

HAWTHORNE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

A compilation of writings by Nathaniel Hawthorne
(1804-1864)

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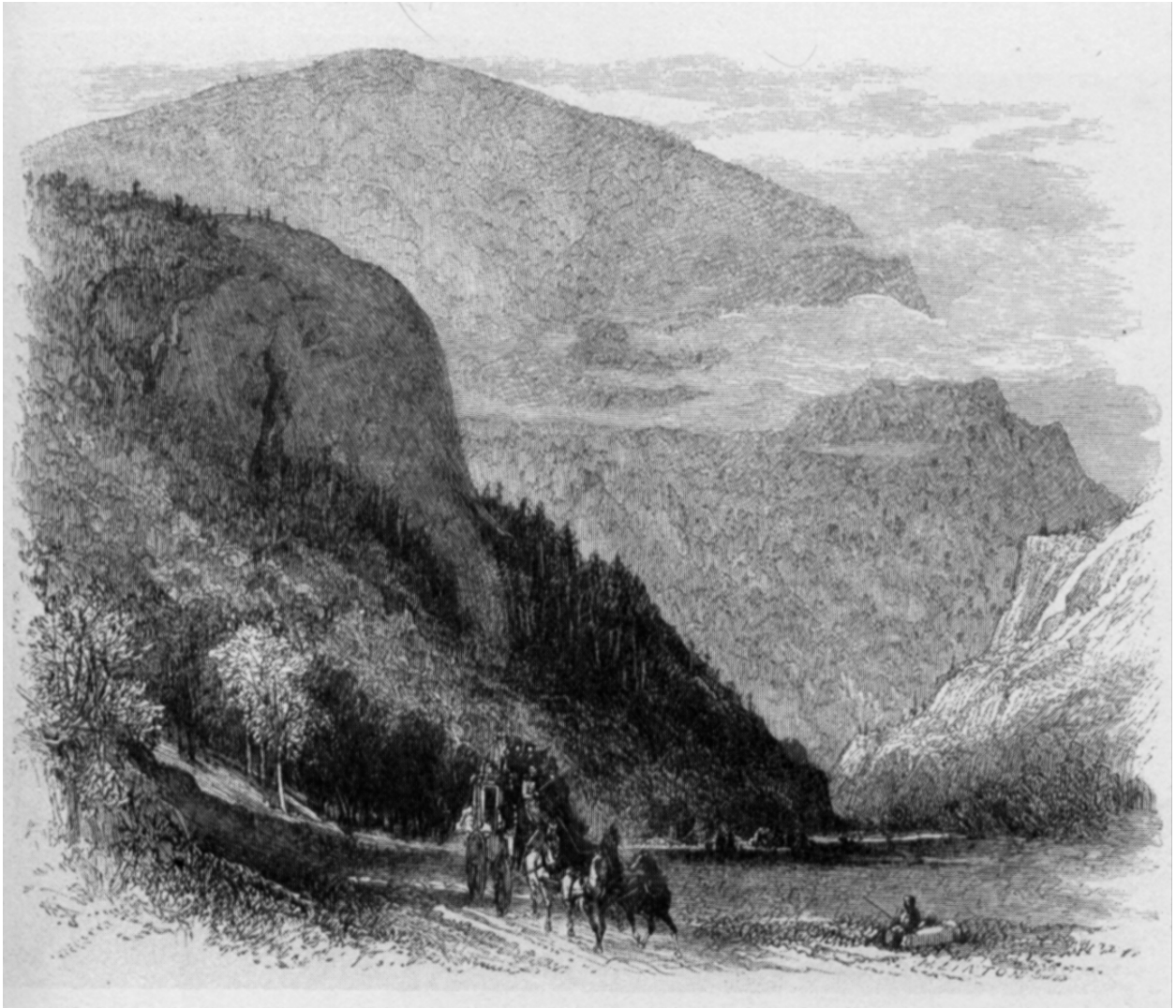
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Sketches from Memory

THE NOTCH OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

IT WAS NOW the middle of September. We had come since sunrise from Bartlett, passing up through the valley of the Saco, which extends between mountainous walls, sometimes with a steep ascent, but often as level as a church-aisle. All that day and two preceding ones, we had been loitering towards the heart of the White Mountains—those old crystal hills, whose mysterious brilliancy had gleamed upon our distant wanderings before we thought of visiting them. Height after height had risen and towered one above another, till the clouds began to hang below the peaks. Down their slopes, were the red path-ways of the Slides, those avalanches of earth, stones and trees, which descend into the hollows, leaving vestiges of their track, hardly to be effaced by the vegetation of ages. We had mountains behind us and mountains on each side, and a group of mightier ones ahead. Still our road went up along the Saco, right towards the centre of that group, as if to climb above the clouds, in its passage to the farther region.

In old times, the settlers used to be astounded by the inroads of the northern Indians, coming down upon them from this mountain rampart, through some defile known only to

themselves. It is indeed a wondrous path. A demon, it might be fancied, or one of the Titans, was travelling up the valley, elbowing the heights carelessly aside as he passed, till at length a great mountain took its stand directly across his intended road. He tarries not for such an obstacle, but rending it asunder, a thousand feet from peak to base, discloses its treasures of hidden minerals, its sunless waters, all the secrets of the mountain's inmost heart, with a mighty fracture of rugged precipices on each side. This is the Notch of the White Hills. Shame on me, that I have attempted to describe it by so mean an image—feeling, as I do, that it is one of those symbolic scenes, which lead the mind to the sentiment, though not to the conception, of Omnipotence.

We had now reached a narrow passage, which showed almost the appearance of having been cut by human strength and artifice in the solid rock. There was a wall of granite on each side, high and precipitous, especially on our right, and so smooth that a few evergreens could hardly find foothold enough to grow there. This is the entrance, or, in the direction we were going, the extremity of the romantic defile of the Notch. Before emerging from it, the rattling of wheels approached behind us, and a stage-coach rumbled out of the mountain, with seats on top and trunks behind, and a smart driver, in a drab great-coat, touching the wheel horses with the whip-stock, and reining in the leaders. To my mind, there was a sort of poetry in such an incident, hardly inferior to what would have accompanied the painted array of an Indian war-party, gliding forth from the same wild chasm. All the

passengers, except a very fat lady on the back seat, had alighted. One was a mineralogist, a scientific, green-spectacled figure in black, bearing a heavy hammer, with which he did great damage to the precipices, and put the fragments in his pocket. Another was a well-dressed young man, who carried an opera-glass set in gold, and seemed to be making a quotation from some of Byron's rhapsodies on mountain scenery. There was also a trader, returning from Portland to the upper part of Vermont; and a fair young girl, with a very faint bloom, like one of those pale and delicate flowers, which sometimes occur among Alpine cliffs.

They disappeared, and we followed them, passing through a deep pine forest, which, for some miles, allowed us to see nothing but its own dismal shade. Towards night-fall, we reached a level amphitheatre, surrounded by a great rampart of hills, which shut out the sunshine long before it left the external world. It was here that we obtained our first view, except at a distance, of the principal group of mountains. They are majestic, and even awful, when contemplated in a proper mood; yet, by their breadth of base, and the long ridges which support them, give the idea of immense bulk, rather than of towering height. Mount Washington, indeed, looked near to Heaven; he was white with snow a mile downward, and had caught the only cloud that was sailing through the atmosphere, to veil his head. Let us forget the other names of American statesmen, that have been stamped upon these hills, but still call the loftiest—WASHINGTON. Mountains are Earth's undecaying monuments. They must stand

while she endures, and never should be consecrated to the mere great men of their own age and country, but to the mighty ones alone, whose glory is universal, and whom all time will render illustrious.

The air, not often sultry in this elevated region, nearly two thousand feet above the sea, was now sharp and cold, like that of a clear November evening in the low-lands. By morning, probably, there would be a frost, if not a snow-fall, on the grass and rye, and an icy surface over the standing water. I was glad to perceive a prospect of comfortable quarters, in a house which we were approaching, and of pleasant company in the guests who were assembled at the door.

OUR EVENING PARTY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

WE stood in front of a good substantial farm-house, of old date in that wild country. A sign over the door denoted it to be the White Mountain Post-Office, an establishment which distributes letters and newspapers to perhaps a score of persons, comprising the population of two or three townships among the hills. The broad and weighty antlers of a deer, "a stag of ten," were fastened at a corner of the house; a fox's bushy tail was nailed beneath them; and a huge black paw lay on the ground, newly severed and still bleeding—the trophy of a bear-hunt. Among several persons collected about the door-steps, the most remarkable was a sturdy mountaineer, of six feet two and corresponding bulk, with a heavy set of features, such as might be moulded on his own blacksmith's anvil, but yet indicative of mother-wit and rough humor. As we appeared, he uplifted a tin trumpet, four or five feet long, and blew a tremendous blast, either in honor of our arrival, or to awaken an echo from the opposite hill.

Ethan Crawford's guests were of such a motley description as to form quite a picturesque group, seldom seen together, except at some place like this, at once the pleasure-house of fashionable tourists, and the homely inn of country travellers. Among the company at the door, were the mineralogist and the owner of the gold opera-glass, whom we had encountered in the Notch; two Georgian gentlemen, who had chilled their southern blood, that morning, on the top of Mount Washington; a physician and his

wife, from Conway; a trader, of Burlington, and an old 'Squire, of the Green Mountains; and two young married couples, all the way from Massachusetts, on the matrimonial jaunt. Besides these strangers, the rugged county of Coos, in which we were, was represented by half a dozen wood-cutters, who had slain a bear in the forest and smitten off his paw.

I had joined the party, and had a moment's leisure to examine them, before the echo of Ethan's blast returned from the hill. Not one, but many echoes had caught up the harsh and tuneless sound, untwisted its complicated threads, and found a thousand aerial harmonies in one stern trumpettone. It was a distinct, yet distant and dreamlike symphony of melodious instruments, as if an airy band had been hidden on the hill-side, and made faint music at the summons. No subsequent trial produced so clear, delicate, and spiritual a concert as the first. A field-piece was then discharged from the top of a neighboring hill, and gave birth to one long reverberation, which ran round the circle of mountains in an unbroken chain of sound, and rolled away without a separate echo. After these experiments, the cold atmosphere drove us all into the house, with the keenest appetites for supper.

It did one's heart good to see the great fires that were kindled in the parlor and bar-room, especially the latter, where the fire-place was built of rough stone, and might have contained the trunk of an old tree for a back-log. A man keeps a comfortable hearth when his own forest is at his very door. In the parlor, when the evening was fairly set in, we held our hands before our

eyes, to shield them from the ruddy glow, and began a pleasant variety of conversation. The mineralogist and the physician talked about the invigorating qualities of the mountain air, and its excellent effect on Ethan Crawford's father, an old man of seventy-five, with the unbroken frame of middle life. The two brides and the doctor's wife held a whispered discussion, which, by their frequent titterings and a blush or two, seemed to have reference to the trials or enjoyments of the matrimonial state. The bridegrooms sat together in a corner, rigidly silent, like Quakers whom the spirit moveth not, being still in the odd predicament of bashfulness towards their own young wives. The Green Mountain 'Squire chose me for his companion, and described the difficulties he had met with, half a century ago, in travelling from the Connecticut river through the Notch to Conway, now a single day's journey, though it had cost him eighteen. The Georgians held the album between them, and favored us with the few specimens of its contents, which they considered ridiculous enough to be worth hearing. One extract met with deserved applause. It was a "Sonnet to the Snow on Mount Washington," and had been contributed that very afternoon, bearing a signature of great distinction in magazines and annuals. The lines were elegant and full of fancy, but too remote from familiar sentiment, and cold as their subject, resembling those curious specimens of crystallized vapor, which I observed next day on the mountain-top. The poet was understood to be the young gentleman of the gold opera-glass,

who heard our laudatory remarks with the composure of a veteran.

Such was our party, and such their ways of amusement. But, on a winter evening, another set of guests assembled at the hearth, where these summer travellers were now sitting. I once had it in contemplation to spend a month hereabouts, in sleighing-time, for the sake of studying the yeomen of New-England, who then elbow each other through the Notch by hundreds, on their way to Portland. There could be no better school for such a purpose than Ethan Crawford's inn. Let the student go thither in December, sit down with the teamsters at their meals, share their evening merriment, and repose with them at night, when every bed has its three occupants, and parlor, bar-room and kitchen are strewn with slumberers around the fire. Then let him rise before daylight, button his great-coat, muffle up his ears, and stride with the departing caravan a mile or two, to see how sturdily they make head against the blast. A treasure of characteristic traits will repay all inconveniences, even should a frozen nose be of the number.

The conversation of our party soon became more animated and sincere, and we recounted some traditions of the Indians, who believed that the father and mother of their race were saved from a deluge by ascending the peak of Mount Washington. The children of that pair have been overwhelmed, and found no such refuge. In the mythology of the savage, these mountains were afterwards considered sacred and inaccessible, full of unearthly

wonders, illuminated at lofty heights by the blaze of precious stones, and inhabited by deities, who sometimes shrouded themselves in the snowstorm, and came down on the lower world. There are few legends more poetical than that of the "Great Carbuncle" of the White Mountains. The belief was communicated to the English settlers, and is hardly yet extinct, that a gem, of such immense size as to be seen shining miles away, hangs from a rock over a clear, deep lake, high up among the hills. They who had once beheld its splendor, were enthralled with an unutterable yearning to possess it. But a spirit guarded that inestimable jewel, and bewildered the adventurer with a dark mist from the enchanted lake. Thus, life was worn away in the vain search for an unearthly treasure, till at length the deluded one went up the mountain, still sanguine as in youth, but returned no more. On this theme, methinks I could frame a tale with a deep moral.

The hearts of the pale-faces would not thrill to these superstitions of the red men, though we spoke of them in the centre of their haunted region. The habits and sentiments of that departed people were too distinct from those of their successors to find much real sympathy. It has often been a matter of regret to me, that I was shut out from the most peculiar field of American fiction, by an inability to see any romance, or poetry, or grandeur, or beauty in the Indian character, at least, till such traits were pointed out by others. I do abhor an Indian story. Yet no writer can be more secure of a permanent place in our

literature, than the biographer of the Indian chiefs. His subject, as referring to tribes which have mostly vanished from the earth, gives him a right to be placed on a classic shelf, apart from the merits which will sustain him there.

I made inquiries whether, in his researches about these parts, our mineralogist had found the three "Silver Hills," which an Indian sachem sold to an Englishman, nearly two hundred years ago, and the treasure of which the posterity of the purchaser have been looking for ever since. But the man of science had ransacked every hill along the Saco, and knew nothing of these prodigious piles of wealth. By this time, as usual with men on the eve of great adventure, we had prolonged our session deep into the night, considering how early we were to set out on our six miles' ride to the foot of Mount Washington. There was now a general breaking-up. I scrutinized the faces of the two bridegrooms, and saw but little probability of their leaving the bosom of earthly bliss, in the first week of the honey-moon, and at the frosty hour of three, to climb above the clouds. Nor, when I felt how sharp the wind was, as it rushed through a broken pane, and eddied between the chinks of my unplastered chamber, did I anticipate much alacrity on my own part, though we were to seek for the "Great Carbuncle."



The Great Carbuncle

A MYSTERY OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS*

AT NIGHTFALL, once, in the olden time, on the rugged side of one of the Crystal Hills, a party of adventurers were refreshing themselves, after a toilsome and fruitless quest for the Great Carbuncle. They had come thither, not as friends, nor partners in the enterprise, but each, save one youthful pair, impelled by his own selfish and solitary longing for this wondrous gem. Their feeling of brotherhood, however, was strong enough to induce them to contribute a mutual aid in building a rude hut of branches, and kindling a great fire of shattered pines, that had drifted down the headlong current of the Amonoosuck, on the lower bank of which they were to pass the night. There was but one of their number, perhaps, who had become so estranged from natural sympathies, by the absorbing spell of the pursuit, as to acknowledge no satisfaction at the sight of human faces, in the remote and solitary region whither they had ascended. A vast extent of wilderness lay between them and the nearest settlement, while scant a mile above their heads, was that bleak verge, where the hills throw off their shaggy mantle of forest trees, and either robe themselves in clouds, or tower naked into the sky. The roar of the Amonoosuck would have been too

awful for endurance, if only a solitary man had listened, while the mountain stream talked with the wind.

The adventurers, therefore, exchanged hospitable greetings, and welcomed one another to the hut, where each man was the host, and all were the guests of the whole company. They spread their individual supplies of food on the flat surface of a rock, and partook of a general repast; at the close of which, a sentiment of good-fellowship was perceptible among the party, though repressed by the idea, that the renewed search for the Great Carbuncle must make them strangers again, in the morning. Seven men and one young woman, they warmed themselves together at the fire, which extended its bright wall along the whole front of their wigwam. As they observed the various and contrasted figures that made up the assemblage, each man looking like a caricature of himself, in the unsteady light that flickered over him, they came mutually to the conclusion, that an odder society had never met, in city or wilderness—on mountain or plain.

The eldest of the group, a tall, lean, weather-beaten man, some sixty years of age, was clad in the skins of wild animals, whose fashion of dress he did well to imitate, since the deer, the wolf, and the bear, had long been his most intimate companions. He was one of those ill-fated mortals, such as the Indians told of, whom in their early youth, the Great Carbuncle smote with a peculiar madness, and became the passionate dream of their existence. All, who visited that region, knew him as the Seeker,

and by no other name. As none could remember when he first took up the search, there went a fable in the valley of the Saco, that for his inordinate lust after the Great Carbuncle, he had been condemned to wander among the mountains till the end of time, still with the same feverish hopes at sunrise—the same despair at eve. Near this miserable Seeker sat a little elderly personage, wearing a high crowned hat, shaped somewhat like a crucible. He was from beyond the sea, a Doctor Cacaphodel, who had wilted and dried himself into a mummy, by continually stooping over charcoal furnaces, and inhaling unwholesome fumes, during his researches in chemistry and alchymy. It was told of him, whether truly or not, that, at the commencement of his studies, he had drained his body of all its richest blood, and wasted it, with other inestimable ingredients, in an unsuccessful experiment—and had never been a well man since. Another of the adventurers was Master Ichabod Pignort, a weighty merchant and selectman of Boston, and an elder of the famous Mr. Norton's church. His enemies had a ridiculous story, that Master Pignort was accustomed to spend a whole hour, after prayer time, every morning and evening, in wallowing naked among an immense quantity of pine-tree shillings, which were the earliest silver coinage of Massachusetts. The fourth, whom we shall notice, had no name, that his companions knew of, and was chiefly distinguished by a sneer that always contorted his thin visage, and by a prodigious pair of spectacles, which were supposed to deform and discolor the whole face of nature, to this

gentleman's perception. The fifth adventurer likewise lacked a name, which was the greater pity, as he appeared to be a poet. He was a bright-eyed man, but wofully pined away, which was no more than natural, if, as some people affirmed, his ordinary diet was fog, morning mist, and a slice of the densest cloud within his reach, sauced with moonshine, whenever he could get it. Certain it is, that the poetry, which flowed from him, had a smack of all these dainties. The sixth of the party was a young man of haughty mien, and sat somewhat apart from the rest, wearing his plumed hat loftily among his elders, while the fire glittered on the rich embroidery of his dress, and gleamed intensely on the jewelled pommel of his sword. This was the Lord de Vere, who, when at home, was said to spend much of his time in the burial vault of his dead progenitors, rummaging their mouldy coffins in search of all the earthly pride and vain glory, that was hidden among bones and dust; so that, besides his own share, he had the collected haughtiness of his whole line of ancestry.

Lastly, there was a handsome youth in rustic garb, and by his side, a blooming little person, in whom a delicate shade of maiden reserve was just melting into the rich glow of a young wife's affection. Her name was Hannah, and her husband's Matthew; two homely names, yet well enough adapted to the simple pair, who seemed strangely out of place among the whimsical fraternity whose wits had been set agog by the Great Carbuncle.

Beneath the shelter of one hut, in the bright blaze of the same

fire, sat this varied group of adventurers, all so intent upon a single object, that, of whatever else they began to speak, their closing words were sure to be illuminated with the Great Carbuncle. Several related the circumstances that brought them thither. One had listened to a traveller's tale of this marvellous stone, in his own distant country, and had immediately been seized with such a thirst for beholding it, as could only be quenched in its intensest lustre. Another, so long ago as when the famous Captain Smith visited these coasts, had seen it blazing far at sea, and had felt no rest in all the intervening years, till now that he took up the search. A third, being encamped on a hunting expedition, full forty miles south of the White Mountains, awoke at midnight, and beheld the Great Carbuncle gleaming like a meteor, so that the shadows of the trees fell backward from it. They spoke of the innumerable attempts, which had been made to reach the spot, and of the singular fatality which had hitherto withheld success from all adventurers, though it might seem so easy to follow to its source a light that overpowered the moon, and almost matched the sun. It was observable that each smiled scornfully at the madness of every other, in anticipating better fortune than the past, yet nourished a scarcely hidden conviction, that he would himself be the favoured one. As if to allay their too sanguine hopes, they recurred to the Indian traditions, that a spirit kept watch about the gem, and bewildered those who sought it, either by removing it from peak to peak of the higher hills, or by calling up a mist

from the enchanted lake over which it hung. But these tales were deemed unworthy of credit; all professing to believe, that the search had been baffled by want of sagacity or perseverance in the adventurers, or such other causes as might naturally obstruct the passage to any given point, among the intricacies of forest, valley, and mountain.

In a pause of the conversation, the wearer of the prodigious spectacles looked round upon the party, making each individual, in turn, the object of the sneer which invariably dwelt upon his countenance.

“So, fellow-pilgrims,” said he, “here we are, seven wise men and one fair damsel—who, doubtless, is as wise as any gray beard of the company: here we are, I say, all bound on the same goodly enterprise. Methinks now, it were not amiss, that each of us declare what he proposes to do with the Great Carbuncle, provided he have the good hap to clutch it. What says our friend in the bear-skin? I low mean you, good Sir, to enjoy the prize which you have been seeking, the Lord knows how long? among the Crystal Hills?”

“How enjoy it!” exclaimed the aged Seeker, bitterly. “I hope for no enjoyment from it—that folly has past, long ago! I keep up the search for this accursed stone, because the vain ambition of my youth has become a fate upon me, in old age. The pursuit alone is my strength—the energy of my soul—the warmth of my blood, and the pith and marrow of my bones! Were I to turn my back upon it, I should fall down dead, on the hither side of the Notch,

which is the gate-way of this mountain region. Yet, not to have my wasted life time back again, would I give up my hopes of the Great Carbuncle! Having found it, I shall bear it to a certain cavern that I wot of, and there, grasping it in my arms, lie down and die, and keep it buried with me for ever.”

“Oh, wretch, regardless of the interests of science!” cried Doctor Cacaphodel, with philosophic indignation. “Thou art not worthy to behold, even from afar off, the lustre of this most precious gem that ever was concocted in the laboratory of Nature. Mine is the sole purpose for which a wise man may desire the possession of the Great Carbuncle. Immediately on obtaining it—for I have a presentiment, good people, that tile prize is reserved to crown my scientific reputation—I shall return to Europe, and employ my remaining years in reducing it to its first elements. A portion of the stone will I grind to impalpable powder; other parts shall be dissolved in acids, or whatever solvents will act upon so admirable a composition; and the remainder I design to melt in the crucible, or set on fire with the blow-pipe. By these various methods, I shall gain an accurate analysis, and finally bestow the result of my labours upon the world, in a folio volume.”

“Excellent!” quoth the man with the spectacles. “Nor need you hesitate, learned Sir, on account of the necessary destruction of the gem; since the perusal of your folio may teach every mother’s son of us to concoct a Great Carbuncle of his own.”

“But, verily,” said Master Ichabod Pignort, “for mine own part,

I object to the making of these counterfeits, as being calculated to reduce the marketable value of the true gem. I tell ye frankly, Sirs, I have an interest in keeping up the price. Here have I quitted my regular traffic, leaving my warehouse in the care of my clerks, and putting my credit to great hazard, and furthermore, have put myself to peril of death or captivity by the accursed heathen savages—and all this without daring to ask the prayers of the congregation, because the quest for the Great Carbuncle is deemed little better than a traffic with the evil one. Now think ye that I would have done this grievous wrong to my soul, body, reputation and estate, without a reasonable chance of profit?”

“Not I, pious Master Pignort,” said the man with the spectacles.—“I never laid such a great folly to thy charge.”

“Truly, I hope not,” said the merchant. “Now, as touching this Great Carbuncle, I am free to own that I have never had a glimpse of it; but be it only the hundredth part so bright as people tell, it will surely outvalue the Great Mogul’s best diamond, which he holds at an incalculable sum. Wherefore, I am minded to put the Great Carbuncle on ship board, and voyage with it to England, France, Spain, Italy, or into Heathendom, if Providence should send me thither, and, in a word, dispose of the gem to the best bidder among the potentates of the earth, that he may place it among his crown jewels. If any of ye have a wiser plan, let him expound it.”

