both hands pressing her head, and kissed her. Priscilla Mullins laughed with Constance, looking sympathetically at her, but some of

the other girls looked a trifle shocked at this demonstration.

"Massasoit is a great Indian chief, small lass; he is coming in a day or so, and Father and Mr. Winslow will make a treaty with him; that means that Massasoit will promise to be our friend and to protect us from other Indian tribes, he and his Indians, while we shall promise to be true friends to him. It is a great good to our colony, and we are proud, you and I—and I think your mother, too"—Constance glanced with amusement at Priscilla—"that our father is chosen for the colony's representative."

"Do you suppose that the Indians know whether cloth or velvet is grander? Those we see like leather and paint and feathers," said Priscilla. "I hold that our men should overawe the savages, but——"

"And I hold that brides should be bonny, let it be here, or in England," Constance interrupted her. "What will you wear on the day of days, Priscilla, you darling?"

"Well, I have consulted with Mistress Brewster," admitted Priscilla, regretfully. "I did think, being a woman, she would know better how a young maid feeleth as to her bridal gown than her godly husband. But she saith that it is least of all becoming on such a solemn occasion to let my mind consider my outward seeming. So I have that excellent wool skirt that Mistress White dyed for me a good brown, and that with my blue body——"

"Blue fiddlesticks, Priscilla Mullins!" Constance again interrupted her, impatiently. "You'll wear nothing of the kind. I tell you it shall be white for you on your wedding day, with your comely face and your honest eyes shining over it! I have a sweet embroidered muslin, and I can fashion it for you with a little cleverness and a deep frill combined, for that you are taller than I, and more plump to take up its length, there's no denying, Prissy dear! We'll not stand by and see our plantation's one real romance end in dyed brown cloth and dreariness, will we, girls?"

"No!" cried Humility Cooper who would have followed Constance's lead into worse danger than a pretty wedding gown for Priscilla.

But Elizabeth Tilley, her cousin, looked doubtful. "It sounds nice," she admitted, "but I never can tell what is wrong and what is right, because, though we read our Bibles to learn our duty, the Bible does not condemn pleasure, and our teachers do. So it might be safer to wear dull garments when we are married, Constance, and not be light-minded."

"You mean light-bodied; light-coloured bodies, Betsy!" Constance laughed at her, with a glint of mischievous appreciation of Elizabeth's unconscious humour that was like her father. "No, indeed, my sister pilgrim. A snowy gown for Pris, though I fashion it, who am not too skilful. Oh, Francis Billington, how you scared me!" she cried, jumping to her feet and upsetting Damaris who leaned upon her, as Francis Billington burst into the room, out of breath, but full of importance.

"Nothing to fear with me about, girls," he assured the roomful. "But great news! Massasoit has come, marched in upon us before we expected him, and the treaty is to be made to-morrow. Squanto is as proud and delighted as——"

Squanto himself appeared in the doorway at that moment, a smile mantling his high cheek bones and a gleam in his eyes that betrayed the importance that his pride tried to conceal.

"Chief come, English girls," he announced. "No more you be fear Indian; Massasoit tell you be no more fear, he and Squanto fight for you, and he say true. No more fear, little English girl!" he laid his hand protectingly upon Damaris's head and the child smiled up at him, confidingly.

Giles came fast upon Squanto's heels. His face was flushed, his eyes kindled; Constance saw with a leap of her heart that he looked like the lad she had loved in England and had lost in the New World.

"Got Father's coat ready, Con?" he asked. "There's to be a counsel held, and my father is to preside over it on our side, arranging with Massasoit. My father is to settle with him for the colony—of course Mr. Winslow will have his say, also."

"I meant to furbish the coat somewhat more, Giles, but the necessary repairs are made," said Constance yielding her brother the garment. "How proud of Father he is!" she thought, happily. "How truly he adores him, however awry matters go between them!"

Giles hung the coat on his arm, carefully, to keep it from wrinkles, a most unusual thoughtfulness in him, and hastened away.

"No more work to-day, girls, or at least of this sort," cried Constance gaily, her heart lightened by Giles's unmistakable pride in their father. "We shall be called upon to cook and serve. Many Indians come with Massasoit, Squanto?"

"No, his chiefs," Squanto raised one hand and touched its fingers separately, then did the same with the other hand. "Ten," he announced after this illustration.

"That means no less than thirty potatoes, and something less than twenty quarts of porridge," laughed Constance, but was called to account by her stepmother, who had come in from the rear.

"Will you never speak the truth soberly, Constantia Hopkins?" she said. "We do not count on two quarts of porridge for every Indian we feed. Take this child; he is heavy for so long, and he hath kicked with both heels in my flesh every step of the way. Another Hopkins, I'll warrant, I've borne for my folly in marrying your father; a restless, headstrong brood are they, and Oceanus is already not content to sit quietly on his mother's hip, but will drive her, like a camel of the

desert." She detached Oceanus's feet from her skirt and handed him over to Constance with a jerk. Constance received him, biting her lips to hold back laughter, and burying her face in the back of the baby neck that had been pitifully thin during the cruel winter, but which was beginning to wrinkle with plumpness now.

Too late she concealed her face; Mistress Eliza caught a glimpse of it and was upon her.

"It's not a matter for laughter that I should be pummelled by your brother, however young he may be," she cried; Dame Eliza had a way of underscoring her children's kinship to Constance whenever they were troublesome. "Though, indeed, I carry on my back the weight of your father's children, and my heart is worse bruised by the ingratitude of you and your brother Giles, than is my flesh with this child's heels. And Mistress Bradford is proud-hearted, and that I will maintain, Puritan or no Puritan, or whether she be one of the elect of this chosen company, or a sinner. For plain could I see this afternoon that she held her husband to be a better man, and higher in the colony, than my husband, nor would she give way one jot when I put it before her—though not so that she would see what I would be after—that Stephen Hopkins it was who was chosen with Mr. Winslow to make the treaty, and not William Bradford. Well, far be it from me to take pride in worldly things; I thank the good training that my mother gave me that I am humble-minded. Often and often would she say to me: Eliza, never plume yourself that you, and your people before you, are, as they are, better, more righteous people than are most other folks. For it is our part to bear ourselves humbly, not setting ourselves up for our virtue, but content to know that we have it and to see how others are lacking in it, making no traffic with sinners, but yet not boasting. And as to you, young women, it would be better if you betook yourselves to your proper homes, not lingering here to encourage Constantia Hopkins to idleness when I've my hands full, and more than full, to make ready for the Indian chiefs' supper, and I need her help."

On this strong hint the Plymouth girls bade Constance good-bye and departed, leaving her to a bustle of hard work, accompanied by her stepmother's scolding; Dame Eliza had come back dissatisfied from her visit, and Constance paid the penalty.

The next morning the men of Plymouth gathered at the house of Elder Brewster, attired in all the decorum of their Sunday garb, their faces gravely expressive of the importance of the event about to take place.

Captain Myles Standish, indeed, felt some misgivings of the pervading gravity of clothing of the civilized participants in this treaty, that it might not sufficiently impress their savage allies. He had fastened a bright plume that had been poor Rose's, on the side of his hat, and a band of English red ribbon across his breast, while he carried arms burnished to their brightest, his sword unsheathed, that the sun might catch its gleam.

Elder Brewster shook his head slightly at the sight of this display, but let it pass, partly because Captain Standish ill-liked interference in his affairs, partly because he understood its reason, and half believed that the doughty Myles was right.

Not less solemn than the white men, but as gay with colours as the Puritans were sombre, the Indians, headed by Massasoit, marched to the rendezvous from the house which had been allotted to them for lodging.

With perfect dignity Massasoit took his place at the head of the council room, and saluted Captain Standish and Elder Brewster, who advanced toward him, then retreated and gave place to Stephen Hopkins and Edward Winslow, who were to execute the treaty.

Its terms had already been discussed, but the Indians listened attentively to Squanto's interpretation of Mr. Hopkins's reading of them. They promised, on the part of Massasoit, perfect safety to the settlers from danger of the Indians' harming them, and, on the part of the pilgrims, aid to Massasoit against his enemies; on the part of both savage and white men, that justice should be done upon any one who wronged his neighbour, savage or civilized.

The gifts that bound both parties to this treaty were exchanged, and the treaty, that was so important to the struggling colony, was consummated.

The women and children, even the youths, were excluded from the council; the women had enough to do to prepare the feast that was to celebrate the compact before Massasoit took up his march of forty miles to return to his village.

But Giles leaned against the casement of the open door, unforbidden, glowing with pride in his father, for the first time in heart and soul a colonist, completely in sympathy with the event he was witnessing.

Stephen Hopkins saw him there and made no sign of dismissal. Their eyes met with their old look of love; father and son were in that hour united, though separated. Suddenly there arose a tremendous racket, a volley of shots, a beating of pans, shouts, pandemonium.

Captain Myles Standish turned angrily and saw John and Francis Billington, decorated with streamers of party-coloured rags, which made them look as if they had escaped from a madhouse, leaping and shouting, beating and shooting; John firing his clumsy "Bouncing Bully" in the air as fast as he could load it; Francis filling in the rest of the outrageous performance.

But worst of all was that Stephen Hopkins, who saw what Captain Myles saw, saw also his own boy, whom but a moment before he had looked at lovingly, bent and swayed by laughter.

Captain Standish strode out in a towering fury to deal with the Billingtons, with whom he was ceaselessly dealing in anger, as they were ceaselessly afflicting the little community with the pranks that shocked and outraged its decorum.

Stephen Hopkins dashed out after him. Quick to anger, sure of his own judgments, he instantly leaped to the conclusion that Giles had been waiting at the door to enjoy this prank when it was enacted, and it was a prank that passed ordinary mischief. If the Indians recognized it for a prank, they would undoubtedly take it as an insult to them. Only the chance that they might consider it a serious celebration of the treaty, afforded hope that it might not annul the treaty at its birth, and put Plymouth in a worse plight than before it was made.

Mr. Hopkins seized Giles by the shoulders and shook him.

"You laugh? You laugh at this, you young wastrel?" he said, fiercely. "By heavens, I could deal with you for conniving at this, which may earn salt tears from us all, if the savages take it amiss and retaliate on us. Will you never learn sense? How, in heaven's name, can you help on with this, knowing what you know of the danger to your own sisters should the savages take offence at it? Angels above us, and but a moment agone I thought you were my son, and rejoicing in this important day!"

Giles, white, with burning eyes, looked straight into his father's eyes, rage, wounded pride, the sudden revolt of a love that had just been enkindled anew in him, distorting his face.

"You never consider justice, sir," he said, chokingly. "You never ask, nor want to hear facts, lest they might be in my favour. You welcome a chance to believe ill of me. It is Giles, therefore the worst must be true; that's your argument."

He turned away, head up, no relenting in his air, but the boy's heart in him was longing to burst in bitter weeping.

Stephen Hopkins stood still, a swift doubt of his accusation, of himself, keen sorrow if he had wronged his boy, seizing him.

"Giles, stop. Giles, come back," he said.

But Giles walked away the faster, and his father was forced to return to Massasoit, to discover whether he had taken amiss what had happened, and, if he had, to placate him, could it be done.

To his inexpressible relief he found that their savage guests had not suspected that the boys' mischief had been other than a tribute to themselves, quite in the key of their own celebrations of joyous occasions.

After the dinner in which all the women of the settlement showed their skill, the Indians departed as they had come, leaving Squanto to be the invaluable friend of their white allies.

Giles kept out of his father's way; Stephen Hopkins was not able to find him to clear up what he began to hope had been an unfounded suspicion on his part. "Zounds!" said the kind, though irascible man. "Giles is almost grown. If I did wrong him, I am sorry and will say so. An apology will not harm me, and is his due—that is in case it *is* due! I'll set the lad an example and ask his pardon if I misjudged him. He did not deny it, to be sure, but then Giles is too proud to deny an unjust accusation. And he looked innocent. Well, a good lad is Giles, in spite of his faults. I'll find him and get to the bottom of it."

"Giles is all right, Stephen," said Myles Standish, to whom he was speaking. "Affairs that go wrong between you are usually partly your own fault. He needs guiding, but you lose your own head, and then how can you guide him? But those Billington boys, they are another matter! By Gog and Magog, there's got to be authority put into my hands to deal with them summarily! And their father's a madman, no less. I told them to-day they'd cool their heels in Plymouth jail; we'd build Plymouth jail expressly for that purpose. And I mean it. I'm the last man to be hard on mischief; heaven knows I was a harum-scarum in my time. But mischief that is overflowing spirits, and mischief that is harmful are two different matters. I've had all I'll stand of Jack Billington, his Bouncing Bully and himself!"

"Here comes Connie. I wonder if she knows anything of her brother? If she does, she'll speak of it; if she doesn't, don't disturb her peace of mind, Myles. My pretty girl! She hurts me by her prettiness, here in the wilderness, far from her right to a sweet girl's dower of pleasure, admiration, dancing, and——"

"Stephen, Stephen, for the love of all our discarded saints, forbear!" protested Captain Myles, interrupting his friend, laughing. "If our friends about here heard you lamenting such a list of lost joys for Constance, by my sword, they'd deal with you no gentler than I purpose dealing with the Billingtons! Ah, sweet Con, and no need to ask how the day of the treaty hath left you! You look abloom with youth and gladness, dear lass."

"I am happy," said Constance, slipping her hand into her father's and smiling up into the faces of both the men, who loved her. "Wasn't it a great day, Father? Isn't it blessed to feel secure from invasion, and, more than that, secure of an ally, in case of unknown enemies coming? Oh, Father, Giles was so proud of you! It was funny, but beautiful, to see how his eyes shone, and how straight he carried himself, because his father was the man who made the treaty for us all! I love you, dearest, quite enough, and I am proud of you to bursting point, but Giles is almost a man, and he is proud of you as men are proud; meseems it is a deeper feeling than in us women, who are content to love, and care less for ambition."

Stephen Hopkins winced; he saw that Constance did not know that anything was again amiss between the two who were dearest to her on earth, but he said:

"'Us women,' indeed, Constantia! Do you reckon yourself a woman, who art still but my child-daughter?"

"Not a child, Father," said the girl, truly enough, shaking her head hard. "No pilgrim maid can be a child at my age, having seen and shared what hath fallen to my lot. And to-morrow there is to be another treaty made of peace and alliance, which is much on my mind, because I am a woman and because I love Priscilla. To-morrow is Pris married, Father."

"Of a truth, and so she is!" cried Stephen Hopkins, slapping his leg vigorously.

"Well, my girl, and what is it? Do you want to deck her out, as will not be allowed? Or what is on your mind?"

"Oh, I have made her a white gown, Father," said Constance. "Whatever they say, sweet Pris shall not go in dark clothing to her marriage! But, Father, Mr. Winslow is to marry her, as a magistrate, which he is. Is there no way to make it a little like a holy wedding, with church, and prayers, and religion?"

"My dear, they have decided here that marriage is but a matter belonging to the state. You must check your scruples, child, and go along with arrangements as they are. There is much of your earliest training, of your sainted mother's training, in you yet, my Constance, and, please God, you will remain her daughter always. But you cannot alter the ways of Plymouth colony. So be content, sweet Con, to pray for our Pris all you will, and rest assured they receive blessings who seek them, however they be situate," said Stephen Hopkins, gently touching his girl's white-capped head.

"Ah, well," sighed Constance, turning away in acquiescence.

Captain Myles Standish and her father watched Constance away. Then they turned in the other direction with a sigh.

"Hard to face westward all the time, my friend; even Con feels the tug of old ways, and the old home, on her heartstrings," said Captain Myles.

CHAPTER XI

A Home Begun and a Home Undone

"Do you know aught of your brother, Constance?" asked Stephen Hopkins when he appeared in the great kitchen and common room of his home early the following morning.

"He hath been away from home all night," Dame Eliza answered for Constance, her lips pulled down grimly.

"Which I know quite well, wife," said her husband. "Constance, did Giles speak to you of whither he was going?"

Constance looked up, meeting her father's troubled eyes, her own cloudless.

"No, Father, but he must be with the other lads. Perhaps they are serving up some merry trick for the wedding. Nothing can have befallen him. Giles was the happiest lad yesterday, Father dear! I must hasten through the breakfast-getting!"

Constance fluttered away in a visible state of pleasant excitement. Her father watched her without speaking, his eyes still gloomy; he knew that Constance lacked knowledge of his reason for being anxious over Giles's absence.

"And why should you hasten the getting of breakfast, Constantia Hopkins?" demanded Dame Eliza. "It is to be no earlier than common. If you are thinking to see Priscilla Mullins made the wife of John Alden, it will not be till nine of the clock, and that is nearly three hours distant."

"Ah, but I am going to dress the bride!" triumphed Constance. "I'm going to dress her from top to toe, and coil her wealth of glossy hair, to show best its masses! And to crown her dear pretty face with it brought around her brow, as only I can bend it, so Pris declares! My dear, winsome Pris!"

"Will you let be such vanity and catering to sinful worldliness, Stephen Hopkins?" demanded that unfortunate man's wife, with asperity. "Why will you allow your daughter to divert Priscilla Mullins from the awfulness of the vows she will utter, filling her mind with thoughts that ill become a Puritan bride, and one to be a Puritan wife? I will say for your wife, sir, that she did not come to vow herself to you in such wise. And when Constantia herself becomes a matron of this plantation she will not deport herself becomingly if she spend her maidenhood fostering vanity in others. But there is no folly in which you will not uphold her! I pray that I may live to keep Damaris to the narrow path."

"Aye, and my sweet Con hath lost Her mother!" burst out Stephen Hopkins, already too disturbed in mind to bear his wife's nagging.

His allusion to Constance's mother, of whose memory his wife was vindictively jealous, would have brought forth a storm, but that Constance flew to her father, caught him by the arm, and drew him swiftly out of the door, saying:

"Nay, nay, my dear one; what is the use? Let us be happy on Pris's wedding day. I feel as though if we were happy it would somehow bring good to her. Don't mind Mistress Eliza; let her rail. If it

were not about this, it would be something else. Come down the grass a way, my father, and see how the sunshine sparkles on the sea. The day is smiling on Pris, at least, and is decked for her by God, so why should my stepmother mind that I shall make the girl herself as fair as I know how?"

"You are a dear lass, Con, child, and I swear I don't know how I should bear my days without you," said Stephen Hopkins, something suspiciously like a quaver in his voice.

He did not return to the house till Con had prepared the breakfast. Hastily she cleared it away, her stepmother purposely delaying the meal as long as possible. But Dame Eliza's utmost contrariness could not hold back Constance's swift work long enough to make the hour very late when it was done, the room set in order, and Constance herself, unadorned, in her plain Sunday garb, hastening over the young grass to where Priscilla awaited her.

No one else had been allowed to help Constance in her loving labour. Beginning with Priscilla's sturdy shoes—there were no bridal slippers in Plymouth!—Constance, on her knees, laced Pris into the gear in which she would walk to meet John Alden, and followed this up, garment by garment, which she and Priscilla had sewn in their brief spare moments, until she reached the masses of shining brown hair, which was Priscilla's glory and Constance's affectionate pride.

Brushing, and braiding, and coiling skilfully, Constance wound the fine, yet heavy locks around Priscilla's head.

Then with deft fingers she pulled, and patted and fastened into curves above her brow sundry strands which she had left free for that purpose, and fell back to admire her results.

"Well, my Prissy!" Constance cried, rapturously clapping her hands. "Wait till you are dressed, and I let you see this in the glass yonder. No, not now! Only when the bridal gown is donned! My word, Priscilla Mullins, but John Alden will think that he never saw, nor loved you until this day! Which is as we would wish him to feel. They may forbid us curling and waving our locks in this plantation, but no one ever yet, as I truly believe, could make laws to keep girls from increasing their charms! Your hair brought down and shaken loose thus around your face, my Pris, is far, far more lovely, and adorns you better than any curling tongs could do it. Because, after all, nature fits faces and hair together, and my waving hair would not be half so becoming to you as your own straight hair, thus crowning your brow. Constance Hopkins, my girl, I am proud of your skill as lady's maid!" And Constance kissed her own hand by way of her reward, as she went to the corner and gingerly lifted the white gown that waited there for her handling.

It was a soft, fragile thing, made of white stuff from the East, embroidered all over with sprigs of small flowers. It had been Constance's mother's, and had come from England at the bottom of her own chest, safe hidden, together with other beautiful fabrics that had been Constance's mother's, from the condemnatory eyes of Stephen Hopkins's second wife.

"It troubles me to wear this flimsy loveliness, Constance," said Priscilla, as the gown drifted down over her shoulders. "And to think it was thy mother's."

"It will not harm it to lie over your true heart to-day, dearest Pris, when you vow to love John forever. It seems to me as though lifeless things drew something of value to themselves from contact with goodness and love. Pris, it is really most exquisite! And that deep ruffle that I sewed around it at the bottom makes it exactly long enough for you, yet it leaves it still right for me to wear, should I ever want to, only by ripping it off again! Oh, Priscilla, dear, you are lovely enough, and this embroidery is fine enough, for you to be a London bride!"

Once more Constance fell back to admire at the same time Priscilla and her achievements.

"I think, perhaps, it may be wrong, as they tell us it is, to care too much for outward adornment, Con dear. Not but that I like it, and love you for being so unselfish, so generous to me," said Priscilla, with her sweet gravity of manner.

"Constance, if only my mother and father, and Joseph—but of course my parents I mourn more than my brother—were here to bless me to-day!"

"Try to feel that they are here, Prissy," said Constance. "There be Christians in plenty who would tell you that they pray for you still."

"Oh, but that is superstition!" protested Priscilla, shocked.

Constance set her face into a sort of laughing and sweet contrariness.

"There be Christians in plenty who believe it," she repeated. "And it seems a comforting and innocent enough thing to me. Art ready now, Priscilla? But before you go, kiss me here the kind of good-bye that we cannot take in public; my good-bye to dear Priscilla Mullins; your good-bye to Con, with whom, though dear friends we remain for aye, please God, you never again will be just the same close gossip that we have been as maids together, on ship-board and land, through sore grief and hardships, yet with abounding laughter when we had half a chance to smile."

"Why, Con, don't make me cry!" begged Priscilla, holding Constance tight, her eyes filling with tears. "You speak sadly, and like one years older than yourself, who had learned the changes of our mortal life. I'll not love you less that I am married."

"Yes, you will, Pris! Or, if not less, at least differently. For maids are one in simple interests, quick to share tears and laughter, while the young matron is occupied with graver matters, and there is not oneness between them. It is right so, but——Well, then, kiss me good-bye, Pris, my comrade, and bid Mistress John Alden, when you know her, love me well for your sweet sake," insisted Constance, not far from tears herself.

Quietly the two girls stole out of the bedroom, into the common room of the new house which Doctor Fuller had built for the reception of his wife, whose coming from England he eagerly awaited. The widow White and Priscilla had been lodged there, helping the doctor to get it in order.

"You look well, Priscilla," said Mrs. White. "Say what they will, there is something in the notion of a young maiden going in white to her marriage. Your friends are waiting you outside. I wish you well, my daughter, and may you be blessed in all your undertakings."

Priscilla went to the door and Constance opened it for her, stepping back to let the bride precede her. Beyond it were waiting the young girls of the settlement; Humility Cooper and her cousin, Elizabeth Tilley, caught Priscilla by the hands.

"How fair you are, dear!" cried Humility. "The children begged to be allowed to come to your wedding, and they are all waiting at Mr. Winslow's, for you were always their great friend, and there is scarce a limit to their love for John Alden."

"Surely let the children come!" said Priscilla. "They are first of all of us, and will win blessings for John Alden and me."

