A CANDLE IN THE WILDERNESS

IRVING BACHELLER

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BY IRVING BACHELLER

EDEN HOLDEN
D'RI AND I
DARREL OF THE BLESSED ISLES
THE LIGHT IN THE CLEARING
KEEPING UP WITH WILLIAM
A MAN FOR THE AGES
THE PRODIGAL VILLAGE
FATHER ABRAHAM
IN THE DAYS OF POOR RICHARD
OPINIONS OF A CHEERFUL YANKEE
COMING UP THE ROAD
THE HOUSE OF THE THREE GANDERS

A CANDLE IN THE WILDERNESS

A Tale of the Beginning of New England

by
IRVING BACHELLER

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Fancy the moral condition of that society in which a lady of fashion joked with a footman and carved a great shoulder of veal and provided besides a sirloin, a goose, hare, rabbit, chickens, partridges, black pudding and a ham for dinner for eight Christians.

—THACKERAY'S ESSAY ON STEELE.

Lord Campbell tells us that Sir John Popham, when a law student in the Middle Temple, used, after night fall, to go out and take purses with his pistols on Hounslow Heath partly to show that he was a young man of spirit, partly to recruit his meager finances impaired by riotous living. This amateur highwayman lived to become Chief Justice of England. The age in which such things could be done was that in which John Smith grew to manhood. —JOHN FISKE.

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A Candle in the Wilderness

PROLOGUE

Which Relates to the Background of This Narrative

They called it the mighty deep. It was the Lord's Waste. Even the profanest men who, when ashore, were of a light and boastful carriage, venturing out upon it, even in "the great ships" of two hundred tons or more, had solemn faces and would be always kneeling with their betters at prayer time. It was an old say that those who go far out should be prepared for Heaven. Many a ship sailing west had gone down or fallen a prey to pirates.

Those who went out to sea bound for the New World in the third decade of the seventeenth century left behind them an England no longer the merry land it had been. It was rent, fettered and impoverished by two great tyrannies—the crown and the church. High prices had reduced the buying power of money. The gentry, whose lands were leased for long terms, and all men of unchanging incomes were sorely pressed. Europe knew but one great industry. It was war, the profit in which came from seizure, loot and oppression. Charles I had failed to make it pay. He was burning up the resources of his people and forcing loans to keep his armies in the field. Those who could not pay had squads of soldiers billeted upon them. Only the yeomen who had the fruit of mother earth to sell were prosperous. A land lust was abroad and many were thinking of that world in the west where land was plentiful and easy to be had. A new spirit was on English soil—a desire for peace and for a greater liberty of mind and conscience, a hatred of oppression, a faith in honest industry governed only by the laws of God and seeking only the fruit of its efforts.

The common folk had begun to read and dream of a better world. Of a stern and unemotional nature, they were now moved by a strange depth of passion to begin the building of it where no king or bishop could stand in their way. Many of the rich and learned—even certain of the great earls shared this passion. Under its urge some of their sons and daughters were braving the

perils of the deep and an unknown wilderness.

To most of these adventurers death was a familiar enemy. For some a sublime faith had killed their fear of it. They were in a temper for the doing of great things.

CHAPTER I
THE ESCAPE AND THE VOYAGE

The sky is overcast. A day in early July, 1634, is near its end. Two young men are riding at breakneck speed on a country road between hedgerows in the east of England. They are pursued by a King's officer. The Spirit of the Future is on the flying chestnut mares ahead. The Spirit of the Past is in the saddle behind them. He is lashing his lathered horse. Robert Heathers and William Heydon—sons of gentlemen in Lincolnshire, both twenty years of age—ride neck and neck into the falling night, leading by less than a pistol-shot.

They have been on a visit to their young friend, Sir Harry Vane, at Raby Castle, Durham, the ancient seat of the Nevilles. This brilliant youth was a shining example of the new spirit in the young gentry.

"Castles! Silks! Waving plumes! Gold braid and spurs!" he had exclaimed. "What have they done for England? After a thousand years of wars and toils our great city is London with less than one hundred and seventy thousand people in it. We need mills where there are castles, saws instead of silks, crowbars instead of plumes, work instead of idleness, doing instead of undoing, religion in the place of pomp, holding enough reality to give us peace."

A number of wild foxes had been loosed in England and had run about with firebrands on their tails. They were men of courage, power and learning like John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, son of a yeoman who it was said "could put a king in his pocket." The fire was spreading and even those of noble blood were helping it with the bellows of their own resentment.

Harry could be outspoken. His father had been the cofferer of Prince Charles and was now a member of the Privy Council. At court Harry was laughed at as a lad with a twist in his brain. William and Robert, now fleeing on the highway, had been even more rebellious than he. At a public meeting in the Wheat Sheaf, near Norwich, they had openly denounced the tyrannies of the crown. It turned out that a spy heard and reported their words. Having no friends at court they were not to be lightly dealt with. The High Commission had resolved to make them recant or suffer the pain of death. Now within a dozen miles of their home its officer had come upon them with a warrant.

The young men spurred their steeds while a pistol ball cut the air between them. The time lost in drawing and taking aim gave them a chance to get

agoing and “to fill their sails.” A rain had fallen and the road was sloppy. They held their advantage. Other shots went wild above their heads in the dusk. They flew onward flinging a spatter of mud behind them. The cottagers along the way, excited by the stir and clatter, exclaimed: “Again the King and the Puritans! Good luck to short hair!”

The lighter horse of the officer began to fail. The space between pursuer and pursued slowly widened. When the latter came down into their familiar fenlands they were shrouded in darkness, and as they drew rein, the officer was so far behind that the hoof beats of his horse were out of hearing. They leaped a hedge and, at a slow gallop, crossed a broad pasture to a tenant’s cottage on the Heydon lands.

These young men were friends from the same neighborhood above and in sight of The Wash—blond, blue-eyed, comely youths nearly six feet tall—alike in experience and breeding, in height, weight and color. Their sunburnt, merry faces were of the same mold so that often one was taken for the other when they were apart. They had a like spirit also, and it was their fancy, growing out of their mutual regard, to help the resemblance by dressing in the same fashion. Yet those who knew them well could be subject to no confusion in meeting either. Will Heydon’s eyes were larger by a trifle and more amply screened by their lashes and milder in expression than those of Robert Heathers. Moreover Will had wavy hair and a slight scar on his right temple which had come of a skylarking duel.

The second sons of gentlemen they were a rash and heady pair of rebels. Their opinions were as common as short hair in their neighborhood, but generally spoken in a whisper among gentlefolk whose fortunes were indeed a part of the kingdom. These young men did no whispering. The soul of England and the courage of the young were in their voices.

On fresh horses they spent the night in travel disguised as the sons of yeomen in the use of whose dialect they had some skill. Next day they went aboard their ship whereon their goods had been safely stored. It was the *Handmaid* of one hundred eighty tons bound for Boston in the New World under the Puritan Captain, John Huddleston, who was privy to their plans and who had a heart for more than wind and weather. There was a touch of drama in their leaving the wharf at the last bell of the ship. A man in citizen’s clothes, with a small flag in his hand, asked them:

“Do you wish to earn three pounds in hard money?”

“It would pleasure us,” one answered.

“I suspect that two men are aboard that ship who are wanted for sedition.

Their names are Robert Heathers and William Heydon. A King's wherry will follow the ship out of the harbor. If you learn that they are aboard, wave this flag from the stern and you shall each have a pound and a half for your trouble."

They kept their disguise until they had come to No Man's Water. There were other small flags on the ship but there was no waving from the stern. The Commission had a very imperfect notion of the Puritan mind and the purchase power of its money.

The *Handmaid* was in a calm some fifty miles off the Isle of Wight. Captain Huddleston sat with a number of his passengers on the poop-deck one evening. They could hear the cattle bellowing below. In calm weather a strong stable odor seemed to wrap the ship. Robert Heathers wrote in a letter to Sir Henry, his father:

> "The Captain, a big, portly, red-haired man with mighty forearms always bare, has sailed three times to the Plymouth colony.
>
> " 'On my first trip I made the harbor with the *Fortune* in May, 1622,' he said. 'I looks up at the shore and what do I see? Trees, trees, trees, and a few little houses and one bigger than the others all made o' tree-bodies and roofed with marsh grass on a hill in a palisade and about fifty men, women and children runnin' down to the shore and wavin' their handkerchiefs. We lowered a boat and took water, me and two sailors. It were a cold, barren strip o' land. Satan was in the greenwood behind 'em, so big that it is like unto the sea—no man hath seen its end. The fiends o' hell inhabit it. The bitter salt winds o' the water waste land on the rocky slopes and plunge into the wilderness, knockin' down the high trees in their haste. His enemies be that strong and many that the God o' Heaven would 'a' found it hard to keep a footin' there even in the purest heart. I was o' a mind to blubber, tough old dog that I am, when the women and the young ones ran upon us cryin' and kissin' our hands. Every face withered to the bones and brown as an old sail! They was half starved. It broke the heart o' me to look at 'em. Did ye ever see a man come out to be hung? That's the way the men looked—solemn and kind o' wild. Their hands trembled when they shook my old rope hauler. Aye, it were a sight to wet the face o' ye. You whose bellies have been filled with beef and mutton and rich capons and good beer or old wine, what think ye these people had been eatin' to keep 'em alive? Roots, by the God o' Israel! dug out o' the wilderness, and dried berries and snails and mussels. I give 'em all

the bread I could spare and flour—four ounces for each person a day to stead 'em until harvest time and some powder and bullets.

" 'Half o' the whole ship's load who had gone over two years before was underground, rotted by scurvy, burnt up by fever! But these that met me were in no mind to give in. I swear, by the beard o' Pharaoh, I never seen the like o' it. They had a covenant with God, so they told me. Their feet were soul-tied. When an Englishman thinks he's right it's easier to kill him than to change his mind.'

"I said to the Captain that I thought it a shameful thing to take women and children into such a land.

" 'Ye can't make way without 'em,' said the Captain. 'Ye might as well say there shouldn't have been an Eve in the Garden o' Eden. Adam would have wore himself out searchin' for happiness. Men will never behave orderly without women and children.

" 'Now there was Weston's colony near the one at Plymouth—all able and lusty men. They were not agoin' to have women and children to put up with. They bragged o' what they would do and bring to pass. What happened? They stole the Indians' fodder and got their sides stung with arrows and their heads smashed by tomahawks. They powered themselves out, blew up. Couldn't stand it. Where there's men there's got to be women or afore long hell is ahead and the wind behind ye.'

"The Captain grew brusk over this quib. I asked him to tell us what he knew of the savages.

"He told how ambassadors went far out in the greenwood to meet a great sachem. They were fed on stinkin' meat and gutty fish, and were put on the same bed with the sachem and his wife and dogs, to sleep in his filthy, smoky cabin. The sachem and his wife sang and yelled for an hour after goin' to bed.

"This description of the meeting of barbaric and civilized man as unreconcilable as if they were of different planets, I shall not soon forget. I shall write more as opportunity offers and finish my letter when I get to Boston."