“That have I, thou sordid man!” exclaimed the poet. “Dost thou desire nothing brighter than gold, that thou wouldst

transmute all this ethereal lustre into such dross, as thou wallowest in already? For myself, hiding the jewel under my cloak, I shall hie me back to my attic chamber, in one of the darksome alleys of London. There, night and day, will I gaze upon it—my soul shall drink its radiance—it shall be diffused throughout my intellectual powers, and gleam brightly in every line of poesy that I indite. Thus, long ages after I am gone, the splendor of the Great Carbuncle will blaze around my name!”

“Well said, Master Poet!” cried he of the spectacles. “Hide it under that cloak, say’st thou? Why, it will gleam through the holes, and make thee look like a Jack o’lantern!”

“To think!” ejaculated the Lord de Vere, rather to himself, than his companions, the best of whom he held utterly unworthy of his intercourse,—”to think that a fellow in a tattered cloak should talk of conveying the Great Carbuncle to a garret in Grub street! Have not I resolved within myself, that the whole earth contains no fitter ornament for the great hall of my ancestral castle? There shall it flame for ages, making a noonday of midnight, glittering on the suits of armour, the banners, and escutcheons, that hang around the wall, and keeping bright the memory of heroes. Wherefore have all other adventurers sought the prize in vain, but that I might win it, and make it a symbol of the glories of our lofty line? And never, on the diadem of the White Mountains, did the Great Carbuncle hold a place half so honored, as is reserved for it in the hall of the de Veres!”

“It is a noble thought,” said the Cynic, with an obsequious

sneer. "Yet, might I presume to say so, the gem would make a rare sepulchral lamp, and would display the glories of your lordship's progenitors more truly in the ancestral vault, than in the castle hall."

"Nay forsooth," observed Matthew, the young rustic, who sat hand in hand with his bride, "the gentleman has bethought himself of a profitable use for this bright stone. Hannah here and I are seeking it for a like purpose."

"How, fellow!" exclaimed his lordship, in surprise. "What castle hall hast thou to hang it in?"

"No castle," replied Matthew, "but as neat a cottage as any within sight of the Crystal Hills. Ye must know, friends, that Hannah and I, being wedded the last week, have taken up the search of the Great Carbuncle, because we shall need its light in the long winter evenings; and it will be such a pretty thing to show the neighbors, when they visit us. It will shine through the house, so that we may pick up a pin in any corner, and will set all the windows a-glowing, as if there were a great fire of pine knots in the chimney. And then how pleasant, when we awake in the night, to be able to see one another's faces!"

There was a general smile among the adventurers, at the simplicity of the young couple's project, in regard to this wondrous and invaluable stone, with which the greatest monarch on earth might have been proud to adorn his palace. Especially the man with spectacles, who had sneered at all the company in turn, now twisted his visage into such an expression of ill-natured

mirth, that Matthew asked him, rather peevishly, what he himself meant to do with the Great Carbuncle.

“The Great Carbuncle!” answered the Cynic, with ineffable scorn. “Why, you blockhead, there is no such thing, in rerum nature. I have come three thousand miles, and am resolved to set my foot on every peak of these mountains, and poke my head into every chasm, for the sole purpose of demonstrating to the satisfaction of any man, one whit less an ass than thyself, that the Great Carbuncle is all a humbug!”

Vain and foolish were the motives that had brought most of the adventurers to the Crystal Hills, but none so vain, so foolish, and so impious too, as that of the scoffer with the prodigious spectacles. He was one of those wretched and evil men, whose yearnings are downward to the darkness, instead of Heavenward, and who, could they but extinguish the lights which God hath kindled for us, would count the midnight gloom their chiefest glory. As the Cynic spoke, several of the party were startled by a gleam of red splendor, that showed the huge shapes of the surrounding mountains, and the rock-bestrewn bed of the turbulent river, with an illumination unlike that of their fire, on the trunks and black boughs of the forest trees. They listened for the roll of thunder, but heard nothing, and were glad that the tempest came not near them. The stars, those dial-points of Heaven, now warned the adventurers to close their eyes on the blazing logs, and open them, in dreams, to the glow of the Great Carbuncle.

The young married couple had taken their lodgings in the furthest corner of the wigwam, and were separated from the rest of the party by a curtain of curiously woven twigs, such as might have hung, in deep festoons around the bridal bower of Eve. The modest little wife had wrought this piece of tapestry, while the other guests were talking. She and her husband fell asleep with hands tenderly clasped, and awoke, from visions of unearthly radiance, to meet the more blessed light of one another's eyes. They awoke at the same instant, and with one happy smile beaming over their two faces, which grew brighter, with their consciousness of the reality of life and love. But no sooner did she recollect where they were, than the bride peeped through the interstices of the leafy curtain, and saw that the outer room of the hut was deserted.

“Up, dear Matthew!” cried she, in haste. “The strange folk are all gone! Up, this very minute, or we shall lose the Great Carbuncle!”

In truth, so little did these poor young people deserve the mighty prize which had lured them thither, that they had slept peacefully all night, and till the summits of the hills were glittering with sunshine; while the other adventurers had tossed their limbs in feverish wakefulness, or dreamed of climbing precipices, and set off to realize their dreams with the earliest peep of dawn. But Matthew and Hannah, after their calm rest, were as light as two young deer, and merely stops to say their prayers, and wash themselves in a cold pool of the Amonoosuck,

and then to taste a morsel of food, ere they turned their faces to the mountain-side. It was a sweet emblem of conjugal affection, as they toiled up the difficult ascent, gathering strength from the mutual aid which they afforded. After several little accidents, such as a torn robe, a lost shoe, and the entanglement of Hannah's hair in a bough, they reached the upper verge of the forest, and were now to pursue a more adventurous course. The innumerable trunks and heavy foliage of the trees had hitherto shut in their thoughts, which now shrank affrighted from the region of wind, and cloud, and naked rocks, and desolate sunshine, that rose immeasurably above them. They gazed back at the obscure wilderness which they had traversed, and longed to be buried again in its depths, rather than trust themselves to so vast and visible a solitude.

"Shall we go on?" said Matthew, throwing his arm round Hannah's waist, both to protect her, and to comfort his heart by drawing her close to it.

But the little bride, simple as she was, had a woman's love of jewels, and could not forego the hope of possessing the very brightest in the world, in spite of the perils with which it must be won.

"Let us climb a little higher," whispered she, yet tremulously, as she turned her face upward to the lonely sky.

"Come then," said Matthew, mustering his manly courage, and drawing her along with him; for she became timid again, the moment that he grew bold.

And upward, accordingly, went the pilgrims of the Great Carbuncle, now treading upon the tops and thickly interwoven branches of dwarf pines, which, by the growth of centuries, though mossy with age, had barely reached three feet in altitude. Next, they came to masses and fragments of naked rock, heaped confusedly together, like a cairn reared by giants, in memory of a giant chief. In this bleak realm of upper air, nothing breathed, nothing grew; there was no life but what was centred in their two hearts; they had climbed so high, that Nature herself seemed no longer to keep them company. She lingered beneath them, within the verge of the forest trees, and sent a farewell glance after her children, as they strayed where her own green footprints had never been. But soon they were to be hidden from her eye. Densely and dark, the mists began to gather below, casting black spots of shadow on the vast landscape, and sailing heavily to one centre, as if the loftiest mountain peak had summoned a council of its kindred clouds. Finally, the vapors welded themselves, as it were, into a mass, presenting the appearance of a pavement over which the wanderers might have trodden, but where they would vainly have sought an avenue to the blessed earth which they had lost. And the lovers yearned to behold that green earth again, more intensely, alas! than, beneath a clouded sky, they had ever desired a glimpse of Heaven. They even felt it a relief to their desolation, when the mists, creeping gradually up the mountain, concealed its lonely peak, and thus annihilated, at least for them, the whole region of visible space. But they drew closer together,

with a fond and melancholy gaze, dreading lest the universal cloud should snatch them from each other's sight.

Still, perhaps, they would have been resolute to climb as far and as high, between earth and heaven, as they could find foothold, if Hannah's strength had not begun to fail, and with that, her courage also. Her breath grew short. She refused to burthen her husband with her weight, but often tottered against his side, and recovered herself each time by a feebler effort. At last, she sank down on one of the rocky steps of the acclivity.

"We are lost, dear Matthew," said she, mournfully. "We shall never find our way to the earth again. And, Oh, how happy we might have been in our cottage!"

"Dear heart!—we will yet be happy there," answered Matthew. "Look! In this direction, the sunshine penetrates the dismal mist. By its aid, I can direct our course to the passage of the Notch. Let us go back, love, and dream no more of the Great Carbuncle!"

"The sun cannot be yonder," said Hannah, with despondence. "By this time, it must be noon. If there could ever be any sunshine here, it would come from above our heads."

"But, look!" repeated Matthew, in a somewhat altered tone. "It is brightening every moment. If not sunshine, what can it be?"

Nor could the young bride any longer deny, that a radiance was breaking through the mist, and changing its dim hue to a dusky red, which continually grew more vivid, as if brilliant particles were interfused with the gloom. Now, also, the cloud began to roll away from the mountain, while, as it heavily withdrew, one

object after another started out of its impenetrable obscurity into sight, with precisely the effect of a new creation, before the indistinctness of the old chaos had been completely swallowed up. As the process went on, they saw the gleaming of water close at their feet, and found themselves on the very border of a mountain lake, deep, bright, clear, and calmly beautiful, spreading from brim to brim of a basin that had been scooped out of the solid rock. A ray of glory flashed across its surface. The pilgrims looked whence it should proceed, but closed their eyes with a thrill of awful admiration, to exclude the fervid splendor that glowed from the brow of a cliff, impending over the enchanted lake. For the simple pair had reached that lake of mystery, and found the long sought shrine of the Great Carbuncle!

They threw their arms around each other, and trembled at their own success; for, as the legends of this wondrous gem rushed thick upon their memory, they felt themselves marked out by fate—and the consciousness was fearful. Often, from childhood upward, they had seen it shining like a distant star. And now that star was throwing its intensest lustre on their hearts. They seemed changed to one another's eyes, in the red brilliancy that flamed upon their cheeks, while it lent the same fire to the lake, the rocks, and sky, and to the mists which had rolled back before its power. But, with their next glance, they beheld an object that drew their attention even from the mighty stone. At the base of the cliff, directly beneath the Great Carbuncle, appeared the

figure of a man, with his arms extended in the act of climbing, and his face turned upward, as if to drink the full gush of splendor. But he stirred not, no more than if changed to marble.

“It is the Seeker,” whispered Hannah, convulsively grasping her husband’s arm. “Matthew, he is dead!”

“The joy of success has killed him,” replied Matthew, trembling violently.—“Or perhaps the very light of the Great Carbuncle was death!”

“The Great Carbuncle,” cried a peevish voice behind them. “The Great Humbug! If you have found it, prithee point it out to me.”

They turned their heads, and there was the Cynic, with his prodigious spectacles set carefully on his nose, staring now at the lake, now at the rocks, now at the distant masses of vapor, now right at the Great Carbuncle itself, yet seemingly as unconscious of its light, as if all the scattered clouds were condensed about his person. Though its radiance actually threw the shadow of the unbeliever at his own feet, as he turned his back upon the glorious jewel, he would not be convinced that there was the least glimmer there.

“Where is your Great Humbug?” he repeated. “I challenge you to make me see it!”

“There,” said Matthew, incensed at such perverse blindness, and turning the Cynic round towards the illuminated cliff. “Take off those abominable spectacles, and you cannot help seeing it!”

Now these colored spectacles probably darkened the Cynic’s

sight, in at least as great a degree as the smoked glasses through which people gaze at an eclipse. With resolute bravado, however, he snatched them from his nose, and fixed a bold stare full upon the ruddy blaze of the Great Carbuncle. But, scarcely had he encountered it, when, with a deep, shuddering groan, he dropt his head, and pressed both hands across his miserable eyes. Thenceforth there was, in very truth, no light of the Great Carbuncle, nor any other light on earth, nor light of Heaven itself, for the poor Cynic. So long accustomed to view all objects through a medium that deprived them of every glimpse of brightness, a single flash of so glorious a phenomenon, striking upon his naked vision, had blinded him forever.

“Matthew,” said Hannah, clinging to him, “let us go hence!”

Matthew saw that she was faint, and kneeling down, supported her in his arms, while he threw some of the thrillingly cold water of the enchanted lake upon her face and bosom. It revived her, but could not renovate her courage.

“Yes, dearest!” cried Matthew, pressing her tremulous form to his breast,—“we will go hence, and return to our humble cottage. The blessed sunshine, and the quiet moonlight, shall come through our window. We will kindle the cheerful glow of our hearth, at eventide, and be happy in its light. But never again will we desire more light than all the world may share with us.”

“No,” said his bride, “for how could we live by day, or sleep by night, in this awful blaze of the Great Carbuncle!”

Out of the hollow of their hands, they drank each a draught

from the lake, which presented them its waters uncontaminated by an earthly lip. Then, lending their guidance to the blinded Cynic, who uttered not a word, and even stifled his groans in his own most wretched heart, they began to descend the mountain. Yet, as they left the shore, till then untrodden, of the Spirit's lake, they threw a farewell glance towards the cliff, and beheld the vapors gathering in dense volumes, through which the gem burned duskily.

As touching the other pilgrims of the Great Carbuncle, the legend goes on to tell, that the worshipful Master Ichabod Pignort soon gave up the quest, as a desperate speculation, and wisely resolved to betake himself again to his warehouse, near the town-dock, in Boston. But, as he passed through the Notch of the mountains, a war party of Indians captured our unlucky merchant, and carried him to Montreal, there holding him in bondage, till, by the payment of a heavy ransom, he had wofully subtracted from his hoard of pine-tree shillings. By his long absence, moreover, his affairs had become so disordered, that, for the rest of his life, instead of wallowing in silver, he had seldom a sixpence worth of copper. Doctor Cacaphodel, the alchemist, returned to his laboratory with a prodigious fragment of granite, which he ground to powder, dissolved in acids, melted in the crucible, and burnt with the blow-pipe, and published the result of his experiments in one of the heaviest folios of the day. And, for all these purposes, tile gem itself could not have answered better than the granite. The poet, by a somewhat similar mistake,

made prize of a great piece of ice, which he found in a sunless chasm of the mountains, and swore that it corresponded, in all points, with his idea of the Great Carbuncle. The critics say, that, if his poetry lacked the splendor of the gem, it retained all the coldness of the ice. The Lord de Vere went back to his ancestral hall, where he contented himself with a wax-lighted chandelier, and filled, in due course of time, another coffin in the ancestral vault. As the funeral torches gleamed within that dark receptacle, there was no need of the Great Carbuncle to shew the vanity of earthly pomp.

The Cynic, having cast aside his spectacles, wandered about the world, a miserable object, and was punished with an agonizing desire of light, for the wilful blindness of his former life. The whole night long, he would lift his splendor-blasted orbs to the moon and stars; he turned his face eastward, at sunrise, as duly as a Persian idolater; he made a pilgrimage to Rome, to witness the magnificent illumination of Saint Peter's church; and finally perished in the great fire of London, into the midst of which he had thrust himself, with the desperate idea of catching one feeble ray from the blaze, that was kindling earth and heaven.

Matthew and his bride spent many peaceful years, and were fond of telling the legend of the Great Carbuncle. The tale, however, towards the close of their lengthened lives, did not meet with the full credence that had been accorded to it by those, who remembered the ancient lustre of the gem. For it is affirmed, that, from the hour when two mortals had shown themselves so simply

wise, as to reject a jewel which would have dimmed all earthly things, its splendor waned. When other pilgrims reached the cliff, they found only an opaque stone, with particles of mica glittering on its surface. There is also a tradition that, as the youthful pair departed, the gem was loosened from the forehead of the cliff, and fell into the enchanted lake, and that, at noontide, the Seeker's form may still be seen to bend over its quenchless-gleam.

Some few believe that this inestimable stone is blazing, as of old, and say that they have caught its radiance, like a flash of summer lightning, far down the valley of the Saco. And be it owned, that, many a mile from the Crystal Hills, I saw a wondrous light around their summits, and was lured, by the faith of poesy, to be the latest pilgrim of the GREAT CARBUNCLE.

* The Indian tradition, on which this somewhat extravagant tale is founded, is both too wild and too beautiful, to be adequately wrought up in prose. Sullivan, in his history of Maine, written since the Revolution, remarks, that even then, the existence of the Great Carbuncle was not entirely discredited.



The Canterbury Pilgrims

THE summer moon, which shines in so many a tale, was beaming over a broad extent of uneven country. Some of its brightest rays were flung into a spring of water, where no traveller, toiling up the hilly road beside which it gushes, ever failed to quench his thirst. The work of neat hands and considerate art, was visible about this blessed fountain. An open cistern, hewn and hollowed out of solid stone, was placed above the waters, which filled it to the brim, but, by some invisible outlet, were conveyed away without dripping down its sides. Though the basin had not room for another drop, and the continual gush of water made a tremor on the surface, there was a secret charm that forbade it to overflow. I remember, that when I had slaked my summer thirst, and sat panting by the cistern, it was my fanciful theory, that Nature could not afford to lavish so pure a liquid, as she does the waters of all meaner fountains.

While the moon was hanging almost perpendicularly over this spot, two figures appeared on the summit of the hill, and came with noiseless footsteps down towards the spring. They were then in the first freshness of youth; nor is there a wrinkle now on either of their brows, and yet they wore a strange old fashioned garb. One, a young man with ruddy cheeks, walked beneath the canopy of a broad brimmed gray hat; he seemed to have inherited his great-grand-sire's square skirted coat, and a waistcoat that

extended its immense flaps to his knees; his brown locks, also, hung down behind, in a mode unknown to our times. By his side was a sweet young damsel, her fair features sheltered by a prim little bonnet, within which appeared the vestal muslin of a cap; her close, long waisted gown, and indeed her whole attire, might have been worn by some rustic beauty who had faded half a century before. But that there was something too warm and life-like in them, I would here have compared this couple to the ghosts of two young lovers, who had died long since in the glow of passion, and now were straying out of their graves to renew the old vows, and shadow forth the unforgotten kiss of their earthly lips, beside the moonlit spring.

“Thee and I will rest here a moment, Miriam,” said the young man, as they drew near the stone cistern, “for there is no fear that the elders know what we have done; and this may be the last time we shall ever taste this water.”

Thus speaking, with a little sadness in his face, which was also visible in that of his companion, he made her sit down on a stone, and was about to place himself very close to her side; she, however, repelled him, though not unkindly.

“Nay, Josiah,” said she, giving him a timid push with her maiden hand, “thee must sit farther off, on that other stone, with the spring between us. What would the sisters say, if thee were to sit so close to me?”

“But we are of the world’s people now, Miriam,” answered Josiah.

The girl persisted in her prudery, nor did the youth, in fact, seem altogether free from a similar sort of shyness; so they sat apart from each other, gazing up the hill, where the moonlight discovered the tops of a group of buildings. While their attention was thus occupied, a party of travellers, who had come wearily up the long ascent, made a halt to refresh themselves at the spring. There were three men, a woman, and a little girl and boy. Their attire was mean, covered with the dust of the summer's day, and damp with the night dew; they all looked woe begone, as if the cares and sorrows of the world had made their steps heavier as they climbed the hill; even the two little children appeared older in evil days, than the young man and maiden who had first approached the spring.

“Good evening to you, young folks,” was the salutation of the travellers; and “Good evening, friends,” replied the youth and damsel.

“Is that white building the Shaker meeting house?” asked one of the strangers. “And are those the red roofs of the Shaker village?”

“Friend, it is the Shaker village,” answered Josiah, after some hesitation.

The travellers, who, from the first had looked suspiciously at the garb of these young people, now taxed them with an intention, which all the circumstances, indeed, rendered too obvious to be mistaken.

“It is true, friends,” replied the young man, summoning up his

courage. "Miriam and I have a gift to love each other, and we are going among the world's people, to live after their fashion. And ye know that we do not transgress the law of the land; and neither ye, nor the elders themselves, have a right to hinder us."

"Yet you think it expedient to depart without leave taking," remarked one of the travellers.

"Yea, ye-a," said Josiah, reluctantly, "because father Job is a very awful man to speak with, and being aged himself, he has but little charity for what he calls the iniquities of the flesh."

"Well," said the stranger, "we will neither use force to bring you back to the village, nor will we betray you to the elders. But sit you here awhile, and when you have heard what we shall tell you of the world which we have left, and into which you are going, perhaps you will turn back with us of your own accord. What say you?" added he, turning to his companions. "We have travelled thus far without becoming known to each other. Shall we tell our stories, here by this pleasant spring, for our own pastime, and the benefit of these misguided young lovers?"

In accordance with this proposal, the whole party stationed themselves round the stone cistern; the two children, being very weary, fell asleep upon the damp earth, and the pretty Shaker girl, whose feelings were those of a nun or a Turkish lady, crept as close as possible to the female traveller, and as far as she well could from the unknown men. The same person who had hitherto been the chief spokesman, now stood up, waving his hat in his hand, and suffered the moonlight to fall full upon his

front.

“In me,” said he, with a certain majesty of utterance, “in me, you behold a poet.”

Though a lithographic print of this gentleman is extant, it may be well to notice that he was now nearly forty, a thin and stooping figure, in a black coat, out at elbows; notwithstanding the ill condition of his attire, there were about him several tokens of a peculiar sort of foppery, unworthy of a mature man, particularly in the arrangement of his hair, which was so disposed as to give all possible loftiness and breadth to his forehead. However, he had an intelligent eye, and on the whole a marked countenance.

“A poet!” repeated the young Shaker, a little puzzled how to understand such a designation, seldom heard in the utilitarian community where he had spent his life. “Oh, ay, Miriam, he means a varse maker, thee must know.”

This remark jarred upon the susceptible nerves of the poet; nor could he help wondering what strange fatality had put into this young man’s mouth an epithet, which ill natured people had affirmed to be more proper to his merit than the one assumed by himself.

“True, I am a verse maker,” he resumed, “but my verse is no more than the material body into which I breathe the celestial soul of thought. Alas! how many a pang has it cost me, this same insensibility to the ethereal essence of poetry, with which you have here tortured me again, at the moment when I am to

relinquish my profession forever! Oh, Fate! why hast thou warred with Nature, turning all her higher and more perfect gifts to the ruin of me, their possessor? What is the voice of song, when the world lacks the ear of taste? How can I rejoice in my strength and delicacy of feeling, when they have but made great sorrows out of little ones? Have I dreaded scorn like death, and yearned for fame as others pant for vital air, only to find myself in a middle state between obscurity and infamy? But I have my revenge! I could have given existence to a thousand bright creations. I crush them into my heart, and there let them putrify! I shake off the dust of my feet against my countrymen! But posterity, tracing my footsteps up this weary hill, will cry shame upon the unworthy age that drove one of the fathers of American song to end his days in a Shaker village!”

During this harangue, the speaker gesticulated with great energy, and, as poetry is the natural language of passion, there appeared reason to apprehend his final explosion into an ode extempore. The reader must understand, that for all these bitter words, he was a kind, gentle, harmless, poor fellow enough, whom Nature, tossing her ingredients together without looking at her recipe, had sent into the world with too much of one sort of brain and hardly any of another.

“Friend,” said the young Shaker, in some perplexity, “thee seemest to have met with great troubles, and, doubtless, I should pity them, if—if I could but understand what they were.”

“Happy in your ignorance!” replied the poet, with an air of

sublime superiority. "To your coarser mind, perhaps, I may seem to speak of more important griefs, when I add, what I had well nigh forgotten, that I am out at elbows, and almost starved to death. At any rate, you have the advice and example of one individual to warn you back; for I am come hither, a disappointed man, flinging aside the fragments of my hopes, and seeking shelter in the calm retreat which you are so anxious to leave."

"I thank thee, friend," rejoined the youth, "but I do not mean to be a poet, nor, Heaven be praised! do I think Miriam ever made a verse in her life. So we need not fear thy disappointments. But, Miriam," he added, with real concern, "thee knowest that the elders admit nobody that has not a gift to be useful. Now, what under the sun can they do with this poor varse maker?"

"Nay, Josiah, do not thee discourage the poor man," said the girl, in all simplicity and kindness. "Our hymns are very rough, and perhaps they may trust him to smooth them."

Without noticing this hint of professional employment, the poet turned away, and gave himself up to a sort of vague reverie, which he called thought. Sometimes he watched the moon, pouring a silvery liquid on the clouds, through which it slowly melted till they became all bright; then he saw the same sweet radiance dancing on the leafy trees which rustled as if to shake it off, or sleeping on the high tops of hills, or hovering down in distant vallies, like the material of unshaped dreams; lastly, he

looked into the spring, and there the light was mingling with the water. In its crystal bosom, too, beholding all heaven reflected there, he found an emblem of a pure and tranquil breast. He listened to that most ethereal of all sounds, the song of crickets, coming in full choir upon the wind, and fancied, that, if moonlight could be heard, it would sound just like that. Finally he took a draught at the Shaker spring, and, as if it were the true Castalia, was forthwith moved to compose a lyric, a Farewell to his Harp, which he swore should be its closing strain, the last verse that an ungrateful world should have from him. This effusion, with two or three other little pieces, subsequently written, he took the first opportunity to send by one of the Shaker brethren to Concord, where they were published in the New Hampshire Patriot.