The girls fell into line ahead of her, and Priscilla walked down Leyden Street, the short distance that lay between the doctor's house and Edward Winslow's, her head bent, her eyes upon the ground, the colour faded from her fresh-tinted face. At the magistrate's house the elders of the little community were gathered, waiting. John Alden came out and met his bride on the narrow, sanded walk, and led her soberly into the house and up to Edward Winslow, who awaited them in his plain, close-buttoned coat, with its broad collar and cuffs of white linen newly and stiffly starched and ironed.

It was a brief ceremony, divested of all but the necessary questions and replies, yet to all present it was not lacking in impressiveness, for the memory of recent suffering was vivid in every mind; the longing for the many who were dead was poignant, and the consciousness of the uncertainty of the future of the young people, who were thus beginning their life together, was acute, though no one would have allowed its expression, lest it imply a lack of faith.

When Mr. Winslow had pronounced John and Priscilla man and wife, Elder William Brewster arose and, with extended hands, called down upon their heads the blessing of the God of Israel, and prayed for their welfare in this world, their reward in the world to come.

Without any of the merriment which accompanied congratulations and salutations at a marriage in England, these serious men and women came up in turn and gravely kissed the bride upon her cheek, and shook John Alden's hand. Yet each one was fond of Priscilla and had grieved with her on her father's, mother's, and brother's deaths, and each one honoured and truly was attached to John Alden.

But even in Plymouth colony youth had to be more or less youthful.

"Come, now; we're taking you home!" cried Francis Billington. "Fall in, girls and boys, big and little, grown folks as well, if only you will, and let us see our bride and her man started in their new home! And who remembers a rousing chorus?"

John Alden had been building his house with the help of the older boys; to it now he was taking Priscilla on her wedding journey, made on her own feet, a distance of a few hundred yards.

"No rousing choruses here, sir," said Edward Winslow, sternly. "If you will escort our friends to their home—and to that there can be no objection—let it be to the sound of godly psalms, not to profane songs."

"You offer us youngsters little inducement to marry when our time comes," muttered Francis, but he took good care that Mr. Winslow should not hear him, having no desire to run counter at that moment to Mr. Winslow's will, knowing that he and Jack were already in danger of being dealt with by the authorities. And where was Jack? He had not seen his brother since the previous day.

Boys and young men in advance, girls and the younger women following, the bridal pair bringing up the rear, the little procession went up Leyden Street and drew up at the door of the exceedingly small house which John Alden had made for his wife. Francis, who had constituted himself master of ceremonies, made the escort divide into two lines and, between them, John and Priscilla walked into their house. And with that the wedding was over.

For an instant the young people held their places, staring across the space that separated them, with the blank feeling that always follows after the end of an event long anticipated.

Then Constance turned with a sigh, looking about her, wondering if she really were to resume her work-a-day tasks, first of all get dinner.

She met her father's intent gaze and his look startled her. He beckoned her, and she stepped back out of the line and joined him.

"Giles, Constance; where is he?" demanded Stephen Hopkins.

"Father, I don't know! Isn't he here?" she cried.

"He is not here, nor is John Billington," said her father. "No one has seen either of them since last night. Is it likely that they would absent themselves willingly from this wedding; Giles, who is so fond of John Alden; John Billington, who is so fond of anything whatever that breaks the monotony of the days?"

Constance shook her head. "No, Father," she whispered.

"No. And you have no clue to this disappearance, Constance?" her father insisted.

"Father, Father, no; no, indeed!" protested Constance. "I did not so much as miss the boys from among us. But what could have befallen them? It can't be that they have come to harm?"

"Constance," said her father with a visible effort, "Giles was deeply angry with me yesterday——"

"Father, dear Father, you are quite wrong!" Constance interrupted him. "There was no mistaking how delighted Giles was with your making the treaty. Indeed I saw in him all the old-time love and pride in you that we used to make a jest—but how we liked it!—in the dear days across the water, when we were children."

Stephen Hopkins let her have her say. Then he shook his head.

"It may all be as you say, Constance," he said, sadly. "I also felt in Giles, saw in his face, the affection I have missed of late. But when the Billingtons came making that disturbance I went out—angry, Con; I admit it—and accused Giles of abetting them in what might have caused us serious trouble. And he, in turn, was furiously angry with me. He did not reply to my accusation, but spoke impertinently to me, and went away. I have not seen him since."

"Oh, Father, Father!" gasped Constance, her lips trembling, her face pale.

"I know, my daughter," said Stephen Hopkins, almost humbly. "But it was an outrageous thing to risk offending our new allies, and inviting the death of us all. And Giles did not deny having a hand in it, remember. But I confess that I should have first asked him whether he had, or not."

"Poor Father," said Constance, gently. "It is hard enough to be anxious about your boy without being afraid that you wronged him. How I wish that Giles would not always stand upon his dignity, and scorn speech! How I wish, how I pray, that you may come to understand each other, to trust each other, and be as we were when you trotted Giles and me upon your knees, and I sometimes feared that you liked me less than you did your handsome boy, who was so like you."

"Who *is* so like me," her father corrected her. "You were right, Con, when you said that Giles and I were too alike to get on well together; the same quick temper, rash action, swift conclusions."

"The same warm heart, high honour, complete loyalty," Constance amended, swiftly.

"Father, if you could but once and for ever grasp that! Giles is you again in your best traits. He can be the reliance that you are, but if he turns wrong——"

She paused and her father groaned.

"Ah, Constance, you are partial to me, yet you stab me. If I have turned him wrong, is what you would say! How womanly you are grown, my daughter, and how like your dead mother! But, Con, this is no time to stand discussing traits, not even to adjust the blame of this wretched business. How shall I find the boy?"

"Why, for that, Father, you know far better than I," said Constance, gently, taking her father's arm. "Let us go home, dear man. I should think a party to scour the woods beyond us? And Squanto would be our best help, he and Captain Standish, wouldn't they? But I am sure the boys will be in for supper. You know they are sharp young wolves, with a scent like the whole pack in one for supper! Giles is safe! And as to Jack Billington, tell me truly, Father, can you imagine anything able to harm him?" She laughed with an excellent reproduction of her own mirth when she possessed it, but it was far from hers now.

Constance shared to the uttermost her father's apprehension. If her poor, hasty father had again accused Giles of that which he had not done, and this when he was aglow with a renewal of the old confidence between them, then it well might be that Giles, equally hot-headed, had done some desperate thing in his first sore rage. The fact that he had been absent from the wedding of John Alden, whom he cared for deeply; that he had missed his supper and breakfast; and that John Billington, reckless, adventurous Jack, was missing at the same time, left Constance little ground for hope that nothing was wrong.

But nothing of this did she allow to escape in her manner of speech.

She gaily told her father all about her morning: how cleverly she had lengthened Priscilla's gown, her own mother's gown, lent Pris; how becomingly she had arranged Pris's pretty hair; all the small feminine details which a man, especially a brave, manly man of Stephen Hopkins's kind, is supposed to scorn, but which Constance was instinctively sympathetic enough to know rested and amused her father; soothed him with its pretty femininity; relaxed him as proving that in a world of such pretty trifles tragedy could not exist.

"My stepmother is not come back yet," Constance said, with a swift glance around, as she entered. "Father, when she comes in with the baby you must test his newly discovered powers; Oceanus is beginning to stand alone! Now I must go doff my Sunday best—Father, I never can learn to call it the Sabbath; please forgive me!—and put on my busy-maid clothes! What a brief time a marriage takes! I mean in the making!" She laughed and ran lightly away, up the steep stairs that wound in threatening semi-spiral, up under the steep lean-to roof.

"Bless my sunshine!" said Stephen Hopkins, fervently, as he watched her skirt whisk around the door at the stairway foot.

But upstairs, in the small room that she and Damaris shared, his "sunshine" was blurred by a swift rain of tears.

CHAPTER XII

The Lost Lads

A gray evening of mist drifting in from the sea settled down upon Plymouth. It emphasized the silence and seemed to widen and deepen the vacuum created by the absence of Giles and John. For the supper hour, at which they were enthusiastically prompt to return to give their hearty appetites their due, came and passed without bringing back the boys.

Stephen Hopkins pushed away his plate with its generous burden untouched, threw on his wide-brimmed hat, and strode out of the house without a word. Constance knew that he had gone to ask help from Myles Standish, to organize a search, and go out to find the lost.

Damaris crept into her sister's lap and sat with her thin little hands in Constance's, mutely looking up into the white, sorrowing face above her.

Even Dame Eliza was reluctantly moved to something like pity for the girl's silent misery, and expressed it in her way.

"At least," she said, suddenly, out of the deep silence enveloping them, "here is one thing gone wrong without my sending. No one can say that I had a finger raised to push your brother out of the right course this time!"

Constance tried to reply, but failed. Not directly had her stepmother had a share in this misfortune, but how great a share had she in the estrangement between father and son that was at the bottom of the present misunderstanding? Constance would not remind her stepmother of this, and no other reply was possible to her in her intense anxiety.

The night wore away, the dawn came, lifting the fog as the sun shot up out of the sea. Stephen Hopkins came out of the principal bedroom on the ground floor of the house showing in his haggard face that he had not slept. Constance came slowly down the winding stairs, pale, with dark circles under her eyes which looked as though they had withdrawn from her face, retreated into the mind which dwelt on Giles since they could no longer see him, and the brain alone could fulfil their office.

"There's no sort of use in getting out mourning till you're sure of having a corpse, so I say," said Mistress Eliza, impatiently. "Giles is certain to take care of himself. I've no manner of patience with people who borrow what they can't return, and how would you return trouble, borrowed from nothing and nobody?"

Nevertheless she helped both Constance and her father to a generous bowlful of porridge, and set it before them with a snapped-out: "Eat that!" which Constance was grateful to feel concealed uneasiness on her stepmother's own part.

Another day, and still another, wore themselves away. Constance fought to keep her mind occupied with all manner of tasks, hoping to tire herself till she must sleep at night, but nevertheless slept only brokenly, lying staring at the three stars which she could see through the tiny oblong window under the eaves, or into the blackness of the slanting roof, listening to Damaris's quiet breathing, and thinking that childhood was not more blessed in being happy than in its ability to forget.

Stephen Hopkins had gone with Captain Standish, Francis Billington, and Squanto to scour the woods for miles, although labouring hands could ill be spared at that season. They returned at the close of their fourth day of absence, and no one ventured to question them; that they had not so much as a clue to the lost lads was clearly written on their faces.

Constance drew her stool close to her father after supper was over, and wound her arms about him and laid her head on his breast, unrebuked by her stepmother.

"Read the fifty-first psalm, my daughter; it was the penitential psalm in England in my beginnings," Stephen Hopkins said, and Constance read it in a low voice, which she dared not raise, lest it break.

An hour later, an hour which had been passed in silence, broken only by Dame Eliza's taking Damaris up to bed, the sound of voices was heard coming down the quiet street. Stephen Hopkins's body tautened as he sat erect, and Constance sprang to her feet. No one ever went outside his house in the Plymouth plantation after the hour for family prayers, which was identical in every house. But someone was abroad now; it was not possible——?

"It is Squanto," said Stephen Hopkins, catching the Indian's syllables of broken English.

"And Francis Billington, and another Indian, talking in his own tongue!" added Constance, shaking with excitement.

The door opened; Stephen Hopkins did not move to open it. There entered the three whom those within the house had recognized; Francis's face was crimson, his eyes flashing.

"You come to tell me that my son is dead?" said Stephen Hopkins, raising his hand as if to ward off a blow.

"No, we don't! Don't look like that, Mr. Hopkins, Con!" cried Francis. "Jack and Giles are all right ——"

"Massasoit send him," said Squanto, interrupting the boy, as if he wanted to save Stephen Hopkins from betraying the feeling that an Indian would scorn to betray, for Mr. Hopkins had

closed his eyes and swayed slightly as he heard Francis's high boyish voice utter the words he had so hungered to hear.

Squanto pointed to the Indian beside him as he spoke. "Massasoit sent him. Massasoit know where boys go. Nawsett. It not far; Massasoit more far. Nawsett Indians fight you when you come, not yet got Plymouth found. Nawsett. Both boys, both two." Squanto touched two fingers of his left hand. "Not dead, not sick, not hurt. You send, Massasoit say. Get boys you send Nawsett. Squanto go show Nawsett." Squanto looked proudly at his hearers, rejoicing in his good news.

"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," said Stephen Hopkins, bowing his head, and Constance burst into tears and seized him around the neck, while Francis drew his sleeves across his eyes, muttering something about: "Rather old Jack was all right."

Dame Eliza came down the stairs, having heard voices, and recognized them as Indian, but had been unable to catch what was said. She stopped as she saw the scene before her, and her face crimsoned. She at once knew the purport, though not the details, of the message delivered through Squanto by Massasoit's messenger, and that the lost lads were safe. With a quick revulsion from the anxiety that she had felt, she instantly lost her temper.

"Stephen Hopkins, what is this unseemingly exhibition? Will you allow your daughter to behave in this manner before a youth, and two savage men? Shame on you! Stand up, Constantia, and let your father alone. So Giles is safe, I suppose? Well, did I not tell you so? Bad sixpences are hard to lose; your son will give you plenty of the scant comfort you've already had from him. No fear of him not coming back to plague me, and to disgrace you," she scolded.

"Oh, Stepmother, when we are so glad and thankful!" sighed Constance, lifting her tired, tear-worn face, over which the light of her gladness and gratitude was beginning to shine.

There was nothing to be done that night but to try to adjust to the relief that had come, and to wait impatiently for morning to arrange to bring home the wanderers.

Stephen Hopkins was ahead of the sun in beginning the next day, and as soon as he could decently do so, he set out to see Governor Bradford to ask his help.

"I rejoice with you, my friend and brother," said dignified William Bradford, when he had heard Mr. Hopkins's story. "Like the woman in the Gospel you call in your neighbours to rejoice with you that the lost is found. I will at once send the shallop to sail down the coast and bring off our thorn-in-the-flesh, young John Billington, and your somewhat unruly lad with him. As your brother in our great enterprise and your true well-wisher, let me advise that you deal sternly with Giles when he is returned to us. He hath done exceeding wrong thus to afflict you, and with you, all of our community to a lesser extent, by anxiety over his safety. Furthermore, it is a time in which we need all our workers; he hath not only deprived us of his own services, but hath demanded the valuable hours of others in striving to rescue him. I doubt not that you will do your duty as a father, but let me remind you that your duty is not leniency, but sternness to the lad who is too nearly man to fail us all as he hath done."

"It is true, William Bradford, and I will do my best though it hath afflicted me that I may have driven the lad from me by blaming him when it was not his desert, and that because of this he went away," said Mr. Hopkins.

"If this were true, Stephen, yet would it not excuse Giles," said William Bradford, whose one child, a boy, had been left behind in England to follow his father to the New World later, and who was not versed in ways of fatherhood to highstrung youths of Giles's age. "It becometh not a son to resent his father's chastisements, which, properly borne, may result in benefit, whether or not their immediate occasion was a matter of justice or error. So deal with your son sternly, I warn you, nor let your natural pleasure in receiving him safe back again relax you toward him."

The shallop was launched with sufficient men to navigate her, Squanto accompanying them to guide them southward to the tribe that held Giles and John, in a sense, their captives.

On the third day after her departure the shallop came again in sight, nosing her way slowly up the harbour against a wind dead ahead and blowing strong. There was time, and to spare for any amount of preparation, and yet to get down on the sands to see the shallop come to anchor, and be ready to welcome those whom she bore. Nevertheless, Constance hurried her simple toilet till she was breathless, snarling the comb in her hair; tying her shoe laces into knots which her nervousness could hardly disentangle; chafing her delicate skin with the vigorous strokes she gave her face; stooping frequently to peer out of her bedroom window to see if, by an impossible mischance, the shallop had come up before she was dressed, although the one glimpse that she had managed to get of the small craft had shown that the shallop was an hour away down the harbour.

At last her flustered mishaps were over, and Constance was neat and trim, ready to go down to the beach.

"Damaris, little sister, come up and let me see that none of the dinner treacle is on the outside of your small mouth," Constance called gaily down the stairs.

Damaris appeared, came half way, and stopped forlornly.

"Mother says she will take me, Constance," the child said, mournfully. "She says that you will greet Giles with warm welcome, and that I must not help in it, for that Giles is wicked, and must be frowned upon. Is Giles wicked, Constance? He is good to me; I love him, not so much as you, but I do love Giles. Must I not be glad when he comes, Sister?"

"Oh, Damaris, darling, your kind little heart tells you that you would want a welcome yourself if you were returning after an absence! And we know that the father of that bad son in the Gospel went out to meet him, and fell on his neck! But I must not teach you against your mother's teaching! You know, little lass, whether or not I think our big brother bad!" said poor Constance. "Where is your mother?"

"She hath gone to fetch Oceanus back; he crawled out of the open door and went as fast as a spider down the street, crawling, Constance! He looked so funny!" and Damaris laughed.

Constance laughed too, and cried gaily, with one of her sudden changes from sober to gay: "And so Oceanus is beginning to run off, too! What a time we shall have, Damaris, with our big brother marching away, and our baby brother crawling away, both of them caring not a button whether we are frightened about them, or not!"

She flitted down the stairs with her lightness of movement that gave her the effect of a half-flight, caught Damaris to her and kissed her soundly, and set her down just in time to escape rebuke for her demonstrativeness from Dame Eliza, who returned with her face reddened, and Oceanus kicking under one arm, hung like a sack below it, and screaming with baffled rage and the desire of adventure. On the beach nearly everyone of the small community was gathered to see the arrival.

Constance stole up behind Priscilla Alden, and touched her shoulder.

"You are not the only happy girl here to-day, my bonny bride," she said.

Priscilla turned and caught Constance by both hands.

"Nor the only one glad for this cause, Constance," she retorted. "Indeed I rejoice beyond my powers of telling, that Giles is come to thee, and that thou art spared the bitter sorrow that we feared had fallen upon thee!"

"Well do I know that, dear Pris," said Constance. "Where is my father?"

"Yonder with William Bradford, Edward Winslow, Elder Brewster; do you not see?" Priscilla replied nodding toward the group that stood somewhat apart from the others. Constance crossed over to them, and curtseyed respectfully to the heads of this small portion of the king's subjects.

"Will you not come with me, my father?" she said, hoping that Stephen Hopkins would stand with her on the edge of the sands to be the first whom Giles would see on arriving, identifying himself with her who, Giles would know, was watching for him with a heart leaping out toward him.

"No, Daughter, I will remain here. I am to-day less Giles Hopkins's father than one of the representatives of this community, which he and John Billington have offended," replied Stephen Hopkins, but whether with his mind in complete accord with his decision, or stifling a longing to run to meet his son, like that other father of whom Constance had spoken to Damaris, the girl could not tell.

She turned away, recognizing the futility of pleading when her father was flanked as he then was.

The shallop was beached and the lost lads leaped out, John with a broad grin on his face, unmixed enjoyment of the situation visible in his every look; Giles with his eyes troubled, joy in getting back struggling with his misgivings as to what he might find awaiting him.

The first thing that he found was Constance, and there was no admixture in the delight with which he seized his sister's hands—warmer greeting being impossible before a concourse which would rebuke it sternly—and replied fervently to her: "Oh, Giles, how glad I am to see you again!"

"And I to see you, sweet sis! Ah, there is Pris! I missed her wedding. And there is John Alden!" said Giles, shading his eyes with his hand, but Constance saw the eyes searching for his father, and merely glancing at Priscilla and John.

"Our father is with the other weighty men of our plantation, waiting for you, Giles. You and John must go to them," suggested Constance.

Giles shrugged his shoulders. "Otherwise they will not know we are back?" he asked. "Very well; come, then, Jack. The sooner the better; then the gods are propitiated."

The two wilful lads walked over to the grave men awaiting them.

"We thank you, Governor Bradford, for sending the shallop after us," said Giles.

"Is this all that you have to say?" demanded William Bradford!

"No, sir; we have had adventures. We wandered five days, subsisting on berries and roots; came upon an Indian village, called Manamet, which we reckon to be some twenty miles to the southward of Plymouth here. These Indians conveyed us on to Nawsett still further along, and there we rested until the shallop appeared to take us off. This is, in brief, the history of our trip, although I assure you, it was longer in the living than in the telling. Permit me to add, Governor, that those Indians among whom we tarried are coming to make a peace with us and seek satisfaction from those of our community who took their corn what time we were dallying at Cape Cod, when we arrived in the *Mayflower*. This is, perhaps, in a measure due to our visit to them, though we would not claim the full merit of it, since it may also be partly wrought by Massasoit's example."

Giles spoke with an easy nonchalance that held no suggestion of contrition, and William Bradford, as well as Elder Brewster, and Mr. Winslow, frowned upon him, while his father flushed darkly under the bronze tint of his skin, and his eyes flashed. At every encounter this

father and son mutually angered each other.

"Inasmuch as you have done well, Giles Hopkins and John Billington, we applaud you," said Governor Bradford, slowly. "In sooth we are rejoiced that you are not dead, not harmed by your adventure. We rejoice, also, in the tidings of peace with yet another savage neighbour. But we demand of you recognition of your evil ways, repentance for the anxiety that you have caused those to whom you are dear, to all Christians, who, as is their profession, wish you well; for the injury you have done us in taking yourselves off, to the neglect of your seasonable labours, and the time which hath been wasted by able-bodied men searching for you. You have not asked your father to pardon you."

Giles looked straight into his father's eyes. Unfortunately there was in them nothing of the look they had worn a few nights earlier when Constance had read to him the psalm of the stricken heart.

"I am truly grieved for the suffering that I know my sister bore while my fate was uncertain, for I know well her love for me. And I regret being a charge upon this struggling plantation. As far as lies in my power I will repay that debt to it. But as to my father, his last words to me expressed his dislike for me, and his certainty that I was a wrong-doer. I cannot think that he has grieved for me," said poor Giles, speaking like a man to men until, at the last words, his voice quavered.

"I have grieved for thee often and bitterly, Giles, and over thee, which is harder for a father than sorrow for a son. Show me that I am wrong in my judgment of thee, by humbling thyself to my just authority, and conducting thyself as I would have thee act, and with a great joy in my heart I will confess myself mistaken in thee, and thank Heaven for my error," said Stephen Hopkins.

Giles's eyes wavered, he dropped his lids, and bit his lip. The simple manhood in his father's words moved him, yet he reflected that he had been justified in resenting an unfounded suspicion on this father's part, and he steeled himself against him. More than this, how could he reply to him when he was surrounded by the stern men who condemned youthful folly, and whom Giles resisted in thought and deed?

Giles turned away without raising his eyes; he did not see a half movement that his father made to hold out his hand to detain him.

"Time will right, or end everything," the boy muttered, and walked away.

Constance, who had been watching the meeting between her two well-beloveds, crossed over to Myles Standish.

"Captain Standish," she begged him, "come with me; I need you."

"Faith, little Con, I need you always, but never have you! You show scant pity to a lonely man, that misses his little friend," retorted Captain Standish, turning on his heel, obedient to a gesture from Constance to walk with her.

"It is about Giles, dear Captain," Constance began. "He is back, I am thankful for it, but this breach between him and my father is a wide one, and over such a foolish thing! And it came about just when everything was going well!"

"Foolish trifles make the deepest breaches, Constance, hardest to bridge over," said Captain Myles. "I grant you that the case is serious, chiefly because the man and the boy love each other so greatly; that, and their likeness, is what balk them. What would you have me do?"

"I don't know, but something!" cried Constance wringing-her hands. "I hoped you would have a plan by which you could bring them together."

