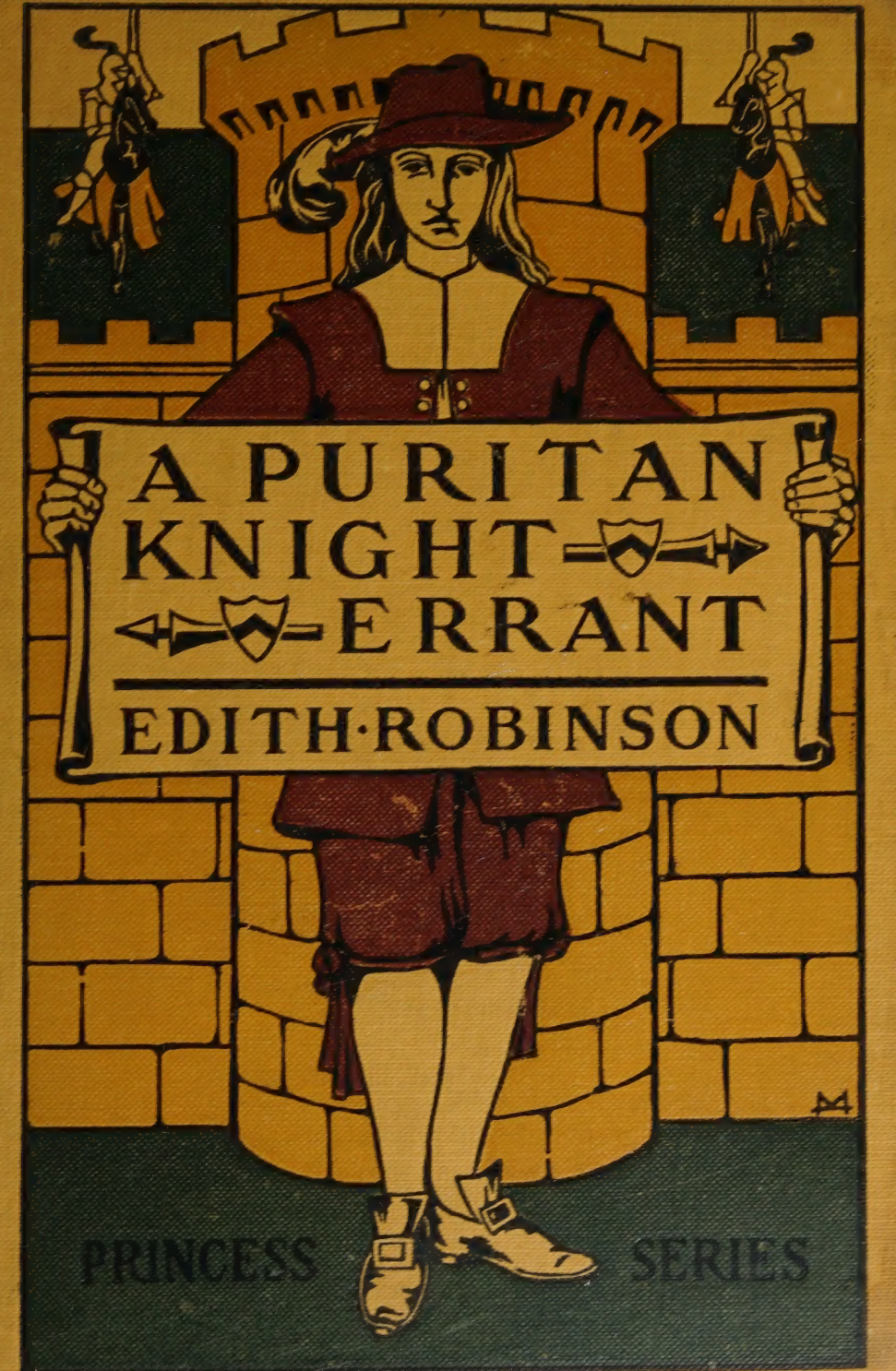

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EDITH·ROBINSON
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PRINCESS SERIES



A Puritan Knight Errant

By

EDITH ROBINSON

Author of "A Little Puritan Pioneer," "A Little Puritan's First Christmas," "A Little Puritan Rebel," etc.

Illustrated by

L. J. BRIDGMAN

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THE spirit of chivalry — let worldlings say what they will — is the very spirit of our spirit, the salt which keeps our characters from utter decay, the very instinct which raises us above the selfishness of the brute. Yea, it is the Spirit of God Himself. For what is the feeling of horror at wrong, of pity for the wronged, of burning desire to set wrong right, save the Spirit of the Father and the Son, — the Spirit which brought down the Lord Jesus out of the highest heaven, to stoop, to serve, to suffer, and to die, — that He might seek and save that which was lost.

The age of chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth and a man or woman left to say, "I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt." The age of chivalry is never past, as long as men have faith enough in God to say, "God will help me to redress that wrong; or if not me, those that come after me. For His eternal will it is, to overcome evil with good."

— *Charles Kingsley.*

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A PURITAN KNIGHT ERRANT

CHAPTER I.

"See, 'tis the ship, sure," repeated Faith. "Look yonder, beyond the Castle."

But her companion was less far-sighted or more credulous.

"'Tis a gull or a light dancing on the water," he answered, positively. "Thou hast seen whole fleets of vessels, ere now, that never landed."

"But it must be the *Abigail*, — she is long overdue; only this morning my honoured father said that she was four months out from England," insisted the girl, unheeding that her basket of bayberries was overturned in the impulsive movement that followed her alleged discovery of the long delayed ship. "Thy sight will be better when thou hast dwelt a little longer in this land of sunshine," she went

on; "'tis true that at home we could not see from this distance to the water's edge, because of the rain and fog."

"I have been in New England as long as thou," answered Thomas. "Did we not both come in the same ship — the *Griffin* — that landed in Boston fourteen months ago? And glad enough I was to see land, — e'en such a land as this has proved to be," added the boy; "for what with a voyage that I thought would never end, and the deadly seasickness that made me long to be at the bottom of the sea, never should I have reached Boston had it not been for thy mother and her care of me on shipboard."

The girl made no reply, being, indeed, so absorbed in gazing out at sea as scarce to have heard her companion's words. With arms upraised, and hands shading her eyes, Faith Hutchinson's figure was well defined against the soft sky of mid-October. Her face, a round oval in contour, was brown with exposure to the summer's sun; little time, indeed, did Faith spend within doors, unless compelled thereto by parental authority; her eyes, soft and large, were of a darker hue than was common amongst her country folk; their heavy lids, habitually downcast, were fringed with long, curling lashes, that, well-

nigh as thick on the lower as upon the upper lid, aided to give the girl's eyes, when raised, a certain intent, starry look that in somewise seemed out of keeping with certain other traits of her character. Her gown, of heavy gray stuff, reached nearly to her ankles, showing heavy wooden shoes that made light-footedness a marvel; over the little shawl that was folded, kerchief-wise, upon her breast, was a round white linen collar. The masses of dark hair might have seemed almost too heavy for the slender head — poised so delicately upon the shoulders — were it not of a silky, clinging quality that allowed its plaits to lie compactly beneath a close-fitting muslin cap.

Her companion, perhaps a twelvemonth older than herself, was taller by many inches, and of a figure of which the lithe grace, manifest in its every line, could not be disfigured even by the shabby clothes, though the leather doublet was torn in many places, and the breeches gave token of long-sustained rough usage. Brilliant dark eyes, a nose perhaps something overlarge for absolute beauty, but giving character to the whole face, and golden-brown curls worn much longer than was usual amongst boys of the time and place, made Thomas Savage a lad whose appearance seldom failed to attract attention.

Boy and girl looked intently seaward for some minutes in silence.

"Verily, I believe thou art right, Faith," cried Thomas, at last. "I can see the sails plainly. 'Tis the *Abigail*, past doubt."

The news had apparently spread rapidly through the town, for even as they looked, it seemed as though every house below was emptying itself of people, all hastening in the direction of the wharf.

"Come, let us hurry!" cried the boy, making a movement to pull his companion down the steep path by which they had ascended; but Faith held back.

"Nay, I want my bayberries," she said; "my mother would be sore disappointed did I return without them; besides, she hath promised some of our fine bayberry candles to Mistress Winthrop, who hath been so ill of the distemper as to leave no time for the work. Though I think, indeed," added the girl, reflectively, "that however gracious of speech Mistress Winthrop may be for such neighbourly service, at heart she likes it not that my mother hath the name of being a more notable housewife than she."

Thomas good-naturedly helped to pick up the scattered berries till the birch basket was refilled.

"'Tis great fun to see the people come ashore,"

said Faith. "Think'st thou there will be any children aboard? I should be right glad an there were nice maids of mine own age."

"Nay, I think thou wouldst rather go walking and climbing and fishing with Francis and me though every one aboard were a maid," observed Thomas, laughing. "But thou must not go to the wharf with me, Faith," he added. "'Tis no place for a girl, and thine honoured mother would like it not an I let thee go."

"Then let us stay here on the hill and watch the ship come in," pleaded Faith. "As soon as she nears the wharf, thou canst run to meet her; thou canst run very fast, Thomas, and wilt be with the other boys ere the people aboard have come ashore," she added, persuasively, as her companion's frown warned her that her proposition was ill received.

"But I would be with the other lads now," answered Thomas, impatiently. "Wilt ever be a marplot, Faith? Thou art a maid and 'tis time thou learnt that a maid cannot do as her brothers."

"But I can," retorted Faith, her plea based on substantial fact rather than airy theory. "I can row and fish and walk as far without being wearied as either thou or Francis. Ay, and when he and thou

and my father were all ill of the distemper, did I not chop wood and fetch water and catch the biggest lobster ever seen in Boston — all of three feet long — and did I not even wring a fowl's neck with my eyes shut — "

"And cried the rest of the day over the slaughter," interrupted Thomas, scoffingly. "There goes Francis," he cried, as a boy's figure was seen to leave a house at the foot of the Tramount. "I can wait no longer." With the last words, he gathered himself up for a run.

"Then will I go with thee," said Faith, stubbornly.

Thomas made a gesture of impatience, paused, and looked at the approaching vessel. The *Abigail* — for there could be little doubt that it was she — was warping slowly up the harbour, the numerous islands making navigation difficult. It would certainly be an hour or more before she reached the wharf. He knew from experience that when Faith's face wore an expression like the present, argument or remonstrance was useless. So, though with no very good grace, he yielded, on the promise from his companion that she would return to her home when he joined the other boys at the wharf.

Except to baffled impatience, it was not an ill place in which to pass the time of waiting. They were on

the summit of Cotton's Hill, — as the highest peak of the Tramount was known, — a rocky, dome-shaped mass topped by a plateau of several rods in extent. On the hill to the south, the walls of a fort, its foundations just outlined upon the ground, were visible; upon the heights to the north, the sails of a windmill were slowly revolving. The tide had risen over the narrow neck that connected Boston with the mainland, converting the three-hilled peninsula, for the time, into an island. Seaward, beyond the Castle that watched the channel, could be seen the fifty islands of the bay; from one of them a lighter was making its way, laden with the resinous pine upon which Boston depended for its firewood. In the broad arm of the sea into which the river Charles widened, lay the *Mary Rose*, from Bristol, England, to set sail that very night, at turn of the tide, for Virginia. On the lower slopes and about the base of the Tramount, were scattered the houses of the settlement, — for the most part cabins of rough hewn logs; a few of the mud huts that had sheltered the earliest pioneers were still standing, while here and there the growing prosperity of the town was evidenced by frame houses with Elizabethan fronts and overhanging gables. These domiciles were connected by unpaved lanes, following the lines

of the hills and coast, something more than cow-paths, not yet streets.

Thomas was looking meditatively out at sea, as though his thoughts were retracing the course of the approaching vessel.

"Thou art looking for news from thy friends, Thomas?" queried the girl. "Perchance thou art expecting a letter from her of whom thou hast told me?" she went on, and there was a new note, almost as of wistfulness, in her voice. "Nay, I would not keep thee here against thy will," she added. "I spake, but now, out of haste. Go thou to the wharf, with Francis and the other boys."

"I have told thee I would stay with thee," answered Thomas, with becoming dignity, but mollified, notwithstanding, by his companion's altered tone. "It would scarce become a squire, and one who some day hopes to be a knight, to desert a lady."

"But I am not a lady," returned Faith, simply; "at least, not such an one as thy Lady Emilia of the Castle, though my dear and honoured father was a gentleman of good estate, and my honoured mother is the daughter of a minister, one held in high esteem in our old home in Alford," the girl added, not without pride. "But we are not Castle folk,

and I do recall that once, when my father took me to old Boston, in Lincolnshire, we passed the great Castle of Sempringham, where thou dwelt, — only I did not know thee then, nor dreamt that thou wouldst ever become my brother. I do recall with what wonder I gazed at the high frowning castle, the moat and drawbridge, thinking that not even his gracious Majesty, King Charles, could live in so splendid a place. But how canst thou be a squire when thy lady is a thousand miles away, and thou hast no knight, either, to whom to offer thy services, nor any services, either, to offer, except thy work on thy books, — and that is little enough, I fear me, — or digging on the roads, or carrying stones to help build the wharf?" queried the girl, with dancing eyes, and another of her swift changes of mood.

"Thou shalt play thou art my lady — for the time," rejoined Thomas, discreetly.

"Nay, take my poppet for thy lady," retorted the girl. "I put her away for good and all yesternight, having reached my thirteenth birthday, and have no further use for her."

"Of course thou knowest, Faith," went on Thomas, seriously, "that Lady Emilia, and she only, is the lady of my heart, and that I came to this country so that I might win fame and honour

for her. But since that it is well for a squire to have some one to whom to pay his devoirs, and since, also, thou needest a proper squire, and there being none other to play the part in this town," added Thomas, with fine scorn, "I tell thee, Faith, that thou shalt be my lady, and in all things will I be thy faithful squire."

"And I tell thee that I'll have none of thy make-believe, Master Thomas," retorted Faith. "Think'st thou I'll let thee practise thy rules of knightly conduct on me, so that when thou goest back to Sempringham, with a name of right gallant worth and a record of deeds with which all England rings, thy Lady Emilia may marvel that we in the wilderness had bred so true a knight as to make even that Sir Philip Sidney, of whom thou lovest to speak, as tame and dull a figure as my poppet," cried Faith, without a pause for breath.

"Thou need'st not speak with such scorn," returned Thomas, somewhat uneasily. "Many a maid would not take it ill that I offered her my services as true and loyal squire, telling her, fairly and squarely, as beseems such a case, that mine heart was long ago given to another, — and hers to me, — ay, and she one who could choose betwixt me and an earl's son."

"Then find such a maid!" retorted Faith. "Only, let me tell thee, she is not my mother's daughter. Besides, an I need a squire, — which I do not, for I can take care of myself, — I would take Dean Winthrop."

"A matchlock may befit him," returned Thomas, haughtily. "'Twould ill become a gentleman's son to carry other weapons than sword and dagger or a lance in battle."

"Dean is a right honest, trusty lad, not afraid of hard work, and his father hath been our honoured governor, and is like to be again, folks say," answered Faith, sturdily. "Thou hast no better reason for thy mislike than that Dean hath red hair and shoots the long bow better than thou!"

"He hath warts, too," returned Thomas, doggedly; "there hath been two-headed knights, and even knights without arms or legs, but never since the world was made, six thousand years ago, hath there been a knight with warts."

"He counts himself more than thine equal," returned Faith. "His father is one of the richest men in the Colony, and none here held in higher honour."

"Dean Winthrop may hold his head high because that his father hath been governor," said Thomas.

"He may even sit side by side with me in the meeting-house; but, were we at home, he would have to remember that he is but the son of an attorney, whilst I have the right to the same coat of arms as the most noble Lady Bridget, Countess of Lincoln."

"I like right well to hear thee tell of her," answered Faith; "far better than to hearken to tales of thy Lady Emilia, who, I make no doubt, was a vain, high-tempered minx, — nay, I meant not to vex thee again!" cried the girl in quick repentance, as her companion's brow clouded. "'Twas good of thee to stay with me instead of running with the other lads, and I will say no more to make thee frown. The countess must indeed have been a right gracious, noble lady, and, as thou knowest, I love to hear thee tell of thy Castle life," she added, tentatively.

"The earl, too, was ever my friend," went on the boy, in mollified tones, "not less, I think, because it was my good fortune to be the kinsman of his noble lady, than that my father was his right trusty companion in arms when, many years ago, the Earl of Lincoln, at the head of a gallant regiment of horse and foot, went to the aid of the Palatine. When war and pestilence and famine had killed a woful number of the Lincolnshire men, and the earl himself lay

wounded and sick unto death, my father never quitted his side, and so, by God's merciful will, the earl recovered. But scarce had he quitted his bed, when my father sickened — and died. Ah, I cannot bear to think of his death," went on the lad, in a choked voice. "Had he fallen in battle, that were a glorious ending to a noble life! But to die, as do cattle of the murrain — that were no fit death for a brave and honourable man. My mother was at the Castle of Sempringham when the earl returned, with scarce a tenth of the gallant men with whom he had set forth. She died shortly after, when I was born. The earl and countess, from my very cradle, charged themselves with my bringing up, and right generously have they acquitted themselves of the burden. I think, indeed, if any difference was ever made betwixt me and their only son and heir, Lord Eaton, it was in my favour."

"Those were sad, troubled times, Thomas," said the girl; "I am glad we live in a country and in a time that nobody could call heroic, when there is nothing to be done save spinning and soap-making and candle-dipping and sweeping, with something of study of the Westminster Catechism; and, maybe, a whipping or two thrown in by way of ill luck."

"Nay, those were glorious days," cried the boy,

with flashing eyes. "Thou knowest not what it is, Faith, to be born with fighting blood in thy veins, yet forced to live such a life as one is constrained unto in yonder town. Ah, if I had been born in the time, not so long ago, when there was fighting and cruising and glory for brave men and true! If God sent death instead, who feared it? Old Dickory — one of the bowmen in my father's troop, who, in his age, was given a home at the Castle — would tell us lads, of an evening, in the Castle hall, stories that made one long to seize his sword and go forth to instant battle, — tales that would have stirred a coward's blood — and there were no cowards who listened. He told of fighting in the Low Countries, of persecution for the right, of wrong steadfastly resisted, unflinching bravery against overwhelming odds; of times when Protestant faced Papist, counting it glory to die for the one true faith, when blood ran like water in the streets of Antwerp and men fought on, unknowing how to yield! Think of sailing with Drake, the fearless and true, in his voyage around the world, struggling with wind and wave and danger of every sort for three years, and coming home with a shipload of gold dust and ingots and pearls and emeralds and diamonds, the wonder and glory of England and of the world!"

"May not one be a knight nowadays?" queried the girl, with an odd wistfulness in her tone.

"Nay, the age of chivalry is past," answered Thomas, gravely; "and there be no more such knights as once walked the earth — although, on payment of some wretched, paltry eighty pounds a year, men may still be called by that once so lofty name — shame be it said! Once, to be a knight was to be held the equal of kings and emperors, and was the guerdon of a brave and blameless life, of lofty aims and noble achievements. Such an one was mine own ancestor, Brian le Sauvage, a squire of ancient lineage attending the knight, Sir Walter de Bartelot, who came over with William the Conqueror. At the battle of Hastings, 'twas said the Normans would have been driven from the field had it not been for the gallant stand made by Brian le Sauvage over his master's body, when the dead lay twenty thick about, thus giving Sir Walter time to rise and rally his men and hasten to the side of the king, hard pressed by the Saxon hordes. For this service, Brian was knighted on the field of battle by the king himself," related Thomas, proudly, "and as further meed of his valour was given an estate covering nearly the whole of Sussex; on him was also bestowed the right to keep swans. Therefore it is that thou mayst see the

swans, to-day, upon our coat of arms. That were a knighthood worthy of its aims!" cried Thomas. "Faith, thou art a girl and knowst not what the very sound of deeds of high emprise may mean, to one who hath the blood of many knights within his veins, but perchance thou mayst in some sort picture the scene in which mine ancestor bore chief part," the boy went on, with flashing eyes. "Listen! Then knelt the squire before the king. 'To what end,' asked the king, 'do you desire to enter this order? If it be that you may repose yourself and be honoured without doing honour to knighthood, then you are unworthy of it.' And Brian le Sauvage gave answer as became him.

"Then dubbed the king, saying:

"'In the name of God, St. George, and St. Michael, I make thee knight.'"

"Some day, thou, too, shalt be knight," cried Faith, eagerly. "Even such an one as thine ancestor, gallant Sir Brian, — or better still, our own St. George, who slew the dragon!"

"One worthier of knighthood than my father never lived," returned Thomas, soberly, "and so said the noble earl, and old Dickory, and all who knew him; and had he lived in the days of chivalry, he would have won the golden spurs when no older than

I. But like many a poor gentleman, nowadays, he could not be at the cost of maintaining proper state as knight, and so remained squire all his life."

"Thou knowest that before we sailed for America I had scarce set foot beyond our quiet town," said Faith. "I know not what a knight should look like. There was my dear father and our honoured minister, and sometimes Master Dudley, the steward of the Earl of Lincoln, rode into Alford on his lordship's business. Would Master Dudley have made a knight, had he lived long ago, when men were brave and ready to die for a comrade, or so that they knew they were doing right and pleasing God? Master Dudley was so big and tall and strong that I used to think he must be one of those of whom the minister spake, — of the 'shining hosts of Gideon,'" questioned Faith, earnestly, "and when I went to his house in old Boston, with mine honoured father, I thought none could be sweeter lady, whether in castle or cabin, than his daughter, Mistress Anne."

"Master Dudley was a right faithful, painstaking steward," answered Thomas, a shade of condescension mingling with the genuine respect in his tones. "But thou art a girl, Faith, and understandest not of what stuff true knighthood is made," he added, decidedly but not unkindly. "In truth, there are no

knights in the town yonder, and if there were," he added, discontentedly, "there would be nought for them to draw swords upon — for even the savage, brutish men of the forest have ceased fighting."

"But somewhere in the world there are still giants and dwarfs and dragons and the Paynim and the Spanish — such foes to righteousness as thou hast told me about, — are there not?" persisted Faith.

"Truly there are," cried Thomas, eagerly, "and some day — perhaps, who knows, ere very long? — I may go forth to do battle with them. I may yet have tales written about me, as there were of the Seven Champions and of the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table. 'Twas in the hope of such adventures, indeed, that I besought his Lordship to let me come to America; for there were wonderful tales told of this country by returning sailors, even such as were related by Marco Polo and Prester John, when those bold travellers returned from their journeyings in the far East — of gold mines and diamond fields sparkling in the sun; of strange beasts bigger and fiercer than the dragon conquered by our own St. George; creatures with seven horns, like the beast of the Apocalypse, and a race of one-legged men who lived to the far north, and other marvellous people whose heads grew beneath their shoulders.

But none of all these wonders have I seen," sighed Thomas, "and there is no more glory to be won here than at home, with as much hard study and more disagreeable work than at Sempringham. Here I thought at least I should be a man, but Master Dudley, in whose care, as thou knowest, I was placed by the Earl of Lincoln, saw fit to put me at school, with no livelier prospect than of going, later, to the college school of which they are talking," added the lad, with discontent in every line of his handsome face.

"Thou hast scarce o'ertasked thy brains with study," returned Faith, laughing. "Take heed lest the tithing-men visit thee for an idle good-for-nothing, as I fear me thou art sometimes called."

"A murrain on the tithing-men!" said Thomas, sulkily. "At any rate, 'twas Master Dudley himself who placed me at school, and if Master Eaton turned out, later on, after all his professions of piety and learning, to have a greater fondness for the bottle, and for the pages of him whom Master Winthrop calls 'that wanton playwright, Will Shakespeare,' sure I am not to blame for being idle. 'Tis an ill wind that blows no good, and as long as Master Eaton seemeth content to take the shillings that my guardian hath agreed to pay for my keep and instruction

in Latin and what not, and asks nothing of me, why, matters might well be worse. The chaplain at the Castle was ever for giving Theophilus and me a flogging, when we rightly thought it a sin and shame to spend the day at our books in a stuffy room when we might be bird's-nesting or swimming in the river. But, in sooth, I am sick of this town of tradespeople, where there is no chance to win the name and fortune of which I came in quest. To the south, in the Colony of Virginia, are men of a different breed!"

"Thou wilt not go thither?" cried Faith, in alarm. "Thou couldst not walk so great a distance, — thou wouldst meet wolves and lions and savages and all manner of evil spirits that dwell in the forests."

"That would suit me right well," answered Thomas, fervently, his eyes straying, as he spoke, to the *Mary Rose* below.

"Thou and Francis have had thy heads much together of late," said Faith, quickly — but Thomas was gazing so intently at the Bristol vessel as scarce to heed her words. And on the next instant, almost as though she repented of her hasty speech, the girl arose and held out her hand.

"Come, let us go," she said, "the *Abigail* is nearly in."

CHAPTER II.

It seemed as though nearly all of the people of Boston, of every sort and condition, were assembled at the wharf, even several of the magistrates being present. These dignitaries stood somewhat apart from the others, near the landing; and to judge from their dress, — which was that worn on occasions of state — and expectant demeanour, might be awaiting the arrival of some one of distinction on the approaching vessel. Amongst the promiscuous crowd were many who had friends and relatives on board the belated ship; others had been drawn thither by the desire for tidings of dear ones in their English homes, from whom nothing had been heard for many months. Still others there were who had come to the wharf in the mere excitement of the ship's arrival, a most momentous event in the life of the colony. A group of boys were gathered near the newly completed wharf, amusing themselves by skipping stones over the surface of the water. A shout went up as a dexterously tossed pebble went far

beyond its fellows. It was cast from the hand of a sandy-haired lad of about Thomas's own age, but more stockily built and not so tall by half a head. His dress, like that of his companions, consisted of a leather doublet, long hose, and square-toed shoes of buff leather.

"How now, Thomas Savage?" he called out, as the other boy drew near. "Think'st thou that some of thy noble kinsmen have come over to bear thee company?"

"An there were, Dean Winthrop, thou wouldst have no share in their welcome," retorted Thomas, "unless, perchance, to carry a load for them. Perhaps thou art waiting thyself to welcome friends amongst the servants?"

"Look thou, Master Savage," retorted Dean, angrily, "it ill becomes thee to put on the airs and manners of a lordling because that thou wert, on sufferance, bred in a castle. Thy castle manners ill fit thee here. 'Tis well known that but for the charity of his lordship, the Earl of Lincoln, who, no doubt, right gladly paid thy passage to America to be quit of thee, — thou mightst well be one of those same servants thyself — ay, and bound to our household."

"My betters are not to be found in thine house!"

retorted Thomas. "Nor would any here," he added, glancing defiantly at the rest of the group, who had been cheering Dean's sleight of hand, "have been thought worthy to wait at the board at which I sate."

"Was it in the earl's household that thou learnedst thine insolence?" queried Dean. "Truly, of that, if of nought else, thou hast brought plentiful store out of England."

The other boys had been looking, with suppressed excitement, from one speaker to the other, instinctively closing about them, that their threatening gestures might not be seen by any in authority; their angry voices, however, may have reached beyond the confines of the group, for one of the magistrates, a personage of evidently marked importance, with a pale face and dark pointed beard rising above a ruff of ample size, had stepped aside from his worshipful companions, and was looking intently in the direction of the boys. As the two lads glowered at each other, hardly restrained by prudence from an appeal to fisticuffs, Thomas's arm was grasped by a tall, slender boy, whose face had not yet lost the clear red and white of those bred beneath the soft gray skies of the Lincolnshire fens.

"Take heed, Thomas," he said. "Both the tithing-

men and the magistrates are close at hand, and thou wilt find thyself right speedily in trouble if thou comest to blows. An Master Winthrop would not disgrace his own son, he would even now send the beadle this way."

The appeal to prudence was not lost upon either boy, for Dean drew back, and Thomas, although he still held his ground, suffered his clenched fist to relax. Fortunately, at this moment, a diversion was created by the cry from those in the immediate vicinity of the wharf:

"She is in!"

All other issues forgotten in the exciting announcement, the group of boys, — including the two would-be combatants — hastened to the landing, or as near as the constables would allow them to come. Thomas, by means of wriggling his lithe body through the crowd, and Dean by dint of sheer pushing and ramming, succeeded in making their way to the outer ring of spectators. Eager hands had received the hawser from the deck of the *Abigail*, and the plank was thrown ashore. There followed an unaccountable delay in which the now surging crowd nearly broke its bounds. It was perceived presently that Master Winthrop and the other magistrates had gone to the end of the wharf, and it appeared that the

delay in somewise concerned them. At last, some one — it was not easy, at that distance, to distinguish his appearance — stepped upon the plank, and the worshipful gentlemen were greeting him with much apparent deference. Then the newcomer led the way shorewards, Master Winthrop and the other magistrates following at a respectful distance. The constables, pressing back the throng with stern commands, aided by sharp raps from their rods, cleared a space about the land end of the wharf.

With wide open eyes and held breath, Thomas was leaning eagerly forward, his surroundings forgotten, ignoring even the weight of Dean's heavy shoes on his own feet, in the sudden backward surge of the crowd. Silence had fallen upon the tumultuous throng, and all alike were staring at the newcomer.

It needed not his distinguished and deferential escort to mark him a person of distinction. He was a tall and strikingly handsome man — or rather youth, for his years could scarce have numbered four and twenty. His head, with its mass of golden brown curls reaching nearly to the shoulders, was thrown slightly back, as though to permit deeper, fuller draughts of the bracing air of the New World. Widely open black-brown eyes, beneath an ample forehead, swept the crowd with a certain deepening

of two little lines between the brows that, despite his youth, gave the newcomer the air of one who discerned the characters and purposes of men with wonderful sagacity. Almost it was as though, in that seemingly careless, yet searching glance, he was looking for some face which, although seeing for the first time, he should instantly recognise.

In the gaping crowd was a handsome, bright-faced lad whose eyes were upraised to his with a look of admiration — almost of adoration, — in their depths. The boy's cap was in his hand, his knee was bent, as though in some instinctive homage to which the rest of the throng were strange. For an instant only, that solemn, searching look rested on Thomas's face — a look that sent some responsive thrill through the boy's heart; for that instant, he and the stranger stood alone together out of all the world, face to face and heart to heart. Then, something dimmed the boy's sight — a sudden mist, it was likely, sweeping in from out the sea, after the manner of drifting fogs in this strange country. When his vision cleared again, the stranger was lost to view.

The other passengers were pouring ashore. Most of those who had friends or relatives in the town made their way, under the escort of these, toward the settlement; others lingered about the wharf,

intent on getting their goods ashore with as little delay as possible. Still as in a dream, Thomas heard the question asked on every side amongst those to whom the interest of the scene was now nearly at end :

"Who was he — surely some great lord ? "

The reply was in Dean Winthrop's most important tones, — the words reached Thomas as he left the other boys, to follow, led by some impulse that he neither sought to combat or to comprehend, the footsteps of the stranger.

"Master Harry Vane, son of Sir Henry Vane, Comptroller of the household of his Majesty the king. He is to live, at present, with Master Cotton."

CHAPTER III.

"FAITH!"

The girl arose, respectfully, from her wheel as her mother entered the kitchen — it was living-room as well in the Hutchinson house. Dusk had fallen, but the blaze from the pine knots in the great fireplace sufficed to illumine the room without recourse to candles.

"Hast heard who came on the ship?" queried her mother. "Goodwife Dyer hath been in great anxiety because of the long delay. Her brother's wife was expected, and being in ill health when she started, 'twas matter of doubt as to whether she would reach these shores alive. Was there much sickness aboard?"

"I have seen no one since the ship was in," answered Faith. "Francis hath not yet returned from the wharf. Boston hath been making holiday," she added, knowing that, when her mother was absorbed in one of her errands of mercy, she was not

infrequently oblivious to all that was going on about her.

"True, true," murmured Mistress Hutchinson, "I noted that the streets were deserted as I came from Goodwife Dyer's. Doubtless people are listening at any welcome fireside to news from home."

"The child is dead?" queried Faith, softly.

"He died at sunset; may the Lord sanctify this affliction to his sorrowing mother," answered Mistress Hutchinson. "I remained awhile to pray and exhort with her, bidding her call on the Lord to make her child's death what He would to her," she added, fervently.

"Thou must be rarely tired, mother," said Faith. "'Tis now three days and nights that thou hast watched with Goodwife Dyer, and I'll warrant me thou hast scarce tasted food in all that time. I have kept the porridge hot for thee. The children are in bed," she added, as her mother glanced, still with that absent air, about the room, as though in quest of something, she knew not what. Apparently satisfied with the answer, Mistress Hutchinson removed her cape and hood and remained standing by the fireplace, apparently lost in thought. Thus seen, she was a tall, slender woman, of some five or six and thirty, of resolute and even haughty carriage.