Meantime, another of the Canterbury Pilgrims, one so different from the poet, that the delicate fancy of the latter could hardly have conceived of him, began to relate his sad experience. He was a small man, of quick and unquiet gestures, about fifty years old, with a narrow forehead, all wrinkled and drawn together. He held in his hand a pencil, and a card of some commission merchant in foreign parts, on the back of which, for there was light enough to read or write by, he seemed ready to figure out a calculation.

“Young man,” said he abruptly, “what quantity of land do the Shakers own here, in Canterbury?”

“That is more than I can tell thee, friend,” answered Josiah,

“but it is a very rich establishment, and for a long way by the road-side, thee may guess the land to be ours, by the neatness of the fences.”

“And what may be the value of the whole,” continued the stranger, “with all the buildings and improvements, pretty nearly, in round numbers?”

“Oh, a monstrous sum, more than I can reckon,” replied the young Shaker.

“Well, sir,” said the pilgrim, “there was a day, and not very long ago, neither, when I stood at my counting room window, and watched the signal flags of three of my own ships entering the harbour, from the East Indies, from Liverpool, and from up the Straits, and I would not have given the invoice of the least of them for the title deeds of this whole Shaker settlement. You stare. Perhaps, now, you won’t believe that I could have put more value on a little piece of paper, no bigger than the palm of your hand, than all these solid acres of grain, grass and pasture land, would sell for?”

“I won’t dispute it, friend,” answered Josiah, “but I know I had rather have fifty acres of this good land, than a whole sheet of thy paper.”

“You may say so now,” said the ruined merchant, bitterly, “for my name would not be worth the paper I should write it on. Of course, you must have heard of my failure?”

And the stranger mentioned his name, which, however mighty it might have been in the commercial world, the young Shaker

had never heard of among the Canterbury hills.

“Not heard of my failure!” exclaimed the merchant, considerably piqued. “Why, it was spoken of on ‘Change in London, and from Boston to New Orleans, men trembled in their shoes. At all events I did fail, and you see me here on my road to the Shaker village, where, doubtless, (for the Shakers are a shrewd sect,) they will have a due respect for my experience, and give me the management of the trading part of the concern, in which case, I think I can pledge myself to double their capital in four or five years. Turn back with me, young man, for though you will never meet with my good luck, you can hardly escape my bad.”

“I will not turn back for this,” replied Josiah, calmly, “any more than for the advice of the verse maker, between whom and thee, friend, I see a sort of likeness, though I can’t justly say where it lies. But Miriam and I can earn our daily bread among the world’s people, as well as in the Shaker village. And do we want any thing more, Miriam?”

“Nothing more, Josiah,” said the girl quietly.

“Yea, Miriam, and daily bread for some other little mouths, if God send them,” observed the simple Shaker lad.

Miriam did not reply, but looked down into the spring, where she encountered the image of her own pretty face, blushing within the prim little bonnet. The third pilgrim now took up the conversation. He was a sunburnt countryman, of tall frame and bony strength, on whose rude and manly face there appeared a

darker, more sullen and obstinate despondency, than on those of either the poet or the merchant.

“Well now, youngster,” he began, “these folks have had their say, so I’ll take my turn. My story will cut but a poor figure by the side of theirs; for I never supposed that I could have a right to meat and drink, and great praise besides, only for tagging rhymes together, as it seems this man does; nor ever tried to get the substance of hundreds into my own hands, like the trader there. When I was about of your years, I married me a wife, just such a neat and pretty young woman as Miriam, if that’s her name, and all I asked of Providence was an ordinary blessing on the sweat of my brow, so that we might be decent and comfortable, and have daily bread for ourselves, and for some other little mouths that we soon had to feed. We had no very great prospects before us; but I never wanted to be idle, and I thought it a matter of course that the Lord would help me, because I was willing to help myself.”

“And didn’t He help thee, friend?” demanded Josiah, with some eagerness.

“No,” said the yeoman, sullenly; “for then you would not have seen me here. I have labored hard for years; and my means have been growing narrower, and my living poorer, and my heart colder and heavier, all the time; till at last I could bear it no longer. I set myself down to calculate whether I had best go on the Oregon expedition, or come here to the Shaker village; but I had not hope enough left in me to begin the world over again;

and, to make my story short, here I am. And now, youngster, take my advice, and turn back; or else, some few years hence, you'll have to climb this hill, with as heavy a heart as mine."

This simple story had a strong effect on the young fugitives. The misfortunes of the poet and merchant had won little sympathy from their plain good sense and unworldly feelings, qualities which made them such unprejudiced and inflexible judges, that few men would have chosen to take the opinion of this youth and maiden, as to the wisdom or folly of their pursuits. But here was one whose simple wishes had resembled their own, and who, after efforts which almost gave him a right to claim success from fate, had failed in accomplishing them.

"But thy wife, friend?" exclaimed the young man, "What became of the pretty girl, like Miriam? Oh, I am afraid she is dead!"

"Yea, poor man, she must be dead, she and the children too," sobbed Miriam.

The female pilgrim had been leaning over the spring, wherein latterly a tear or two might have been seen to fall, and form its little circle on the surface of the water. She now looked up, disclosing features still comely, but which had acquired an expression of fretfulness, in the same long course of evil fortune that had thrown a sullen gloom over the temper of the unprosperous yeoman.

"I am his wife," said she, a shade of irritability just perceptible in the sadness of her tone. "These poor little things, asleep on the

ground, are two of our children. We had two more, but God has provided better for them than we could, by taking them to himself.”

“And what would thee advise Josiah and me to do?” asked Miriam, this being the first question which she had put to either of the strangers.

“‘Tis a thing almost against nature, for a woman to try to part true lovers,” answered the yeoman’s wife, after a pause; “but I’ll speak as truly to you as if these were my dying words. Though my husband told you some of our troubles, he didn’t mention the greatest, and that which makes all the rest so hard to bear. If you and your sweetheart marry, you’ll be kind and pleasant to each other for a year or two, and while that’s the case, you never will repent; but by-and-by, he’ll grow gloomy, rough, and hard to please, and you’ll be peevish, and full of little angry fits, and apt to be complaining by the fireside, when he comes to rest himself from his troubles out of doors; so your love will wear away by little and little, and leave you miserable at last. It has been so with us; and yet my husband and I were true lovers once, if ever two young folks were.”

As she ceased, the yeoman and his wife exchanged a glance, in which there was more and warmer affection than they had supposed to have escaped the frost of a wintry fate, in either of their breasts. At that moment, when they stood on the utmost verge of married life, one word fitly spoken, or perhaps one peculiar look, had they had mutual confidence enough to

reciprocate it, might have renewed all their old feelings, and sent them back, resolved to sustain each other amid the struggles of the world. But the crisis past, and never came again. Just then, also, the children, roused by their mother's voice, looked up, and added their wailing accents to the testimony borne by all the Canterbury Pilgrims against the world from which they fled.

“We are tired and hungry!” cried they. “Is it far to the Shaker village?”

The Shaker youth and maiden looked mournfully into each other's eyes. They had but stepped across the threshold of their homes, when lo! the dark array of cares and sorrows that rose up to warn them back. The varied narratives of the strangers had arranged themselves into a parable; they seemed not merely instances of woeful fate that had befallen others, but shadowy omens of disappointed hope, and unavailing toil, domestic grief, and estranged affection, that would cloud the onward path of these poor fugitives. But after one instant's hesitation, they opened their arms, and sealed their resolve with as pure and fond an embrace as ever youthful love had hallowed.

“We will not go back,” said they. “The world never can be dark to us, for we will always love one another.”

Then the Canterbury Pilgrims went up the hill, while the poet chanted a drear and desperate stanza of the Farewell to his Harp, fitting music for that melancholy band. They sought a home where all former ties of nature or society would be sundered, and all old distinctions levelled, and a cold and passionless security be

substituted for human hope and fear, as in that other refuge of the world's weary outcasts, the grave. The lovers drank at the Shaker spring, and then, with chastened hopes, but more confiding affections, went on to mingle in an untried life.



Roger Malvin's Burial

ONE OF THE few incidents of Indian warfare, naturally susceptible of the moonlight of romance, was that expedition, undertaken, for the defence of the frontiers, in the year 1725, which resulted in the well-remembered "Lovell's Fight." Imagination, by casting certain circumstances judiciously into the shade, may see much to admire in the heroism of a little band, who gave battle to twice their number in the heart of the enemy's country. The open bravery displayed by both parties was in accordance with civilized ideas of valor, and chivalry itself might not blush to record the deeds of one or two individuals. The battle, though so fatal to those who fought, was not unfortunate in its consequences to the country; for it broke the strength of a tribe, and conduced to the peace which subsisted during several ensuing years. History and tradition are unusually minute in their memorials of this affair; and the captain of a scouting party of frontier-men has acquired as actual a military renown, as many a victorious leader of thousands. Some of the incidents contained in the following pages will be recognized, notwithstanding the substitution of fictitious names, by such as have heard, from old men's lips, the fate of the few combatants who were in a condition to retreat, after "Lovell's Fight."

The early sunbeams hovered cheerfully upon the tree-tops,

beneath which two weary and wounded men had stretched their limbs the night before. Their bed of withered oak-leaves was strewn upon the small level space, at the foot of a rock, situated near the summit of one of the gentle swells, by which the face of the country is there diversified. The mass of granite, rearing its smooth, flat surface, fifteen or twenty feet above their heads, was not unlike a gigantic grave-stone, upon which the veins seemed to form an inscription in forgotten characters. On a tract of several acres around this rock, oaks and other hard-wood trees had supplied the place of the pines, which were the usual growth of the land; and a young and vigorous sapling stood close beside the travellers.

The severe wound of the elder man had probably deprived him of sleep; for, so soon as the first ray of sunshine rested on the top of the highest tree, he reared himself painfully from his recumbent posture, and sat erect. The deep lines of his countenance, and the scattered grey of his hair, marked him as past the middle age; but his muscular frame would, but for the effects of his wound, have been as capable of sustaining fatigue, as in the early vigor of life. Languor and exhaustion now sat upon his haggard features, and the despairing glance which he sent forward through the depths of the forest, proved his own conviction that his pilgrimage was at an end. He next turned his eyes to the companion, who reclined by his side. The youth, for he had scarcely attained the years of manhood, lay, with his head upon his arm, in the embrace of an unquiet sleep, which a thrill

of pain from his wounds seemed each moment on the point of breaking. His right hand grasped a musket, and, to judge from the violent action of his features, his slumbers were bringing back a vision of the conflict, of which he was one of the few survivors. A shout,—deep and loud to his dreaming fancy,—found its way in an imperfect murmur to his lips, and, starting even at the slight sound of his own voice, he suddenly awoke. The first act of reviving recollection, was to make anxious inquiries respecting the condition of his wounded fellow traveller. The latter shook his head.

“Reuben, my boy,” said he, “this rock, beneath which we sit, will serve for an old hunter’s grave-stone. There is many and many a long mile of howling wilderness before us yet; nor would it avail me anything, if the smoke of my own chimney were but on the other side of that swell of land. The Indian bullet was deadlier than I thought.”

“You are weary with our three days’ travel,” replied the youth, “and a little longer rest will recruit you. Sit you here, while I search the woods for the herbs and roots, that must be our sustenance; and having eaten, you shall lean on me, and we will turn our faces homeward. I doubt not, that, with my help, you can attain to some one of the frontier garrisons.”

“There is not two days’ life in me, Reuben,” said the other, calmly, “and I will no longer burthen you with my useless body, when you can scarcely support your own. Your wounds are deep, and your strength is failing fast; yet, if you hasten onward alone,

you may be preserved. For me there is no hope; and I will await death here.”

“If it must be so, I will remain and watch by you,” said Reuben, resolutely.

“No, my son, no,” rejoined his companion. “Let the wish of a dying man have weight with you; give me one grasp of your hand, and get you hence. Think you that my last moments will be eased by the thought, that I leave you to die a more lingering death? I have loved you like a father, Reuben, and, at a time like this, I should have something of a father’s authority. I charge you to be gone, that I may die in peace.”

“And because you have been a father to me, should I therefore leave you to perish, and to lie unburied in the wilderness?” exclaimed the youth. “No; if your end be in truth approaching, I will watch by you, and receive your parting words. I will dig a grave here by the rock, in which, if my weakness overcome me, we will rest together; or, if Heaven gives me strength, I will seek my way home.”

“In he cities, and whenever men dwell,” replied the other, “they bury their dead in the earth; they hide them from the sight of the living; but here, where no step may pass, perhaps for a hundred years, wherefore should I not rest beneath the open sky, covered only by the oak-leaves, when the autumn winds shall strew them? And for a monument, here is this grey rock, on which my dying hand shall carve the name of Roger Malvin; and the traveller in days to come will know, that here sleeps a hunter and a warrior.

Tarry not, then, for a folly like this, but hasten away, if not for your own sake, for hers who will else be desolate.”

Malvin spoke the last few words in a faltering voice, and their effect upon his companion was strongly visible. They reminded him that there were other, and less questionable duties, than that of sharing the fate of a man whom his death could not benefit. Nor can it be affirmed that no selfish feeling strove to enter Reuben’s heart, though the consciousness made him more earnestly resist his companion’s entreaties.

“How terrible, to wait the slow approach of death, in this solitude!” exclaimed he. “A brave man does not shrink in the battle, and, when friends stand round the bed, even women may die composedly; but here—”

“I shall not shrink, even here, Reuben Bourne,” interrupted Malvin. “I am a man of no weak heart; and, if I were, there is a surer support than that of earthly friends. You are young, and life is dear to you. Your last moments will need comfort far more than mine; and when you have laid me in the earth, and are alone, and night is settling on the forest, you will feel all the bitterness of the death that may now be escaped. But I will urge no selfish motive to your generous nature. Leave me for my sake; that, having said a prayer for your safety, I may have space to settle my account, undisturbed by worldly sorrows.”

“And your daughter! How shall I dare to meet her eye?” exclaimed Reuben. “She will ask the fate of her father, whose life I vowed to defend with my own. Must I tell her, that he travelled

three days' march with me from the field of battle, and that then I left him to perish in the wilderness? Were it not better to lie down and die by your side, than to return safe, and say this to Dorcas?"

"Tell my daughter," said Roger Malvin, "that, though yourself sore wounded, and weak, and weary, you led my tottering footsteps many a mile, and left me only at my earnest entreaty, because I would not have your blood upon my soul. Tell her, that through pain and danger you were faithful, and that, if your life-blood could have saved me, it would have flowed to its last drop. And tell her, that you will be something dearer than a father, and that my blessing is with you both, and that my dying eyes can see a long and pleasant path, in which you will journey together."

As Malvin spoke, he almost raised himself from the ground, and the energy of his concluding words seemed to fill the wild and lonely forest with a vision of happiness. But when he sank exhausted upon his bed of oak-leaves, the light, which had kindled in Reuben's eye, was quenched. He felt as if it were both sin and folly to think of happiness at such a moment. His companion watched his changing countenance, and sought, with generous art, to wile him to his own good.

"Perhaps I deceive myself in regard to the time I have to live," he resumed. "It may be, that, with speedy assistance, I might recover of my wound. The foremost fugitives must, ere this, have carried tidings of our fatal battle to the frontiers, and parties will be out to succour those in like condition with ourselves. Should

you meet one of these, and guide them hither, who can tell but that I may sit by my own fireside again?"

A mournful smile strayed across the features of the dying man, as he insinuated that unfounded hope; which, however, was not without its effect on Reuben. No merely selfish motive, nor even the desolate condition of Dorcas, could have induced him to desert his companion, at such a moment. But his wishes seized upon the thought, that Malvin's life might be preserved, and his sanguine nature heightened, almost to certainty, the remote possibility of procuring human aid.

"Surely there is reason, weighty reason, to hope that friends are not far distant," he said, half aloud. "There fled one coward, unwounded, in the beginning of the fight, and most probably he made good speed. Every true man on the frontier would shoulder his musket, at the news; and though no party may range so far into the woods as this, I shall perhaps encounter them in one day's march. Counsel me faithfully," he added, turning to Malvin, in distrust of his own motives. "Were your situation mine, would you desert me while life remained?"

"It is now twenty years," replied Roger Malvin, sighing, however, as he secretly acknowledged the wide dissimilarity between the two cases,— "it is now twenty years, since I escaped, with one dear friend, from Indian captivity, near Montreal. We journeyed many days through the woods, till at length, overcome with hunger and weariness, my friend lay down, and besought me to leave him; for he knew, that, if I remained, we both must

perish. And, with but little hope of obtaining succour, I heaped a pillow of dry leaves beneath his head, and hastened on.”

“And did you return in time to save him?” asked Reuben, hanging on Malvin’s words, as if they were to be prophetic of his own success.

“I did,” answered the other. “I came upon the camp of a hunting party, before sunset of the same day. I guided them to the spot where my comrade was expecting death; and he is now a hale and hearty man, upon his own farm, far within the frontiers, while I lie wounded here, in the depths of the wilderness.”

This example, powerful in effecting Reuben’s decision, was aided, unconsciously to himself, by the hidden strength of many another motive. Roger Malvin perceived that the victory was nearly won.

“Now go, my son, and Heaven prosper you!” he said. “Turn not back with our friends, when you meet them, lest your wounds and weariness overcome you; but send hitherward two or three, that may be spared, to search for me. And believe me, Reuben, my heart will be lighter with every step you take towards home.” Yet there was perhaps a change, both in his countenance and voice, as he spoke thus; for, after all, it was a ghastly fate, to be left expiring in the wilderness.

Reuben Bourne, but half convinced that he was acting rightly, at length raised himself from the ground, and prepared himself for his departure. And first, though contrary to Malvin’s wishes, he collected a stock of roots and herbs, which had been their only

food during the last two days. This useless supply he placed within reach of the dying man, for whom, also, he swept together a fresh bed of dry oak-leaves. Then, climbing to the summit of the rock, which on one side was rough and broken, he bent the oak-sapling downward, and bound his handkerchief to the topmost branch. This precaution was not unnecessary, to direct any who might come in search of Malvin; for every part of the rock, except its broad, smooth front, was concealed, at a little distance, by the dense undergrowth of the forest. The handkerchief had been the bandage of a wound upon Reuben's arm; and, as he bound it to the tree, he vowed, by the blood that stained it, that he would return, either to save his companion's life, or to lay his body in the grave. He then descended, and stood, with downcast eyes, to receive Roger Malvin's parting words.

The experience of the latter suggested much and minute advice, respecting the youth's journey through the trackless forest. Upon this subject he spoke with calm earnestness, as if he were sending Reuben to the battle or the chase, while he himself remained secure at home; and not as if the human countenance, that was about to leave him, were the last he would ever behold. But his firmness was shaken, before he concluded.

"Carry my blessing to Dorcas, and say that my last prayer shall be for her and you. Bid her have no hard thoughts because you left me here"—Reuben's heart smote him—"for that your life would not have weighed with you, if its sacrifice could have done me good. She will marry you, after she has mourned a little while

for her father; and Heaven grant you long and happy days! and may your children's children stand round your death-bed! And, Reuben," added he, as the weakness of mortality made its way at last, "return, when your wounds are healed and your weariness refreshed, return to this wild rock, and lay my bones in the grave, and say a prayer over them."

An almost superstitious regard, arising perhaps from the customs of the Indians, whose war was with the dead, as well as the living, was paid by the frontier inhabitants to the rites of sepulture; and there are many instances of the sacrifice of life, in the attempt to bury those who had fallen by the "sword of the wilderness." Reuben, therefore, felt the full importance of the promise, which he most solemnly made, to return, and perform Roger Malvin's obsequies. It was remarkable, that the latter, speaking his whole heart in his parting words, no longer endeavored to persuade the youth, that even the speediest succour might avail to the preservation of his life. Reuben was internally convinced, that he should see Malvin's living face no more. His generous nature would fain have delayed him, at whatever risk, till the dying scene were past; but the desire of existence, and the hope of happiness had strengthened in his heart, and he was unable to resist them.

"It is enough," said Roger Malvin, having listened to Reuben's promise. "Go, and God speed you!"

The youth pressed his hand in silence, turned, and was departing. His slow and faltering steps, however, had borne him

but a little way, before Malvin's voice recalled him.

"Reuben, Reuben," said he, faintly; and Reuben returned and knelt down by the dying man.

"Raise me, and let me lean against the rock," was his last request. "My face will be turned towards home, and I shall see you a moment longer, as you pass among the trees."

Reuben, having made the desired alteration in his companion's posture, again began his solitary pilgrimage. He walked more hastily at first, than was consistent with his strength; for a sort of guilty feeling, which sometimes torments men in their most justifiable acts, caused him to seek concealment from Malvin's eyes. But, after he had trodden far upon the rustling forest-leaves, he crept back, impelled by a wild and painful curiosity, and, sheltered by the earthy roots of an uptorn tree, gazed earnestly at the desolate man. The morning sun was unclouded, and the trees and shrubs imbibed the sweet air of the month of May; yet there seemed a gloom on Nature's face, as if she sympathized with mortal pain and sorrow. Roger Malvin's hands were uplifted in a fervent prayer, some of the words of which stole through the stillness of the woods, and entered Reuben's heart, torturing it with an unutterable pang. They were the broken accents of a petition for his own happiness and that of Dorcas; and, as the youth listened, conscience, or something in its similitude, pleaded strongly with him to return, and lie down again by the rock. He felt how hard was the doom of the kind and generous being whom he had deserted in his extremity. Death would come,

like the slow approach of a corpse, stealing gradually towards him through the forest, and showing its ghastly and motionless features from behind a nearer, and yet a nearer tree. But such must have been Reuben's own fate, had he tarried another sunset; and who shall impute blame to him, if he shrank from so useless a sacrifice? As he gave a parting look, a breeze waved the little banner upon the sapling-oak, and reminded Reuben of his vow.

Many circumstances contributed to retard the wounded traveller, in his way to the frontiers. On the second day, the clouds, gathering densely over the sky, precluded the possibility of regulating his course by the position of the sun; and he knew not but that every effort of his almost exhausted strength, was removing him farther from the home he sought. His scanty sustenance was supplied by the berries, and other spontaneous products of the forest. Herds of deer, it is true, sometimes bounded past him, and partridges frequently whirred up before his footsteps; but his ammunition had been expended in the fight, and he had no means of slaying them. His wounds, irritated by the constant exertion in which lay the only hope of life, wore away his strength, and at intervals confused his reason. But, even in the wanderings of intellect, Reuben's young heart clung strongly to existence, and it was only through absolute incapacity of motion, that he at last sank down beneath a tree, compelled there to await death. In this situation he was discovered by a party, who, upon the first intelligence of the fight,

had been despatched to the relief of the survivors. They conveyed him to the nearest settlement, which chanced to be that of his own residence.

Dorcas, in the simplicity of the olden time, watched by the bedside of her wounded lover, and administered all those comforts, that are in the sole gift of woman's heart and hand. During several days, Reuben's recollection strayed drowsily among the perils and hardships through which he had passed, and he was incapable of returning definite answers to the inquiries, with which many were eager to harass him. No authentic particulars of the battle had yet been circulated; nor could mothers, wives, and children tell, whether their loved ones were detained by captivity, or by the stronger chain of death. Dorcas nourished her apprehensions in silence, till one afternoon, when Reuben awoke from an unquiet sleep, and seemed to recognize her more perfectly than at any previous time. She saw that his intellect had become composed, and she could no longer restrain her filial anxiety.

"My father, Reuben?" she began; but the change in her lover's countenance made her pause.

The youth shrank, as if with a bitter pain, and the blood gushed vividly into his wan and hollow cheeks. His first impulse was to cover his face; but, apparently with a desperate effort, he half raised himself, and spoke vehemently, defending himself against an imaginary accusation.

"Your father was sore wounded in the battle, Dorcas, and he

bade me not burthen myself with him, but only to lead him to the lake-side, that he might quench his thirst and die. But I would not desert the old man in his extremity, and, though bleeding myself, I supported him; I gave him half my strength, and led him away with me. For three days we journeyed on together, and your father was sustained beyond my hopes; but, awaking at sunrise on the fourth day, I found him faint and exhausted,—he was unable to proceed,—his life had ebbed away fast,—and—”

“He died!” exclaimed Dorcas, faintly.

Reuben felt it impossible to acknowledge, that his selfish love of life had hurried him away, before her father’s fate was decided. He spoke not; he only bowed his head; and, between shame and exhaustion, sank back and hid his face in the pillow. Dorcas wept, when her fears were thus confirmed; but the shock, as it had been long anticipated, was on that account the less violent.