It is not possible to quote more from this letter, a part of which had been drenched in sea brine. Only here and there, beneath the spread ink, may one make out a sentence. It was dispatched from Boston partly, no doubt, to show

what had happened, with another letter telling of their battle with a hurricane and a sea gone wild with rage beneath it. Through its help and that afforded by the journal of another passenger one may piece out a sufficient story of the voyage.

There were the usual incidents of a long sea trip. The passengers were roughly tumbled about. Sudden lurches of the ship threw them against one another and turned the dining table into a place of peril for the person and garments of those able to take food. All moved with great caution, clinging to fixed objects for fear of having their bones broken. A high wave in a fret of wind burst a window at night and created a panic.

The passengers and even the Captain had a deep respect for whales. Huddleston told how, often, when he saw one of unusual size he threw overboard a tub or a barrel for the whale to play with so that he would not follow and perhaps injure the ship.

One prayer time they buried a man who had died, with a shot at his head and one at his feet. A stripling servant was whipped, naked at the cap stern, with a cat-o'-nine-tails for filching lemons.

They had been more than sixty days at sea when they came into a breathless calm. The Captain was worried as night fell. He said that he saw in the darkness a strange light resting for a moment on the mast. He was watching for it to reappear. It was a bad sign, he said, if it came not again. The passengers could hear distant thunder and a strange roaring beyond the horizon in the southwest. Then they were driven under hatches—all save Will Heydon, a favorite of the Captain. The young man had begged for the privilege of staying in the weather to lend a hand in case of need. By midnight the ship lay at hull in a mighty wind. A mast was cut down. Before daylight the waves had beat off the roundhouse. He who cund the ship had to be lashed to his place for fear of washing away. When the storm passed, the *Handmaid* was so foundered in the sea that none thought she could rise again. The frantic bellowing of the cattle which had been a part of the tumult had ceased. They were dead.

The sea was going down. All able-bodied men were summoned to the pumps. Three days and nights they were lifting water while the carpenters were making repairs. Soon the ship began to rise. Then all heard how William Heydon, lashed to the stern stays when a great wave swept the deck, had seized the Captain's waist and kept him from going overboard. A fair wind favored them. They spread what sails they could carry. The wind quickened to a gale and sped them landward. In two more weeks on a flood-tide they swung into Portsmouth harbor. It was a warm bright day. The land odors and the look of

the shore filled the adventurers with a great joy. They were all on deck. Many, having lost their clothes in the storm, were ragged and half clad. “Cap’n John,” as he was familiarly called, addressed them briefly as follows:

“The savages say o’ the whites that they are the people who talk with God. I reckon that you know why we do it. If you didn’t have it before you’re likely to get the habit comin’ over. When it’s the toss of a penny between port and a sea-grave nobody is careless in choosin’ between God and the Devil. In fact they’re apt to be careful a long time after that has happened. Now let us all bow our heads and do a little private talkin’.”

It seemed as if all the good people of Portsmouth were crowded about the landing, with furs, seashells, fish, Indian arrows and other merchandise, crying their wares.

Next day the young men and some others took water for Boston in a shallop with all their goods.

CHAPTER II
SOME WORTHIES OF NEW BOSTON

Now Boston was a lusty young village of more than a hundred houses in a scatter of green trees. There were two hills next to the sea. Some of the smaller houses were built of tree trunks with the bark on them. Some of frames covered with clapboards with breakneck roofs in the rear. A few were built of brick and stone and roofed with slate or planks. On well-ordered, comely streets, were a mill, a smithy, a fish market, an inn and a number of stores, trading mainly in furs, clothing, linen, hardware, wampum and fishing gear. Robert and William went to the inn and, after a day of looking about, to the house of the Reverend John Cotton whose hands had touched their heads in blessing when he was the Vicar of St. Botolph's—a magnificent church of that parish, by common report, the greatest in England. They were familiar with the thrilling story of his escape in disguise from the High Commission of the King and his violent, pestering Bishop Laud. He was a graduate of Trinity College, a fellow and Dean of Emmanuel's College, where these boys had spent a year and had hoped to spend other years. From this rich, learned and sumptuous environment Cotton had come to the crude, rough-wood meeting-house on the edge of a vast wilderness as the teacher of the people of New Boston—mostly unschooled but serious-minded. He was no small figure of a man. There was a noble dignity in his smooth-shaved, handsome face. His stalwart form was as erect as a sheriff's post.

He received the young men with a warm heart and the clerical fashion of speech.

"Welcome, my boys! You are as those come to another planet. Youth and strength and courage backed with the good English blood are needed here. I have heard of your frightful voyage and of a fine brave thing Heydon did."

The young man was quick to answer: "I am sorry. I do not want a reputation to live up to that is on so poor a footing. Let me be known only as one who hates oppression and who has come here to be rid of it, and to help build up a better England."

The great man put his hand on the boy's shoulder, saying: "Your talk is like a breath from the beloved fenlands. One knows what to expect from a well-bred Englishman. You will hear much talk of another kind. Roundabout us are many lewd and common folk. In spite of all our severity we can not prevent the breaking out of sundry gross and notorious sins, especially

drunkenness and uncleanness. This is a lusty atmosphere and our natures are naturally corrupt and not easily bridled. We have a hard time to keep those outside the church within bounds and certain of those in the fold toward and orderly. Satan is as crafty here as ever he was in the garden of old. Often you will be shocked but you will be happy and, in the good days coming, prosperous. I should like to see you bound in wedlock to this new world and stayed among the founders of a great commonwealth."

With a smile Robert answered: "Our mothers advise us not to marry here."

The Doctor rejoined: "I have all deep respect for the good English mothers, but they speak with little knowledge of America. A great, free, God-fearing people are growing up here and one can do no better thing for England than give his strength to them. It should be done with no reservations. You will have small comfort standing with a foot in England and the other in America. I would rather see you marry and become flesh of our flesh. Here man may not practise or submit to beguilements far too common in the world behind us. A man and a woman are now under sentence of death for adultery. It is my duty to make you to know of these new English rigidities. I am acquainted with lusty youth and its perils. Not long will you be happy or contented in this land unless duly married. We have girls with every grace of mind and person. Come and dine with us to-morrow and you shall know that my eyes do not deceive me. Moreover you shall meet men who can advise in the business you have in mind and perhaps give needed furtherance."

They were glad to accept this offer of hospitality from the kindly Doctor. As they were leaving he directed them to an agent of the colony from whom they bought, subject to the court's approval, a few acres near the home of their friend. Forthwith they agreed upon plans for the immediate building and furnishing of a house. The agent introduced them to an interesting, friendly man—heavily bearded and a little beyond middle age—of the name of Amos Todkill.

"This is a man of great and diverse adventures," said the agent. "He fought with Captain John Smith in Pannonia and helped him to make a map of this promontory when the wilderness touched the water. He is the famous story-teller of Massachusetts Bay. He knows the savages as no living white man knows them. For a few pence he will show you all the tri-mountain peninsula and tell you of the old times and the new."

They had, even now, begun to speak of "old times" in this New England.

Todkill was a sinewy, broad-shouldered, ruddy man of medium height and keen blue eyes. His blond hair and beard were streaked with gray. His quick

movements and rapid talk, his prodigious hands and arms betrayed the lion-like vitality and energy wrapped in his red skin. He led them along the shore where canoes were busking about in the quiet water. He showed them the place where he and Smith had landed and another point where they saw savages scurrying to cover and he imitated the whizzing of the arrows that struck near them. He pointed out the houses on the hills behind and characterized the men and women who lived in them as follows:

"America is partly rocks: I reckon they helped to hold the world down a pretty time while it were young and in the green years. They have winds here that would blow the top off o' hell. We need weight in the houses to hold 'em down.

"There's John Endicott! A big iron cannon loaded with hard opinions! He is sure that God agrees with him.

"There's Winthrop. He's a lever among iron men. He can move 'em—a gallant good man! Rich, learnt! Lives in that long house yonder.

"Thomas Dudley, the Governor, lives next to Winthrop. Blue-blooded! Agent and kin o' the Duke o' Northumberland and Sir Philip Sidney! Iron man! Guts o' brass! Hates light stuff. Beware o' light carriage and light words when he's lookin'. I reckon he thinks that God is a Dudley and as easy insulted. But hold up yer hearts. It's a buxom land. I want to take ye to a wit and a scholar. Knew Will Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. He's 'the hermit o' the promontory.' "

He hired a birch-bark canoe and paddled the young men across a cove to the little hut of Henry Blaxton—a tall, lank, swarthy, hospitable Englishman who loved to smoke and recall his memories to men of understanding. He had a kindly face of noble outlines—a voice rich, deep and gentle. He was near sixty years of age. In deerskin half-boots and rough sad cloth he was still a gentleman—one of those restless sons of the old sod who have seen much of the world and can be content with his own company. His head and beard were well trimmed. The cheerful friend of John Smith was smiling. There was a twinkle in the gray eyes of the hermit when, after welcoming his guests, he shook the ashes out of his pipe and said:

"Todkill, you look like a New England planter whose cow has just calved."

Todkill laughed and shook his head—a habit of his when amused.

Blaxton filled his pipe, saying with a sober face:

"He often shakes his head as if to make sure there is a brain in it. I see no ground for his doubts."

Todkill rejoined: “That’s one matter in which you have good judgment.”

“But you have the judgment of a malt horse or you would not be bringing your friends to meet a half-decayed, worm-eaten gentleman. I have a great fear of woodpeckers.”

“Well, if we light on you we shall do no peckin’,” Todkill answered.

“Sit down and loose your tongues. I’ll be a whetstone for your wit.”

Todkill turned to the young men and said: “Here’s a whale who needs deeper water to play in than my gab affords. Once one o’ King James’ men playin’ at the Globe.”

Then the hermit spoke: “And now playing with many ghosts in a comedy called Solitude. This is my kingdom. I am the king, the court, the church and the parliament. The dog and the cat are my people. We have no disagreements. The other players enter. Real folk, as now, or ghosts out of my memory. My friend Will Shakespeare comes in with a merry jest and sits down with me as he was wont to do of old. Then as we drink our wine together I hear the familiar query: ‘Can you hold your water while I read a sonnet?’ Therein he writes of another Garden of Eden with God walking in it and the fathers and mothers of a new world. I see the need of it when big Ben Jonson blusters on with one of his old tales of the town, full of intrigue and youthful deviltry, adding at the end ‘If it be not so I’ll eat my spur leathers.’

“It is my part to be often looking out upon the sea. It is the grave of the best-loved ghosts in the play. Sometimes I hear their voices when the tide comes in. The last scene will break no hearts. It is the hour of sunset, the play is near its end. The ghosts are calling me. I shall get into my canoe and paddle out to sea. Then the curtain of night.

“What is life without illusion so it does not turn one’s head! Many here are often gazing at the sea. Alas! Some of them have discovered the meremen.”