"Well, truth to tell, Con, I have a plan by which to separate them," said the captain, adding, laughing—as Constance cried out: "Oh, not for all time!"—"But I think a time spent apart would bring them together in the end. Here is my plan: I am going exploring. There is that vast tract of country north of us which we have not seen, and tribes of savages, of which Squanto tries to tell us, but which he lacks of English to describe. I am going to take a company of men from here and explore to the nor'ard. I would take Giles among them. He will learn self-discipline, obedience to me—I am too much a soldier to be lax in exacting obedience from all who serve under me—and he will return here licked into shape by the tongue of experience, as an unruly cub is licked into his proper form by his dam. In the meantime your father will see Giles more calmly than at short range, and will not be irritated by his manly airs. When they come together again it will be on a new plane, as men, not as man and boy, and I foresee between them the sane enjoyment of their profound mutual affection. I had it in mind to ask Stephen Hopkins to lend me his boy; what say you, my Constance?"

"I say: Bless you, and thrice over bless you, Captain Myles Standish!" cried Constance. "It is the very solution! Oh, I am thankful! I shall be anxious every hour till you return, but with all my heart I say: Take Giles with you and teach him sense. What should we ever do here without you, Captain, dear 'Arm-of-the-Colony'?"

"I doubt you ever have a chance to try that dire lack, my Con," said Captain Myles, with a humorous look at her. "I think I'm chained here by the interest that has grown in me day by day, and that I shall die among you. Though, by my sword, it's a curious thing to think of Myles Standish dying among strict Puritans!"

CHAPTER XIII

Sundry Herbs and Simples

Stephen Hopkins and his son drew no nearer together as the days went by.

Hurt and angry, Giles would not bend his stiff young neck to humble himself, checking any impulse to do so by reminding himself that his father had been unjust to him.

Yet Doctor Fuller, good, kind, and wise, had the right of it when he said to the lad one day, laying his arm across Giles's shoulders, caressingly:

"Remember, lad, that who is right, or who is wrong in a quarrel, or an estrangement, matters little, since we are all insects of a day and our dignity at best a poor thing, measured by Infinite standards. But he is always right who ends a quarrel; ten thousand times right if he does it at the sacrifice of his own sense of injury, laying down his pride to lift a far greater possession. There may be a difference of opinion as to which is right when two have fallen out, but however that be, the situation is in itself wrong beyond dispute, and all the honour is his who ends it."

Giles heard him with lowered head, and knit brows, but he did not resent the brief sermon. Doctor Fuller was a gentle spirit; all his days were given over to healing and helping; he was free from the condemnatory sternness of most of the colonists, and Giles, as all others did, loved him.

Giles kicked at the pebbles in the way, the slow colour mounting in his face. Then he threw back his head and looked the good doctor squarely in the eyes.

"Ah, well, Doctor Fuller," he said. "I'd welcome peace, but what would you? My father condemns me, sees no good in me, nor would he welcome back the old days when we were close friends. There will be a ship come here from home some time on which I can sail back to England. It will be better to rid my father of my hateful presence; yet should I hate to leave Sis—Constance."

"May the ship never leave the runway that shall take you from us, Giles, lad," said the doctor. "You are blind not to see that it is too-great love for thee that ails thy father! It often works to cross purposes, our unreasonable human affection. But the case is by no means past curing when love awry is the disease. Do your part, Giles, and all will be well."

But Giles did not alter his course, and when Captain Myles Standish said to Stephen Hopkins: "We set forth on the eighteenth of September to explore the Massachusetts. I shall take ten men of our colour, and three red men, two besides Squanto. Let me have your lad for one of my band, old friend. I think it will be his remedy." Stephen Hopkins welcomed the suggestion, as Giles himself did, and it was settled. The Plymouth company sailed away in their shallop on a beautiful, sunshiny morning when the sun had scarcely come up out of the sea.

Giles and his father had shaken hands on parting, and Stephen Hopkins had given the boy his blessing; both were conscious that it might be a final parting, since no one could be sure what would befall the small band among untried savages.

Yet there was no further reconciliation than this, no apology on the one side, nor proffered pardon on the other.

Constance clung long around her brother's neck in the dusk in which she had risen to prepare his breakfast; she did not go down to see the start, being heavy hearted at Giles's going, and going without lifting the cloud completely between him and his father. She bade him good-bye in the long low room under the rear of the lean-to, where wood was piled and water buckets were set and storage made of supplies.

"Oh, Giles, Giles, my dearest, may God keep you and bring you back!" Constance whispered, and then let her brother go.

She went about her household tasks that morning with lagging step and unsmiling lips. Damaris followed her, wistfully, much depressed by the unusual dejection of Constance, who, in spite of her stepmother's disapproval of anything like merriment, ordinarily contrived to entertain Damaris to the top of her bent when the household tasks were getting done.

"Will Giles never come home again, Connie?" the child asked at last, and Constance cried with a catch in her voice:

"Yes, oh yes, little sister! We know he will, because we so want him!"

"There must be a better ground for hope than our poor desires, Damaris," Dame Eliza was beginning, speaking over the child at Constance; when opportunely a shadow fell across the floor through the open door and Constance turned to see Doctor Fuller smiling at her.

"Good morning, Mistress Hopkins; good morning little Damaris; and good morning to you, Constance lass!" he said. "Is this a day of especial business? Are you too busy for charity to your neighbours, beginning with me, and indirectly reaching out to our entire community?"

Constance smiled at him with that swift brightening of her face that was one of her chief attractions; her expression was always playing between grave and gay.

"It is not a day of especial business, Doctor Fuller," she said, "or at least all our days are especial ones where there is everything yet to be done. But I could give it over to charity better than some other days, and if it were charity to you—though I fear there is nothing for such as I to do for such as you—then how gladly would I do it, if only to pay a tittle of the debt we all owe to you."

"Good child!" said the doctor. "I need help and comradeship in my herb gathering; it is to be done to-day, if you will be that helper. There is no wind, and there is that benignity of sun and sky that hath always seemed to me to impart special virtue to herbs gathered under it. So will you come with me? We will gather the morning long, and this afternoon I purpose distilling, in which necessary work your deft fingers will be of the greatest assistance to me."

"Gladly will I go," cried Constance, flushing with pleasure. "I will fetch my basket and shears, put on my bonnet, and be ready in a trice. Shall I prepare a lunch, or shall I be at home again for dinner?"

"Neither, Constance; there is yet another alternative." Doctor Fuller looked with great satisfaction at Constance's happier face as he spoke; she had been so melancholy when he had come. "I have arranged that you shall be my guest at dinner in my house, and after it we will to work in my substitute for a laboratory. Mistress Hopkins, Constance will be quite safe, be assured; and you, I trust, will not mind a quiet day with Damaris and Oceanus to bear you company?"

"And if I did mind it, would that prevent it?" demanded Dame Eliza with a toss of her head. "Not even with a 'by your leave' does Constantia Hopkins arrange her goings and comings."

"Which was wholly my fault in not first putting my question to you, instead of to Constance directly," said Doctor Fuller. "And surely there is no excuse for my blundering, I who am trained to feel pulses and look at tongues! But since it is thus happily concluded, and your stepmother is glad to let you have a sort of holiday, come then; hasten, Constance girl!"

Constance ran upstairs to hide her laughing face. She came down almost at once with that face shaded by a deep bonnet, a basket hung on her arm, shears sticking up out of it, pulling on long-armed half-gloves as she came.

As they walked down the narrow street Constance glanced up at Doctor Fuller, interrogatively.

"And——?" the doctor hinted.

"And I was wondering whether you were not treating me to-day as your patient?" Constance said. "A patient with a trouble of the mind, and also a heart complaint?"

"Which means——?" The doctor again waited for Constance to fill out his question.

"Which means that you knew I was sorely troubled about Giles; that he had gone without better drawing to his father; that I was anxious about him, even while wishing him to go; and that you gave me this day in the woods with you for my healing," Constance answered.

"At least not for your harm, little maid," said the doctor. "It hath been my experience that the gatherer of herbs gets a healing of spirit that is not set down in our books among the beneficial qualities of the plants, but which may, under conditions, be their best attribute. Although the singing of brooks and birds, the sweetness of the winds, the solemn nobility of the trees, the vastness of the sky, the over-brooding presence of God in His creation are compounded with the herbs, and impart their powers to us with that of the plants."

"That is true," said Constance. "I feel my vexations go from me as if my soul were bathed in a miraculous elixir, when I go troubled to the woods and sit in them awhile."

"Of a certainty," agreed the doctor, bending his tall, thin figure to pick a small leaf which he held up to Constance. "See this, with its likeness to the halberd at its base? This is vervain, which is called 'Simpler's Joy,' because of the good it yields to those who, like us to-day, are simplers, gatherers of simple herbs for mankind's benefit. Now let us hope that this single plant is a forerunner of many of its kind, for it hath been a sacred herb among the ancients, as among Christians, and it should be an augury of good to us to find it. Look you, Constance, I do not mind confessing it to you, for you are not only young, but of that happy sort who yield to imagination something of its due. I like my omens to be favourable, not in superstition, though our brethren would condemn me thus, but from a sense of harmony and the satisfaction of it."

"How pleasant a hearing is that, Doctor Fuller!" laughed Constance. "I love to have the new moon aright, though well I know the moon and I have naught in common! And though I do not believe in fairies, yet do I like to make due allowance for them!"

"It is the poetry of these things, and children like you and me, my dear, are not to be deprived of poetry by mere facts and common sense," said the doctor, sticking in the band of his hat the sprig of blue vervain which his sharp eyes had discovered.

"Yonder on the side of that sandy hill shall we find mints, pennyroyal, and the close cousin of it, which is blue curls. There is the prunelle, and welcome to it! Gather all you can of it, Constance. That is self-heal, and a sovereign remedy for quinsy. So is it a balm for wounds of iron and steel tools, and for both these sorts of afflictions, what with our winter climate as to quinsy and our hard labour as to wounds, I am like to need abundant self-heal."

Thus pleasantly chatting Doctor Fuller led the way, first up the sandy hill where grew the pennyroyal, all along the border of the woods where self-heal abounded. They found many plants unexpectedly, which the doctor always hailed with the joy of one who loved them, rather more than of the medical man who required them, and Constance busily snipped the stems, listening to the doctor's wise and kindly talk, loving him for his goodness and kindness to her in making her heart light and giving her on this day, which had promised to be sad, of his own abundant peace.

"Now, Constance, I shall lead you to a secret of my own," announced the doctor as the sun mounted high above them, and noon drew near. "Come with me. But do not forget to rejoice in

this wealth of bloom, purple and blue, these asters along the wayside. They are the glory of our new country, and for them let us praise God who sets beauty so lavishly around us, having no use but to praise Him, for not to any other purpose are these asters here, and yet, though I cannot use them, am I humbly thankful for them. And for these plumes of golden and silver flowers beside them, which we did not know across the seas. Now, Constance, what say you to that?"

He pointed triumphantly to a small group of plants with heart-shaped leaves, having small leaves at their base, and which twisted as they grew around their neighbouring plants, or climbed a short distance on small shrubs. Groups of drooping berries of brilliant, translucent scarlet lighted up the little plant settlement, hanging as gracefully as jewels set by a skilful goldsmith for a fair lady's adornment.

"I think they are wonderfully beautiful. They are like ornaments for a beautiful lady! What are they?" cried Constance.

"They are themselves the beautiful lady," Doctor Fuller said, with a pleased laugh. "That is their name—belladonna, which means 'beautiful lady.' They are *Atropa Belladonna*, to give them their full title. But their beauty is only in appearance. If they are a belle dame, then she is the *belle dame sans merci*, a cruel beauty if you cross her. You must never taste these berries, Constance. I myself planted these vines. I brought them with me, carefully set in soil. The beautiful lady can be cruel if you take liberties with her, but she is capable of kindness. I shall gather the belladonna now and distil it. In case any one among us ate of poisonous toadstools, and were seized with severe spasms of the nature of the effect of toadstools, belladonna alone would save them. Nightshade, we also call this plant. See, I will myself gather this, by your leave, my assistant, and place it in my own herb wallet."

The doctor suited the action to the word, arose from his knees and carefully brushed them. "When Mistress Fuller comes, which is a weary day awaiting, I hope she may not find me fallen into untidiness," he said, whimsically. "Constance, the ship is due that will bring my wife and child, if my longing be a calendar!"

"Indeed, dear Doctor Fuller, I often think of it," said Constance. "You who are so good to us all are lonely and heavy of heart, but none is made to feel it. The comfort is that Mistress Fuller and your little one are safe and you will yet see them, while so many of the women who came hither in our ship are not here now, and those who loved them will never see them in this world again."

"Surely, my child. I am not repining, for, though I am opposed to the extreme strict views of some of our community, and they look askance upon me for it at times, yet do I not oppose the will of God," said the doctor, simply.

"Who of them fulfils it as you do?" cried Constance. "You who go out to minister to the sick savages, not content to heal your own brethren?"

"And are not the savages also our brothers?" asked the doctor, taking up his wallet. "Come then, child; we will go home, and this afternoon shall you learn something of distilling, as you have, I hope, this morning learned something of selecting herbs for remedies."

Constance went along at the doctor's side, swinging her bonnet, not afraid of the hot September sun upon her face. It lighted up her disordered hair, and turned it into the semblance of burnished metal, upon which the doctor's eyes rested with the same satisfaction that had warmed them as he looked on the generous beauty of aster and goldenrod, and he saw with pleasure that Constance's face was also shining, its brightness returned, and he was well content with the effect of his prescription for this patient.

Constance had a gift of forgetting herself in an ecstasy that seized her when the weight of her new surroundings was lifted. With Doctor Fuller she felt perfect sympathy, and her utter delight in this lovely day bubbled up and found expression.

Doctor Fuller heard her singing one of her little improvised songs, softly, under her breath, to a crooning air that was less an air than a succession of sweet sounds. It was the sort of little song with which Constance often amused the children of the settlement, and Doctor Fuller, that childlike soul, listened to her with much of their pleasure in it.

> "Blossom, and berry, and herb of grace;
> Purple and blue and gold lighting each place;
> Herbs for our body and bloom for our heart—
> Beauty and healing, for each hath its part.
> Under the sunshine and in the starlight,
> Warp and woof weareth the pattern aright.
> Shineth the fabric when summer's at end:
> The garment scarce hiding the Heart of our Friend,"

Constance sang, nor did the doctor interrupt her simple Te Deum by a word.

At the doctor's house dinner awaited them, kept hot, for they were tardy. After it, and when Constance had helped to put away all signs of its having been, the doctor said to her:

"Now for my laboratory, such as it is, and for our task, my apprentice in medicine!" He conducted Constance into a small room, at the rear of the house where he had set up tables of various sizes of his own manufacture, and where were ranged on the shelves running around three sides of the room at different heights, bowls, glasses of odd shapes—the uses of which were not known to Constance—and small, delicate tools, knives, weights, and piles of strips of linen, neatly rolled and placed in assorted widths in an accessible corner.

"Mount this stool, Constance, and watch," the doctor bade her. "Pay strict attention to what I shall do and tell you. Take this paper and quill and note names, or special instructions. I am serious in wishing you to know something of my work. I need assistance; there is no man to be spared from man's work in the plantation, and, to speak the truth, your brain is quicker to apprehend me, as your hand is more skilful to execute for me in the matters upon which I engage than are those of any of the lads who are with us. So mount this high stool, my lass, and learn your lesson."

Constance obeyed him. Breathlessly she watched the beginnings of the distillation of the belladonna which she had seen gathered.

As the small drops fell slowly into the glass which the doctor had set for them, he began to teach Constance other things, while the distillation went on.

"These are my phials, Constance," he said. "Commit to memory the names of their contents, and note their positions. See, on these shelves are my drugs. Do you see this dark phial? That is for my belladonna. Now note where it is to stand. In that line are poisons. Their phials are dark, to prevent mistaking them for less harmful drugs, which are on this other shelf, in white containers."

The doctor taught, and Constance obediently repeated her lesson, till the sound of the horn that summoned the settlers to their homes for supper, and the level rays of the sun across the floor, warned the doctor and his pupil that their pleasant day was over.

"But you must return, till you are letter perfect in your knowledge, Constance," the doctor said. "I have decided that there must be one person among us whom I could dispatch to bring me what I needed in case I were detained, and could not come myself."

"I will gladly learn, Doctor Fuller," said Constance, her face confirming her assurance. "I have no words to tell you how happy it makes me to hope that I may one day be useful in such great matters."

"As you will be," the doctor said. "But remember, my child, the lesson of the fields: It does not concern us whether great or small affairs are given us to do; the one thing is to do well what comes our way; to be content to fill the background of the picture, or to be a figure in the foreground, as we may be required. Aster, goldenrod, herb, all are doing their portion."

"Indeed you have helped me to see that, dear Doctor Fuller," said Constance, gently. "It is not ambition, but the remembrance of last winter's hardships, when there was so little aid, that makes me wish I could one day help."

"Yes, Constance; I know. Good-night, my child, and thank you for your patient attention, for your help; most of all for your sweet companionship," said the doctor.

"Oh, as to that, I am grateful enough to you! You made to-day a happy girl out of a doleful one!" cried Constance. "Good-night, Doctor Fuller!"

She ran down the street, singing softly:

"Flower, and berry, and herb of grace;"

till she reached her home and silenced her song with a kiss on eager Damaris's cheek.

CHAPTER XIV

Light-Minded Man, Heavy-Hearted Master

Constance Hopkins sat at the side of the cave-like fireplace; opposite to where her father, engrossed in a heavy, much-rubbed, leather-bound book, toasted his feet beside the fire, as was his nightly wont.

He was too deeply buried in his reading to heed her presence, but the girl felt keenly that her father was there and that she had him quite to herself. The consciousness of this made her heart sing softly in her breast, with a contentment that she voiced in the softest humming, not unlike the contented song of the kettle on the crane, and the purring of the cat, who sat with infolded paws between her human friends.

Puck, the small spaniel, and Hecate, the powerful mastiff, who had come with the Hopkins family on the *Mayflower*, shared the hearth with Lady Fair, the cat, a right that their master insisted upon for them, but which Dame Eliza never ceased to inveigh against.

However, Dame Eliza had gone to attend upon a sick neighbour that night, a fact which Hecate had approvingly noted, with her deep-grooved eyelids half-open, and in which Constance, no less than Puck and Hecate, rejoiced.

There was the quintessence of domestic joy in thus sitting alone opposite her father, free from the sense of an unsympathetic element dividing them, in watching the charring of the tremendous back log, and the lovely colours in the salt-soaked small sticks under and over it which had been cast up by the sea and gathered on the beach for this consumption.

Damaris and baby Oceanus were tucked away asleep for the night. It was as if once more Constance were a child in England with her widowed father, and no second marriage had ever clouded their perfect oneness.

So Constance hummed softly, not to disturb the reader, the content that she felt not lessened by anxiety for Giles; there were hours in which she was assured of Giles's safe return, and this was one of them.

Stephen Hopkins had been conscious of his girl's loving companionship, though not aware that he felt it, till, at last, the small tune that she hummed crept through his brain into his thought, and he laid down his book to look at her.

She sat straight and prim by necessity. Her chair was narrow and erect—a carved, dark oaken chair, with a small round seat; it had been Constance's mother's, and had come out of her grandfather's Tudor mansion, wherein he had once entertained Queen Bess.

Constance's dress was of dark homespun stuff, coming up close under her soft chin, falling straight around her feet, ornamented but with narrow bands of linen at her neck and around her wrists. Yet by its extreme severity the Puritan gown said: "See how lovely this young creature is! Only her fleckless skin, her gracious outlines, could triumph over my barrenness!"

Obedient to her elders' demands upon her to curb its riotousness, Constance had brushed smooth and capped her lustrous hair, yet its tendrils escaped upon her brow; it glinted below the cap around her ears, and in the back of her neck, and shone in the firelight like precious metal.

Stephen Hopkins's eyes brightened with delight in her charm, but, though he was not one of the strictest of Plymouth colonists, yet was he too imbued with their customs to express his pleasure in Constance's beauty.

Instead he said, but his voice thrilled with what he left unsaid:

"It's a great thing, my girl, to draw such a woman as Portia, here in this leathern book. She shines through it, and you see her clever eyes, her splendid presence, best of all her great power to love, to humble herself, to forget herself for the man she hath chosen! I would have you conversant with the women here met, Constance; they are worthy friends for you, in the wilderness where such noble ladies are rare."

"Yet we have fine women and devoted ones here, Father," objected Constance, putting down the fine linen that she was hemstitching for her father's wearing. He noted the slender, supple hands, long-fingered, graceful, yet a womanly hand, made for loyalty.

"Far be it from me to belittle them who recognized their hard and repulsive duty in the plague last winter, and performed it with utter self-renunciation," said Stephen Hopkins. "But, Constance, there is a something that, while it cannot transcend goodness, enhances it and places its possessor on a sort of dais all her life. Your mother had it, child. She was beautiful, charming, winsome, gracious, yet had she a lordly way with her; you see it in a fine-bred steed; I know not how to describe it. She was mettlesome, spirited. It was as if she did the right with a sort of inborn scorn for aught low; had made her choice at birth for true nobility and could but abide by it for aye, having made that choice. You have much of her, my lass, and I am daily thankful for it. A fine lady, was your exquisite young mother, and that says it, though the term is lowered by common usage. I would that you could have known her, my poor child! It was a loss hard to accept that you were deprived of her too soon, and never could have her direct impress upon you. And yet, thank Heaven, she hath left it upon you in mothering you, though the memory of her doth not bless you. And you sit here, upon a Plymouth hearthstone, far from the civilization that produced her, and to this I brought you!"

"Oh, Father, Father, my darling!" cried Constance, flinging aside her work and dropping upon her knees beside him, for his voice quivered with an emotion that he never before had allowed to escape him, as he uttered a self-reproach that no one knew he harboured. "Oh, my father, dearest, don't you know that I am happy here? And are you not here with me? However fine a lady my sweet mother was—and for your sake I am glad indeed if you see anything of her in me! —yet was she no truer lady than you are a fine gentleman. And with you I need no better exemplar. As time goes on we shall receive from England much of the good we have left behind; our colony will grow and prosper; we shall not be crude, unlettered. And how truly noble are many of our company, not only you, but Governor Bradford, Mr. Brewster, Mr. Winslow; their wives; our Arm, Captain Myles; and—dearest of all, save you—Doctor Fuller! No maiden need lack of models who has these! But indeed, I want to be all that you would have me to be! I cannot say how glad I am if you see in me anything of my mother! Not for my sake; for yours, for yours!"

"Portia after all!" Stephen Hopkins cried, stroking Constance's cheek. "That proves how well he knew, great Will of Warwickshire—which is our county also, my lass! Not for their own sake do true women value their charm, but for him they love. 'But only to stand high in your account I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends, exceed!' So spake Portia; so, in effect, spake you just now. That was your mother's way; she, too, longed to have, but to give, her possessions, herself ——"

There came a knocking at the door and Constance sprang back to her chair, catching up her sewing, thrusting in her needle with shortened breath, not to be caught by her severe Plymouth neighbours in so unseemly a thing as betraying love for her father, leaning on his knee.

Mr. Hopkins answered the summons, and there entered Francis Eaton, Mr. Allerton, and John Howland, who having come to Plymouth as the servant of Governor Carver, was now living in the colony with his articles of bondage annulled, and was inclined to exceed in severity the other

Puritans, as one who had not long had authority even over himself.

"Peace be to you, Mr. Hopkins," said John Howland, gravely. "Mistress Constantia, I wish you a good evening. Sir, we are come to consult you as to certain provisions to be made for the winter to come, as to care of the sick, should there be many——. Will that great beast bite? She seems not to like me, and I may say the feeling is mutual; I never could bear a beast."

"She will not bite you, John; she is but deciding on your credentials as set forth in the odour of your clothing," said Mr. Hopkins, smiling. "Down, Hecate, good lass! While I am here you may leave it to me to see to your dwelling and fireside, old trusty!"