Her eyes, clear and dark beneath level brows, were set widely apart. The lower part of her face, with its heavily moulded chin, was redeemed from a suggestion of masculinity by the full and beautiful curves of a sensitive, mobile mouth. Mistress Anne Hutchinson's smile had an attraction few could resist.

"I know not what it means," she said at length, talking more to herself than to her daughter, "nor whether that which hath been revealed to me this day be a portent for good or ill. At early dawn, I stood in the doorway of Goodwife Dyer's house, looking seaward. There appeared all at once, over the harbour, the form of the keel of a ship, with three masts, to which were suddenly added the tackling and sails; and presently after, upon the top of the poop, a man was standing." The speech of Mistress Hutchinson, at all times of much fluency and in moments of excitement even voluble, was now slow and laboured, as though she were seeking to recall every detail of a picture that had evidently deeply impressed her. "He was young and of extraordinary beauty," she went on, "a gallant, courtly figure, the like of which I have never seen save once, when my father took me to London at the coronation of his gracious Majesty. More kingly than Charles,

more noble than any nobleman in the royal train, the gallant figure stood, in silk and velvet attire, such as is worn by gentlemen of the court. In his right hand was a sword outstretched toward Boston. Then from the side of the ship that was toward the town arose a great smoke, which covered all the ship; and in the smoke she vanished away."

The girl listened to her mother's recital in wondering, awestruck silence. Signs and omens were not infrequently vouchsafed to the godly people who had left the comforts of their English firesides to plant God's church in the wilderness; and to some of these, as to the prophets and wise men of old, were visions unrolled of which the interpretations lay not always in human understanding. In those days, men lived near to God, and in these visions were sometimes hints of a glory not of earth, a suggestion as of some celestial country, whose like had never been seen by mortal eyes, save in the faint foreshadowings of dreamers. To none, in Boston, had these marvels been more frequently vouchsafed than to Mistress Hutchinson. Of late, they had been more frequent and of deeper spiritual significance; often dawning at the bedsides of the sick and dying, when, by prolonged vigil and fast, the soul had gained as-

cendency over the flesh; or in the exaltation of those moments of prayer and exhortation that never failed to accompany the ministrations on the weak and suffering body. In such high esteem, and in such incessant demand were Mistress Hutchinson's services held, particularly in the hours of woman's sorest trial, that the time she spent at home was become daily less. Not that her household suffered from these prolonged absences, for no more notable housewife than Mistress Anne Hutchinson was to be found in Boston, and in her spinning, and candle dipping, and soap making — that yearly trial of patience — she was no whit behind her neighbours of more home-keeping habits and perhaps of homelier wits. If, in the esteem of certain good folk in the near neighbourhood, Faith was permitted to share the sports of her brother and brother's friend, Thomas Savage, to an unbecoming degree, Mistress Hutchinson was held in such universal esteem that, except for an occasional shake of the head, or possibly, some censorious word from a sour-visaged goodwife, there was little open criticism to be heard in Boston. Besides, Faith, hoyden though she might be, had inherited her mother's ability to no inconsiderable degree, and in her mother's absence looked so well after the ways of the household and cared so faithfully for the needs

of the younger children, that the lack of an older pair of hands was scarcely felt.

The house of Master Eaton — at whose school the boys of the better class in Boston were taught — stood somewhat apart from the rest of the settlement, being the last dwelling on the road to the Neck. The Countess of Lincoln, holding the judgment of her former steward in high esteem, had placed the conduct and welfare of her young kinsman unreservedly in Captain Dudley's hands. Although circumstance, as well as natural predilection, had shaped Captain Dudley's earlier life to that of a soldier of fortune rather than a scholar, he held learning in high esteem, and had lost no time in placing his ward at the newly opened school of Master Eaton, a Cambridge scholar of considerable repute. Under existing circumstances, indeed, this arrangement had appeared the only feasible one, if the countess's desire that her young kinsman be bred for the ministry were carried out, as Captain Dudley had recently removed from the seat of government to the border settlement of Agawam, some thirty miles to the north of Boston. Thomas was thus left almost wholly to the jurisdiction of the schoolmaster and the magistrates; those latter worshipful gentlemen, however, for certain reasons that they deemed of weight, were

slower to exercise their authority in this case than in any other instance that appeared to call for discipline, although of late Master Winthrop had been known to express fears that in such leniency they were not only lax in the performance of their own duty, but were suffering the lad a real and perhaps lasting injury by withholding the bitter but salutary effects of punishment. Master Eaton's school had speedily diminished in numbers as his incapacity for so responsible a position became increasingly evident; as he paid scant heed to the instruction or discipline of his two or three remaining pupils, Thomas was left to a more considerable degree of freedom than was usual amongst the boys of his age in the Puritan town, a condition of which he did not fail to take advantage.

At first, indeed, his life in the New World seemed an ill exchange for that of Sempringham Castle and the merry companionship of his friend Theophilus. Instead of the brief service in the Castle chapel, was now a long prayer and three hours' sermon, to which he must give the appearance, at least, of devout attention, under penalty of a sharp rap from the tithing-man's rod. His lessons were as many and as distasteful as when under the tutelage of the chaplain; there was work, too, upon the roads and

wharves, for which Thomas had even less liking, deeming such labour below the proper dignity of his birth and station.

But by degrees, as he became wonted to the conditions of his new life, he began to find it not only tolerable, but even much therein that was enjoyable. Francis Hutchinson, who was also being educated for the ministry, proved as good and trusty a comrade as the earl's son, and of a disposition less apt to clash with Thomas's own, while in the hospitable house of Mistress Hutchinson, the boy found an ever ready welcome and place at board — the latter condition of special gratulation to one else condemned to the meagre and unwholesome fare supplied by Mistress Eaton. There was trapping rabbits and hunting foxes at the back of the Tramount, coasting on the sharp northern incline of Windmill Hill, that shot one over the bluff and far out over the frozen Charles. There were snowball fights with the boys of the North End, and skating on the mill pond — when Thomas's fine Holland skates were the envy of every boy in town. With spring, came shooting with the long bow at pigeons on the Charlestown marshes, or at the sea-fowl that, when the east wind was straining over the river flats, flew low to their roosting-places on the islands in the

harbour. Wild turkeys and ducks, cooked by one's own hands, were eating not to be despised even by one who had sate at an earl's board. As warmer days loosed the rivulets and covered the country about with myriad flowers unknown to English soil, there were explorations of the new land, with just the possibility of an attack by the wolves or bears, to add zest to these excursions. It would have been gratifying to write to Theophilus of an actual encounter with the savage men which ranged up and down the country, little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same. But although some of these people, from accounts that had reached the Bay Colony from other parts, were known to be cruel, barbarous, and most treacherous, being most furious in their rage, and merciless when they overcame, delighting to torment men in the most bloody manner that might make the weak to quake and tremble, it was hearsay, rather than actual experience that gave the people of Boston their darker conception of the Indians. A few years previous to the permanent settlement of the town, a pestilence had raged amongst the savage tribes that invested the eastern coast of Massachusetts, from which they perished in such numbers that the dead lay in heaps all up and down the shores, there being not enough survivors to bury them. Peril from such

a source seemed increasingly unlikely, as time went on, and the English, in ever increasing numbers, seeking in the New World the religious freedom that was denied them at home, extended their settlements farther and farther along the coast — as yet not beyond tide-water, but with every indication that ere long they would dispossess of their inheritance the savage peoples that still roamed the unbroken wilderness of the interior. Every year, too, the only tribe for many miles around — roaming the southern coast — of which any considerable numbers remained, the Narragansetts, brought to Boston presents of wampum and beaver skins, and received in return the white men's beads and blankets, the nominal interchange of gifts being tacitly recognised by either side as the feudal offering of vassals and their gracious acceptance by the lords.

On leaving the wharf, Thomas and Francis took advantage of the general relaxation of discipline to visit their rabbit traps on the solitary wooded heights above Blaxton's Point, a bluff on the farther side of the Tramount, looking westward. Several of the traps were found to contain captives, which the boys proceeded to cook by their own fire on the hillside; although their appetite did not thereby suffer for a later meal of suppawn and warm beer at the Hutch-

inson board. Shortly after, Thomas took leave of his friend at the door with the whispered words: "All is ready; at nine of the clock, on Blaxton's Point," without observing Faith's quick, comprehensive glance at her brother and himself.

It was dusk when Thomas reached Master Eaton's house. It was the opinion, amongst those who had the opportunity of observing something of the inner workings of the Eaton household, that its mistress rather encouraged Master Savage's frequent absences from board, as an appreciable saving of her own provender. It was, therefore, somewhat to Thomas's surprise, — and not without a premonitory twinge of dismay, — that he perceived Master Eaton in the fore-yard of the house, holding in his hand a stout birch rod, and apparently on the lookout for some one. As the boy came nearer, it was also manifest that the schoolmaster had been taking advantage of the general holiday and the possible arrival by the *Abigail* of certain consignments of *aqua vitæ* to the tavern near the town dock, newly opened by Goodman Samuel Coles.

"So, sirrah, thou hast neglected thy tasks to run about the town, making thyself an example of idleness and wanton mischief and unseemly brawling, and drawing thereby on thy master the rebuke of the

magistrates!" began Master Eaton, twirling the rod threateningly.

"Thou hadst given me no task," answered Thomas, not disrespectfully, but in a tone that may have betrayed some scornful recognition of the schoolmaster's condition, for it was in a tone of increasing anger that Master Eaton went on: "Thou hast nought better to do than to run about with slanderous tales of thy good mistress and the food which is a thousand times too good for a worthless vagabond like thee!"

"All the town knows, and that without words of mine, that the fare thou and Mistress Eaton gave thy scholars, so long as thou hadst any to turn from thy board with qualmish stomach, was bread made of sour meal, and fish that the very swine left untouched, while beer and butter were not seen in thy house for weeks at a time!" cried Thomas, hotly.

"Ho, ho, listen to our fine young lordling, — with his long rent roll and servants to command! He thinks he may live on the fat of the land, when he doth not earn his salt. Thou shouldst be thankful that thou hast so good and merciful a master, for if I made complaint to the magistrates of all thine idleness and mischief, think'st thou wouldst escape with a trouncing?"

"Let him feel what it is to say his mistress's food is not fit for the swine!" called a shrill voice from the doorway.

"That will I — as well as to settle certain other little accounts that thou hast been running up," added Master Eaton, turning to Thomas, "and which have come to mine ears of late. Off with thy doublet!"

Thomas had often been whipped, both at home — as he still called Sempringham — and by Master Eaton, in the earlier days of the school, when it had presented a flourishing appearance, and the schoolmaster himself had maintained a semblance, at least, of self-respect; and rebellion had never entered the boy's mind. But something told him that the whipping he was about to receive would be unlike any from which he had ever before suffered. He took a backward step. They were standing near the woodpile, and the idea shot through the boy's mind of seizing one of the heavy billets and defending himself. He knew, did it come to an actual trial of strength, that he was more than a match for the schoolmaster. Master Eaton repeated his command. The habit of obedience conquered, and almost mechanically Thomas unhooked his doublet. The first blow fell.

He was conscious, at last, — how long it was since



"THE HABIT OF OBEDIENCE CONQUERED"

the cruel blows had been raining upon his head and shoulders he did not know — that he should probably die under the infliction. Every now and then there appeared to be a lapse of consciousness, probably only of a fraction of time, but seemingly infinite in duration. The next time — the next — would be the last.

With the conviction came a swift gathering of all his forces. He would not die, slain by this drunken brute, without lifting a finger in self-defence. Or, if he must die, he would fall as became the descendant of Brian le Sauvage, with the dead twenty thick around him! He struck madly out with some weapon that had mysteriously found its way into his hand, again and again — thinking that with each blow he felled one of the surrounding foe. He must keep on striking those death-dealing blows, till the enemy was no more.

Presently he found that his blows were no longer meeting any object of resistance. A shrill voice reached his brain, calling "Murder!"

He stopped, dazed. Returning consciousness showed him Master Eaton lying, motionless, at his feet; his own hand grasped a heavy billet that he must have snatched from the woodpile. It was wet with something. As the stick dropped from his

grasp, he saw that it left a red stain upon his hand.

In the very desperation of the situation, his brain cleared. The next instant, he had seized his doublet, and was off over the marshes like a deer in the direction of Blaxton's Point.

CHAPTER IV.

To his surprise, when he reached Blaxton's Point, two persons instead of one were awaiting him. Francis stood by the boat — an old dugout, that had probably belonged to Master Blaxton, and which the boys had since utilised for their fishing excursions. The other figure was seated in the stern of the canoe, wrapped in a cape that prevented recognition.

"Who's that?" questioned Thomas, sharply.

"Faith. She would come," muttered Francis, discontentedly.

"Why didst thou tell her we were going — thou mightst have known she would come with us — and probably get here first," returned Thomas, sharply.

"I did not tell her, nor did I know any more than thou, that she would be here when I came, seated where thou seest her now, and refusing to move an inch, though I have talked myself near dumb trying to get her to go home. We shall have to let

her go," groaned Faith's brother, warned by experience that it were an idle task to keep Faith out of any scheme in which she was resolved to participate.

"I suppose we must take her along, then," assented Thomas, ungraciously.

"Didst thou and Francis think I would have thee go alone, with no women folk to care for thee?" said a composed voice from the boat.

"'Tis no place for girls," asserted Thomas. "Why must thou be always at our heels, Faith?"

"Have I been, ever, a marplot in thy plans?" came the girl's indignant voice from the shadows. "When we have gone fishing, have I not always pulled an oar with thee, and dug mine own bait, — ay, and thine, too? An I went not along now, who would bind thine hurts and mend thy clothing and cook thy meals? Think'st thou in that land of blackamoors and convicts and godless folk of the Church of England that thou couldst find any one to keep the house decent or the hearth clean or the kettle filled?"

"An thou must come, why, come," returned Francis, desperately. "But quit chattering. The tide hath turned, and in five minutes we should have been left sticking in the mud," he added, turning to Thomas, "while the *Mary Rose* was showing her

heels below the Castle. I thought thou wouldst never get here!"

It was evident, indeed, that no time was to be lost, for there was already a bed of ooze visible along the shore, and each succeeding wavelet broke farther and yet a little farther behind its predecessor. As he spoke, Francis was unfastening the cord that secured the dugout to a stake driven in the mud.

"Sit in the stern while we get her off," directed Thomas to the occupant of the canoe.

Faith moved, not without some apparent difficulty, for she seemed to have a burden in her arms about which she displayed much solicitude. The bow of the boat thus lifted out of the water, the two boys, putting their shoulders to the stern, by the exertion of all their strength succeeded in getting the clumsy craft afloat.

For a time, as Thomas and Francis bent themselves to the oars, none of the little party spoke, partly because of the fear of discovery, — doubtless exaggerated, as there had been no dwelling in the neighbourhood since the hermit Blaxton abandoned his house on the bluff, — and partly because the thoughts of all present were strained upon the necessity of getting out of the shallows before the receding tide left them a wide stretch of oozy mud and

sand, interspersed with patches of coarse marsh grass. Passing the promontory that marked the western extremity of the peninsula, they were soon in the main body of the stream. The force of the receding tide in the estuary sufficed to bear them onward, although care was necessary to keep the boat in the tortuous channel, the eddies and counter currents of the lower Charles not infrequently playing strange tricks on the unwary boatman.

Suddenly Faith became engaged in a frantic struggle with something beneath her cape, — an animate body, evidently, that all at once, struggling free from the imprisoning folds, gave vent to a prolonged and incensed howl that awakened all the echoes of the Tramount; so many repetitions, indeed, were sent back of pussy's indignant cries, that it might well have seemed as though the dome was the coming scene of some midnight orgy, and that a horde of witches' familiars were greeting one another, as they and their mistresses alighted from their broomstick steeds.

"An thou keepest not that beast quiet I will throw her overboard," threatened Thomas, who was the first to recover his self-possession from this unexpected demonstration. "Take care," he called to his companion, for in the moment that followed the

tumult of catcalls, his fellow oarsman made several false strokes. "Dip deeper — faster —" But Francis failed to bring his stroke into unison with that of his companion, and the boat was pulled about in eccentric circles, till a cry from Faith caused both boys to desist from their futile labours and look over their shoulders in the direction indicated.

At some distance farther down the stream, between the channel and the shore, was dancing a brilliant light in the form of a cross. As the occupants of the boat stared, dumfounded, at this spectacle, the light suddenly stopped in its gyrations and hovered immediately over the surface of the water, as though considering its next movement. Then it darted across the stream between the dugout and the *Mary Rose*, with the manifest intent of intercepting the runaways.

Suddenly there was a terrific glare, a mass of flame appeared to rise to the very heavens, followed by a roar that sent its reverberations echoing and reëchoing up the river, over the sleeping town, and far out on the marshes. When silence came at last, patches of burning timbers were seen far and wide upon the stream; where the black hulk of the Bristol ship had loomed in the darkness was now a glowing mass that sank nearer and nearer the water's edge,

till only a faint light marked the spot where had recently floated the ill-fated *Mary Rose.*

In the paralysis of fright that followed the explosion, both boys had dropped their oars, and the boat had since been drifting at the mercy of the current or counter currents. They were now apparently at some distance from the scene of the explosion, for all about was total darkness; but not by straining their eyes in any direction could they obtain a clue to their whereabouts. As the tide was running out rapidly at the time of the explosion, it would have appeared that they had been carried out to sea; but all were too familiar with the strong salt breeze, laden with the odour of pine, that blew amongst the islands, not to feel sure, by its absence, that they were still on the river. While they were conjecturing and deliberating, the cat, struggling free from her mistress's arms, leaped over the side of the boat, into what its occupants had supposed to be a stretch of water. A few more leaps and the animal disappeared from view, a triumphant howl in the distance evidencing her rejoicing at her escape.

Just then, the crescent moon came partly out from the clouds by which it had hitherto been obscured.

"Look yonder! Canst not see something?" queried Thomas, in a hushed voice.

A few rods distant, a battalion of hags — hideous, bowed, distorted forms — were hastening forward on some purpose unhallowed by the light. The rustle of the garments of the uncanny horde was followed by deadly stillness, as each horrid presence appeared to await some word of command to swoop upon its victims. The moon went behind the clouds again and the three trembling children waited in darkness for the onrush of those frightful forms.

After what seemed a lifetime, the moon came fully out.

"Corn shocks!" exclaimed Thomas, in a voice that still shook with the horror of the unknown.

Groups of half a dozen stalks, from which the corn had been stripped, were tied together a few inches below the tops of the stalks and left standing till they should have become sufficiently dry to gather for fodder and bedding for the cattle.

"I will go ashore and see where we are," said Thomas, after a momentary hesitation.

The others, relieved of their worst terrors, yet still apprehensive, awaited his return.

"There is no house in sight; we would better come ashore and wait till morning," he reported.

Without oars, it was manifestly useless to remain in the boat; the little party scrambled ashore, and cross-

ing an intervening strip of marsh, found themselves in the corn-field. Either boy being supplied with a piece of match, a fire of the cornstalks soon gave a measure of comfort to the unfortunate adventurers.

"I am going to reconnoitre," said Thomas, presently, pointing to a faint glow on the horizon that seemed to betoken the dawn. So far as they could conjecture from their immediate surroundings, they were in the meadows that bordered the Charles in the neighbourhood of Newtown. But at the mercy of a stream that, in a portion of its course, meandered a distance of forty miles to cover what was four miles in a bee line, it was possible that they might not have gone a great distance from their starting-point. Of the time, they could make no guess, for in their panic minutes or hours might have passed.

"Thou wilt lose thy way, and once lost in the wilderness, people sometimes wander for days without regaining the path," urged Francis.

"If I lose my bearings, I can follow the river back to Newtown," returned Thomas, confidently; and without more ado, set out in the direction of the light.

To the two in the corn-field, dawn was long in coming. The light on the horizon became momentarily fainter, and finally went out altogether. The moon having by this time set, all was darkness again.

"Will daylight never come!" exclaimed Francis, in tones of despair. "If, indeed, the everlasting Day of Darkness be not upon the earth," he muttered. "Nay, be not afraid, Faith," he added, as his sister slipped a trembling hand into his.

"I meant not to be afraid," returned the girl, in a tone she bravely strove to make steady. "Did I not tell thee and Thomas, when I would go with thee, that I would be no trouble? But I wish Thomas had not gone. I am sore afraid that he will fall in with wolves and bears, or — or worse," she added, in a hushed voice, and with an involuntary glance over her shoulder.

How it chanced neither boy nor girl could say, for care had been taken to clear a considerable space of ground about the fire. Doubtless some errant spark, shooting to a distance, fell on a stalk that, dry as tinder, was instantly a slender column of flame that swiftly enwrapped the entire shock; the flames extended to the next shock and the next, till the two children, perceiving their efforts to extinguish the fire to be in vain, and themselves in some danger, retreated to the boat, whence, in dismayed helplessness, they watched the flames apparently about to make an end of the entire field.

Several men were seen running toward the spot;

forming a line to the river and being provided with buckets, by great diligence they succeeded in putting out the fire, but not before the greater part of the shocks had been destroyed. When, at last, they ceased from their exertions, it was to regard the trespassers with scant favour. It was, indeed, a sorry ending of their brave adventure when Francis and Faith were haled to the house of the owner of the field, there to await what action might follow.

Newtown was scarce a quarter-mile distant from the place where they had landed. The mistress of the house happily proved of gentle temper, and exclaiming over the sorry plight in which Faith was found to be, soon had her comfortable on the settle by the fire while a steaming bowl of catnip tea sent warmth to her shivering limbs. As she bound Faith's hand, badly burnt in her efforts to extinguish the fire, she questioned the girl concerning the plight in which she had been found, holding up her hands in wonder and awe at the ensuing recital.

"'Tis God's mercy that thou wert stayed in thy mad scheme," she said, solemnly. "Last night, the *Mary Rose* was blown to pieces with her own powder, being twenty barrels. No man knows how the powder took fire, but every one on board perished,

with the exception of one man, who was carried up in the scuttle and so let fall into the water."

"My mother — was any one in Boston hurt?" asked Faith, trembling.

"The explosion shook all the houses in Boston," returned the goodwife. "Great pieces of timber were carried a long way off, and some rags and such light things beyond Boston meeting-house. It was a marvel that the town was not burnt to ashes. My man, with several others, set out for Boston to ascertain the cause of the noise; all the town was awake and abroad, some thinking it an earthquake, others holding that the Indians had made a descent upon them, and still others saying that the end of the world was come."

On the information regarding Thomas, the men, scarcely staying to touch food, set out in search of the missing boy. They returned at nightfall with grave faces.

"Thou fearest" — the good wife shuddered.

"Ay, that he may have wandered into the Ragged Plain," returned the goodman, soberly; and at the words, Faith, for the first time in the experiences of the past four and twenty hours, broke down and sobbed aloud.

Ragged Plain, depopulated by the plague of a few

years previous, was a strange labyrinth of unbeaten, bushy ways in the woody wilderness, interspersed with swamps, and cut by running streams that prevented widespread forest fires. Infested with wolves and rattlesnakes, and the reputed haunt of demons, it was said that no one lost in these bad lands ever found his way out, or that his dead body was known to be recovered.

On the following day, Francis and Faith were brought to their home. Anxiety for the missing children had of course been intense, and conjecture as to the cause of their disappearance ran wild. Had they not been the offspring of godly parents, duly baptised and instructed in the Catechism, the opinion would have gained credence that they had perished in the explosion, — or at least that their mortal frames had so vanished. For the survivor of the ill-fated *Mary Rose* had recovered his senses sufficiently to narrate that immediately before the accident, he, with others on board, had heard distinctly the mewing and howling of myriad cats on the heights of the Tramount; and as the summit of the three-topped hill was known to have been, in former days, a favourite gathering-place of witches, it seemed superfluous to look farther for the cause of the catastrophe. A Geneva Bible, in the pocket of

this man, was the evident explanation of his own miraculous preservation.

A party of Boston men was promptly organised to join with those of Newtown in the search for Thomas Savage. For several ensuing days, the chief subject of conversation in the settlement was of the missing boy. Scarce an hour could have elapsed from the time of his leaving his companions in the corn-field to the setting forth of the Newtown men on his track, but he had vanished as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed him, — or, what was more probable, the evil powers that infested Ragged Plain had borne him bodily away. The country for a considerable radius about Newtown had now been covered in the search, but without avail, the only human being in the neighbourhood being an old squaw gathering sticks in the marshy fields not far from her house, — a birchbark structure on piles. Toward the end of the week it was thought best to obtain of Master Winthrop the aid of the four fine hounds recently sent him from England by his brother-in-law, Master Downing. The solicitude for Thomas was by this time, however, somewhat divided with sympathy for Master Eaton, who, on recovering from what he alleged to be the effects of a severe blow on his head, dealt him by his

unruly pupil, had lost no time in lodging complaint against Master Savage with the magistrates. There was even a growing feeling in the town, chiefly, however, amongst those who are ever ready to believe the worst of their fellow beings, or, in some instances, by those who had suffered from Thomas's mischievous propensities, that the lad's disappearance was of his own contriving. In view of the serious charge against him, the affair of setting fire to the corn-field sank into comparative insignificance. The latter suit, also, proved to be a matter easily adjusted, as the owner of the field was content with the payment of adequate damages. The ordinary procedure in such cases had recently been set aside, the court having enacted that no one "should sue one another at law, before Mr. H. Vane and the two elders had the hearing and deciding of the cause."

Short as was the time in which Master Vane had been in Boston, it was little short of marvellous how all hearts turned to him. Though young in years, it was openly said that it was to his sagacity, to the clear, penetrating power of his mind, rather than to the riper judgment of his two compeers, Master Oliver and Master Leverett, that the wisdom and justice of these decisions were due. Certain it was that all parties in the threatened difficulties

had left the presence of Master Vane and the two elders well satisfied to take no further action at law.

As Master Hutchinson and his two children were about to leave the room in which the examination had been held, there was a slight stir by the door, and directly appeared Master Eaton and his wife, accompanied by the beadle, in whose custody was a wet, bedraggled, mud-stained figure with long, tousled hair and begrimed face. At the utter forlornity of the youthful prisoner's appearance, Master Vane, despite the ordinary gravity of his demeanour, threw back his handsome head and laughed till he could laugh no more. Under the influence of that infectious peal, even the stern faces of the two elders and the beadle relaxed.

"Thy name and station?" questioned Master Oliver, at length.

"Thomas Savage, gentleman," came in the clear, ringing tones that one could scarce associate with one guilty of "felonious assault."

The examination on the more serious charge began.

Master Vane took no part in the earlier proceedings in the case, but his eyes scarce left the face of the prisoner, that turned from accuser to judges, at first indignant, then defiant, at last growing set and

white as the boy realised the magnitude of the charge against him. But in that open, handsome countenance, fear there was none.

Master Vane spoke at last.

By and by, the beadle shook Thomas slightly by the arm.

"Wake up," he said, roughly, but not ill-naturedly.

"I am ready," said the boy, in a dazed tone.

"Ready for what — a square meal?" returned the man, smiling. "Thou must be sore in need of food," he added, "if, as they say, thou hast had naught but parched corn to eat for a week past!"

"What have they been saying?" queried Thomas, rubbing his eyes, as one who passes from darkness into light, and looking bewildered about the room. Master Vane and the elders were conferring with Master Hutchinson. Master Eaton and his wife stood hard by, in evident custody.

"Thou art free, lad," explained the beadle. "I thought thou didst fall asleep during the progress of the examination. Perchance hunger and weariness, and mayhap something of fever from the unmerciful beating thou didst receive, put on its semblance. Master Eaton hath confessed to having whipped thee cruelly, when under the influence of drink, and that the blow thou struckst him was in self-defence. Mis-

tress Eaton hath likewise owned to having given thee poor food, and often none at all; to have taken away thy clothes under pretence of mending them, as was agreed, and neglecting to return them, and in divers other ways to have disregarded the terms upon which thy guardian placed thee with them. Faith, I should not like to be tried for my life, and guilty of the charge against me, and have Master Vane question me," went on the worthy man; "for whether or no, his eyes have a trick of getting the truth out of one, even as the witchhazel wand is drawn downwards by the presence of water in the earth below. Turn about is fair play, and Master Eaton and his wife are bound over for trial before the court on the charge of failure to keep their bond, and for thine unjust and cruel punishment. For all of which thou hast Master Vane to thank, and none other. For the present, thou art to live with Mistress Hutchinson, whereof I also give thee joy, for all Boston knows of her and her good deeds."

It was not long ere Thomas was installed in his new home, with his hunger in a fair way of being appeased.

Faith was regarding him with eyes of wonder.

"Wert thou in great peril?" she questioned.

Thomas coloured, and manifested some reluctance

to enlarge upon the theme of his recent adventures. But Faith's curiosity was not easily balked.

"There was an Indian," he rejoined, at length, shortly.

"What of the Indian?" queried Faith.

"If thou must know," returned Thomas, his good nature returning with the bounteous supply set before him of good things from Mistress Hutchinson's buttery, "this is what chanced. After leaving thee and Francis, I had gone but a little way when I came to an Indian hut, built on piles, and with a ladder convenient. There I decided to wait till morning. Hardly had I drawn up the ladder after me when the owner of the hut appeared, and was furiously angry on finding me in possession. I would not come down, and one could not get up without the ladder. There was a store of parched corn within, and, as I was nearly famished, I ate some. Some," added Thomas, after a momentary hesitation, "I fired at the Indian through a cornstalk, which made an excellent pea-shooter. This sport made the savage furiously angry, and — and threatening. By and by I heard the Newtown men calling, but as the Indian gave no sign of raising the siege, and — and became even more threatening, as it seemed I were about to fall into — into the hands of a horrid revenge, I

thought it best to remain where I was. At last the hounds brought the search party to the foot of the house, and I could descend without fear of consequences."

Incited by the wide-eyed horror of his listener's face, Thomas made a dramatic pause.

"Did he — oh, Thomas, — did he want to — to — s—" With a white face, Faith paused before the awesome word that never failed to send a shudder through the heart of him who spake or him who hearkened.

"N— no, not exactly," answered Thomas. "After being paid for the corn, of which I had eaten nearly the whole, the enemy withdrew," he added.

"Were they many?" asked Faith.

"There was only one," answered Thomas, lamely; adding, still more lamely, "*He* was a squaw. She wanted to — to — s—" But that word, also, remained unspoken. Only it was not scalp.

CHAPTER V.

"Do get thee from the way, Thomas," exclaimed Faith, as she wielded the broom vigorously about the kitchen. "Two boys are not twice one boy; they are twenty boys. Thou and Francis together track in enough mud and gravel to build the new causey on the Neck! Canst not let the baby alone?" she added, indignantly, as Thomas, wandering restlessly about the room, gave the cradle a violent shove, with the result of producing a vigorous protest from its rudely awakened occupant. "Here, take thou the broom! 'Tis but fair that thou shouldst finish sweeping while I put the baby to sleep again."

She took the little one in her arms, and began walking up and down the room, crooning one of the songs, half ballad, half lullaby, that, handed down from mother to child at English hearthstones, were still sung by Boston firesides:

"As I was walking all alone,
Between a water and a wa,
And there I spied a wee, wee man,
And he was the least that ever I saw —"

the while throwing out an occasional remark in the direction of Thomas, who, half repentant, half bent on reprisal for Faith's jeers, was raising little whirlwinds of dust and sand about the room.

"The naughty boy, to be ever in mischief now that school doth not keep! Hast heard what sentence hath been passed on Master Eaton?" she queried. "The court sate yesterday, did it not?"

"Ay, that have I," answered Thomas, in a tone of satisfaction. "He and his wife are banished the Colony, and are to be shipped without delay to Virginia."

"An it were not for Master Vane, the affair might have ended differently indeed for thee," said Faith, gravely. "So says all the town. One marvels that so handsome a man should be gifted with all the graces of mind as well. They say that even Master Winthrop speaks with admiration of his youthful piety, terming him 'a noble young gentleman of excellent parts.'"

"There was a book of plays at the Castle that I liked right well to read," returned Thomas, thoughtfully; "they were writ by one Will Shakespeare, a playwright who was held in right high esteem by his lordship, the Earl of Lincoln. I remember one line, —'A Daniel, a second Daniel, come to judgment!'

So, it seems to me, might one speak of Master Vane. I am glad, so glad, he is to be our next governor," went on the boy, earnestly.

"Why art thou so glad?" queried Faith. "Thinkst thou he will be choosing thee for his squire?"