“These boys were eager to meet you,” said Todkill.

Blaxton remarked with a bow and a smile: “I will now hear their lines. I hope that they are of ‘sober and peaceable conversation.’ ”

They recognized this phrase from one of the laws of the general court, which Doctor Cotton had read to them.

“Are you a member of the church?” young Heydon asked.

“No, I am old and I live in the skies. The Lord’s brethren are like the Lord’s bishops, but the brethren are better men,” Blaxton answered. “I hate

their tyranny as a Jew hates hog's flesh. Still when I think of these stern men I set my wisdom at work. The shores swarm with mere adventurers who expect to find rocks of pure gold. Some of them are rake hells, whoresons, cullions, who sucked in deviltry with their mother's milk and are fitter for Bridewell than the company of decent folk. Some are careless, improvident, merry time-killers. Their receding backs were a joy and relief to their friends in England. Some are visionaries content with nothing but war and loot and a liberty that kills itself. Some are bull beef, ready to go as they are driven. None of these louts care a straw for law and order. They would be glad to see them put away. These evil, lax and thoughtless men outnumber the church folk. But remember the church makes the only law we have and maintains a respect for it. Weakness would open the way to chaos and anarchy. The magistrates are sturdy old Englishmen struggling with the ancient law of dead and moldering ages to bend it to their common sense."

One of the young men asked how they had treated the Indians.

"Firmly and in a manner to my liking. They punish every white man who mistreats the savages, every savage who breaks their law. Trade with the Indians is a new kind of commerce. It may be unjust to take their furs and their land for wampum and hatchets and tin whistles, but what is one to do but give them the things they demand? They care not for money or any symbol of value. Our clothing is of no more use to them than our religion. Yet our religion, in spite of their distrust, is a comfort to them. In a pestilence they turn away from their own sick. The brethren go and minister to these abandoned ones so that often death is induced to give them back. Stern with mischief, tender with misfortune, these white folk have stayed the arrows and cooled the fierce passions of the savage. Still he can not understand us. Industry and thrift are not for him. He is the child of Bloody Strife."

"Soon or late we got to fight it out with him," said Todkill.

Blaxton went on: "You boys have enlisted in a war the end of which will not be in your time. It is a war against two enemies, one before and one behind you—Tyranny and the Wilderness. The Winds and Waves and Wideness of the sea will be your allies. There is but one power which can hold men to a purpose through many generations."

He paused to fill his pipe.

"Will you name it?" William asked.

"The power personified by Endicott, he of the short neck and the big, round, abominable breach—religion. Even the fleas on his dog have religion."

Robert laughed as he said: “A flea lit on me the other day and in a minute he sucked all the religion out of me. If fleas have religion I know how they get it.”

“Well, a flea’s belly can hold as much religion as there is in most young gentlemen just arrived from England. But be of good cheer. Your capacity will increase and you’ll need it for you’ve gone back thousands of years to the ancient arena of God and Satan. You must choose sides here. There’s no middle ground for the young.”

“I can shoot and fence and ride and play football, but I have never had any gift for religion,” said Robert.

“It’s a better game than any you know under two great Captains. After all, what is religion but a window through which we should see the light of truth? Here you will find it covered with the dust of ages, the cobwebs of ancient error. It is the part of the young not to break the window but to clean and renew its panes, remembering that no earthly thing is perfect. Winthrop is a window cleaner. He would be a father to you.”

As they were leaving this lover of solitude Robert exclaimed: “He’s a whale. He overawes me. I feel foolish.”

“Why not?” Todkill asked.

“There’s no good reason,” Robert agreed. “The man is a prophet.”

CHAPTER III
William Falls in Love

At Doctor Cotton's party they met the great men of the parish and some lately arrived. The dinner was served at twelve o'clock. To their surprise they found both Endicott and Dudley in a genial mood.

Governor Dudley said: "Young men, I can give you no better compliment than to say that you look much alike."

Many spoke of their resemblance, but under the skin there were subtle differences not quickly discovered. William, of a family distinguished in scholarship and statecraft, had a milder and more generous temper than his friend. Robert, of a family of soldiers, was made of sterner stuff. He had a keener relish for desperate hazards—like that of racing with the King's officer—and a cooler head in facing them. He had not William's skill in choosing words to serve him. There was an inborn grace and refinement in the manners of William, which Robert had tried in vain to acquire. He was of a lighter spirit and carriage. These young men had Puritan sympathies, yet they had done no worrying about their souls. It must be admitted that neither was quite prepared for admission to the First Church of Boston, the gate of a way straighter and narrower than any they had known. They had been familiar with the fat rump of luxury and its license.

The Governor kindly offered to send a man of the best judgment as to land to help them find a good site for their plantation.

It was while they were talking with him that they were introduced to the most comely girl in the colony, Miss Elizabeth Brade, of a family well known in Lincolnshire. She was dressed like a lady of fashion in London—satin overskirt, virago sleeves, with puffs, old Flemish lace, rare and costly jewels in her hair and on her neck and wrists.

"What a glory of youth!" the Governor exclaimed as he took her hand. "I could wish it were not my duty to chide you for this rich attire. It quarrels with our teaching and is a bad example."

Quickly she answered: "You should have grace for the young."

"I have grace for every one but myself," he answered.

He exercised the license of a Governor, being not himself plainly dressed. He wore a blue coat, 'broidered doublet, velvet breeches and white stockings

with ribbons at the knee. Only Endicott was in sad cloth. His great white linen collar over his coat as he came in had reminded the young men of a lion's mane.

Mrs. Winthrop spoke up for the young lady: "Every girl who has to find a husband in this land should have special indulgence."

Miss Brade turned and greeted the young men and quickly chose between them. Her talk was chiefly addressed to William:

"Why are old people always thinking about marriage?" she asked. "One would suppose that our only thought was of mating. I am not a bird."

"Good! I like girls better even than larks or nightingales."

"And have they not the same right to plumage? I can not put away my love of silk and satin and jewels and embroidery."

She lifted her skirt a little, showing her pretty ankles and a bit of the embroidery on her petticoat and gave the perfumed satin a shake.

"Do you not like the sound of it?"

"Yes, but better the grace with which you wear it and the smile in your query."

"I like you!" she exclaimed. "I am going to ask our host to make you sit by me. If I were a queen I'd hire a poet to flatter me as Mary did. It's better than wine."

The blood of both had reddened their faces a little when she left him.

William was asked to take Miss Brade to dinner. His seat was next hers. All stood with bowed heads while Mr. Endicott made a long prayer. William found another new world in the eyes of the young lady. They were brown, gentle eyes. Her abundant hair was brown. The skin on her shapely face was fair but filled with glowing vitality, her mouth charmingly curved, her teeth perfect. It was said by one who knew her at that time and whose words are now on record: "I have met the 'Lady Bess' as she is called. She has every grace of form and feature. Yet her charm is in something beneath it all, radiating from her countenance, artful and yet artless. It is a something very lovely that comes of her blood and breeding and her frank good-nature. The light in her smile is like the suggestive glow of certain flowers not easy to explain."

It is no wonder, one would say, that the young man was impressed by her and the more because he had come out of great hardship to a crude wilderness.

The young lady was in a merry mood not like that of the older folk at the table. The latter began at once to discuss the vexed problem: should the cross be cut out of the King's colors? All agreed with Mr. Endicott that it was a symbol of ancient popish superstition out of place in the New World. Still many were of the mind of Mr. Winthrop that the colony should be careful not to offend the King. The Governor quoted Roger Williams, of the church at Salem, whereat the old lion, Endicott, growled:

"There is one respect in which I can agree with that man of rash and lamentable apostasies."

They spoke also of the growing fortifications which were to defend them against the threat of the Archbishop of Canterbury to take charge of them.

While this talk engaged the others William and the girl gave thought to things of an interest limited to themselves.

"Tell me of dear old England," she urged. "What were you doing there?"

"School mostly. For a time I was a page to the Earl of Lincoln."

"A page! What did you have to do?"

"I was in training to be a squire and finally a knight. I waited on my master and mistress, attended in the chase. Served the lady in her bower. Was much instructed by the chaplain, the lady and her damsels. Offered the first glass of wine to my master and the guests. Waited at dinner, helped with the dishes, served the napkin and ewer. I could be a great help in your house."

She looked in his eyes and answered with a smile, the light of which was long in his memory, "I think that I will engage you and mainly to serve the lady with compliments."

"My friend Robert was another page in the great house. High prices and repeated levies of the King reduced the fortune of our patron so that he had to cut down his household. We went home. Our fathers were in hard times. It was necessary to put money in our purses. We began to hate tyranny. We became rebels, fled from England and here we are."

"So it was with my father and the rest of us. He is a son of Sir Edward Brade."

"A great statesman! One of the King's opposers in the parliament. A speech of his helped to make me a rebel."

"Strange!" she exclaimed thoughtfully. "The same wind blew us over the sea—my grandfather was in part the cause of your coming as well as mine."

“Perhaps it’s destiny. Who knows?”

She turned toward him and smiled, saying: “I wonder.” Quickly she asked: “Do you like this new world?”

“One needs help in the task of liking it,” he answered. “I begin to have a hopeful feeling.”

“Oh, you will be running away soon. Here they blame one for being young. They want you to hurry up and grow old and solemn and [now she whispered] get your soul saved. There’s little amusement. Many think it’s wicked to be merry. One must never forget death and go to all the funerals. I wish that God were not so easily offended here. He’s more indulgent in England.”

The wine had been poured when Doctor Cotton arose and said: “I know that the vain drinking of one to another is to some an offense, but I have no vain purpose in proposing the health, prosperity and contentment in our land of two young men lately arrived here, namely, William Heydon and Robert Heathers, both of families which I knew and loved in Lincolnshire. They passed through a mighty storm in which their ship was well-nigh foundered in the sea and in which I am told, though not by him, that William saved the life of the well-beloved, famous Puritan Captain John Huddleston—a life worth saving, as many have reason to know. Like a well-bred English gentleman he will of course disclaim all credit for this noble doing, but I wish him to rise and greet us after the toast is drunk.”

All clapped their hands and arose and drank the toast. William then said, with a remarkable grace of manner: “I have been trying to forget that little incident of the storm of which the beloved Doctor has spoken. I am sure that any of you would reach out a hand to one in trouble. That I shall ever be ready to do. But I would not have you overestimate me. You will find me a poor hero but, I hope, a good citizen. I thank the Doctor and each and all of you for these welcome good wishes.”

In making his acknowledgments Robert said: “We were shaken up like dice in a box and had to pump for our lives on that ship. I’m pumping now and am as scared as I was then. I’m sinking with embarrassment and gratitude. The hold is full. A pailful is enough for a sample, so I say thank you.”

These two speeches illustrate the differing methods of the young men.

John Winthrop read a letter from Thomas Shepherd, minister of the First Church of Salem, in which he entreated that no sin be made of drinking one to another and thus adding a new sin to those, already proclaimed by the Almighty. A number of those present agreed that there were sins enough in the

catalogue.