Hecate wagged her whip like tail and instantly lay down, her nose on her extended paws, frowning at the callers.

"But what is this, Stephen Hopkins?" demanded Francis Eaton, picking up the marred, leather-covered great volume which Stephen Hopkins had laid down when he had risen. "Shakespeare! Plays! Fie, fie upon you; sir! I wot you know this is godless matter, and that you are sinning to set the example of such reading to your child."

Stephen Hopkins's quick temper blazed; he took a step in the speaker's direction, and Hecate was justified in growling at her master's lead.

"Zounds! Eaton," he cried. "I know that an Englishman's house is his castle, on whichever side of the ocean he builds it, and that I will not brook your coming into it to tell me—*you* to tell *me*, forsooth!—that I am sinning! Look to your own affairs, sir, but keep your hands off mine. If you are too ignorant to know more of Shakespeare than to think him harmful, well, then, sir, you confess to an ignorance that is in itself a sin against the Providence that gave us poets."

"As to that, Francis Eaton," said Mr. Allerton, "Mr. Hopkins hath the best of it. We who strive after the highest virtue do not indulge in worldly reading, but there be those among us who would not condemn Shakespeare. But what is the noise I hear? Permit us to go yonder into your outer room, Mr. Hopkins, to satisfy ourselves that worse than play-reading is not carried on within this house."

"Noise? I heard no noise till now, being too much occupied to note it, but it is easy to decide upon its cause from here, though if you desire to go yonder, or to share the play, I'll not prevent you," said Mr. Hopkins, his anger mounting.

"Say, rather, as I seriously fear, that you are too accustomed to the sound to note it. I will pass over, as unworthy of you and of my profession, the insult you proffered me in suggesting that I would bear part in a wicked game," said Mr. Allerton, going toward the door.

He threw it open with a magnificent gesture and stalked through it, followed close by the other two, and by Hecate's growl and Puck's sharp barking.

Constance had dropped her work and sat rigidly regarding her father with amazed and frightened eyes.

Stephen Hopkins went after them, purple with rage. What they saw was a table marked off at its farther end by lines drawn in chalk. At the nearer end sat Edward Doty and Edward Lister, the men whom Stephen Hopkins had brought over with him on the *Mayflower* to serve him. Beside them sat tankards of home-made beer, and a small pile of coins lay, one at each man's right hand.

Just as Francis Eaton threw open the door, Edward Lister leaned forward, balanced a coin carefully between his thumb and finger, and shot it forward over one of the lines at the other end.

"Aimed, by St. George! Well shot, Ted!" cried Edward Doty.

"See that thou beatest me not, Ned; thou art a better man than me at it," said Lister, and they both took a draught of beer, wiping their lips on their sleeve in high satisfaction with the flavour, the game, and each other.

"Shovelboard!" "Shuffleboard!" cried Francis Eaton and John Howland together, differing on the pronunciation of the obnoxious sport, but one in the boundless horror in their voices.

"Stephen Hopkins, I am profoundly shocked," said Mr. Allerton, turning with lowering brows upon their host. "A man of your standing among us! A man of your experience of the world! Well wot you that playing of games is forbid among us. That you should tolerate it is frightful to consider——"

"See here, Isaac Allerton," said Stephen Hopkins, stepping so close to his neighbour that Mr. Allerton fell back uneasily, "it is a principle among us that every man is to follow his conscience. If we have thrown off the authority of our old days, an authority mind you, that had much to be said for it, and set up our own conscience as the sole guide of our actions, then how dare you come into my house to reproach me for what I consider no wrong-doing? Ted and Ned are good fellows, on whose hands leisure hangs heavily, since they do not read Shakespeare, as does their master, whom equally you condemn. To my mind shovelboard is innocent; I have permitted my men to play it. Go, if you will, and report to our governor this heinous crime of allowing innocent play. But on your peril read me no sermon, nor set up your opinion in mine own house, for, by my honour, I'll not abide it."

"By no will of mine will I report you, my brother," said Isaac Allerton, but the gleam in his eye belied him; there was jealousy in this little community, as in all human communities. "You know that my duty will compel me to lay before Governor Bradford what I have seen. Since we have with our own eyes seen it, there needs no further witnesses."

"Imply that I would deny the truth, were there never a witness, and Heaven help you, Plymouth or no Plymouth, brother or no brother! I'm not a liar," cried Stephen Hopkins, so fiercely that Mr. Allerton and his companions went swiftly out the side door, Mr. Allerton protesting:

"Nay, then Brother and friend; thou art a choleric man, and lax as to this business, but no one would doubt your honour."

After they had gone Mr. Hopkins went back to his chair by the fireside, leaving Ted and Ned staring open-mouthed at each other, stunned by the tempest aroused by their game.

"Well, rather would I have held the psalm book the whole evening than got the master into trouble," said Ted.

"Easy done, since thou couldst no more than hold it, reading being beyond thee," grinned Ned. "Yet am I one with thy meaning, which is clearer to me than is print."

Constance dared not speak to her father when he returned to her. She glanced up at his angry face and went on with her stitchery in silence.

At length he stretched himself out, his feet well toward the fire, and let his right hand fall on Hecate's insinuating head, his left on Puck's thrusting nose.

"Good friends!" he said to the happy dogs. "I am ashamed, my Constance, so to have afflicted thee. Smile, child; thou dost look as though destruction awaited me."

"I am so sorry, Father! In good sooth, is there not trouble coming to you from this night's business?" asked Constance, folding up her work.

"Nothing serious, child; likely a fine. But indeed it will be worth it to have the chance it will buy me to speak my mind clearly to my fellow colonists on these matters. Ah, my girl, my girl, what sad fools we mortals be, as Shakespeare, whom also these grave and reverend seigniors condemn, hath said! We have come here to sail by the free wind of conscience, but look you, it must be the conscience of the few, greater thraldom than it was in the Old World! Ah, Constance, Constance, we came here to escape the thraldom of men, but to do that it needs that no men came! If authority we are to have, then let it be authoritative, say I; not the mere opinion of men. My child, have you ever noted how much human nature there is in a man?"

But the next day, during which Stephen Hopkins was absent from his home, when he returned at night his philosophy had been sadly jostled.

He had been called before the governor, reprimanded and fined, and his pride, his sense of justice, were both outraged when he actually had to meet the situation. Dame Eliza was in a state of mind that made matters worse. She had heard from one of those persons through whom ill news filters as naturally as water through a spring, that her husband had been, as she termed it, "disgraced before the world."

"They can't disgrace him, Stepmother," protested Constance, though she knew that it was useless to try to stem the tide of Dame Eliza's grievance. "My father is in the right; they have the power to fine, but not to disgrace him who hath done no wrong."

"Of course he hath done no wrong," snapped Dame Eliza. "Shovelboard was played in my father's kitchen when I was no age. Are these prating men better than my father? Answer me that! But your father has no right to risk getting into trouble for two ne'er-do-wells, like his two precious Edwards. They eat more than any four men I ever knew, and that will I maintain against all comers, and as to work they cannot so much as see it. Worthless! And for them will he risk our good name. For mark me, Constantia, shovelboard is a game, and gaming an abomination, and not to be mentioned in a virtuous household, yet would your father permit it played——"

"But you just said it was harmless, and that your father had a table!" cried Constance.

"My father was a good man, but not a Puritan," said Dame Eliza, somewhat confused to be called upon to harmonize her own statements. "In England shovelboard is one thing; in Plymouth a second thing, and two things are not the same as one thing. I am disgusted with your father, but what good does it do me to speak? Never am I heeded but rather am I flouted by the Hopkins brood, young and old, which is why I never speak, but eat my heart out in silence and patience, knowing that had I married as I might have married—aye, and that many times, I'd have you know—I'd not be here among sands and marshes and Indians and barrens, slaving for ungrateful people who think to show their better blood by treating me as they best know how! But it is a long lane that hath no turning, and justice must one day be my reward."

When Stephen Hopkins came in Dame Eliza dared not air her grievances; his angry face compelled silence. Even Constance did not intrude upon his annoyance, but contented herself with conveying her sympathy by waiting upon him and talking blithely to Damaris, succeeding at last in winning a smile from her father by her amusing stories to the child.

"There is a moon, Constance; is it too cold for you to walk with me? The sea is fair and silvery beneath the moon rays," said Mr. Hopkins after supper.

"Not a whit too chill, Father, and I shall like to be out of doors," cried Constance, disregarding her stepmother's frown, who disapproved of pleasure strolls.

Constance drew her cloak about her, its deep hood over her head, and went out with her father. Stephen Hopkins placed her hand in his arm, and led her toward the beach. It was a deep, clear autumn night, the moon was brilliant; the sea, still as a mirror, gave its surface for the path that led from the earth to the moon, made by the moon rays.

At last her father spoke to Constance.

"Wise little woman," he said, patting the hand in his arm, "to keep silent till a man has conquered his humours. Your mother had that rare feminine wisdom. What a comrade was she, my dear! Seeing your profile thus half-concealed by your hood I have been letting myself feel that she had returned to me. And so she has, for you are part of her, her gift to me! Trouble no more over my annoyance, Constance; I have conquered it. I do not say that there is no soreness left in me, that I should be thus dealt with, but I am philosopher enough to see that Myles Standish was right when he once said to me that I was a fool for my pains; that living in Plymouth I must bear myself Plymouth-wise."

"Father, have you had enough of impertinence in the day's doings, that your neighbours should dare to judge you, or will you tolerate a little more impertinence, and from your own daughter?" asked Constance.

"Now what's in the wind?" demanded Stephen Hopkins, stopping short.

"Nay, Father, let me speak freely!" Constance implored. "Indeed there is nothing in my heart that you would disapprove, could I bare it to your eyes. Does not this day's experience throw a light upon Giles?"

"Giles! How? Why?" exclaimed her father.

"Giles is as like you as are two peas in a pod, dear Father. He does not count himself a boy any longer. He hath felt that he was dealt with for offences that he had not done. He has been wounded, angry, sore, sad—and most of all because he half worships you. The governor, Mr. Winslow, no one is to you, nor can hurt you, as you can hurt Giles. Don't you feel to-day, Father, how hard it is for a young lad to bear injustice? When Giles comes home will you not show him that you trust him, love him, as I so well know you do, but as he cannot now be made to believe you do? And won't you construe him by what you have suffered this day, and comfort him? Forgive me, Father, my dearest, dearest! I do not mean wrong, and after all, it is only your Constance speaking her heart out to you," she pleaded.

For upwards of ten minutes Stephen Hopkins was silent while Constance hung trembling on his arm.

Then her father turned to her, and took her face in both his hands, tears in his eyes.

"It is only my Constance speaking; only my dearest earthly treasure," he said. "And by all the gods, she hath spoken sweetly and truly, and I will heed her! Yes, my Constance, I will read my own bitterness in Giles's heart, and I will heal it, if but the lad comes back safe to us."

With which promise, that sounded in Constance's ears like the carol of angels, her father kissed her thrice on brow, and lips, a most unusual caress from him. It was a thankful Constance that lay down beside Damaris that night, beneath the lean-to roof.

"Now I know that Giles will come back, for this is what has been meant in all that hath lately come to us," was her last thought as she drifted into sleep.

CHAPTER XV

The "Fortune," that Sailed, First West, then East

"There's a ship, there's a sail standing toward us!"

It was Francis Billington's shrill boyish voice that aroused the Hopkins household with this tidings, early in the morning on one of those mid-November days when at that hour the air was chill and at noon the warmth of summer brooded over land and sea.

Stephen Hopkins called from within: "Wait, wait, Francis, till I can come to thee."

In a moment or two he came out of his door and looked in the direction in which the boy pointed, although a hillock on the Hopkins land, which lay between Leyden and Middle streets, cut off the sight of the sail.

"She's coming up from the south'ard," cried Francis, excitedly. "Most like from the Cape, but she must have come from England first, say you not so, Mr. Hopkins?"

"Surely," agreed Stephen Hopkins. "The savages build no vessels like ours, as you well know. Thank you, my boy, for warning me of her approach. Go on and spread your news broadcast; let our entire community be out to welcome whatever good the ship brings, or to resist harm—though that I fear not. I will myself be at the wharf when she gets in."

"Oh, as to that, Mr. Hopkins, you have time to eat as big a breakfast as you can get and still be too early for the arrival," said Francis, grinning. "She's got a long way to cover and a deal to do to reach Plymouth wharf in this still air. She's not close in, by much. I hurried and yelled to get you up quick because—well, because you've got to hurry folks and yell when a ship comes in, haven't you?"

Mr. Hopkins smiled sympathetically at the boy whose actions rarely got sympathy.

"Till ships become a more common sight in our harbour, Francis, I would advise letting your excitement on the coming of one have vent a-plenty," he said, turning to reënter the house as Francis Billington, acting on advice more promptly than was his wont, ran down Leyden Street, throwing up his cap and shouting: "A ship! A sail! A ship! A sail!" at the top of his vigorous lungs, not only unreproved for his disturbance of the peaceful morning, but hailed with answering excitement by the men, women, and children whom he aroused as he ran.

The ship took as long to reach haven as Francis Billington had prophesied she would require. She proved to be a small ship with a figure-head of a woman, meant to represent Fortune, for she was blindfolded, but her battered paint indicated that she had in her own person encountered ill-fortune in her course.

A number of people were gathered on her forward deck, looking eagerly for indications of the sort of place that they were approaching.

"Mr. Weston, knowing that we depend upon him and his brother merchants, our friends across seas, for supplies, hath at last dispatched us the long-waited ship," said Mr. Winslow to Mr. Hopkins.

"With someone, let us hope, authorized to carry back report of us here, and thus to get us, later on, what we sore need. Many new colonists, as well as nearly all things that human beings require for existence," said Stephen Hopkins, with something of the strain upon his endurance that he had suffered getting into his voice.

The ship was the *Fortune*—her figure-head had announced as much. When she made anchor, and her small boat came to the wharf, the first person to step ashore was Mr. Robert Cushman, the English agent who had played so large a part in the embarkation of the pilgrims in the *Mayflower*.

"Welcome, in all truth!" said Governor Bradford stepping forward to seize the hand of this man, from whose coming and subsequent reports at home so much might be hoped. "Now, at last, have we what we have so long needed, a representative who can speak of us as one who hath seen!"

"I am glad to be here in a twofold sense, Mr. Bradford," returned Mr. Cushman.

"Glad to meet with you, whom I knew under the distant sky of home, glad to be at the end of my voyage. I have brought you thirty-five additional members of your community. We came first to Cape Cod, and a more discouraged band of adventurers would be hard to find than were these men when they saw how barren of everything was the Cape. I assured them that they would find you in better condition here, at Plymouth, and we set sail hither. They have been scanning waves and sky for the first symptom of something like comfort at Plymouth, beginning their anxious outlook long before it was possible to satisfy it. I assure you that never was a wharf hailed so gladly as was this one that you have built, for these men argued that before you would build a wharf you must have made sure of greater essentials."

"We are truly thankful for new strength added to us; we need it sore," said William Bradford. "We make out to live, nor have we wanted seriously, thus far."

"The men I have gathered together and brought to you are not provided; they will be a charge upon you for a while in food and raiment, but after a time their strength should more than recompense you in labour," said Mr. Cushman. "Where is the governor? I have a letter here from Mr. Weston to Governor Carver; will you take me to him?"

"That we may not do, Mr. Cushman," said Governor Bradford, sadly. "Governor Carver is at rest since last April, a half year agone. It was a day of summer heat and he was labouring in the field, from which he came out very sick, complaining greatly of his head. He lay down and in a few hours his senses failed, which never returned to him till his death, some days later. Bitterly have we mourned that just man. And but a month and somewhat more, passed when Mistress Carver, who was a weak woman, and sore beset by the sufferings of her coming here, and so ill-fitted to bear grief, followed her spouse to their reward, as none who knew them could doubt. I am chosen, unworthily, to succeed John Carver as governor of this colony."

"Then is the letter thine, William Bradford, and the Plymouth men have wisely picked out thee to hold chief office over them," said Robert Cushman. "Yet your news is heavy hearing, and I hope there is not much of such tidings to be given me."

"Half of us lie yonder on the hillside," said Governor Bradford. "But they died in the first months of our landing, when we lacked shelter and all else. It was a mortality that assailed us, a swift plague, but since it hath passed there is little sickness among us. Gather your men and let us go on to the village which we have built us, a habitation in the wilderness, like Israel of old. Like old Plymouth at home it is in name, but in naught else, yet it is not wholly without its pleasant comfort, and we are learning to hold it dear, as Providence hath wisely made man to cherish his home."

Mr. Cushman marshalled his sorry-looking followers; they were destitute of bedding, household utensils, even scantily provided with clothes, so that they came off the *Fortune* in the lightest marching order, and filled with dismay the Plymouth people who saw that their deficiencies would fall upon the first settlers to supply.

"Well, Constantia, and so hath it ever been, and ever will be, world without end, that they who till and sow do not reap, but rather some idle blackbird that sits upon a stump whistling for the corn that grows for him, and not for his betters," scolded Dame Eliza who, like others of the women who were hard-working and economical, felt especially aggrieved by this invoice of destitution.

"It is we, and such as we who may feed them, even to Damaris. Get a pan of dried beans, child, and shell 'em, for it is against our profession to see them starve, but why the agents sent, or Robert Cushman brought, beggars to us it would puzzle Solomon to say. Where will your warm cloak come from that you hoped for, think you, Constantia, with these people requiring our stores? Do they take Plymouth for Beggars' Bush?"

"I came hither walking beside my father, who was talking with Mr. Winslow, Stepmother," said Constance, noting with amusement that her stepmother commiserated her probable sacrifice, swayed by her indignation to make common cause with Constance, whose desires she rarely noted. "They said that it would put a burden upon us to provide for these new-comers at first, but that they looked like able and hopeful subjects to requite us abundantly, and that soon. So never mind my cloak; I will darn and patch my old one, and at least there be none here who will not know why I go shabby, and be in similar stress."

The door opened and Humility Cooper entered. She kissed Constance on the cheek, a manner of greeting not common among these Puritan maidens, especially when they met often, and slowly took the stool that Constance placed for her in the chimney corner, loosening her cape as she did so.

"I have news, dear Constance," Humility said.

"How strangely you look at me, Humility!" cried Constance. "Is your news good or ill? Your face would tell me it was both; your eyes shine, yet are ready to tears, and your lips droop, yet are smiling!"

"My news is that same mixture, Constance," cried Humility. "I am sent for from England. The letter is come by the *Fortune*. She is to lie in our harbour barely two sen' nights, and then weigh anchor for home. And I——"

"You go on her!" cried Constance. "Oh Humility!"

"And so I do," said Humility. "I am glad to go home. It is a sad and heavy-hearted thing to be here alone, with only Elizabeth Tilley, my cousin, left me. To be sure her father and mother, and Edward Tilley and his wife, who brought me hither, were but my cousins, though one degree nearer than John Tilley's Betsy; yet was it kindred, and they were those who had me in charge. Since they died I have felt lone, kind though everyone hath been; you and Priscilla Mullins Alden and Elizabeth are like my sisters. But my heart yearns back to England. Yet when I think of seeing you for the last time, till we meet beyond all parting, since you will never go to the old land, nor I return to the new one, then it seems that it will break my heart to say farewell, and that I cannot go."

"Why, Humility, dear lass, we cannot let you go!" cried Constance, putting her arms around the younger girl toward whom she felt as a protector, as well as comrade.

"Tut, tut!" said Dame Eliza, yet not unkindly. "It is best for Humility to go. I have long been glad to know, what we did know, that her kindred at home would send for her."

Humility stooped and gathered up Lady Fair, the cat, on her knee.

"I am like her," she said. "The warmth I have holds me, and I like not to venture out into the chillsome wet of the dark and storm."

"Lady Fair would scamper home fast enough if she were among strangers, in a new place, Humility," cried Constance, with one of her mercurial changes setting herself to cheer Humility on her unavoidable road. "It will be hard setting out, but you will be glad enough when you see the green line of shore that will be England awaiting you!"

"I thought you would be sorry, Constance!" cried Humility, tears springing to her eyes and rolling down her smooth, pink cheeks.

"And am I not, dear heart, just because I want to make it easier for you?" Constance reproached her. "How I shall miss you, dear little trusting Humility, I cannot tell you. But I am glad to know that we who remain are worse off than you who go, and that when you see home again there will be more than enough there to make up to you for Pris, Elizabeth, and me. There will be ships coming after this, so my father and Mr. Winslow were saying, and you will write us, and we will write you. And some day, when Oceanus, or Peregrine White, or one of the other small children here, is grown up to be a great portrait painter, like Mr. Holbein, whose portraits I was taken to see at Windsor when I was small, I will dispatch to you a great canvas of an old lady in flowing skirts, with white hair puffed and coifed and it will be painted across the bottom in readable letters: 'Portrait of Constantia Hopkins, aetat. 86,' else will you never know it for me, the silly girl you left behind."

"'Silly girl,' indeed! You will be the wife of some great gentleman who is now in England, but who will cross to the colony, and you will be the mother of those who will help in its growth," cried Humility the prophetess.

"Cease your foolish babble, both of you!" Dame Eliza ordered them, impatiently. "It is poor business talking of serious matters lightly, but Humility is well-off, and needs not pity, to be returning to the land that we cast off, nor am I as Lot's wife saying it, for it is true, nor am I repining."

Humility had made a correct announcement in saying that the *Fortune* would stay on the western shore but two weeks.

For that time she lay in the waters of Plymouth harbour taking on a cargo of goods to the value of

500 pounds, or thereabout, which the Plymouth people rightly felt would put their enterprise in a new light when the ship arrived in England, especially that she had come hither unprepared for trade, expecting no such store here.

Lumber they stowed upon the *Fortune* to her utmost capacity to carry, and two hogsheads full of beaver and otter skins, taken in exchange for the little that the Englishmen had to offer for them, the idea of trading for furs being new to them, till Squanto showed them the value in a beaver skin.

On the night of the thirteenth day of the *Fortune's* lying at anchor Humility went aboard to be ready in case that the ship's master should suddenly resolve to take advantage of a favourable wind and sail unexpectedly.

Stephen Hopkins offered to take the young girls, who had been Humility's companions on the *Mayflower*, out to the *Fortune* early the next morning for the final parting. It was decided that the *Fortune* was to set sail at the turn of the tide on the fourteenth day, and drop down to sea on the first of its ebb.

Priscilla, Elizabeth Tilley, Desire Minter, who was also to return to England when summoned, and Constance, were rowed out to the ship when the reddening east threw a glory upon the *Fortune* and covered her battered, blindfolded figure-head with the robes of an aurora.

Humility was dressed, awaiting them. She threw herself into the arms of each of the girls in succession, and for once five young girls were silent, their chatter hushed by the solemn thought that never would their eyes rest again upon Humility's pleasant little face; that never again would Humility see the faces which had smiled her through her days of bereavement, see Constance who had nursed her back to life when she herself seemed likely to follow her protectors to the hillside, to their corn-hidden graves.

"We cannot forget, so we will not ask each other to remember, Humility dear," whispered Constance, her lips against Humility's soft, brown hair.

Humility shook her head, unable otherwise to reply.

"I love you more than any one on earth, Con," she managed to say at last.

"I am sorry to shorten your stay, daughters, sorry to compel you to leave Mistress Humility," said Mr. Cushman, coming down the deck to the plaintive group, "but we are sailing now, and there will be no time when the last good-bye is easy. You must go ashore."

Not a word was spoken as Priscilla, Desire—though for her the parting was not final—Elizabeth and Constance kissed, clung to Humility, and for ever let her go. Stephen Hopkins, not a little moved himself—for he was fond of Humility, over whom he had kept ward since Edward Tilley had died—guided the tear-blinded girls down the ship's ladder, into his boat, and rowed them ashore.