But for once Thomas's temper was proof against the mockeries of his girl companion. A sparkle came into his eyes, and there was another tone in his voice as he answered:

"Ah, if he only would so choose me! To be squire to such a knight! Think of waiting on Master Vane at board, of caring for his armour, of attending him when he went abroad, of being permitted, sometimes, as I fastened his spurs, to kneel before him — I would gladly be squire all my life, as was my father, in his service. But some day, to receive knighthood at his hands were worth all that the world here holds to be of value!"

Faith broke into a laugh as Thomas, in an enthusiastic flourish of his unwonted weapon, tripped over the broom, with such uncouth gyrations to preserve his balance as to cause the baby, who apparently conceived the idea that the performance was for his special benefit, to laugh and crow with delight.

"Art practising for a midnight ride with the

witches?" cried Faith, laughing; "or wouldst like to keep the broomstick for a steed when thou art knight — or perchance as a weapon against the next time thou art besieged?"

"Let be, Faith," Thomas made answer, sulkily. "'Twas a sorry jest at best, and long ago worn threadbare. 'Twas ill done of thee to tell it to Dean Winthrop, who hath done naught since but jibe at me, till my fists convinced him he would better find another theme for his poor wit. A tattletale finds no lovers."

"I am no tattletale, Thomas Savage, and that thou knowest right well," cried Faith. "An I had naught to do but run over town telling tales of thine idle and mischievous pranks, I should have time, indeed, for naught else. The story went all over Boston without a word from me and so would have travelled had I known nothing thereof. As for lovers, when I want them, let me tell thee, they will not be lacking!" cried the girl, with sparkling eyes.

Thomas, momentarily silenced, withdrew to the window-ledge, while Faith, having laid the baby in the cradle again, began strewing fine white sand over the floor in an intricate pattern.

"What are thou about?" questioned Thomas.

"Some of the women of Boston are coming here

presently," explained Faith. "It seemed not right that the men should listen every Thursday to words of holy exhortation, and women be debarred from a like privilege, so my mother hath invited a few friends to come here to-day to talk over the sermon of last Sabbath, and to ask of her what questions thereon they will — my mother being well fitted for such a task," added Faith, proudly. "'Tis well known that Master Cotton himself hath called her a 'masterpiece of woman's wit,' and Master Vane hath declared her to be 'a prodigy of wit and learning.' Boys are not admitted," she added, significantly, glancing at the sun-dial on the window-sill.

"I have business without," returned Thomas, loftily, making his way toward the door.

"If thy business is what I take it to be, — skating on the millpond, — the ice will have melted before thou get'st there," retorted Faith.

Swift upon assurance of the children's safety, indignation and wrath had cast up a heavy reckoning, from which Faith was not exempt. But her case was considered to have been aggravated by the fact that she was a girl, and the further punishment was decreed that she should not be allowed to leave the house — except, of course, on the Sabbath day, to attend meeting — till she had spun one hundred

skeins of flax. Skilled as Faith was at the wheel, it was rarely, with the demands of other household duties, that she could accomplish more than two skeins a day. As the long hours of the winter wore away at her wearisome task, if, as the girl stopped to tie the knot in the thread, an occasional tear was wiped away, none was the wiser, for Faith bore her punishment bravely, and the only outward sign she gave of how heavily it bore upon her was when her wistful glance followed Thomas and Francis as the two boys raced off to the fine skating on the mill-pond, or to coast on the long slide from the top of Cotton's Hill to the foot of the Common. Most of all did she long to be out of doors when the south wind was blowing, bringing with it the promise of the springtime and the thought of the arbutus blossoms hidden in the leafy hollows of the Tramount, that she, better than any other, knew where to find. It was passing hard, too, that having to bear, from no fault or choice of her own, the exceedingly hard lot of having been born a girl, she should now be so heavily punished because of its limitations.

If other thoughts came to her, in the long hours of solitude, broken only by the whirr of the wheel and the tick of the clock reel, Faith was equally silent regarding them. It may have been that her mind

was less wont to stray in unbidden courses during Master Cotton's sermon, that a softer tone had come into her voice, that sharp words sprang less frequently to her tongue. Such outward change, if any, was unnoted by those about her, who, it chanced, were just then exceedingly occupied with their own affairs. But now the last skein of flax had been put with the rest, ready for the bleaching in fresh running water as soon as the spring should have set the brooks free, and Faith rejoiced, deeming her troubles at an end.

Pending the establishment of the college school at Newtown, that Master Harvard's bequest had now materially aided, Master Cotton had generously offered to give a few boys who were preparing for college the benefit of his own rare learning. Dean Winthrop, Francis Hutchinson and Thomas Savage were of these favoured ones. In his daily goings and comings from the minister's study, Thomas not infrequently met Master Vane, although the boy was at some pains to avoid a direct encounter with the object of his worship, in sore and discomfited recollection of their earlier meeting.

Master Hutchinson, though of estimable character and good education, had so exalted an opinion of his wife's abilities as to leave all matters of household

discipline in her hands. In addition to her ordinary labours at home and abroad, Mistress Hutchinson had of late been so absorbed in study of the Scriptures, as a preparation for the projected meetings, as to pay comparatively little attention to the movements of the two boys. After being dismissed from the minister's study, Francis and Thomas betook themselves to the northern side of Cotton's Hill, and seating themselves on a convenient boulder, discussed what it were best to do with the remainder of the day. Scattered far and wide about the shore at their feet were the timbers that had once formed part of the ill-fated *Mary Rose*. It was hinted that the vessel had carried on a more profitable if less lawful business upon the seas than that of peaceful trader — a supposition to which the strength of the armament she was found to have carried gave colour. Most of this ordnance, after being recovered from the channel, had lain for some time upon the beach in danger of spoiling; recently, the matter had been taken in hand, and such of the great guns as were found to be in proper condition had been mounted on their carriages preparatory to removal to the fort in dilatory process of erection on the hill to the south.

"If we had reached Virginia and made our for-

tunes as we planned," said Francis, "I should have fitted out another ship and gone into the East India trade — with perhaps an occasional venture to the coast of Africa for blackamoors for the New England market; they say slaves fetch a better price here than in the southern colonies."

"I should have naught to do with trade, — or with corn and turnips, — a farmer's life may well enough befit fellows like Dean Winthrop! I should return straightway to England, raise a troop of the finest young men in Lincolnshire, and set out for the Netherlands. In these little Indian fights of which we have heard," Thomas went on magnificently, "if ten men are killed, they think it a sad loss. At the battle of Hastings, where fought my ancestor, Brian le Sauvage, the dead lay twenty thick around. Ah! that were fighting!" sighed Thomas.

"Methinks one man would be too heavy a loss, an I were the man," returned Francis, philosophically, if unheroically.

"I will make thee my lieutenant, Francis," said Thomas, with thoughts that still dwelt on glory.

"And I will take thee aboard my ship as mate, an thou art agreed to keep thy place and not seek to command all aboard, including the captain," retorted the prospective lieutenant, ungratefully.

"Thy ship will be naught but a lighter," answered Thomas, angrily, as one of those clumsy craft was seen in the harbour distance.

For a space, in silent ill-humour, the two boys watched the lighter creep nearer the shore. Suddenly Thomas spoke with much animation:

"Let us fire off the guns yonder. Election Day is not a week off, and it would be fine to celebrate Master Vane's election with a salvo of great guns!"

The proposal was too attractive not to enlist the sympathy of his companion, though suggestive of too many difficulties to win instant assent.

"If we should be found out!" said he, with a reminiscent shrug of his shoulders.

"We shall not be found out," answered Thomas, with a confidence that could scarcely have been based upon experience. "It would make a great noise," he added, enticingly.

But to his less sanguine companion there still appeared difficulties in the way of the scheme.

"Art going to load with gravel?" he suggested, crushingly. "Or wilt thou ask the magistrates for powder, and get the answer they sent when Plymouth begged for ammunition against an expected Indian attack? 'We have no more powder than we want for ourselves!'"

In the end, however, the prospect of the "great noise" was too seductive to be resisted, and Francis assented to the plan, on condition that Thomas should take upon himself the task of obtaining the powder. His own part in the scheme would be to touch off the fuses on election morning. Without further loss of time the two boys raced up the hill and down its farther slopes to Mistress Hutchinson's house. A goodly number of women had been drawn thither, some, doubtless, attracted by the mere novelty of hearing one of their own sex "exercise," but, for the most part, with dispositions eager to benefit by the well-known spiritual gifts of the speaker. Francis would have taken prompt advantage of the general absorption, but Thomas's curiosity was aroused by the proceedings within, and despite sundry impatient tugs at his doublet, he remained beneath the window, that, fortunately for his inquisitive spirit, had been opened by Faith not a moment before to admit a little air into the crowded room. Mistress Hutchinson was speaking in the fervour of pious eloquence that, comforting many a deathbed, had strengthened and consoled as well those who mourned. It was a beautiful voice, with certain inflections, as of a yet purer quality, striking ever and again into its pure, rounded volume — a

peculiarity not infrequently noted in the voices of rarely magnetic folk, and carrying with it not only an undefinable charm, but also a well-nigh irresistible sense of authority.

"You that are against those things and that are for the Spirit and the Lord together, hold up your hands!"

Mistress Hutchinson's voice sounded again in answer to some question that only sharp ears could have distinguished in the babel of shrill, anxious voices that followed the close of her remarks:

"Master Vane and Master Cotton are under a Covenant of Grace."

"Are Master Winthrop and Master Wilson, then, under a Covenant of Works?" demanded a voice, strident with excitement; but before this question could be answered, another woman struck in, in tones high pitched with fearful anxiety:

"I prithee, mistress, is my man under a Covenant of Grace, or is he under a Covenant of Works, and so doomed to everlasting damnation?"

"Come away, or we shall be too late," whispered Francis.

Something of the inexplicable excitement that had laid hold of those within seemed to have communicated itself to Thomas, for apparently forgetful

of the project before them, he remained as though rooted to the spot, unheeding Francis's words, except to jerk his doublet from his friend's hand. He stepped closer to the window, without noticing that in so doing he put his foot upon a stone; tilting forward, his nose came into violent contact with the window-sill. An involuntary exclamation of pain escaped him, and both boys beat a hasty retreat.

The company was dispersing, but there were still a few minutes in which to profit by the absorption of the mistress of ceremonies, as she received the farewell words of the little body of disciples — for such some of the more spiritually minded of the gathering had avowed themselves. The bedroom on the ground floor opened, within, from the kitchen; another door gave access from without; this outside door was secured at top and bottom with heavy oaken bars and staples.

"Stay outside and give warning if any one approaches," said Thomas, preparing to enter.

"It's too late; come away, or we shall be caught," urged Francis, sulkily.

But Thomas was not to be balked in his design, and darted toward the closet. Some inadvertent movement, perchance a backward thrust of his hand, a motion to push Francis from the way, as his com-

panion sought to detain him, sufficed to swing the heavy door, on its clumsy leather hinges, to its place. The consequent jar sent the upper bolt rattling into the staple. Unheeding his companion's warning whistle, Thomas thrust handful after handful of the powder into his doublet, then darted back to the door; it was quite in vain that he strove to unbar it — the staple was just beyond his finger-tips. Faith's voice called softly from the kitchen door:

"Quick, quick, this way," and Thomas darted thitherwards, trying to look unconcerned and watching for a chance to make good his escape, ere Mistress Hutchinson's sharp eyes should fall on his bulging doublet.

The mistress of the house was looking after her departing guests, in one of the fits of abstraction to which she was prone. When she reëntered the kitchen, something of the rapt manner lingered and perhaps obscured her usually keen perceptions.

"Take the bellows, Thomas, and stir the fire," she said, and as the boy, aghast at this command, stared at her in silence, she added, with unwonted sharpness: "Dost hear? Do as thou art bid!"

Almost dazed with fright, Thomas knelt at some distance from the hearth and sent a few feeble puffs at the dying fire. Mistress Hutchinson, with an ex-

clamation of impatience, seized the bellows from over his shoulders and was about to send a vigorous blast upon the back log. At that moment, Faith, approaching with a pail of water to fill the great copper kettle that swung upon the lug-pole, by some inexplicable awkwardness, let the pail slip, with the result of extinguishing the last spark upon the hearth. Under cover of the ensuing cloud of steam, the girl whispered to Thomas :

"Quick, be off!" and tried to disregard the pain of her own scalded hand or that of the stinging box on the ear that accompanied her mother's words :

"Thou'rt a careless wench."

Thomas lost no time in rejoining his companion without, and with him of making the best of his way to the northerly side of the hill.

"Faith, in another moment, I'd have been sent higher up the chimney than ever journeyed witch!" he exclaimed, — and he nor none dreamt that that day a spark had been let fall of which the consequences were like to blow all Boston to destruction.

CHAPTER VI.

"DIDST know — hast heard?" cried Thomas, bursting without ceremony into the Hutchinson kitchen. "Master Vane hath chosen me to the body-guard that is to attend him during his term of office as governor. Such fine array as hath been sent from London! Doublets and small clothes of crimson and white, — the Vane colours, — steel caps, hauberks, small arms, and halberds, while for occasions of special ceremony like to-morrow, we wear fringed white gauntlets, broidered with the Vane coat of arms."

Though the sumptuary laws forbade rich apparel and similar extravagances to the plebeian order, these were readily conceded to individuals dignified by rank and wealth; and it was deemed only fit and proper that Master Vane's servitors should dress as became their master's exalted station.

"Really to be in the service of his honourable Worship, the governor?" inquired Faith, in awe-stricken tones.

"This morning," related Thomas, "Master Cotton, after our Latin, bade me go to Master Vane, who had something of importance to say to me. Never dreaming that I had been chosen to so high and honourable a post, — for though none in Boston be better born, though I say it, there are right many who esteem themselves of greater importance, and who would have liked right well to be appointed halberdier to the governor."

"Wert much afraid?" queried Faith.

"What should I fear?" returned Thomas, loftily, thinking it unnecessary to confess that a score of recent misdeeds, including the loading of the great guns preparatory to fitly ushering in the new administration, had been in his mind, rather than the possibility of honour, when he was admitted to Master Vane's study. The latter apprehension, besides being the suggestion of a guilty conscience, may have been prompted also, by the fact that, the day before, at dusk, as he was returning from placing the fuses in the great guns, he had met Master Vane face to face, and the glance of the young governor-elect was of so penetrating a sort as to render his future halberdier, for the time, exceedingly uncomfortable. "He was so gentle, so courteous," went on the boy,

thoughtfully, "that one could not be afraid, although sure am I that never, for a single instant, would one forget that Master Vane is master."

"What did he say?" questioned Faith, looking at Thomas as though the mantle of the master had in somewise fallen upon the servitor.

"He asked me, first, if I would like to enter his service on his body-guard; and I told him I should esteem it a great honour, and would try to do my duty as I understood it or as his Worship saw fit to instruct me," related the boy, circumspectly. "He spake then, at some length, of what service would be required of me, and of the time I would have to pursue my studies with Master Cotton, which he wished me to continue. All of which being understood, to-morrow I am to enter his service as halberdier, at fifteen shillings a year, and food and clothing to boot; for lodging, at least until such time as his own house be completed, he preferred that I should sleep here. His servant will bring the accoutrements anon, that I am to wear for the first time to-morrow, for the election sermon."

"I shall see thee in thy bravery!" cried Faith, with sparkling eyes.

"Be sure that thou art on hand, for we shall not tarry on the way to church, and everybody, from far

and near, is coming to Boston to-morrow to see us," advised Thomas.

That evening, a boyish figure stole from out the shadows of Mistress Hutchinson's house and made its way along the footpath up Cotton's Hill; winding through the scrubby trees and huckleberry bushes that covered the uplands, the summit of the Tramount was at last reached. The lights were out in all the houses of the town, save one on the northerly spur of the hill, beneath whose roof dwelt Harry Vane. Laying on the ground the accoutrements that on the morrow he was to don in the governor's services, Thomas prepared to spend the night beside them, halberd in hand, in vigil and prayer, as became the faithful squire about to be attached to the personal service of his lord. What mattered it that the age of chivalry was past, and that only in his own heart could he vow himself to the fealty of those glorious days?

Presently, a fog seemed to be drifting over his senses, and his hand relaxed its grip. The noise of the falling halberd aroused him, and for a few minutes, walking up and down the plateau served to arouse his dormant faculties; but soon his eyelids drooped again. It was not exactly forbidden in the knightly ritual to seat oneself for a few minutes; nor

was it interdicted by any known rule of chivalry that one might rest his head for an instant upon his helmet. His heavy eyelids had their way.

And as he slept, he dreamt.

He saw Master Vane, not as he had often seen him in the past months, clad in courtly apparel, such as was worn by the young noblemen of the court; but arrayed in shining armour, and mounted on a great battle-horse. His visor was up, and Thomas could see his face, which was raised to heaven and shining as with an exceeding great light. The voice of an unseen herald sounded:

"*Laissez les aller!*" and the closed helmet shut Harry Vane's face from view.

Then came the thunder of the horse's hoofs, and the knight, lance in rest, advanced toward a gigantic opponent, who, even in the fraction of time in which he awaited his adversary, grew in size and blackness, till he seemed to overspread earth and sky. But all undaunted that with his single arm he must vanquish or die, Sir Harry's lance met this creature of the infernal regions, who quivered in his seat, tottered, and fell to the ground. But even as the monster lay in the first shock of insensibility, he stirred and partially raised himself, and Thomas knew that he not only lived, but would rise to many such encounters;

and that time and again good men and true would go down before him. Would he conquer for always? And because the boy did not know, though he cried aloud to the very heavens for answer, his heart was sore heavy within him.

But the knight lay upon the ground where he fell, and stirred not. Then his faithful squire ran to him and lifted his visor. But even as he raised his master's head, he knew by the look upon his face that he was wounded unto death. Only, instead of the glaze that comes over the vision of the dying, a great light shot into the black-brown eyes that were looking into his, and Sir Harry's lips moved:

"Thou wilt remember?" and though unknowing with what quest he was charged, his squire bowed his head in solemn promise.

Then Sir Harry half arose, and reclining on one arm, with the other he drew his sword, and spake the old, ringing words:

"In the name of God, of St. George, and St. Michael, I make thee knight!"

"Wake, wake, lad! What art thou doing here?" called a voice.

Thomas, his cheeks stained with the tears of his dream, awoke to find Master Vane bending over him and shaking him gently by the shoulder.

"Art alive?" muttered the boy, staring wildly about the hilltop. "Where is thine adversary?"

"Gramercy, I am still alive, and have met no worse adversary than a stray pig that might have disputed the right of way thither, 'tis true, only that I ingloriously left his pigship the path," answered Master Vane, laughing. Then, as his eyes fell upon the heap of accoutrements near by, he looked down upon his young companion with the eyes that made men many years his senior yield their inmost thoughts to him. All he said, however, was, "By my faith, an I were thou, I think I would choose another bedroom than that cooled by the east wind of Boston. Truly, it pierces one's very marrow!"

He seated himself by the boy's side, and flung the wide folds of his cloak about him.

Below, the signs of life were becoming visible. Doors opened, men and women issued from the houses carrying buckets to some adjoining spring; thin spirals of smoke curled upward from the chimneys; through the still air came the notes of lusty cocks greeting the morning. The rosy glow on the horizon extended, a sheet of flame, nearly to the zenith, transforming the sea to a stretch of crimson and purple and opal.

In silence, the boy still folded in the man's close

embrace, they two, alone on the hilltop, watched a new day dawn upon Boston — upon the world.

"Get thee to thy home and breakfast," said Master Vane, at length, smiling. "I would not that my guard grew weak and faint with vigil and fasting. I may yet have need of the sturdy strength of thy right arm, Thomas."

At the edge of the plateau, the boy turned for a last look at his master, for so, in his thoughts, he already termed him. Master Vane stood with raised hat, as though to salute the coming day. Doubtless with some lingering fantasy of his dream, Thomas thought to hear the words with which the knight entered the lists:

"May God defend the right!"

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY in the morning of the day on which the new governor was to receive his office at the hands of the people, the market-place was thronged with the craftsmen and other plebeian inhabitants of the town. Soon, all the neighbouring plantations were adding their numbers, journeying afoot, in farm wagons and on horseback, in the latter case frequently accompanied by wife or daughter. A party of Indians, in savage finery, — embroidered deerskin robes, wampum belts, and feathers, — stood apart from the rest of the throng, with faces of impassive gravity. Sailors there were, too, from a vessel just landed in Boston ; rough fellows with wide breeches, heavy dark beards, and knives stuck in the folds of their gay sashes.

To judge by the words spoken on every side, most of the people had come thither for no other purpose than to behold the "Boy Governor" — the appellation bestowed by Boston's love and pride upon the youthful magistrate.

"Truly, 'tis well said that Boston is gone mad over Master Vane," said a stout old man, who, with a comely young matron by his side, was holding a horse by its bridle not far from the meeting-house.

"Our worshipful governor is a fine young gentleman, truly," said a bystander, an artisan evidently belonging to Boston. "Despite his rare grace and beauty, and the fact that his father is high in favour with his gracious Majesty the king, Master Vane hath forsaken the vanities of the court to practise godliness here."

"I have nought against the governor but his youth," answered the yeoman. "Methinks a lad of scarce four and twenty years is hardly fitted to take the affairs of the Colony out of the hands of those who led them thither — grave and tried men of twice and thrice his years."

"Master Vane is not an ordinary youth," answered the Boston man. "I am told that he is esteemed, by those in high places, both at home and in this country, who have had a chance to observe him freely, to be a man of extraordinary parts, a pleasant wit, a great understanding. Certes, this much I may say of myself: in the time he hath been in Boston, nought but praise hath been heard of him; he hath proven himself, in very truth, the blessed peace-

maker. All who would see the increase of the fruits of the Spirit must rejoice at this day's election."

The talk of the multitude was hushed as the sound of drum and clarion announced the coming of the procession. The train-band, clad in burnished steel, with plumage nodding over their bright morions, although their martial display generally called forth the plaudits of the crowd, and the body of worshipful magistrates and ministers that followed, passed almost in silence, the thoughts of the crowd intent upon one face and form.

As the boy governor came in sight, preceded by his halberdiers, the throng pressed closer and yet more close, to catch a glimpse of Boston's idol. All too soon Master Vane passed from sight into the meeting-house, and from the crowd without arose the hum of eager discussion and comment.

"Didst mark, father, how the sunlight turned his hair to gold — didst see the jewel-hilted sword by his side, and the fine lace ruffles at his wrists?" exclaimed the young matron, who was the companion of the yeoman. "With what courtly grace did he remove his plumed hat as he entered the meeting-house! An one were told the king passed by, 'twere no matter for wonderment."

"'Tis not to be gainsaid that his dress became

him right well, though better fitting the court and its fripperies than a rude little hamlet in a new country," rejoined her father, with a shake of the head. "For mine own part, I would rather it had been Master Winthrop in the place of chief magistrate."

"And so, methinks, would Master Winthrop himself," returned the artisan, significantly. "Though ever of grave and thoughtful cast, it seemed that our deputy governor's face was a shade more serious than usual, when none gave glance at him, but were agape to behold this stripling stranger!"

"Friend, thou wrong'st Master Winthrop," answered the yeoman, gravely. "He hath the true good of the colony ever at heart, not his own advantage, and would not entrust its welfare to the rash guidance of youth."

"An thou doubt'st the wisdom of our choice," observed the artisan, in a manner not far removed from sulkiness, "I will say only, come hither a year hence and see our boy governor, and in what esteem the people of Boston continue to hold him."

For answer, the yeoman turned to his companion with the words:

"Sure, there be something in this Boston air that goes to men's heads like aqua vitæ. They are as like to tear one another to pieces over trifles as

though they had all at once forgot what it was to be Englishmen, and were turned French or Spanish!"

"My father means no offence, sir," said the young woman, as the Boston man flushed angrily at the biting speech, and was evidently about to make some heated reply. "Couldst tell me, sir," she went on, with the manifest intention of changing a subject that appeared fraught with danger, "who was the halberdier who walked behind his honourable Worship — he with the curls and bright dark eyes? Though the youngest, he looked the bravest and bonniest of the four guards."

"Thou must indeed be a stranger in these parts not to know Master Thomas Savage," was the answer, given in a tone to which the equanimity was scarcely restored. "His looks might not save him from the gallows, did he get his deserts, for he hath the reputation of being the most idle, mischievous boy in town, whom a sound flogging would mightily benefit. It hath been matter of wonder all over Boston, ay, and 'tis said in high places as well as low, that the worshipful Governor Vane should encourage idleness and lawlessness in the person of Master Savage!"

"Hath he none to correct his faults?" asked the

young matron, gently. "This young Master Savage hath so handsome and open a countenance that I would fain take his faults to be those of youth and indiscretion, rather than of vice."

"Of a truth, the boy seemeth to have fallen between two stools," returned the artisan, his good humour apparently restored. "The magistrates hesitate to call him to account, though knowing well that he is the leader of all the mischief in town, because that he is the kinsman of the great Earl of Lincoln, and 'tis known that unkind reports of us at home, or talk of dissension amongst our leaders, might well lead to our undoing. Besides, Master Winthrop's long standing quarrel with Master Dudley, who is this lad's guardian, is at last bridged by the marriage of their children, and the deputy governor is loath to arouse renewed ill feeling between them. Though Master Winthrop is no longer governor, his word carries weight in the Council. At least, this, in some sort, be the reading that we humble folk have given the fact that time and again have the magistrates winked at pranks of this same worshipful young Master Savage, when a lad without such high and mighty kinsfolk would have been made to smart roundly."

"Couldst tell us where we could obtain a drink of

beer?" questioned the yeoman. "We have fared from Salem this morning, and Boston dust sticks in one's throat."

"I fear that thou wouldst find it difficult to get a draught at the tavern, as it is crowded with strangers; but, an thou hast no ill feeling for water, yonder is a spring" — the man indicated the slope behind Master Winthrop's house, not far distant. "The water is not so wholesome as the good wine and beer of London; but else, for water, it is as good as any in the world."

It would be long past meridian ere the services in the meeting-house were concluded and the fine company seen again. The throng without was dispersing, some finding accommodations for eating the dinners with which they were provided at the Sabba'-day house adjoining the meeting-house; others, so fortunate as to have friends or relatives in the town, repaired to the dwellings of these for rest and refreshment. The greater part, however, were making their way to the Common, where most of those who had come from a distance had left their horses and wagons.

Of a sudden, there sounded, from the other side of the Tramount, the boom of a great gun, followed by another and yet another, report and echo mingling,

till it seemed as though a hostile fleet was sending its volleys into the ill-fated town. People poured from the meeting-house; the multitude without, at first stricken dumb with terror and amazement, pushed and struggled in the endeavour to get elbow room, to take blind flight — for in the rolling echoes it was difficult to determine from what direction the noise came. There arose a tumult of excited exclamations and angry threats, mingled with women's screams. Most of the men who had come from a distance carried matchlocks, and while these looked well to the priming of their pieces, the excitement of the crowd momentarily increased. The cry arose, "The Pequots!" — a word sufficient at any time to let loose panic.

In another moment the swaying, surging mob might have lost its reason and fallen one upon another like wild beasts, when the sound of a drum echoed through the crowd; the tithing-man stood upon the church step, exercising the function of his office. The familiar roll fell upon the people's ear as with the voice of acknowledged authority, and blindly obeying, for an instant the threatened panic was held. The instant was enough, for in that brief interval, a courtly young figure appeared on the step of the meeting-house, lifting a hand of authority;

and as the crowd, instinctively recognising its master, paused at the word "Hold!" the next words, in the clear, masterful young voice, reached its tottering reason:

"There is no danger. Pirates could not have got past the Castle without warning being given. Messengers have been sent to ascertain the cause of the alarm, which will soon be made known."

Indignant discussion held the crowd together, the general opinion now being expressed that the alarm had been caused by mischievous boys. Conjecture merged into certainty when the messengers returned with the information that the firing had been from the guns of the wrecked *Mary Rose*. Two of these, from being overcharged, were blown to atoms, and all had sustained such serious injury as to render it doubtful if they could be put to their projected use in providing the sorely needed armament of the new fort. The wicked waste of powder, too, at a time when ammunition was so scarce, aroused the most violent indignation, and the hope was expressed on all sides that when the culprit — or culprits — were discovered, he or they should be dealt with according to the utmost severity of the law.

"An Master Savage be not concerned in this last and worst prank, I lose my guess," said the artisan

with whom the Salem pair had held converse, as, later in the day, the three came together again.

"Sir, whether or no the lad be concerned in so wicked a piece of mischief, — for such one must well deem it at the present time, — sure am I that he cannot live with the man whom the Colony hath this day chosen for its honoured governor without his whole life being changed thereby," returned the old man, gravely. "As he whom you call the 'Boy Governor' stood on yonder steps, he looked like our very own St. George of the dragon. Sure am I that his spirit, laid upon the unruly spirit of that youth of whom you speak, will work a change that one may well call a miracle!"

The affair of the guns remained the chief topic of conversation for some days after the election; but though it was said that every effort was being made to discover the perpetrators of the deed, the matter remained as much in the dark as ever. If Master Hutchinson had any suspicion that those of his own household were concerned in the affair, — for the shrinkage in his keg of powder could scarcely have escaped notice, — his reckoning with the two boys was in private.

Thomas was still regarded as a member of the Hutchinson household, but much of his time was

necessarily spent in attendance on the governor, and insensibly his relations with those in the friendly house at the foot of the hill altered. Into the manner of both Francis and Faith had come a certain deference, such as one might display to an honoured guest; on Thomas's side, amiably accepting this deference as his due, there was also a suggestion of kindly patronage, as of a grown-up brother toward the little ones; perhaps, too, there was not lacking a certain loftiness of tone and manner that would not have been out of place in the bearing of his Worship, the governor — as some of the ill-natured amongst Thomas's former mates were not slow to suggest.

When Master Vane went abroad upon affairs of state, or to church, the full number of his body-guard was in attendance; on these occasions, Thomas bore himself with so haughty a mien as to create not a little jealousy and resentment amongst the other lads of his age. The cry "Way for his Worship the governor!" was ever the signal for a gaping crowd to gather, while women paused at their looms, and girls left their wheels to catch a glimpse of the brilliant little pageant and its central figure. As the procession swept by the Hutchinson house, a sharp glance might have descried Faith's figure within the doorway. She never failed to be at the post, and

though Thomas always refrained from looking in that direction, he did not neglect, at the turn of the road, to bear himself with a haughtier mien, and hold his halberd in a firmer grasp.

When not on escort duty, two of the halberdiers were expected to be within call of his Worship in a small room adjoining Master Vane's hall or living-room, ready for any service, at the governor's behest, within or without. In this anteroom were row upon row of books that attested the scholarly tastes of the young governor; parchment-bound folios of the Fathers, the lore of the rabbis, tomes heavy with monkish erudition. But there were not lacking volumes of another sort, as well, less frequently seen in the Puritan town; tales of travel and adventure, goodly store of merry plays and love songs. Ere long, Thomas began to have a tolerable acquaintance with some of these latter books. There was one amongst them that attracted his attention, in the first instance, perhaps, merely because his eye was caught by the volume projecting somewhat beyond its mates in the seemly row, as though lately replaced by a hasty hand; it was a worn little book, shabby beyond its fellows, with nothing in its outward garb to suggest the entrancing nature of its contents. It was writ by one of whose great wit and learning Thomas



"A HAND WAS PLACED UPON HIS SHOULDER"

remembered to have heard often spoken at Sempringham, the Earl of Lincoln having, indeed, had the honour, in his courtier days, to have been in some wise the friend and companion of Lord Bacon. Soon all Thomas's leisure moments were spent poring over the pages of "The New Atlantis." The tale it told was of a mariner who, like the sailor in one of old Dickory's stories, was cast away upon an unknown shore; but instead of a desert island, the hero of this new romance found himself in a marvellous city, of which the lovely outward guise was but as the symbol of the harmony and beauty of the characters of those that dwelt therein. For in this wondrous city over seas, there lived "a Christian people, full of piety and humanity." One morning, alone in the anteroom, William Balston, Thomas's usual companion, having been despatched on some trifling errand, the boy was intent on the pages of his new treasure, when a hand was placed upon his shoulder. The governor stood before him.

"I crave your pardon, your Worship," stammered Thomas, rising, "I did not hear your summons."

"There was none," answered Master Vane, smiling, as he picked up the book that the boy had let fall in his haste, and glancing at the title.

"I should not have taken so great a liberty, sir,"

said Thomas, abashed, as the governor turned upon him the swift, scrutinising look with which he had before regarded him in their brief intercourse. "Having once glanced into its pages, the tale it told did so hold me that I know not how many minutes have passed since I opened the book."