“You dug a grave for my poor father, in the wilderness, Reuben?” was the question by which her filial piety manifested itself.

“My hands were weak, but I did what I could,” replied the youth in a smothered tone. “There stands a noble tomb-stone above his head, and I would to Heaven I slept as soundly as he!”

Dorcas, perceiving the wildness of his latter words, inquired no further at the time; but her heart found ease in the thought, that Roger Malvin had not lacked such funeral rites as it was possible to bestow. The tale of Reuben’s courage and fidelity lost nothing,

when she communicated it to her friends; and the poor youth, tottering from his sick chamber to breathe the sunny air, experienced from every tongue the miserable and humiliating torture of unmerited praise. All acknowledged that he might worthily demand the hand of the fair maiden, to whose father he had been “faithful unto death”; and, as my tale is not of love, it shall suffice to say, that, in the space of a few months, Reuben became the husband of Dorcas Malvin. During the marriage ceremony, the bride was covered with blushes, but the bridegroom’s face was pale.

There was now in the breast of Reuben Bourne an incommunicable thought; something which he was to conceal most heedfully from her whom he most loved and trusted. He regretted, deeply and bitterly, the moral cowardice that had restrained his words, when he was about to disclose the truth to Dorcas; but pride, the fear of losing her affection, the dread of universal scorn, forbade him to rectify this falsehood. He felt, that, for leaving Roger Malvin, he deserved no censure. His presence, the gratuitous sacrifice of his own life, would have added only another, and a needless agony to the last moments of the dying man. But concealment had imparted to a justifiable act, much of the secret effect of guilt; and Reuben, while reason told him that he had done right, experienced, in no small degree, the mental horrors, which punish the perpetrator of undiscovered crime. By a certain association of ideas, he at times almost imagined himself a murderer. For years, also, a thought would

occasionally recur, which, though he perceived all its folly and extravagance, he had not power to banish from his mind; it was a haunting and torturing fancy, that his father-in-law was yet sitting at the foot of the rock, on the withered forest-leaves, alive, and awaiting his pledged assistance. These mental deceptions, however, came and went, nor did he ever mistake them for realities; but in the calmest and clearest moods of his mind, he was conscious that he had a deep vow unredeemed, and that an unburied corpse was calling to him, out of the wilderness. Yet, such was the consequence of his prevarication, that he could not obey the call. It was now too late to require the assistance of Roger Malvin's friends, in performing his long-deferred sepulture; and superstitious fears, of which none were more susceptible than the people of the outward settlements, forbade Reuben to go alone. Neither did he know where, in the pathless and illimitable forest, to seek that smooth and lettered rock, at the base of which the body lay; his remembrance of every portion of his travel thence was indistinct, and the latter part had left no impression upon his mind. There was, however, a continual impulse, a voice audible only to himself, commanding him to go forth and redeem his vow; and he had a strange impression, that, were he to make the trial, he would be led straight to Malvin's bones. But, year after year, that summons, unheard but felt, was disobeyed. His one secret thought, became like a chain, binding down his spirit, and, like a serpent, gnawing into his heart; and he was transformed into a sad and downcast, yet irritable man.

In the course of a few years after their marriage, changes began to be visible in the external prosperity of Reuben and Dorcas. The only riches of the former had been his stout heart and strong arm; but the latter, her father's sole heiress, had made her husband master of a farm, under older cultivation, larger, and better stocked than most of the frontier establishments. Reuben Bourne, however, was a neglectful husbandman; and while the lands of the other settlers became annually more fruitful, his deteriorated in the same proportion. The discouragements to agriculture were greatly lessened by the cessation of Indian war, during which men held the plough in one hand, and the musket in the other; and were fortunate if the products of their dangerous labor were not destroyed, either in the field or in the barn, by the savage enemy. But Reuben did not profit by the altered condition of the country; nor can it be denied, that his intervals of industrious attention to his affairs were but scantily rewarded with success. The irritability, by which he had recently become distinguished, was another cause of his declining prosperity, as it occasioned frequent quarrels, in his unavoidable intercourse with the neighboring settlers. The results of these were innumerable law-suits; for the people of New England, in the earliest stages and wildest circumstances of the country, adopted, whenever attainable, the legal mode of deciding their differences. To be brief, the world did not go well with Reuben Bourne, and, though not till many years after his marriage, he was finally a ruined man, with but one remaining expedient

against the evil fate that had pursued him. He was to throw sunlight into some deep recess of the forest, and seek subsistence from the virgin bosom of the wilderness.

The only child of Reuben and Dorcas was a son, now arrived at the age of fifteen years, beautiful in youth, and giving promise of a glorious manhood. He was peculiarly qualified for, and already began to excel in, the wild accomplishments of frontier life. His foot was fleet, his aim true, his apprehension quick, his heart glad and high; and all, who anticipated the return of Indian war, spoke of Cyrus Bourne as a future leader in the land. The boy was loved by his father, with a deep and silent strength, as if whatever was good and happy in his own nature had been transferred to his child, carrying his affections with it. Even Dorcas, though loving and beloved, was far less dear to him; for Reuben's secret thoughts and insulated emotions had gradually made him a selfish man; and he could no longer love deeply, except where he saw, or imagined, some reflection or likeness of his own mind. In Cyrus he recognized what he had himself been in other days; and at intervals he seemed to partake of the boy's spirit, and to be revived with a fresh and happy life. Reuben was accompanied by his son in the expedition, for the purpose of selecting a tract of land, and felling and burning the timber, which necessarily preceded the removal of the household gods. Two months of autumn were thus occupied; after which Reuben Bourne and his young hunter returned, to spend their last winter in the settlements.

It was early in the month of May, that the little family snapped asunder whatever tendrils of affection had clung to inanimate objects, and bade farewell to the few, who, in the blight of fortune, called themselves their friends. The sadness of the parting moment had, to each of the pilgrims, its peculiar alleviations. Reuben, a moody man, and misanthropic because unhappy, strode onward, with his usual stern brow and downcast eye, feeling few regrets, and disdaining to acknowledge any. Dorcas, while she wept abundantly over the broken ties by which her simple and affectionate nature had bound itself to everything, felt that the inhabitants of her inmost heart moved on with her, and that all else would be supplied wherever she might go. And the boy dashed one tear-drop from his eye, and thought of the adventurous pleasures of the untrodden forest. Oh! who, in the enthusiasm of a day-dream, has not wished that he were a wanderer in a world of summer wilderness, with one fair and gentle being hanging lightly on his arm? In youth, his free and exulting step would know no barrier but the rolling ocean or the snow-topt mountains; calmer manhood would choose a home, where Nature had strewn a double wealth, in the vale of some transparent stream; and when hoary age, after long, long years of that pure life, stole on and found him there, it would find him the father of a race, the patriarch of a people, the founder of a mighty nation yet to be. When death, like the sweet sleep which we welcome after a day of happiness, came over him, his far descendants would mourn over the venerated dust. Enveloped by

tradition in mysterious attributes, the men of future generations would call him godlike; and remote posterity would see him standing, dimly glorious, far up the valley of a hundred centuries!

The tangled and gloomy forest, through which the personages of my tale were wandering, differed widely from the dreamer's Land of Fantasie; yet there was something in their way of life that Nature asserted as her own; and the gnawing cares, which went with them from the world, were all that now obstructed their happiness. One stout and shaggy steed, the bearer of all their wealth, did not shrink from the added weight of Dorcas; although her hardy breeding sustained her, during the latter part of each day's journey, by her husband's side. Reuben and his son, their muskets on their shoulders, and their axes slung behind them, kept an unwearied pace, each watching with a hunter's eye for the game that supplied their food. When hunger bade, they halted and prepared their meal on the bank of some unpolluted forest-brook, which, as they knelt down with thirsty lips to drink, murmured a sweet unwillingness, like a maiden, at love's first kiss. They slept beneath a hut of branches, and awoke at peep of light, refreshed for the toils of another day. Dorcas and the boy went on joyously, and even Reuben's spirit shone at intervals with an outward gladness; but inwardly there was a cold, cold sorrow, which he compared to the snow-drifts, lying deep in the glens and hollows of the rivulets, while the leaves were brightly green above.

Cyrus Bourne was sufficiently skilled in the travel of the woods,

to observe, that his father did not adhere to the course they had pursued, in their expedition of the preceding autumn. They were now keeping farther to the north, striking out more directly from the settlements, and into a region, of which savage beasts and savage men were as yet the sole possessors. The boy sometimes hinted his opinions upon the subject, and Reuben listened attentively, and once or twice altered the direction of their march in accordance with his son's counsel. But having so done, he seemed ill at ease. His quick and wandering glances were sent forward, apparently in search of enemies lurking behind the tree-trunks; and seeing nothing there, he would cast his eyes backward, as if in fear of some pursuer. Cyrus, perceiving that his father gradually resumed the old direction, forbore to interfere; nor, though something began to weigh upon his heart, did his adventurous nature permit him to regret the increased length and the mystery of their way.

On the afternoon of the fifth day, they halted and made their simple encampment, nearly an hour before sunset. The face of the country, for the last few miles, had been diversified by swells of land, resembling huge waves of a petrified sea; and in one of the corresponding hollows, a wild and romantic spot, had the family reared their hut, and kindled their fire. There is something chilling, and yet heart-warming, in the thought of these three, united by strong bands of love, and insulated from all that breathe beside. The dark and gloomy pines looked down upon them, and, as the wind swept through their tops, a pitying sound

was heard in the forest; or did those old trees groan, in fear that men were come to lay the axe to their roots at last? Reuben and his son, while Dorcas made ready their meal, proposed to wander out in search of game, of which that day's march had afforded no supply. The boy, promising not to quit the vicinity of the encampment, bounded off with a step as light and elastic as that of the deer he hoped to slay; while his father, feeling a transient happiness as he gazed after him, was about to pursue an opposite direction. Dorcas, in the meanwhile, had seated herself near their fire of fallen branches, upon the moss-grown and mouldering trunk of a tree, uprooted years before. Her employment, diversified by an occasional glance at the pot, now beginning to simmer over the blaze, was the perusal of the current year's Massachusetts Almanac, which, with the exception of an old black-letter Bible, comprised all the literary wealth of the family. None pay a greater regard to arbitrary divisions of time, than those who are excluded from society; and Dorcas mentioned, as if the information were of importance, that it was now the twelfth of May. Her husband started.

“The twelfth of May! I should remember it well,” muttered he, while many thoughts occasioned a momentary confusion in his mind. “Where am I? Whither am I wandering? Where did I leave him?”

Dorcas, too well accustomed to her husband's wayward moods to note any peculiarity of demeanor, now laid aside the Almanac, and addressed him in that mournful tone, which the tender-

hearted appropriate to griefs long cold and dead.

“It was near this time of the month, eighteen years ago, that my poor father left this world for a better. He had a kind arm to hold his head, and a kind voice to cheer him, Reuben, in his last moments; and the thought of the faithful care you took of him, has comforted me, many a time since. Oh! death would have been awful to a solitary man, in a wild place like this!”

“Pray Heaven, Dorcas,” said Reuben, in a broken voice, “pray Heaven, that neither of us three die solitary, and lie unburied, in this howling wilderness!” And he hastened away, leaving her to watch the fire, beneath the gloomy pines.

Reuben Bourne’s rapid pace gradually slackened, as the pang, unintentionally inflicted by the words of Dorcas, became less acute. Many strange reflections, however, thronged upon him; and, straying onward, rather like a sleep-walker than a hunter, it was attributable to no care of his own, that his devious course kept him in the vicinity of the encampment. His steps were imperceptibly led almost in a circle, nor did he observe that he was on the verge of a tract of land heavily timbered, but not with pine-trees. The place of the latter was here supplied by oaks, and other of the harder woods; and around their roots clustered a dense and bushy undergrowth, leaving, however, barren spaces between the trees, thick-strewn with withered leaves. Whenever the rustling of the branches, or the creaking of the trunks made a sound, as if the forest were waking from slumber, Reuben instinctively raised the musket that rested on his arm, and cast a

quick, sharp glance on every side; but, convinced by a partial observation that no animal was near, he would again give himself up to his thoughts. He was musing on the strange influence, that had led him away from his premeditated course, and so far into the depths of the wilderness. Unable to penetrate to the secret place of his soul, where his motives lay hidden, he believed that a supernatural voice had called him onward, and that a supernatural power had obstructed his retreat. He trusted that it was Heaven's intent to afford him an opportunity of expiating his sin; he hoped that he might find the bones, so long unburied; and that, having laid the earth over them, peace would throw its sunlight into the sepulchre of his heart. From these thoughts he was aroused by a rustling in the forest, at some distance from the spot to which he had wandered. Perceiving the motion of some object behind a thick veil of undergrowth, he fired, with the instinct of a hunter, and the aim of a practiced marksman. A low moan, which told his success, and by which even animals can express their dying agony, was unheeded by Reuben Bourne. What were the recollections now breaking upon him?

The thicket, into which Reuben had fired, was near the summit of a swell of land, and was clustered around the base of a rock, which, in the shape and smoothness of one of its surfaces, was not unlike a gigantic grave-stone. As if reflected in a mirror, its likeness was in Reuben's memory. He even recognized the veins which seemed to form an inscription in forgotten characters; everything remained the same, except that a thick covert of

bushes shrouded the lower part of the rock, and would have hidden Roger Malvin, had he still been sitting there. Yet, in the next moment, Reuben's eye was caught by another change, that time had effected, since he last stood, where he was now standing again, behind the earthy roots of the uptorn tree. The sapling, to which he had bound the blood-stained symbol of his vow, had increased and strengthened into an oak, far indeed from its maturity, but with no mean spread of shadowy branches. There was one singularity, observable in this tree, which made Reuben tremble. The middle and lower branches were in luxuriant life, and an excess of vegetation had fringed the trunk, almost to the ground; but a blight had apparently stricken the upper part of the oak, and the very topmost bough was withered, sapless, and utterly dead. Reuben remembered how the little banner had fluttered on the topmost bough, when it was green and lovely, eighteen years before. Whose guilt had blasted it?

Dorcas, after the departure of the two hunters, continued her preparations for their evening repast. Her sylvan table was the moss-covered trunk of a large fallen tree, on the broadest part of which she had spread a snow-white cloth, and arranged what were left of the bright pewter vessels, that had been her pride in the settlements. It had a strange aspect—that one little spot of homely comfort, in the desolate heart of Nature. The sunshine yet lingered upon the higher branches of the trees that grew on rising ground; but the shades of evening had deepened into the hollow, where the encampment was made; and the fire-light

began to redden as it gleamed up the tall trunks of the pines, or hovered on the dense and obscure mass of foliage, that circled round the spot. The heart of Dorcas was not sad; for she felt that it was better to journey in the wilderness, with two whom she loved, than to be a lonely woman in a crowd that cared not for her. As she busied herself in arranging seats of mouldering wood, covered with leaves, for Reuben and her son, her voice danced through the gloomy forest, in the measure of a song that she had learned in youth. The rude melody, the production of a bard who won no name, was descriptive of a winter evening in a frontier-cottage, when, secured from savage inroad by the high-piled snow-drifts, the family rejoiced by their own fireside. The whole song possessed that nameless charm, peculiar to unborrowed thought; but four continually-recurring lines shone out from the rest, like the blaze of the hearth whose joys they celebrated. Into them, working magic with a few simple words, the poet had instilled the very essence of domestic love and household happiness, and they were poetry and picture joined in one. As Dorcas sang, the walls of her forsaken home seemed to encircle her; she no longer saw the gloomy pines, nor heard the wind, which still, as she began each verse, sent a heavy breath through the branches, and died away in a hollow moan, from the burthen of the song. She was aroused by the report of a gun, in the vicinity of the encampment; and either the sudden sound, or her loneliness by the glowing fire, caused her to tremble violently. The next moment, she laughed in the pride of a mother's heart.

“My beautiful young hunter! my boy has slain a deer!” she exclaimed, recollecting that, in the direction whence the shot proceeded, Cyrus had gone to the chase.

She waited a reasonable time, to hear her son’s light step bounding over the rustling leaves, to tell of his success. But he did not immediately appear, and she sent her cheerful voice among the trees, in search of him.

“Cyrus! Cyrus!”

His coming was still delayed, and she determined, as the report had apparently been very near, to seek for him in person. Her assistance, also, might be necessary in bringing home the venison, which she flattered herself he had obtained. She therefore set forward, directing her steps by the long-past sound, and singing as she went, in order that the boy might be aware of her approach, and run to meet her. From behind the trunk of every tree, and from every hiding place in the thick foliage of the undergrowth, she hoped to discover the countenance of her son, laughing with the sportive mischief that is born of affection. The sun was now beneath the horizon, and the light that came down among the trees was sufficiently dim to create many illusions in her expecting fancy. Several times she seemed indistinctly to see his face gazing out from among the leaves; and once she imagined that he stood beckoning to her, at the base of a craggy rock. Keeping her eyes on this object, however, it proved to be no more than the trunk of an oak, fringed to the very ground with little branches, one of which, thrust out farther than the rest, was

shaken by the breeze. Making her way round the foot of the rock, she suddenly found herself close to her husband, who had approached in another direction. Leaning upon the butt of his gun, the muzzle of which rested upon the withered leaves, he was apparently absorbed in the contemplation of some object at his feet.

“How is this, Reuben? Have you slain the deer, and fallen asleep over him?” exclaimed Dorcas, laughing cheerfully, on her first slight observation of his posture and appearance.

He stirred not, neither did he turn his eyes towards her; and a cold, shuddering fear, indefinite in its source and object, began to creep into her blood. She now perceived that her husband’s face was ghastly pale, and his features were rigid, as if incapable of assuming any other expression than the strong despair which had hardened upon them. He gave not the slightest evidence that he was aware of her approach.

“For the love of Heaven, Reuben, speak to me!” cried Dorcas, and the strange sound of her own voice affrighted her even more than the dead silence.

Her husband started, stared into her face; drew her to the front of the rock, and pointed with his finger.

Oh! there lay the boy, asleep, but dreamless, upon the fallen forest-leaves! his cheek rested upon his arm, his curled locks were thrown back from his brow, his limbs were slightly relaxed. Had a sudden weariness overcome the youthful hunter? Would his mother’s voice arouse him? She knew that it was death.

“This broad rock is the grave-stone of your near kindred, Dorcas,” said her husband. “Your tears will fall at once over your father and your son.”

She heard him not. With one wild shriek, that seemed to force its way from the sufferer’s inmost soul, she sank insensible by the side of her dead boy. At that moment, the withered topmost bough of the oak loosened itself, in the stilly air, and fell in soft, light fragments upon the rock, upon the leaves, upon Reuben, upon his wife and child, and upon Roger Malvin’s bones. Then Reuben’s heart was stricken, and the tears gushed out like water from a rock. The vow that the wounded youth had made, the blighted man had come to redeem. His sin was expiated, the curse was gone from him; and, in the hour, when he had shed blood dearer to him than his own, a prayer, the first for years, went up to Heaven from the lips of Reuben Bourne.



FRANKLIN PIERCE

His Parentage and Early Life

FRANKLIN PIERCE was born at Hillsborough, in the State of New Hampshire, on the 23d of November, 1804. His native county, at the period of his birth, covered a

much more extensive territory than at present, and might reckon among its children many memorable men, and some illustrious ones. General Stark, the hero of Bennington, Daniel Webster, Levi Woodbury, Jeremiah Smith, the eminent jurist, and governor of the state, General James Miller, General McNeil, Senator Atherton, were natives of old Hillsborough county.

General Benjamin Pierce, the father of Franklin, was one of the earliest settlers in the town of Hillsborough, and contributed as much as any other man to the growth and prosperity of the county. He was born in 1757, at Chelmsford, now Lowell, in Massachusetts. Losing his parents early, he grew up under the care of an uncle, amid such circumstances of simple fare, hard labor, and scanty education as usually fell to the lot of a New England yeoman's family some eighty or a hundred years ago. On the 19th of April, 1775, being then less than eighteen years of age, the stripling was at the plough, when tidings reached him of the bloodshed at Lexington and Concord. He immediately loosened the ox chain, left the plough in the furrow, took his uncle's gun and equipments, and set forth towards the scene of action. From that day, for more than seven years, he never saw his native place. He enlisted in the army, was present at the battle of Bunker Hill, and after serving through the whole revolutionary war, and fighting his way upward from the lowest grade, returned, at last, a thorough soldier, and commander of a company. He was retained in the army as long as that body of veterans had a united existence; and, being finally disbanded, at

West Point, in 1784, was left with no other reward, for nine years of toil and danger, than the nominal amount of his pay in the Continental currency--then so depreciated as to be almost worthless.

In 1785, being employed as agent to explore a tract of wild land, he purchased a lot of fifty acres in what is now the town of Hillsborough. In the spring of the succeeding year, he built himself a log hut, and began the clearing and cultivation of his tract. Another year beheld him married to his first wife, Elizabeth Andrews, who died within a twelvemonth after their union, leaving a daughter, the present widow of General John McNeil. In 1789, he married Anna Kendrick, with whom he lived about half a century, and who bore him eight children, of whom Franklin was the sixth.

Although the revolutionary soldier had thus betaken himself to the wilderness for a subsistence, his professional merits were not forgotten by those who had witnessed his military career. As early as 1786, he was appointed brigade major of the militia of Hillsborough county, then first organized and formed into a brigade. And it was a still stronger testimonial to his character as a soldier, that, nearly fifteen years afterwards, during the presidency of John Adams, he was offered a high command in the northern division of the army which was proposed to be levied in anticipation of a war with the French republic. Inflexibly democratic in his political faith, however, Major Pierce refused to be implicated in a policy which he could not approve.

"No, gentlemen," said he to the delegates, who urged his acceptance of the commission, "poor as I am, and acceptable as would be the position under other circumstances, I would sooner go to yonder mountains, dig me a cave, and live on roast potatoes, than be instrumental in promoting the objects for which that army is to be raised!" This same fidelity to his principles marked every public, as well as private, action of his life.

In his own neighborhood, among those who knew him best, he early gained an influence that was never lost nor diminished, but continued to spread wider during the whole of his long life. In 1789, he was elected to the state legislature, and retained that position for thirteen successive years, until chosen a member of the council. During the same period, he was active in his military duties, as a field officer, and finally general, of the militia of the county; and Miller, McNeil, and others, learned of him, in this capacity, the soldier-like discipline which was afterwards displayed on the battle fields of the northern frontier.

The history, character, and circumstances of General Benjamin Pierce, though here but briefly touched upon, are essential parts of the biography of his son, both as indicating some of the native traits which the latter has inherited, and as showing the influences amid which he grew up. At Franklin Pierce's birth, and for many years subsequent, his father was the most active and public-spirited man within his sphere; a most decided democrat, and supporter of Jefferson and Madison; a practical farmer,

moreover, not rich, but independent, exercising a liberal hospitality, and noted for the kindness and generosity of his character; a man of the people, but whose natural qualities inevitably made him a leader among them. From infancy upward, the boy had before his eyes, as the model on which he might instinctively form himself, one of the best specimens of sterling New England character, developed in a life of simple habits, yet of elevated action. Patriotism, such as it had been in revolutionary days, was taught him by his father, as early as his mother taught him religion. He became early imbued, too, with the military spirit which the old soldier had retained from his long service, and which was kept active by the constant alarms and warlike preparations of the first twelve years of the present century. If any man is bound, by birth and youthful training, to show himself a brave, faithful, and able citizen of his native country, it is the son of such a father.

At the commencement of the war of 1812, Franklin Pierce was a few months under eight years of age. The old general, his father, sent two of his sons into the army; and, as his eldest daughter was soon afterwards married to Major McNeil, there were few families that had so large a personal stake in the war as that of General Benjamin Pierce. He himself, both in his public capacity as a member of the council, and by his great local influence in his own county, lent a strenuous support to the national administration. It is attributable to his sagacity and energy, that New Hampshire--then under a federal governor--was

saved the disgrace of participation in the questionable, if not treasonable, projects of the Hartford Convention. He identified himself with the cause of the country, and was doubtless as thoroughly alive with patriotic zeal, at this eventful period, as in the old days of Bunker Hill, and Saratoga, and Yorktown. The general not only took a prominent part at all public meetings, but was ever ready for the informal discussion of political affairs at all places of casual resort, where-in accordance with the custom of the time and country-the minds of men were made to operate effectually upon each other. Franklin Pierce was a frequent auditor of these controversies. The intentness with which he watched the old general, and listened to his arguments, is still remembered; and, at this day, in his most earnest moods, there are gesticulations and movements that bring up the image of his father to those who recollect the latter on those occasions of the display of homely, native eloquence. No mode of education could be conceived, better adapted to imbue a youth with the principles and sentiment of democratic institutions; it brought him into the most familiar contact with the popular mind, and made his own mind a part of it.