The *Fortune's* sails creaked and her gear rattled as her men hauled up her canvas for her homeward voyage.

She weighed anchor and slowly moved on her first tack, bright in the golden sunshine of a perfect Indian summer morning.

"Be brave, and wave a gay farewell to the little lass," said Stephen Hopkins. "And may God fend her from harm on her way, and lead her over still waters all her days."

"Oh, amen, amen, Father!" sobbed Constance. "She can't see we are crying while we wave to her so blithely. But it is the harder part to stay behind."

"With me, my lass?" asked Stephen Hopkins, smiling tenderly down on his usually courageous little pioneer.

"Oh, no; no indeed! Forgive me, Father! The one hard thing would be to stay anywhere without thee," cried Constance, smiling as brightly as she had just wept bitterly. The *Fortune* leaned over slightly, and sailed at a good speed down the harbour, Humility's white signal of farewell hanging out over the boat's stern, discernable long after the girl's plump little figure and pink round face, all washed white with tears, had been blotted out by intervening space.

Before the *Fortune* had gone wholly out of sight Francis Billington came over the marsh grass that edged the sand, sometimes running for a few steps, sometimes lagging; his whole figure and air eloquent of catastrophe.

"What can ail Francis Billington?" exclaimed Stephen Hopkins.

"He looks ghastly," cried Constance. "Father, it can't be—Giles?" she whispered.

"Bad news of him!" cried her father quickly, turning pale. "Nonsense, no; of course not."

Nevertheless he strode toward the boy hastily and caught him by the arm.

"What aileth thee; speak!" he ordered him.

"Jack. Jack is—Jack——" Francis stammered.

"Oh, is it Jack?" cried Stephen Hopkins, relieved, though he could have struck himself a moment later for the seeming heartlessness of his excusable mistake.

"What has Jack done now? He is always getting into mischief, but I am sure you need have no fear for him. But now that I look at you——. Why, my poor lad, what is it? No harm hath befallen your brother?"

"Jack is dead," said Francis.

Constance uttered a cry, and her father fell back a step or two, shocked and sorry.

"Forgive me, Francis; I had no notion of this. I never thought John Billington, the younger, could come to actual harm—so daring, so reckless, but so strong and able to take care of himself! Dead! Francis, it can't be. You are mistaken. Where is Doctor Fuller?"

"With my father," said Francis, and they saw that he shook from head to foot.

"He was with Jack; he did what he could. He couldn't do more," said Francis.

"Poor lad," said Stephen Hopkins, laying his hand gently on the boy's shoulder.

"Do you want to tell us? Was it an accident?"

Francis nodded. "Bouncing Bully," he muttered.

Stephen Hopkins glanced questioningly at Constance; he thought perhaps Francis was wandering in his mind.

"That was poor Jack's great pistol that he took such pride in," cried Constance.

"Oh, Francis, did that kill him?"

"Burst," cried Francis, and said no more.

"Come home with us, Francis," said Mr. Hopkins. "Indeed, my boy, I am heartily sorry for thee, and wish I could comfort thee. Be brave, and bear it in the way that thou hast been taught."

"I liked Jack," said poor Francis, turning away. "I thank you, Mr. Hopkins, but I'd not care to go home with you. If Giles was back——. Not that I don't love you, Con, but Jack and Giles——. I'm going—somewhere. I guess I'll find Nimrod, my dog. Thank you, Mr. Hopkins, but I couldn't come. I forgot why I came here. Doctor Fuller told me to say he wanted you. It's about Jack—Jack's——. They'll bury him."

The boy turned away, staggering, but in a moment Constance and her father, watching him, saw him break into a run and disappear.

"Don't look so worried, my dear," said Stephen Hopkins. "It is a boy's instinct to hide his grief, and the dog will be a good comrade for Francis for awhile. Later we will get hold of him. Best leave him to himself awhile. That wild, unruly Jack! And he is dead! I'd rather a hundred pounds were lost than that I had spoken as I did to Francis at first, but how should I have dreamed it was more than another of the Billington scrapes? I tell thee, Connie, it will be a rare mercy if the father does not end badly one day. He is insubordinate, lawless, dangerous. Perhaps young John is saved a worse fate."

"Nevertheless I am sad enough over the fate that has befallen him," said Constance. "He was a kindly boy, and loyal enough to me to make it right that I should mourn him. And I did like him. Poor Jack. Poor, young, heedless Jack! And how proud he was of that clumsy weapon that hath turned on him!"

"And so did I like him, Connie, though he and Francis have been, from our first embarkation on the *Mayflower*, the torment and black sheep of our company. But I liked the boy. I like his father less, and fear he will one day force us to deal with him extremely." In which prophecy Stephen Hopkins was only too right.

"To think that in one day we should bid a last farewell to two of our young fellow-exiles, Humility and Jack, both gone home, and for ever from us! Giles liked Jack; Jack stood by him when he needed help. Oh, Father, Father, if it were Giles!" cried Constance.

"I know, I know, child," said her father, huskily. "I've been thinking that. I've been thinking that, and more. My son has been headstrong, but never wicked. He is stiffnecked, but hath no evil in his will, except that he resists me. But I have been thinking hard, my Constance. You were right; I would have done well to listen to your pleadings, to your wiser understanding of my boy. I have been hard on him, unjust to him; I should have admitted him to my confidence, given mine to him. I am wrong and humbly I confess it to you, Giles's advocate. When he comes back my boy shall find a better father awaiting him. I wounded him through his very love for me, and well I know how once he loved me."

"Oh, Father; dear, good, great Father!" cried Constance, forgetful of all grief. "Only a great man can thus acknowledge a mistake. My dear, dear, beloved Father!" And in her heart she thought perhaps poor Jack had not died in vain if his death helped to show their father how dear Giles was to him, still, and after all.

CHAPTER XVI

A Gallant Lad Withal

There was a gray sky the day after young madcap John Billington was laid to rest in the grave that had been hard to think of as meant for him, dug by the younger colonists. Long rifted clouds

lay piled upon one another from the line of one horizon to the other, and the wind blew steadily, keeping close to the ground and whistling around chimneys and rafters in a way that portended a storm driven in from the sea.

"I think it's lost-and-lone to-day, Constance," said Damaris, coining her own term for the melancholy that seemed to envelop earth and sky. "I think it's a good day for a story, and I'd like much to sit in your lap in the chimney corner and hear your nicest ones."

"Would you, my Cosset? But you said a story at first, and now you say my nicest *ones*! Do you mean one story, or several stories, Damaris?" Constance asked.

"I mean one first, and many ones after that, if you could tell them, Constance," said the child. "Mother says we have no time to idle in story-telling, but to-day is so empty and lonesome! I'd like to have a story."

"And so you shall, my little sis!" cried Constance gathering Damaris into her arms and dropping into the high-backed chair which Dame Eliza preëmpted for herself, when she was there; but now she was not at home. "Come, at least the fire is gay! Hark how it snaps and sings! And how gaily red and golden are the flames, and how the great log glows! Shall we play it is a red-coated soldier, fighting the chill for us?"

"No, oh, no," shuddered Damaris. "Don't play about fighting and guns!"

Constance cuddled her closer, drawing her head into the hollow of her shoulder. Sensitive, grave little Damaris had been greatly unnerved by the death of Jack, and especially that his own pistol had taken his life.

"We'll play that the red glow is loving kindness, and that we have had our eyes touched with magic that makes us able to see love," cried Constance. "Fire is the emblem of love, warming our hearts toward all things, so our fancy will be at once make-believe and truth. Remember, my cosset lamb, that love is around us, whether we see it or not, and that there can be no dismal gray days if we have our eyes touched to see the glow of love warming us! Now what shall the story be? Here in the hearth corner, shall it be Cinderella? Or shall it be the story of the lucky bear, that found a house empty and a fire burning when he wanted a home, and wherein he set up housekeeping for himself, like the quality?"

"All of them, Constance! But first tell me what we shall do when Giles comes home. I like that story best. I wish he would come soon!" sighed Damaris.

"Ah, so do I! And so he will;" Constance corrected instantly the pain that she knew had escaped into her voice. "Captain Standish will not risk the coming of cold weather; he will bring them home soon. Well, what shall we do then, you want to hear? First of all, someone will come running, calling to us that the shallop hath appeared below in the harbour. Then we shall all make ourselves fine, and——"

"Someone is coming now, Con, but not running," cried Damaris, sitting up and holding up a warning finger.

"It is a man's step," began Constance, but, as the door opened she sprang to her feet with a cry, and stood for an instant of stunned joy holding Damaris clasped to her breast. Then she set the child on her feet and leaped into Giles's arms, with a great sob, repeating his name and clinging to him.

"Steady, Constance! Steady, dear lass," cried Giles, himself in not much better state, while Damaris clung around his waist and frantically kissed the tops of his muddy boots.

"Oh, how did you get here? When did you come? Are they all safely here?" cried Constance.

"Every man of them; we had a fine expedition, not a misfortune, perfect weather, and we saw wonders of noble country: streams and hills and plains," said Giles, and instantly Constance felt a new manhood and self-confidence in him, steadier, less assertive than his boyish pride, the self-reliance that is won through encountering realities, in conquering self and hence things outside of self.

"I cannot wait to hear the tale! Let me help you off with your heavy coat, your matchlock, and then sit you down in this warmest corner, and tell me everything," cried Constance, beginning to recover herself, the rich colour of her delight flooding her face as, the first shock of surprise over, she realized that it was indeed Giles come back to her and that her secret anxiety for him was past. "Art hungry, my own?" she added, fluttering around her brother, like a true woman, wanting first of all to feed him.

"Well, Con, to be truthful I am always hungry," said Giles, smiling down on her.

"But not in such strait now that I cannot wait till the next meal."

"Here are our father and Mistress Hopkins, hastening hither," said Constance, looking out the door, hoping for this coming of her father. "You have not seen Father yet?"

"No, Con; I came straight home, but the captain has met with him, I am sure. And, Con, I want to tell you before he comes in, that I have seen how wrong I was toward our good father, and that I hope to carry myself dutifully toward him henceforth."

Constance clasped her hands, rapturously, but had not time to reply before the door was thrown wide open and Stephen Hopkins strode in, his face radiant.

He went up to his tall son and clasped his shoulders in a grip that made Giles wince, and said through his closed teeth, trying to steady his voice:

"My lad, my fine son, thank God I have you back! And by His mercy never again shall we be parted, nor sundered by the least sundering."

Giles looked up, and Giles looked down. He hoped, yet hardly dared to think, that his father meant more than mere bodily separation.

"I am glad enough to be here, yet we had glorious days, and have seen a country so worthy that we wish that we might go thither, leaving this less profitable country," said Giles. "We have seen land that by a little effort would be turned into gracious meadows. We have seen great bays and rivers, full of fish, capable of navigation and industry. We have seen a beautiful river, which we have named the Charles, for we think it to be that river which Captain John Smith thus named in his map. The Charles flows down to the sea, past three hills which top a noble harbour, and where we would dearly like to build a town. I will tell you of these things in order. Captain Myles will have a meeting of the Plymouth people to hear our tale; I would wait for that, else will it be stale hearing to you."

"Nay, Giles, we shall never tire of it!" cried Constance. "A good story is the better for oft hearing, as you know well, do you not, little Damaris?"

"Well, it hath made a man of thee, Giles Hopkins," said Dame Eliza who had silently watched the lad closely as he talked. "It was a lucky thing for thee that the Arm of the Colony, Captain Myles, took thee for one of his tools."

"A lucky thing for him, too," interposed Giles's father proudly. "I have seen Myles; he hath told me how, when you and he were fallen behind your companions, investigating a deep ravine, he had slipped and would have been killed by his own matchlock as it struck against the rock, but that you, risking your life, threw yourself forward on a narrow ledge and struck up the muzzle of the gun. The colony is in your debt, my son, that your arm warded death from the man it calls, justly, its Arm."

"Prithee, father!" expostulated Giles, turning crimson. "Who could do less for a lesser man? And who would not do far more for Myles Standish? I would be a fool to hesitate over risk to a life no more valuable than mine, if such as he were in danger. Besides which the captain exaggerates my danger. I don't want that prated here. Please help me silence Myles Standish."

Stephen Hopkins nodded in satisfaction.

"Right, Giles. A blast on one's own horn produces much the sound of the bray of an ass. Yet am I glad that I know of this," he said.

Little Love Brewster, who was often a messenger from one Plymouth house to another, came running in at that moment.

"My father sends me," he panted. "The men of Plymouth are to sit this afternoon at our house to hear the tale of the adventurers to the Massachusetts. You will come? Giles, did you bring us new kinds of arrows from the strange savages? My father saith that Squanto was the best guide and helper on this expedition that white men ever had."

"So he was, Love. I brought no new arrows, but I have in my sack something for each little lad in the colony. And for the girls I have wondrous beads," added Giles, seeing Damaris's crestfallen face.

"I will risk a reprimand; it can be no worse than disapproval from Elder Brewster, and belike they will spare me because of the occasion," thought Constance in her own room, making ready to go to the assembly that was to gather to welcome the explorers, but which to her mind was gathered chiefly to honour Giles.

Thus deliberately she violated the rule of the colony; let her beautiful hair curl around her flushed face; put on a collar of her mother's finest lace, tied in such wise by a knot of rose-coloured ribbon that it looked like a cluster of buds under her decided little chin. And, surveying herself in the glass, which was over small and hazy for her merits, that chin raised itself in a hitch of defiance.

"Why should I not be young, and fair and happy?" Constance demanded of her unjust reflection. "At the worst, and if I am forced to remove it, I shall have been gay and bonny—a wee bit so!—for a little while."

With which this unworthy pilgrim maid danced down the stairs, seized by the hand Damaris, who looked beside her like a small brown grub, and set out for Elder Brewster's house.

Although the older women raised disapproving brows at Constance, and shook their heads over her rose-tinted knots of ribbon, no one openly reproved her, and she slid into her place less pleased with her ornamentation than she had been while anticipating a rebuke.

Captain Myles Standish rose up in his place and gave the history of his explorations in a clear-cut, terse way, that omitted nothing, yet dwelt on nothing beyond the narration of necessary facts.

It was a long story, however condensed, yet no one wearied of it, but listened enthralled to his account of the Squaw-Sachem of the tribe of the Massachusetts, who ruled in the place of her dead spouse, the chief Nanepashemet, and was feared by other Indians as a relentless foe, and of the great rock that ended a promontory far in on the bay, at the foot of the three hills which were so good a site for a settlement, a rock that was fashioned by Nature into the profile of an Indian's face, and which they called Squaw Rock, or Squantum Head. As the captain went on telling of their inland marches from these three hills and their bay, and of the fertile country of great

beauty which they everywhere came upon, there arose outside a commotion of children crying, and the larger children who were in charge of the small ones, calling frantically.

Squanto, admitted to the assembly as one who had borne an important part in the story that Myles Standish was relating, sprang to his feet and ran out of the house. He came back in a few moments, followed by another Indian—a tall, lithe, lean youth, with an unfriendly manner.

"What is this?" demanded Governor Bradford, rising.

"Narragansett, come tell you not friends to you," said Squanto.

The Narragansett warrior, with a great air of contempt, threw upon the floor, in the middle of the assembly, a small bundle of arrows, tied around with a spotted snake skin. This done, he straightened himself, folded his arms, and looked disdainfully upon the white men.

"Well, what has gone amiss with *his* digestion!" exclaimed Giles, aloud.

His father shook his head at him. "How do you construe this act and manner, Squanto? Surely it portendeth trouble."

"It is war," said Squanto. "Arrows tied by snake skin means no friend; war."

"Perhaps we would do well to let it lie; picking it up may mean acceptance of the challenge, as if it were a glove in a tourney. The customs of men run amazingly together, though race and education separate them," suggested Myles Standish.

"Squanto, take this defiant youngster out of here, and treat him politely; see that he is fed and given a place to sleep. Tell him that we will answer him——By your approval, Governor and gentlemen?"

"You have anticipated my own suggestion, Captain Standish," said William Bradford bowing, and Squanto, who understood more than he could put into words, spoke rapidly to the Narragansett messenger and led him away.

"Shall we deliberate upon this, being conveniently assembled?" suggested Governor Bradford.

"It needs small consideration, meseems," said Myles Standish, impatiently. "Dismiss this messenger at once; do not let him remain here over night. The less your foe knows of you, the more your mystery will increase his dread of you. In the morning send a messenger of our own to the Narragansetts, and tell them that if they want war, war be it. If they prefer war to peace, let them begin upon the war at once; that we no more fear them than we have wronged them, and as they choose, so would we deal with them, as friends worth keeping, or foes to fear."

"Admirable advice," Stephen Hopkins applauded the captain, and the other Plymouth men echoed his applause.

Then, with boyish impetuosity and with laughter lighting up his handsome face, Giles leaped to his feet.

"Now do I know the answer!" he cried. "Let the words be as our captain hath spoken; no one could utter better! But there is a further answer! Empty their snakeskin of arrows and fill it round with bullets, and throw it down among them, as they threw their pretty toy down to us! And our stuffing of it will have a bad flavour to their palates, mark me. It will be like filling a Christmas goose with red peppers, and if it doesn't send the Narragansetts away from the table they were setting for us, then is not my name Giles Hopkins! And one more word, my elders and masters! Let me be your messenger to the Narragansetts, I beseech you! They sent a youth to us; send you this youth back to them. If it be hauteur against hauteur, pride for pride, I'll bear me like the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown, both together, in one person. See whether or not I can strike the true defiant attitude!"

With which, eyes sparkling with fun and excitement, head thrown back, Giles struck an attitude, folding his arms and spreading his feet, looking at once so boyish and so handsome that with difficulty Constance held her clasped hands from clapping him.

"Truth, friend Stephen, your lad hath an idea!" said Myles Standish, delightedly.

"It could not be better. Conceived in true harmony with the savages' message to us, and carrying conviction of our sincerity to them at the first glimpse of it! By all means let us do as Giles suggests."

There was not a dissentient voice in the entire assembly; indeed everyone was highly delighted with the humour of it.

There was some objection to allowing Giles to be the messenger, but here Captain Standish stood his friend, though Constance looked at him reproachfully for helping Giles into this risky business.

"Let the lad go, good gentlemen," he said. "Giles hath been with me on these recent explorations, and hath borne himself with fortitude, courage, and prudence. He longs to play a man's part among us; let him have the office of messenger to the Narragansetts, and go thither in the early morning, at dawn. We will dismiss their youth at once, and follow him with our better message without loss of time."

So it was decided, and in high feather Giles returned to his home, Damaris on his shoulder, Constance walking soberly at his side, half sharing his triumph in his mission, half frightened lest her brother had but returned from unknown dangers to encounter worse ones.

"Oh, they'll not harm me, timorous Con!" Giles assured her. "They know that it is prudent to let

lie the sleeping English bulldogs, of whom, trust me, they know by repute! Now, Sis, can you deck me out in some wise impressive to these savages, who will not see the dignity of our sober dress as we do?"

"Feathers?" suggested Constance, abandoning her anxiety to enter into this phase of the mission. "I think feathers in your hat, Giles, and some sort of a bright sash across your breast, all stuck through with knives? I will get knives from Pris and some of the others. And—oh, I know, Giles! That crimson velvet cloak that was our mother's, hung backward from your shoulder! Splendid, Giles; splendid enough for Sir Walter Raleigh himself to wear at Elizabeth's court, or to spread for her to walk upon."

"It promises well, Sis, in sound, at least," said Giles. "But by all that's wise, help me to carry this paraphernalia ready to don at a safe distance from Plymouth, and by no means betray to our solemn rulers how I shall be decked out!"

The sun was still two hours below his rising when Giles started, the crimson velvet cloak in a bag, his matchlock, or rather Myles Standish's matchlock lent Giles for the expedition, slung across his shoulder, a sword at his side, and the plumes fastened into his hat by Constance's needle and thread, but covered with another hat which surmounted his own.

Constance had arisen, also, and went with Giles a little way upon his journey. Stephen Hopkins had blessed him and bidden him farewell on the preceding night, not to make too much of his setting forth.

At the boundary which they had agreed upon, Constance kissed her brother good-bye, removing his second hat, and dressing the plumes crushed below it.

"Good-bye, my dear one," she said. "And hasten back to me, for I cannot endure delay of your return. And you look splendid, my Knight of the Wilderness, even without the crimson cloak. But see to it that you make it swing back gloriously, and wave it in the dazzled eyes of the Narragansetts!"

"'You look splendid, my knight of the wilderness'"

Thus with another kiss, Constance turned back singing, to show to Giles how little she feared for him, and half laughing to herself, for she was still very young, and they had managed between them to give this important errand much of the effect of a boy-and-girl, masquerading frolic.

Yet, always subject to sudden variations of spirits, Constance had not gone far before she sat down upon a rock and cried heartily. Then, having sung and wept over Giles, she went sedately homeward to await his return in a mood that savoured of both extremes with which she had parted from him.

The waiting was tedious, but it was not long. Sooner than she had dared to hope for him, Giles came marching back to her, and as he sang as he came, at the top of a lusty voice, Plymouth knew before he could tell it that his errand had been successful.

Giles went straight to Governor Bradford's house, whither those who had seen and heard him coming followed him.

"There is our gift of war rejected," said Giles, throwing down the spotted snakeskin, still bulging with its bullets. "They would have naught of it, but picked it up and gave it back to me with much air of solicitude, and with many words, which I could not understand, but which I doubt not were full of the warmest love for us English. And I was glad to get back the stuffed snakeskin and our good bullets, for here, so far from supplies, bullets are bullets, and if any of our red neighbours

did attack us we could not afford to have lessened our stock in object lessons. All's well that ends well—where have I heard that phrase? Father, isn't it in a book of yours?" Giles concluded, innocently unconscious that he was walking on thin ice in alluding to a play of Shakespeare's, and his father's possession of it.

"You have done well, Giles Hopkins," said Governor Bradford, heartily, "both in your conception of this message, and in your bearing it to the Narragansetts. And so from them we have no more to fear?"

"No more whatever," said Giles.

"Nevertheless, from this day let us build a stockade around the town, and close our gates at night, appointing sentinels to take shifts of guarding us," said Myles Standish. "This incident hath shown me that the outlying savages are not securely to be trusted. I have long thought that we should organize into military form. I want four squadrons of our men, each squadron given a quarter of the town to guard; I want pickets planted around us, and at any alarm, as of danger from fire or foe, I want these Plymouth companies to be ready to fly to rescue."

"It shall be as you suggest, Captain," said Governor Bradford. "These things are for you to order, and the wisdom of this is obvious."

Constance and Giles walked home together, Constance hiding beneath her gown the plumes which she had first fastened into, then ripped out of Giles's hat.

"It is a delight to see you thus bearing your part in the affairs of Plymouth, Giles, dearest," she said. "And what fun this errand must have been!"

Giles turned on her a pain-drawn face.

"So it was, Constance, and I did like it," he said. "But how I wish Jack Billington had been with me! He was a brave lad, Constance, and a true friend. He was unruly, but he was not wicked, and the strict ways here irked him. Oh, I wish he had been here to do this service instead of me! I miss him, miss him."

Giles stopped abruptly, and Constance gently touched his arm. Giles had not spoken before of Jack's death, and she had not dared allude to it.

"I am sorry, too, dear Giles," she whispered, and Giles acknowledged her sympathy by a touch upon her hand, while his other hand furtively wiped away the tears that manhood forbade the boy to let fall.

CHAPTER XVII

The Well-Conned Lesson

Giles took a new place in Plymouth after his embassy to the Narragansetts. No longer a boy among his fellow pilgrims, he fulfilled well and busily the offices that were his as one of the younger, yet mature men.