They sat long at dinner with venison and wild turkeys and pigeons and fish and cakes and jellies and pumpkin sauce made into a pie. Mr. Brade had a negro slave who waited on him and then stood erect and solemn behind him in a livery with scarlet trimmings.

Robert sat opposite William, between Margaret Winthrop and a comely but commonplace girl. While the dinner was going on Mrs. Winthrop observed William and Elizabeth with deep and growing interest.

"Look at them," she said to Robert. "Are they not a pair? Upon my word! I think that they like each other. They see no one but themselves. They are as those apart."

William walked with the Lady Bess after dinner, for it would seem that they still had many things to say to each other. When they returned, Mrs. Winthrop invited them to come with Robert to sup at her home a week later.

"I shall try to have all the young people come to meet you," she said. "You may count upon special indulgence."

William and Robert walked the bounds with the Brades. The walk ended at the latter's door as night was falling. Mr. and Mrs. Brade still had the light hearts of a better time and environment. They were nearing forty years of age. Mr. Brade had bought and was clearing a big tract of land and proposed to be a planter with a tenantry.

The lady said: "God help us we are cheerful—not yet solemnified by the heavy troubles that have come to many of those around us. We have horses. Every day we ride through the dusky wood to the plantation far beyond the neck and look after the workers and have excellent good times. At home Bess keeps the house merry."

"And us longing for old England," said her husband. "Still, with my family, my pipe, my task and my horses I make out very well."

"Often I ride the old bull when the path is wet," said Elizabeth.

Her father laughed, saying: "She would mount a moose if he could be persuaded to stand long enough."

"I hear that there are lions and tigers and unicorns far back in the wilderness," said Robert.

Mr. Brade said: "Only God knows what is far back in the wilderness. Some say it is wider than the sea. There are Indians worse than the most cruel beast.

They subject their captives to the vilest torment. But the near savages are now friendly, and roundabout us there are no beasts to harm one save wolves that sometimes kill the sheep."

At the door Mrs. Brade said to the young men: "You will find a welcome in our home."

Elizabeth turned to William, saying with a smile: "Queen Mary said to the poet who had kept her waiting, 'Young man, you know your duty. If you are careless you may find your head in a basket some day.' "

"I think that mine is missing now," was his laughing answer.

When the young men were gone and the slave had admitted the Brades to their home the Lady Bess began:

"Let him light the rushes, I must talk to you. I am like Columbus when he saw the green shores in the west."

"What have *you* discovered?" her father asked.

"The man!—The one man! I swear it by the beard of Pharaoh. He came here partly because of a speech of grandfather's. Now that is what I call destiny."

She told them of all that the young man had said, as if it had been as precious as the wisdom of Solomon, and of the noble look of him in saying it. She crowned her enthusiasm with a trembling seriousness. "He is adorable. I have said that the words of Margaret Winthrop to her husband in the letter which he read to me, were not well chosen. I was a fool. I could now write them myself: 'I wish that I may always be pleasing to thee. I will say to thee as Abigail said to David: I will be a servant to wash the feet of my lord.' "

Roswell Brade and his wife were laughing.

"My Lady Bess!" said he. "This is like you—an avalanche of enthusiasm! I knew it would come that way. Restrain yourself. We know little of the young man."

She arose and danced before them—like one in a galliard.

"Restrain myself!" she exclaimed. "Would you try to put fetters on a butterfly?"

Her father added: "He may not care a fig for you."

"Am I a dullard? If I be not right you may call me a horse and ride me to market. I have hooked my fish."

“He may not be worth the catching. I’ll write to England for information.”

The girl said: “You may write but I—I am not afflicted with dim eyes and the ignorance of age.”

More was said but that is enough.

A dialogue, in the room of the young men that night, was of a like nature.

Robert said: “Coming home you were as one counting the stars. I spoke but you did not hear me. You’re like a young lad trying to look sober after his first bottle of wine. Are you ill?”

William answered: “If I am it is a kind of illness of which I would to God there were no cure. I think it some enchantment such as we have seen in the pretty comedies of Will Shakespeare. That smile! Those eyes and lips and hands and shoulders and all that is behind them! They broke the shell of some sleeping thing in me. It has come to life. I reckon that I am like a woman when she feels the first kick of the child.”

Robert interrupted his rhapsody with these laughing words: “By Jove, Will! I’m no midwife but I can rub some liniment on you.”

“Don’t laugh at me,” said William. “I’ve been hit hard. It’s a serious matter but I feel happy and benevolent.”

“And you twitter like a bullfinch. Go on.”

William resumed his song: “I could even believe everything that Romeo and Juliet said to each other at the Blackfriars’ when we went up to London. Coming home I was thinking of that sentence in Endicott’s prayer: ‘O God! break the heavens and come down and fill these hearts with celestial rapture.’ Well, I got it—a heart full. God’s my witness! I could go out and sing to the moon.”

“Wait till you’re engaged,” said Robert. “Then you have a license to be even an idiot. Solos to the moon are like a dog’s sorrow. Duets are better. Just now I recommend a cold tub.”

The young men sat and looked at each other and laughed.

The final scene in this little comedy of youth, old as human joy, came a week later after Mrs. Winthrop’s supper-party. William walked home with the Lady Bess at nine o’clock. Rush lights were aglow in the Brade parlor. Would he come in and sit down a while? He would. They sat down together. She began the dialogue by saying:

“I like to hear you talk about the stars.”

He answered: “I never saw their beauty until I came here.”

“Are they not as beautiful in England?”

“Yes, but my eyes have changed.”

“Changed! How may that be?” As she spoke she turned to him with a look of interest.

“Would you care to know?”

“Well, my great need is knowledge.” She smiled, her fingers playing with the lace on her breast.

“I think that I will not tell you.”

She sighed and looked into his eyes, saying: “You get me burning with curiosity and then throw cold water on me.”

The young man looked at her. His passion broke its fetters of restraint. “My dear, what have you done to me?” he asked. “I too am burning in the same fire. If I am to have a bath of cold water I may as well get it now as later. You have lent your beauty to all nature. I see it everywhere. I love you. Tell me, am I to be crowned with gold or with thorns?”

He took her hand. She withdrew it and turned away from him, covering her face, and said: “Astonishment does not become me. I must hide a moment.”

“I will not try to hide the truth because I can not. It is too big to be hidden. Then—it longs to be discovered.”

She uncovered her face that assumed a look of pained surprise. It vanished in a smile. She took his hand in hers and whispered: “I am sorry.”

He answered: “Your eyes and your words are in disagreement.”

“How can I love you? I do not even know you.”

“It is easy to know me. I show you my heart. There is nothing in it save my love of you. Tell me how to win you for I must have you for my own.”

She held his hand in hers as she said: “This is madness. Try to put it out of your heart. If it is impossible tell my father of it. I am sure that he could help you put it away. If not come back to me and I will soon convince you that I am not worth the bother. Let us now talk of sheep and cows.”

“No. If we change our theme let us speak of snails and turtles. Think of the wooing of a snail—even a young and winsome snail.”

She answered with a laugh: “I think it would be a dull affair.”

“Then why should I imitate it? Have I not what our Will has called ‘the bounding pulse of youth’?”

She felt her wrist, saying: “I think that mine needs more stimulation.”

There was an invitation in her eyes, and he tried to kiss her but she resisted him.

As William arose to go she added: “Consider the humble snail. He never hurries.”

“The lucky snail has no clock. It is late in Boston. Even now I must argue with the constable.”

At the door she whispered: “Come back to me after you have seen my father whatsoever he may say.”

She stood close to him looking into his eyes. He embraced her and their lips met.

Then she said in a whisper: “You thief! Now go home and forget all about this if you can.”

“If you can,” he said to himself as he went away. “What a pretty bit of impudence!”

CHAPTER IV
ROBERT'S LOVE-AFFAIR AND THE SOCIAL EARTHQUAKE IN NEW BOSTON

William had his talk with Mr. Brade. The man was kind and favorably disposed but firm as a rock. Personal and family pride were strong in him.

"I set you a hard task, but it is one to test your worthiness." said he. "You shall be welcome to our home as often as you may wish to enter it. This I say because we like you and, further, because Doctor Cotton has some knowledge of you and your people. But you must promise on your word of honor as a gentleman that you will seek no further progress in this affair until I am better informed."

William gave his word and kept it. Still it was impossible that no progress should be made in that affair. William came to the house and returned to his home and no word of love was spoken, but youth has its way of speaking without words.

The young men bought a pair of Flemish mares and, on the approval of the court, some two thousand acres of land an hour or so from the neck, a part of which had been burned over. It was watered by streams and a small lake. Settled in a good and hopeful manner with such help as they could get, they cut a path over hard ground to a point on their land where they began clearing and burning. Amos Todkill lived in a shanty on the tract and was their overseer. Their help lived in tents. It was when William had taken water for Plymouth to hire men and buy horses that Robert went to call on the Brades. Mr. Brade was not at home. Robert sat down to talk with the Lady Bess and her mother.

"I came in the hope of finding Mr. Brade here," he began. "William and I grew up together. I am quite a rogue. He is the most innocent creature I have ever known and the most generous. It is so unnecessary to keep these young people waiting for the slow ships. I could not wait. Madam, one look in a pair of eyes like those of your daughter and my promise would be forgotten. William is different. You could search the world and find no higher type of gentleman. I came to say this, and having said it, and more even than I intended to say, I shall go."

"Stay a while," the girl urged. "You are like William and yet you are not like him. Stay and talk with us."

“No, I might fall in love with you myself,” he laughed. “Besides, I would miss an appointment.”

When he was gone Bess turned to her mother saying: “A gallant, fascinating, beautiful man!”

“I fear that he is a subtle rogue of a man!” her mother answered. “You have not learned wisdom. You have a glowing eye for every handsome young buck that comes along.”

While Robert was, like most young gentlemen of the time, a bit of a rogue and deeply impressed by the girl’s beauty, this verdict was too severe. It would seem that many women of the colony entertained suspicions of young men who were handsome and unattached, especially if they were of the gentry and lately arrived. Wild rumors often followed them on the wings of the wind. There was little reading, but that which the Bible afforded. News went by word of mouth. Therefore, the tongues of the ladies were well-developed. However, it must be said that Robert had been moved by the best of motives in his errand.

Their house was finished and furnished—a neat but simple wooden structure of five rooms with a “lento” for a kitchen. William and Robert were living in it. A well-born, elderly lady of the parish, one Margaret Hooper, recommended by Doctor Cotton, was their housekeeper. A comely young Englishwoman of about thirty, whose husband worked in Newtown, came every day to do their cooking and milking, going home at night. Her name was Mabel Hartley.

They had fish in plenty coming every week from the northern coast, and Todkill kept them supplied with venison and dried berries. They had a cow that was pastured in the common fields and a small stable. Moreover, the ships were bringing oatmeal and pitch-suet and tallow and conserves of red roses and mithridate. They could also buy corn-meal for hasty pudding.