"The story is new to thee?" questioned Master Vane, kindly, seating himself on the window-ledge and motioning the boy to a place by his side. "The 'New Atlantis,'" he went on, musingly, — "a land where men shall dwell in peace together, though of differing opinions; where no slave's foot may touch, for touching, that instant he is free; where the highest shall stand equal to the lowest in the law and men shall honour Honour, not her trappings," — the young man's hand touched, half disdainfully, a golden insignia upon his breast. "Of such a land hath men in dungeons dreamed, and smiling, gone to scaffold and to stake. Ay, to scaffold," he repeated, dreamily. "It is ever dangerous to be a dreamer of dreams. My Lord Bacon was wise when he clad his vision in the robes of fantasy."

"Where is the land — is the 'New Atlantis' a real place — did my Lord Bacon see it with his own eyes, as Prester John saw the city and wonderful palace of Kubla Khan?" questioned the boy, breathlessly.

"Nay, thou wilt not find the city upon any chart," answered the governor, smiling, but with an undefinable sadness in his voice that the boy vaguely felt — scarce with consciousness, but as with some underlying perception that seemed before now to have had part in his intercourse with Master Vane. "I mistrust even those bold travellers, Prester John and Marco Polo, — for whose tales thou hast such a fancy, — have not visited this country of the 'New Atlantis'; nor yet that enterprising and vivacious mariner of our own times, Captain John Smith," quoth Master Vane, pulling one of the boy's curls. "I' faith, they seem to have such a misliking for hair here, as a mistake of the Almighty in ornamenting men's heads, that ere long one may find them cutting off their noses and ears as well, to produce a pleasing uniformity," added the young man, tossing back his own beautiful curls, whose length was tipped as with the golden tint of childhood. Though Puritan, Master Vane was no Roundhead.

Tone, no less than words, recalled to Thomas a certain remark of William Balston that had recently aroused his own wonderment and indignation.

"All is not plain sailing with his Worship," the older halberdier had said, and hinted at a rising jealousy amongst the leading men toward Vane, and hos-

tility to certain principles the young man had not hesitated to avow. There had ever been a heated discussion in the Council concerning measures connected with the banishment, the previous year, of Roger Williams, because his opinions were not those of the churches. A bold speech of Master Vane's on this topic had, it appeared, been ill received by the magistrates and elders.

"Why should the labours of any be suppressed, be they never so different?" the boy governor had exclaimed, in conclusion, and Master Wilson had even taken it upon himself to rebuke so rash and heretical an utterance.

"Consider your youth and your inexperience in the things of God; and beware of peremptory conclusions, which I perceive you to be very apt unto," he said, sternly. It was generally reported that the boy governor had by no means borne this censure in the spirit of one who turns his other cheek toward the smiter.

"Who were thy other friends at the Castle, Thomas?" questioned Master Vane, kindly, and almost before the boy was aware, he was telling the governor of the gracious countess whom everybody loved, of Lady Emilia, and his friend Theophilus; of old Dickory, his father's former bowman; and

presently, though Master Vane spake little himself, only looked at his young companion with eyes that seemed to change with every mood and shade of thought, he was drawn on, insensibly, to say more and more concerning himself and his inmost thoughts, till ere long he found himself telling the governor of the hopes and dreams and heroic ambitions that had led him to the New World and in which he had been so speedily and grievously disappointed.

Suddenly he was aware that Master Vane was looking away from him and seemed lost in thought.

"I crave your pardon, sir; 'twas over bold of me to talk so freely," faltered the boy.

But the young governor, in answer, smiled, and putting an arm around his shoulder, even as an elder brother might have done, gave confidence for confidence, telling the lad of his own early life in the green depths of Kent, of his later boyhood at Westminster School, and of his chosen friends, Thomas Scott and Arthur Hazelrigg. He described the brilliant days that followed, at the court of Austria, whither he had gone in the train of the English ambassador. Great names, Gustavus Adolphus, Tilly, Wallenstein, fell easily from the lips of one who had been behind the scenes when the most astute diplomatists of Europe held council together in Vienna.

More gravely he told of his later sojourn in Geneva, where he had become interested in the doctrines of Calvin. It was not difficult to guess at the dismay of Sir Henry Vane when he found that the gifted son on whom he had built such hopes had "turned Puritan," although Master Vane spake not of the differences betwixt himself and his father, which had led to his coming to Boston.

Thomas listened, entranced, marvelling, at times, that his idol could once have been a boy like himself, enjoying the same sports, with comrades of his own age and tastes; most wonderful of all, with evidence of something of the same aptitude for mischief. Yet still, throughout the narration, in all the underlying zest of life natural in one for whom the world held all good things, there were ever and again hints of the man that was to be. Half fearing that some untoward word or motion might unloose the half caressing, half protecting pressure about his shoulder, Thomas scarce drew breath when Master Vane lapsed into a silence that lasted, perhaps minutes, perhaps hours, for in the quickening of the boy's spirit that came upon him in that hour of mutual confidence, the reckoning was not of time but of eternity.

At last the governor aroused himself and looked at his watch.

"I have work for thee, Thomas," he said, with a return to his usual alert, forceful manner. "Distressful rumours are abroad concerning some rising disaffection amongst the Indians. Fair of speech and profuse of promise though this savage chieftain called Miantonimo is, he hath not yet made his customary annual tribute, but delays with one specious pretext after another. In view of this and other matters, many of which are deemed trivial by some, though held of importance by others, it is thought best to confer with Captain Dudley concerning the best measures to adopt in putting Boston into a condition of defence and for the concerted action of the Colony in case of need. Thou wilt set out for Agawam at once, with word to Captain Dudley to come to Boston. Thy mission is to be kept a secret from all, as a panic might precipitate conditions that at present are indeterminate. Thou art simply going to visit thy guardian. But if need be," he drew a ring with an armorial seal off his finger and slipped it upon Thomas's hand, — "remember, thou art journeying '*In the name of the king!*'"

Thomas repeated the potent words, his lips for an instant touching the governor's outstretched hand.

"Can I trust thee?" questioned Master Vane, gravely, and again the feeling was strong upon the

boy that something deeper than their spoken sense lay in the words. There was passing wonder, too, that he, the youngest of those called to the personal service of the governor, should have been singled out for so important a mission. With all the fervour of his imaginings and the influence of the wonderful hour that had just passed, as well as beneath the influence of that masterful look and tone, the boy answered:

"Your Worship, I would die for you!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THOMAS found Francis, bow and arrow in hand, impatiently waiting his coming.

"What possessed thee to linger all this while?" he demanded. "The pigeons were never so thick, nor flying so low over the Charlestown marshes. All the boys who could get leave have gone. Dean is waiting for us at the ferry."

"Nay, I have other matters to which I must attend," answered Thomas, loftily. "I am on the governor's service."

"But the others are on duty this afternoon," objected Francis. "I saw them but now going up the hill."

"I am detailed on special service," Thomas condescended to explain.

"What may it be?" asked Francis, with gratifying curiosity.

"'Twould scarce be proper that I told," returned Thomas; "the despatches of his Worship are not matter for common speech."

"'Tis a pity thou canst not go," said Francis, over his shoulder, already at some distance down the road, the prospect of the sport on the marshes being of more interest than trivial matters of state. "Good-bye; I will make haste to join Dean."

"Wait but a moment," called Thomas. "My way lies through Charlestown. I may as well take my bow and arrows along. 'Twould be pity to lose such rare sport."

Divesting himself with all speed of his accoutrements, Thomas found Faith busy at some household task in the kitchen. He could not refrain from giving some hint of his real mission when the girl glanced at his bow and arrows. It was an unusually fine bow, of seasoned yew, and had been made for Thomas by his friend old Dickory.

"Farewell, Faith," he said; "thou wilt not forget me?"

"Dost think I am like to lose my wits before thy return," retorted the girl, "or that I am so near being bedlam that my memory will take leave of me ere bedtime?"

"If I come not back," added Thomas, gravely, "then think of this moment as my farewell."

The road to Agawam had been recently laid out, replacing the old Indian trail which was at first

the only means of communication between the settlements to the north of Boston. This highway followed the coast, holding on its string a series of plantations with farmhouses between, so that at scarcely any time would a traveller be beyond the reach of aid. Except under stress of hunger, wild beasts did not now venture near the settlements, so there was scarcely a possibility of danger on his present mission. But Faith's indifference piqued to exaggeration.

"Why shouldst thou not come back — art not going pigeon shooting with the other boys?" queried the girl, and this time there was something of real concern in her voice.

"There are doings afoot of which maids may not know," answered Thomas, solemnly. "Yet one boon I would ask of thee; give me thy favour — thy kerchief an thou wilt — to take with me on this quest."

"What wouldst thou do with it?" asked Faith. "Art going to pay another visit to thy friend the squaw?" she added, mischievously.

"Thou art over ready with pert words, Faith," rejoined Thomas, with dignity. "Not so did Lady Emilia scoff or jest when I bade her farewell."

"Perhaps she had not the wit therefor," retorted Faith.

"It may be she sees me even now, as she vowed

to do when I was setting forth on a mission of danger," meditated Thomas, his errand increasing in peril as he dwelt upon it.

"Lady Emilia hath passing good eyesight to see across three thousand miles of ocean," answered Faith. "An she can hear thee, too, I am thinking she can scarce be charmed with the nonsense thou art talking," added the girl, with the asperity that the name of Lady Emilia ever seemed in some mysterious fashion to evoke.

An impatient whistle from without brought Thomas to a realisation of passing time, and he would have joined his friend without a backward glance, but a few steps from the house Faith's voice gave him pause.

"An thou wilt have a favour, take this," she said, holding out a small silken parcel.

Thrusting it into his doublet without a glance, even of conjecture, and flinging back some incoherent word of thanks, Thomas hurried after Francis. Dean was already at the ferry, in ill-humour at the delay and its cause. The three boys were at last set on the Charlestown shore, whence a smart walk took them to the marshes. The report of the good sport had not been exaggerated. Dean's first arrow spitted two birds.

"Beat that, an thou canst," he cried. "Wouldst like my bow, Thomas?" he added, jeeringly, as the

other boy let fly an arrow that shot wide of the entire flock. "Maybe better luck would be thine!"

"Neither thy bow nor thy company have I asked for, Dean Winthrop," retorted Thomas; "and as for thy shot, thou sayest well 'twas mere luck." He fitted another arrow to the string, but vexation was now added to poor marksmanship, and again the arrow sailed harmless through the air.

"I'll lay thee a wager — my bow against thine — that my string of pigeons will be twice thine ere sunset," cried Dean, tauntingly.

"'Tis not fair, Dean," protested Francis. "Thou hast been in the country these five years, and hast been gaining skill all the while with bow and arrow. Thomas hath not had a tithe of thy practice. He shoots right well, too, for one so new to the sport."

"An he is afraid to venture his bow, let him brag no more," answered Dean. "Think'st thou he would risk that gold ring upon his finger in such a trial? Thomas's words are ever bigger than his deeds. Afraid of a squaw, forsooth!" jeered the boy.

At the last words, it was with difficulty that Francis restrained his friend from falling with his fists upon Dean.

"Wilt thou be a firebrand?" he urged. "Canst not see that the other boys are within sight and

hearing? An thou getst into another brawl, my father hath said thou shouldst not go shooting again this year. Talk not of wagers either!"

The recollection of Master Hutchinson's threat stayed Thomas in his belligerent purpose and he contented himself with glowering at Dean, who from a safe distance gave back a sneering laugh.

"Nay, I'll take his wager!" cried Thomas, with sparkling eyes. "An my score be not twice thine, my ring and my bow — against thy bow — shall be thine."

"Done," cried Dean, and without more ado, the trial of skill between the two boys began.

From the outset, there could be no doubt as to its result. No arrow from Dean's bow failed of its mark; sometimes, indeed, several pigeons were spitted upon the same dart; while Thomas, under the combined influence of vexation at his continued failures and irritation at Dean's jeers, shot more and more wildly. Much time, too, was consumed in fruitless search for the errant missiles in the long, tangled marsh grass; when, ere long, his store of arrows was exhausted, another dispute arose between him and his opponent as to whether it was fair to allow Thomas the use of Francis's quiver, which the latter generously placed at his disposal. In the midst

of a hot argument upon this point, Dean pointed to the sun, just sinking below the horizon.

"One hundred and twenty pigeons," he counted, triumphantly. "'Twill not take thee long to count thine," he sneered.

Without a word, Thomas flung his bow at his rival's feet.

"I would redeem the ring," he said. "'Tis a privilege fairly asked and granted. Ask what thou wilt," he added, haughtily.

"Nay, I'll take the ring too," insisted Dean. "Art going back on thy word?" he added, scornfully.

Vouchsafing no reply, Thomas drew the ring — the governor's signet-ring — from his finger, and with the strength of passion flung it to a distance. Dean, with an angry exclamation, went in search.

Thomas stood lost in thought.

Not till that moment had the recollection of his neglected errand come to him. Precious time had been squandered in idle sport, and should darkness fall ere he regained the highway, the trackless marshes offered illimitable possibilities of losing one's way. The homeward track was indicated plainly enough by the trampled grass and weeds through which they had come; but to retrace his steps to

the spot where they had left the highway, while undoubtedly the only prudent course to pursue, would add an indefinite distance to his belated journey. The other boys had long ago gone home.

"Art not going farther?" queried Francis, in surprise, as his friend set his face in the opposite direction from Charlestown. "Thou'rt mad," he cried, running after him. "Wouldst look for the arrows? 'Tis too dark to find them; an thou tak'st not heed, we shall not be home ere curfew. I will right gladly give thee half of my arrows, and to-morrow will help thee make more."

Luckily for Thomas's pride, the dusk concealed the gathering tears in his eyes, and the quiver in his voice was overridden in the surliness of the tone with which he repulsed his friend's offer.

"Let be, I tell thee, Francis! I want mine own arrows, and none others! Go home with Dean and leave me to do as I will!"

But Francis continued to follow, though at some distance. Dean, searching in vain for the ring in the long, tangled grass, was calling impatiently to Francis to come to his help. Thomas, goaded by the necessity of getting somewhere where he could give unchecked vent to the unmanly sobs that were threatening to choke him, without another backward

look set out on a dead run. When at last he stayed his steps, no one was in sight. Flinging himself on the ground beneath a clump of willows, he dug his fingers into the wet earth and gave himself up to unavailing misery. In those moments of bitter self upbraiding he did not spare himself. He had let his own pleasure take the place of his master's business, dallying in a mission of which the importance had generously been confided to him. In a moment of pique and childish passion, he had bartered the governor's signet-ring in a foolish wager. His heart sank lower still as he reflected that he might fail in his mission because of the lack of that puissant symbol. He saw again the eyes of the young governor looking into his, and felt the pressure of Master Vane's arm about his shoulder. He recalled his own words at parting:

"Your Worship, I would die for you!"

Faint from long fasting and continued exercise in the keen air, before continuing his journey — for come what might, he was resolved to reach Agawam that night — he plucked the two pigeons he had shot, and scraping together a few twigs, thrust his hand into his doublet for the piece of match with which he was provided. In so doing, his fingers came into contact with the little silken parcel given him by Faith. A

vagrant curiosity led him to open it; to his surprise, it contained the string of gold beads that had belonged to Faith's grandmother and which he well knew to be the girl's most treasured possession. Certainly Faith was given to astonishing freaks; after which careless conclusion, he thrust the beads into his doublet again, as a matter of infinitely less importance than the match.

His meal finished, he arose refreshed and heartened for his farther journey. Unfortunately, the sky was overcast, so he could not guide his course by the north star; nor was he able to get his bearings from the moss on the tree trunks, as a few stunted willows were the only wooded growth on the marshes. He set off in the direction in which he supposed Agawam to lie, hoping, ere long, to strike the highroad. But with every step, his difficulties seemed to increase; the long grass wound itself about his feet, so that more than once he tripped and fell headlong; now and again, in a fruitless endeavour to make up for lost time, he broke into a run, nor stayed his steps till compelled thereto by lack of breath. He was conscious that he should long ago have reached the highway, were he headed in the right direction; but something of the bewilderment that comes upon men in a solitude had overtaken

him, and he staggered on in circles, impelled only by one thought — he must keep going. He was very sleepy; once or twice he aroused himself with the feeling that he was in a nightmare, from which he should presently awaken to find himself in bed, with Francis by his side. He even fancied that he heard his friend's voice calling him. But when he tried to answer, the spell as of a nightmare was upon him and his lips were held.

The first signs of day were appearing in the sky when Thomas was aroused from his lethargy by a tall form apparently rising out of the earth directly before him; the next moment he was felled to the ground.

When he came to himself, he was bound hand and foot, and tied fast to a stake. The stars had disappeared, and the morning light was stealing over the plain. The embers of a fire were close at hand, about which some score of savage figures were discernible; the sound of voices reached him, following one upon another, as though in earnest debate. The boy's mind, stimulated to its utmost activity by the ominous situation, puzzled over the meaning of this conference, for such it appeared to be. Why should it be held at a distance from any Indian settlement? for no house or wigwam was within sight. Intently

watchful, it was presently borne in upon him that there were two parties in the debate — a surmise to which was added almost the strength of certainty when a finely formed savage on the farther side of the fire, who had taken a leading part in the discussion, arose, and followed by ten or twelve of the other braves, stole out over the plain to the west. The rest of the council were making ready, also, for the march; the thongs that bound Thomas were cut and he was motioned to rise and follow his captors. He made several attempts to talk with the Indian to whose special care he appeared to have been consigned, but either from disinclination or lack of comprehension on the savage's part, his efforts were unavailing.

It was now evident from the sun, at some distance above the horizon, that they were journeying almost due south, which would indicate that his captors were of the tribe of the Narragansetts. Swift upon this surmise followed another. The other party in the council had departed to the west, and to the west lived the dreaded Pequots. Could it be that this savage conference on the borders of south and west, meant that some concerted treachery to the English was afoot between the two tribes?

Toward noon, they reached an Indian settlement,

consisting of a number of rude houses and wigwams within a pale. Thomas was taken to the principal house in the enclosure, where the savage who had led the returning party held a brief consultation with other members of the tribe. With the aid of an Indian who spoke a few words of English, Thomas tried to make known his situation. He was travelling to the north on a mission for the English governor; assuming an air of confidence that he was far from feeling, he assured the chief that would the latter forward him to his destination, he should be properly rewarded; while, if he detained him, it would be at the cost of the displeasure of the governor. It was evident that this speech made something of an impression on his captors, and in the discussion that followed, Thomas caught the name, several times repeated, "Harrivane."

Presently the interpreter turned to him again and questioned him closely regarding his relationship with the great chief of the white men. It was not easy, to the limited understanding of the savage, to explain his exact office about the governor's person. Doubtless, too, the boy's naturally lordly bearing aided the misconception, for the reply that was given the Narragansett chieftain was:

"Him Harrivane's little brother."

The interview was concluded by the chief waving his hand, whereupon Thomas was conducted to another house near by. Indian curs and children were tumbling over one another by the entrance, and close at hand a squaw was bending over a huge kettle balanced upon a fire. Presently the savages squatted around, dipping pieces of wood or birch bark into a mess of coarsely pounded maize into which pieces of fish were stirred. Despite the untempting appearance of the food, Thomas ate eagerly. After the meal his captor motioned him to a pile of skins within the house, and exhausted with his long walk and the accompanying excitement, the boy flung himself upon this couch and was soon fast asleep.

He had been unconscious an indefinite number of hours, when he was awakened by a tumult without; hastening from the house, he found what was apparently the entire settlement — men, women, and children and dogs — in a state of the highest excitement, surging about an Indian who was relating something that appeared to be the cause of the tumult. Catching sight, at last, of the savage who had acted as his interpreter, Thomas questioned him as to the meaning of the uproar.

It appeared that an Englishman, John Oldham by

name, with two little boys, had been foully murdered while in their boat, not far from Plymouth. The appearance of the bodies of the murdered man and children left no doubt that the perpetrators of the deed were Indians. After awhile, the tumult subsided, and though, on several subsequent occasions, Thomas tried to obtain further information regarding the murder, the subject had apparently been interdicted.

Although he may thereby have secured better treatment, Thomas had also, unwittingly, drawn the toils more closely about him when the savages imputed to him the honour of being the "little brother of Harrivane." In the ticklish situation that the recent murders had placed the relations between the Narragansetts and the English, the value to the savages of such a hostage as the governor's brother could hardly be overestimated. Had it not been for anxiety regarding his precarious position and the heavy thought of his own faithlessness, Thomas would not have been without pleasure in his present life. There were even times when it would have seemed well to him to give up all thoughts of returning to civilisation and cast in his lot for ever with these wild people. A liberal share of food was given him, and in the ravenous appetite induced by

his open-air life, he was not overparticular as to its quality or method of preparation. He fished, and swam, and ran, and wrestled, and shot with the Indian boys of his age: if he found himself the inferior of his savage companions in most of these sports, he proved himself their superior in wrestling, in which long practice with the lads of an English village stood him in good stead; in running, too, his natural superiority — for he was built for speed — outdistanced most of his rivals. Within the limits of the settlement, he was free to go and come as he would; beyond its confines, however, several ineffectual attempts at escape showed him the futility of any effort to evade the vigilance of his savage hosts. One day, while fishing in the stream that ran near the settlement, he sought, under pretence of whipping the upper banks, to increase, gradually, the distance between himself and his companions; but scarcely had he succeeded in placing a slight space between them and him, when a tall Indian arose from the deep grass near by, and in the most friendly manner offered, by signs, to show the boy a place where the trout bit best. Nor was he more successful when, shooting with the Indian lads, he made a feint of searching for arrows that had outsped their mark. Stealing a glance over his shoulder

to see if he were observed, at his very elbow was a savage with the stray arrows in his hand. Any attempt to escape under cover of the darkness seemed likewise futile. The climate in that part of the country, although at no great distance from Boston, was many degrees warmer than in the seaport town, and the nights were already oppressively hot. The savages slept without the lodge; more than once, when Thomas looked cautiously about the slumbering circle, the movement, slight though it was, was invariably followed by one or another of the apparent sleepers giving signs of wakefulness.

One hot afternoon he was sitting in the shade of the lodge, idly watching a fight between some of the snarling curs, when he was suddenly seized from behind; and bound hand and foot, was thrown within the house.

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGHOUT the remainder of the long, sultry day he lay, tormented by mosquitoes and flies, a green-headed monster with a sharp sting causing him unspeakable misery; the curs and children stumbled over him, the squaws gave him a vicious kick as they passed. He was given no food, and suffered torments from thirst. He could only conjecture that this change in his captors' temper toward him had been caused by some development arising from the Oldham murder. By and by, he heard the savages at some sort of a feast without. He recalled that he had somewhere heard that before the Indians set out on a forced march, they ate to repletion. At last, one by one, the savages flung themselves upon the ground and all was still. Apparently secure that escape from his bonds was impossible, and after their orgy doubtless sleeping more heavily than usual, the watch that night upon the prisoner was relaxed. Lying where he had been flung, just within the entrance of the lodge, even had not physical misery

intervened, his ominous situation would have precluded, for Thomas, the possibility of sleep.

The hours wore slowly on till, as nearly as the boy could judge, it was after midnight, when his ears, painfully alert to any noise, detected a slight movement near the door; he could not turn his eyes in that direction without moving his whole body. With every sense strained to the utmost, he awaited the repetition of the almost imperceptible sound, hoping he knew not what, for help in his present situation seemed impossible. The noise was presently repeated, and after a moment's pause, in which Thomas scarcely drew breath, he felt rather than heard the presence of a softly moving body coming nearer and nearer. Suddenly a hand was placed upon his mouth, and a face bent low over his.

It was that of Francis Hutchinson.

After a handclasp — of irrepressible joy on the one side, of encouragement on the other — Francis sank close by his friend's side. The next moment, a knife was at work upon his bonds. Even with a keen blade, it was no easy matter to cut the rawhide thongs; when they were at last severed, Thomas's arms and legs were numb from their long confinement, and, for a time, movement was impos-

sible. Setting his teeth in the agony of returning circulation, he succeeded, at last, in moving one limb after another; after an eternity of suspense, he was able to give the signal to start.

Scarcely drawing breath, the two boys crawled from the lodge, and worked their way past the recumbent forms without, expecting every moment that a savage would arise or one of the swarming curs give the alarm. Reaching, at last, the outside of the settlement, they regained their feet, and hastened onward. The first part of the way led through a growth of scrub pine, and on the soft carpet of pine needles beneath, they were able to make good speed; fortunately, too, the night was clear, so they had the north star to guide their course. No breath was wasted in speech, till some miles had been put between them and the Indian village; then, avoiding the relaxation of the muscles that would have followed flinging themselves upon the ground, as both longed to do, they took a few minutes' rest by leaning upright against a tree. Francis answered his friend's eager questioning.

"I followed thee the day on the marshes. I thought at first thou wert hunting for the arrows, and wouldst speedily have enough of the search. No, Dean could not find the ring. I told him that he

could go home alone, an he would, which he lost no time in doing, saying I was a fool to give concern to a bad-tempered fellow like thyself" — the harshness of the words was contradicted by the tone in which they were spoken. "I meant, at first, only to give thee time for thy spleen to cool; but when I saw thee cooking the birds, it came over me what thou hadst said about being on private business for his Worship, the governor, which, at the time, I thought to be some of thy foolery, and so judged it best to keep, for awhile at least, at a distance. When thou took'st to thy heels, I could not keep up with thee, for thy legs are of the stuff of which the deer's are made; and so, in the darkness, I lost thee.

"I called again and again, but if thou heardest, thou gavest no sign; then thinking it useless to fare farther till morning, I laid myself down and went to sleep. When at last I awoke it was nearly dawn, and, to my great joy, I saw thee again not a great way off. Almost on the instant the savage sprang upon thee. I dared not go nearer whilst thou lay bound on the meadow, but when the powwow broke up, I followed again till thou and the Indians reached the settlement. Then I judged it best to cut across the country to the coast, which I thought by the salt air on my face to be at no great distance. I arrived

at Plymouth just as the news of the murder of John Oldham reached the settlement. Some of the people were for instant reprisal, but the more prudent were against such a course, these arguing that the murder might have been the act of a few renegade Indians, not involving any concerted action on the part of the tribe. When I urged that any hour might determine your fate, it was answered that Boston had refused powder to Plymouth in its need; it could scarce be expected of Plymouth men that they would risk their lives to save any one from Boston. Then came the tidings that Endicott, with a force of ninety men, had set out from Salem, and was marching southward, burning villages and giving orders that all savages over the age of ten years should be killed."

"That was the cause of the excitement yesterday," interpolated Thomas.

"Endicott was said to be well supplied with ammunition, so it was thought best by the Plymouth Council to await his coming," resumed Francis. "But meantime there was almost the certainty that the Narragansetts would either withdraw into the farther wilderness, taking you with them, when the difficulties of reaching you would be a thousandfold increased, or, incensed at Endicott's reprisal, that they

would instantly" — Francis hesitated to complete the sentence, but his friend's paling cheek testified that Thomas understood without words. "So, without letting any one know my intention, I set out alone for the Narragansett village," concluded Francis.

In turn, Thomas related, briefly, the incidents of his captivity, and the two boys resumed their march. The remainder of the way was through a jungle of fallen trees and rank undergrowth, tangled with vines into an almost impenetrable thicket, in which progress was slow. Not till they were come within sight of an isolated farmhouse or two did the boys feel themselves safe from pursuit; here they paused to take counsel. Almost due east lay Boston; to the northeast was Agawam. So many days had now elapsed since Thomas set forth on his mission, that its accomplishment at the present hour was, to say the least, superfluous. But the boy was ready to seize upon any pretext for avoiding Boston, to which even the dreaded Agawam appeared an agreeable alternative. The thought of facing Master Vane with the confession of his culpable failure seemed to Thomas of all hard things the most impossible. Not that he feared hard words or punishment; in his present frame of mind, indeed, he would have faced any penalty rather than meet the reproach of the black-brown eyes that

had looked into his very soul. So, after considerable discussion, Francis took the direction to Boston alone, charged with the mission of imparting to the authorities the circumstance of the savage council on the borders of south and west, — an incident that in the present war cloud assumed added importance, — while Thomas pushed on to Agawam. As had been anticipated, Captain Dudley had set out for Boston immediately on receiving belated word from his Worship, the governor, desiring his attendance, leaving word with his household that should Master Thomas Savage appear, he was to remain till further orders. It was evident, from Dean Winthrop's report of what took place on the marshes, that the governor's messenger had stopped to play by the way and a more trustworthy emissary had been promptly despatched in his stead. Neither in Boston nor Agawam had there been any subsequent alarm concerning the two boys, it being supposed, in either place, that they were safe in the other.

The Agawam household was a large one, consisting not only of Captain Dudley's immediate family, but that of his daughter, Mistress Bradstreet and her young children. Thomas had been freely in and out of the steward's house in the old days at Sempringham. Many a time had he and Theophilus,

galloping through the streets of old Boston, turned in at the house beneath the shadow of St. Botolph's Church; so that he did not enter the Dudley household as a stranger, although in any case the manner in which he was received would speedily have put him on terms of affectionate familiarity. He soon found, however, that a different order of things prevailed therein than that which had obtained in either the schoolmaster's or the Hutchinson household. Authority might find less arbitrary expression than in many homes of the time, but its rule was none the less absolute; for Captain Dudley was a man whose dominant personality never failed to make itself felt in whatever company he might be, and, in his absence, his household was still ruled by his spirit. A certain military order and precision prevailed, notable even in an age when disobedience in a child might be punished with death; and even a nature as naturally insubordinate as Thomas Savage's could scarcely fail to feel its salutary influence.

Although Captain Dudley was accounted one of the richest men in the Colony, and accustomed, in his English home, to such mode of living as became the gentry, the difficulty of procuring servants in the new country, particularly away from the centres of population, was very great, so that

most of the work at Agawam, within and without, devolved upon the members of the family. Every season brought its special round of labour, and no good housewife would allow the tasks of spring to crowd upon those of summer, nor these suffer dalliance into the burdens of autumn, which must give place in turn to the duties with which the brief winter days were filled. In addition to this ceaseless yearly round, there were at Agawam all the manifold labours incident to the establishment of a home in the wilderness.

The special task that devolved upon Thomas was that of preparing the flax, from its first stage, in a crop of tender green stalks with blue blossoms, to its final condition for the wheel. It was hard, dirty, tedious work, demanding unremitting care and attention, else the labour of weeks might be thrown away, and the entire crop, for which the household depended for its annual supply of linen, be ruined. The labour, too, must be performed under the burning heat of a semi-tropical summer, that often produced a headache, and always a burning thirst that it seemed as though nothing could quench. Frequently the boy chafed inwardly at the task imposed upon him; sometimes he grumbled thereat to his companions; more than once he went to bed

thinking that on the morrow he would run away from this degrading servitude. But he arose feeling as though something held him to the labour he despised, — nay, that seemed to bind him to doing it as well as he could. Partly it was, perhaps, in these new thoughts, that the recent peril from which he had almost miraculously been rescued had exercised a sobering influence upon him; largely too because of his unavailing sorrow and remorse at his faithlessness when on his master's business. Then, whatever the lad's faults, his was not a nature to render grudging service to those whom he held in such high and loving esteem as he did Mistress Dudley and sweet young Mistress Anne. So, as the days went on, he grew to accept the situation with a better grace than would once have seemed possible; some of his most irksome tasks grew lighter, and he even voluntarily assumed others that he would once have slighted as irksome or scorned as menial.

Sometimes it seemed as though many years had passed since he was the governor's halberdier, thinking himself a man. He thought of his companions in the service, who, although his seniors by several years, had yielded their wills almost unreservedly to him. He recalled the playtimes of Francis and

himself, and how unfailingly his friend had followed all his steps. He thought of Mistress Hutchinson, who had made him as one of her own children from the day on shipboard when she had cared for him in his seasickness and misery. He sometimes wondered — and there was not a little heartache in the thought — whether he had cared enough for all these dear people when he was with them.

Most of all, his thoughts dwelt on Faith with a persistency for which he could give no reason, unless it might be there was some charm in the gold beads she had given him at parting; some strange, potent power whereby to call up the image of their giver. At first he had looked at the token with mere idle curiosity, by degrees, with a speculative interest that ere long took to formulating foolish, impossible reasons as to why Faith should have given him her chief treasure. He recalled how once he had come upon her standing a-tiptoe before the dresser, gazing at her own reflection in a burnished copper skimmer; the beads were about her neck; she had been wearing them, it seemed, concealed beneath her kerchief; for such girlish ornaments were forbidden by the court as "garish gauds." He had teased Faith not a little for such display of vanity. Lady Emilia had necklaces and girdles galore, of gold and precious

stones, and apparently attached but little value to such adornments. Thomas at first had had no thought of what the gold beads might have meant to Faith; by and by, when there came to him some glimmering idea of what the one poor little bauble may have been to its owner, he wondered again why Faith should have given it to him, and, so wondering, looked at the beads oftener than ever, and never without their evoking the image of their wearer.