He was given the discipline of the squadron, that, pursuant to Captain Standish's plan for guarding the settlement, was the largest and controlled the most important gate of the stockade which was rapidly put up around the boundary of Plymouth after the defiance of the Narragansetts. Though that had come to naught, it had warned the colonists that danger might arise at an unforeseen moment.

There was scarcity of provisions for the winter, the thirty-five destitute persons left the colony by the *Fortune* being a heavy additional drain upon its supplies. Everyone was put upon half rations, and it devolved upon Giles and John Alden to apportion each family's share. It was hard to subsist through the bitter weather upon half of what would, at best, have been a slender nourishment, yet the Plymouth people faced the outlook patiently, uncomplainingly, and Giles, naturally hot-headed, impatient, got more benefit than he gave when he handed out the rations and saw the quiet heroism of their acceptance.

He grew to be a silent Giles, falling into the habit of thoughtfulness, with scant talk, that was the prevailing manner of the Plymouth men. Between his father and himself there was friendliness, the former opposition between them, mutual annoyance, and irritation, were gone. Yet there they halted, not resuming the intimacy of Giles's childhood days. It was as if there were a reserve, rather of embarrassment than of lack of love; as if something were needed to jostle them into closer intercourse.

Constance saw this, and waited, convinced that it would come, glad in the perfect confidence that she felt existed between them.

She was a busy Constance in these days. The warmth of September held through that November, brooding, slumberous, quiet in the sunshine that warmed like wine.

Constance and her stepmother cut and strung the few vegetables which they had, and hung them in the sunny corner of the empty attic room.

They spread out corn and pumpkins upon the floor, instructing the willing Lady Fair to see to it that mice did not steal them.

Dame Eliza, also, had grown comparatively silent. Her long tirades were wanting; she showed no softening toward Constance, yet she let her alone. Constance thought that something was on her stepmother's mind, but she did not try to discover what—glad of the new sparing of her sharp tongue, having no expectation of anything better than this from her.

Damaris had been sent with the other children to be instructed in the morning by Mrs. Brewster in sampler working and knitting; by her husband in the Westminster catechism, and the hornbook.

In the afternoon Damaris was allowed to play quietly at keeping house, with Love Brewster, who was a quiet child and liked better to play at being a pilgrim, and making a house with Damaris, than to share in the boys' games.

"Where do you go, lambkin?" Constance asked her. "For we must know where to find you, nor must it be far from the house."

"It is just down by that little patch, Connie; it's as nice as it can be, and it is the safest place in Plymouth, I'm sure," Damaris assured her earnestly. "You see there is a woods, and a hollow, and a big, big, great tree, and its roots go all out, every way, and we live in them, because they are rooms already; don't you see? And it's nice and damp—but you don't get your feet wet!" Damaris anticipated the objection which she saw in Constance's eye. "It's only—only—soft, gentle damp; not wetness, and moss grows there, as green as green can be, and feathery! And on the tree are nice little yellow plates, with brown edges! Growing on it! And we play they are our best plates that we don't use every day, because they are soft-like, and we didn't care to touch them when we did it. But they make the prettiest best plates in the cupboard, for they grow, in rows, with their edges over the next one, just the way you set up our plates in the corner cupboard. So please don't think it isn't a nice place, Constance, because it is, and I'd feel terribly afflicted, and cast down, and as nothing, if I couldn't go there with Love."

Constance smiled at the child's quoting of the phrases which she had heard in the long sermons that Elder Brewster read, or delivered to them twice on Sunday, there being no minister yet come to Plymouth.

"You little echo!" Constance cried. "It surely would be a matter to move one's pity if you suffered so deeply as that in the loss of your playground! Well, dear, till the warmth breaks up I suppose you may keep your house with Love, but promise to leave it if you feel chilly there. We must trust you so far. Art going there now?"

"Yes, dear Constance. You have a heart of compassion and I love you with all of mine," said Damaris, expressing herself again like a little Puritan, but hugging her sister with the natural heartiness of a loving child.

Then she ran away, and Constance, taking her capacious darning bag on her arm, went to bear Priscilla Alden company at her mending, as she often did when no work about the house detained her.

Giles came running down the road when the afternoon had half gone, his face white. "Con, come home!" he cried, bursting open the door. "Hasten! Damaris is strangely ill."

Constance sprang up, throwing her work in all directions, and Priscilla sprang up with her. Without stopping to pick up a thread, the two girls went with Giles.

"I don't know what it is," Giles said, in reply to Constance's questions. "Love Brewster came running to Dame Hopkins, crying that Damaris was sick and strange. She followed him to the children's playground, and carried the child home. She is like to die; convulsions and every sign of poison she has, but what it is, what to do, no one knows. The women are there, but Doctor Fuller, as you know, is gone to a squaw who is suffering sore, and we could not bring him, even if we knew where he was, till it was too late. They have done all that they can recall for such seizures, but the child grows worse."

"Oh, Giles!" groaned Constance. "She hath eaten poison. What has Doctor Fuller told me of these things? If only I can remember! All I can think of is that he hath said different poisons require different treatment. Oh, Giles, Giles!"

"Steady, Sister; it may be that you can help," said Giles. "It had not occurred to any one how much the doctor had told you of his methods. Perhaps Love will know what Damaris touched."

"There is Love, sitting crouched in the corner of the garden plot, his head on his knees, poor little Love!"

Constance broke into a run and knelt beside the little boy, who did not look up as she put her arms around him.

"Love, Love, dear child, if you can tell me what Damaris ate perhaps God will help me cure her," she said. "Look up, and be brave and help me. Did you see Damaris eat anything that you did not eat with her?"

"Little things that grow around the big tree where it is wetter, we picked for our furniture," Love said at once. "Damaris said you cooked them and they were good. So then she said we would play some of them was furniture, and some of them was our dinner. And I didn't eat them, for they were like thin leather, only soft, and I felt of them, and couldn't eat them. But Damaris did eat them."

"Toadstools!" cried Constance with a gasp. "Toadstools, Love! Did they look like little tables? And did Damaris call them mushrooms?"

"Yes, like little tables," Love nodded his head hard. "All full underneath with soft crimped——"

But Constance waited for no more. With a cry she was on her feet and running like the wind, calling back over her shoulder to Giles:

"I'll come quick! I know! I know! Tell Father I know!"

"She hath gone to Doctor Fuller's house," said Priscilla, watching Constance's flying figure, her hair unbound and streaming like a burnished banner behind her as she ran to get her weapon to fight with Death. "No girl ever ran as she can. Come, Giles; obey her. Tell your father and Mistress Hopkins that mayhap Constance can save the child."

They turned toward the house, and Constance sped on.

"Nightshade! The belladonna!" she was saying to herself as she ran. "I know the phial; I know its place. O, God, give me time, and give me wit, and do Thou the rest!" Past power to explain, she swept aside with a vehement arm the woman who found needed shelter for herself in Doctor Fuller's house, and kept it for him till his wife should come to Plymouth.

Into the crude laboratory and pharmacy—in which the doctor had allowed her to work with him, of the contents of which he had taught her so much for an emergency that she had little dreamed would so closely affect herself when it came—Constance flew, and turned to the shelf where stood, in their dark phials, the few poisons which the doctor kept ready to do beneficent work for him.

"Belladonna, belladonna, the beautiful lady," Constance murmured, in the curious way that minds have of seizing words and dwelling on them with surface insistence, while the actual mind is intensely working on a vital matter.

She took down the wrong phial first, and set it back impatiently.

"There should be none other like belladonna," she said aloud, and took down the phial she sought. To be sure that she was right, though it was labelled in the doctor's almost illegible small writing, she withdrew the cork. She knew the sickening odour of the nightshade which she had helped distil, an odour that dimly recalled a tobacco that had come to her father in England in her childhood from some Spanish colony, as she had been told, and also a wine that her stepmother made from wild berries.

Constance shuddered as she replaced the cork.

"It sickens me, but if only it will restore little Damaris!" she thought.

Holding the phial tight Constance hastened away, and, her breath still coming painfully, she broke into her swift race homeward, diminishing nothing of her speed in coming, her great purpose conquering the pain that oppressed her labouring breast.

When she reached her home her father was watching for her in the doorway. He took her hands in both of his without a word, covering the phial which she clasped, and looking at her questioningly.

"I hope so; oh, I hope so, Father!" she said. "The doctor told me."

Stephen Hopkins led her into the house; Dame Eliza met her within.

"Constance? Connie?" Thus Mistress Hopkins implored her to do her best, and to allow her to hope.

"Yes, yes, Mother," Constance replied to the prayer, and neither noted that they spoke to each other by names that they had never used before.

The first glimpse that Constance had of Damaris on the bed sent all the blood back against her heart with a pang that made her feel faint. It did not seem possible that she was in time, even should her knowledge be correct.

The child lay rigid as Constance's eyes fell on her; her lips and cheeks were ghastly, her long hair heightening the awful effect of her deathly colour. Frequent convulsions shook her body, her struggling breathing alone broke the stillness of the room.

"She is quieter, but it is not that she is better," whispered Dame Eliza.

Priscilla Alden stood ready with a spoon and glass in one hand, water in a small ewer in the other, always the efficient, sensible girl when needed.

Constance accepted the glass, took from it the spoon, gave the glass back to Priscilla and poured from the dark phial into the spoon the dose of belladonna that Doctor Fuller had explained to her would be proper to use in an extreme case of danger.

"How wonderful that he should have told me particularly about toadstool poisoning, yet it is because of the children," Constance's dual mind was saying to her, even while she poured the remedy and prayed with all her might for its efficacy.

"Open her mouth," she said to her father, and he obeyed her. Constance poured the belladonna down Damaris's throat.

Even after the first dose the child's rigor relaxed before a long time had passed. The dose was repeated; the early dusk of the grayest month closed down upon the watchers in that room. The

neighbours slipped away to their own homes and duties; night fell, and Stephen Hopkins, his wife, Giles, and Constance stood around that bed, feeling no want of food, watching, watching the gradual cessation of the wracking convulsions, the relaxation of the stiffened little limbs, the fall of the strained eyelids, the quieter breathing, the changing tint of the skin as the poison loosed its grip upon the poor little heart and the blood began to course languidly, but duly, through the congested veins.

"Constance, she is safe!" Stephen Hopkins ventured at last to say as Damaris turned on her side with a long, refreshing breath.

Giles went quickly from the room, and Constance turned to her father with sudden weakness that made her faint.

Constance swayed as she stood and her father caught her in his arms, tenderly drawing her head down on his shoulder, as great rending sobs shook her from relief and the accumulated exhaustion of hunger, physical weariness, anxiety, and grief.

"Brave little lass!" Stephen Hopkins whispered, kissing her again and again. "Brave, quick-witted, loving, wise little lass o' mine!"

Dame Eliza spoke never a word, but on her knees, with her head buried in the bright patch bedspread, one of Damaris's cold little hands laid across her lips, she wept as Constance had never dreamed that her stepmother could weep.

"Better look after her, Father," Constance whispered, alarmed. "She will do herself a mischief, poor soul! Mother, oh—she loves me not! Father, comfort her; I will rest, and then I shall be my old self."

"You did not notice that Priscilla had come back," her father said. "She is in the kitchen, and the kettle is singing on the hob. Go, dear one, and Priscilla will give you food and warm drink. Let me help you there. My Constance, Damaris would be far beyond our love by now had you not saved her. You have saved her life, Constance! What do we not all owe to you?"

"It was Doctor Fuller. He taught me. He is wise, and knew that children might take harm from toadstools, playing in the woods as ours do. It was not due to me that Damaris was saved," Constance said.

She was not conscious of how heavily she leaned on her father's arm, which lovingly enfolded her, leading her to the big chair in the inglenook. The fire leaped and crackled; the steam from the singing kettle on the crane showed rosy red in the firelight; Hecate, Puck, and Lady Fair basked in the warmth, and Priscilla Alden knelt on the hearth stirring something savoury in the saucepan that sat among the raked-off ashes, while John Alden, who had brought Priscilla back to be useful to the worn-out household, sat on the settle, leaning forward, elbows on knees, the bellows between his hands, ready to pump up wind under a flame that might show a sign of flagging.

"Dear me, how cosy it looks!" exclaimed Constance, involuntarily, her drooping muscles tautening to welcome the brightness waiting for her. "It does not seem as though there ever could come a sorrow to threaten a hearthstone so shut in, so well tended as this one!"

"It did not come, my dear; it only looked in at the window, and when it saw the tended hearth, and how well-armed you were to grapple with it, off it went!" cried Priscilla, drawing Constance into the high-backed chair. "Feet on this stool, my pretty, and this napery over your knees! That's right! Now this bowl and spoon, and then your Pris will pour her hot posset into your bowl, and you must shift it into your sweet mouth, and we'll be as right as a trivet, instanter!"

Priscilla acted as she chattered, and Constance gladly submitted to being taken care of, lying back smiling in weary, happy acquiescence.

Priscilla's posset was a heartening thing, and Constance after it, munched blissfully on a biscuit and sipped the wine that had been made of elder too brief a time before, yet which was friendly to her, nevertheless.

Constance's lids drooped in the warmth, her head nodded, her fingers relaxed. Priscilla caught her glass just in time as it was falling, and Constance slept beside the fire while John and Priscilla crept away, and Giles came to take their place, to keep up the blaze in case a kettle of hot water might be needed when Damaris wakened from her first restoring sleep.

At dawn Doctor Fuller came in and Constance aroused to welcome him.

"Child, what an experience you have borne!" the good man said, bending with a moved face to greet Constance. "To think that I should have been absent! Your practice was more successful than mine; the squaw is dead. And you remembered my teaching, and saved the child with the nightshade we gathered and distilled that fair day, more than two months ago! 'Twas a lesson well conned!"

"'Twas a lesson well taught," Constance amended. "Sit here, Doctor Fuller, and let me call my father. You will see Damaris? And her mother is in need of a quieting draught, I think. The poor soul was utterly spent when last I saw her, though I've selfishly slept, nor known aught of what any one else might be bearing."

Constance slipped softly through the door as she spoke, into the bedroom where Damaris lay. The little girl was sleeping, but her mother lay across her feet, her gloomy eyes staring at the wall, her face white and mournful.

"Doctor Fuller is come, Stepmother," whispered Constance. "Shall he not see Damaris? And you, have you not slept?"

"Not a wink," said Dame Eliza, rising heavily. "To me it is as if Damaris had died, and that that child there was another. I bore the agony of parting from her, and now must abide by it, meseems, for I cannot believe that she is here and safe. Constance, it is to you——." She stopped and began again. "I was ever fond of calling you your father's daughter, making plain that I had no part in you. It was true; none have I, nor ever can have. But in my child you have the right of sister, and the restorer of her life. Damaris's mother, and Damaris is your father's other daughter, is heavily in your debt. I do not know——." She paused. She had spoken slowly, with difficulty, as if she could not find the words, nor use them as she wished to when she had found them. Young as she was, Constance saw that her stepmother was labouring under the stress of profound emotion, that tore her almost like a physical agony.

"Now, now, prithee, Mistress Hopkins!" cried Constance, purposely using her customary title for her stepmother, to avoid the effect of there being anything out of the ordinary between them. "Bethink thee that I have loved Damaris dearly all her short life, and that her loss would have wounded me hardly less than it would have you. What debt can there be where there is love? Would I not have sacrificed anything to keep the child, even for myself? And what have I done but remember what the doctor taught me, and give her drops? Do not, I pray thee, make of my selfishness and natural affection a matter of merit! And now the doctor is waiting. Will you not go to him and let him treat you, too?—for indeed you need it. And he will tell you how best to bring Damaris back to her strength. I am going out into the morning air, for my long sleep by the hot fire hath made me heavy. I will be back in a short time to help with breakfast, Stepmother!"

Constance snatched her cloak and ran out by the other door to escape seeing the doctor again and hearing her stepmother dilate to him upon the night's events.

The sun was rising, resplendent, but the air was cold.

"And no wonder!" Constance thought, startled by her discovery. "Winter is upon us; to-day is December! Our warmth must leave us, and then will danger of poisoning be past, even in sheltered spots, such as that in which our little lass near found her death!"

She spread her arms out to the sun rays, and let the crisp, sea wind cool her face.

"What a world! What a world! How fair, how glad, how sweet! Oh, thank God that it is so to us all this morning! Never will I repine at hardships in kind Plymouth colony, nor at the cost of coming on this pilgrimage, for of all the world in Merry England there is none to-day happier or more grateful than is this pilgrim maid!"

CHAPTER XVIII

Christmas Wins, Though Outlawed

Little Damaris, who had so nearly made the last great pilgrimage upon which we must all go, having turned her face once more toward the world she had been quitting, resumed her place in it but languidly. Never a robust child, her slender strength was impaired by the poison which she had absorbed. Added to this was the sudden coming of winter upon Plymouth, not well prepared to resist it, and it set in with violence, as if to atone for dallying on its way, for allowing summer to overlap its domain. Without a word to each other both Dame Eliza and Constance entered into an alliance of self-denial, doing without part of the more nourishing food out of their scanty allowance to give it to Damaris, and to plot in other ways to bring her back to health.

Constance scarcely knew her stepmother. Silent, where she had been prone to talk; patient, where she had been easily vexed; with something almost deprecatory in her manner where she always had been self-assertive, Dame Eliza went about her round of work like a person whom her husband's daughter had never known.

Toward Constance most of all was she changed. Never by the most remote implication did she blame her, whereas heretofore everything that the girl did was wrong, and the subject of wearisome, scolding comment. She avoided unnecessary speech to Constance, seemed even to try not to look at her, but this without the effect of her old-time dislike; it was rather as if she felt humiliated before her, and could not bring herself to meet the girl's eyes.

Constance, as she realized this, began to make little overtures toward her stepmother. Her sweetness of nature made her suffer discomfort when another was ill-at-ease, but so far her cautious attempts had met with failure.

"We have been in Plymouth a year, lacking but a sen' Night, Stepmother," Constance said one December day when the snow lay white on Plymouth and still thickened the air and veiled the sky. "And we have been in the New World past a year."

"It is ordered that we remember it in special prayer and psalmody to the Lord, with thanksgiving on the anniversary of our landing; you heard that, Constantia?" her stepmother responded.

"No, but that would be seemly, a natural course to follow," said Constance.

"There is not one of us who is not reliving the voyage hither and the hard winter of a year ago, I'll warrant. And Christmas is nearing."

"That is a word that may not be uttered here," said Dame Eliza with a gleam of humour in her eyes, though she did not lift them, and a flitting smile across her somewhat grimly set lips.

"Oh, can it be harmful to keep the day on which, veiled in an infant's form, man first saw his redemption?" cried Constance. "There were sweetness and holiness in Christmas-keeping, meseems. If only we could cut out less violently! Stepmother, will you let me have my way?"

"Your way is not in my guidance, Constantia," said Dame Eliza. "It is for your father to grant you, or refuse you; not me."

"This is beyond my father's province," laughed Constance. "Will you let me make a doll—I have my box of paints, and you know that a gift for using paints and for painting human faces is mine. I will make a doll of white rags and dress her in our prettiest coloured ones, with fastenings upon her clothes, so that they may be taken off and changed, else would she be a trial to her little mother! And then I will paint her face with my best skill, big blue eyes, curling golden hair, rose-red cheeks and lips, and a fine, straight little nose. Oh, she shall be a lovely creature, upon my honour! And will you let me give her to Damaris on Christmas morning, saying naught of it to any one outside this house, so no one shall rebuke us, or fine my father again for letting his child have a Christmas baby, as they fined him for letting Ted and Ned play at a harmless game? Then I shall know that there is one happy child on the birthday of Him who was born that all children, of all ages, should be happy, and that it will be, of all the possible little ones, our dear little lass who is thus full of joy!"

Mistress Hopkins did not reply for a moment. Then she raised the corner of her apron and wiped her eyes, muttering something about "strong mustard."

"How fond you are of my little Damaris," she then said. "You know, Constantia, that I have no right to consent to your keeping Christmas, since our elders have set their faces dead against all practices of the Old Church. Yet are your reasons for wishing to do this, or so it seems to me in my ignorance, such as Heaven would approve, and it sorely is borne upon me that many worser sins may be wrought in Plymouth than making a delicate child happy on the birthday of the Lord. Go, then, and make your puppet, but do not tell any one that you first consulted me. If trouble comes of it they will blame you less, who are young and not so long removed from the age of dolls, than me, who am one of the Mothers in Israel."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Stepmother!" cried Constance jumping up and clapping her hands with greater delight than if she had herself received a Christmas gift.

"I'll never betray you, never! None shall know that any but my wicked, light-minded self had a hand in this profanation of——. What does it profane, Stepmother?"

"Plymouth and Plymouth pilgrimage," said Dame Eliza, and this time the smile that she had checked before had its way.

Constance ran upstairs to look for the pieces which were to be transformed by fairy magic, through her means, from shapeless rags to a fair and rosy daughter for pale Damaris. She remembered, wondering, as she knelt before her chest, that she had clapped her hands and pranced, and that Dame Eliza had not reproved her.

Constance was busy with her doll till Christmas morning, the more so that she must hide it from Damaris and there was not warmth anywhere to sit and sew except in the great living room where Damaris amused Oceanus most of the darksome days. But Damaris's mother connived with Constance to divert the child, and there were long evenings, for, to give Constance more time, Dame Eliza put Damaris early to bed, and Constance sat late at her sewing.

Thus when Christmas day came there sat on the hearth, propped up against the back of Stephen Hopkins's big volume of Shakespeare, a doll with a painted face that had real claim to prettiness. She wore a gown of sprigged muslin that hung so full around the pointed stomacher of her waist that it was a scandal to sober Plymouth, and a dangerous example to Damaris, had she been inclined to vain light-mindedness. And—though this was a surprise also to Dame Eliza—there was a horse of brown woollen stuff, with a tail of fine-cut rags and a mane of ravelled rags, and legs which, though considerably curved as to shape and unreliable as to action, were undeniably legs, and four in number. There were bright, black buttons on the steed's head suggestive of eyes, and the red paint in two spots below them were all the fiery nostrils the animal required. This was Giles's contribution to the joy of his ailing baby brother. Oceanus was a frail child whose grasp on life had been taken at a time too severe for him to hold it long, nor indeed did he.

"Come out and wander down the street, Con," Giles whispered to Constance under the cover of the shouts of the two children who had come downstairs to find the marvellous treasures, the doll and horse, awaiting them, and who went half mad with joy, just like modern children in old Plymouth, as if they had not been little pilgrims.

"There will be amusement for thee; come out, but never say I bade you come. You can make an errand."

"Oh, Giles, you are not plotting mischief?" Constance implored, seeing the fun in her brother's eyes and fearing an attempt at Christmas fooling.

"No harm afoot, but we hope a little laughter," said Giles, nodding mysteriously as he left the house.

Constance could not resist her curiosity. She wrapped herself in her cloak against the cold and tied a scarf over her hair, before drawing its hood over her head.

"You look like a witch, like a sweet, lovely witch," cried Damaris, getting up from her knees on which she had seemed, and not unjustly, to be worshipping her doll, whom she had at once christened Connie, and running over to hug her sister, breathless. "Are you a witch, Constance, and made my Connie by magic? No, a fairy! A fairy you are! My fairy, darling, lovely sister!"

"Be grateful to Constantia, as you should be, Damaris, but prate not of fairies. I will not let go undone all my duty as a Puritan and pilgrim mother. Constantia is a kind sister to you, which is better, than a fairy falsehood," said Dame Eliza, rallying something of her old spirit.

Constance kissed Damaris and whispered something to her so softly that all the child caught was "Merry." Yet the lost word was not hard to guess.

Then Constance went out and down the street, wondering what Giles had meant. She saw a small group of men before her, near the general storehouse for supplies, and easily made out that they were the younger men of the plantation, including those that had come on the *Fortune*, and that Giles and Francis Billington were to the fore.