Through the autumn and early winter William and Robert were at work with Todkill and his men. When the snow came deep enough to clog their affairs, they broke camp in the forest and waited for better weather.

Every Sabbath they went to the crowded meeting-house and sat on the stairs with a parcel of young boys. Constables, each with a black staff tipped with brass, were at its three doors to prevent people from coming out and dogs from going in. The dogs of Boston, abandoned by their masters and playmates, were depressed in spirit and wont to howl with loneliness. The long prayer, the chapter and its exposition by Doctor Cotton, the sermon by the pastor, the psalm singing, the solemnity on many faces wearied the young and put them in

dread of the Sabbath day, especially in severe weather with no heat in the meeting-house. Our young men found the prisoners, who came under compulsion with armed guards, a diverting part of the congregation. Robert speaks in a letter of the stir when some "blubbering person" made a public confession.

Todkill and Blaxton came often to while away a winter afternoon with them. The hermit with his dog and cat and pipe and his castipitigan—a sack of muskrat skin filled with the "sovereign precious weed"—was glad to accept the greater comfort of their home in bitter weather.

Bess came of a winter afternoon with her maid to bring them a wild goose—one of the two which her father had shot when the snow-laden drag was flying low. As she went away, Blaxton exclaimed: "What heavenly pulchritude is this!"

"I hope that she will be my wife," said William.

"A lamp of virginity! And what a pretty redness of cheek and lip!" the old gentleman exclaimed. "Looking at her I regret my age. Counsel to the young is like giving mutton to a horse. You will both do well to marry with the red blood of youth in you and a lusty young wife in the kitchen."

He told how a baronet had come over with a comely punk and been compelled to run for his life and find refuge among the savages.

"Neither heraldry nor wealth can prevail with the court if one is up for clicketing. Will Shakespeare once said to me, speaking of the Puritans: 'There are those who think that because they are virtuous there should be no more cakes and ale.' "

It reminded Todkill of the killing and boiling of a Puritan by "man eaters" of the wilderness.

Blaxton interrupted him, saying: "I make one remark. A Spaniard is that tough they hang him three days before he is boiled. If you have a Spaniard to be cooked I will listen, but if he be an Englishman I beg you to desist. It provokes me like a wringing of the nose. Turn somersaults or sing a bawdy song if you will, but no more torturing of the King's men."

So the brain of Blaxton moved about in these sessions as unexpectedly as a cork in water.

It was after this talk with him that the young men decided to displace that "lusty young wife" in the kitchen, Mabel Hartley.

"Her face and form are too winning," said William. "We do not need a

Venus in the kitchen. To be sure, she is a wench, but we are human and we want to live a few years yet."

In this they were of the same mind. They drew lots to decide which should dismiss her and the heavy task fell to William.

Mabel Hartley had served in the kitchen of the Earl of Warwick. She had married one of his stablemen and come to America in the westward rush of 1632. Her husband had turned out to be a heavy-drinking roysterer incapable of supporting a wife. He had found work in Newtown where he progressed in the downward way. She had left him there and come back to Boston. The young woman had agreeable manners and a face and form which many of higher birth had regarded with envy. She had flaxen hair, eyes of the shade of a bluet in the meadow grass and a fair skin. Her cheeks glowed with color. Robert Heathers said in his diary that she was about five feet and six inches tall, straight as an arrow, and that "her plump breast and slender waist and ankles would have filled the eye of old Phidias. It is a pity that she was so thrown away. Henry VIII would have educated her and brought her to court."

William found her at work in the kitchen.

"Mrs. Hartley, I am sorry to have to tell you that you must find other employment," said he.

The young woman asked: "Have I not pleased you, sir?"

"Too well," he answered. "We are young and you are that pleasing to the eye it will make gossip if we keep you here. They tell us in Boston that we are all filled with corruption. There are moments when I can believe it. It is said, I hear, that you and Robert already know each other too well."

He smiled but she flushed with anger.

"I would not have you think that I believe it," he went on. "You are no brabbling, limber-tongued sossle like most of the women who do kitchen work. You have a brain in your head. You have a comely face and figure. You know the town you live in as well as I do."

"Yes, I know you rich people. A woman who works is like your cattle. You do not care what happens to her."

"You are in error," he answered. "I do care. I shall try to find a place for you and until that is done we shall give you an allowance for food and lodging."

She left that day not in a good temper. The young men engaged a new maid who went home at night, and Mabel lived with a poor family on the shore

and came once a week in the evening for her allowance until she was suitably placed in the house of a reputable freeman.

William was often at the Brades' or with Lady Bess at the Winthrops'. He was fond of the Winthrops, who gave their heartiest welcome to these young ones. The brown-bearded John Winthrop was a man of wealth, learning and dignity; his wife a lady with unusual graces. The atmosphere of affectionate devotion was in their home. Here was an example of married life not without its effect on the young of the parish.

"Youth is of perishable stuff," he said to the boy and girl. "We should ever be looking toward the future. Therefore, the mainstays of our commonwealth will be the school and the church. I look forward to a time in this land when education will not be regarded as the privilege of the few but as a duty which the state owes to every citizen."

William was often thinking of this vision of his wise friend. In May Winthrop was elected Governor.

The summer returned. The young men had resumed their task in the wilderness. Day and night they were going back and forth on the well-worn path to their clearings. Ships laden with men and women, with sheep, goats, horses and cattle had arrived. On every side one could hear the sound of saws and hammers. The colony was growing. It was at peace.

Friendly savages came in their feathered caps and blankets, and fantastic necklaces and bracelets, and traded and begged at the stores and stood about, silently gazing at the strange, hurried, restless doings of the white folk, and went away. They feared the strong hands of these pale-faced people, swift to punish or to help. No one feared them. The Indian menace had passed. Only the Pequots were in a bad temper, but they were far out and beyond the valley of the great Fresh Water River in the west.

A ship brought the long-desired letters. Roswell Brade, not easy to satisfy, was satisfied. William and Bess were preparing for their examination as candidates for baptism in the church. Meanwhile Robert had had a deep experience. The good fortune of his friend in finding the stay and solace of an affection well placed had not been his.

At last he had hope of it. One day at Mrs. Winthrop's he had met Peggy Weld—a tall, light-hearted, red-cheeked blonde—lately arrived from England with her brother Henry. Her hair was beautiful. There was much talk of that wavy silken crown of red gold among the men and women of Boston. She had dark blue merry eyes. Her face was not so finely molded as that of the Lady Bess, but she was good to look upon. It was her love of fun—her gay manner

and her talk—that chiefly pleased the boy Robert, although it shocked the good people of the parish. Soon the ladies began to chatter of her light carriage and to shake their heads.

"I'm pinked at last," the young man said to his friend William. "I'm not going to gaze at the moon and twitter. I could sing pretty but I have no perch to stand on. I have a rival in Jim Rosewell, who has been bossing the fortifications. He's a living Apollo. I may have to poison him."

"Bob, good luck to you," said William. "It's the thing I've been hoping for. She's got a brain in her head. Good family and all that! The type that stirs the blood in a man! She's a pearl."

"For the present she's just a sweet-voiced bird in the bush," Robert went on. "She's as wise as she is beautiful. She loves joy. She's a ray of sunlight in this gloomy parish. Lord! It's a land of long faces. I wonder why it makes a man solemn to get his soul saved. Peggy could be a help in the great problem of New Boston."

"What problem?" William asked.

"The dissipation of solemnity and keeping the grave out of conversation and in the cemetery where it belongs and hell in the hereafter. For my own part I simply refuse to be worried about my soul. For that reason I will not join the church."

Robert was still a rebel. Next day he rode with Peggy to the clearings. On the way he said to her:

"Peggy, I couldn't make love in a saddle. One needs free hands and feet and proximity. He might want to run. I warn you that I have serious intentions. I'm a little worried about Rosewell. If I'm to have a race with him, I ask for fair conditions."

The girl blushed as she answered: "This is a subject on which I can not talk with you. I am engaged to Mr. Rosewell."

"He's a quick starter. I have had no chance to show you my pace."

"I can imagine what it would be," she said with a laugh. "You see, Jim Rosewell and I were friends in England."

"Well, permit me to say that I love you and that I do not surrender. I shall keep on loving you because I can not help it. Not until I must will I bow my head to the deepest regret of my life and say that I wish you happiness and good luck with Rosewell."

They rode on in silence. She broke it, saying: “Don’t take it seriously. You are one of the dearest of men and there are better fish in the sea than were ever caught. I’m a common alewife that they use in growing corn. I feel sorry for Rosewell when I think of myself. I’m unregenerate. A lady asked me the other day if I was bound for Heaven. I told her that I just kept going and really didn’t know where I’d fetch up. She grew stern and said, ‘It’s a pity. Have you no sense of sanctification?’ I had to say that no one had ever suspected me of having any kind of sense, that one might as well try to pick strawberries on the sea-beach. I’m all right in England, but here I’m a lost soul.”

“Well, I ask one favor,” he said. “It may be the last one I shall ever request.”

“What is it?” she asked.

“I want a memory that will last as long as I live.”

“A memory!” she exclaimed.

“A blessed memory! I want to kiss those lips of yours—just once.”

She looked down and did not answer. The horses stopped. He dismounted. They were in the deep greenwood. She leaned toward him and their lips met.

Looking into her eyes he asked: “Do you think that I could ever forget that?”

“Lord o’ mercy! It’s a mean thing to do to one,” she answered with a sigh.

“Why mean?”

“Because you put me in mind of the Devil. I shall have nothing more to do with you. Your lips have filled me with a strange trembling. Get on your horse and look to your behavior. Let us go home and pull this burr out of our minds. I am engaged to marry one of the best men in the world. Keep that among your memories.”

She spurred her horse and rode on. He mounted and caught up with her.

“If I have too much ardor, forgive me,” he said. “I have got my memory and if I have to be content with that I shall find comfort in recalling it. I shall think of it only as an act of charity and generosity.”

“My grandmother used to tell me that there are lovers with whom a girl should always keep in sight of her mama,” she answered with a smile. “We shall ride no more together, but I shall be glad to have you visit us at the Governor’s house.”

Robert returned to his home in a rather unhappy mood. He said to William:

“I am now a lack-brained, sorry varlet. My virgin heart is broken. I called her a ray of sunlight piercing the gloom, but she has only pierced me. She’s been a kind of lightning flash, and now it’s darker than ever and I’m like a splintered tree with its top on the ground.”

“Cheer up, old man,” William answered. “Girls are coming on every ship. There’s time enough. Meanwhile my home shall be yours.”