Yet, in these mental images, Faith never appeared exactly as the little maid who, whether or no, would accompany Francis and himself on all their boyish expeditions. He found himself puzzling as to wherein lay the change, or when he had first begun to notice it. He spent long hours trying to bring before him the colour of Faith's eyes, the shape of her nose, the contour of her chin, that had such a pretty, provoking fashion of tilting itself upward when the girl was bent on having her wilful way.

He thought of the times when he had bidden her stay at home, saying that maids might not do all that their brothers could, and recalled her answer, "Why not, an they can do it as well or better?"

Even boyish pride must confess that Faith had been no whit behind Francis and himself in any of the sports they had in common. After all, Faith

was a good little maid, despite an occasional over-sharpness of tongue and an over-desire to do those things that become not a woman, and some day, when she was grown up, he hoped she would marry suitably. Dean Winthrop would make a proper husband, notwithstanding his overbearing ways and an unbecoming fondness for being "cock of the walk," an ambition that ill-beseemed him, particularly at a time when another was present better suited to that eminence. He looked again at the beads, and, on second thoughts, decided that Dean was not worthy of his little sister, and that he — Faith's brother — would never give his consent to the proposed nuptials. Besides, a brother-in-law with warts was almost as much of an impossibility as a knight with those excrescences.

Master Dudley had found means to communicate with his family shortly after his arrival in Boston, by which they learnt that he had been appointed major-general of the Colony forces; but since then no news had reached the Agawam household from the absent husband and father. Tidings from other sources of the Indian disturbances occasionally came to the isolated plantation, but of these reports it was difficult to say how much was authentic and how much distorted or exaggerated. There was talk of

levies to be made upon the different towns of the Bay for men and arms, reports of warlike preparations at Boston, stories, too vague and contradictory to be relied upon, of the continued harrying of Endicott's band to the south. It was generally thought that this swift retaliation for Oldham's murder would so intimidate the Narragansetts as effectually to prevent any repetition of the outrage and bring about the delayed tribute. Some of the more timid or clearer sighted, in the outlying plantations, sent their wives and families to a neighbouring blockhouse, or looked well to their own defences. But for the most part the settlers went about their business in contemptuous disregard of the thickening war rumours. What should the men who had fought to victory in every known land and on every sea, who had conquered the fierce Spaniard and the redoubtable Dutch, fear from a handful of mere savages, whose weapons could scarce pierce a wadded cotton doublet, and which would be defied by English armour?

"Thou art a good lad, Thomas," said Mistress Bradstreet, one day, as the boy came in from his work to get a drink of buttermilk. "My honoured father hath said, 'The lad is of the right mettle; an I had him in my troop, he would right speedily show of what stuff he is made!'"

"Here I have no chance to prove myself a man," answered the boy, flushing at praise from such a source, but speaking not without an underlying bitterness, as he glanced at his hands — gentleman's hands they were till of late, though brown and toughened by an out-of-door life; now they were soiled and hardened, the palms were calloused, and the nails broken by the hateful "hackling," — that, happily, was the last stage in the preparation of the flax before it should be turned over to the women folk and the wheel.

"Give over thy dreams, dear boy," said Mistress Anne, gently. "Dreams are not of the stuff of which true manhood is made."

"Are dreams always ill, Mistress Anne?" questioned the boy, earnestly, thinking of that wonderful hour when he and the Boy Governor sat side by side, and he had listened to that dream of a New Atlantis.

"I meant not that — or, at least, that I would wholly condemn them," answered Mistress Anne. "I think, indeed, dreams may be the pattern on which our lives are to be fashioned. But our lives themselves must be made of stouter stuff — stuff that will stand the wear and tear of time — and eternity," she added, gravely.

Shortly after, one intensely hot afternoon, Thomas

was walking up and down with the baby in a shaded place before the house, where a breath of air seemed stirring. It was quite in vain, however, that the boy whistled and chirruped and kicked his heels against the tree to divert his little charge; all the expedients that he vaguely remembered to have seen mothers use to quiet babies seemed only to enrage young Simon Bradstreet the more.

"What art thou doing to that poor babe?" cried an indignant voice, and, to his amazement, Faith Hutchinson stood before him.

CHAPTER X.

It was indeed Faith, heated and dusty, looking scarce able to drag one foot after another, but not so exhausted from her journey as to speak with lessened spirit, or act with diminished energy; the next moment the baby was in her arms, and she was walking up and down, interspersing a little crooning lullaby with indignant ejaculations flung at Thomas.

"Shaking the poor child, kicking the tree to vent thy spleen — thou'rt a rough, unmannerly boy. What business hast thou with a baby, I would know? Attend to thine own affairs, Master Thomas, and leave babies to thy betters. It ill beseems a boy to wish to do all that he sees his sisters about," added the girl, with a mischievous sparkle in her eyes. "There, there, sweetheart!" The last words, spoken in a surprising change of tone, were addressed to the now pacified baby, whom she presently laid in his cradle. Then she turned to Thomas, who had been sulkily regarding these operations, divided between an inclination to take himself from the scene of his

humiliation, and curiosity as to what could have brought Faith such a distance from home.

"So thou art still playing knight," said the girl. "Hast vanquished all the squaws, that I find thee in mortal combat with a two months' baby?"

"Take heed thy waspish tongue brings thee not to the ducking-stool," returned Thomas, sulkily. "Never did I know a maid so fond of her own way, — nor of voicing it."

"Then thou hast known little of pleasing company," retorted Faith; "for my part, I would as soon have a stick or stone for a companion as one who can do no more than repeat what hath just been spoken. Thou mightst as well sit on Cotton's Hill and talk with the echo from the dome." As she spoke, she was emptying her heavy shoes of an accumulation of sandy gravel. "I fear me I should have made but a poor pilgrim to Canterbury," she said. "I could ne'er have walked thither with pebbles in my shoes, an St. Thomas's shrine were for ever unvisited. Saint — Thomas!" she repeated, reflectively. "The words have an odd sound, mated. But I have not come all the way from Boston to hold speech with thee," she added, and turned, apparently forgetful of the presence of the boy, as, attracted by the sound of voices, Mistress Bradstreet

appeared in the doorway. She came swiftly forward with welcoming word and look, and drew Faith within the house.

"Indeed, it is not for nothing that I am come to thee, dear Mistress Bradstreet, nor yet out of childish spleen," said the girl, breaking off in the midst of a passionate, incoherent outburst of weariness and despair, and burying her head in the older woman's lap.

"I cannot sense what thou hast been saying," said Mistress Anne, stroking the girl's hair as she spoke. "Boston — thy mother — distracted — what hath thy mother to do with distracting Boston? Have the Indians risen?" she questioned, in alarm.

"No word is spoken of the Indians," answered Faith, with an attempt at self-control; "none gives the least thought to the savages. I think, indeed, that did they howl at our very doors, Boston folk would only ask did they come under a Covenant of Grace or a Covenant of Works, and dispute the point till the tomahawk was at their scalps."

"What mean those strange words?" queried Mistress Anne, thoroughly mystified, and either because Faith had reached the limits of endurance, or some whimsical chord in her nature was touched by her own utterance, she fell to laughing and crying to-

gether, as though she would never stop. Mistress Bradstreet spake no more, but stroked the girl's hair, and as though the gentle touch held in it something of strength and comfort, by degrees Faith's sobs grew quieter, and were at length stilled.

"Try to tell me, dear child, what it is all about," said Mistress Anne.

"I think, indeed, matters could scarce have been worse had the Indians really descended upon the town," began the girl; "or that savages, however cruel, could show more hatred toward us than Boston folk are showing toward one another. I have told thee how all the women in town were soon coming to my mother's meetings; presently, there was another weekly meeting, at our house, for both men and women; it seemed as though nothing all over Boston was talked about but what my mother said, and who was 'called' and who not. It was thought at first to be a great awakening, and there was rejoicing that so many souls were being led to Christ."

"Did thy mother teach aught contrary to the Church of which she is a sister?" questioned Mistress Anne, gravely.

"It passeth my understanding as to what she taught," answered the girl, in bewildered tones; "what I do know is, that our home is no more what

it was. I cannot say how the change was wrought, nor can I put my hand on the day or hour it began, but all is as different as though some evil spell were laid upon us," she added, with a shudder.

Mistress Anne waited for farther disclosures in a silence so full of sympathy that words would have lessened its gentle influence. "I strive to do my best, but the children will not mind me, because they say I am under a Covenant of Works," resumed Faith, in the shrinking tone in which one speaks of a shameful thing. "Indeed, I would as soon be under a Covenant of Grace as a Covenant of Works had I the least idea what either meant, or how one is to get into one or t'other. The little ones turn from me at every step; they will not even speak to me, and when I come into the room, their talk ceases. I have done all manner of foolish things to try to please them, for, oh, it is a sore and bitter thing to look into the eyes of those you love, and who once loved you, and see nought therein but hatred. Nor is all this the worst. I — am — become so afraid — of — my mother," Faith went on, in awestruck tones. "One is afraid of the tithing-man and the minister and of witches and Indians; and very, very much afraid of God. But to be afraid of one's mother! I have been counting the years before I die. One

does not die often before she is an old woman, does she? — and it will be so many, many years before I am forty! So, thinking it all over, — though, indeed, in these days I think of nought else, — I made up my mind that I could bear it no longer.

"This morning, I arose very early, and making ready the oven, filled it as full as it would hold with bread and pies and pudding. I milked the cows and churned the butter and set the house in order. Francis was from home, so I wrote him a letter and left it on the dresser; none of the others would speak to me. I would have kissed the baby, but she, too, turned from me in the cradle. It was so good to hold your little one but now, and feel that he did not hate me! I think it was the first time for many weeks that I could pray, when I felt there was some one who did not hate me!"

"But thy father, thy brother Francis, — surely they are not possessed with this strange fancy, — if indeed thou speakest not out of some feverish fantasy brought on by the burning sun and that long walk from Boston?" murmured Mistress Bradstreet, anxiously; but though the girl's face was flushed with heat, her pulse beat in the tune of perfect health, and there was no fever heat in the touch of her hands.

"Francis is ever at his books, and keeps much from the house, liking not to be fretted by the wrangling of the children, whom he says I should still. I think, indeed," went on the girl, "that could I have roamed with him and Thomas, as I once did, I could bear better the woful change. But — 'tis passing strange — I care no more for the romps I used to love, except at times a great, sore longing comes over me for the hills and sea. Besides, the children needed me — though they scorned and hated me; but the burden hath become too heavy for me to bear. Therefore have I come to thee, dear Mistress Bradstreet, out of the love I bore thee in the old days, under St. Botolph's shadow, to beg that thou wilt let me stay with thee; there was no one in all Boston to whom I could go, for all our friends are under a Covenant of Grace, and would not suffer me in the house. I will work for thee as did never bondmaid or slave, nor ever ask for wage. I will rise before dawn, and lie not down till midnight. Indeed, though I am young in years, I am strong, and could be of service to thee."

For many minutes no word was spoken. Mistress Anne's voice broke the silence at last.

"Listen, dear child," she said, in a voice too full of the sweetness and humility of her own gentle

spirit for aught of censoriousness or the savour of self-righteousness to lie within her words. "Life seemeth to me like a garment, whereof the materials — some coarse, some fine, some scant, some bounteous — are given us to fashion. For each garment there is a pattern, to each its own, like none other. We may make it like the pattern, an we will; but a wrong stitch here, a hasty cut of the shears there, an unconsidered pull elsewhere that strains the whole fabric, and though we may do our best to make good our error, and though the garment may present a fair seeming to the world, it is not what it should be, what it might have been had we fashioned it according to our pattern. And in our heart of hearts we know our failure, and One other knows it.

"Nay, nay, I will say no more," she added, as the girl was about to break again into eager speech, "nor will I, now, listen to more. Thou art sore weary, and hath not touched food for many hours. Rest to-night, and on the morrow thou shalt decide whether to remain here or return to thy home. Only, Faith, in thy decision, take heed lest thou mar'st thy wedding-garment."

Whatever thoughts may have come to Faith Hutchinson in the watchful hours of the night may not be told, but on the morrow, ere she spake a

word, it was evident that her decision had been made, and to Mistress Anne, at least, what that decision was. It was speedily arranged that she should return to Boston in the care of Thomas Savage, an arrangement at which the latter was mightily pleased, notwithstanding obtrusive thoughts of a reckoning with his guardian and deeper concern regarding a meeting with Master Vane. Not only was the prospect most welcome of a change from the monotony of the past weeks, but he was not without a secret hope that by this time past errors were forgiven and that he would be allowed to resume his place on the governor's guard. Mistress Dudley, too, was not ill pleased at the opportunity of sending a hamper of good country provender to her husband, as the tavern where he was putting up, during his stay in Boston, could boast but indifferent fare.

It was a very subdued Faith that mounted the pillion behind Thomas Savage. As for Thomas, with every mile that left Agawam behind, the morning air, fresh from the sea, seemed to fill his lungs with an intoxicating sense of freedom, and he kept Gray Bess at her best speed. Under a sudden impulse, his shoes, well furnished with hobnails, gave a dig into the mare's ribs ; unaccustomed to knightly spurs, she started forward just at the moment Faith's hand

quitted its steadying hold upon the hamper to brush a stray lock of hair from her eyes. The hamper, already loosened from its fastenings by the rude jolting, slid to the ground. Gray Bess gave a startled kick or two to free herself from the obstacle bumping against her hind hoofs, and broke into a run. At last, Thomas succeeded in checking her, and both riders dismounted and retraced their steps to where the hamper lay. Not one of the eggs had escaped the wreck, and the good things packed so carefully by Mistress Dudley were a dripping yellow mass, from which bits of egg-shell protruded in every direction. Boy and girl looked at each other in dismay.

"'Twas thy fault," said Thomas. "Had I not enough to do to manage Gray Bess?"

"And how was I to know that thou wouldst all at once take it into thy head to stir up the mare? Thou hadst like to break my neck as well as the eggs," retorted the girl.

Some further time was spent in wrangling as to which was to blame for the accident, when Thomas, glancing over his shoulder, perceived that Gray Bess was nowhere in sight. The mare was a staid and sober beast, and no possibility of her straying had entered the boy's mind, when, in dismounting, he merely looped the bridle over a low-hanging branch.

Perhaps the intoxication of freedom was upon the mare as well as her rider, or she may have been still resentful of that rude thrust in her ribs. Certainly, she appeared to have developed unexpected powers of speed, and after running a mile or more, the boy slackened his pace, vexation merged into apprehension. He was come within sight of scattered houses, and knew he must be nearing Salem. He paused to inquire of the first person he met, whether a gray mare had passed that way, without observing, in his preoccupation, that the man was labouring, also, under some untoward excitement.

"Art thou the owner of the beast?" he demanded, and as Thomas, in some surprise at the heat of the tone, gave assent, his interlocutor went on, "Then thou wilt come with me to the nearest magistrate to answer for the corn that the wretched creature hath either eaten or trampled down, — my whole crop, — as fine a field of Indian corn as thou wouldst find 'twixt here and Boston, — ruined! As for thy starved, miserable mare, she is in the pound, repenting, already, over her stolen feast."

"Let me go to her!" urged the boy, in alarm, thinking of the rate of speed to which he had urged Gray Bess on the journey. "Such a meal will kill her, after her ride!"

"Then her hide shall pay me for my corn!" asserted the man, surlily. "Give me the value of my good corn, and thou mayst go to the pound and settle with the poundmaster for thy jade as thou wilt."

"But I have no money," protested Thomas. "I tell thee," he added, as the man was evidently prepared to use force in carrying out his mandate, "I am the bearer of a letter from his home to Master Thomas Dudley, major-general of the Colonial forces, at present commanding in Boston."

Master Dudley's name was too well known and held in too high esteem throughout the Colony for its mention not to command instant respect, and it was in an altered tone that his captor said:

"Let me see the letter — the seal will suffice. I doubt not that you can satisfy the poundmaster by the same token."

Thomas withdrew his hand from his doublet with an exclamation of dismay. In the selfsame moment, it flashed upon him that the letter with which he had been charged had, in the excitement and preoccupation of the morning, been left upon the table where Mistress Dudley placed it, bidding him take heed to its prompt delivery. He recalled that directly after she had left the room to attend to the hamper.

"I have not the letter by me," he attempted to explain, "but I give thee my word —"

"Thy lies will not serve thee," interrupted his captor, rudely. "Nay, they will rather make thy case the worse. At any rate, thou shalt have the chance to see whether the magistrate will believe thy tale or not. As for me, I will have pay for my corn," and turning a deaf ear to further protest, he laid a heavy hand on Thomas's shoulder, and so haled him Salemwards.

CHAPTER XI.

They soon reached the market-place, the usual centre of the telling and hearing of news. To-day some matter of uncommon interest appeared to be afoot, judging both by the number of people present and the evident excitement under which they were labouring. Fragments of startling import fell on the ears of Thomas and his captor.

"The Indians are on the war-path," replied the man to whom the latter addressed himself. "Master Endicott hath but now returned," he went on, "bringing sorry tidings of the state of affairs to the south. It would appear that his expedition not only failed to intimidate, but hath incensed. Small parties of the Narragansetts are already on the war-path, and 'tis said that the concerted action of the tribe will soon follow, — if indeed it hath not already befallen."

"Master Endicott is ever the stirrer up of strife," said another bystander, dourly. "Was it not he who nearly brought us into trouble with the king

because of cutting the cross out of the ensign? What action the worshipful magistrates will take in this matter hath not yet appeared, but I greatly fear that Master Endicott hath kindled a fire that will not soon be put out."

"Were many killed?" asked Thomas's captor.

"Of those that set out, scarce the half hath returned," was the startling reply. "The remainder barely escaped with their lives, every step of the homeward way being harried by Indian arrows; many fell in an ambush in a swamp, where flight was well-nigh impossible."

"Hast heard whether Edward Nourse, my sister's son, is safe?" questioned the man who held Thomas.

"I know not with certitude, yet methinks his was one of the names I heard spoken with sorrow," hesitated the man. "Master Endicott is now closeted with the other magistrates, and his men have gone to their own homes. Soon, they say, will be read the list of killed or — missing," — there was a rueful pause before the last word, as it brought to mind the fate of those who had fallen alive into the hands of such a foe. "There they come!" he exclaimed, abruptly.

There was a sudden surge toward the edge of the market-place, where stood the town house, on the

gallery of which Master Endicott had now appeared, holding a paper in his hand. During the preceding colloquy, Thomas's captor had unconsciously loosened his grip, and in the impetuous forward movement of the crowd, his hand was wrenched from the boy's shoulder. Thomas lost no time in taking advantage of this circumstance, and almost before his captor was aware of his escape, he had wriggled and twisted his lithe body free of the crowd. The remainder of the town was almost deserted, and, taking to his heels, with the comfortable assurance that he could outrun anybody in the Colony, he had soon put a considerable distance between himself and Salem. Then flinging himself beneath a tree, he considered the situation.

Relief at his escape was followed by dismay at the thought of Faith. Of real danger to her there was scarce probability, and she had by this time, no doubt, reached Salem. His own return thither, under existing circumstances, would not only fail of being any benefit to her, but would inevitably be fraught with unpleasant consequences to himself. Master Endicott had shown himself, on divers occasions, as was well known throughout the Colony, to be a man of precipitate action and great severity of judgment, and in the probable event of his being the

magistrate before whom Thomas was brought, it was quite possible that his story would be discredited, and he be forced to await investigation in jail. Communication with either Boston or Agawam was a matter of time at the best, and might be indefinitely delayed if these reports of the Indian uprising were true. To be sure, to desert a lady placed in one's care was not strictly according to the rules of chivalry; but this discomforting reflection was parried by the thought that Faith had long ago scornfully refused to be the lady of his devoirs. Not a little vexation, too, mingled in his thoughts of his late companion as he recalled her sharp words over the loss of the hamper. But the strongest factor of all in his deliberations was the fact that did he keep on his present road, he would be the bearer of the tidings that war was up with the savage hordes of Southern Massachusetts. The herald of such momentous news could hardly fail of consideration. Besides, at a time when fighting men would be sorely needed, it was scarcely probable that he would be sent back to the farm, or set at his books again. There was even hope that he might be reinstated on the governor's guard. With the last thought, hesitation was flung to the winds, and he sprang to his feet, with his face set toward Boston.

Having run the greater part of the intervening distance, it was scarce midafternoon when he reached the next hamlet on the road, — Saugus, — and made his way to the tavern. The buoyant sense of returning freedom had now so far restored his self-confidence that in his boldest manner he ordered that the best horse in the stable be instantly brought him.

"I have but one horse, and the charge of the 'Bag-o'-Nails' is fourpence an hour," answered the landlord, hesitatingly.

"Thy charge is reasonable," returned Thomas, loftily, and called for a pot of beer, whilst the animal should be saddled. The landlord presently reappeared, leading a fine, well-groomed horse.

"I doubt not your means to pay, young sir," he said; "but should my horse come to grief, and I could not get his value, 'twould be a sad loss to me, who am dependent on my labour for my bread, and have a family to support."

"I will see to it that thou art paid to the last farthing," returned Thomas, loftily, handing the man the empty beer noggin.

"Young blood is sometimes forgetful, sir," returned the man, respectfully, but with the manner of one not to be cajoled or browbeaten.

"I am on business relating to his Worship, the governor," said Thomas, haughtily.

The landlord was plainly nonplussed. Despite the shabby and dust-covered clothes, the labour-stained hands, there was that about the boy that bespoke, unmistakably, the gentleman.

"Have you aught about you to show the truth of your words?" he asked, civilly. "I mean no disrespect, sir, but many a rascal is about who would not hesitate of any pretext to rob an honest man."

"I — I have nothing," began Thomas, with renewed dismay at the recollection of his carelessness regarding the letter.

The landlord's face darkened. The hand that held the horse's bridle closed in a firmer grip.

"Thou hast not yet paid for thy pot of beer," he said, significantly, as his would-be customer stood cudgelling his brains for some way out of this new and annoying dilemma.

Thomas flushed angrily at the change of address.

"*Thou*, fellow!" he repeated, angrily. "Is that the way to speak to thy betters?"

"An thou wouldst cheat me out of a ha'penny for a pot of beer, thou wouldst let me whistle for fourpence for the horse — ay, and 'tis likely, for the horse, as well," returned the man. "As for *thou*

being my better," — he laid deliberate emphasis on the offensive pronoun, — "my betters are not wont to go afoot and run up a reckoning for which they cannot pay."

"Canst thou not see, fellow, that I am a gentleman's son?" urged Thomas, desperately.

But as though the last words had evoked some evil spell, the landlord's face darkened, and he answered in a tone that evidenced the futility of further urging.

"'Gentleman's son,' forsooth! 'Tis not so long ago that I was landlord of the 'Bag-o'-Nails,' in Cheapside, and a horde of young ruffians came on a Sabbath day, bidding me, as though they were lords of the land, to set forth the best in my house; knowing well that the entire piratical crew had not a groat amongst them, I would not heed their orders, whereon the rascals fell on me with cudgels, and beat me till I was near dead, and a wonder it was that I had a whole bone left in my body. Then they brake everything in the house, — furniture, pewter, the very shutters, — and opening the bung-hole of every cask in the cellar, after they had drank their fill themselves, let all my good sack and ale run to waste!" groaned the man, in piteous recollection. "When I brought complaint to the magistrates, the

rapscallions got off scot-free, because, forsooth, they were 'gentlemen's sons!' Were it not for them, — for I had not the money to restore things at home, — I should not now be in this accursed country, where the mosquitoes are like dragons and the sky is enough to blind one. No, no, — no 'gentlemen's sons' for me!"

There was no other tavern between Saugus and Charlestown, and should the tidings of the Indian uprising reach Boston by another, — and doubtless a speedy messenger would be despatched from Salem, — the honour of bringing the warning would be lost, and with it, the fond hope of reinstatement on the governor's guard. Bridle in hand, the landlord turned toward the stable.

There was a cry from within the house. "The baby, — the kettle!" mingled with a child's agonised screams. The man let go his hold of the horse and dashed into the house. In an instant, Thomas was in the saddle, clattering down the road at full speed. The inn was on the edge of the village, so the way was clear before him, and the horse kept nobly up to the pace at which his rider urged him. Enjoyment of the swift movement mingled with exhilaration at the thought of having got the better of the landlord, and that of good times ahead. As he dug his nailed

shoes into the horse's side, the boy's thoughts swept beyond the immediate future to a day when, heralded by the glory he had won in the New World, he should return to Sempringham. In imagination, unconsciously slackening the reins the while, he saw the great avenue that led to the castle thronged with villagers and peasants, who in hushed voices spake the name of the hero of the hour. Within the castle, awaited him a vast assemblage of another sort. The Earl of Lincoln advanced to meet him, and, throwing a golden chain about his neck, led him to the dais at the end of the hall, where sate the Countess of Lincoln. With her was Lady Emilia, eager to behold the returning hero, yet blushing to show her eagerness. He cast at her feet the crown and jewels of the Indian king, with which he was laden, and kneeling before her said, "Lady, 'twas for thee I conquered!"

The horse stumbled, and before Thomas could pull him up, had flung his rider headlong to the ground; there the boy lay for some minutes, stunned by the shock, but as he soon found, without serious injury. Unhappily, the horse had not escaped so lightly, as a futile struggle to rise, a painful neigh, too plainly indicated. With a heavy heart Thomas found that the animal's foreleg was broken. A hole in the

road revealed but too plainly the cause of the mishap. Sorry luck, reflected the boy, ruefully, to lose two horses in one day, and neither by any fault of his own! There was nothing to do but to resume his journey afoot, though he could now scarcely hope to outdistance the messenger from Salem. He had scarce taken a half-score steps when a whinny brought him back to the horse's side; eyes almost human in their entreaty implored the boy to be put out of agony. The nearest house was just visible on the road behind; to return thither, borrow a matchlock, despatch the horse, and return the firearm, meant not only appreciable delay, but the possibility of being overtaken by some one whom the irate landlord had sent upon his track. Again and once again, Thomas set his face Bostonwards, and again compassion for the suffering creature drew him back. At last, pity got the better of all other considerations, and he retraced his steps. The man of the house proved good-natured, and, possibly influenced by his women folk, to whom the lad's merciful intent evidently appealed, he not only readily consented to lend the matchlock, but offered to expedite the boy's journey by returning with him to the place where the horse lay. The animal was soon despatched, and dragging their joint burden to the side of the road, Thomas

was about to continue his journey, when the man detained him, pointing to a brand upon the horse's flank that had just come into view.

"How came you by this horse?" he questioned, gravely. "The landlord of the Saugus tavern is my brother by marriage."

"By what right dost thou ask?" answered Thomas, goaded nearly to frenzy by the continued obstacles that an unkind fate was casting in his way. "I care not who thy kinsfolk be, nor how they get their living. I take it a gentleman hath a right to hire a horse at an inn without being questioned thereon by every ploughman he meets!"

"Not so fast, young sir," returned his interlocutor, on whom the lad's display of temper had evidently an ill effect. "A civil question deserves a civil answer, and I am thinking that he who forgets such courtesy shows himself scarce the equal of the ploughman."

"As thou seest, the horse belonged to the landlord of the Saugus tavern," replied Thomas, flushing at the not undeserved rebuke, and from so humble a source.

"It may be even as you say," said the man. "I ask but for proof. An my brother-in-law has let you have the horse by agreement, I have no more to say; he and you can settle any further matter between

you. You have but to answer 'yea' and the road is open before you." He stood aside as earnest of his speech.

It was such a little word, so easily spoken. It would purchase so much at so slight a cost! But even as he opened his lips to speak, there came to him the words of one of the knightly souls he loved:

"Thou shalt tell no untruth, no, not in trifles; for there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar," and his lips refused the little word, so hardly spoken, and which would have cost so infinitely much!

Ah, if at that moment he had been armed with the governor's signet-ring!

"I am the bearer of tidings of urgent importance to his Worship, the governor, in whose personal service I am," he said, firmly. "I have the right to say: '*In the name of the king!*'"

Perhaps the potent words, in their mere utterance, aided by the look of fearless truth on the boy's face, might have won their way, but at that moment a rider, unobserved by both in their preoccupation, swept down upon them with the warning cry:

"*In the name of the king!*"

"I like not the looks of things," said Thomas's

companion, decidedly. "Return with me to the house, whilst I send a message to my brother-in-law. If all is as you say, I will ask your pardon for detaining you, and will do what I can to forward you on your road to Boston."

CHAPTER XII.

UNAVAILING efforts to convince his captor — who, indeed, seemed a man of fair and open mind — that his release would be the better part, occupied Thomas on their return to the house. There was nothing of which to complain in his subsequent treatment, it being that of guest rather than prisoner. He sate at board with his captor and his family, — consisting of wife and son and a niece, the last a pretty, demure-looking girl called Eunice, who was, apparently, less inclined to regard him with favour than the others, for whenever Thomas glanced her way she was looking persistently in another direction. As his hunger became satisfied, the lad's spirits rose, and he talked entertainingly of his captivity amongst the Indians, and of the goings-on in Boston for the past twelvemonth, little of which had reached the remote farmhouse. He was showered with questions, too, regarding the Boy Governor, whom his hosts had never seen, and concerning whom they entertained the most intense curiosity. To speak of his master

was so great a pleasure that, quite forgetful of his own precarious situation, Thomas described Master Vane in the most glowing terms, dwelling on the universal love in which he was held. But at the last words the host shook his head.

"'Beware when all men speak well of you,'" he said, gravely. "It betokens no good, either, to my thinking, that all Boston is running after this woman preacher — I cannot bring her name to mind," he added. "For mine own part, I would bid her remember the words of St. Paul, that women should not be heard in the churches."

"Though we are at so great a distance from town, we learn something of what is going on from the travellers who stop at my sister's inn," said the good woman of the house, with not a little pride in their cosmopolitanism. "Boston is said to swarm like an angry ant hill because of this woman's teaching. It is become common for men — ay, and women, too — to get up in the meeting-house and tell the minister to his face that he is all wrong, and belike leave the church. Even in the highest places are they at loggerheads; the governor is set against the deputy governor, Master Cotton against Master Wilson."

"We are not yet come to the end of the matter, either," said her husband, gravely. "They say that

in Boston it is as common to distinguish between those who are under a Covenant of Grace and those under a Covenant of Works, as it is in other countries betwixt Papists and Protestants. One may well tremble at such words, when he recalls the bloody doings in the streets of Antwerp."

"Thou art ever ready to think that the worst will befall," said Goodwife Fox, reproachfully. "An souls are being drawn to Christ, why should men murmur at the instrument of His choice?"

"Because when the old serpent can not prevail to ruinate and destroy the Kingdom of Christ from without, mayhap he seeks so to do by more secret and subtle means — by sowing the seeds of contention and bitter enmity amongst the professors and seeming reformers themselves," answered the host, gravely.

The loft over the living-room was indicated to Thomas as his sleeping-place; as he mounted the ladder leading above, he heard Goodwife Fox say to her niece:

"'Twould be passing strange that so comely a lad, and of such pleasing parts, should be a thief," — but Eunice did not, apparently, take enough interest in the matter to reply, for, instead, she reminded her aunt of a certain pattern of a bedquilt that she had

promised, the previous Sabbath, to send to her sister at the inn. Oliver entered the room with two foaming pails of milk.

"Do not stand there staring as though thou wert like never to see me again," said the girl, pettishly; "go finish thy chores, and I will presently bring the pails to the barn."

Oliver, crestfallen, moved slowly away, muttering something to the effect that she was not in such a hurry to be rid of the strange lad.

"That is neither here nor there," retorted Eunice. "An thou goest not, I will have nought more to say to thee," she added, with a glance over her shoulder at Goodwife Fox, still busy in unavailing search for her pattern.

Thomas's first act was to examine his quarters for the night; there was no window in the loft, and no other mode of egress than that by which he had entered; the ladder had been immediately removed, although, had it remained, the situation would scarce have been altered thereby, as the family slept in the room below. He heard, soon, the bed let down. As he recalled the vengeful feelings of the landlord toward "gentlemen's sons," his heart sank within him and the image of the stocks arose with fearful distinctness before his mental vision. He thought of

the culprits he had seen thus exposed in Boston market-place, the target of the rude wit of the passers-by, and pelted with all manner of offensive missiles by the coarser crowd. Though the stocks was a penalty to which a gentleman was rarely subjected, cases were on record when such punishment had been meted out to one of the quality. It might even be that a more severe penalty would be visited upon him; to have one's nose slit or his forehead branded with a "T" was a not infrequent punishment of theft. Not even when he lay bound in the Narragansett lodge had Thomas known such a tremor of apprehension as that which overcame him in his present captivity.