Up the street in his decorous raiment, but without additional marking of the day by his better cloak as on Sunday, came Governor Bradford with his unhastening pace not quickened, walking with his English thorn stick that seemed to give him extra, gubernatorial dignity, toward the group. The younger lads nudged one another, laughing, half afraid, but not Giles. He stood awaiting the governor as if he faced him for a serious cause, yet Constance saw that his eyes danced.

"Good morning, my friends," said William Bradford. "Not at work? You are apportioned to the building of the stockade. It is late to begin your day, especially that the sun sets early at this season."

"It is because of the season, though not of the sun's setting, that we are not at work," said Giles, chosen spokesman for this prank by his fellows, and now getting many nudges lest he neglect his office. "Hast forgotten, Mr. Bradford, what day this is? It offends our conscience to work on a day of such high reverence. This be a holy day, and we may not work without sin, as the inward voice tells us. We waited to explain to you what looked like idleness, but is rather prompted by high and lofty principles."

The governor raised his eyebrows and bowed deeply, not without a slight twitching of his lips, as he heard this unexpected and solemn protest.

"Indeed, Giles Hopkins! And is it so? You have in common with these, your fellow labourers, a case of scruples to which the balm of the opinions of your elders and betters, at least in experience and authority, does not apply? Far be it from me to interfere with your consciences! We have come to the New World, and braved no slight adversity for just this cause, that conscience unbridled, undriven, might guide us in virtue. Disperse, therefore, to your homes, and for the day let the work of protection wait. I bid you good morning, gentlemen, and pray you be always such faithful harkeners to the voice of conscience."

The governor went on, having spoken, and the actors in the farce looked crestfallen at one another, the point of the jest somewhat blunted by the governor's complete approval. Indeed there were some among them who followed the governor. He turned back, hoping for this, and said:

"This is not done to approve of Christmas-keeping but rather to spare you till you are better informed."

"What will you do, Giles?" asked Constance, as her brother joined her, Francis also, not in the least one with those who relinquished the idea of a holiday.

"Do? Why follow our consciences, as we were commended for doing!" shouted Francis tossing his hat in the air and catching it neatly on his head in the approved fashion of a mountebank at a fair in England.

"Our consciences bid us play at games on Christmas," supplemented Giles. "Would you call the girls and watch us? Or we'll play some games that you can join in, such as catch-catch, or pussy-wants-a-corner."

Constance shook her head. "Giles, be prudent," she warned. "You have won your first point, but if I know the governor's face there was something in it that betokened more to come. You know there'll be no putting up with games on any day here, least of all on this day, which would be taken as a return to abandoned ways. Yet it is comical!" Constance added, finding her rôle of mentor irksome when all her youth cried out for fun.

"Good Con! You are no more ready for unbroken dulness than we are!" Francis approved her. "Come along, Giles; get the bar for throwing, and the ball, and who said pitch-and-toss? I have a set of rings I made, I and—someone else." Francis's face clouded. Pranks had lost much of their flavour since he lacked Jack.

Seeing this, Giles raced Francis off, and the other conscientious youths who refused work, streamed after them.

Constance continued her way to the Alden home. She thought that a timely visit to Priscilla would bring her home at such an hour as to let her see the end of the morning escapade.

Elizabeth Tilley drifted into Priscilla's kitchen in an aimless way, not like her usual busy self, although she made the reason for her coming a recipe which she needed. Soon Desire Minter followed her, asking Priscilla if she would show her how to cut an apron from a worn-out skirt, but, like Elizabeth, Desire seemed listless and uncertain.

"There's something wrong!" cried Desire at last, without connection. "There is a sense of there being Christmas in the world somewhere to-day, and not here! I am glad that I go back to England as soon as opportunity offers."

"There is Christmas here, most conscientiously kept!" laughed Constance. "Hark to the tale of it!" And she told the girls what had happened that morning.

"Come with me, bear me company home, and we shall, most probably, see the end of it, for I am sure that the governor is not done with those lads," she added.

Desire and Elizabeth welcomed the suggestion, for they were, also, about to go home.

"See yonder!" cried Constance, pointing.

Down the street there was what, in Plymouth, constituted a crowd, gathered into two bands. With great shouting and noise one band was throwing a ball, which the other band did its utmost to prevent from entering a goal toward which the throwers directed it. Alone, one young man was throwing a heavy bar, taking pride in his muscles which balanced the bar and threw it a long distance with ease and grace.

"To think that this is Plymouth, with merrymaking in its street on Christmas day!" exclaimed Desire, her eyes kindling with pleasure.

"Ah, but see the governor is coming, leading back those men who went to work; he has himself helped to build the stockade. Now we shall see how he receives this queer idea of a holiday, which is foreign to us, though it comes from England," said Constance.

Governor Bradford came toward the shouting and mirth-making with his dignified gait unvaried. The game slackened as he drew nearer, though some of the players did their best to keep it up at the same pace, not to seem to dread the governor's disapproval.

Having gained the centre of the players, the governor halted, and looked from one to another.

"Hand me that ball, and yonder bar, and all other implements of play which you have here," he said, sternly. "My friends," he added to the men who had been at work, "take from our idlers their toys."

There was no resistance on the part of the players; they yielded up bats, ball, and bar, the stool-ball, goal sticks, and all else, without demur, curious to see what was in the wind.

"Now, young men of Plymouth colony," said Governor Bradford, "this morning you told me that your consciences forbade you to work on Christmas day. Although I could not understand properly trained Puritan consciences going so astray, yet did I admit your plea, not being willing to force you to do that which there was a slender chance of your being honest in objecting to, for conscience sake. You have not worked with your neighbours for half of this day. Now doth my conscience arouse, nor will it allow me, as governor, to see so many lusty men at play, while others labour for our mutual benefit. Therefore I forbid the slightest attempt at game-playing on this day. If your consciences will not allow you to labour then will mine, though exempting you from work because of your sense of right, yet not allow you to play while others work. For the rest of this day, which is called Christmas, but which we consider but as the twenty-fifth day of this last month of the year, you will either go to work, or you will remain close within your various houses, on no account to appear beyond your thresholds. For either this is a work-a-day afternoon, or else is it holy, which we by no means admit. In either case play is forbidden you. See to it that you obey me, or I will deal with you as I am empowered to deal."

The young men looked at one another, some inclined to resent this, others with a ready sense of humour, burst out laughing; among these latter was Giles, who cried:

"Fairly caught, Governor Bradford! You have played a Christmas game this day yourself and have won out at it! For me, as a choice between staying close within the house and working, I will take to the stockade. By your leave, then, Governor, I will join you at the work, dinner being over."

"You have my leave, Giles Hopkins," said William Bradford, and there was a twinkle in his eyes as he turned them, with no smile on his lips, upon Giles.

Giles went home with Constance in perfect good humour, taking the end of his mischief in good part.

"For look you," he said, summing up comments upon it to his sister. "I don't mind encountering defeat by clever outwitting of me. We tried a scheme and the governor had a better one. What I mind is unfairness; that was fair, and I like the governor better than I ever did before."

Stephen Hopkins stood in the doorway of the house as the brother and sister came toward it. He was gazing at the skyline with eyes that saw nothing near to him, preoccupied, wistful, in a mood that was rare to him, and never betrayed to others. His eyes came back to earth slowly, and he looked at Giles and Constance as one looks who has difficulty in seeing realities, so occupied was he with his thoughts. He put out a hand and took one of Constance's hands, drawing it up close to his breast, and he laid his left hand heavily on Giles's shoulder.

"Across that ocean it is Christmas day," he said, slowly. "In England people are sitting around their hearths mulling ale, roasting apples, singing old songs and carols. When I was young your

mother and I rode miles across a dim forest, she on her pillion, I guiding a mettlesome beauty. But she had no fear with my hand on his bridle; we had been married but since Michaelmas. We went to visit your grandmother, her mother, Lady Constantia, who was a famous toast in her youth. You are very like your mother, Constance; I have often told you this. Strange, that one can inhabit the same body in such different places in a lifetime; stranger that, still in the same body, he can be such an altered man! Giles, my son, I have been thinking long thoughts to-day. There is something that I must say to you as your due; nay something, rather, that I want to say to you. I have been wrong, my son. I have loved you so well that a defect in you annoyed me, and I have been hard, impatient, offending against the charity in judgment that we owe all men, surely most those who are our nearest and dearest. I accused you unjustly, and gave you no opportunity to explain. Giles, as man to man, and as a father who failed you, I beg your pardon."

"Oh, sir! Oh, dear, dear Father!" cried Giles in distress. "It needed not this! All I ask is your confidence. I have been an arrogant young upstart, denying you your right to deal with me. It is I who am wrong, wrongest in that I have never confessed the wrong, and asked your forgiveness. Surely it is for me to beg your pardon; not you mine!"

"At least a good example is your due from me," said Stephen Hopkins, with a smile of wistful tenderness. "We are all upstarts, Giles lad, denying that we should receive correction, and this from a Greater than I. The least that we can do is to be willing to acknowledge our errors. With all my heart I forgive you, lad, and I ask you to try to love me, and let there be the perfect loving comradeship between us that, it hath seemed, we had left behind us on the other shore, just when it was most needed to sustain us in our venture on this one. You loved me well, Giles, as a child; love me as well as you can as a man."

Giles caught his father's hand in both of his, and was not ashamed that tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"Father, I never loved you till to-day!" he cried. "You have taught me true greatness, and—and—Oh, indeed I love and honour you, dear sir!"

"The day of good will, and of peace to it! And of love that triumphs over wrongs," said Stephen Hopkins, turning toward the house, and whimsically touching with his finger-tips the happy tears that quivered on Constance's lashes.

"We cannot keep it out of Plymouth colony, however we strive to erect barriers against the feast; Christmas wins, though outlawed!"

"God rest ye merry, gentlemen;
Let nothing you dismay,"

Constance carolled as she hung up her cloak, her heart leaping in rapture of gratitude. Nor did Dame Eliza reprove her carol, but half smiled as Oceanus crowed and beat a pan wildly with his Christmas horse.

CHAPTER XIX

A Fault Confessed, Thereby Redressed

As the winter wore away, that second winter in Plymouth colony that proved so hard to endure, the new state of things in the Hopkins household continued. Constance could not understand her stepmother. Though the long habit of a lifetime could not be at once entirely abandoned, yet Dame Eliza scolded far less, and toward Constance herself maintained an attitude that was far from fault-finding. Indeed she managed to combine something like regretful deference that was not unlike liking, with a rigid keeping of her distance from the girl. Constance wondered what had come over Mistress Hopkins, but she was too thankful for the peace she enjoyed to disturb it by the least attempt to bridge the distance that Dame Eliza had established between them.

Her father and Giles were a daily delight to Constance. The comradeship that they had been so happy in when Giles was a child was theirs again, increased and deepened by the understanding that years had enabled Giles and his father to share as one man with another. And added to that was wistful affection, as if the older man and the younger one longed to make up by strength of love for the wasted days when all had not been right between them.

Constance watched them together with gladness shining upon her face. Dame Eliza also watched them, but with an expression that Constance could not construe. Certain it was that her stepmother was not happy, not sure of herself, as she had always been.

Oceanus was not well; he did not grow strong and rosy as did the other *Mayflower* baby, Peregrine White, though Oceanus was by this time walking and talking—a tall, thin, reed-like little baby, fashioned not unlike the long grasses that grew on Plymouth harbour shore. But Damaris had come back to health. She was Constance's charge; her mother yielded her to Constance and devoted herself to the baby, as if she had a presentiment of how brief a time she was to keep him.

It was a cruelly hard winter; except that there was not a second epidemic of mortal disease it was harder to the exiles than the first winter in Plymouth.

Hunger was upon them, not for a day, a week, or a month, but hourly and on all the days that rose and set upon the lonely little village, encompassed by nothing kinder than reaches of marsh, sand, and barrens that ended in forest; the monotonous sea that moaned against their coast and separated them from food and kin; and the winter sky that often smiled on them sunnily, it is true, but oftener was coldly gray, or hurling upon them bleak winds and driving snows.

From England had come on the *Fortune* more settlers to feed, but no food for them. Plymouth people were hungry, but they faithfully divided their scarcity with the new-comers and hoped that in the spring Mr. Weston, the agent in England who had promised them the greatest help and assured them of the liveliest interest in this heroic venture, would send them at least a fraction of the much he had pledged to its assistance.

So when the spring, that second spring, came in and brought a small ship there was the greatest excitement of hope in her coming. But all she brought was letters, and seven more passengers to consume the food already so shortened, but not an ounce of addition to the supplies. One letter was from Mr. Weston, filled with fair words, but so discouraging in its smooth avoidance of actual help that Governor Bradford dared not make its contents known, lest it should discourage the people, already sufficiently downhearted, and with more than enough reason to be so. There was a letter on this ship for Constance from Humility, and Governor Bradford beckoned to John Howland, standing near and said to him:

"Take this letter up to Mistress Constantia Hopkins, and ask her father to come to me, if it please him. Say to him that I wish to consult him."

"I will willingly do your bidding, Mr. Bradford," said John Howland, accepting the letter which the governor held out to him and turning it to see in all lights its yellowed folder and the seal thrice impressed along its edge to insure that none other than she whose name appeared written in a fine, running hand on the obverse side, should first read the letter. "In fact I have long contemplated a visit to Mistress Constantia. It hath seemed to me that Stephen Hopkins's daughter was growing a woman and a comely woman. She is not so grave as I would want her to be, but allowance must be made for her youth, and her father is not so completely, nor profoundly set free from worldliness as are our truer saints; witness the affair of the shovelboard. But Constantia Hopkins, under the control and obedience of a righteous man, may be worthy of his hand."

"Say you so!" exclaimed William Bradford, half amused, half annoyed, and wondering what his quick-tempered but honoured friend Stephen would say to this from John Howland—he who had a justifiable pride in his honourable descent and who held no mere man equal to his Constance, the apple of his eye. "I had not a suspicion that you were turning over in your mind thoughts of this nature. I would advise you to consult Mr. Hopkins before you let them take too strong hold upon your desire. But in as far as my errand runneth with your purpose to further your acquaintance with the maiden, in so far I will help you, good John, for I am anxious that Mr. Hopkins shall know as soon as possible what news the ship hath brought. Stay; here is another letter; for Mistress Eliza Hopkins this time. Take that, also, if you will and bid Mr. Hopkins hither."

John Howland, missing entirely the hint of warning in the governor's voice and manner, took the two letters and went his way.

He found Stephen Hopkins at his house, planning the planting of a garden with his son.

"I will go at once; come thou with me, Giles. It sounds like ill news, I fear me, that hint of wishing to consult me. Somehow it seems that as 'good wine needs no bush,' for which we have Shakespeare's authority, so good news needs little advice, or rarely seeks it, for its dealing."

So saying Stephen Hopkins, straightening himself with a hand on his stiffened side went into the house, and, taking his hat, went immediately out of it again, with Giles. John Howland followed them into the house, but not out of it. Instead, he seated himself, unbidden, upon the fireside settle, and awaited their departure.

Then he produced his two letters, and offered one to Constance.

"I have brought you this, Mistress Constantia," he said, ponderously, "at the request of the governor, but no less have I brought it because it pleaseth me to do you a service, as I hope to do you many, even to the greatest, in time to come."

"Thank you, John," said innocent Constance, having no idea of the weighty meaning underlying this statement, indeed scarce hearing it, being eager to get the letter which he held. "Oh, from Humility! It is from Humility! Look, little Damaris, a letter from England, writ by Humility Cooper! The *Fortune* is safely in port, then! Come, my cosset, and I will read you what Humility hath to tell us of her voyage, of home, and all else! First of all shall you and I hear this: then we will hasten to Priscilla Alden and read it to her new little daughter, for she hath been so short a time in Plymouth that she must long for news from across the sea, do you not say so?"

Damaris giggled in enjoyment of Constance's nonsense, which the serious little thing never failed to enter into and to enjoy, as unplayful people always enjoy those who can frolic. The big sister ran away, with the smaller one clinging to her skirt, and with never a backward glance nor thought for John Howland, meditating a great opportunity for Constance, as he sat on the fireside settle.

"Mistress Hopkins, this is your letter," said John, completing his errand when Constance was out of sight.

He offered Dame Eliza her letter. She looked at it and thrust it into her pocket with such a

heightened colour and distressed look that even John Howland's preoccupation took note of it.

"This present hour seems to be an opportunity that is a leading, and I will follow this leading, Mistress Hopkins, by your leave," John said. "It cannot be by chance that all obstacles to plain speaking to you are removed. I had thought first to speak to Stephen Hopkins, or perhaps to Constantia herself, but I see that it is better to engage a woman's good offices."

Dame Eliza frowned at him, darkly; she was in no mood for dallying, and this preamble had a sound that she did not like.

"Good offices for what? My good offices? Why?" she snapped. "Why should you speak to Mr. Hopkins, with whose Christian name better men than you in this colony make less free? And still more I would know why you should speak either first or last to Mistress Constantia? That hath a sound that I do not like, John Howland!"

John Howland stared at her, aghast, a moment, then he said:

"It is my intent, Mistress Eliza Hopkins, to offer to wed Mistress Constantia, and that cannot mislike you. Young though she be, and somewhat frivolous, yet do I hope much for her from marriage with a godly man, and I find her comely to look upon. Therefore——"

"Therefore!" cried Dame Eliza who seemed to have lost her breath for a moment in sheer angry amazement. "Therefore you would make a fool of yourself, had not it been done for you at your birth! Art completely a numbskull, John Howland, that you speak as though it was a favour, and a matter for you to weigh heavily before coming to it, that you might make Stephen Hopkins's daughter your wife? Put the uneasiness that it gives you as to her light-mindedness out of your thoughts, nor dwell over-much upon her comeliness, for your own good! Comely is she, and a rare beauty, to give her partly her due. And what is more, is she a sweet and noble lass, graced with wit and goodness that far exceed your knowledge; not even her father can know as I do, with half my sore reason, her patience, her charity, her unfailing generosity to give, or to forgive. Marry Constance, forsooth! Why, man, there is not a man in this Plymouth settlement worthy of her latchets, nor in all England is there one too good for her, if half good enough! Your eyes will be awry and for ever weak from looking so high for your mate. But that you are the veriest ninny afoot I would deal with you, John Howland, for your impudence! Learn your place, man, and never let your conceit so run away with you that you dare to speak as if you were hesitant as to Mr. Hopkins's daughter to be your wife! Zounds! John, get out of my sight lest I be tempted to take my broom and clout ye! Constance Hopkins and you, forsooth! Oh, be gone, I tell ye! She's the pick and flower of maidens, in Plymouth or England, or where you will!"

John Howland rose, slowly, stiffly, angry, but also ashamed, for he had not spirit, and he felt that he had stepped beyond bounds in aspiring to Constance since Dame Eliza with such vehemence set it before him. Then, too, it were a strong man who could emerge unscathed from an inundation of Dame Eliza's wrath.

"I meant no harm, Mistress," he said, awkwardly. "No harm is done, for the maid herself knows naught of it, nor any one save the governor, and he but a hint. Let be no ill will between us for this. I suppose, since Mistress Constantia is not for me, I must e'en marry whom I can, and I think I must marry Elizabeth Tilley."

"What does it matter to me who you marry?" said Dame Eliza, turning away with sudden weariness. "It's no concern of mine, beyond the point I've settled for good and all."

John Howland went away. After he had gone Constance came around the house and entered by the rear door. Her eyes were full of moisture from suppressed laughter, yet her lips were tremulous and her eyes, dewy though they were, shone with happiness.

"Hast heard?" demanded Dame Eliza.

"I could not help it," said Constance. "I left Damaris at Priscilla's and ran back to ask you, for Priscilla, to lend her the pattern of the long wrapping cloak that you made for our baby when he was tiny. Pris's baby seems cold, she thinks. And as I entered I heard John. I near died of laughing! I had thought a lover always felt his beloved to be so fair and fine that he scarce dared look at her! Not so John! But after all, it is less that I am John's beloved than his careful—and doubtful choice. But for the rest, Mistress Hopkins—Stepmother—might I call you Mother?—what shall I say? I am ashamed, grateful but ashamed, that you praise me so! Yet how glad I am, never can I find words to tell you. I thought that you hated me, and it hath grieved me, for love is the air I breathe, and without it I shrivel up from chill and suffocation! I would that I could thank you, tell you——." Constance stopped.

The expression on Dame Eliza's face, wholly beyond her understanding, silenced her.

"You have thanked me," Dame Eliza said. "Damaris is alive only through you. However you love her, yet her life is her mother's debt to you. Much, much more do I owe you, Constantia Hopkins, and none knows it better than myself. Let be. Words are poor. There is something yet to be done. After it you may thank me, or deny me as you will, but between us there will be a new beginning, its shaping shall be as you will. Till that is done which I must do, let there be no more talk between us."

Puzzled, but impressed by her stepmother's manner and manifest distress, Constance acquiesced. It was not many days before she understood.

The people of Plymouth were summoned to a meeting at Elder William Brewster's house. It was generally understood that something of the nature of a court of justice, and at the same time of a religious character was to take place. Everyone came, drawn by curiosity and the dearth of

interesting public events.

Stephen Hopkins, Giles, and Constance came, the two little children with them, because there was no one at home to look after them. Not the least suspicion of what they were to hear entered the mind of these three, or it might never have been heard.

Elder Brewster, William Bradford, Edward Winslow sat in utmost gravity at the end of the room. It crossed Stephen Hopkins's mind to wonder a little at his exclusion from this tribunal, for it had the effect of a tribunal, but it was only a passing thought, and instantly it was answered.

Dame Eliza Hopkins entered the room, with Mistress Brewster, and seated herself before the three heads of the colony.

"My brethren," said William Brewster, rising, "it hath been said on Authority which one may not dispute that a broken and contrite heart will not be despised. You have been called together this night for what purpose none but my colleagues and myself knew. It is to harken to the public acknowledgment of a grave fault, and by your hearing of a public confession to lend your part to the wiping out of this sin, which is surely forgiven, being repented of, yet which is thus atoned for. We have vainly endeavoured to persuade the person thus coming before you that this course was not necessary; since her fault affected no one but her family, to them alone need confession be made. As she insisted upon this course, needs must we consent to it. Dame Eliza Hopkins, we are ready to harken to you."

He sat down, and Dame Eliza, rising, came forward. Stephen Hopkins's face was a study, and Giles and Constance, crimson with distress, looked appealingly at their father, but the situation was beyond his control.

"Friends, neighbours, fellow pilgrims," began Dame Eliza, manifestly in real agony of shamed distress, yet half enjoying herself, through her love for drama and excitement, "I am a sinner. I cannot continue in your membership unless you know the truth, and admit me thereto. My anger, my wicked jealousy hath persecuted the innocent children of my husband, they whose mother died and whose place I should have tried in some measure to make good. But at all times, and in all ways have I used them ill, not with blows upon the body, but upon their hearts. Jealousy was my temptation, and I yielded to it. But, not content with sharp and cruel words, I did plot against them to turn their father from them, especially from his son, because I wanted for my son the inheritance in England which Stephen Hopkins hath power to distribute. I succeeded in sowing discord between the father and Giles, but not between my husband and his daughter. At last I used a signature which fell into my hands, and by forwarding it to England, set in train actions before the law which would defraud Giles Hopkins and benefit my own son. By the ship that lately came into our harbour I received a letter, sent to me by the governor, by the hand of John Howland, promising me success in my wicked endeavour. My brethren, my heart is sick unto death within me. Thankfully I say that all estrangement is past between Giles Hopkins and his father. In that my wicked success at the beginning was foiled. While I was doing these things against the children, Constantia Hopkins, by her sweetness, her goodness, her devotion, without a tinge of grudging, to her little half-sister and brother, and at last her saving of my child's life when no help but hers was near and the child was dying before me, hath broken my hard heart; and in slaying me—for I have died to my old self under it—hath made me to live. Therefore I publicly acknowledge my sin, and bid you, my fellow pilgrims, deal with me as you see fit, neither asking for mercy, nor in any wise claiming it as my desert."