Franklin's father had felt through life, the disadvantages of a defective education; although, in his peculiar sphere of action, it might be doubted whether he did not gain more than he lost, by being thrown on his own resources, and compelled to study men and their actual affairs, rather than books. But he determined to afford his son all the opportunities of improvement, which he

himself had lacked. Franklin, accordingly, was early sent to the academy at Hancock, and afterwards to that of Frankestown, where he was received into the family of General Pierce's old and steadfast friend, Peter Woodbury, father of the late eminent judge. It is scarcely more than a year ago, at the semi-centennial celebration of the academy, that Franklin Pierce, the mature and distinguished man, paid a beautiful tribute to the character of Madam Woodbury, in affectionate remembrance of the motherly kindness experienced at her hands by the schoolboy.

The old people of his neighborhood give a very delightful picture of Franklin at this early age. They describe him as a beautiful boy, with blue eyes, light curling hair, and a sweet expression of face. The traits presented of him indicate moral symmetry, kindness, and a delicate texture of sentiment, rather than marked prominences of character. His instructors testify to his propriety of conduct, his fellow-pupils to his sweetness of disposition and cordial sympathy. One of the latter, being older than most of his companions, and less advanced in his studies, found it difficult to keep up with his class; and he remembers how perseveringly, while the other boys were at play, Franklin spent the noon recess, for many weeks together, in aiding him in his lessons. These attributes, proper to a generous and affectionate nature, have remained with him through life. Lending their color to his deportment, and softening his manners, they are, perhaps, even now, the characteristics by which most of those who casually meet him would be inclined to

identify the man. But there are other qualities, not then developed, but which have subsequently attained a firm and manly growth, and are recognized as his leading traits among those who really know him. Franklin Pierce's development, indeed, has always been the reverse of premature; the boy did not show the germ of all that was in the man, nor, perhaps, did the young man adequately foreshow the mature one....



The Ambitious Guest

ONE SEPTEMBER NIGHT a family had gathered round their hearth, and piled it high with the driftwood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the splintered ruins of great trees that had come crashing down the precipice. Up the chimney roared the fire, and brightened the room with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of Happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of Happiness grown old. They had found the “herb, heart’s-ease,” in the bleakest spot of all New England. This family were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter—giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep, that the stones would often rumble down its sides and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest that filled them all with mirth, when the wind came through the Notch and seemed to pause before their cottage—rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was

nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveller, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a solitude, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the life-blood of internal commerce is continually throbbing between Maine, on one side, and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence, on the other. The stage-coach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The way-farer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain maid at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveller pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness beyond all price. When the footsteps were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome someone who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a

wild and bleak road, at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile placed the stranger on a footing of innocent familiarity with the eldest daughter.

“Ah, this fire is the right thing!” cried he; “especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite benumbed; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows; it has blown a terrible blast in my face all the way from Bartlett.”

“Then you are going towards Vermont?” said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man’s shoulders.

“Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond,” replied he. “I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford’s tonight; but a pedestrian lingers along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt as if you had kindled it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home.”

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire when something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

“The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him,” said the landlord, recovering himself. “He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well upon the whole. Besides we have a sure place of refuge hard by if he should be coming in good earnest.”

Let us now suppose the stranger to have finished his supper of bear’s meat; and, by his natural felicity of manner, to have placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit—haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man’s fireside. In the household of the Notch he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry of native growth, which they had gathered when they little thought of it from the mountain peaks and chasms, and at the very threshold of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had travelled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude. But this evening a prophetic sympathy

impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers, and constrained them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long cherished, had become like certainty, that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway- though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But when posterity should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess that a gifted one had passed from his cradle to his tomb with none to recognize him.

“As yet,” cried the stranger—his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm—“as yet, I have done nothing. Were I to vanish from the earth tomorrow, none would know so much of me as you: that a nameless youth came up at nightfall from the valley of the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask, ‘Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?’ But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! I shall have built my monument!”

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth

amid abstracted reverie, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the ludicrous, he blushed at the ardor into which he had been betrayed.

"You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about. And, truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by this fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and if my mind had been turned that way, I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how his talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, repelling the idea with reproachful kindness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine, too. But I was wishing we had a good farm in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors and be

called Squire, and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain, honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when I should be grown quite an old man, and you an old woman, so as not to be long apart, I might die happy enough in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one—with just my name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian.”

“There now!” exclaimed the stranger; “it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man.”

“We’re in a strange way, tonight,” said the wife, with tears in her eyes. “They say it’s a sign of something, when folks’ minds go a-wandering so. Hark to the children!”

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were outvying each other in wild wishes, and childish projects, of what they would do when they came to be men and women. At length a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

“I’ll tell you what I wish, mother,” cried he. “I want you and father and grandma’m, and all of us, and the stranger too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!”

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume—a brook, which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded, in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey or put up here for the night.

“Father,” said the girl, “they are calling you by name.”

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too solicitous of gain by inviting people to patronize his house. He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the travellers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

“There, mother!” cried the boy, again. “They'd have given us a ride to the Flume.”

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious fancy for a night ramble. But it happened that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way, in spite of a little struggle to repress it. Then starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her

bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

“Nothing,” answered she, with a downcast smile. “Only I felt lonesome just then.”

“Oh, I have always had a gift of feeling what is in other people’s hearts,” said he, half seriously. “Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother’s side. Shall I put these feelings into words?”

“They would not be a girl’s feelings any longer if they could be put into words,” replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom in Paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the shy yearnings of a maiden’s nature, the wind through the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness.

The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

“Old folks have their notions,” said she, “as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning; and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a-wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you.”

“What is it, mother?” cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse in the coffin and beneath the clods would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

“Don't talk so, grandmother!” said the girl, shuddering.

“Now,” continued the old woman, with singular earnestness,

yet smiling strangely at her own folly, “I want one of you, my children- when your mother is dressed and in the coffin—I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all’s right?”

“Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments,” murmured the stranger youth. “I wonder how mariners feel when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean—that wide and nameless sepulchre?”

For a moment, the old woman’s ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers that a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move. Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips.

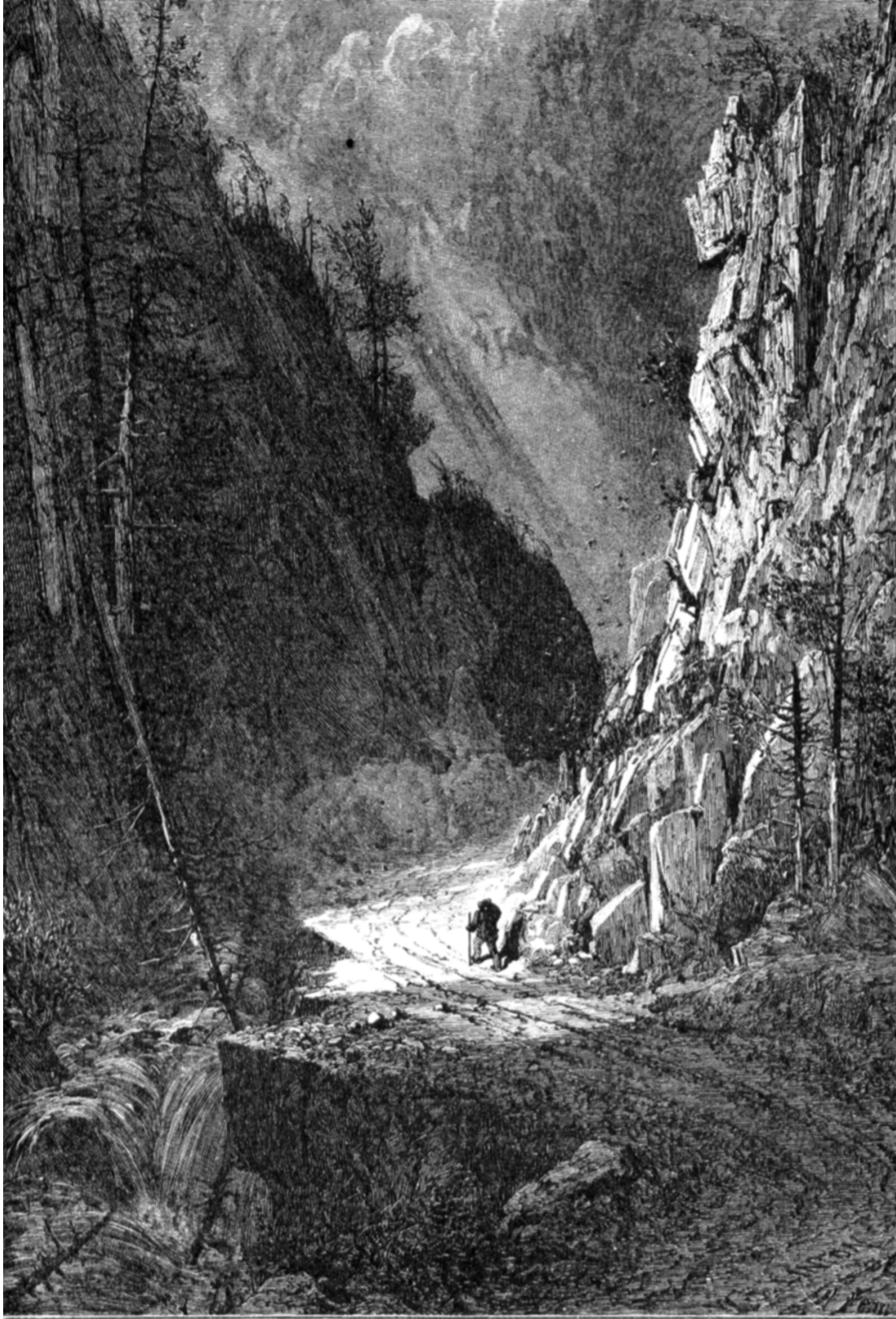
“The Slide! The Slide!”

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot—where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the

house, the stream broke into two branches—shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of the great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning, the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain side. Within, the fire was yet smouldering on the hearth, and the chairs in a circle round it, as if the inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide, and would shortly return, to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate tokens, by which those who had known the family were made to shed a tear for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates. Others denied that there were sufficient grounds for such a conjecture. Wo for the high-souled youth, with his dream of Earthly Immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved, his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death moment?



At the Isles of Shoals

From *The American Notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, 1852

The Isles of Shoals, Monday, August 30th.—Left Concord at a quarter of nine A.M. Friday, September 3, set sail at about half past ten to the Isles of Shoals. The passengers were an old master of a vessel; a young, rather genteel man from Greenland, N. H.; two Yankees from Hamilton and Danvers; and a country trader (I should judge) from some inland town of New Hampshire. The old sea-captain, preparatory to sailing, bought a bunch of cigars (they cost ten cents), and occasionally puffed one. The two Yankees had brought guns on board, and asked questions about the fishing of the Shoals. They were young men, brothers, the youngest a shopkeeper in Danvers, the other a farmer, I imagine, at Hamilton, and both specimens of the least polished kind of Yankee, and therefore proper to those localities. They were at first full of questions, and greatly interested in whatever was going forward; but anon the shopkeeper began to grow, first a little, then very sick, till he lay along the boat, longing, as he afterwards said, for a little fresh water to be drowned in. His brother attended him in a very kindly way, but became sick himself before he reached the end of the voyage.

The young Greenlander talked politics, or rather discussed the

personal character of Pierce. The New Hampshire trader said not a word, or hardly one, all the way. A Portsmouth youth (whom I forgot to mention) sat in the stern of the boat, looking very white. The skipper of the boat is a Norwegian, a good-natured fellow, not particularly intelligent, and speaking in a dialect somewhat like Irish. He had a man with him, a silent and rather sulky fellow, who, at the captain's bidding, grimly made himself useful.

The wind not being favorable, we had to make several tacks before reaching the islands, where we arrived at about two o'clock. We landed at Appledore, on which is Loughton's Hotel, a large building with a piazza or promenade before it, about an hundred and twenty feet in length, or more, yes, it must be more. It is an edifice with a centre and two wings, the central part upwards of seventy feet. At one end of the promenade is a covered veranda, thirty or forty feet square, so situated that the breeze draws across it from the sea on one side of the island to the sea on the other, and it is the breeziest and comfortablest place in the world on a hot day. There are two swings beneath it, and here one may sit or walk, and enjoy life, while all other mortals are suffering.

As I entered the door of the hotel, there met me a short, corpulent, round, and full-faced man, rather elderly, if not old. He was a little lame. He addressed me in a hearty, hospitable tone, and, judging that it must be my landlord, I delivered a letter of introduction from Pierce. Of course it was fully efficient in obtaining the best accommodations that were to be had. I found

that we were expected, a man having brought the news of our intention the day before. Here ensued great inquiries after the General, and wherefore he had not come. I was looked at with considerable curiosity on my own account, especially by the ladies, of whom there were several, agreeable and pretty enough. There were four or five gentlemen, most of whom had not much that was noteworthy.

After dinner, which was good and abundant, though somewhat rude in its style, I was introduced by Mr. Loughton to Mr. Thaxter, his son-in-law, and Mr. Weiss, a clergyman of New Bedford, who is staying here for his health. They showed me some of the remarkable features of the island, such as a deep chasm in the cliffs of the shore, towards the southwest; also a monument of rude stones, on the highest point of the island, said to have been erected by Captain John Smith before the settlement at Plymouth. The tradition is just as good as truth. Also, some ancient cellars, with thistles and other weeds growing in them, and old fragmentary bricks scattered about. The date of these habitations is not known; but they may well be the remains of the settlement that Cotton Mather speaks about; or perhaps one of them was the house where Sir William Pepperell was born, and where he went when he and somebody else set up a stick, and travelled to seek their fortunes in the direction in which it fell.

In the evening, the company at the hotel made up two whist parties, at one of which I sat down, - my partner being an

agreeable young lady from Portsmouth. We played till I, at least, was quite weary. It had been the beautifulest of weather all day, very hot on the mainland, but a delicious climate under our veranda.

Saturday, September 4th.--Another beautiful day, rather cooler than the preceding, but not too cool. I can bear this coolness better than that of the interior. In the forenoon, I took passage for Star Island, in a boat that crosses daily whenever there are passengers. My companions were the two Yankees, who had quite recovered from yesterday's sickness, and were in the best of spirits and the utmost activity of mind of which they were capable. Never was there such a string of questions as they directed to the boatman,--questions that seemed to have no gist, so far as related to any use that could be made of the answers. They appear to be very good young men, however, well-meaning, and with manners not disagreeable, because their hearts are not amiss. Star Island is less than a mile from Appledore. It is the most populous island of the group,--has been, for three or four years, an incorporated township, and sends a representative to the New Hampshire legislature. The number of voters is variously represented as from eighteen to twenty-eight. The inhabitants are all, I presume, fishermen. Their houses stand in pretty close neighborhood to one another, scattered about without the slightest regularity or pretence of a street, there being no wheel-carriages on the island. Some of the houses are very comfortable two-story dwellings. I

saw two or three, I think, with flowers. There are also one or two trees on the island. There is a strong odor of fishiness, and the little cove is full of mackerel-boats, and other small craft for fishing, in some of which little boys of no growth at all were paddling about. Nearly in the centre of this insular metropolis is a two-story house, with a flag-staff in the yard. This is the hotel.

On the highest point of Star Island stands the church,--a small, wooden structure; and, sitting in its shadow, I found a red-baize-shirted fisherman, who seemed quite willing to converse. He said that there was a minister here, who was also the schoolmaster; but that he did not keep school just now, because his wife was very much out of health. The school-house stood but a little way from the meeting-house, and near it was the minister's dwelling; and by and by I had a glimpse of the good man himself, in his suit of black, which looked in very decent condition at the distance from which I viewed it. His clerical air was quite distinguishable, and it was rather curious to see it, when everybody else wore red-baize shirts and fishing-boots, and looked of the scaly genus. He did not approach me, and I saw him no nearer. I soon grew weary of Gosport, and was glad to reëmbark, although I intend to revisit the island with Mr. Thaxter, and see more of its peculiarities and inhabitants. I saw one old witch-looking woman creeping about with a cane, and stooping down, seemingly to gather herbs. On mentioning her to Mr. Thaxter, after my return, he said that it was probably "the bearded woman." I did not observe her beard; but very likely she may have

had one.

The larger part of the company at the hotel returned to the mainland to-day. There remained behind, however, a Mr. T--- from Newburyport,--a man of natural refinement, and a taste for reading that seems to point towards the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and men of that class. I have had a good deal of talk with him, and at first doubted whether he might not be a clergyman; but Mr. Thaxter tells me that he has made his own way in the world,--was once a sailor before the mast, and is now engaged in mercantile pursuits. He looks like nothing of this kind, being tall and slender, with very quiet manners, not beautiful, though pleasing from the refinement that they indicate. He has rather a precise and careful pronunciation, but yet a natural way of talking.

* * *

In the afternoon I walked round a portion of the island that I had not previously visited, and in the evening went with Mr. Titcomb to Mr. Thaxter's to drink apple-toddy. We found Mrs. Thaxter sitting in a neat little parlor, very simply furnished, but in good taste. She is not now, I believe, more than eighteen years old, very pretty, and with the manners of a lady,--not prim and precise, but with enough of freedom and ease. The books on the table were "Pre-Raphaelitism," a tract on spiritual mediums, etc. There were several shelves of books on one side of the room, and engravings on the walls. Mr. Weiss was there, and I do not know but he is an inmate of Mr. Thaxter's. By and by came in Mr.

Thaxter's brother, with a young lady whose position I do not know,-either a sister or the brother's wife. Anon, too, came in the apple-toddy, a very rich and spicy compound; after which we had some glees and negro melodies, in which Mr. Thaxter sang a noble bass, and Mrs. Thaxter sang like a bird, and Mr. Weiss sang, I suppose, tenor, and the brother took some other part, and all were very mirthful and jolly. At about ten o'clock Mr. Titcomb and myself took leave, and emerging into the open air, out of that room of song, and pretty youthfulness of woman, and gay young men, there was the sky, and the three-quarters waning moon, and the old sea moaning all round about the island.

Sunday, September 5th.-To-day I have done little or nothing except to roam along the shore of the island, and to sit under the piazza, talking with Mr. Loughton or some of his half-dozen guests; and about an hour before dinner I came up to my room, and took a brief nap. Since dinner I have been writing the foregoing journal. I observe that the Fanny Ellsler, our passenger and mail boat, has arrived from Portsmouth, and now lies in a little cove, moored to the rocky shore, with a flag flying at her main-mast. We have been watching her for some hours, but she stopped to fish, and then went to some other island, before putting in here. I must go and see what news she has brought.

"What did you fire at?" asked one of the Yankees just now of a boy who had been firing a gun. "Nothing," said the boy. "Did you hit it?" rejoined the Yankee.

The farmer is of a much ruder and rougher mould than his brother,--heavier in frame and mind, and far less cultivated. It was on this account, probably, that he labored as a farmer, instead of setting up a shop. When it is warm, as yesterday, he takes off his coat, and, not minding whether or no his shirt-sleeves be soiled, goes in this guise to meals or wherever else,--not resuming his coat as long as he is more comfortable without it. His shoulders have a stoop, and altogether his air is that of a farmer in repose. His brother is handsome, and might have quite the aspect of a smart, comely young man, if well dressed.

This island is said to be haunted by a spectre called "Old Bab." He was one of Captain Kidd's men, and was slain for the protection of the treasure. Mr. Lughton said that, before he built his house, nothing would have induced the inhabitant of another island to come to this after nightfall. The ghost especially haunts the space between the hotel and the cove in front. There has, in times past, been great search for the treasure.

Mr. Thaxter tells me that the women on the island are very timid as to venturing on the sea,--more so than the women of the mainland,--and that they are easily frightened about their husbands. Very few accidents happen to the boats or men,--none, I think, since Mr. Thaxter has been here. They are not an enterprising set of people, never liking to make long voyages. Sometimes one of them will ship on a voyage to the West Indies, but generally only on coast-wise trips, or fishing or mackerel voyages. They have a very strong local attachment, and return to

die. They are now generally temperate, formerly very much the contrary.

September 5th.—A large part of the guests took their departure after an early breakfast this morning, including Mr. Titcomb, Mr. Weiss, the two Yankees, and Mr. Thaxter,—who, however, went as skipper or supercargo, and will return with the boat. I have been fishing for cunners off the rocks, but with intolerably poor success. There is nothing so dispiriting as poor fishing, and I spend most of the time with my head on my hands, looking at the sea breaking against the rocks, shagged around the bases with seaweed. It is a sunny forenoon, with a cool breeze from the south-west. The mackerel craft are in the offing. Mr. Loughton says that the *Spy* (the boat which went to the mainland this morning) is now on her return with all her colors set; and he thinks that Pierce is on board, he having sent Mr. Thaxter to invite him to come in this boat.

Pierce arrived before dinner in the *Spy*, accompanied by Judge Upham and his brother and their wives, his own wife, Mr. Furness, and three young ladies. After dinner some of the gentlemen crossed over to Gosport, where we visited the old graveyard, in which were monuments to Rev. Mr. Tucke (died 1773, after forty years' settlement) and to another and later minister of the island. They were of red freestone, lying horizontally on piles of the granite fragments, such as are scattered all about. There were other graves, marked by the rudest shapes of stones at head and foot. And so many stones protruded

from the ground, that it was wonderful how space and depth enough was found between them to cover the dead. We went to the house of the town clerk of Gosport (a drunken fisherman, Joe Caswell by name), and there found the town records, commencing in 1732, in a beautiful style of penmanship. They are imperfect, the township having been broken up, probably at the time of the Revolution. Caswell, being very drunk, immediately put in a petition to Pierce to build a sea-mole for the protection of the navigation of the island when he should be President. He was dressed in the ordinary fisherman's style, red-baize shirt, trousers tucked into large boots, which, as he had just come ashore, were wet with salt water.

He led us down to the shore of the island, towards the east, and showed us Betty Moody's Hole. This Betty Moody was a woman of the island in old times. The Indians came off on a depredating excursion, and she fled from them with a child, and hid herself in this hole, which is formed by several great rocks being lodged so as to cover one of the fissures which are common along these shores. I crept into the hole, which is somewhat difficult of access, long, low, and narrow, and might well enough be a hiding-place. The child, or children, began to cry; and Betty, fearful of discovery, murdered them to save herself. Joe Caswell did not tell the latter part of the story, but Mr. Thaxter did.

Not far from the spot there is a point of rocks extending out farther into the ocean than the rest of the island. Some four or five years ago there was a young woman residing at Gosport in

the capacity of school-teacher. She was of a romantic turn, and used to go and sit on this point of rock to view the waves. One day, when the wind was high, and the surf raging against the rocks, a great wave struck her, as she sat on the edge, and seemed to deprive her of sense; another wave, or the reflex of the same one, carried her off into the sea, and she was seen no more. This happened, I think, in 1846.

Passing a rock near the centre of the island, which rose from the soil about breast-high, and appeared to have been split asunder, with an incalculably aged and moss-grown fissure, the surfaces of which, however, precisely suited each other, Mr. Hatch mentioned that there was an idea among the people, with regard to rocks thus split, that they were rent asunder at the time of the Crucifixion. Judge Upham observed that this superstition was common in all parts of the country.

Mr. Hatch said that he was professionally consulted the other day, by a man who had been digging for buried treasure at Dover Point, up the Piscataqua River; and, while he and his companions were thus engaged, the owner of the land came upon them, and compelled Hatch's client to give him a note for a sum of money. The object was to inquire whether this note was obligatory. Hatch says that there are a hundred people now resident in Portsmouth, who, at one time or another, have dug for treasure. The process is, in the first place, to find out the site of the treasure by the divining-rod. A circle is then described with the steel rod about the spot, and a man walks around within its

verge, reading the Bible, to keep off the evil spirit while his companions dig. If a word is spoken, the whole business is a failure. Once, the person who told him the story reached the lid of the chest, so that the spades plainly scraped upon it, when one of the men spoke, and the chest immediately moved sideways into the earth. Another time, when he was reading the Bible within the circle, a creature like a white horse, but immoderately large, came from a distance towards the circle, looked at him, and then began to graze about the spot. He saw the motion of the jaws, but heard no sound of champing. His companions saw the gigantic horse precisely as he did, only to them it appeared bay instead of white.

The islanders stared with great curiosity at Pierce. One pretty young woman appeared inclined to engross him entirely to herself.

There is a bowling-alley on the island, at which some of the young fishermen were rolling.

September 7th. . . I have made no exploration to-day, except a walk with the guests in the morning, but have lounged about the piazza and veranda. It has been a calm, warm, sunny day, the sea slumbering against the shores, and now and then breaking into white foam.

The surface of the island is plentifully overgrown with whortleberry and bayberry bushes. The sheep cut down the former, so that few berries are produced; the latter gives a pleasant fragrance when pressed in the hand. The island is one

great ledge of rock, four hundred acres in extent, with a little soil thrown scantily over it; but the bare rock everywhere emerging, not only in points, but still more in flat surfaces. The only trees, I think, are two that Mr. Loughton has been trying to raise in front of the hotel, the taller of which looks scarcely so much as ten feet high. It is now about sunset, and the Fanny, with the mail, is just arrived at the moorings. So still is it, that the sounds on board (as of throwing oars into a small boat) are distinctly heard, though a quarter of a mile off. She has the Stars and Stripes flying at the main-mast. There appear to be no passengers.