He had intended keeping awake through the night in vague hope that some chance of escape might offer with the darkness, but after flinging himself on the bed, scarce a minute seemed to have elapsed before he was aroused by a stir in the room below and, opening his drowsy eyes, he perceived daylight stealing through the chinks of the walls. Directly, the ladder was placed against the opening, and he heard his host's voice bidding him descend. Still struggling with sleep, Thomas stood before the assembled family. The sight of Oliver, evidently just returned from a morning ride, cleared his mind to the con-

sciousness of his situation. To his utter bewilderment, Goodman Fox, in tones of the utmost deference, said:

"I crave your pardon, sir, for my overhasty and most mistaken action. Oliver hath brought word from my brother-in-law that he let you have the horse at the usual charge, being well assured that you were what you represented yourself to be, a young gentleman in the personal service of his Worship the governor, and advising me to further you on your journey by all the means in my power."

Perhaps luckily for him, amazement at this unexpected turn of affairs held Thomas's speech, or some unguarded exclamation might have betrayed him. His host, evidently interpreting the boy's silence as token of offence, renewed his apologies, concluding with the hope that Master Savage would do him the honour of remaining to breakfast.

But Thomas wisely preferred to resume his journey fasting rather than run any further risk of detention. Assuming a haughty air, he declared that he had already been delayed too long, and that it behoved him to set forth at once upon his road. Taking a courteous farewell of his hostess, — who had not neglected to give her husband a triumphant "I told thee so!" — the lad was soon on his way, at as rapid a

pace as he felt to be consistent with appearances, till he reached a dip in the road that hid him from watchful eyes; here he paused an instant to tighten his belt, preparatory to setting out on a run, when he heard his own name softly called; directly a girl's figure emerged from the thicket by the side of the road. It was Eunice.

"I hurried across the fields whilst thou and uncle were talking," she said. "'Twere best not to go by the road. Come this way." As she spoke, she seized Thomas's hand, and the boy, uncomprehending, but readily acquiescent, kept pace with his guide, as she led the way through a brier-set field to the tangled underbrush that fringed the forest hard by.

"There is the old Indian trail," she said, indicating an almost obliterated wood path. "'Tis a longer route than by the road, but they will not think to look for thee here. Here is food for thy journey," she added, thrusting a generous parcel into the boy's hand.

"'Twas thou who saved me?" cried Thomas, eagerly.

"I told Oliver that I would never speak to him again an he brought not back the tale — word for word — as thou hadst spoken it. I made him say it over after me at the barn, till he was letter perfect.

I think, indeed," went on the girl, gravely, "that one with a face like thine should speak truth; but be that as it may, 'twould be a sore pity that thou shouldst go through life a sight for the crows to caw at."

"But thy cousin, Oliver, — I shouldst be a coward an I let him bear the blame. His father will learn, ere long, that he spake falsely, — or at least that he deceived them in the matter of bearing the true tale from the landlord," rejoined Thomas.

"At all events my cousin's nose is safe," answered the girl. "His father or uncle will scarce hale him before the magistrate because of speaking true word in false guise. The reason that none hath yet followed thee is that the baby was near scalt to death by the breaking of the lug-pole and upsetting of the kettle; mine uncle of the tavern hath since thought of nought but the child. But depend upon it, as soon as he can set about it — and 'twill be ere long — the constable will be at thy heels."

"But Oliver will not escape a flogging," said Thomas, earnestly.

"If, by taking a few blows, he cannot save a poor fellow from lifelong misery," returned Eunice, seriously, "why, Oliver is not the lad I take him to be, and he may look elsewhere for a sweetheart."

"But thou?" protested Thomas. "Think'st thou I would make a shield of a maid's apron? It may fare hardly with thee, as well as with thy cousin."

"Think'st thou so?" returned Eunice, smiling saucily. "At heart, mine aunt will be mightily relieved over thy escape, for she liked thy face and speech right well; though she may scold me somewhat when the truth is known, and — well — it may be I shall get a box on the ear for a froward minx, but I have nought of any account to fear. Having a snug little dowry of mine own, both mine uncle and aunt would be well pleased to see me wed Oliver. And I told Oliver, an he did this thing for me, — for Oliver is not a lad who lies for his own pleasure, — that the minister might cry the bans next Sabbath day, — as my cousin hath been teasing me to have him do for a twelvemonth past and more. My hand for thy nose is a fair exchange, Master Savage," she added, smiling; "so give thyself no further concern for either Oliver or myself."

"How can I, being, as I truly said, a gentleman's son, — a right worthy, gallant gentleman, — hope that mine own son — an I have one — could make the same boast, if I take this boon of thee?" said Thomas, with a gravity that now and again gave hint

of another nature that lay beneath the untutored impulses and crude ambitions that dominated the present.

He took a few backward steps, but Eunice caught him by the arm. He did not know how bravely handsome he looked in his earnest protest, as he stood, cap in hand, the wind blowing his curls about his face, that, brown with the summer's exposure, set in relief his bright eyes and white teeth.

"Thou must not," cried Eunice. "Thou knowest not mine uncle of the tavern. The mere mention of 'gentlemen's sons' puts him in a blind rage. And now that he holds thee, as one of that 'cursed breed,' as he terms them, to blame for the breaking of the lug-pole, — as though, forsooth, it would not have burnt through as well hadst thou been a churl's son, — believe me, he will spare no pains to lay hands on thee; perchance he will not wait for the hangman to sharpen his knife. Go — if not for thine own sake, for thy sweetheart's," she added, desperately, as Thomas showed no signs of yielding. "One with a face like thine hath a sweetheart?" she queried.

"Truly, yes," answered Thomas, trying to think of Lady Emilia, but finding instead his thoughts

reverting to Faith Hutchinson, as he had last seen her in the Salem woods.

"Then for her sake, go," urged Eunice. "Tell her that another girl, out of her own happiness, sends you back to her, — for a sorry thing it would be, indeed, to kiss a face made frightful by the hangman's knife."

"Then take this, I pray thee, as a wedding token from her," said Thomas, holding out Faith's gold beads. "So she would bid me do, an she were here, with her own dear love to thee and Oliver," he added, as Eunice hesitated to take the gift, though her eyes rested longingly on the glistening circlet. But to her protest, Thomas made answer:

"'Tis little enough for the danger thou hast run, though all too much, I fear me, for the worth of that which thou hast saved. For never would I have outlived such shame as that which thou hast snatched me from!"

"Then will I take it, with my dear thanks to thee and thy sweetheart, and will treasure it to wear upon my wedding day," said Eunice, dropping a curtsey. "And when I come to Boston, as I think to do when Oliver goes thither for the first time to vote at the next general election," interpolated the girl, proudly, "then will I seek out thy sweetheart and thank her

for her gift. Might I make bold to ask her name? Faith — Faith Hutchinson?" she repeated. "I know right well that she must be good and fair and of gracious speech, or she could not have won the love of such as thou," she added, gravely.

In the courtly speech to which he had been bred, and which would ever cling to him, though Castle and Castle folk were far away, Thomas made answer:

"She is, indeed, all that thou sayest — and more. And to be held worthy of her love is praise enough, though undeserved" — for in what other phrase should one speak of the lady of his heart?

Eunice set out in the direction of home and Thomas struck into the forest. He soon found that it was by no means easy to keep to the path, that had not been used to any appreciable extent since the highroad was laid out. The scars on the tree trunks, by which the settler's broad axe had aided to mark the trail, were in many places obliterated; and more than once, Thomas must retrace his steps on finding that he had merely been following some misleading opening amongst the trees. At length, he adopted the method of hanging his cap upon a low branch of a blazed tree, and from this point finding the next blaze, to which in turn he transferred the cap. But this process, while doubtless the best under

the circumstances, consumed time, so that dusk was fast deepening into darkness when he reached Charlestown. The ferry landed him in Boston, and he made the best of his way to the tavern.

CHAPTER XIII.

Captain Dudley had been at the house of his Worship the governor since early afternoon, said the landlord. Thomas would have asked permission to await his guardian's return in the tap-room, but worthy Goodman Coles insisted upon showing the lad to a room and good bed. Tired with his long journey, Thomas was aware of nothing more till aroused by the sunlight pouring into the room. Descending, he found, to his surprise, that Captain Dudley had not yet returned.

After a hasty breakfast, he left the tavern, and hurried to the house that, ever since his arrival in Boston, he had called home. The door was wide open and some one was stirring in the kitchen. To his surprise, it was Faith.

"How camest thou here?" he queried. "Didst get Gray Bess?" he added, eagerly.

"Gray Bess was dead with the corn with which she had filled herself," answered Faith. "The man whose crop she had destroyed was wild with rage, as

he thought his loss would have been made good by the value of the mare, after thou hadst escaped him."

"Doth Captain Dudley know what chanced?" questioned Thomas, after a dismayed silence.

"He questioned me how we fared on the journey, when I took him Mistress Dudley's letter," returned Faith, in manifest distress. "I found the letter on the table and placed it in my bodice," she added.

"Was he much wroth?" asked Thomas, trying to speak carelessly.

Faith's hesitation answered with only too much of emphasis.

In the brief companionship of the journey from Agawam, Thomas had been so engrossed with the welcome change of scene that appeared about to offer that he had paid scant heed to his fellow traveller. Besides, Faith was too familiar an element in his daily life for her presence to arouse unwonted thoughts, at least consciously. He could not understand the diffidence that all at once seemed to have come over him in her presence. As he stood in the doorway, fiddling his cap, and watching Faith at her work, he noticed for the first time that a change had come over the girl, and although he was observant only of its outward guise, he was vaguely conscious that it represented as well something deeper and

more essential. He saw that a womanly slenderness had replaced the childish roundness of form, a more sedate movement was in the stead of the quick motions that had characterised Faith of old. In her speech was no longer the irrepressible confidence that had been the cause of so many passages of arms between them. Always, after such contention, although it was Faith who held her ground and in the end never failed to have her own way, it was Faith, too, who was the first to make up. But now she kept about her work with a manifest indifference to his presence that was something new in Thomas's experience of his little playmate; and so disquieting, as well, was the novel sensation, that he knew not whether to be piqued or indifferent, to go or stay, to speak or be silent. When he spake, at last, the words seemed in despite of his own volition.

"I meant not, Faith," he said, "to have left thee alone on the Salem road, to fend for thyself" — and would have spoken farther, but that the girl quickly took the word.

"Thou needst not trouble thyself over so small a matter, — I walked back, — as I had gone — alone."

"Where is Francis?" asked Thomas, desperately, after another uncomfortable pause that Faith showed no signs of breaking.

"He hath gone to Master Cotton for his lesson," she returned.

"I must report myself to his Worship. Perchance I shall meet Francis on the way," said Thomas, unwelcome reflections for the moment cast aside in his eagerness to see his friend again.

"Here is a letter for thee," said Faith, taking the missive from the dresser. "It hath just arrived, or I would have brought it thee at Agawam," she added, and again Thomas was conscious of something new — a sense of care-taking, a womanliness to which he could give no name, but which was none the less a part of the new Faith who had taken the place of his little playmate of old. He was half resentful of this usurper, whose ways recalled Faith's ways, yet were not hers, who spoke in a voice that resembled Faith's, yet with a difference; whose form and features were those of his little comrade, and yet were not hers — except the eyes. The lovely, starry eyes were Faith's own, not to be changed by time or circumstance.

The letter bore a familiar armorial seal; as Thomas ran along the path up Cotton's Hill, he tore the missive open, though with only half-hearted interest. But the first line chained his attention, and dropping on a boulder by the wayside, he read to the end.

"GOOD THOMAS: — I have news for thee that will give thee joy. It is my betrothal to Lady Emilia. Of a truth, I had little thought in that direction till of late, though 'tis now some months since my father told me what were his wishes for me and for her. Though in all duty to mine honoured father, it needed not another pair of eyes to aid me in seeing that Lady Emilia is the sweetest lady in all England, — saving only my mother, — and that Lady Emilia will be such a Countess of Lincoln as never was and never will be again, except my mother. Lady Emilia says she hath never cared for any one but me, although I do recall, when thou wert at the Castle, that it sometimes appeared that she favoured thee rather than me. But maids are ever shy of letting their real preferences be known, and though she ever cared for thee, 'twas only as a brother. But what passeth wonder to me is that thou hadst no eyes for her. But then, thy mind was ever on other matters — adventure, and honour, and fighting. Thou mayst like to know, however, that Lady Emilia taketh a kindly interest in thy fortunes and never faileth to ask of thee when thy letters come. They have not been frequent of late; but I suppose thou hast little time for clerkly offices with all the bold adventures that are now thine. Some rumour hath reached

Sempringham that war is like to be up ere long with the savage hosts that were in America ere the coming of the English. I suppose thou art rejoicing at such a prospect, but for mine own part, I hope the tale is false, matters here, 'twixt king and Parliament, having reached so ticklish a state that the Colony could look for no help from England in case of such an outbreak.

"Her gracious ladyship, my mother, sends her dear wishes for thine health and well being in all things.

"Thy loving friend,

"THEOPHILUS."

In his absorption, Thomas had not noticed the sound of approaching steps, till Francis Hutchinson stood before him. The next moment, the two boys were pounding each other's back in excess of joy at this reunion.

"I am on my way to his Worship the governor," were Thomas's first collected words.

"Nay, 'tis useless," said Francis. "Master Vane left Boston early this morning to hold parley with the Narragansetts, who 'tis hoped are not yet wholly committed to war."

"Why was not I here?" groaned Thomas, after

a moment's dumfounded silence. "Tell more," he added, impatiently.

"When the messenger arrived from Endicott it was felt that the critical moment was come, and that unless prompt and energetic measures were adopted the result would be a war of extermination against the English on the part of the savages," began Francis, obediently. "Yesterday I was called to the governor's, where he and the other magistrates, together with Captain Dudley, were in consultation, and questioned again concerning that which we had witnessed — the war council, for such all present deemed it to be, on the borders of south and west."

"Why parley with such a foe?" demanded Thomas, scornfully. "Thou rememberest when a bundle of arrows, lapped in a rattlesnake's skin, was sent to Plymouth, the reply was the same skin filled with powder and bullets. He who strikes first, strikes hardest."

"Ah, Thomas, I know right well how thou lovest him," said Francis, sadly. "But couldst thou have seen him in these latter days, thou wouldst have felt that none ever lived like unto Master Vane. In the council, so they say, men of twice and thrice his years have yielded to his wisdom."

"Oh, to have followed him to battle!" groaned

Thomas. "To have fastened his spurs, held his horse, perchance, like Brian le Sauvage, to have stood over his body while the dead lay twenty thick around! Perchance to have given mine own life for his — why am I ever out of the way when something worthy is going on? With what force did he go?"

"He went alone, afoot and unarmed," answered Francis, with averted face.

"Alone! What meanest thou?" queried Thomas, after a pause of dumb amazement.

"There was none to go with him," returned Francis, sadly. "At least," he corrected himself, "nothing to be called a force. Captain Dudley would have gone, but that his Worship forbade, saying that he was needed at home, and that inasmuch as the mission was one of peace and not of war, one man could do the work as well as two. Thy guardian was fain to see the force of the reasoning. He hath now gone with Master Vane to the Neck, where they will bid each other farewell."

"Where were the men of the train-band?" asked Thomas, the feeling strong upon him that in his absence from Boston, comparatively short though the time had been, some spell had been cast over the familiar hamlet, so altered seemed the place and all the people therein!

"Yester morn the drummers beat up and down the streets, summoning the train-band," answered Francis, slowly, still speaking with averted face. "It was intended to make an instant descent upon the savages. But not a man would go."

"Refuse to meet the foe!" cried Thomas, hotly. "Men who fought under Frobisher and Drake afraid — Englishmen turn cowards!"

"Captain Dudley was the only man in Boston capable of commanding such an expedition. The train-band said that he was under a Covenant of Works. For that reason none would go with him," answered Francis, at length. He was tracing figures in the earth with the toe of his shoe, taking heed that the circles were exact. "Thou hast heard nothing of that which hath set all Boston by the ears — of the new doctrine, as 'tis called, of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace?" he queried, after a prolonged pause, in which his friend stared at him as though wondering which of the two had taken leave of his senses.

"Nothing; yet wait — methinks I did hear something of the sort spoken at the Fox farm, but in truth, I was too concerned with a matter that appeared to me of greater account just then than what folks in Boston were talking about," rejoined Thomas,

stroking his nose in still perturbed recollection of his narrow escape. "Some words, too, of that sense — or rather sound, for of sense I perceived none at all — I heard spoken on my way to thine house. If I recall rightly, they ran thuswise," he went on, knitting his brows: "'the seal of the Spirit,' 'witnesses of the Spirit,' 'a broad seal and a little seal,' 'not being sealed.' By their excitement, I supposed the people were talking of the likelihood of being murthered in their beds by the savages, and would have asked what news of the Pequots, but presently found they spoke of matters beyond my understanding. Besides, I was in a hurry to find thee, and gave no further heed to their idle chatter."

"Thus they spend most of their time, arguing and quarrelling," answered Francis, gloomily. "Captain Dudley, as thou knowest, is not one to tamely submit to insubordination, but when a man throws himself flat on the ground — why, thou canst not take such an one by the heels and drag him to the wars. The others of the train-band were like to follow the example. There hath been more than one threatened duel, only that the governor put an end to such extremities by threatening to tie together neck and heels, and expose on the pillory, any one who should draw weapon on such a pretext."

"Is the whole town gone mad?" cried Thomas.

"So, in truth, say some," answered Francis, soberly. "Some declare that my mother is a Miriam, a prophetess, a dear saint and servant of God. Others, chief amongst them being Master Wilson and Master Winthrop, call her a virago, a she-Gamaliel, the American Jezebel," went on the lad, restraining his tears with difficulty; yet, once fairly started on his narration, finding it a relief to be able to share his trouble with his friend. "How the little matter of my mother's reading and praying with a few friends in her own house could have reached such a pass, I know not," added Francis. It would have been difficult, indeed, for older and wiser heads to understand how a season of religious talk and prayer, merging, ere long, into criticism and argument, had speedily become a war of words that on the morrow was an irreconcilable feud, and was now threatening a war of factions.

"Thy mother the woman preacher of whom they spoke!" repeated Thomas, incredulously. "What else of thy home?" he asked, drawing a long breath.

"My father comes and goes, paying no heed to what is said or done about him," answered Francis. "Could one be dead, yet at the same time alive, I should say that such a fate had come upon my

father. Through all the sad, miserable time, Faith hath shown herself a right brave little maid. I knew not," added Francis, hesitatingly, "that she had taken certain foolish notions so sorely to heart, till two or three days ago she went from home, leaving a letter for me, saying — well, it matters not what she said," added the lad. "The children did little else but cry after her whilst she was gone, and when she came back, fell upon her, laughing and crying together and like to smother her with kisses; since then, she can scarce leave the room that they are not at her heels."

"What of Captain Dudley?" and both boys turned with relief from a matter too near their own hearts for discussion to be easy, even were it profitable.

It appeared that Captain Dudley was too good a soldier to commit the ofttimes fatal mistake of despising the enemy, and on taking command of the Colony forces, had at once proceeded to put Boston in a position of defence. It was ordered that all the male inhabitants, with the exception of boys under fourteen and men over sixty, together with the magistrates and ministers, should be enrolled in the train-band, one squadron being apportioned to each hill. Dean Winthrop was appointed to drill a company of boys on the Common — an item that brought an omi-

nous frown to Thomas's brow. Work on the fort was hurried on apace. The blockhouse was enclosed in a good strong pale, with flankers in convenient places, and gates to shut, which every night were locked, and a watch kept. Every one in town, high and low, had his place appointed to which he was to repair at any alarm. A sentry was posted on the Neck, where the turnstile that had sufficed to keep the cattle from straying, was replaced by a stout barricade. Day and night, too, watch was kept on the summit of the Tramount, that commanded a view of the country for many miles around. Here also a high staff was set, by means of which, in case of need, the signal could be given to the people of the neighbouring settlements to take their arms and repair instantly to the town. By day, the signal was to be a banner; by night, an iron cage, filled with pine and pitch, would serve as a beacon. "In reference to this warning light," added Francis, "the peak had been renamed Beacon Hill."

Yet in spite of all these warlike preparations, that might have been supposed to dominate all minds, it was no unusual thing to see the men at work on the fosses and palisades throw down their spades and pickaxes, and waste hours of precious time in heated discussion as to which Covenant their neighbour pro-

fessed. It was hinted that on more than one such occasion, Captain Dudley had used language more befitting the camp of his former French liege than the Puritan town. Nor was the pacific speech of the Boy Governor of more avail:

"Should not the exercises and troubles which God is pleased to lay upon us here, teach us patience and forbearance one with another, though there be difference in our opinions?"

Master Vane's example, likewise, passed unheeded, when with his own slender white hands, accustomed to no harder labour than that of wielding a sword, or holding the reins of his horse, he had set up the Beacon-light on Boston's three-topped hill.

Thomas suddenly gripped his friend's arm.

"Let us go on the track of Master Vane!" he cried. "It may be that we shall arrive just in time to rescue him from the savage hordes! As true and loyal squire, I am bound to give my life, if need be, in the service of my lord. Besides, never will I take orders from Dean Winthrop!"

A prolonged discussion followed, in which Francis brought to bear every available argument against what he unkindly called Thomas's latest foolhardy scheme.

"It matters little to me where my bones lie, in the

trackless forest, or in Westminster Abbey," added Thomas, suddenly remindful of Lord Eaton's letter.

"It may not matter overmuch where my bones lie, but it concerns me a great deal where I lay them down," repeated Francis, doggedly. "I prefer to die comfortably abed to being scalped and murthered by a savage crew. I' faith, they may talk as they will about a Covenant of Grace and a Covenant of Works, I think a likely misliking for Indian warfare was not without its weight with those who refused to go with Captain Dudley."

"Then will I go alone!" declared Thomas.

"That thou shalt not," returned Francis, with equal determination. "Thou art a mad, scatter-brained fellow, but if thou hast made up thy mind to go, — and I see thou hast, — why, I will not suffer thee to go alone, for there is no telling what manner of mischief thou wilt get into next."

"I would as lieve face the Narragansetts, who, when all is said and done, did not treat me ill, as meet Captain Dudley," muttered Thomas, whose awe of his guardian had not lessened with the tidings of the unhappy fate of the mare. "Though at the worst," he added, repeating the philosophy that has cheered the hearts of generations of boys in similar predicaments:

"'Scolding don't hurt, whipping don't last long, kill me he dasn't."

It was speedily settled that the most feasible plan was to go south by water, — thus avoiding the sentry on the Neck, and skirting the coast till the neighbourhood of the Narragansett country was reached, when they would make the best of their way to the lodge of Miantonimo, where, barring accidents, or unforeseen delays, Master Vane would no doubt by that time have arrived. The conjecture was probably correct that the governor, unaccustomed to the management of a boat in the rough and treacherous waters of the New England coast, had for this reason chosen the more difficult and circuitous route by land. The Indian trail that was the only other means of communication to the south did not follow the shore, but wound about the head waters of tidal inlets and circled the uplands in search of fords, where alone it was possible to cross the swamps.

It was arranged that Francis should return to the house for food and other necessities, while his friend made ready the old dugout. The latter task accomplished, Thomas spent the remainder of the day in the shadow of a rock, dreaming the wide-eyed dreams of which he was so fond. At twilight, Francis appeared and the two boys pushed off.

The water-fowl that hovered by day over the Charles River marshes were seeking their roosting-places along the water's edge of the myriad islands, their hoarse calls being the only sound that broke the silence as the boys, having placed a safe distance between themselves and the town, drew in their oars for a moment's breathing space.

Over the crest of Beacon Hill the sun was pouring one of those gorgeous sunsets to which the people of Boston, wonted to the soft duns and grays that hung low over the Lincolnshire fens, had not yet ceased to marvel. To one whose naturally vivid imagination had been fed to repletion, like Thomas, on old romances and scarcely less fabled tales of travel, the spectacle was one to fire the train of all manner of uncanny fancies. Unbidden came the thought, what if all these whisperings of Boston lying under the spell of a sorceress were true, and the "woman preacher" was really one of those wrecked, remorseless souls who would drag to perdition all on whom she could cast her evil spells?

The last rays of the sun were shooting arrows of gold and crimson and green from behind the crest of the Tramount, transforming the dome to a ball of gold. Below, swimming in a violet mist, a great city, like the one told of in Kubla Khan, of which he

had been dreaming all the afternoon, outstretched to the water's edge.

A sea-gull, dropping apparently from the sky, flapped wide distended wings directly over the boat. A paroxysm of terror came upon the boy.

"Row faster, faster!" he cried, seizing the oars, only to make a false stroke. In an unavailing effort to recover himself, he laid hold of the gunwale of the boat. The next instant, the clumsy craft had upset and the two boys were in the water.



"THE NEXT INSTANT, THE CLUMSY CRAFT HAD UPSET AND THE TWO BOYS WERE IN THE WATER"

CHAPTER XIV.

Both boys were expert swimmers and soon reached the island near which they had been upset. Their first collected thought was for the boat.

"'Tis too late; better not try to get it," said Francis, as Thomas would have plunged again into the water.

The craft possessed buoyancy enough to float, although filled with water up to the gunwales; but caught in one of the currents that ran amongst the islands, it was being borne rapidly out to sea. As the situation dawned upon the two boys, they looked at each other in dismay. Their food — bisket-cake, Indian-mixt bread, and suppawn, to which they had helped themselves liberally from Mistress Hutchinson's well-filled buttery — was, of course, lost with the boat. Fortunately, they had with them means to kindle a fire, and almost as with one impulse, they started up the slope to the woods, a few rods distant, where were found underbrush and broken

branches in plenty. Hanging their wet clothes on bushes near by, they played leap-frog on the beach till the fire was well under way. The exercise aided to revive their spirits, so that when they drew within the welcome circle of warmth, the situation had lost something of its gloom.

"They will see the fire from the town and will soon set off to rescue us," said Thomas.

"Who is going to know that it is we?" rejoined Francis, sulkily. "Folk yonder have something else to do besides setting sail in the dead o' night to see what means a little blaze on a harbour island. Besides, several islands with wooded heights shut us from view of the town. We might as well be in Plymouth — or England, for that matter, for all Boston can see us."

"The sentry on Beacon Hill could see the fire," rejoined Thomas, with less confidence.

"A little smoke would cause no alarm; careless folk are continually setting fire to the trees on the islands when they come here for firewood," rejoined Francis, holding his ground with unwonted pertinacity.

"A lighter will come, ere long, for pitch pine. See how well-wooded the place is," observed Thomas, lamely, for even to his optimistic vision it was evi-

dent that the spot would scarce have been so well wooded, if lighters came there frequently.

"People are cautious about coming even so far out to sea as this, since the affair of John Oldham," returned Francis. "I verily believe," he continued, in tones of the deepest disgust, "that thou wouldst contrive to upset a raft in the Frog Pond. Of a truth, Thomas, an ever we get to land, I will have nought to do with thy hair-brained schemes again. A score of times have I said the same, and a score of times belied it. But I'll not go back on my word again. An thou wert not so fond of riding a high horse, thou wouldst not get so many tumbles!"

"'Tis not my fault," urged Thomas, crestfallen, in spite of himself, at these strictures from so unwonted a source. "An a vessel blows up, or a mare runs away, or a crabbed landlord will not trust a gentleman's word, or there is a hole in the road for a clumsy beast to put his hoof into, or a boat upsets in a dead calm — why, sure, I am not to blame, but the devil is in it all! It hath sometimes seemed to me that some one hath cast an ill spell upon me, and all that I attempt, else why should dull plodders like Dean Winthrop succeed in all that they undertake, while one of good parts like myself — an I do say it — comes to nought," argued Thomas. "But I thought

I could rely on thy friendship, Francis, though all the world played me false — " The lad's voice trembled and the sentence remained unfinished.

After a moment's silence, Francis came around to the other side of the fire and put his arm about his friend's shoulders.

" I did but speak in heat and not out of my sober sense," he said. " An thy friend of the Castle forget thee, — though I think, indeed, that that is not like to happen, for with all thy provoking ways, thou hast a fashion, like to none other, of entering a fellow's heart, — ay, and staying there," interpolated Francis, " never will I turn my back on thee. Come what may, thou art my brother; and I know right well that thou wert made to lead and I to follow."

" And I love thee, too, Francis," rejoined Thomas, " as well as, in the old days, I loved Theophilus — though he was a right good and merry comrade," added the boy, loyally. " But thou art my brother, and Faith is my sister, and thy mother hath ever been to me as mine own mother, whom I never knew. And come what may, never will I forget it of thee and thine — and here's my hand on it."

The two boys gripped hands beneath the starlight with a solemnity that seemed to belong to the time and place; perhaps, too, in some vague and uncon-

scious premonition of coming ill, when they must, indeed, stand shoulder to shoulder against all the world — and the world, to them, was Boston.

When they awoke the next morning, the sun was shining upon one of those mild, windless days of late summer, when a gentle haze lies upon the brilliant New England foliage and softens the sky to turquoise. On the one side, an opal sea stretched out into indefinite distance, broken only by a white line of surf as the waves broke upon the jagged reef that shut Boston Harbour from the open Atlantic. On the other side, beyond the lovely islands of the Bay, the Tramount stood boldly out against the sky, with the range of the Blue Hills beyond. The boys broke fast on mussels, and a few ground-nuts — fare that only whetted their already ravenous appetites. Their first thought was to explore the island; although there was little doubt that it had been uninhabited since the settlement of Boston, it seemed best to proceed cautiously. Avoiding the trail through the woods, which indicated a former savage occupation, the boys followed the beach along the shore, their steps becoming bolder as the assurance increased that they had the island to themselves. Suddenly, on a grassy terrace high above the sea, they came upon a scene from which they

shrank in horror. Before them lay evidences of the great mortality that in foretimes had prevailed in those parts — a veritable Golgotha, bones and skulls lying in great heaps, bleached by the sun and rain, and twisted by the wind and storms into all manner of uncouth and grotesque attitudes, as though death had overtaken the poor wretches in their tracks. Doubtless here was the explanation of the island being unvisited by lighters.

Skirting "Graveyard Point," as they named the terrace, the boys soon reached the woods, and presently came upon a path that led through a growth of pine to a good quantity of clear ground, where it appeared that the Indians had formerly set corn. A growth of young woodland had nearly taken possession of the clearing, and the most careful search revealed only a few stunted corn-stalks with withered ears. They continued their explorations till a shout from Thomas, who was somewhat in advance, brought Francis to his side.

Before them were evidences of a former habitation; some planks and a great kettle were remaining, and heaps of sand. The boys, digging up these heaps, found in them baskets filled with corn, and some in ears fair and good, and of divers colours; in other baskets were beans of different colours. Some

of the corn was soon pounded between two stones, after the Indian fashion, and set to boiling in the kettle. This "samp," together with some clams roasted in the seaweed, afforded a substantial meal. There was enough timber in good condition remaining of the house to construct a shelter, open at the front and sloping to the ground at the sides and back. A fire in front of this lean-to afforded warmth and protection against the east wind, that even in midsummer sometimes pierced to the bone those accustomed to the milder climate of the North Sea, and which would also secure the shipwrecked adventurers against the possible attack of any wild beast that might make its way from the mainland.

Lying on the warm sand, after finishing their meal with handfuls of the delicious huckleberries found in abundance on the hillside, their seeming mishap began to assume the light of an agreeable adventure, particularly to Thomas.

"'Twould not be so ill a thing an we were to spend the remainder of our lives here, instead of returning to Boston," he suggested.

"'Tis well enough now," rejoined his companion, "but when a nor'easter comes tearing over Boston Harbour, then my choice is for a tight roof, and a warm fireside."

"Old Dickory knew a Spanish [1] sailor who lived for two and twenty years on an island at the mouth of the Orinoco. He had for company a parrot that he taught to speak, and an amiable savage who became a beautiful Christian character," said Thomas.