Stephen Hopkins had bent forward, his elbows on his knees, hiding his face in his hands. Giles stared straight before him, his brow dark red, frowning till his face was drawn out of likeness to itself, his nether lip held tight in his teeth.

Poor Constance hid her misery in Oceanus's breast, holding the baby close up against her so that no one could see her face. Little Damaris, pale and quiet, too frightened to move or fully to breathe, clutched Constance's arm, not understanding what was going forward, but knowing that whatever it was it distressed everyone that constituted her little world, and suffering under this knowledge.

"My friends," Elder Brewster resumed his office, "you have heard what Mistress Hopkins hath spoken. It is not for us to deny pardon to her. She hath done all, and more than was required of her, in publicly confessing her wrong. Let us take her by the hand, and let us pray that she may live long to shed peace and joy upon the young people whom she hath wronged, and might have wronged further, had not repentance found her."

One by one these severely stern people of Plymouth arose and, passing before Mistress Hopkins, took her hand, and said:

"Sister, we rejoice with you." Or some said: "Be of good consolation, and Heaven's blessing be upon you." A few merely shook her hand and passed on.

Before many had thus filed past, Myles Standish leaped to his feet and cried: "Stephen, Stephen Hopkins, come! There's a wild cat somewhere!"

Stephen Hopkins went out after him, thankful to escape.

"Poor old comrade," said Captain Standish, putting his hand on the other's shoulder. "If only good and sincere people would consider what these scenes, which relieve their nerves, cost others! There is a wild cat somewhere; I did not lie for thee, Stephen, but in good sooth I've no mortal idea where it may be!"

He laughed, and Stephen Hopkins smiled. "You are a good comrade, Myles, and we are as like as

two peas in a pod. Certes, we find this Plymouth pod tight quarters, do we not, at least at times? I've no liking for airing private grievances in public: to my mind they belong between us and the Lord!—but plainly my wife sees this as the right way. What think you, Myles? Is it going to be better henceforward?" he said.

"No doubt of that, no doubt whatever," asserted Myles, positively. "And my pet Con is the chief instrument of Dame Eliza's change of heart! Well, to speak openly, Stephen, I did not give thy wife credit for so much sense! Constance is sweet, and fair, and winsome enough to bring any one to her—his!—senses. Or drive him out of them! Better times are in store for thee, Stephen, old friend, and I am heartily thankful for it. So, now; take your family home, and do not mind the talk of Plymouth. For a few days they will discuss thee, thy wife, thy son, and thy daughter, but it will not be without praise for thee, and it will be a strange thing if Giles and I cannot stir up another event that will turn their attention from thee before thy patience quite gives out."

Myles Standish laughed, and clapped his hand on his friend's shoulder by way of encouragement to him to face what any man, and especially a man of his sort, must dread to face—the comments and talk of his small world.

The Hopkins family went home in silence, Stephen Hopkins gently leading his wife by her arm, for she was exhausted by the strain of her emotions.

Giles and Constance, walking behind them with the children, were thinking hard, going back in their minds to their early childhood, to the beautiful old mansion which both remembered dimly, to the Warwickshire cousins, to their embittered days since their stepmother had reigned over them, and now this marvellous change in her, this strange acknowledgment from her before everyone—*their* every-one—of wrong done, and greater wrong attempted and abandoned. They both shrank from the days to come, feeling that they could not treat their stepmother as they had done, yet still less could they come nearer to her, as would be their duty after this, without embarrassment. Giles went at once to his room to postpone the evil hour, but Constance could not escape it.

She unfastened Damaris's cloak, trying to chatter to the child in her old way, and she glanced up at her stepmother, as she knelt before Damaris, to invite her to share their smiles. Dame Eliza was watching her with longing that was almost fear. "Constance," she said in a low voice. "Constance——?" She paused, extending her hands.

Constance sprang up, forgetful of embarrassment, forgetful of old wrongs, remembering only to pity and to forgive, like the sweet girl that she was.

"Ah, Mother, never mind! Love me now, and never mind that once you did not!" she cried.

Dame Eliza leaned to her and kissed her cheek.

"Dear lass," she murmured, "how could I grudge thee thy father's love, since needs must one love thee who knows thee?"

CHAPTER XX

The Third Summer's Garnered Yield

Side by side now, through the weary days of another year, Constance Hopkins and her stepmother bore and vanquished the cruel difficulties which those days brought.

Dame Eliza had been sincere in her contrition as was proved by the one test of sincerity—her actions bore out her words.

Toward Giles she held herself kindly, yet never showed him affection. But toward Constance her manner was what might be called eagerly affectionate, as if she so longed to prove her love for the girl that the limitations of speech and opportunity left her unsatisfied of expression.

Hunger was the portion of everyone in Plymouth; conditions had grown harder with longer abiding there, except in the one—though that was important—matter of the frightful epidemic of the first winter.

In spite of want Constance grew lovelier as she grew older. She was now a full-grown woman, tall with the slenderness of early youth. Her scant rations did not give her the gaunt look that most of the pilgrims, even the young ones, wore as they went on working hard and eating little. Instead, it etherealized and spiritualized Constance's beauty. Under her wonderful eyes, with their far-off look of a dreamer warmed and corrected by the light in them of love and sacrifice, were shadows that increased their brilliance. The pallor that had replaced the wild-rose colour in her cheeks did not lessen the exquisite fairness of her skin, and it set in sharp contrast to it the redness of her lips and emphasized their sweetness.

Dame Eliza watched her with a sort of awe, and Damaris was growing old enough to offer to her sister's beauty the admiration that was apart from her adoring love for that sister.

"Connie would set London afire, Stephen Hopkins," said Dame Eliza to her husband one day. "Why not send her over to her cousins in Warwickshire, to your first wife's noble kindred, and let

her come into her own? It seems a sinful thing to keep her here to fade and wane where no eye can see her."

"This from you, Eliza!" cried Stephen Hopkins, honestly surprised, but feigning to be shocked. "Nay but you and I have changed rôles! Never was I the Puritan you are, yet have I seen enough of the world to know that it hath little to offer my girl by way of peace and happiness, though it kneel before her offering her adulation on its salvers. Constance is safer here, and Plymouth needs her; she can give here, which is in very truth better than receiving; especially to receive the heartaches that the great world would be like to give one so lovely to attract its eye, so sensitive to its disillusionments. And as to wasted, wife, Con gives me joy, and you, too, and I think there is not one among us who does not drink in her loveliness like food, where actual food is short. Captain Myles and our doctor would be going lame and halt, and would feel blind, I make no doubt, did they not meet Constance Hopkins on their ways, like a flower of eglantine, fair and sweet, and for that matter look how she helps the doctor in his ministrations! Nay, nay, wife; we will keep our Plymouth maid, and I am certain there will come to her from across seas one day the romance and happiness that should be hers."

"Ah, well; life is short and it fades us sore. What does it matter where it passes? I was a buxom lass myself, as you may remember, and look at me now! Not that I was the rare creature that your girl is," sighed Dame Eliza. "Is it true that Mr. Weston is coming hither?"

"True that he is coming hither," assented her husband, "and to our house. He hath made us many promises, but kept none. He hath come over with fishermen, in disguise, hath been cast away and lost everything at the hands of savages. He is taking refuge with us and we shall outfit him and deal with him as a brother. I do not believe his protestations of good-will and the service he will do us in return, when he gets back to England. Yet we must deal generously, little as we have to spare, with a man in distress such as his."

"Giles is coming now, adown the way with a stranger; is this Mr. Weston?" asked Dame Eliza.

"I'll go out to greet and bring him in. Yes; this is the man," said Mr. Hopkins, going forth to welcome a man, whom in his heart he could not but dread. The guest stayed with the Hopkins family for a few days, till the colony should be won over to give him beaver skins, under his promise to repay them with generous interest, when he should have traded them, and was once more in England to send to Plymouth something of its requirements.

On the final day of his stay Mr. Weston arose from the best seat in the inglenook, which had been yielded to him as his right, and strolled toward the door.

"Come with me, my lad," he said to Giles. "I have somewhat to say to thee."

"Why not say it here?" asked Giles, surlily, though he followed slowly after their guest.

"Giles Hopkins, you like me not," said Weston, when they had passed out of earshot. "Why is it? Surely I not only use you well, but you are the one person in this plantation that hath all the qualities I like best in a man: brains, courage, youth, good birth, which makes for spirit, and good looks. Your sister is all this and more, yet is the 'more' because she is a maid, and that excludes her from my preference for my purposes. Giles Hopkins, are you the man I take you for?"

"Faith, sir, that I cannot tell till you have shown me what form that taking bears," said Giles.

"There you show yourself! Prudence added to my list of qualities!" applauded Weston, clapping Giles on the back with real, or pretended enthusiasm. "I take you for a man with resolution, courage to seize an opportunity to make your fortune, to put yourself among those men of consequence who are secure of place, and means to adorn it. Will you march with me upon the way I will open to you?"

"'I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none,'" replied Giles. "I don't know where I learned that, but it sounds like one of my father's beloved phrases, from his favourite poet. It seems well to fit the case."

"Shakespeare is not a Puritan text book," observed Weston, dryly. "No Hopkins is ever fully atune with such a community as this. Therefore, Giles, will you welcome my offer, as a more canting Plymouth pilgrim might not. Not to waste more time: Will you collect, after I have gone, all the skins which you can obtain from these settlers? And will you hold them in a safe place together, assuring your neighbours that you are secured of a market for them at better prices than they have ever received? And will you then, after you have got together all the skins available, ship them to me by means which I will open to you as soon as I am sure of your coöperation? This will leave your Plymouth people stripped to the winds; their commodity of trade gone, and, scant of food as they are, they will come to heel like dogs behind him who will lead them to meat. This will be yourself. I will furnish you with the means to give them what they will require in order to be bound to you. You shall be a prince of the New World, holding your little kingdom under the great English throne; there shall be no end to your possible grandeur. I will send you men, commodities for trade, arms, fine cloth and raiment to fulfil the brightest fairy dreams of youth. And look you, Giles Hopkins, this is no idle boast; it is within my power to do exactly as I promise. Are you mine?"

"Yours!" Giles spoke with difficulty, the blood mounting to his temples and knotting its veins, his hands clenching and unclenching as if it was almost beyond him to hold them from throttling his father's guest. "Am I a man or a cur? Cur? Nay, no cur is so low as you would make me. Betray Plymouth? Turn on these people with whom I've suffered and wrought? I would give my hand to kick you out into yonder harbour and drown you there as you deserve. I have but to turn you over to our governor, and short ways will you get with the good beaver skins which have been given to

you by these people you want me to trick, scant though they are of everything, and that owing to you who have never sent them anything but your lying promises. Nay, turn not so white! You may keep your courage, as you keep your worthless life. Neither will I betray you to them. But see to it that this last day of your stay here is indeed the last one! Only till sunset do I give you to get out of Plymouth. If you are within our boundaries at moonrise I will deliver you over, and urge your hanging. And be sure these starved immigrants will be in a mood to hang you higher than Haman, when they hear of what you have laid before me, against them who are in such straits."

Mr. Weston did not delay to test Giles's sincerity. There was no mistaking that he would do precisely as he promised, and Weston took his departure a good two hours before sundown.

Giles stood with his hands in his pockets beside his father as Weston departed.

"Giles, courtesy to a guest is a law that binds us all," suggested Stephen Hopkins.

"Mercy, rather," said Giles, tersely. He nodded to Mr. Weston without removing his hands. "A last salute, Mr. Weston," he said. "I expect never to meet you again, neither in this, nor any other world."

"Giles!" cried Constance, shocked.

"Son, what do you know of this man that you dare insult him in departing?" said Mr. Hopkins.

"That never will Plymouth receive one penny of value for the beaver skins he hath taken, nor gratitude for the kindness shown him when he was destitute," said Giles, turning on his heel shortly and leaving his father to look after Weston, troubled by this confirmation of the doubt that he had always felt of this false friend of Plymouth colony.

The effect upon Giles of having put far from him temptation and stood fast by his fellow-colonists, though no one but himself knew of it, was to arouse in him greater zeal for the welfare of Plymouth than he had felt before, and greater effort to promote it.

Plymouth had been working upon the community plan; all its population labouring together, sharing together the results of that labour, like one large family. And, though the plan was based upon the ideal of brotherhood, yet it worked badly; food was short, and the men not equal in honest effort, nor willing to see their womankind tilling the soil and bearing heavy burdens for others than their own families. So while some bore their share of the work, and more, others lay back and shirked. There must be a remedy found, and that at once, to secure the necessary harvest in the second year, and third summer of the life of the plantation.

Giles Hopkins went swinging down the road after he had seen the last of Mr. Weston. He was bound for the governor's house, but he came up with William Bradford on the way and laid before him his thoughts.

"Mr. Bradford," he said, "I've been considering. We shall starve to death, even though we get the ship that is promised us from home, bringing us all that for which we hope, unless we can raise better crops. I am one of the youngest men, but may I lay before you my suggestion?"

"Surely, my son," said Governor Bradford. "Old age does not necessarily include wisdom, nor youth folly. What do you advise?"

"Give every family its allotment of land and seed," said Giles. "Let each family go to work to raise what it shall need for itself, and abide by the result of its own industry, or indolence, always supposing that no misfortune excuses failure. I'll warrant we shall see new days—or new sacks filled, which is more to the point—than when we let the worthless profit by worth, or worth be discouraged by the leeches upon it."

Governor Bradford regarded Giles smilingly. "Thou art an emphatic lad, Giles, but I like earnestness and strong convictions. Never yet was there any one who did not believe in his own panacea for whatever evil had set him to discovering it! It was Plato's conceit, and other ancients with him, that bringing into the community of a commonwealth all property, making it shared in common, was to make mankind happy and prosperous. But I am of your opinion that it has been found to breed much confusion and discontent, and that it is against the ordinance of God, who made it a law that a man should labour for his own nearest of kin, and transmit to them the fruit of his labours. So will I act upon your suggestion, which I had already considered, having seen how wrong was Plato's utopian plan, or at least how ill it was working here. With the approval of our councillors, I will distribute land, seed, and all else required, and establish individual production instead of our commonality."

"It is time we tried a new method, Governor Bradford," said Giles. "Another year like these we've survived, and there would be no survival of them. I don't remember how it felt to have enough to eat!"

"Poor lad," said the governor, kindly, though to the full he had shared the scarcity. "It is hard to be young and hungry, for at best youth is rarely satisfied, and it must be cruel to see every day at the worst! But I have good ground to hope that our winter is over and past, and that the voice of the turtle will soon be heard in our land. In other words, I think that a ship, or possibly more than one, will be here this summer, bringing us new courage in new helpers, and supplies in plenty."

"It is to be hoped," said Giles, and went away.

The new plan was adopted, and it infused new enthusiasm into the Plymouth people. Constance insisted upon having for her own one section of her father's garden. Indeed all the women of the colony went to work in the fields now, quite willingly, and without opposition from their men, since their work was for themselves.

"It was wholly different from having their women slaving for strong men who were no kin to them, as they had done when the community plan prevailed," said the men of Plymouth. And so the women of Plymouth went to work willingly, even gaily.

There was great hope of a large crop, early in May, when all the land was planted, and little green heads were everywhere popping up to announce the grain to come. Constance had planted nothing but peas; she said that she loved them because they climbed so bravely, and put out their plucky tendrils to help themselves up. Her peas were the pride of her heart, and all Plymouth was admiring them, when the long drouth set in.

From the third week in May till the middle of July not a drop of rain fell upon the afflicted fields of Plymouth. The corn had been planted with fish, which for a time insured it moisture and helped it, but gradually the promising green growth drooped, wilted, browned, and on the drier plain, burned and died under the unshadowed sun.

Constance saw her peas drying up, helpless to save them. She fell into the habit of sitting drooping like the grain, on the doorstep of the Leyden Street house, her bonnet pushed back, her chin in her hands, sorrowfully sharing the affliction of the soil.

Elder Brewster, passing, found her thus, and stopped.

"Not blithe Constantia like this?" he said.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Brewster," said Constance, rising, "just like this. The drouth has parched my heart and dried up my courage. For nine weeks no rain, and our life hanging upon it! Oh, Elder Brewster, call for a day of fasting and prayer that we may be pitied by the Lord with the downfall of his merciful rain! Without it, without His intervention, starvation will be ours. But it needs not me to tell you this!"

"My daughter, I will do as you say; indeed is it time, and I have been thinking so," replied the elder. "The day after to-morrow shall be set aside to implore Heaven's mercy on our brave plantation, which has borne and can offer the sacrifice of a long-suffering patience to supplement its prayers."

The day of fast and prayer arose with the same metallic sky that had cloudlessly stretched over Plymouth for two months. Not a sign of mercy, nor of relenting was anywhere above them as the people of Plymouth, the less devout subdued to the same fearless eagerness to implore for mercy that the more devout ones felt, went silently along the dusty roads, heads bent beneath the scorching sun, without having tasted food, assembling in their meeting house to pray.

In the rear of the bare little building stood the Indians who lived among the Englishmen, Squanto at their head, with folded arms watching and wondering what results should follow this appeal to the God of the white men, now to be tested for the first time in a great public way as to whether He was faithful to His promise, as these men said, and powerful to fulfil.

All day long the prayer continued, with the coming and going of the people, taking turns to perform the necessary tasks of the small farms, and to continue in supplication.

There had been no hotter day of all those so long trying these poor people, and no cloud appeared as the sun mounted and reached his height, then began to descend. Damaris took Constance's hand as they walked homeward, then dropped it.

"It is too hot; it burns me," she said, fretfully.

Constance raised her head and pushed back her hair with the backs of her burning hands. She folded her lips and snuffed the air, much as a fine dog stands to scent the birds. Constance was as sensitive to atmospheric conditions as a barometer.

"Damaris, Damaris, rain!" she cried.

And the "little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand," was rising on the horizon.

Before bedtime the sky was overcast, and the blessed, the prayed-for rain began to fall. Without wind or lightning, quietly it fell, as if the angels of God were sent to open the phials of the delicious wetness and pour it steadily upon Plymouth. As the night went on the rain increased, one of the soft, steady, soaking rains that penetrate to the depths of the sun-baked earth, find the withered rootlets, and heal and revivify.

Plymouth wakened to an earth refreshed and moistened by a downpour so steady, so generous, so calm that no rain could have seemed more like a direct visitation of Heaven's mercy than this, which the reverent and awe-stricken colony, even to the doubting Indians, so received. For by it Plymouth was saved.

It was two weeks later that Doctor Fuller came hastily to Stephen Hopkins's door.

"Friends," he said, with trembling voice, "the *Anne* is coming up! Mistress Fuller and my child are aboard, as we have so often reminded one another. Constance, you promised to go with me to welcome this fateful ship."

"Have I time to make a little, a very small toilette, doctor mine?" cried Constance, excitedly. "I want to look my prettiest to greet Mistress Fuller, and to tell her what I—what we all owe to you."

"You have a full half hour, yet it is a pleasure to watch the ship approach. Hasten, then, vain little Eve of this desolate First Abiding Place!" the doctor gave her permission.

Constance ran away and began to dress with her heart beating fast.

"I wonder why the *Anne* means so much to me, as if she were the greatest event of all my days here?" she thought.

Her simple white gown slipped over her head and into place and out of its thin, soft folds her little throat rose like a calla, and her face, all flushed, like a wild rose.

She pinned a lace neckerchief over her breast, and laid its ruffles into place with fluttering fingers, catching it with a delicate hoop of pearls that had been her mother's. For once she decided against her Puritan cap, binding her radiant hair with fillets of narrow blue velvet ribbon, around and over which its little tendrils rose, wilful and resisting its shackles.

On her hands she drew long mitts of white lace, and she slipped her feet into white shoes, which had also once been worn by her mother in far-away days when she danced the May dances in Warwickshire.

Constance's glass was too small, too high-hung, to give her the effect of her complete figure, but it showed her the face that scanned it, and what it showed her flushed that lovely face with innocent joy in its loveliness, and completed its perfection.

She got the full effect of her appearance in the eyes of the four men in the colony whom, till this day, she had loved best, her father, Giles, Doctor Fuller, and Myles Standish, as she came down the winding stairway to them.

They all uttered an involuntary exclamation, and took a step toward her.

Her father took her hand and tucked it into his own.

"You are attired like a bride, my wild rose," he said. "Who are you going to meet?"

"Who knows!" cried Constance, gaily, with unconscious prophecy. "Mistress Fuller, but who can say whom else beside?"

The *Anne* came up with wide-spread canvas, free of the gentle easterly breeze. Her coming marked the end of the hardest days of Plymouth colony; she was bringing it much that it needed, some sixty colonists; the wives and children of many who had borne the brunt of the beginning and had come on the *Mayflower*; new colonists, some among Plymouth's best, some too bad to be allowed to stay, and stores and articles of trade abundantly.

As the coming of the *Anne* marked the close of Plymouth's worst days, so it meant to many who were already there the dawn of a new existence.

Doctor Fuller took into his arms his beloved wife and his child, with grateful tears running down his face.

He turned to present Mistress Fuller to Constance, but found, instead, Captain Myles Standish watching with a smile at once tender, melancholy, and glad another meeting. A young man, tall, browned, gallant, and fearless in bearing, with honest eyes and a kindly smile, had come off the *Anne* and had stood a moment looking around him. His eyes fell upon Constance Hopkins on her father's arm, her lips parted, her eyes dilated, her cheeks flushed, a figure so exquisite that he fell back in thrilled wonder. Never again could he see another face, so completely were his eyes and heart filled by this first sight of Constance Hopkins, unconsciously waiting for him, her husband-to-be, upon the shore of the New World.

Damaris was clinging to her hand; Giles and her step-mother were watching her with loving pride; it was easy to see that all those who had come ashore from the *Anne* were admiring this slender blossom of Plymouth.

But the young man went toward her, almost without knowing that he did so, drawn to her irresistibly, and Constance looked toward him, and saw him for the first time, her pulses answering the look in his eyes.

Myles Standish joined them; he had learned the young man's name.

"Welcome, Nicholas Snowe, to Plymouth," he said. "We have borne much, but we have won our fight; we have founded our kingdom. Nicholas Snowe, this is a Plymouth maid, Constance Hopkins."

"I am glad you are come," said Constance; her voice was low and the hand that she extended trembled slightly.

"I, too, am glad that you are here, Nicholas Snowe," added Stephen Hopkins. "Yes, this is Constance Hopkins, a Plymouth maid, and my dearest lass."

THE END

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Transcriber's Notes:

Page 36: "remanent" changed to "remnant" (what would my remnant of life be to me)
Page 51: "so" changed to "no" (I mean no such thing, as well you know)
Page 67: "senstive" changed to "sensitive" (a girl, sensitive and easily wounded)
Page 83: "devasting" changed to "devastating" (The devastating diseases of winter)
Page 106: "begining" changed to "beginning" (the beginning of a street)
Page 140: "wordly" changed to "worldly" (to take pride in worldly things)
Page 160: normalised "work-aday" (her work-a-day tasks)
Page 180: changed case of "Come" to lower case (come with me; I need you)
Page 192: "mercie" changed to "merci" (belle dame sans merci)
Page 196: "be" changed to "he" (he began to teach Constance other things)
Page 210 "Shakspeare" normalised to "Shakespeare" (we mortals be, as Shakespeare, whom)

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