The only reptile on the island is a very vivid and beautiful green snake, which is exceedingly abundant. Yesterday, while catching grasshoppers for fish-bait, I nearly gripeed one in my hand; indeed, I rather think I did gripe it. The snake was as much startled as myself, and, in its fright, stood an instant on its tail, before it recovered presence of mind to glide away. These snakes are quite harmless.

September 8th.—Last evening we could hear the roaring of the beaches at Hampton and Rye, nine miles off. The surf likewise swelled against the rocky shores of the island, though there was little or no wind, and, except for the swell, the surface was smooth. The sheep bleated loudly; and all these tokens, according to Mr. Loughton, foreboded a storm to windward. This morning, nevertheless, there were no further signs of it; it is sunny and calm, or only the slightest breeze from the westward; a haze sleeping along the shore, betokening a warm day; the surface of

the sea streaked with smoothness, and gentle ruffles of wind. It has been the hottest day that I have known here, and probably one of the hottest of the season ashore; and the land is now imperceptible in the haze.

Smith's monument is about seven feet high, and probably ten or twelve in diameter at its base. It is a cairn, or mere heap of stones, thrown together as they came to hand, though with some selection of large and flat ones towards the base, and with smaller ones thrown in. At the foundation, there are large rocks, naturally imbedded in the earth. I see no reason to disbelieve that a part of this monument may have been erected by Captain Smith, although subsequent visitors may have added to it. Lughton says it is known to have stood upwards of a hundred years. It is a work of considerable labor, and would more likely have been erected by one who supposed himself the first discoverer of the island than by anybody afterwards for mere amusement. I observed in some places, towards the base, that the lichens had grown from one stone to another; and there is nothing in the appearance of the monument that controverts the supposition of its antiquity. It is an irregular circle, somewhat decreasing towards the top. Few of the stones, except at the base, are bigger than a man could easily lift,--many of them are not more than a foot across. It stands towards the southern part of the island; and all the other islands are visible from it, Smutty Nose, Star Island, and White Island,--on which is the light-house,--much of Lughton's island (the proper name of which is

Hog, though latterly called Appledore), and Duck Island, which looks like a mere reef of rocks, and about a mile farther into the ocean, easterly of Hog Island.

Laughton's Hotel, together with the house in which his son-in-law resides, which was likewise built by Laughton, and stands about fifty yards from the hotel, occupies the middle of a shallow valley, which passes through the island from east to west. Looking from the veranda, you have the ocean opening towards the east, and the bay towards Rye Beach and Portsmouth on the west. In the same storm that overthrew Minot's Light, a year or two ago, a great wave passed entirely through this valley; and Laughton describes it, when it came in from the sea, as toppling over to the height of the cupola of his hotel. It roared and whitened though, from sea to sea, twenty feet abreast, rolling along huge rocks in its passage. It passed beneath his veranda, which stands on posts, and probably filled the valley completely. Would I had been here to see!

The day has been exceedingly hot. Since dinner, the Spy has arrived from Portsmouth, with a party of half a dozen or more men and women and children, apparently from the interior of New Hampshire. I am rather sorry to receive these strangers into the quiet life that we are leading here; for we had grown quite to feel ourselves at home, and the two young ladies, Mr. Thaxter, his wife and sister, and myself, met at meal-times like one family. The young ladies gathered shells, arranged them, laughed gently, sang, and did other pretty things in a young-lady-like way. These new-

comers are people of uncouth voices and loud laughter, and behave themselves as if they were trying to turn their expedition to as much account as possible in the way of enjoyment.

John's boat, the regular passenger-boat, is now coming in, and probably brings the mail.

In the afternoon, while some of the new-comers were fishing off the rocks, west of the hotel, a shark came close in shore. Hearing their outcries, I looked out of my chamber window, and saw the dorsal fin and the fluke of his tail stuck up out of the water, as he moved to and fro. He must have been eight or ten feet long. He had probably followed the small fish into the bay, and got bewildered, and, at one time, he was almost aground.

Oscar, Mr. Loughton's son, ran down with a gun, and fired at the shark, which was then not more than ten yards from the shore. He aimed, according to his father's directions, just below the junction of the dorsal fin with the body; but the gun was loaded only with shot, and seemed to produce no effect. Oscar had another shot at him afterwards; the shark floundered a little in the water, but finally got off and disappeared, probably without very serious damage. He came so near the shore that he might have been touched with a boat-hook.

September 9th.--Mr. Thaxter rowed me this morning, in his dory, to White Island, on which is the lighthouse. There was scarcely a breath of air, and a perfectly calm sea; an intensely hot sunshine, with a little haze, so that the horizon was indistinct. Here and there sail-boats sleeping on the water, or moving almost



imperceptibly over it. The lighthouse island would be difficult of access in a rough sea, the shore being so rocky. On landing, we found the keeper peeling his harvest of onions, which he had gathered prematurely, because the insects were eating them. His little patch of garden seemed to be a strange kind of soil, as like marine mud as anything; but he had a fair crop of marrow squashes, though injured, as he said, by the last storm; and there were cabbages and a few turnips. I recollect no other garden vegetables. The grass grows pretty luxuriantly, and looked very green where there was any soil; but he kept no cow, nor even a pig nor a hen. His house stands close by the garden,--a small stone building, with peaked roof, and whitewashed. The lighthouse stands on a ledge of rock, with a gulley between, and there is a long covered way, triangular in shape, connecting his residence with it. We ascended into the lantern, which is eighty-seven feet high. It is a revolving light, with several great illuminators of copper silvered, and colored lamp-glasses. Looking downward, we had the island displayed as on a chart, with its little bays, its isthmus of shingly beach connecting two parts of the island, and overflowed at high tide; its sunken rocks about it, indicated by the swell, or slightly breaking surf. The keeper of the light-house was formerly a writing-master. He has a sneaking kind of look, and does not bear a very high character among his neighbors. Since he kept the light, he has lost two wives,--the first a young creature whom he used to leave alone

upon this desolate rock, and the gloom and terror of the situation were probably the cause of her death. The second wife, experiencing the same kind of treatment, ran away from him, and returned to her friends. He pretends to be religious, but drinks. About a year ago he attempted to row out alone from Portsmouth. There was a head wind and head tide, and he would have inevitably drifted out to sea, if Mr. Thaxter had not saved him.

While we were standing in his garden-patch, I heard a woman's voice inside the dwelling, but know not whose it was. A lighthouse nine miles from shore would be a delightful place for a new-married couple to spend their honeymoon, or their whole first year.

On our way back we landed at another island called Londoner's Rock, or some such name. It has but little soil. As we approached it, a large bird flew away. Mr. Thaxter took it to be a gannet; and, while walking over the island, an owl started up from among the rocks near us, and flew away, apparently uncertain of its course. It was a brown owl, but Mr. Thaxter says that there are beautiful white owls, which spend the winter here, and feed upon rats. These are very abundant, and live amidst the rocks,--probably having been brought hither by vessels.

The water to-day was not so transparent as sometimes, but had a slight haze diffused through it, somewhat like that of the atmosphere.

The passengers brought by the *Spy*, yesterday, still remain with

us. They consist of country traders, a country doctor, and such sorts of people, rude, shrewd, and simple, and well-behaved enough; wondering at sharks, and equally at lobsters; sitting down to table with their coats off; helping themselves out of the dish with their own forks; taking pudding on the plates off which they have eaten meat. People at just this stage of manners are more disagreeable than at any other stage. They are aware of some decencies, but not so deeply aware as to make them a matter of conscience. They may be heard talking of the financial affairs of the expedition, reckoning what money each has paid. One offers to pay another three or four cents, which the latter has overpaid. "It's of no consequence, sir," says his friend, with a tone of conscious liberality, "that's near enough." This is a most tremendously hot day.

There is a young lady staying at the hotel, afflicted with what her friends call erysipelas, but which is probably scrofula. She seems unable to walk, or sit up; but every pleasant day, about the middle of the forenoon, she is dragged out beneath the veranda, on a sofa. To-day she has been there until late in the decline of the afternoon. It is a delightful place, where the breezes stir, if any are in motion. The young girls, her sisters or cousins, and Mr. Thaxter's sister, sat round her, babbling cheerfully, and singing; and they were so merry that it did not seem as if there could be an incurably sick one in the midst of them.

The Spy came to-day, with more passengers of no particular character. She still remains off the landing, moored, with her sails

in the wind.

The mail arrived to-day, but nothing for me.

Close by the veranda, at the end of the hotel, is drawn up a large boat, of ten or twelve tons, which got injured in some gale, and probably will remain there for years to decay, and be a picturesque and characteristic object.

The *Spy* has been lying in the broad track of golden light, thrown by the sun, far down towards the horizon, over the rippling water, her sails throwing distinct, dark shadows over the brightness. She has now got under way, and set sail on a northwest course for Portsmouth; carrying off, I believe, all the passengers she brought to-day.

September 10th.—Here is another beautiful morning, with the sun dimpling in the early sunshine. Four sail-boats are in sight, motionless on the sea, with the whiteness of their sails reflected in it. The heat-haze sleeps along the shore, though not so as quite to hide it, and there is the promise of another very warm day. As yet, however, the air is cool and refreshing. Around the island, there is the little ruffle of a breeze; but where the sail-boats are, a mile or more off, the sea is perfectly calm. The crickets sing, and I hear the chirping of birds besides.

At the base of the light-house yesterday, we saw the wings and feathers of a decayed little bird, and Mr. Thaxter said they often flew against the lantern with such force as to kill themselves, and that large quantities of them might be picked up. How came these little birds out of their nests at night? Why should they

meet destruction from the radiance that proves the salvation of other beings?

Mr. Thaxter had once a man living with him who had seen "Old Bab," the ghost. He met him between the hotel and the sea, and describes him as dressed in a sort of frock, and with a very dreadful countenance.

Two or three years ago, the crew of a wrecked vessel, a brigantine, wrecked near Boon Island, landed on Hog Island of a winter night, and found shelter in the hotel. It was from the eastward. There were six or seven men, with the mate and captain. It was midnight when they got ashore. The common sailors, as soon as they were physically comfortable, seemed to be perfectly at ease. The captain walked the floor, bemoaning himself for a silver watch which he had lost; the mate, being the only married man, talked about his Eunice. They all told their dreams of the preceding night, and saw in them prognostics of the misfortune.

There is now a breeze, the blue ruffle of which seems to reach almost across to the mainland, yet with streaks of calm; and, in one place, the glassy surface of a lake of calmness, amidst the surrounding commotion.

The wind, in the early morning, was from the west, and the aspect of the sky seemed to promise a warm and sunny day. But all at once, soon after breakfast, the wind shifted round to the eastward; and great volumes of fog, almost as dense as cannon-smoke, came sweeping from the eastern ocean, through the

valley, and past the house. It soon covered the whole sea, and the whole island, beyond a verge of a few hundred yards. The chilliness was not so great as accompanies a change of wind on the mainland. We had been watching a large ship that was slowly making her way between us and the land towards Portsmouth. This was now hidden. The breeze is still very moderate; but the boat, moored near the shore, rides with a considerable motion, as if the sea were getting up.

Mr. Loughton says that the artist who adorned Trinity Church, in New York, with sculpture wanted some real wings from which to imitate the wings of cherubim. Mr. Thaxter carried him the wings of the white owl that winters here at the Shoals, together with those of some other bird; and the artist gave his cherubim the wings of an owl.

This morning there have been two boat-loads of visitors from Rye. They merely made a flying call, and took to their boats again,--a disagreeable and impertinent kind of people.

The Spy arrived before dinner, with several passengers. After dinner, came the Fanny, bringing, among other freight, a large basket of delicious pears to me, together with a note from Mr. B. B. Titcomb. He is certainly a man of excellent taste and admirable behavior. I sent a plateful of pears to the room of each guest now in the hotel, kept a dozen for myself, and gave the balance to Mr. Loughton.

The two Portsmouth young ladies returned in the Spy. I had grown accustomed to their presence, and rather liked them; one

of them being gay and rather noisy, and the other quiet and gentle. As to new-comers, I feel rather a distaste to them; and so, I find, does Mr. Lughton,--a rather singular sentiment for a hotel-keeper to entertain towards his guests. However, he treats them very hospitably when once within his doors.

The sky is overcast, and, about the time the *Spy* and the *Fanny* sailed, there were a few drops of rain. The wind, at that time, was strong enough to raise white-caps to the eastward of the island, and there was good hope of a storm. Now, however, the wind has subsided, and the weather-seers know not what to forebode.

September 11th.--The wind shifted and veered about, towards the close of yesterday, and later it was almost calm, after blowing gently from the northwest,--notwithstanding which it rained. There being a mistiness in the air, we could see the gleam of the light-house upon the mist above it, although the light-house itself was hidden by the highest point of this island, or by our being in a valley. As we sat under the piazza in the evening, we saw the light from on board some vessel move slowly through the distant obscurity,--so slowly that we were only sensible of its progress by forgetting it and looking again. The splash and murmur of the waves around the island were soothingly audible. It was not unpleasantly cold, and Mr. Lughton, Mr. Thaxter, and myself sat under the piazza till long after dark; the former at a little distance, occasionally smoking his pipe, and Mr. Thaxter and I talking about poets and the stage. The latter is an odd subject to be discussed in this stern and wild scene, which has precisely the

same characteristics now as two hundred years ago. The mosquitoes were very abundant last night, and they are certainly hardier race than their inland brethren.

This morning there is a sullen sky, with scarcely any breeze. The clouds throw shadows of varied darkness upon the sea. I know not which way the wind is; but the aspect of things seems to portend a calm drizzle as much as anything else.

About eleven o'clock, Mr. Thaxter took me over to Smutty Nose in his dory. A sloop from the eastward, laden with laths, bark, and other lumber, and a few barrels of mackerel, filled yesterday, and was left by her skipper and crew. All the morning we have seen boats picking up her deck-load, which was scattered over the sea, and along the shores of the islands. The skipper and his three men got into Smutty Nose in the boat; and the sloop was afterwards boarded by the Smutty Noses and brought into that island. We saw her lying at the pier,--a black, ugly, rotten old thing, with the water half-way over her decks. The wonder was, how she swam so long. The skipper, a man of about thirty-five or forty, in a blue pilot-cloth overcoat, and a rusty, high-crowned hat jammed down over his brow, looked very forlorn; while the islanders were grouped about, indolently enjoying the matter.

I walked with Mr. Thaxter over the island, and saw first the graves of the Spaniards. They were wrecked on this island a hundred years ago, and lie buried in a range about thirty feet in length, to the number of sixteen, with rough, moss-grown pieces of granite on each side of this common grave. Near this spot, yet

somewhat removed, so as not to be confounded with it, are other individual graves, chiefly of the Haley family, who were once possessors of the island. These have slate gravestones. There is also, within a small enclosure of rough pine boards, a white marble gravestone, in memory of a young man named Bekker, son of the person who now keeps the hotel on Smutty Nose. He was buried, Mr. Thaxter says, notwithstanding his marble monument, in a rude pine box, which he himself helped to make.

We walked to the farthest point of the island, and I have never seen a more dismal place than it was on this sunless and east-windy day, being the farthest point out into the melancholy sea which was in no very agreeable mood, and roared sullenly against the wilderness of rocks. One mass of rock, more than twelve feet square, was thrown up out of the sea in a storm, not many years since, and now lies athwart-wise, never to be moved unless another omnipotent wave shall give it another toss. On shore, such a rock would be a landmark for centuries. It is inconceivable how a sufficient mass of water could be brought to bear on this ponderous mass; but, not improbably, all the fragments piled upon one another round these islands have thus been flung to and fro at one time or another.

There is considerable land that would serve tolerably for pasture on Smutty Nose, and here and there a little enclosure of richer grass, built round with a strong stone-wall. The same kind of enclosure is prevalent on Star Island,-each small proprietor

fencing off his little bit of tillage or grass. Wild-flowers are abundant and various on these islands; the bayberry-bush is plentiful on Smutty Nose, and makes the hand that crushes it fragrant.

The hotel is kept by a Prussian, an old soldier, who fought at the Battle of Waterloo. We saw him in the barn,--a gray, heavy, round-skulled old fellow, troubled with deafness. The skipper of the wrecked sloop had, apparently, just been taking a drop of comfort, but still seemed downcast. He took passage in a fishing-vessel, the *Wave*, of Kittery, for Portsmouth; and I know not why, but there was something that made me smile in his grim and gloomy look, his rusty, jammed hat, his rough and grisly beard, and in his mode of chewing tobacco, with much action of the jaws, getting out the juice as largely as possible, as men always do when disturbed in mind. I looked at him earnestly, and was conscious of something that marked him out from among the careless islanders around him. Being as much discomposed as it was possible for him to be, his feelings individualized the man and magnetized the observer. When he got aboard the fishing-vessel, he seemed not entirely at his ease, being accustomed to command and work amongst his own little crew, and now having nothing to do. Nevertheless, unconsciously perhaps, he lent a hand to whatever was going on, and yet had a kind of strangeness about him. As the *Wave* set sail, we were just starting in our dory, and a young fellow, an acquaintance of Mr. Thaxter, proposed to take us in tow; so we were dragged along at her stern very rapidly,

and with a whitening wake, until we came off Hog Island. Then the dory was cast loose, and Mr. Thaxter rowed ashore against a head sea.

The day is still overcast, and the wind is from the eastward; but it does not increase, and the sun appears occasionally on the point of shining out. A boat--the Fanny, I suppose, from Portsmouth--has just come to her moorings in front of the hotel. A sail-boat has put off from her, with a passenger in the stern. Pray God she bring me a letter with good news from home; for I begin to feel as if I had been long enough away.

There is a bowling-alley on Smutty Nose, at which some of the Star-Islanders were playing, when we were there. I saw only two dwelling-houses besides the hotel. Connected with Smutty Nose, by a stone-wall there is another little bit of island, called Malaga. Both are the property of Mr. Laighton.

Mr. Laighton says that the Spanish wreck occurred forty-seven years ago, instead of a hundred. Some of the dead bodies were found on Malaga, others on various parts of the next island. One or two had crept to a stone-wall that traverses Smutty Nose, but were unable to get over it. One was found among the bushes the next summer. Mr. Haley had been buried at his own expense.

The skipper of the wrecked sloop, yesterday, was unwilling to go to Portsmouth until he was shaved,--his beard being of several days' growth. It seems to be the impulse of people under misfortune to put on their best clothes, and attend to the decencies of life.

The Fanny brought a passenger,—a thin, stiff, black-haired young man, who enters his name as Mr. Tufts, from Charlestown. He, and a country trader, his wife, sister, and two children (all of whom have been here several days), are now the only guests besides myself.

September 12th.—The night set in sullen and gloomy, and morning has dawned in pretty much the same way. The wind, however, seems rising somewhat, and grumbles past the angle of the house. Perhaps we shall see a storm yet from the eastward; and, having the whole sweep of the broad Atlantic between here and Ireland, I do not see why it should not be fully equal to a storm at sea.

It has been raining more or less all the forenoon, and now, at twelve o'clock, blows, as Mr. Loughton says, "half a gale" from the southeast. Through the opening of our shallow valley, towards the east, there is the prospect of a tumbling sea, with hundreds of white-caps chasing one another over it. In front of the hotel, being to leeward, the water near the shore is but slightly ruffled; but farther the sea is agitated, and the surf breaks over Square Rock. All around the horizon, landward as well as seaward, the view is shut in by a mist. Sometimes I have a dim sense of the continent beyond, but no more distinct than the thought of the other world to the unenlightened soul. The sheep bleat in their desolate pasture. The wind shakes the house. A loon, seeking, I suppose, some quieter resting-place than on the troubled waves, was seen swimming just now in the cove not more than a

hundred yards from the hotel. Judging by the pother which this "half a gale" makes with the sea, it must have been a terrific time, indeed, when that great wave rushed and roared across the islands.

Since dinner, I have been to the eastern shore to look at the sea. It is a wild spectacle, but still, I suppose, lacks an infinite deal of being a storm. Outside of this island there is a long and low one (or two in a line), looking more like a reef of rocks than an island, and at the distance of a mile or more. There the surf and spray break gallantly, white-sheeted forms rising up all at once, and hovering a moment in the air. Spots which, in calm times, are not discernible from the rest of the ocean, now are converted into white, foamy breakers. The swell of the waves against our shore makes a snowy depth, tinged with green, for many feet back from the shore. The longer waves swell, overtop, and rush upon the rocks; and, when they return, the waters pour back in a cascade. Against the outer points of Smutty Nose and Star Island, there is a higher surf than here; because, the wind being from the southeast, these islands receive it first, and form a partial barrier in respect to this. While I looked, there was moisture in the air, and occasional spats of rain. The uneven places in the rocks were full of the fallen rain.

It is quite impossible to give an idea of these rocky shores, how confusedly they are tossed together, lying in all directions; what solid ledges, what great fragments thrown out from the rest. Often the rocks are broken, square and angular, so as to form a

kind of staircase; though, for the most part, such as would require a giant stride to ascend them.

Sometimes a black trap-rock runs through the bed of granite; sometimes the sea has eaten this away, leaving a long, irregular fissure. In some places, owing to the same cause perhaps, there is a great hollow place excavated into the ledge, and forming a harbor, into which the sea flows; and, while there is foam and fury at the entrance, it is comparatively calm within. Some parts of the crag are as much as fifty feet of perpendicular height, down which you look over a bare and smooth descent, at the base of which is a shaggy margin of seaweed. But it is vain to try to express this confusion. As much as anything else, it seems as if some of the massive materials of the world remained superfluous, after the Creator had finished, and were carelessly thrown down here, where the millionth part of them emerge from the sea, and in the course of thousands of years have become partially bestrewn with a little soil.

The wind has changed to southwest, and blows pretty freshly. The sun shone before it set; and the mist, which all day has overhung the land, now takes the aspect of a cloud,--drawing a thin veil between us and the shore, and rising above it. In our own atmosphere there is no fog nor mist.

September 13th.--I spent last evening, as well as part of the evening before, at Mr. Thaxter's. It is certainly a romantic incident to find such a young man on this lonely island; his marriage with the pretty Miranda is true romance. In our talk we

have glanced over many matters, and, among the rest, that of the stage, to prepare himself for which was his first motive in coming hither. He appears quite to have given up any dreams of that kind now. What he will do on returning to the world, as his purpose is, I cannot imagine; but, no doubt, though all their remaining life, both he and she will look back to this rocky ledge, with its handful of soil, as to a Paradise.

Last evening we (Mr., Mrs., and Miss Thaxter) sat and talked of ghosts and kindred subjects; and they told me of the appearance of a little old woman in a striped gown, that had come into that house a few months ago. She was seen by nobody but an Irish nurse, who spoke to her, but received no answer. The little woman drew her chair up towards the fire, and stretched out her feet to warm them. By and by the nurse, who suspected nothing of her ghostly character, went to get a pail of water; and, when she came back, the little woman was not there. It being known precisely how many and what people were on the island, and that no such little woman was among them, the fact of her being a ghost is incontestable. I taught them how to discover the hidden sentiments of letters by suspending a gold ring over them. Ordinarily, since I have been here, we have spent the evening under the piazza, where Mr. Loughton sits to take the air. He seems to avoid the within-doors whenever he can. So there he sits in the sea-breezes, when inland people are probably drawing their chairs to the fire-side; and there I sit with him, not keeping up a continual flow of talk, but each speaking as any wisdom happens

to come into his mind.

The wind, this morning, is from the northwestward, rather brisk, but not very strong. There is a scattering of clouds about the sky; but the atmosphere is singularly clear, and we can see several hills of the interior, the cloud-like White Mountains, and, along the shore, the long white beaches and the dotted dwellings, with great distinctness. Many small vessels spread their wings, and go seaward.

I have been rambling over the southern part of the island, and looking at the traces of habitations there. There are several enclosures,--the largest, perhaps, thirty yards square,--surrounded with a rough stone-wall of very mossy antiquity, built originally broad and strong, two or three large stones in width, and piled up breast-high or more, and taking advantage of the extending ledge to make it higher. Within this enclosure there is almost a clear space of soil, which was formerly, no doubt, cultivated as a garden, but is now close cropt by the sheep and cattle, except where it produces thistles, or the poisonous weed called mercury, which seems to love these old walls, and to rot itself in or near them. These walls are truly venerable, gray, and mossy; and you see at once that the hands that piled the stones must have been long ago turned to dust. Close by the enclosure is the hollow of an old cellar, with rocks tumbled into it, but the layers of stone at the side still to be traced, and bricks, broken or with rounded edges, scattered about, and perhaps pieces of lime; and weeds and grass growing about the whole. Several such sites of former

human homes may be seen there, none of which can possibly be later than the Revolution, and probably they are as old as the settlement of the island. The site has Smutty Nose and Star opposite, with a road (that is, a water-road) between, varying from half a mile to a mile. Duck Island is also seen on the left; and, on the right, the shore of the mainland. Behind, the rising ground intercepts the view. Smith's monument is visible. I do not see where the inhabitants could have kept their boats, unless in the chasms worn by the sea into the rocks.