"The savages hereabouts are not of that breed," returned Francis, energetically. "Your island in the Orinoco may have been one of those visited by your friends Prester John or Marco Polo, but an they ever lived, — which I doubt, — the amiable savage and the beautiful Christian character of a parrot were long ago drowned out in some flood along shore. For mine own part," continued the lad, soberly, "ever since I visited that Indian village, and saw those hideous savage faces, cruel and blood-thirsty even in their sleep, an awful fear and trembling comes upon me at the mere mention of their name. Many and many hath been the time since then, while the talk was of the Pequots, that I have awakened with the sound of their yell in mine ears, and thought to see, at my bedside, a crouching figure, with uplifted tomahawk!" He put his hand to his head, as though the mere allusion to the frightful savage ceremony caused an uneasy twitch-

[1] Probably the original of Robinson Crusoe.

ing of the scalp. "I am not like to play any great part in the world," he went on, "but with thee, Thomas, it is different. Thou art of the stuff of which leaders are made. If all the lads in town have followed thee ever since thou cam'st amongst them, 'twas not only that they loved thee right well, but because they could not, an they would, have done otherwise — though thou hast been the cause of more floggings in Boston than all the original sin of which Master Wilson preaches."

Thomas smiled a little gratified smile as he aimed a pebble at a sandpiper that was hopping within touch of his outflung arm, although it was with a sigh that he answered:

"All but the one for whose heart I yearned!" and told his friend of how his lady love had played him false.

"Why, look at the matter seriously," urged Francis. "Favoured as thou wert at Sempringham Castle, still, thou wert a dependent. Lady Emilia was one of the richest heiresses in all England. Without doubt, the Earl of Lincoln intended her marriage with his son when they should have reached a suitable age. As thou grew'st toward manhood, and one could see that thou wert of a sort that maids love to look upon, thinkst not that the thought may have

come to the noble earl and countess, that 'twere well to have thee out of the way ere Lady Emilia were of an age to choose for herself — or perchance to breed unhappiness for you both through an unconsidered fancy? Nay, nay, Thomas, be not so quick to wrath," he added, as his friend started up with an exclamation of anger. "Bethink thee! The earl owed a duty to Lady Emilia as well as to thee. In his eyes, — and I doubt not that he acted in good faith to you both, — he would scarce have fulfilled that duty had he suffered thee and Lady Emilia to wed. 'Tis likely he would not have ordered thee away, but 'tis strong on my mind that when thy brain was all aflame for America, to let thee go thither was a straight and easy way out of a situation that, an I lose not my guess, was fast growing one of concern to both his lordship and her ladyship," concluded the lad, shrewdly.

"If I thought 'twas as thou sayst," cried Thomas, in fiery tones, "I would go home in the next ship that sailed and demand Lady Emilia's hand of her perfidious guardian."

"And thinkst thou wouldst get it?" queried his friend, dryly. "Nay, be not a fool, Thomas. The earl hath been thy friend throughout, in this matter as in others — ay, I think even more in this than in

most. 'Twould have bred only unhappiness for both thee and Lady Emilia hadst thou stayed at Sempringham. Hath not the countess told thee that, when the time came for thee to choose a wife, she would give her an ample dowry out of her own estate?"

"'Twas treacherous, nevertheless," muttered Thomas.

"Art sure thou hast not already proven that the good earl and countess were right?" persisted Francis. "I have not heard thee mention Lady Emilia's name for months, when once 'twas ever on thy lips. For mine own part," went on Francis, seriously, "no maid ever lived who could keep me awake nights or make me less ready for dinner or less lusty for a pull at the oar or a turn at wrestling. But then, I was not brought up with ladies and maids as thou wert, and know nothing of the ways of castle folk. But maybe there's a sort of shrewdness that comes along o' keeping shop, as some of my forabears have done, that counts for something — at least when pounds and pence are in the matter; and I take it, they are, oftener than lords and ladies would allow," added the lad, shrewdly. "When first I knew thee, a score of songs were on thy lips, some sad, some merry; there was one I liked the best of all. The tune ran thuswise" — Francis hummed a gay air.

"'Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May,
So she be not fair to me,
What care I how fair she be?'"

trolled Thomas.

"An thou must have a lady," went on Francis, seriously, "why, there is Faith. An she is my sister, I may say she is no ill-looking wench. She is of proper wit and understanding, too, as thou knowest. I should like right well to have thee for a brother, too, — in truth, as well as in friendship."

But to this handsome offer, Thomas shook his head with the air of one who would say that the place once occupied by the beloved one, even though she had proved false, would never again be filled.

It was agreed between the two boys that they should set at once about constructing a dugout, and for this purpose, fortunately, a tree was found that had been felled by lightning. One boy in the wood was to keep at the toil of hacking the log into shape, while the other, on the beach, fished, shot sea-fowl, — bows and arrows having been discovered in the debris of the house, — and kept, the while, a sharp lookout for any passing vessel.

Thomas was thus alone for many hours of the day, and it was at these times that the thought of Faith

in the character suggested by Faith's brother, returned again and again with ever-increasing insistence, till, ere long, her image was the one that he called before his mental vision in the solitude, and that accompanied all the thoughts that are bred of the sea and of the woods. Yet, in a manner that sometimes seemed to him passing strange, so little true understanding had he of his own nature, and in so unreal an atmosphere had romance and the old chivalric tales surrounded the lady of his devotion, that while it was Faith's face that arose before him in the forest aisles, Faith's voice that he heard in the splashing of the waves upon the shingly beach, it was Faith in the surroundings of Lady Emilia as he had been wont to see the maid of the Castle. There was one gown, in particular, in which he had best liked to see the highborn young dame arrayed; he had sometimes fancied that, because of this liking, Lady Emilia wore it oftener than any other. But it was Faith whom he now saw in the robe of fine stammel red, with its embroidered stomacher and puffed and slashed sleeves, girdled with ropes of pearls. Her hair, worn in its shining length, was banded, too, with pearls. Thomas had only seen Faith's hair once, when they were out fishing and the wind had blown off her little cap. He was fain to

confess that not Lady Emilia, nor any of the ladies of the Castle, had such beautiful hair.

By and by, in the vagaries of his undisciplined imagination, it was Faith — still the Faith of the Castle, however, not the girl whom he had seen performing all the humble household duties with such uncomplaining patience — to whom he had vowed allegiance and for whom all his deeds of prowess were to be performed. The strangest trick, however, played in all this fantasy was when it appeared to be Faith whom, in some untoward fashion, he had lost for ever, though it was he who had been unfaithful to their mutual vows, not Faith — never Faith, with the true, starry eyes that, whatever were the other changes that might come over his little playmate, would always remain unaltered.

No vessel of any description had been seen till the close of their first week on the island, when, as they were eating supper, it having been Thomas's turn to mount guard during the afternoon, the two boys descried a sail bearing rapidly eastward. It was impossible to tell with certitude who were aboard the craft, but Thomas thought to distinguish the towering form of Captain Dudley; to add to the bitterness of the situation, the shallop must have passed within a stone's throw of Graveyard Point,

which, it appeared, Thomas, in his turn of mounting guard, had been giving a wide berth.

The vessel reached the line of the Outer Brewsters and took a course due south.

"It is going to the rescue of Master Vane!" exclaimed Thomas. "There will be a fight with the Indians, and I shall not be there!"

"If thou art so scared of a few dead Indians, — who have been dead so long that I'm thinking they are scarce like to come to life again, — I durst not think thou wouldst face a score of live ones with any better heart," retorted Francis, in an ill temper that lasted till morning.

The days were growing shorter; the nights, despite the blazing fire, were chill with autumn frosts; tired to the point of nausea with their monotonous fare, the dugout was at last completed, and the two boys took leave of the island.

CHAPTER XV.

SHORT as was the distance from the island to the peninsula, nearly the entire morning was consumed in the passage, made almost in silence, as both boys realised that they were returning, not as heroes, but as runaways. They headed the canoe toward the more remote beach to the south, preferring to avoid the questioning that would greet their landing nearer the settlement. They made their way through the town, too absorbed in their own reflections to perceive immediately that an unusual number of people were abroad. But as they neared the market-place, it became evident that some stirring event was afoot. Thomas accosted the next person they met.

"Hast not heard?" returned the man, in manifest astonishment. "Where hast thou been the past four and twenty hours? Nothing hath been talked of in the town, ay, and round about so far as the news hath travelled, but the return of Captain Dudley and Master Vane."

"What hath chanced?" queried Thomas, impatiently.

The man, evidently glad to have the opportunity of relating so exciting a tale, entered at once upon the narration as he and the two boys kept on their way toward the market-place. Yestreen Master Vane returned alive and unharmed, thanks to the valour of Captain Dudley. It appeared that on the departure of Master Vane, Captain Dudley won from him the agreement that in case his Worship did not return or send news within a week, then was he, Captain Dudley, with such force as he could muster, to hasten to his aid. In return, the governor claimed the solemn promise that, if the Boston men refused again to accompany their commander, the latter would not go alone. One life was enough to sacrifice, he declared, and in case of his own death Captain Dudley would be more than ever needed at home. On this understanding, the two men wrung hands at the Neck, and Harry Vane set forth alone on his perilous mission.

The allotted time passed. Perchance shamed into manhood by the example of the Boy Governor, eight men of the train-band volunteered to accompany Captain Dudley to the land of the Narragansetts. In their frail craft the little party proceeded south along the coast till they reached the remains of one

of the early settlements of which famine or cold or sickness had made an untimely end. Dudley and his men took possession, strengthened the stockade, and fortified one of the blockhouses within. Ostensibly their object was trade; but the savages seemed to have suspected their real purpose, and for some time avoided intercourse with them. By degrees, however, gaining confidence, and seeing the small number of the white men, they grew bolder and came to the stockade more frequently and in larger numbers. Master Vane was still at the Narragansett village, but though treated ostensibly with respect and even friendliness, it was evident that his position was becoming every day more precarious. Pequot emissaries were striving to gain the alliance of Miantonimo, and it was become a question that any moment might decide, whether the Narragansett chieftain would be won to their side or to that of the English. Once, indeed, Master Vane subsequently related, he heard a stealthy step behind and felt a hand lifting his hair, but the savage stole away without harming him.

Interpreting the inactivity of the white men as a sign that they were afraid to engage with them, the Indians came in larger numbers to the stockade, while on more than one occasion, Dudley and his men were treated with such open scorn that the old soldier

had with difficulty restrained himself from killing the insulting savage then and there. So matters were suffered to stand till the time was ripe.

Meantime, Sassacus, the Pequot chief, had arrived upon the scene, and the number of Pequots in the neighbourhood was rapidly increasing. Many of these did not hesitate to come within the stockade, where they bore themselves with a license that in itself was a challenge.

One day the Pequot chief, with two or three of his principal men, came to the blockhouse, and was permitted to enter. The door was flung to and made fast. Suddenly giving the preconcerted signal, Dudley sprang upon Sassacus; his men fell upon the other chiefs. The savages, not making any fearful noise, but catching at their weapons and striving to the last, fell, covered with an incredible number of wounds.

Without waiting for their own hurts to stiffen, Captain Dudley and his men set out for the Narragansett lodge, where it appeared the news of the death of Sassacus had preceded them. Miantonimo, disclaiming all connivance with the schemes of the Pequot chief, straightway put the ambassadors of his proposed ally to death.

"We have always loved the English and desired

to be at peace with them," said the Narragansett chieftain, with the manner of one who expects to be believed. "We perceived, while our white brother dwelt with us, that he was under the protection of the Great Spirit. Thus we speak, not out of fear — a Narragansett knows no fear; nor price — a Narragansett does not sell his heart; but out of the love and favour which we bear toward the great chief of the English — Harrivane!"

All these amenities were accepted by Master Dudley with the manner of one who believes, merely supplemented by the statement that he and the great English chief rejoiced that the good intentions of their Narragansett brother were discovered in time, as the English had been upon the point of calling the plague out of the ground again, where, as was well known, they kept it, having sent it in advance of their first coming.

It was agreed between the two leaders that it was best to hold Miantonimo to an immediate and formal ratification of his expressions of good will; and to this end the Narragansett chieftain was invited to return with them to Boston. Before setting out on the homeward march, however, Captain Dudley determined to take advantage of the present disorganisation of the Pequots, and, accompanied by some of

the Narragansett braves, set forth upon their tracks. Overtaking the principal party of the Pequots in a swamp not far distant, either side started forward to reach a slight elevation close at hand which would give those reaching it a manifest advantage. The English gained it, and in the fight that followed killed the greater number of their assailants.

"This sudden and unexpected execution," concluded the narrator, "together with the just judgment of God upon their guilty consciences, so wrought and terrified and amazed the savages that they forsook their houses, running to and fro like men distracted, living in swamps and other desert places; and so brought manifold diseases upon themselves, whereof many died."

On the return of Dudley and his men from the south, the tidings of their victory spread rapidly along the way, and numerous folk from the neighbouring settlements followed in the footsteps of the little band. Every point of vantage within the market-place had been secured by the eager throng, and from housetops and fences, and even from the slender young trees that the English had lost no time in setting out, eager faces were turned toward the centre of the green, where the closing scene of these exciting doings was to be enacted.

The crowd, momentarily surging toward the north as the cry was heard, "Way for his Worship the governor!" was pressed back by the pikes of the constables.

A gallant figure appeared, arrayed in plumed hat and a crimson velvet short cloak, of which the folds, flung over the left shoulder, revealed a white and gold doublet, with slashed and banded sleeves, and ruffles of fine lace at the neck and wrists. Small-clothes of white silk, banded with gold, gold-embroidered gauntlets and a jewel-hilted sword, completed the courtly attire of the Boy Governor. Never had Harry Vane looked so beautiful as he stood in Boston market-place, the sunlight falling on his golden brown hair, the look of commanding intellect and imperious will stamped upon his youthful features, more marked than ever, as he awaited the homage of the savage chieftain. For the hour, factional differences were forgotten and all Boston was united in a thousand-fold return of the worship with which Harry Vane was regarded in the early days of his sojourn in Massachusetts. Again and again, from house-tops and market-place arose an irrepressible outburst of rejoicing and admiration and love.

The general attention thus absorbed, it was scarcely noted that toward the south another path was being

cleared through the crowd, till all at once there stood before the governor the bronze figure of the Narragansett chieftain, in paint and fringed garments of deerskin, eagle feathers and wampum. Miantonimo was accompanied by three of his sachems and twenty sannups, while drawn up in line on either side of the savage warriors were Captain Dudley and his men, in full war panoply. Captain Dudley was only second to the young governor in the adulation of the multitude. His recent achievement was the crowning touch to the revulsion of popular feeling that had been making its way in his favour since his return to Boston as military commander. The old soldier appeared as stonily indifferent, however, to the present expression of the multitude as he had previously shown himself to popular misconception, whether in self-exile, or in digging ditches and erecting fosses and palisades under the tropical sun of a Boston midsummer.

The crowd a-tiptoe and agape, there followed embraces, the offering of presents by the Narragansett chieftain, and their gracious acceptance by the English governor. The head of Sassacus was placed upon the ridge-pole of the meeting-house, his skin nailed to the door. Then Master Vane invited Miantonimo with his sachems to his own house, for refreshments, the presence of the magistrates giving additional dig-

nity to the occasion. The sannups were entertained at the tavern by Master Dudley, with an imposing guard of the train-band in attendance. His own trick should not be turned upon the wily old soldier.

That day, the tithing-man and beadle forgot their offices, and in the streets of Boston, where idleness and gossip were offences against the law, groups of men and women stood bareheaded in the open, discussing the great events of the day. A throng, kept at decent limits by the train-band, surrounded the governor's house and the tavern, where such as could obtain glimpses of the feasting within, circulated scraps of information amongst those less fortunately placed.

At dusk, Miantonimo, with his sachems and sannups, were escorted by Master Dudley and his men to the Neck, where they were dismissed with a salute.

Boston was saved.

Thomas and Francis, who had lost little of the day's exciting events, hung upon the heels of the train-band till the last gun was fired. Darkness had fallen when they found themselves again within the town.

"Thou hast nought but a flogging before thee," said Thomas, gloomily, as the two boys parted at the familiar corner.

"A flogging is not the pleasantest of welcomes home," returned Francis, in a tone of equal gravity.

The evil hour could no longer be delayed, and Thomas kept on his way to the tavern. As he entered the tap-room, Master Dudley, setting down the tankard of ale that he had just drained, turned to confront his errant ward.

A veritable Viking in strength and stature was Thomas Dudley, as well as in the fair hair and ruddy complexion that bespoke his descent from the conquering hosts of Hengist and Horsa. The old soldier's helmet was laid aside, but he had not yet removed the rest of his armour; corselet and gorget and tasses bore witness of many a hard blow given and received. Leaning upon his sword, with which he had led his troop at Ivry, and which scarce another in the Colony could wield, Captain Dudley towered above the boy, who, cap in hand, stood awe-struck at the transformation of the faithful steward, the shrewd manager of infinite detail, into this warlike giant.

"Well, sirrah?" said Captain Dudley, at length, and as at the word of command, rather than because his awe was lessened, Thomas found stammering speech.

"What is thine age, Thomas?" asked Captain

Dudley, at length, when the boy thought the ensuing silence would never end. "Hard on sixteen? And when dost thou mean to quit thy fooleries and act the man?" he added, as the lad stood twisting his cap, tongue-tied. If he could only be flogged and have it over!

"Since my coming hither I have heard nought of thee but idle and mischievous pranks," Captain Dudley continued. "Thou wert sent to me by thy kinswoman to make a man of thee; and out of my dear duty to the Countess of Lincoln, as well as because thy father was my trusty comrade in the old days," — the soldier's hand, as though by irresistible force of association, sought his sword, — "I would be thy friend. Her ladyship, as thou knowest, would have had thee bred a minister," he went on, "but 'twas left to my discretion, an that proved not thy vocation, as to what calling thou shouldst be trained, it being understood that the countess would be at the charge of thine maintenance, meanwhile, at whatever sum I judged to be the proper cost. But 'tis plain thou hast not the call to be a minister, and 'twas in my mind, that thou shouldst return with me to Agawam and be bred a farmer. Nay, nay, lad," the soldier interrupted himself, with a half smile at Thomas's exclamation of dismay, "be not so quick

to make an end of the matter. His Worship the governor hath besought thy pardon for thy disobedience and thy mad pranks, and to-morrow thou wilt resume thy place on his guard." He placed a kindly hand on the boy's shoulder as Thomas, bewildered at this unexpected turn of affairs, could scarce find stammering speech.

"Not to me dost thou owe thy gratitude. For less than one act of disobedience, such as thine, I have ordered a man shot. Thou hast to learn, before one can rule, he must obey. Master Vane, too, was thy friend of an earlier day," resumed Captain Dudley, gravely. "Shortly on that affair of election day, it was decided to send the guilty person, or persons, to England in disgrace, and there appeared little doubt, in the minds of the magistrates, as to who the culprit was. Master Vane was resolved at all hazards to get thee out of the way for a space; hence thou wert despatched, in haste, to Agawam. Soon their honourable worships had other matters than thy pranks to think on. Again, when the Saugus landlord sent a constable at thy heels, Master Vane, on his authority as governor, had him withdraw the complaint, on being satisfied to the full value — and something more — of the horse. 'Tis not with the best will and judgment that I leave thee

here, but Master Vane, being governor, is to be obeyed. Besides," added the old soldier, heartily, "I like the lad, and would trust his judgment of men beyond the ripeness of his years. We have slept and eaten and fought together, and in all things did he hold himself subject to me. When a man of Harry Vane's stuff shows such willingness to obey, faith, I make sure he is as well fitted to command. He hath but tried his maiden powers here in Boston, but some day the world will hear of this same young Harry Vane! There is about him, certes, I know not what, which minds me of my one-time lord and master, King Henry of Navarre — God rest his gallant soul, though he sold it to papistry and perdition for a crown! I think men would follow young Harry Vane into the heart of the fight, even as we followed the white plume of Henry of Navarre at Ivry, and cared not whether we came back or no. Belike, it may be that men give me the credit of the fight, and I'd not say but what I may have struck a blow or two; but when out yonder we were footsore or hungry or sick with wounds or struck with the dizziness that comes upon men a-wandering in these swamps, 'twas ever the Boy Governor who nerved us to the march or put heart into us for the fight with the murdering, bloody foe, till the very Indians beheld

the God of Hosts on our side, and threw down their bows and arrows at the sight of Harrivane!

"Fare thee well, lad. To-morrow I return to Agawam. And right glad am I to be quit of this town," concluded the old soldier, fervently; "for sooner would I face the Pequot arrows again, than Boston tongues when they be set a-wagging!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"WHAT is this latest talk, Francis, concerning thy mother?" cried Thomas. His knock at the door had been unheeded, but hearing the sound of voices within, he had entered without further announcement. Faith had just replied with considerable vehemence to some remark of her brother's.

"They are saying that it was because of my mother that the Lord lifted His threatening hand against us in the Pequot war; that He will not always spare us; and except that she who is the breeder and nourisher of all these distempers be dealt with according to her iniquities, Boston will be visited by the fate that overtook the cities of the plain," answered Francis, bitterly.

"Who or what hath incited this mad talk?" queried Thomas, in amazement.

"It toucheth matters too large for my understanding," returned Francis, despondently. "Sometimes it seems," the lad went on, "as though my mother was the centre of a web that others were spinning

about her to their own ends. But what it all means I do not know."

"Master Winthrop would be governor again," said Faith, abruptly. "Whilst Master Vane and Captain Dudley were away, the deputy governor knew how to make good use of his time."

When Thomas expressed wonderment that she, being a girl, and untutored in the larger things of life, should have arrived at conclusions in regard to matters touching upon government, Faith smiled sadly as she replied:

"When it may be a question of life or death to one's mother whether this or the other man be elected governor, even the poor wit of a girl may see as far as that of men."

"We have received warning that, in the event of Master Winthrop again being governor, as seemeth possible, my mother will be called upon to retract her so-called heresies, on penalty of worse to follow," explained Francis.

"Who told thee this?" queried Thomas. "How knowest thou the mind of the governor that is to be? — if so, indeed, Master Winthrop deems himself!" he added, scornfully.

"Dean Winthrop hath but now left the house," answered Francis. "In recompense for his military

services, despite his youth, he hath been made freeman, and will sit at the next general court. It would seem that in view of his coming of age, his father hath held speech with him concerning grave matters, particularly touching those that he is pleased to call the present disturbances in the church."

"Military services, forsooth!" scoffed Thomas. "A soldier who never left the Common, a hero who hath never killed anything but pigeons. I am not so easily taken in with fair words. What should cause this sudden good will on Dean's part, unless he hath some cunning purpose of his own behind, — perchance to play the spy in his father's service!"

"Thou art hard on Dean," protested Francis. "Indeed, I misdoubt me whether, out of friendliness to me he hath not somewhat played the traitor to his own father. Faith, too, was sharp on him, but now, because that he would have his unmannerly fling at thee! — why, what aileth Faith?" repeated the lad, in astonishment, as his sister gave him so peremptory a glance as to cause him to lose, momentarily, the thread of his discourse. "Something hath come over Faith, too, like every one else, I verily believe," he added, as his sister left the room without vouchsafing him a word of explanation. "Did I not know by her eyes and nose and

hair, — and mayhap something else that will ever be Faith's, though it be an hundred years hence, — I'd not know her for the same maid who went rowing and fishing and climbing the hills with us!"

"What more did Dean say?" questioned Thomas.

"If my mother do not retract, so said Dean," hesitated Francis, "then Master Winthrop, holding her for one having familiarity with the devil, will hang her as a witch on Boston Common," he added, desperately.

"Thy mother a witch!" cried Thomas, vehemently. "Who could believe so wild a tale — not Master Winthrop, surely. Did not Dean ever love to draw the long bow? I tell thee what, Francis, an Master Winthrop, were he ten times governor, dare lift a finger against thy mother, he hath me to reckon with!"

"Thou wilt ever be our friend, that I know right well," answered Francis, sadly. "But seest thou not, Thomas, 'tis not Dean thou hast now to reckon with? I know — and in truth I think he hath also learnt, and is in no haste to test conclusions again — that thine arm strikes true and strong. 'Tis his father thou wilt have to deal with, an he is governor again, and Master Wilson, who hath never rightly liked my mother, I know not why, unless, indeed, it be that

folks have said that she, though a woman, is the better preacher. Master Cotton comes not here so frequently as was his wont."

"Master Winthrop may find his lordship the Earl of Lincoln hath still a voice at court, and that even the high and mighty governor of the Bay Colony hath a master!" said Thomas, hotly. "Besides, he is not governor — nor like to be. Master Vane will surely be reëlected!"

But despite the bravado of his tone, a sudden blinding flood of tears came to the boy's eyes at the thought of the fate that might overtake Mistress Hutchinson. He turned to the window, humming a favourite tune of old Dickory's, that perhaps was sung by the returning mariners of Drake or Frobisher:

> "'Oh, Greenland it is a dismal place,
> As ever I did know,
> There is never a tree nor a rock to be seen,
> But mountains of ice and snow.'

"I' faith, I should not want to be where 'tis colder than Boston in February," he said, lightly, shrugging his shoulders. "Is thy spring frozen?" he added, as Faith, with the water-bucket, crossed the foreyard of the house.

"Ay, we must e'en fetch water from Master Winthrop's spring, none other being within distance," answered Francis. His friend was at the door ere the sentence was finished, and hastening in Faith's footsteps.

"Let me help thee," said Thomas, as he overtook the girl. But Faith merely shook her head and kept on her way without further heed to her companion. Nor would she relinquish her burden at the spring.

"Let me carry the bucket up the hill for thee," pleaded Thomas.

"Nay, 'tis not heavy; I can carry it well enough myself," answered Faith, indifferently.

She gave no sign of dissent, however, when Thomas laid hold of the handle of the bucket with her. Their hands touched. Some sudden flash of feeling seemed to vibrate through the boy, unlike anything he had ever known before, so intense as to be almost pain, so delicious that he would have endured the pain for ever. He was almost vexed at the calmness with which, at the selfsame moment, his companion turned away her head. He looked at her more intently than he had ever done before in all their familiar intercourse. The frosty air had touched the girl's cheek to a ruddier bloom, and the soft yet firm contour of the chin and throat

was more clearly outlined as her head was thrown somewhat back in a characteristic attitude touching on defiance. A nipping little sea breeze, sweeping from the foot of the garden, had blown from their confinement a few stray locks of hair that curled about her temples, and low in the neck behind. There was an undefined wonder in Thomas's mind that he had never before noticed how very fair was the little maid with whom he had played and over whom he had tyrannised, boy fashion. And with the recognition came an undefined resentment that another should have made apparently the same discovery — notably Dean Winthrop. Out of the chaotic blending of these thoughts came unconsidered, blundering speech.

"Faith, Faith!" he cried, "I am sorry that I left thee alone in Salem woods. I forgot all about thee."

The frost of the air was in the girl's tone as she answered:

"I have nought to forgive because of that. Truly, thou hast changed mightily since the days, not so long ago, when thou wouldst have it that did I go fishing with thee and Francis, I must take my turn at the oar, because, forsooth, I was a girl."

"But thou art older now!" stammered Thomas.

"And so the less able to fend for myself?" queried

Faith, with something of the old sauciness in her speech.

In the instant's pause that accompanied the words, her companion brought up against her with such unguarded force that the bucket was overturned; its contents descended in an icy shower over Faith's feet.

"Let me help thee, Mistress Faith," cried another voice, and Dean Winthrop appeared on the scene. With exclamations of regret he knelt at the girl's side, and would have aided her to wring out the dripping skirt, but Faith drew its folds from him- and sped up the path, leaving the two boys glowering at each other beside the overturned bucket.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Sir — Thomas!"

Dean's cap nearly swept the ground in mocking obeisance. "A right worshipful knight," he went on; "thou shouldst have a saw-horse for thy steed and a puppet for thy lady. A most valiant knight, to leave thy lady in the woods that thou mightst keep thine own skin whole."

Further jeers were cut short by the recreant knight clapping the bucket on Dean's head, crying,

"That as a meed for thy military services. That" — a vigorous kick — "to salute thee, freeman."

At the sounds of altercation Faith turned midway of the road. Her cap pushed from her forehead, her eyes glowing with excitement, she swiftly retraced her steps.

"Art hurt?" she cried to Thomas, in tones full of solicitude. But when, with a triumphant laugh at Dean, who had just succeeded in extricating his head from the bucket, Thomas held out his hand to Faith

that they should race up the hill together in the old childish fashion, another swift change came over the girl's mood. Snatching her hand away, she drew her cape closely about her and said with the new haughtiness that was at once so angering and so bewitching: "I need not thy help. Thou art welcome to bestow that wheresoever thou wilt — upon Lady Emilia or — another," and hastened her footsteps homeward.

Pausing only to throw a snowball at Dean, by way of parting amenity, Thomas took the road up Beacon Hill. Instead of turning in, however, at the governor's house, he kept on the upward way.

The sentry was now removed from Beacon Hill, and its charm of solitude restored. A patch or two of snow remained in the hollows of the uplands, but the sun lay warm upon the slopes and summit, and in the air was the smell of warm moist earth that held the promise of the springtime. But the anticipation did not bring to Thomas the usual thought of the freedom of the woods and river and sea. It meant merely the approach of the general election, in the result of which lay the fate of the dear people who had befriended him. Flinging himself at full length upon the ground and resting his chin in the hollowed palms of his hands, — the attitude in which

so many hours had passed in boyish dreams, — he tried to think calmly.

In Thomas's prolonged absence from Boston there had been a change in the mode of living of the young governor; he was now established in a house of his own, furnished in a manner regarded only as an essential degree of comfort by the heir of one of the most magnificent estates in England, but which represented to many of the people of Boston a reprehensible degree of luxury. Costly furniture had been brought from England; rich tapestries covered the walls; the windows were paned with glass, instead of the oiled paper through which the light straggled in most of the houses; the board was set with massive silver. Even his well-wishers were led to fear by this display of the vanities of the world that the heart of the Boy Governor, despite its brief yearning for higher things, still clung to the flesh-pots of Egypt.

Other and graver causes there were for the grumbling mislike and distrust with which Thomas, to his own vast astonishment and towering indignation, had found that his idol was regarded. But the roots of these latter reasons lay deep, and came only slowly to the cognisance of the boy. The heroic effort of the young governor to save the town, the self-upbraiding that had laid its hold upon the people

in the days when Master Vane's life hung in the balance, the hosannas and palms that greeted his triumphant return, — all these causes combined, at the outset of his renewal of service, to hide from Thomas the ugly and treacherous feelings which, while in reality of comparatively gradual growth, seemed to his startled perception to have sprung up like a crop of poisonous fungi.

A hand was laid upon his shoulder, and starting up, to his surprise, Thomas confronted the governor. Perhaps he, too, had sought the solitude for thought, for the question he put to the boy was after a lengthened pause, as though his mind had been engrossed with other matters.

"What was the cause of thy quarrel with Dean Winthrop just now? I saw the affair from the house of the deputy governor."

Thomas related, haltingly, the provocation he had received.

"An unseemly brawl upon the highway ill beseems the servant of the governor," said Master Vane, in a tone of quiet displeasure that hurt more than the sternest censure. "Is this thy vows, the worth of thy protestations when I took thee again to my service?" he added, not speaking sharply, hardly with censure. Rather the words were ut-

tered as with a weight of disappointment, a keenness of personal loss and sorrow, almost as one might speak of a friend lost for ever through something worse than death.

Thomas thought on the forgiveness of all the past, so generously accorded, when he had been made to feel again, as in that never-to-be-forgotten hour of mutual confidences, that his master trusted him, loved him, believed in him, — nay, knew him to be better than he knew himself, — and finding no word of exculpation, hung his head like a chidden schoolboy.

When, at last, he raised his eyes, Master Vane was leaning against the beacon staff, one hand resting lightly on the hilt of his sword. He seemed to have forgotten the boy's presence and was gazing at the hamlet below as though lost in some train of thought far from that which had impelled his last utterance. His eyes, usually wide open and piercing, were veiled as by a mist that, shutting out the present, seemed to have turned the vision of the Boy Governor upon something remote of time and space. At last, turning from his rapt contemplation, he asked, breathlessly:

"Didst see — or was it the fantasy of some obscure passing disorder — a great city below us, of

lofty buildings and bustling marts? The tumultuous roar of traffic, of many men hasting hither and yon, in pursuit of myriad callings, came to my ears. Was it some vision of a New Atlantis that shall arise as out of the depths of the sea when you and I have long been gone?"

And as the boy, with wide-open, startled eyes, thought for an instant on the like seeming, that had appeared to him, — of a great and beautiful city crowned with a golden dome, — the governor passed his hand over his eyes, and when he spake again, it was in his usual tones, albeit somewhat more gravely and slowly than was his wont, while in the splendid, compelling eyes was an intensity of feeling, a depth of some unfathomed purpose, that held the boy as with a spell.

"Thou hast read, perchance, in the knightly tales for which thou hast such love, how, in those bygone days, a youth was sometimes trained — it might be unknown to himself — to be the champion of some great cause. I had need of such an one — it matters not now to what end. That fancy hath vanished, also," he murmured, "like the dream of a New Atlantis. Yet — I would it had been so!"