Early October of the memorable year of 1635 brought a welcome arrival to the colony. He was young Sir Harry Vane, of the best blood in England, a descendant of the Sir Harry who fought heroically with the Black Prince at Poitiers. The newcomer had been a friend of Heydon in the school at Westminster. There William’s gift for mathematics and good fellowship had made him popular. The young baronet had been a commoner in spirit and a noted rebel at Magdalen College. He was still a rebel—young, handsome and picturesque. A courtly figure, he had the Puritan leaning and a genius for statecraft. His fine manners and brilliant talk captured the leading men of the colony. He had long wavy hair, an offense to some in that land of cropped heads. Soon all were reconciled. He, they agreed, should be the next Governor. Heraldry had its power even in New England when backed by a clean personality and Calvinistic hatred of oppression. He took William to his heart with all friendly good feeling for the sake of well-remembered days.

Vane’s friendship had strengthened William with the Brades. One evening the boy sat with Bess. His way was now open.

“After all these ages of waiting when are we to be married?” he asked.

“Suppose I say to-morrow,” Bess answered. “There’s a test for your courage.”

“Next to to-night I favor to-morrow,” he answered.

“There is a matter of family courtesy to be considered,” Mr. Brade remarked. “My father will arrive early in November. It is only a little time to wait for his blessing, a deference which would, I am sure, please him deeply. The marriage may take place immediately after his arrival.”

“Oh, the cold unfeeling tyranny of age!” Bess exclaimed. “Have we not suffered enough delay?”

“Oh, the hot blood, the unthinking selfishness of youth! That is my answer,” said Mr. Brade. “At your age a few days will not gray your heads.”

“I am growing old. I feel it,” said the Lady Bess. “If the king and queen will retire we will have a session of parliament to consider the address from the

throne."

Of course the throne prevailed. There was no danger of rebellion. The Lady Bess might speak lightly of her father's authority, but she ever gave it implicit obedience.

It was indeed a memorable session of the young lovers that evening, filled with vows, confessions and embraces. William left so late that he had to make peace with the constable.

In the days that followed they sailed the smooth, translucent, pearl-bottomed sea "whose water is nectar and whose rocks pure gold."

It was a day in the time of the Indian summer, soon after this talk, when of a sudden every face in the quiet town was changed. The colony was rent with tumult and groping in a black cloud of mystery. In the evening of that day, Robert announced his intention of going to see Peggy Weld. The housekeeper testified that he went out at seven-thirty. William was not at home when Robert left. As to William's movements that night, the historian must be content with the court record.

It had been a warm quiet evening under a clear sky with a great golden moon rising. As to Robert, his doing, up to the hour of nine, there was much unquestionable evidence. Leaving home he wore his belt and pistol, as both young men were wont to do when they went out after dark. He was talking with the Welds and James Rosewell and the latter's bosom friend, Roderick Leighton, from Wiltshire, and Sir Harry Vane at the house of the Governor. He left there at nine, saying: "This is the land of early hours. One wandering in the night at ten has to give a good account of himself."

The young lady went out of the door with him.

This entry in Robert's diary made some days later relates an incident of this last meeting as follows:

> "She went out with me into the moonlit space in front of the door. She put in my hands a little golden case shaped like a locket.
>
> " 'This is a curious plaything,' said she. 'It was called *Le Médaillon avec la serrure à secret*. It came to me from my grandmother. It was made by an ingenious French jeweler for one of the naughty ladies of the court of King Henry VIII. The little thing is made to hold and carry secrets. You see, it has a gold beading around its rim. It is a trick to open it—a test of one's patience and curiosity. I lend it to you. When you have opened it bring or send it back to

me. But be warned—years may pass before you find the combination that opens it or you may be lucky.'

"With that I came away. I have spent many hours pushing at members in the circlet around its rim that look like small golden beads. I suppose that certain of them communicate with springs and that these must be pushed in the right order."

Of the events of that evening, he has nothing further to say. He went away in the darkness and whither?

A goodman of the parish—one Hachaliah Grout, a constable—lay concealed that night beside a mossy glade in a pine thicket, remote from the house of the Governor, his lantern hidden under his cloak. He had learned that the glade was a trysting-place. The thicket was not in the path which Robert would naturally have taken.

About nine-fifteen of the clock a woman came down the path to the glade dimly lighted from above. As she came the officer detected the odor of musk. The woman concealed herself in the bushes. Soon after that a young man entered the glade walking hurriedly, his sword tapping his leg. The woman stopped him and kissed his hand.

"Don't you know me?" she whispered. "I am your slave Mab."

"You wanton! Again you put my neck in danger," he had answered.

The pair retired in the shadows not two fathoms from the edge of the glade. A little later the constable sprang upon them, his lantern in his hand. They arose, terror-stricken. The officer seized the woman. He saw the young man not too clearly in the lantern-light. The latter drew his sword. The woman had the better head. She cried out: "Don't strike. Run before he sees you."

There was no time for thinking. It was a moment when action yields to impulse. The young man leaped away and ran. He tore through the thicket and was soon in the open. As he ran a dog pursued him, it was thought, for a dog was found lying dead from a sword thrust.

The court convened at eight-thirty next morning. The young woman, Mabel Hartley, sometime the kitchen maid of William and Robert, was brought from the prison. The watchman related the circumstances under which she had been arrested. The grave, stern-faced Dudley examined the prisoner. Having heard the constable's account of her taking, substantially as given above, he asked:

"Have you a husband who is living?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is the foul sin of adultery. Do you know that the punishment is death?"

All eyes were on the unfortunate woman who was weeping. She gave her head a pathetic, affirmative nod.

"As you value the mercy of God and this court, I enjoin you to tell the whole truth. With whom were you lying when the constable discovered you?"

She wiped her eyes, lifted her head and in a trembling tone spoke a name heard in every part of the court-room:

"William Heydon."

Winthrop dropped the quill with which he had been writing and sank back in his chair. A pallor fell upon his face almost as much in contrast with his black robe as the ample breadth of white linen in his collar. Endicott and Dudley with wrinkled brows turned to each other and whispered. Winthrop broke the silence. He asked the constable:

"Did you see the man?"

"Yes, sir. He was William Heydon, sir. I have seen him often. This is the coat he wore. It was torn from his back in the thicket. We found it lyin' among thorny briars. In one o' the pockets is a letter to William Heydon."

"Is he under arrest?"

"No, sir. He threatened me with his sword and took to his legs. He is not to be found either at his home or the plantation he is clearin'. Both he and his friend made off for parts unknown whilst I was busy with the prisoner."

Winthrop conferred a moment with Endicott and Dudley. Then with sorrow in his face he said in a low tone: "If William Heydon has not returned by high noon you may proclaim the hue and cry."

In due time the constables went through the town with raised staffs crying out: "William Heydon, wanted for the foul sin of adultery, has fled. Let all who hear me assemble at the court-house for a hue and cry."

There were many who enjoyed the excitement of a man chase. It was one of the frightful customs of medieval men, giving free rein to primitive passion, still used in England but not before in the colony. The vulgar crowd gave themselves to its plan with the eager avidity of hounds in the chase—and especially if a man of rank were the fugitive. In the rage of it the captive was likely to lose his life. Soon men and boys and fish-wives and dogs were in full cry, seeking William Heydon. The running, shouting, screaming, barking and

blowing of horns filled the pursuers with excitement.

Many joined them, streaming westward in the main path, spreading into the bush on either side and beating the thickets with clubs in hand. Some had guns or pistols. They were more like furies than like those who have the brain and heart of man in them.

The tumult awoke strange echoes in the silent wilderness. It reached the ears of young Heydon who lay asleep in a mossy glade a mile or so west of the path from which he had wandered in the darkness trying to walk to his plantation. It pained the ears of the Brades, of Margaret Hooper, of John Cotton and of all the good people of the parish. What a striving of thoughts, what a beating of hearts, what a shuddering of souls was under all this hellish uproar!

CHAPTER V
In Peril of the Hempen Rope

The little town was in a ferment, the like of which it would be hard to find in all its history. The best people agreed that if Robert had been the guilty one they would have been the less amazed. There were women, even those without the grace and charm of youth, who were saying: “The sleek, handsome, secret, villainous contriver! I would never have trusted myself with him a bow-shot from home in the night.”

Sir Harry Vane went to the Brades’ house soon after the hue and cry started. He found them crushed with sore astonishment and humiliation. Bess fell upon Sir Harry with a passionate plea.

“This is a lie—a cruel lie!” she declared. “I know it is a lie. You and my father must mount your horses and go and keep those fiends from harming him.”

“I think that she is right,” said the young nobleman. “We must go and do what we can for the boy.”

As soon as the horses could be brought they mounted and rode away, each with sword and pistol. The hue and cry had crossed the neck and split, at a fork in the main path to the Fresh Water River, about half a mile to the west. A part of the howling mob held this path. Mr. Brade made his way through them while Sir Harry headed the caravan that went up toward the clearing of Heydon and Heathers. Soon the dogs stopped. Led by a keen-nosed Spanish hound they made off in the woods, Sir Harry following, for it was high ground. They were not long in finding William.

“You are a good friend to come out to find me,” said he. “Sir Harry, you never looked better. I have been lost since midnight when I strayed from the path. It has not worried me. I slept until awakened not long ago by a great noise.”

He now observed the trouble in the face of his friend.

“Have you bad news?” he asked.

Sir Harry reviewed the damning testimony produced in court.

William turned pale, his friend put his arm around him fearing that he would fall. William stood apart, straightened and looked down in deep

thought.

“Old friend, what is the truth of this matter?” Sir Harry asked.

The younger one answered with trembling lips: “The truth is I’m done for.”

He stood a moment picking at the small mustache on his lip and saying: “I’m sorry for myself—but—mostly for others. I will go and face the court and take what is coming.”

“You ride the horse,” said Sir Harry. “I will walk by the bridle. Near the path I will mount behind you. We will slip around that pack of ruffians.”

The shouting and horn blowing served to guide them toward the path. Some twenty rods away they veered around the mob and came out below it and hastened to the court-house. Elizabeth Brade and her mother met them at the door. The girl seized the hand of her lover, saying: “Dear one! I know it is not true. What has happened to you?”

William was like one in a daze. He leaned upon his friend. His lips trembled. He looked at the girl and spoke—a riddle that passed from lip to lip, and save for one possible solution, it would have burned her brain to ashes.

“Bess, this is the hardest part of it. Remember that whatever else may be said of me, I am no coward. God help you to stand and, chiefly, to understand what is coming.”

News of the arrival of the guilty man reached the magistrates. A constable came out. He escorted the prisoner to the bar. The court discontinued the affairs it had been discussing. In a low solemn tone, that showed at times a sign of emotion, the kindly Governor Winthrop addressed the young man. He read aloud the evidence of the housekeeper, of Peggy Weld and her brother Henry who had talked with Robert at the Governor’s house, of Hachaliah Grout, the constable, of Mabel Hartley, sometime a servant in William’s house. He announced to the prisoner that the court was ready to hear any evidence he could present in his own behalf. His friends on the bench and among the spectators were shocked and amazed by his answer.

“Your Honor, I have no evidence to offer. I submit to the mercy of the court.”

“Where is your friend—Robert Heathers?”

“I do not know.”

“He is not to be found within the jurisdiction of this court.”

The Governor conferred a moment with his assistants. He spoke again to

the prisoner.