One of these chasms has a spring of fresh water in the gravelly base, down to which the sea has worn out. The chasm has perpendicular, though irregular, sides, which the waves have chiselled out very square. Its width varies from ten to twenty feet, widest towards the sea; and on the shelves, up and down the sides, some soil has been here and there accumulated, on which grow grass and wild-flowers, such as goldenrod, now in bloom, and raspberry-bushes, the fruit of which I found ripe, the whole making large parts of the sides of the chasm green, its verdure overhanging the strip of sea that dashes and foams into the hollow. Sea-weed, besides what grows upon and shags the submerged rocks, is tossed into the harbor, together with stray pieces of wood, chips, barrel-staves, or (as to-day) an entire barrel, or whatever else the sea happens to have on hand. The water rakes to and fro over the pebbles at the bottom of the chasm, drawing back, and leaving much of it bare, then rushing up, with more or less of foam and fury, according to the force and

direction of the wind; though, owing to the protection of the adjacent islands, it can never have a gale blowing right into its mouth. The spring is situated so far down the chasm, that, at half or two thirds tide, it is covered by the sea. Twenty minutes after the retiring of the tide suffices to restore to it its wonted freshness.

In another chasm, very much like the one here described, I saw a niche in the rock, about tall enough for a person of moderate stature to stand upright. It had a triangular floor and a top, and was just the place to hold the rudest statue that ever a savage made.

Many of the ledges on the island have yellow moss or lichens spread on them in large patches. The moss of those stone walls does really look very old.

"Old Bab," the ghost, has a ring round his neck, and is supposed either to have been hung or to have had his throat cut, but he steadfastly declines telling the mode of his death. There is a luminous appearance about him as he walks, and his face is pale and very dreadful.

The Fanny arrived this forenoon, and sailed again before dinner. She brought, as passenger, a Mr. Balch, brother to the country trader who has been spending a few days here. On her return, she has swept the islands of all the non-residents except myself. The wind being ahead, and pretty strong, she will have to beat up, and the voyage will be anything but agreeable. The spray flew before her bows, and doubtless gave the passengers all a

thorough wetting within the first half-hour.

The view of Star Island or Gosport from the north is picturesque,—the village, or group of houses, being gathered pretty closely together in the centre of the island, with some green about them; and above all the other edifices, wholly displayed, stands the little stone church, with its tower and belfry. On the right is White Island, with the light-house; to the right of that, and a little to the northward, Londoner's Rock, where, perhaps, of old, some London ship was wrecked. To the left of Star Island, and nearer Hog, or Appledore, is Smutty Nose. Pour the blue sea about these islets, and let the surf whiten and steal up from their points, and from the reefs about them (which latter whiten for an instant, and then are lost in the whelming and eddying depths), the northwest-wind the while raising thousands of white-caps, and the evening sun shining solemnly over the expanse,—and it is a stern and lovely scene.

The valleys that intersect, or partially intersect, the island are a remarkable feature. They appear to be of the same formation as the fissures in the rocks, but, as they extend farther from the sea, they accumulate a little soil along the irregular sides, and so become green and shagged with bushes, though with the rock everywhere thrusting itself through. The old people of the isles say that their fathers could remember when the sea, at high tide, flowed quite through the valley in which the hotel stands, and that boats used to pass. Afterwards it was a standing pond; then a morass, with cat-tail flags growing in it. It has filled up, so far as it

is filled, by the soil being washed down from the higher ground on each side. The storms, meanwhile, have tossed up the shingle and paving-stones at each end of the valley, so as to form a barrier against the passage of any but such mighty waves as that which thundered through a year or two ago.

The old inhabitants lived in the centre or towards the south of the island, and avoided the north and east because the latter were so much bleaker in winter. They could moor their boats in the road, between Smutty Nose and Hog, but could not draw them up. Mr. Lughton found traces of old dwellings in the vicinity of the hotel, and it is supposed that the principal part of the population was on this island. I spent the evening at Mr. Thaxter's, and we drank a glass of his 1820 Scheidam. The northwest-wind was high at ten o'clock, when I came home, the tide full, and the murmur of the waves broad and deep.

September 14th.--Another of the brightest of sunny mornings. The wind is not nearly so high as last night, but it is apparently still from the north-west, and serves to make the sea look very blue and cold. The atmosphere is so transparent that objects seem perfectly distinct along the mainland. To-day I must be in Portsmouth; to-morrow, at home. A brisk west or northwest-wind, making the sea so blue, gives a very distinct outline in its junction with the sky.

September 16th.--On Tuesday, the 14th, there was no opportunity to get to the mainland. Yesterday morning opened with a southeast rain, which continued all day. The Fanny arrived

in the forenoon, with some coal for Mr. Lughton, and sailed again before dinner, taking two of the maids of the house; but as it rained pouring, and as I could not, at any rate, have got home to-night, there would have been no sense in my going. It began to clear up in the decline of the day; the sun shot forth some golden arrows a little before his setting and the sky was perfectly clear when I went to bed, after spending the evening at Mr. Thaxter's. This morning is clear and bright; but the wind is northwest, making the sea look blue and cold, with little breaks of white foam. It is unfavorable for a trip to the mainland; but doubtless I shall find an opportunity of getting ashore before night.

The highest part of Appledore is about eighty feet above the sea. Mr. Lughton has seen whales off the island,--both on the eastern side and between it and the mainland; once a great crowd of them, as many as fifty. They were drawn in by pursuing their food,--a small fish called herring-bait, which came ashore in such abundance that Mr. Lughton dipped up basketfuls of them. No attempt was made to take the whales.

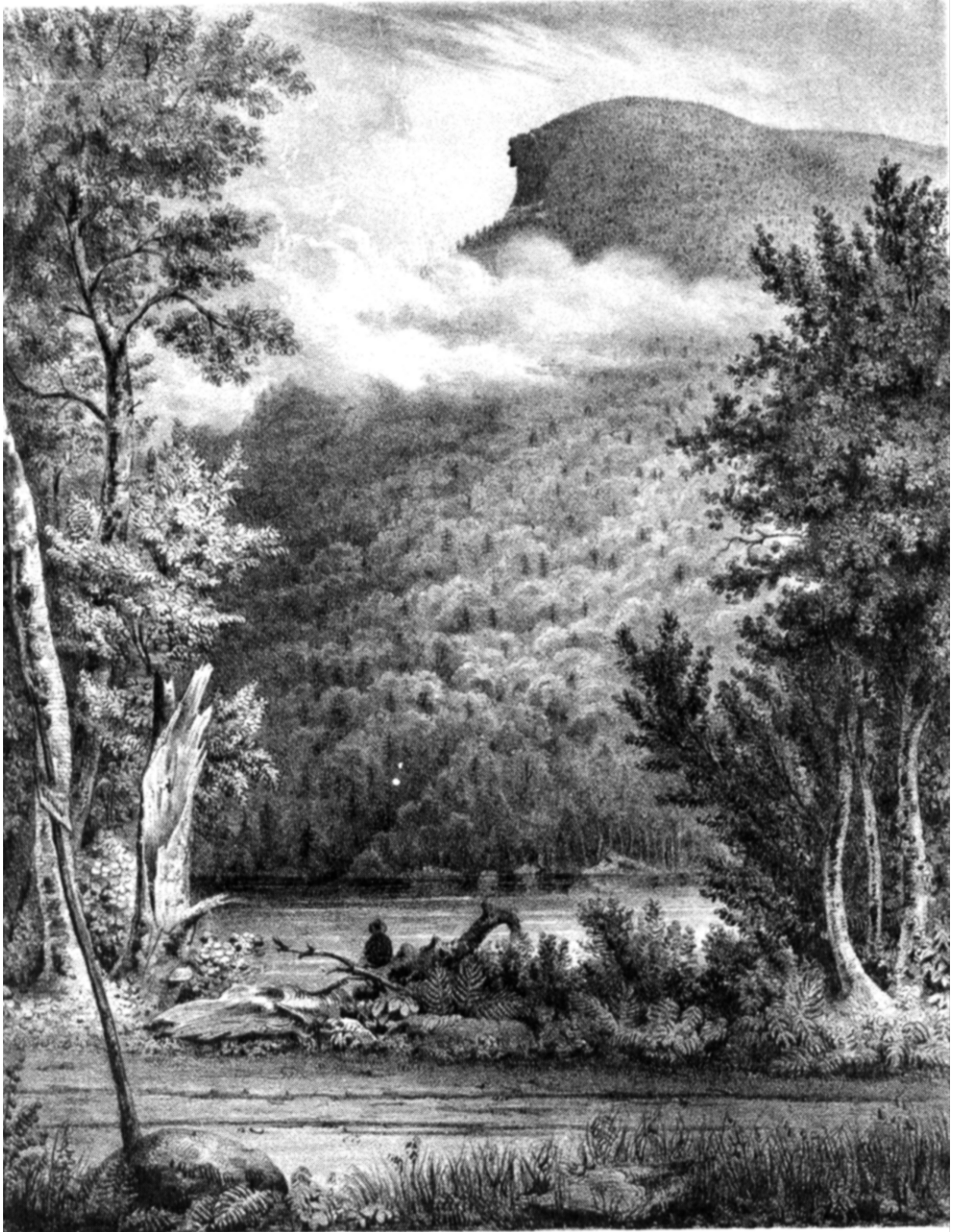
There are vague traditions of trees on these islands. One of them, Cedar Island, is said to have been named from the trees that grew on it. The matter appears improbable, though, Mr. Thaxter says, large quantities of soil are annually washed into the sea; so that the islands may have been better clad with earth and its productions than now.

Mrs. Thaxter tells me that there are several burial-places on this island; but nobody has been buried here since the Revolution.

Her own marriage was the first one since that epoch, and her little Karl, now three months old, the first-born child in all those eighty years.

[Then follow Extracts from the Church Records of Gosport.]

This book of the church records of Gosport is a small folio, well bound in dark calf, and about an inch thick; the paper very stout, with a water-mark of an armed man in a sitting posture, holding a spear . . . over a lion, who brandishes a sword; on alternate pages the Crown, and beneath it the letters G. R. The motto of the former device Pro Patria. The book is written in a very legible hand, probably by the Rev. Mr. Tucke. The ink is not much faded.



The Great Stone Face

ONE AFTERNOON, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

And what was the Great Stone Face?

Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that it contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log huts, with the black forest all around them, on the steep and difficult hill-sides. Others had their homes in comfortable farm-houses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton factories. The inhabitants of this valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life. But all of them, grown people and children, had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbors.

The Great Stone Face, then, was a work of Nature in her mood

of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of the human countenance. It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan, had sculptured his own likeness on the precipice. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in height; the nose, with its long bridge; and the vast lips, which, if they could have spoken, would have rolled their thunder accents from one end of the valley to the other. True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen; and the further he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive.

It was a happy lot for children to grow up to manhood or womanhood with the Great Stone Face before their eyes, for all the features were noble, and the expression was at once grand and sweet, as if it were the glow of a vast, warm heart, that embraced all mankind in its affections, and had room for more. It was an education only to look at it. According to the belief of many people, the valley owed much of its fertility to this benign aspect that was continually beaming over it, illuminating the

clouds, and infusing its tenderness into the sunshine.

As we began with saying, a mother and her little boy sat at their cottage door, gazing at the Great Stone Face, and talking about it. The child's name was Ernest.

"Mother, said he, while the Titanic visage smiled on him, "I wish that it could speak, for it looks so very kindly that its voice must needs be pleasant. If I were to see a man with such a face, I should love him dearly."

"If an old prophecy should come to pass," answered his mother, "we may see a man, some time or other, with exactly such a face as that."

"What prophecy do you mean, dear mother?" eagerly inquired Ernest. "Pray tell me all about it!"

So his mother told him a story that her own mother had told to her, when she herself was younger than little Ernest; a story, not of things that were past, but of what was yet to come; a story, nevertheless, so very old, that even the Indians, who formerly inhabited this valley, had heard it from their forefathers, to whom, as they affirmed, it had been murmured by the mountain streams, and whispered by the wind among the tree-tops. The purport was, that, at some future day, a child should be born hereabouts, who was destined to become the greatest and noblest personage of his time, and whose countenance, in manhood, should bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. Not a few old-fashioned people, and young ones likewise, in the ardor of their hopes, still cherished an enduring faith in this old

prophecy. But others, who had seen more of the world, had watched and waited till they were weary, and had beheld no man with such a face, nor any man that proved to be much greater or nobler than his neighbors, concluded it to be nothing but an idle tale. At all events, the great man of the prophecy had not yet appeared.

“O, mother, dear mother!” cried Ernest, clapping his hands above his head, I do hope that I shall live to see him!”

His mother was an affectionate and thoughtful woman, and felt that it was wisest not to discourage the generous hopes of her little boy. So she only said to him, “Perhaps you may.”

And Ernest never forgot the story that his mother told him. It was always in his mind, whenever he looked upon the Great Stone Face. He spent his childhood in the log-cottage where he was born, and was dutiful to his mother, and helpful to her in many things, assisting her much with his little hands, and more with his loving heart. In this manner, from a happy yet often pensive child, he grew up to be a mild, quiet, unobtrusive boy, and sun-browned with labor in the fields, but with more intelligence brightening his aspect than is seen in many lads who have been taught at famous schools. Yet Ernest had had no teacher, save only that the Great Stone Face became one to him. When the toil of the day was over, he would gaze at it for hours, until he began to imagine that those vast features recognized him, and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement, responsive to his own look of veneration. We must not take upon us to

affirm that this was a mistake, although the Face may have looked no more kindly at Ernest than at all the world besides. But the secret was, that the boy's tender and confiding simplicity discerned what other people could not see; and thus the love, which was meant for all, became his peculiar portion.

About this time, there went a rumor throughout the valley, that the great man, foretold from ages long ago, who was to bear a resemblance to the Great Stone Face, had appeared at last. It seems that, many years before, a young man had migrated from the valley and settled at a distant seaport, where, after getting together a little money, he had set up as a shopkeeper. His name—but I could never learn whether it was his real one, or a nickname that had grown out of his habits and success in life—was Gathergold. Being shrewd and active, and endowed by Providence with that inscrutable faculty which develops itself in what the world calls luck, he became an exceedingly rich merchant, and owner of a whole fleet of bulky-bottomed ships. All the countries of the globe appeared to join hands for the mere purpose of adding heap after heap to the mountainous accumulation of this one man's wealth. The cold regions of the north, almost within the gloom and shadow of the Arctic Circle, sent him their tribute in the shape of furs; hot Africa sifted for him the golden sands of her rivers, and gathered up the ivory tusks of her great elephants out of the forests; the East came bringing him the rich shawls, and spices, and teas, and the effulgence of diamonds, and the gleaming purity of large pearls.

The ocean, not to be behindhand with the earth, yielded up her mighty whales, that Mr. Gathergold might sell their oil, and make a profit on it. Be the original commodity what it might, it was gold within his grasp. It might be said of him, as of Midas in the fable, that whatever he touched with his finger immediately glistened, and grew yellow, and was changed at once into sterling metal, or, which suited him still better, into piles of coin. And, when Mr. Gathergold had become so very rich that it would have taken him a hundred years only to count his wealth, he bethought himself of his native valley, and resolved to go back thither, and end his days where he was born. With this purpose in view, he sent a skilful architect to build him such a palace as should be fit for a man of his vast wealth to live in.

As I have said above, it had already been rumored in the valley that Mr. Gathergold had turned out to be the prophetic personage so long and vainly looked for, and that his visage was the perfect and undeniable similitude of the Great Stone Face. People were the more ready to believe that this must needs be the fact, when they beheld the splendid edifice that rose, as if by enchantment, on the site of his father's old weather-beaten farmhouse. The exterior was of marble, so dazzlingly white that it seemed as though the whole structure might melt away in the sunshine, like those humbler ones which Mr. Gathergold, in his young play-days, before his fingers were gifted with the touch of transmutation, had been accustomed to build of snow. It had a richly ornamented portico, supported by tall pillars, beneath

which was a lofty door, studded with silver knobs, and made of a kind of variegated wood that had been brought from beyond the sea. The windows, from the floor to the ceiling of each stately apartment, were composed, respectively, of but one enormous pane of glass, so transparently pure that it was said to be a finer medium than even the vacant atmosphere. Hardly anybody had been permitted to see the interior of this palace; but it was reported, and with good semblance of truth, to be far more gorgeous than the outside, insomuch that whatever was iron or brass in other houses, was silver or gold in this; and Mr. Gathergold's bed-chamber, especially, made such a glittering appearance that no ordinary man would have been able to close his eyes there. But, on the other hand, Mr. Gathergold was now so inured to wealth, that perhaps he could not have closed his eyes unless where the gleam of it was certain to find its way beneath his eyelids.

In due time, the mansion was finished; next came the upholsterers, with magnificent furniture; then, a whole troop of black and white servants, the harbingers of Mr. Gathergold, who, in his own majestic person was expected to arrive at sunset. Our friend Ernest, meanwhile, had been deeply stirred by the idea that the great man, the noble man, the man of prophecy, after so many ages of delay, was at length to be made manifest to his native valley. He knew, boy as he was, that there were a thousand ways in which Mr. Gathergold, with his vast wealth, might transform himself into an angel of beneficence, and assume a

control over human affairs as wide and benignant as the smile of the Great Stone Face. Full of faith and hope, Ernest doubted not that what the people said was true, and that now he was to behold the living likeness of those wondrous features on the mountain-side. While the boy was still gazing up the valley, and fancying, as he always did, that the Great Stone Face returned his gaze and looked kindly at him, the rumbling of wheels was heard, approaching swiftly along the winding road.

“Here he comes!” cried a group of people who were assembled to witness the arrival. “Here comes the great Mr. Gathergold!”

A carriage, drawn by four horses, dashed round the turn of the road. Within it, thrust partly out of the window, appeared the physiognomy of a little old man, with a skin as yellow as if his own Midas-hand had transmuted it. He had a low forehead, small, sharp eyes, puckered about with innumerable wrinkles, and very thin lips, which he made still thinner by pressing them forcibly together.

“The very image of the Great Stone Face!” shouted the people. “Sure enough, the old prophecy is true; and here we have the great man come, at last!”

And, what greatly perplexed Ernest, they seemed actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. By the roadside there chanced to be an old beggar-woman and two little beggar-children, stragglers from some far-off region, who, as the carriage rolled onward, held out their hands and lifted up their doleful voices, most piteously beseeching charity. A yellow claw-

the very same that had clawed together so much wealth—poked itself out of the coach-window, and dropt some copper coins upon the ground; so that, though the great man's name seems to have been Gathergold, he might just as suitably have been nicknamed Scattercopper. Still, nevertheless, with an earnest shout, and evidently with as much good faith as ever, the people bellowed, "He is the very image of the Great Stone Face!"

But Ernest turned sadly from the wrinkled shrewdness of that sordid visage, and gazed up the valley, where, amid a gathering mist, gilded by the last sunbeams, he could still distinguish those glorious features which had impressed themselves into his soul. Their aspect cheered him. What did the benign lips seem to say?

"He will come! Fear not, Ernest; the man will come!"

The years went on, and Ernest ceased to be a boy. He had grown to be a young man now. He attracted little notice from the other inhabitants of the valley; for they saw nothing remarkable in his way of life, save that, when the labor of the day was over, he still loved to go apart and gaze and meditate upon the Great Stone Face. According to their idea of the matter, it was a folly, indeed, but pardonable, inasmuch as Ernest was industrious, kind, and neighborly, and neglected no duty for the sake of indulging this idle habit. They knew not that the Great Stone Face had become a teacher to him, and that the sentiment which was expressed in it would enlarge the young man's heart, and fill it with wider and deeper sympathies than other hearts. They knew not that thence would come a better wisdom than could be

learned from books, and a better life than could be moulded on the defaced example of other human lives. Neither did Ernest know that the thoughts and affections which came to him so naturally, in the fields and at the fireside, and wherever he communed with himself, were of a higher tone than those which all men shared with him. A simple soul—simple as when his mother first taught him the old prophecy—he beheld the marvellous features beaming adown the valley, and still wondered that their human counterpart was so long in making his appearance.

By this time poor Mr. Gathergold was dead and buried; and the oddest part of the matter was, that his wealth, which was the body and spirit of his existence, had disappeared before his death, leaving nothing of him but a living skeleton, covered over with a wrinkled, yellow skin. Since the melting away of his gold, it had been very generally conceded that there was no such striking resemblance, after all, betwixt the ignoble features of the ruined merchant and that majestic face upon the mountain-side. So the people ceased to honor him during his lifetime, and quietly consigned him to forgetfulness after his decease. Once in a while, it is true, his memory was brought up in connection with the magnificent palace which he had built, and which had long ago been turned into a hotel for the accommodation of strangers, multitudes of whom came, every summer, to visit that famous natural curiosity, the Great Stone Face. Thus, Mr. Gathergold being discredited and thrown into the shade, the man of

prophecy was yet to come.

It so happened that a native-born son of the valley, many years before, had enlisted as a soldier, and, after a great deal of hard fighting, had now become an illustrious commander. Whatever he may be called in history, he was known in camps and on the battle-field under the nickname of Old Blood-and-Thunder. This war-worn veteran, being now infirm with age and wounds, and weary of the turmoil of a military life, and of the roll of the drum and the clangor of the trumpet, that had so long been ringing in his ears, had lately signified a purpose of returning to his native valley, hoping to find repose where he remembered to have left it. The inhabitants, his old neighbors and their grown-up children, were resolved to welcome the renowned warrior with a salute of cannon and a public dinner; and all the more enthusiastically, it being affirmed that now, at last, the likeness of the Great Stone Face had actually appeared. An aid-de-camp of Old Blood-and-Thunder, travelling through the valley, was said to have been struck with the resemblance. Moreover, the schoolmates and early acquaintances of the general were ready to testify, on oath, that, to the best of their recollection, the aforesaid general had been exceedingly like the majestic image, even when a boy, only that the idea had never occurred to them at that period. Great, therefore, was the excitement throughout the valley; and many people, who had never once thought of glancing at the Great Stone Face for years before, now spent their time in gazing at it, for the sake of knowing exactly how General Blood-and-Thunder

looked.

On the day of the great festival, Ernest, with all the other people of the valley, left their work, and proceeded to the spot where the sylvan banquet was prepared. As he approached, the loud voice of the Reverend Doctor Battleblast was heard, beseeching a blessing on the good things set before them, and on the distinguished friend of peace in whose honor they were assembled. The tables were arranged in a cleared space of the woods, shut in by the surrounding trees, except where a vista opened eastward, and afforded a distant view of the Great Stone Face. Over the general's chair, which was a relic from the home of Washington, there was an arch of verdant boughs, with the laurel profusely intermixed, and surmounted by his country's banner, beneath which he had won his victories. Our friend Ernest raised himself on his tip-toes, in hopes to get a glimpse of the celebrated guest; but there was a mighty crowd about the tables anxious to hear the toasts and speeches, and to catch any word that might fall from the general in reply; and a volunteer company, doing duty as a guard, pricked ruthlessly with their bayonets at any particularly quiet person among the throng. So Ernest, being of an unobtrusive character, was thrust quite into the background, where he could see no more of Old Blood-and-Thunder's physiognomy than if it had been still blazing on the battle-field. To console himself, he turned towards the Great Stone Face, which, like a faithful and long-remembered friend, looked back and smiled upon him through the vista of the forest.

Meantime, however, he could over-hear the remarks of various individuals, who were comparing the features of the hero with the face on the distant mountain-side.

“Tis the same face, to a hair!” cried one man, cutting a caper for joy.

“Wonderfully like, that’s a fact!” responded another.

“Like! why, I call it Old Blood-and-Thunder himself, in a monstrous looking-glass!” cried a third. “And why not! He’s the greatest man of this or any other age, beyond a doubt.”

And then all three of the speakers gave a great shout, which communicated electricity to the crowd, and called forth a roar from a thousand voices, that went reverberating for miles among the mountains, until you might have supposed that the Great Stone Face had poured its thunder-breath into the cry. All these comments, and this vast enthusiasm, served the more to interest our friend; nor did he think of questioning that now, at length, the mountain-visage had found its human counterpart. It is true, Ernest had imagined that this long-looked-for personage would appear in the character of a man of peace, uttering wisdom, and doing good, and making people happy. But, taking an habitual breadth of view, with all his simplicity, he contended that Providence should choose its own method of blessing mankind, and could conceive that this great end might be effected even by a warrior and a bloody sword, should inscrutable wisdom see fit to order matters so.