Without another word or glance at his young servitor, he left the heights, and Thomas, his last vestige

of self-control at an end, flung himself on the ground and cried bitterly.

In an old chap-book, over which he had pored at the Castle, was a set of pictures representing the career of Joan of Arc. The art was crude, but the artist had an idea of dramatic values, for in each throng of admiring, reverential faces was one questioning or malicious one. In the days that followed, it seemed to Thomas, whenever he attended the governor abroad, that in the gathering still brought together by the cry, "Way for his Worship, the governor!" there was ever some face, on the edge of the crowd, that gave evidence of an ugly undercurrent beneath the noisy adulation.

For a brief space, indeed, following the occasion of the Treaty-Alliance, there was a lull in the talk that had been absorbing all the interest of the town — but not for long. Boston was no longer under military rule; men had resumed their ordinary occupations. With thoughts refreshed by two months of carnal warfare, the theological dispute was renewed — but with a difference. It was no longer Mistress Hutchinson's teachings that was the subject of dispute. It was Mistress Anne Hutchinson herself.

Thomas had been absent from Boston during the thick of the theological fight, and partly from this

fact, aided, no doubt, by his natural good sense, his mind was not obscured by the smoke of the conflict; in rare moments of humility, he sometimes thought that it might be from lack of understanding that he could make nothing of the war of words in which Boston was engaged. At other times, the whole dispute recalled certain lines of the Earl of Lincoln's favourite poet:

> "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The tide of popular favour, once turned, ran out rapidly. The meetings to which the greater part of Boston had once flocked, ceased. One after another of the adherents of Mistress Hutchinson, amongst the quality, withdrew from her support; many others, though doubtless still her friends and well-wishers at heart, made timorous by the accusations that were arising on every side, the probability of her being dealt with by the Church, the hints of a darker retribution at the hands of the law did she persist in her errors, made haste to deny all participation in her views or kindly feeling for her personally. It seemed, almost, as though Mistress Hutchinson were led, at this time, by some fatuity, to play deliberately into the hands of her enemies; regardless of gathering

clouds, she put no bridle on her tongue, but presented everywhere a bold front till even the more moderate-minded amongst her unfriends looked upon her as one who had lost her understanding, by reason, as Master Winthrop said, of having given herself wholly up to reading and writing, matters unfit for a woman, whose understanding was by nature of a weaker sort than a man's. Those versed in gathering Providences found numerous instances, besides the notable one of the Pequot war, of how an overruling power regarded Mistress Hutchinson and her adherents. A poor barber, called on to perform a dentist's office, and bewildered in a storm of snow between Boston and Roxbury, was found frozen to death. It was remembered that he was a disciple of Mistress Hutchinson, and this and numerous other examples of God's method of dealing with the erring, greatly increased the number of those who, from being Mistress Hutchinson's most ardent admirers, were now loudest in their denunciations. Even Master Cotton went over to the side of her enemies.

Master Wilson's denunciations became louder and fiercer, his warnings to those over whom the "sorceress" had cast her spells grew lurid: Satan would not lose the opportunity of making choice of so fit an instrument as Mistress Hutchinson so long as any

hope remained to attain his mischievous end in darkening the saving truth of the Lord Jesus and disturbing the peace of His churches.

Amongst the common people — and there were not lacking many of the better class who shared their opinion — she grew into great suspicion as a witch. It was whispered that strange noises had been heard, strange sights seen about the house at the foot of the Tramount. People gave that part of the road a wide berth after sundown. So, whether in the natural course of events, swelling from divers sources, big and little, or guided by some crafty hand, the volume of accusations increased and the hour drew near when the enemies of Mistress Hutchinson would no longer hesitate to cry out upon her.

Master Vane was now her only remaining friend in high places. Ere long, the murmuring discontent against him took specious form. It was whispered, it was said aloud, it was shouted from the housetops, that had it not been for Master Vane, Mistress Hutchinson's errors, like many other heresies, would have prevailed a short time without disturbance to the state and then silently subsided. In the spiritual excitement that drove weak heads to distraction, the common people were led by example to condemn the Boy Governor in what it was very

probable divers of them did not understand. From being the blessed peacemaker of the early days, Master Vane was become the great sower of the seeds of dissension in God's vineyard.

Did he himself realise the change in the temper of those about him? It was a question seldom or never absent from the mind of Thomas Savage in his daily service, whether at home or abroad. The number of those threatening faces in the crowd increased. Although the boy knew most of the people of Boston, by sight at least, he was never able to call by name these people of the strange malign features, nor was he able, afterward, to identify them. They never appeared to him except when in attendance on his master. Once, indeed, so overwhelming was this perception of something inimical to Master Vane, that he gave an involuntary exclamation of warning, at which the Boy Governor turned, with a curious, searching look at Thomas, as though the boy himself held for him a deeper and more vital interest than that embodied in any hostile demonstration. For the moment, the boy almost fancied that Master Vane, too, saw the sinister face, for he seemed to hold himself more haughtily erect, his hand involuntarily sought his sword, a look of scorn — the contempt of the aristocrat for the threatening "rabble"

— passed over his face. Then he turned indifferently away and the boy was left to wonder if his imagination had but played him a trick. He whispered to his fellow halberdier :

" Dost see — look quick — the man in the red cap on the edge of the crowd ; dost know him ? "

Balston answered in manifest surprise.

" Truly, yes ; a right worthy baker who lives not far from the town dock," — and Thomas was left to wonder again whether he had not been dreaming. He never voiced these or similar vagaries to his master ; in these latter days, whatever confidence Master Vane had once seemed to give his young guardsman was not repeated. Swift upon the forgiveness accorded his disobedience had come the unseemly brawl with Dean Winthrop, as though he would never cease to be governed by the hot-headed, unreasoning impulses of youth, as if the call to his higher nature that the boy now felt had been made, had been wilfully disregarded. Had Master Vane known his own moment of human longing for human sympathy, when all in this little world had either turned against him or failed to understand, and he had looked to Thomas as to the squire who had vowed to lay down his life for him ? Long afterward, Thomas Savage, grown to higher understand-

ing, a finer knowledge of things unseen, might have answered.

Meantime, he was as much with the Hutchinson household as the duties of his position would permit. Francis turned visibly more and more for support to the stronger nature, although little was said between the two lads of what, in reality, occupied the minds of both.

As for Faith, though no hand could be laid upon the hour when she had passed from childhood to womanhood, — for she seemed to have had no intermediate period of maidenhood, — the change was no less assured. In the quiet, self-contained woman going about her daily tasks with such abnegation of self, such uncomplaining suppression of the little vanities and longings and gratifications natural to her age, — that no tithing-man or sumptuary laws could wholly crush, — there was no trace of the little maid who had insisted on sharing all the sports of her brother and his friend. Held by the strange diffidence he could not overcome, Thomas seldom or never spoke to Faith directly; but if water were to be fetched from the spring, a new reel needed for the spindle, or the lug-pole was charred, he it was who silently and unobtrusively performed the service; sometimes rewarded by a smile from Faith,

oftener only by a look that somehow sent him away sustained and confident.

Faith rarely left the house now, as though shrinking from the looks that greeted her askance from every side. In her attendance at the meeting-house, she passed swiftly and with downcast eyes past the lads who, with one excuse or another, tarried at the door. For with the change that had come over Faith Hutchinson's spirit was an outward and visible one no less marked. She was become very beautiful, of a spiritual and delicate type, the more remarkable in contrast to the round and ruddy English faces about her. No exception could be taken to the maid's modest manner nor to her sober garb; nevertheless, it was hinted that Mistress Faith might receive the admonitions of the magistrates, on the ground that this following of lads "would appear to be a grievous misfortune, for the heart of youth doth always too greatly incline to the vain pleasures of the eye."

One day, Dean Winthrop brought to the house a large bunch of the sweet-scented flowers that grew in profusion on the sunny heights of the Tramount.

"How canst thou abide the fellow?" exclaimed Thomas, who had exchanged frowns with the departing visitor on the threshold.

"Dean is a good lad, and although he is now freeman, and not subject to his father's will, yet doth he brave his father's displeasure in coming hither. Have we so many friends that I should drive away one of whom we may at no distant day be sore in need?"

It was the first time, in their recent intercourse, that she had spoken at such length or referred directly to the troublous times upon which they were fallen. Despite the brave effort at self-control, her voice trembled and her eyes filled with tears.

"Nay, thou shalt not stand alone — neither then nor now, nor any time!" cried Thomas. "With my very life would I defend thee, as thy brother and thy brother's friend. Yet I would thou gavest me a better right. Methinks mine arm is as stout as Dean's, mine heart as fearless. Wilt not give me that better right, Faith?" pleaded the lad.

"Nay, Lady Emilia — or another — may listen to thy soft words — I want them not," answered the girl, with a flash of something like her old spirit, as she fastened the mayflowers at her breast and left the room without vouchsafing Thomas another word or look.

The general election was to be held that year at Newtown, across the river; early on the morning of the day on the result of which was bound up so

many issues, Master Vane, with his halberdiers, embarked on a shallop at Long Wharf; with a favouring breeze and a flood-tide, the journey by water being the easiest and swiftest route to Newtown. Others took the ferry to Charlestown, walking or riding the remainder of the distance; and still others went afoot by way of the Neck, and thence through Roxbury and Watertown to the scene of the election. Newtown Common was thronged with people of every sort and condition. It was evident from the first that the majority of those present would vote for Winthrop. Nevertheless, when Dean Winthrop, in the new-born pride of exercising his privilege as freeman, expressed this opinion with some emphasis to Thomas Savage, the latter met the assertion with a hot denial.

"Thou mayst as well throw down thy halberd, for let me promise thee, his Worship the new governor will not desire thy services," retorted Dean.

"His Worship the governor will e'en be the same who left Boston this morning," answered Thomas, doggedly. "And as for my taking service with another than he, there is not money enough in the Colony — nay, nor in all England, to buy it. Look you, Dean Winthrop, I serve only my superiors."

"Thou wilt sing a different tune after the elec-

tion," sneered Dean; "then will we see which is the better fellow."

"That is a question we may as well settle without delay," retorted Thomas, giving his halberd to one of his fellow guardsmen to hold.

A stinging blow had been given and returned, others were ranging themselves on the sides of the two chief combatants, swords were being drawn, when a diversion was created by Master Wilson, who, notwithstanding the gravity of his calling, the stoutness of his person, and the dignity of his fifty years, climbed up a tree, and from that point of vantage appealed to the people to proceed to the business of the meeting. The election began.

Master Winthrop was elected governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Thomas Savage promptly threw down his halberd, — an example followed by two of his fellow halberdiers, — and without waiting the further results of the election, made the best of his way back to Boston.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I FEAR that worse may follow," said Thomas, as he finished the heavy recital of the day's occurrences. He had returned from Newtown afoot, by way of Watertown and Roxbury, partly because the ferry from Charlestown was so crowded as to delay transportation, and partly because his share in the disturbances at the scene of the election made the less frequented way the more desirable. Some of those who had remained on Newtown Common till a later hour, having taken a more expeditious route, had already arrived in Boston, so that Thomas found his friends were in possession of later news than those of which he himself was the bearer. It was Eunice Fox, now married to her cousin Oliver, who brought the information that Master Dudley was elected deputy governor; the other magistrates were also of Master Winthrop's way of thought. The conservative party was thus completely in control of the affairs of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

"Let us remove with all haste to Providence,"

urged Thomas, desperately. "In the colony of Roger Williams your mother may live in peace — though of differing opinion from her neighbour. There is yet time ere the new governor take action; but he will not tarry long."

"What sin hath my mother committed that she need flee?" returned Francis, dully. "What fault doth the new governor find in her save that she hath ministered unto those who were an hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or sick, or in prison?"

"Thou knowest what Dean told thee of his father's mind," answered Thomas.

"I put together a few little belongings, — my mother's dearest treasures, — without letting her know what I was doing; though I need not have feared that she would have noticed, as she acts as one who hath ceased to have concern in earthly matters," said Faith, who seemed to have changed places with her mother, so completely was she now the caretaker, in matters great as well as little. "When Goodwife Fox told us that Master Winthrop was chosen governor, I tried to persuade my mother to leave Boston — at least till happier times. But she only answered, 'The fear of man is a snare. Why should I be afraid?' I told her, at last, that she was in danger of being proceeded against by the General

Court for holding disorderly meetings. Her reply was, that did that come to pass she should be delivered, and the court ruined with their posterity. I could not speak to her of that last and terrible fear," added the poor girl, pressing her hands to her burning eyeballs as though she would thereby shut out some gruesome sight. "Sleeping or waking," she murmured, "the Great Elm is ever before mine eyes. I see the hooting multitude, the hangman — and my mother," she added, her hard won control nearly giving way.

The two boys looked at each other as though each would fain read in the other's face the hope that had left his own heart.

"Can Master Vane do nothing?" queried Faith, at length; but her very tone showed how desperate was the strait that could look for help from the defeated governor.

Thomas shook his head mutely.

"Thy friends in England?" asked Faith, presently, but not as one with hope.

"I seem, indeed, to be the bearer of ill news," answered Thomas, desperately, after a prolonged pause. "I had hoped, did worse come to worst, that an appeal to the Countess of Lincoln might be of avail. She is dead," said the boy, with a manful effort to

choke back his own grief. "Nay, do not speak," he went on, hurriedly, as Faith turned upon him a quick look of sympathy. "Let us think now only of what lies before us. Absence hath not dulled the love of Theophilus," he resumed, "and could words of his have availed, I know both he and his father would have been our friends. There was a time when the Earl of Lincoln stood high in favour at Whitehall. But Lord Eaton writes that his father hath already identified himself with Parliament, and all hope of his lordship's intercession with the king is at an end."

So the hour passed in which Mistress Hutchinson might have escaped the snare of the fowler. The three children, scarce eating or sleeping, awaited the return to Boston of Master Vane. Not as they who hoped, but rather as they wait who, past hope, would hasten the inevitable end. Perhaps, too, because the idea of failure was so difficult to associate with Harry Vane that, unconsciously to themselves, they could receive its confirmation only from his own lips.

Little was said or done in Boston in the time immediately following the overthrow of Vane and the establishment of the new government. All the following day and the next the people were returning

from the scene of the election, the news they brought spreading rapidly through the town. The followers of Mistress Hutchinson had been proceeded against without delay. Already fifty-eight "opinionists" were disarmed, disfranchised, marked for exile. Men and women looked at one another in dismay. A reign of terror seemed imminent. Who next would be condemned, without means of defence, to go forth into the wilderness? — a wilderness infested with wild beasts and with men more cruel and treacherous than any of which the Old Testament told. Old friends passed each other with averted faces; even to be seen in momentary conversation with an "opinionist" might bring oneself under a like ban. Those of the same household held their breath in fear of being denounced by their brethren; not a few, to avert the doom from their own heads, cried out upon father or mother, sister or brother. There arose a rumour, how or whence none could say, that the bloody scenes of the streets of Antwerp were about to be reënacted in the Puritan town. Yet few, if any, attempted to escape from their impending doom. Whither, indeed, could they flee? The road to Roger Williams's colony — the only harbour of refuge for those whose mode of thought was not that of the churches — lay through many miles of swamp

and wilderness, infested with wild beasts. The harbour islands afforded neither shelter nor food. Besides, who had the courage to take a stand against the combined power of Church and state?

Thomas, hourly expectant of his master's return, slept on a bench in the anteroom of the hall. It was not till early darkness of the third day, however, that Master Vane made his appearance. The day had been one of the excessive heat not infrequent in Boston in early May, but the voyage from Newtown was chill with the sea breeze, and Vane bore a heavy cloak upon his arm, which he flung to his young servitor without appearing to see him. Then, sinking upon the nearest stool, he buried his face in his hands, and Thomas retreated noiselessly to his corner. How long the two, man and boy, sat thus, could scarce have been told; curfew had long ago rung, and no sound came from without. Perhaps some unguarded movement of the boy penetrated at last to the consciousness of the man, for Master Vane called out:

"Who is there? Ah, is't thou, Thomas?" he added, in a voice from which the ringing, masterful tones were gone. The changed accents seemed to hold a woe infinitely beyond that of defeated pride, mortified ambition. Thomas, unable to find speech,

sank on one knee by his master's side, and pressed Vane's hand to his lips.

"I thought that thou, too, hadst deserted me," said Vane.

"I could not serve another master," answered the boy, glad that the darkness concealed the unmanly tears; but the quiver in his voice could not be hid, and for an instant Harry Vane's hand rested on the head of his young servitor in a caressing touch that held a grateful comprehension of all that remained unsaid, and which vibrated through his next words, though all he uttered was:

"Thou art of a temper, I fear, that will ever breed trouble for itself in the world. Of the two halberdiers who followed thine unruly example," he added, gravely, "both have been fined, and Balston, because that he took issue with the magistrates on the justice of the sentence, hath likewise been banished."

"I care not what they do to me," answered Thomas, and if his tones were sullen, perhaps Master Vane understood their deeper significance, for there was an added tenderness in his voice as he returned:

"The new governor hath pardoned thy revolt because of thy youth, and also, it being of importance that the new administration should show an unbroken

front at the present juncture, he will not cross swords with the deputy governor, Master Dudley."

"I hastened home that I might warn Mistress Hutchinson of her impending danger," said Thomas.

Master Vane started up.

"Quick, my sword!" he cried. "Of what am I thinking that I should dally here!"

"Nay, sir, 'tis useless," returned Thomas, sadly, and repeated Mistress Hutchinson's words.

"But she does not — she cannot understand the pressing need that she escape while there is yet time. Master Winthrop hath openly expressed his immediate intention to make of her and all belonging to her an unheard-of heavy example."

"She awaits her fate glorying in the trials, — perchance the martyrdom that is before her, — saying that next to Christ, they were the greatest happiness that ever befell her," answered the boy, sadly.

For some minutes Vane remained deep in thought; then apparently acquiescing in the futility of further urgencies with Mistress Hutchinson, he turned from the door.

"God! will such things ever be?" he cried. "Is this the land where I hoped to find a 'Christian people, full of piety and humility!'"

"Thinkst thou it would avail aught that thou

shouldst go to Master Dudley?" suggested Thomas, desperately. "He holds thee in high esteem — if I may be so bold, with affection," he added, his thoughts reverting to the old soldier's words at the inn.

"Ay, he risked his life for me," assented Vane. "A true soldier, one of the old Viking breed — the race that held it was indispensable to be brave. In fair and open warfare, a noble foe — not one whose battle-cry is of the attorney's craft, 'Avoid or protract,'" added the young nobleman, something of the pride of birth, rarely indeed expressed by him, in voice and look.

"I would add my voice to yours, I would go down on my knees to him, I would be his bond slave for the rest of my life, I would beseech him by all the love and duty he bore my kinswoman, Lady Bridget, to save her who hath been a mother to me in this strange land!" cried Thomas, in a choking voice.

"'Tis useless," answered Vane, sadly. "I have already besought Dudley, — and I pleaded as I would not have done for mine own life. His reply was that it behoved men of God, both in Church and state, to beware how they hatched a toleration, lest that ill-bird bring forth a cockatrice, to poison all with heresy and vice."

"There is nothing to be done?" asked Thomas,

after a pause that was long in the reckoning that is not of minutes.

"Nothing — save to pray without ceasing," answered Vane, solemnly. As he was about to leave the room, he turned once more, and with an intent, solemn look, that vaguely recalled to the boy the hour of their first meeting, he spake again:

"Thomas, thou saidst once that thou wouldst die for me — nay, I meant not to reproach thee," he added, as the lad hung his head in scarlet confusion. "I would ask — couldst thou do a harder thing — couldst thou live for me?"

"Living or dying, I will be thy faithful squire, unto life's end," rang out, without a tremor, the clear, boyish voice.

Master Vane spake no further word, and Thomas was left alone in the anteroom.

Knowing well that his master had neither eaten nor slept for the past three days, Thomas was loath, the next morning, to arouse him; but Master Vane was astir at break of day. The constables were before him. Mistress Hutchinson had been convented for "traducing the ministers," and was committed to the charge of one of the elders, in Roxbury, there to await such sentence as the Church should pass upon her.

The time that followed was like unto that which intervenes between the death and burial of a beloved one, infinitely prolonged. Forbidden intercourse with her family, the days of Mistress Hutchinson's imprisonment dragged on. As it was written, "the ministers resorted to her many times, labouring to convince her, but in vain; yet they resorted to her still, to the end that they might either reclaim her from her errors or that they might bear witness against her if occasion rose." For, as was well said by his Worship the governor, "It is wicked for falsehood to persecute truth, but it is the sacred duty of truth to persecute falsehood." And there was none to heed the ringing words of Harry Vane:

"Truth is wide — it is wider than our conception of it. What seems to us error in others may be a part of the same truth of which we hold only our portion."

But to call to account for such mad utterances the son of Sir Henry Vane, privy councilor of his Majesty the king, was another matter from hounding a feeble and friendless woman. So, in delicate health, badgered, browbeaten, forbidden intercourse with her family, deserted by her friends, save Harry Vane and Thomas Savage, small wonder was it that Mistress Hutchinson wavered, contradicted herself, retracted, relapsed.

Meantime, letters had been despatched to England, but their answers tarried. Midsummer was come when the long expected ship arrived. Thomas Savage hastened to the house at the foot of the Tramount. Faith raised her eyes in mute questioning; there was no need of words in answer. She turned away her head, and twice, thrice Thomas tried to speak ere he found utterance:

"Sir Henry Vane writes that it is impossible to bring the matter before his Majesty," he said. "Times are too troublous and — 'tis easy to see that Sir Henry would not risk his own influence or popularity in a cause so ill favoured as the Puritan. Sir Henry is not as our own Master Harry," added the boy, passionately.

"When will they let me see her?" asked Faith, at last, with a calmness that betrayed how rigidly she had schooled herself for this moment.

"Not — yet," answered Thomas, but the truth he was loath to speak was in his eyes, and the girl read it therein. "When is she to be brought to trial?" she questioned.

"They are drawing up the bill of indictment now; as soon as it is completed," answered Thomas, mercifully making no attempt to "break" the news.

"They say that she hath been very ill — so ill

that for a time 'twas thought she would die; and yet they would not let me see her! I know well how wicked I am," went on the girl, in the torrent of words that not infrequently follows repressed speech, "but I have prayed that God would be so merciful as to let us all die together, ere the dreadful sentence be passed upon my mother. To be excommunicated! — hast thought what it means? To have no hope for this world or the next, to know that one's mother will suffer for ever the torments of the damned! When I think of the terrible words the minister will say, even the Great Elm hath no terrors! After — they will not suffer her to be buried in consecrated ground!"

"I know all that is what the ministers teach, but that will I never believe!" cried the boy, earnestly. "Nor doth Master Vane believe it, either. Some day, perchance, I may tell thee what his Worship hath taught me, in these latter days, of better things. Thy father and Francis have not yet returned from their search for a new home — in case the sentence be merely banishment?" he questioned.

The girl shook her head in silence.

"Is there naught I can do for thee, Faith?" asked Thomas, wistfully.

"I thank thee, nothing," answered Faith. "Thou

hast been very good," she added, trying to smile, as the boy stood in the doorway, loath to depart.

"I have something else to tell thee," he burst out, with a sudden boyishness of mien and tone that was in marked contrast to the restraint in which he had hitherto spoken, "though I know right well how weak and poor a thing it is of me to add the weight of mine own trouble unto thine. Faith, Master Vane is — going — home!"

For an instant, it seemed as though the hard-won control of the girl would give way. Every vestige of colour left her face; she stood as though turned to stone, save that her hands were outstretched and groping like a blind person's.

"No, no, it cannot be — do not say it!" she gasped.

"I would I need not," answered the boy. "We have hoped against hope," he went on, "for the result of Sir Henry Vane's intercession with the king. Did that chance fail, Master Vane's plans were laid to return to England on the next ship that sailed and himself implore his gracious Majesty to pardon one whose only fault hath been that her way of thinking was not that of the ministers. The *Blessing of the Bay* sails to-morrow at turn o' the tide, and Master Vane takes passage in her."

Only a syllable of the girl's attempted speech found utterance.

"'Return?'" repeated Thomas, too full for the moment, of his own sorrow, for his ears to be over sharp to that which was in another's words, though that other were Faith Hutchinson. "Nay, he will not return to Boston. 'Tis sure that matters are fast approaching a crisis at home; already, say to-day's letters, are the two parties, king's and Parliament's, so well defined as to have been given the names of Cavaliers and Roundheads. Master Vane will inevitably be drawn into the coming struggle."

"Lord, help me to bear this, also!" murmured the girl. Presently, making a brave effort to smile, she said, "Francis will grieve that he is not here to bid thee farewell."

"Wherefore farewell?" repeated Thomas. "Thou didst not think that I was going home with Master Vane?" he cried, with sudden comprehension.

"Art not?" cried Faith, turning upon him a face so full of a great light that its meaning, flashing full upon the boy, caused him, the next moment, to draw back, half dazzled by the revelation, doubting his own senses, though they stunned him with their reiteration of the truth.

"Faith, Faith," he cried, "wouldst care — is it aught to thee whether I go or stay?"

"It is — everything," answered the girl, tremulously, all the barriers set up by pride, by maidenly reserve, broken down by the assertion of her own nature.

Thomas's arm was about her, her face was buried on his shoulder as he spake again, this time not in impetuous boyish accents, but in the tone and with the look of one who has put away childish things. "Listen, dear heart," he said, "and let me look in thine eyes that I may read the truth therein, even as I speak, for I cannot wait for laggard speech. 'Tis not as thy brother I care for thee, nor would I like that so thou shouldst think of me, save only as I may not hold a nearer, dearer place. I thought 'twas Dean who had won thy heart. It hath been a sore and heavy thought with me, sweetheart, that I had shown myself unworthy of thy dear love. 'Twas a most unknightly act to desert thee as I did in the Salem woods. An thou couldst not forgive, no blame to thee."

"Nay, there was naught therein to forgive," cried the girl, with wide-open eyes. "I could care for myself, and 'twas not a score of rods from Salem town. But the beads," she murmured, with a new-

born shyness that gave a sudden little thrill to her lover's heart, "thou rememberest the token I gave thee? 'Twas the best I had, though all too poor and slight a thing for such a squire! Ah, I was so glad and proud that thou shouldst wear my favour on thy quest — not Lady Emilia's! The day I followed in thy steps over Saugus road, I stopped at the Fox farmhouse for a drink of water; I did not tell my name because I liked it not that folks stared when they heard it. I saw my beads on Eunice's neck, and made no doubt but that thou hadst given them to her, even as one wonted to castle ways may toss a trinket to a village maid, or beg a token with as light a thought. On election day Eunice sought me out, as she promised thee she would do.

"She told me with what sweet and serious speech thou gavest her the beads, bidding her remember that 'twas from me and not from thee she was to take the token — didst think then I could begrudge the silly bauble? Though, indeed, Thomas, I do think 'twas something over bold that she should have taken such a boon of thee. Then I thought my waspish speech had sickened thee of me and that I was no more thy lady. I thought that thou camest to us still because of thine own good heart and out of the love thou bare to Francis and my poor mother."

"And I thought that thou caredst for Dean Winthrop. I have naught to offer thee but my name and such patrimony as may be mine as the cadet of a noble house," said Thomas, seriously. "Master Winthrop is accounted a rich man; he hath given Dean, being freeman, an island in the harbour for his own. Think well, dear Faith. Dost thou, indeed, choose me before the governor's son?"

"I choose thee before all the world," she made answer, solemnly. "When thou chosest me for thy lady — dost remember the day, on Beacon Hill, when we were but boy and girl together? — there was none in all the world so glad and proud as I. To be thy lady — ah, that was more than had ever fallen to the lot of maid before, be she never so highly placed. And then and there I vowed that I would strive in all things to be worthy of the honour that was mine, and forthwith put away childish things."

"Thou hast been a more loyal, loving lady than I have shown myself squire," said Thomas, pressing to his lips the hand that bore the scar of a burn.

"Thou didst not know, thou couldst not guess," went on the girl, with the shyness that sat so oddly, yet so sweetly upon her, "that when I listened to the tales of high emprise thou lovedst, why, I loved them, too, because 'twas ever thee I heard and saw speak-

ing the brave, true word, acting the noble, fearless part! How I watched for thee, when thou camest abroad, whilst others — foolish folk! — stood agape at the governor. For in thy shining armour thou lookst, in very truth, what thou hast ever been, my brave young squire, ready, when the hour should come, for thy well earned guerdon of knighthood."

CHAPTER XIX.

For the last time, Harry Vane had climbed the Tramount, accompanied by his young companion. Order now reigned in Boston. If friends and well-wishers of Mistress Hutchinson there still were in the three-hilled town, they deemed silence the wiser part.

To be seen in communication with Master Vane was to fall under the condemnation that had been meted out to all her disciples. So, with the exception of Thomas Savage, the once idolised Boy Governor was as though under a ban in the town that a twelvemonth ago had "gone mad" over him.

Vane stood with one hand resting on the beacon staff, one arm flung about the shoulders of his young companion. In silence, the twain looked at the town below, now flooded in the yellow light of the setting sun. In the isolated companionship of the past weeks, they had become very near to each other, and the kinship of soul that each, after his own fashion, had recognised in the other, even at the hour of their

meeting, had grown into an exceeding love. It was as though the spirit of the man, in somewise setting its seal upon the soul of the boy, had moulded the latter's outward features, as well, into his own likeness, for the two looked strangely alike as they stood there, for the last time — the last time, the boy's brain kept repeating dizzily.

"Thou wilt remember?" said Vane, at length, softly.

"I will," rang out the boy's clear, steady tones, as in a sacrament.

"Dear lad, I am glad I was not mistaken in thee," Harry Vane went on. "Were it best, most willingly would I have thee at my side in the coming struggle in England — if men draw swords, as I think, ere long, they will. But not so wilt thou play thy right part in the world. There or here, my spirit shall be laid upon thy spirit, and thou wilt not falter in the quest that is before thee. When the time is ripe, thou, too, shalt choose a champion who will pass on to another the undying quest, who in turn shall throw down the gauntlet to Evil — the monster of which, on this very spot, thou dreamedst. Such knighthood as I may confer on thee will bring thee no glory, — rather it will give thee trouble and sorrow, perchance even such persecution as that to which we have been

witness. Here, where — in the sight of men — I have failed, thou, too, mayst fail; and so, for many a day, will those that come after us. But not for always; for His eternal will it is to overcome evil with good. So surely as there is a God in heaven, so surely shall this light, set by my hand on Boston's three-topped hill, shine, throughout the length and breadth of a New Atlantis, the beacon light of liberty."

Then, solemnly, very tenderly, even as a woman might have done, he kissed him, again and once again, on forehead and either cheek, saying, in the form of the old ringing words, "In the name of God, of truth and liberty, I make thee knight!"

His gracious Majesty, King Charles the First, was too deeply concerned with matters of personal moment to pay heed to the urgencies of young Master Vane, and so vanished the last slight hope to which had clung the children of Mistress Hutchinson.

The time set for her trial arrived — a dreary Thursday lecture day in November. The sermon and prayer at an end, Mistress Hutchinson appeared, as his Worship, Governor Winthrop, noted, "pretending bodily infirmity." She was attended by her son Francis, and Thomas Savage, recently married to

her daughter Faith. One of the elders read the indictment against her. She was to answer for eighty-two opinions, some blasphemous, others erroneous, and all unsafe, besides nine unwholesome expressions. In the long-drawn proceedings that followed was no trace of wisdom, of conciliation or of charity; nothing but priestly intolerance, stimulated by blind zeal; beneath, the rock bed of personal pride and ambition. The judgment meted out to those convicted of having "notoriety with the devil" was averted only by the pleading of Thomas Savage with the deputy governor. Master Wilson pronounced the sentence of excommunication:

"Therefore in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the name of the Church I do not only pronounce you worthy to be cast out, but I do cast you out; and in the name of Christ I do deliver you up to Satan, that you may learn no more to blaspheme, to seduce, and to lie; and I do account you from this time forth to be a heathen and a publican, and so to be held of all the brethren and sisters of this congregation and of others; therefore I command you in the name of Christ Jesus and of this Church as a leper to withdraw yourself out of this congregation."

With the exception of Thomas Savage and Faith, his wife, who remained in Boston, Mistress Anne

Hutchinson, with her family, went forth into the wilderness. There the Indians set upon them and slew her and all her family save one daughter, whom they carried into captivity. Thus, it was written, "the Lord saw fit to make an unheard-of heavy example of this woful woman and all belonging to her."

THE END.

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