“William Heydon, since a time far back in the ages, even before God gave his commandments to the children of men, the marriage tie has been the mainstay of civilization. Unless it be upheld men and women lose their respect for God and man and become as the beasts of the field. They lose the love of all good things and soon even their own children are like unto the weanlings of the flock, indifferent to father and mother. With us the home is the foundation of the State. Its respect for law, its steadfast virtue, is our main dependence. In a new land where to the ill-schooled law is merely a menace, and the thoughtless exceed the wise in number, we must be severe with all disorders tending to corrupt the life of the family, otherwise our little commonwealth would soon crumble into the dust. You shall be taken hence to the prison and be there confined until to-morrow morning at ten o’clock when you will be brought to this court to make a formal plea of guilty and to receive its sentence.”

There was much loss of sleep in Boston that night. Early in the evening Sir Harry Vane was at the Brades’. It was a shocked and dejected family group. Elizabeth had solved the riddle in William’s words to her own satisfaction. She quoted the first sentence:

“ ‘Remember that whatever else may be said of me I am no coward.’ Now the man who was with the woman was a coward. He ran away. He was Robert Heathers. He is still running.

“Now take the other words: ‘God help you to stand and to understand what is coming.’

“The woman is in love with Robert. They have met many times. She adores him. That is why she puts the crime on Will for whom she has a spite. She resented his cleaning the house of her. Perchance he had begun to suspect the secret relations between her and his friend.

“But there is more in this word ‘understand.’ We are to understand that he is a gentleman. That he would not put the crime on his best friend even to save himself.”

“In all this you are quite right,” said Sir Harry. “We must remember that these boys have been friends, inseparable as the swans of Juno. They were like brothers. Yet you have not probed to the bone of this matter of understanding. William has a brain that is never idle. It is swift to see to the end of a problem. Suppose he were to set up a defense and say: ‘It was not I. It must have been Robert for I have long suspected guilty relations between him and this woman.’ It would be like blowing against the wind. The case against William

is perfect—the woman, the constable, the coat, the discovery of the prisoner in a lonely part of the forest, with no explanation of his being there which the court will believe."

"The coat was undoubtedly that of William Heydon," said Mr. Brade.

Bess answered quickly: "The boys often wore each other's clothes. William's best coat was less damaged by the sea and Robert was going to meet a grand lady at the house of the Governor."

She arose, saying: "I really must go to the prison and assure him of our love and faith in his honor."

Her father spoke out firmly then. "I forbid you to go there. Whether he be guilty or innocent, he is disgraced. You must put him out of your heart."

"I can die but I can not put him out of my heart," the girl answered, a look of despair in her face. "If he dies I shall find my way out of this evil world."

Sir Harry answered her: "You broken lily! I would I had the cunning hand to mend and refresh you. I am going now to plead for the boy in a special session of the court in Dudley's house. It will meet at seven o'clock. God help me with those flinty, indurated Puritans. I hope that I can save the boy—a task for which I am prepared the better by your understanding."

He hurried to the house of Thomas Dudley. The grave-faced magistrates and their assistants had been discussing the case. All save Governor Winthrop were in favor of the pain of death for the prisoner. Dudley so informed the young man who took issue with the court squarely in these words:

"Gentlemen, you can not take this man's life."

"Why can we not?" Endicott asked, his ire rising. "Have we not abundant proof?"

"Of what?" Sir Harry inquired.

"Of adultery."

"Well, gentlemen, let us assume that the crime is proved. I can prove that Robert often wore William's coat. The young men resemble each other closely. How in the feeble light of that lantern could the woman or the constable have been sure of the man?

"The woman has to-day admitted to me that she may have been wrong. I ask why has Robert Heathers fled from the jurisdiction of this court? William Heydon did not flee. On his way to his clearing in the dark he wandered from the path and was lost within a mile or so of this court-house.

“Who of you with the life of a human being in his hands—and that the life of a citizen hitherto loved and respected—would venture to say on this evidence that he is the guilty man? At least is there not a serious doubt of it and are you not bound to give the prisoner the benefit of that doubt?

“Since he was a lad in school I have known this William Heydon—the son of an English gentleman of the best breed and schooling. I knew him as a youth of the noblest ideals of conduct, and I declare, solemnly, that I think you have the wrong man by the ear.”

“Do you think that Robert Heathers is the adulterer?” Winthrop asked.

“I do and for this reason. The woman was in love with Robert. She disliked William who had dismissed her. For these reasons she swore falsely. It appears also that Robert often wore William’s best coat, his own having been soiled at sea. I think that he wore it that night. William has neither confessed nor denied his guilt. He simply asks for the mercy of the court. The case looks perfect to him but not to me. In my judgment, the identification of the constable is of slight importance considering how closely the boys resemble each other, the excitement and the dim light. William has done what any well-bred youth would be likely to do. He refuses to put the crime on his friend. He might refuse even if the case against him were not hopeless. Robert ran away. William did not. Action should be deferred until Robert Heathers can be brought within the jurisdiction of this court.”

Sir Harry bade them good night. He had impressed without convincing those solemn men. Until near midnight they argued with one another, striving to discover the will of God in this business. Winthrop favored certain vital contentions of Sir Harry Vane. They agreed upon their course of action and went to their homes.

At eight-thirty next morning the court convened. Long before that hour its seats and aisles were filled with the best people of Boston and a crowd was at the doors. A little before ten the constables came in with their prisoner.

Winthrop proclaimed the will of the court, saying:

“William Heydon, the evidence of a grave violation of the law is conclusive. You have offered no defense. Therefore, your guilt is not in question although you have not as yet pleaded. Before the court takes further action it has decided to await the return of a material witness. Meanwhile you will be confined in the prison house until the court sends for you. I warn you to prepare yourself to suffer the extreme penalty of the law within a month from this day.”

Mabel Hartley was ill in bed and unable to stand on her feet.

Severe as were the words of the Governor, the Brades and all other good people—save Dudley and Endicott who had voted for immediate death—were relieved by the respite.

That evening Peggy Weld and her lover had their first quarrel. Rosewell was a young engineer who had come that year from Cambridge and gone to work in the growing colony. He was a big, brawny, handsome youth of twenty-three, with dark hair and eyes. Unlike Peggy he was of a proud and serious temper. He had joined the church and won the respect and confidence of all the great men. His sense of humor was undeveloped. Her free, unterrified, original opinions often shocked him. “She is young,” he said to himself. “I can change her course with a little steering.” It was the splendid physical endowment of Peggy Weld that chiefly attracted him. They had been discussing the case of William Heydon. This was her query:

“Do you think that any one would enjoy a sinless world? Doctor Cotton would have to stop preaching and you would have no more fortifications to build. The rich would give to the poor and the only ones who worried would be the men who had something. In a little while no one would have anything. Even virtue would be spineless. We are human beings, and if we were perfect we would not be here.”

“Would you have us wink at adultery?” Rosewell asked.

“No, but the Roundheads should be at least as merciful as the Lord. We are not ancient Hebrews living three thousand years ago. I hate your court. Those men should be left alone here to sing psalms and preach sermons to one another until they were dead.”

“You’re a rebel cynic,” said Rosewell with a frown.

“I’m just an English human being and I claim the right to speak my mind.”

“Your talk is indiscreet. Things are different in New England.”

With some feeling she continued: “I demand the right to be sincere even in New England. I am as I am and if you do not like me I could be content.”

Rosewell, who was rather fond of himself, was out of patience. His answer came quickly:

“I hope that you could not be content with Robert Heathers of whom you have had so much to say.”

“With Robert Heathers? Indeed I think that I could. He is a gentleman and

I like him in spite of all the gossip."

In a temper he picked up his hat, bowed and left her.

Peggy and her brother went to the Brades'. While they were doing what they could to comfort the stricken family, Sir Harry arrived with important news. The night of the crime Todkill had left the town in his canoe. The tavern ship was in the harbor. It was going out with the tide at midnight and up the coast among the fishermen. Men passing the ship in a pinnace about eleven-thirty saw a canoe, with two men aboard, coming alongside the anchored ship. In the moonlight they were clearly visible.

"Robert Heathers and his friend Todkill!" Bess exclaimed. "We must find them and get the rope on the right neck."

Peggy Weld went to Bess and kissed her and said: "We both have a bit of old Eve in us. Let us not say hard things of either boy. Whether it was one or the other who did it, I have a heart full of sympathy for him."

Bess answered: "But Robert ran away like a coward and left the woman and my lover to suffer disgrace and death alone."

"It is time that some one spoke up for Robert Heathers," said Peggy. "He is my friend and I can not any longer be silent. It is easy to convict him when he can not speak for himself. But there is not a feather's weight of evidence against him. Why did he run away? I think that this theory is as reasonable as any. If William had come home in a panic and confessed that he had been caught with a pretty wench in the bush, what would Robert have done? Well, he would have had to witness against his friend or commit perjury. Would he not have run away to escape the call of the court? Dear Bess, it is easy for one's judgment to be warped in the heat of her affection. I have been thinking of what William said to you. When he said that he was no coward did he not wish to have you remember that he would take his punishment like a man? In his wish that you would understand does it mean anything more than his hope that a great truth would temper your thought of him, namely, that after all he is only human and that yielding to temptation, as he had done, began in the Garden of Eden and has continued ever since."

These arguments had no effect on the opinions of Bess. She said: "I know William as you do not—as you never could know him. He has a great soul."

"Well, great souls have yielded to temptation," Peggy answered.

Harry Vane had listened with interest to these arguments. He said:

"I have more news and I think that you should both hear it. I sat for an hour

by the bedside of Mabel Hartley. She admitted that she might have been in error in the identification of her paramour. She did not see his face even by the light of the constable's lantern."

"But she must have had an appointment," said Peggy.

"She says that she had no appointment."

"Poor woman!" Peggy exclaimed. "I am not so sinless that I have no sympathy for her. Women always get the worst of it. We have moved to a strange world where laws are made for saints and not for human beings. Enforced sanctity is a fright to me."

"It's only because you are accustomed to be favored by the law," said Sir Harry. "In England we hang for stealing. That catches the poor man. Here they hang for offenses that catch the rich as well as the poor. In America the gentleman is on the same footing as the fishmonger. In England adultery increases as you ascend the social scale. It has become a matter of grave concern in all the Old World."

Roswell Brade said: "We shall know the truth soon. The court is sending for Robert Heathers. As soon as he comes we shall see our way."

Young Sir Harry took the hand of the Lady Bess, saying:

"This deep trouble gives to your face a radiance curious and yet beautiful. I have never seen a face more fair to look upon. It should not be spoiled with too much grieving. Before you leave us here is more hopeful news for you. I have had a long talk with the constable, Mr. Hachaliah Grout. He, too, has admitted that he might have erred in his identification, in view of the fact that the young men are alike in height, weight and color. He admits that his judgment as to the identity of the man had been more or less influenced by the discovery of the coat. I have put the court in a quandary. Nothing will be done until Robert returns. They are sending an officer to find him."