“The general! the general!” was now the cry. “Hush! silence!

Old Blood-and-Thunder's going to make a speech."

Even so; for, the cloth being removed, the general's health had been drunk amid shouts of applause, and he now stood upon his feet to thank the company. Ernest saw him. There he was, over the shoulders of the crowd, from the two glittering epaulets and embroidered collar upward, beneath the arch of green boughs with inter-twined laurell and the banner drooping as if to shade his brow! And there, too, visible in the same glance, through the vista of the forest, appeared the Great Stone Face! And was there, indeed, such a resemblance as the crowd had testified? Alas, Ernest could not recognize it! He beheld a war-worn and weather-beaten countenance, full of energy, and expressive of an iron will; but the gentle wisdom, the deep, broad, tender sympathies, were altogether wanting in Old Blood-and-Thunder's visage; and even if the Great Stone Face had assumed his look of stern command, the milder traits would still have tempered it.

"This is not the man of prophecy," sighed Ernest to himself, as he made his way out of the throng. "And must the world wait longer yet?"

The mists had congregated about the distant mountain-side, and there were seen the grand and awful features of the Great Stone Face, awful but benignant, as if a mighty angel were sitting among the hills, and enrobing himself in a cloud-vesture of gold and purple. As he looked, Ernest could hardly believe but that a smile beamed over the whole visage, with a radiance still brightening, although without motion of the lips. It was probably

the effect of the western sunshine, melting through the thinly diffused vapors that had swept between him and the object that he gazed at. But—as it always did—the aspect of his marvellous friend made Ernest as hopeful as if he had never hoped in vain.

“Fear not, Ernest,” said his heart, even as if the Great Face were whispering him, “fear not, Ernest; he will come.”

More years sped swiftly and tranquilly away. Ernest still dwelt in his native valley, and was now a man of middle age. By imperceptible degrees, he had become known among the people. Now, as heretofore, he labored for his bread, and was the same simple-hearted man that he had always been. But he had thought and felt so much, he had given so many of the best hours of his life to unworldly hopes for some great good to mankind, that it seemed as though he had been talking with the angels, and had imbibed a portion of their wisdom unawares. It was visible in the calm and well-considered beneficence of his daily life, the quiet stream of which had made a wide green margin all along its course. Not a day passed by, that the world was not the better because this man, humble as he was, had lived. He never stepped aside from his own path, yet would always reach a blessing to his neighbor. Almost involuntarily, too, he had become a preacher. The pure and high simplicity of his thought, which, as one of its manifestations, took shape in the good deeds that dropped silently from his hand, flowed also forth in speech. He uttered truths that wrought upon and moulded the lives of those who heard him. His auditors, it may be, never suspected that Ernest,

their own neighbor and familiar friend, was more than an ordinary man; least of all did Ernest himself suspect it; but, inevitably as the murmur of a rivulet, came thoughts out of his mouth that no other human lips had spoken.

When the people's minds had had a little time to cool, they were ready enough to acknowledge their mistake in imagining a similarity between General Blood-and-Thunder's truculent physiognomy and the benign visage on the mountain-side. But now, again, there were reports and many paragraphs in the newspapers, affirming that the likeness of the Great Stone Face had appeared upon the broad shoulders of a certain eminent statesman. He, like Mr. Gathergold and Old Blood-and-Thunder, was a native of the valley, but had left it in his early days, and taken up the trades of law and politics. Instead of the rich man's wealth and the warrior's sword, he had but a tongue, and it was mightier than both together. So wonderfully eloquent was he, that whatever he might choose to say, his auditors had no choice but to believe him; wrong looked like right, and right like wrong; for when it pleased him, he could make a kind of illuminated fog with his mere breath, and obscure the natural daylight with it. His tongue, indeed, was a magic instrument: sometimes it rumbled like the thunder; sometimes it warbled like the sweetest music. It was the blast of war- the song of peace; and it seemed to have a heart in it, when there was no such matter. In good truth, he was a wondrous man; and when his tongue had acquired him all other imaginable success—when it had been heard in halls of

state, and in the courts of princes and potentates—after it had made him known all over the world, even as a voice crying from shore to shore—it finally persuaded his countrymen to select him for the presidency. Before this time—indeed, as soon as he began to grow celebrated—his admirers had found out the resemblance between him and the Great Stone Face; and so much were they struck by it, that throughout the country this distinguished gentleman was known by the name of Old Stony Phiz. The phrase was considered as giving a highly favorable aspect to his political prospects; for, as is likewise the case with the Popedom, nobody ever becomes president without taking a name other than his own.

While his friends were doing their best to make him president, Old Stony Phiz, as he was called, set out on a visit to the valley where he was born. Of course, he had no other object than to shake hands with his fellow-citizens, and neither thought nor cared about any effect which his progress through the country might have upon the election. Magnificent preparations were made to receive the illustrious statesman; a cavalcade of horsemen set forth to meet him at the boundary line of the state, and all the people left their business and gathered along the wayside to see him pass. Among these was Ernest. Though more than once disappointed, as we have seen, he had such a hopeful and confiding nature, that he was always ready to believe in whatever seemed beautiful and good. He kept his heart continually open, and thus was sure to catch the blessing from on

high, when it should come. So now again, as buoyantly as ever, he went forth to behold the likeness of the Great Stone Face.

The cavalcade came prancing along the road, with a great clattering of hoofs and a mighty cloud of dust, which rose up so dense and high that the visage of the mountain-side was completely hidden from Ernest's eyes. All the great men of the neighborhood were there on horseback: militia officers, in uniform; the member of Congress; the sheriff of the county; the editors of newspapers; and many a farmer, too, had mounted his patient steed, with his Sunday coat upon his back. It really was a very brilliant spectacle, especially as there were numerous banners flaunting over the cavalcade, on some of which were gorgeous portraits of the illustrious statesman and the Great Stone Face, smiling familiarly at one another, like two brothers. If the pictures were to be trusted, the mutual resemblance, it must be confessed, was marvellous. We must not forget to mention that there was a band of music, which made the echoes of the mountains ring and reverberate with the loud triumph of its strains; so that airy and soul-thrilling melodies broke out among all the heights and hollows as if every nook of his native valley had found a voice to welcome the distinguished guest. But the grandest effect was when the far-off mountain-precipice flung back the music; for then the Great Stone Face itself seemed to be swelling the triumphant chorus, in acknowledgment that, at length, the man of prophecy was come.

All this while the people were throwing up their hats and

shouting, with enthusiasm so contagious that the heart of Ernest kindled up, and he likewise threw up his hat, and shouted, as loudly as the loudest, "Huzza for the great man! Huzza for Old Stony Phiz!" But as yet he had not seen him.

"Here he is, now!" cried those who stood near Ernest. "There! There! Look at Old Stony Phiz and then at the Old Man of the Mountain, and see if they are not as like as two twin-brothers!"

In the midst of all this gallant array, came an open barouche, drawn by four white horses; and in the barouche, with his massive head uncovered, sat the illustrious statesman, Old Stony Phiz himself.

"Confess it," said one of Ernest's neighbors to him, "the Great Stone Face has met its match at last!"

Now, it must be owned that, at his first glimpse of the countenance which was bowing and smiling from the barouche, Ernest did fancy that there was a resemblance between it and the old familiar face upon the mountain-side. The brow, with its massive depth and loftiness, and all the other features, indeed, were boldly and strongly hewn, as if in emulation of a more than heroic, of a Titanic model. But the sublimity and stateliness, the grand expression of a divine sympathy, that illuminated the mountain-visage, and etherealized its ponderous granite substance into spirit, might here be sought in vain. Something had been originally left out, or had departed. And therefore the marvellously gifted statesman had always a weary gloom in the deep caverns of his eyes, as of a child that has outgrown its

playthings, or a man of mighty faculties and little aims, whose life, with all its high performances, was vague and empty, because no high purpose had endowed it with reality.

Still, Ernest's neighbor was thrusting his elbow into his side, and pressing him for an answer.

"Confess! confess! Is not he the very picture of your Old Man of the Mountain?"

"No!" said Ernest, bluntly, "I see little or no likeness."

"Then so much the worse for the Great Stone Face!" answered his neighbor; and again he set up a shout for Old Stony Phiz.

But Ernest turned away, melancholy, and almost despondent; for this was the saddest of his disappointments, to behold a man who might have fulfilled the prophecy, and had not willed to do so. Meantime, the cavalcade, the banners, the music, and the barouches, swept past him, with the vociferous crowd in the rear, leaving the dust to settle down, and the Great Stone Face to be revealed again, with the grandeur that it had worn for untold centuries.

"Lo, here I am, Ernest!" the benign lips seemed to say. "I have waited longer than thou, and am not yet weary. Fear not; the man will come."

The years hurried onward, treading in their haste on one another's heels. And now they began to bring white hairs, and scatter them over the head of Ernest; they made reverend wrinkles across his forehead, and furrows in his cheeks. He was an aged man. But not in vain had he grown old: more than the

white hairs on his head were the sage thoughts in his mind; his wrinkles and furrows were inscriptions that Time had graved, and in which he had written legends of wisdom that had been tested by the tenor of a life. And Ernest had ceased to be obscure. Unsought for, undesired, had come the fame which so many seek, and made him known in the great world, beyond the limits of the valley in which he had dwelt so quietly. College professors, and even the active men of cities, came from far to see and converse with Ernest; for the report had gone abroad that this simple husbandman had ideas unlike those of other men, not gained from books, but of a higher tone—a tranquil and familiar majesty, as if he had been talking with the angels as his daily friends. Whether it were sage, statesman, or philanthropist, Ernest received these visitors with the gentle sincerity that had characterized him from boyhood, and spoke freely with them of whatever came uppermost, or lay deepest in his heart or their own. While they talked together, his face would kindle, unawares, and shine upon them, as with a mild evening light. Pensive with the fulness of such discourse, his guests took leave and went their way; and, passing up the valley, paused to look at the Great Stone Face, imagining that they had seen its likeness in a human countenance, but could not remember where.

While Ernest had been growing up and growing old, a bountiful Providence had granted a new poet to this earth. He, likewise, was a native of the valley but had spent the greater part of his life at a distance from that romantic region, pouring out

his sweet music amid the bustle and din of cities. Often, however, did the mountains which had been familiar to him in his childhood lift their snowy peaks into the clear atmosphere of his poetry. Neither was the Great Stone Face forgotten, for the poet had celebrated it in an ode, which was grand enough to have been uttered by its own majestic lips. This man of genius, we may say, had come down from heaven with wonderful endowments. If he sang of a mountain, the eyes of all mankind beheld a mightier grandeur reposing on its breast, or soaring to its summit, than had before been seen there. If his theme were a lovely lake, a celestial smile had now been thrown over it, to gleam forever on its surface. If it were the vast old sea, even the deep immensity of its dread bosom seemed to swell the higher, as if moved by the emotions of the song. Thus the world assumed another and a better aspect from the hour that the poet blessed it with his happy eyes. The Creator had bestowed him, as the last, best touch to his own handiwork. Creation was not finished till the poet came to interpret, and so complete it.

The effect was no less high and beautiful, when his human brethren were the subject of his verse. The man or woman, sordid with the common dust of life, who crossed his daily path, and the little child who played in it, were glorified if he beheld them in his mood of poetic faith. He showed the golden links of the great chain that intertwined them with an angelic kindred; he brought out the hidden traits of a celestial birth that made them worthy of such kin. Some, indeed, there were, who thought to show the

soundness of their judgment by affirming that all the beauty and dignity of the natural world existed only in the poet's fancy. Let such men speak for themselves, who undoubtedly appear to have been spawned forth by Nature with a contemptuous bitterness; she having plastered them up out of her refuse stuff, after all the swine were made. As respects all things else, the poet's ideal was the truest truth.

The songs of this poet found their way to Ernest. He read them, after his customary toil, seated on the bench before his cottage door, where, for such a length of time, he had filled his repose with thought by gazing at the Great Stone Face. And now, as he read stanzas that caused the soul to thrill within him, he lifted his eyes to the vast countenance beaming on him so benignantly.

"O, majestic friend," he murmured, addressing the Great Stone Face, "is not this man worthy to resemble thee?"

The Face seemed to smile, but answered not a word.

Now it happened that the poet, though he dwelt so far away, had not only heard of Ernest, but had meditated much upon his character, until he deemed nothing so desirable as to meet this man, whose untaught wisdom walked hand in hand with the noble simplicity of his life. One summer morning, therefore, he took passage by the railroad, and, in the decline of the afternoon, alighted from the cars at no great distance from Ernest's cottage. The great hotel, which had formerly been the palace of Mr. Gathergold, was close at hand, but the poet with his carpet-bag

on his arm, inquired at once where Ernest dwelt, and was resolved to be accepted as his guest.

Approaching the door, he there found the good old man, holding a volume in his hand, which alternately he read, and then, with a finger between the leaves, looked lovingly at the Great Stone Face.

“Good evening,” said the poet. “Can you give a traveller a night’s lodging?”

“Willingly,” answered Ernest; and then he added, smiling, “Methinks I never saw the Great Stone Face look so hospitably at a stranger.”

The poet sat down on the bench beside him, and he and Ernest talked together. Often had the poet held intercourse with the wittiest and the wisest, but never before with a man like Ernest, whose thoughts and feelings gushed up with such a natural freedom, and who made great truths so familiar by his simple utterance of them. Angels, as had been so often said, seemed to have wrought with him at his labor in the fields; angels seemed to have sat with him by the fireside; and, dwelling with angels as friend with friends, he had imbibed the sublimity of their ideas, and imbued it with the sweet and lowly charm of household words. So thought the poet. And Ernest, on the other hand, was moved and agitated by the living images which the poet flung out of his mind, and which peopled all the air about the cottage-door with shapes of beauty, both gay and pensive. The sympathies of these two men instructed them with a profounder sense than

either could have attained alone. Their minds accorded into one strain, and made delightful music which neither of them could have claimed as all his own, nor distinguished his own share from the other's. They led one another, as it were, into a high pavilion of their thoughts, so remote, and hitherto so dim, that they had never entered it before, and so beautiful that they desired to be there always.

As Ernest listened to the poet, he imagined that the Great Stone Face was bending forward to listen too. He gazed earnestly into the poet's glowing eyes.

"Who are you, my strangely gifted guest?" he said.

The poet laid his finger on the volume that Ernest had been reading.

"You have read these poems," said he. "You know me, then—for I wrote them."

Again, and still more earnestly than before, Ernest examined the poet's features; then turned towards the Great Stone Face; then back, with an uncertain aspect, to his guest. But his countenance fell; he shook his head, and sighed.

"Wherefore are you sad?" inquired the poet.

"Because, replied Ernest, "all through life I have awaited the fulfilment of a prophecy; and, when I read these poems, I hoped that it might be fulfilled in you."

"You hoped," answered the poet, faintly smiling, "to find in me the likeness of the Great Stone Face. And you are disappointed, as formerly with Mr. Gathergold, and Old Blood-and-Thunder,

and Old Stony Phiz. Yes, Ernest, it is my doom. You must add my name to the illustrious three, and record another failure of your hopes. For—in shame and sadness do I speak it, Ernest—I am not worthy to be typified by yonder benign and majestic image.”

“And why?” asked Ernest. He pointed to the volume—“Are not those thoughts divine?”

“They have a strain of the Divinity,” replied the poet. “You can hear in them the far-off echo of a heavenly song. But my life, dear Ernest, has not corresponded with my thought. I have had grand dreams, but they have been only dreams, because I have lived—and that, too, by own choice—among poor and mean realities. Sometimes even—shall I dare to say it?—I lack faith in the grandeur, the beauty, and the goodness, which my own works are said to have made more evident in nature and in human life. Why, then, pure seeker of the good and true, shouldst thou hope to find me, in yonder image of the divine!”

The poet spoke sadly, and his eyes were dim with tears. So, likewise, were those of Ernest.

At the hour of sunset, as had long been his frequent custom, Ernest was to discourse to an assemblage of the neighboring inhabitants, in the open air. He and the poet, arm in arm, still talking together as they went along, proceeded to the spot. It was a small nook among the hills, with a gray precipice behind, the stern front of which was relieved by the pleasant foliage of many creeping plants, that made a tapestry for the naked rock, by hanging their festoons from all its rugged angles. At a small

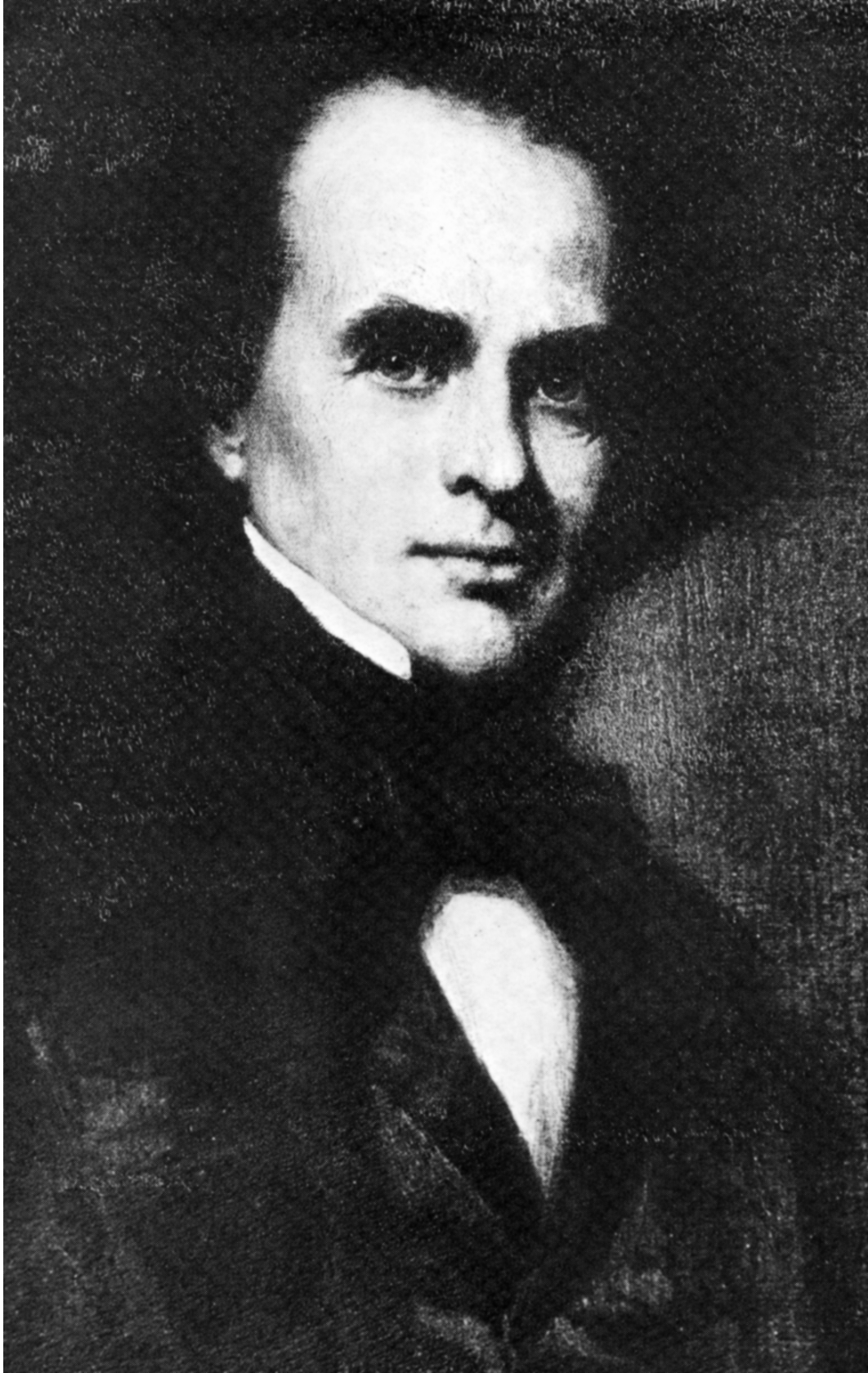
elevation above the ground, set in a rich frame-work of verdure, there appeared a niche, spacious enough to admit a human figure, with freedom for such gestures as spontaneously accompany earnest thought and genuine emotion. Into this natural pulpit Ernest ascended, and threw a look of familiar kindness around upon his audience. They stood, or sat, or reclined upon the grass, as seemed good to each, with the departing sunshine falling obliquely over them, and mingling its subdued cheerfulness with the solemnity of a grove of ancient trees, beneath and amid the boughs of which the golden rays were constrained to pass. In another direction was seen the Great Stone Face, with the same cheer, combined with the same solemnity, in its benignant aspect.

Ernest began to speak, giving to the people of what was in his heart and mind. His words had power, because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth, because they harmonized with the life which he had always lived. It was not mere breath that this preacher uttered; they were the words of life, because a life of good deeds and holy love was melted into them. Pearls, pure and rich, had been dissolved into this precious draught. The poet, as he listened, felt that the being and character of Ernest were a nobler strain of poetry than he had ever written. His eyes glistening with tears, he gazed reverentially at the venerable man, and said within himself that never was there an aspect so worthy of a prophet and a sage as that mild, sweet, thoughtful countenance, with the glory of white

hair diffused about it. At a distance, but distinctly to be seen, high up in the golden light of the setting sun, appeared the Great Stone Face, with hoary mists around it, like the white hairs around the brow of Ernest. Its look of grand beneficence seemed to embrace the world.

At that moment, in sympathy with a thought which he was about to utter, the face of Ernest assumed a grandeur of expression, so imbued with benevolence, that the poet, by an irresistible impulse, threw his arms aloft, and shouted, "Behold! Behold! Ernest is himself the likeness of the Great Stone Face!"

Then all the people looked, and saw that what the deep-sighted poet said was true. The prophecy was fulfilled. But Ernest, having finished what he had to say, took the poet's arm, and walked slowly homeward, still hoping that some wiser and better man than himself would by and by appear, bearing a resemblance to the GREAT STONE FACE.



THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR

from *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, by Julian Hawthorne

[Hawthorne became very ill in 1864 and] it speedily became evident that Hawthorne must not remain in Concord [Massachusetts], or he would sink into the grave at once. Nothing, indeed, could have saved him now; but we could only feel that nothing must be left untried. [Ex-President Franklin] Pierce immediately arranged with him for an excursion through Northern New England. No man was better fitted than Pierce to be of use to him. Of widely different natures, and of not less divergent tastes, pursuits, and experience, these two men had been life-long friends. They loved, understood, and believed in each other. They could afford each other, in the fullest sense, companionship; they could converse without words. The quiet, masculine charm of Pierce's manner, his knowledge of men and the world, his strength, and his tenderness were, moreover, precious qualities in such nursing as was needed now. There was no man with whom Hawthorne would more willingly have passed the last hours of his life; and perhaps it was for this reason that he consented to go with him. He must have known that the journey was to be his final one, and that the farewell to his wife was probably the last farewell of all. And though to say good-bye to the beloved woman who for more than twenty years had been nearest and dearest to him of anything in the world,

must have been the worst pang of death, he could bear it, in the conviction he felt that he was thereby saving her from the lingering anguish of seeing him fade out of existence before her eyes. It was better for her that the blow should be dealt suddenly; that she should not know he was going, but only that he had gone. He had always dreaded the slow parting scenes that precede death, and had often expressed the hope that he might die in his sleep, and unawares. And it was according to his wish that the end came to him.

A few days before he and Pierce set forth, I came up to Concord from Cambridge to make some request of him. I remained only an hour, having to take the afternoon train back to the college. He was sitting in the bedroom upstairs; my mother and my two sisters were there also. It was a pleasant morning in early May. I made my request (whatever it was), and, after listening to the ins and outs of the whole matter, he acceded to it. I had half anticipated refusal, and was the more gratified. I said good-by, and went to the door, where I stood a moment, looking back into the room. He was standing at the foot of the bed, leaning against it, and looking at me with a smile. He had on his old dark coat; his hair was almost wholly white, and he was very pale. But the expression of his face was full of beautiful kindness,--the gladness of having given his son a pleasure, and perhaps something more, that I did not then know of. His aspect at that moment, and the sun-shine in the

little room, are vivid in my memory. I never saw my father again.

The friends started about the middle of May, and, travelling leisurely, reached Plymouth, New Hampshire, on the 18th of the month. There is a little memorandum book, in which are jotted down, in a small and almost illegible handwriting, a few words as to the results of each day's journey; but there is no entry after the 17th. They put up at the Pemigewasset House, and Hawthorne went to bed early. Pierce's room communicated with Hawthorne's; the door was open between, and once or twice during the night Pierce went in to see whether his friend were resting easily. Hawthorne breathed quietly, and lay in a natural position, on his right side. Some time after midnight Pierce, who had been disturbed by the persistent howling of a dog in the courtyard of the hotel, went to Hawthorne's bedside again. He still lay in precisely the same position as when he first fell asleep; but no breathing was now perceptible. Pierce quickly laid his hand on the sleeper's heart, and found that it had stopped beating.