"Thank you," said Bess. "You will know in time that my William is not the guilty man."

With that the girl left them. Her mother followed her to her room. The Lady Bess was depressed and in need of comfort. It may be that some "horseless courier of the air" had come to her from the lonely William on his bed of straw in the prison house.

CHAPTER VI
Mr. John Samp, Constable, Finds Amos Todkill

Next day a constable with an able seaman set out in a shallop to find Robert Heathers. The colony had a long wait for news of them. They found the tavern ship at anchor in a little harbor far up the coast. More than a score of fishermen, including the infamous Thomas Wannerton and the pirate Dixie Bull, thronged its tap-room and decks in a wild spree. They traded fish and furs for beer and bread and meal and clothing and kill-devil, a local name for strong water.

The constable was a fat blustering Englishman of the name of John Samp, with red hair and mutton-chop whiskers and the paunch of an ox. His large weathered face had the lusty redness of raw beef. His belt was like the middle hoop on a hogshead. He had a thick bovine neck, bare to his breast, and a shrewd intelligence. He was able to read and write.

Amos Todkill saw and recognized him as he neared the ship when night was falling. He ran to Robert, saying: "Go over the starboard side into our canoe and pull off a bit and lie to within hail till ye hear my whistle."

The two were prepared for all emergencies. Amos went to the landing stair and met Mr. Samp puffing after his climb.

He took the hand of the constable and said:

"John, my eyes are glad. What news have you?"

Samp answered: "News! Must I bring news to you? Well, then, there are fewer fish in the sea than when I set sail on it."

"Good luck is fond o' good company," said Todkill.

"Also my belly is full o' emptiness. There's news for you."

"Come, let us drain a cup or two."

They could scarcely hear each other among the noisy, jolly seamen who were singing and shouting and arguing on the deck. Some were engaged in feats of strength.

"What side o' hell is this?" Samp asked as they made their way to the tap-room. His face bore a look of overwhelming gravity.

“The north side! Not often as hot as now. They’re a lot o’ roysterin’ good fellows. Be sociable and roly-poly with ’em and ye have no trouble. They’re in the midst o’ a plenty that they see none too frequent.”

Samp looked around him. In a moment he said:

“They’re like cattle in a corn-field. It puts me in mind o’ Morton’s Merrymount. As the Lord’s my savior I never had such a thirst on me! Our beer give out yesterday and our water to-day.”

“It’s a leaky keg that goes to sea,” said Amos. “Here’s to fair winds!”

They drained three cups and then another. The last had a baptism of strong water.

“My heart is in the little town,” said Amos. “Tell me what has happened there.”

The constable was growing dignified and philosophical. His native cunning was now a bit diluted. His gravity deepened as he answered:

“I reckon you know as well as I ’bout that woman trouble in the pine thicket.”

“As God’s my witness—not a quintain.”

“You can lie like Satan and look like a lamb just dropped. The woman swore it to Will Heydon. A coat found in the briars had a letter o’ his in its pocket. The hue and cry come on him hiding in the wood. He is in prison. It’s likely he’ll wear the rope neck-tie. They have sent me here to get Robert Heathers. The case is stout ag’in’ young Heydon. Robert has nothin’ to fear. Why should he break his neck runnin’ away? If he’s got any sense in his mazzard he’ll go back with me. The court needs his testimunny.”

Todkill smiled, exclaiming: “Od’s Blood! Ye look as wise as a midwife at a bornin’. I give ye my word he is not on this ship or on the shore.”

Whereupon, Mr. Samp, always philosophical in his cups, turned his thought toward the eternal verities: “As a liar ye couldn’t earn a farthin’ a day. Ye don’t do it natural like. It’s left-handed lyin’. Everybody likes to believe ye if ye’ll only give him a chance. Now there was Bill Shakespeare. I used to pass him every day on the street. He wrote out a lot o’ lies—spun ’em so slick folks could believe ’em and they did. What happened? Why, Bill made a fortune by it. Amos, ye lie like a tapster. Ye don’t give no one a chance. Ye’ll die a poor man. If I was you I’d try the truth once anyways. I can offer ye twenty pounds to help me. Now there’s a start on the right road.”

Mr. Samp looked gravely into the face of Todkill.

"Well, John," said Amos, "this is hay to a jackass that is full o' oats. Ye got no more knowledge o' this world than a lame cobbler. I can't help ye. If I could I wouldn't take yer money."

They turned to witness a singular and a right perilous game now going on between two fishermen. It was the game of Jim Where—a deadly sort of duel. The players stood blindfolded, their wrists tied together. Each held in his right hand a stocking with a round pine ball in the end of it. One would call "Jim Where?" The other answered, "Here," and dodged, whereupon his adversary struck viciously, guessing at the location of the man he desired to hit. They took turns in calling and striking. A noisy crowd surrounded them, its members shouting words of encouragement. The air was filled with profanity and the odor of perspiration. In a moment one of the players was hit and fell like an ox under the hammer dragging the other down upon him.

"Necked, by God!" was the shout that greeted the fall.

The man who had gone down lay for a moment stunned. He had been hit in the neck which had turned black and blue and was swelling. The injured man and the crowd streamed out to the deck where a fight had started. Mr. Samp had yielded to his specific gravity and sat down. He had nodded as the duel went on. Soon he was fast asleep.

Todkill said to the tapster: "He's got a brick in his hat. Let him sleep a while. He's had a hard day."

He hurried through the throng that surrounded the fighters to the starboard side and blew his whistle. Big Tom Wannerton and Dixie Bull were having a desperate battle with their fists. Often these engagements led to knives or belaying-pins and murder. It was Todkill's business to dip in with his mighty arms and pour his brawn and the oil of an able tongue on the troubled waters. To-night he had other business. In a moment he and Robert Heathers were moving toward the shore. Their packs were ready, for Amos had anticipated the sudden arrival of an officer. Amos had his gun and pistol and a store of ammunition, a few light tools, bread, dried fish and moose meat. Robert had only his pistol, sword and clothing. Under their packs they set out on a path made by mast cutters, which led westward in the forest a distance of about three miles. Soon they heard many wild cries behind them.

"It's them crazy devils leavin' the ship and comin' ashore," said Amos. "They're yellin' and whoopin' like the fiends in hell. If ye'll drop down with me a minute we'll make some calculations. My ol' brain is on its tiptoes. There's a lot o' drift comin' down from up-river."

“What do you mean?” Robert asked.

“Woman trouble! I won’t waste no breath givin’ ye information. There’s a great touse over it an’ I reckon they need a neck for their noose. Don’t worry. It’s a pimpy little matter.”

They sat on a bank by the path. Robert said:

“Since I went aboard that ship I do not wonder at the severity of the law. It’s a battle with Satan.”

“By the toe-nails o’ Pharaoh!” said Amos. “Ye need stout bolts on the hellward doors or everything would break loose.”

It was the fashion of the time to swear by the beard of Pharaoh, but Amos did not so restrict himself in his swearing. He used any feature of the ancient monarch that came to his mind and made a free use now and then of his internal organs to express varying degrees of intensity. In moments of excitement his head quivered nervously and when he was pleased he would lift his right foot and give it a little shake. If vexed or in danger, he squinted his left eye while his right opened the wider.

Amos went on. “I’d have ye know there’s a hot hell in front of us, but I hanker to see it. If we can make a map o’ the country between here and the Lake o’ the Iroquois we can sell it for a cart o’ gold. No white man’s foot has ever touched it. But I want ye to understand, full an’ proper, it’s dangerous. There’ll be times when ye’ll have Death at yer arm’s end. Ye’ll have to hold him there or he’ll fly away with ye.”

“What’s the danger?” Robert asked.

“Tarratines! The tigers o’ the wilderness! The man that goes amongst ’em should take his shroud with him. They’re at war with the Sokokis and have crossed the river in the north. If ye have arguments with ’em and get the worst of it they’ll gnaw the meat off yer bones and eat it while ye’re lookin’ on and then boil ye in a pot. They ain’t real nice folks but I reckon we can dodge ’em. If we can get to the big lake we’ll make a dugout and put for Canada and take a ship to France. I know the great chief o’ the Algonquins. His name is Tessohat —a one-eyed devil. Met him years ago at a big powpow. If ye don’t want to gamble with yer life now is the time to say so. We could wait till this storm ends and take water and with good luck get up to Port Royal. There’s fish in the sea and meat in the greenwood and the sea can be nigh as savage as the Tarratines. Take yer choice.”

Robert was not dismayed by Todkill’s description of the perils ahead. He had a longing for adventure and no great love of life which so far had been a

disappointment. He felt the lure of the vast, green, lonely, mysterious solitudes in the west as did Amos.

"I have had enough of the sea," he said. "The thought of it makes me ill. Let us take our chances in the great greenwood."

"Boy, I like yer courage," Amos answered. "As the toad said when the harrow was goin' over him, 'We're in an unfortunate position.' But I reckon we'll get through. We must travel close. Let me be Captain. Never use a weapon or speak loud without my orders if ye put a penny's value on yer life. We'll push on beyond the end o' this path and lie up for the night."

It was very dark but Amos seemed to have cat's eyes in the night. Robert followed close behind him. When they stopped again Amos cut some boughs for a bed and they lay down, back to back, under a blanket.

"We'll pig together right here till daylight," said the pioneer.

Now Todkill was, in shrewdness, a man of a thousand. He had a fatherly interest in the handsome boy who lay beside him—the son of a gentleman with untold wealth in his background. In his devotion there was a touch of the love of the dog for his master. He did not know whether the boy had been lying with a woman or not. If he had Amos thought none the less of him. After all, in his view, it was a trifling matter. He knew only that, when coming to the house for instructions late in the evening, Robert had told him that, forthwith, he must be taken away. Naturally he knew that some kind of deviltry was in the wind. As to its kind Robert had said nothing. Amos would not have ventured to ask even if he had not been pleased with his own lack of knowledge. Samp had given him his first inkling of the truth. Of course Samp had lied for the purpose of trapping Robert with the notion that there was no danger for him in returning to Boston. Else why was he so eager to get Robert? If William was convicted of what use was Robert's testimony? The story of William's conviction was made out of whole cloth. He would attend to his own affairs and do no blabbing.

These reflections of Amos Todkill are set down in his diary with a full report of Samp's sayings.

All men who could write had the diary habit. Todkill was a methodical man. In the service of his wise friend, Captain John Smith, he had learned many crafts. He had been above all an expert tree-climber. He carried a pencil and blank books wherein his maps are drawn in sections and notes made regarding them. Also some account of the adventures of each day are set down. On sundry pages, tersely and vividly, he has indicated his mental reactions. Before they slept that night Robert asked:

“What did the constable say to you?”

“Only that he was after you. He was like a lathered horse near the water pail. Came aboard thirsty and the drink crossed him. The poor old hitchcock! He shot his granny. Got slewed. I left him asleep in the tap-room.”

“Did he speak of Mabel Hartley?” the young man asked.

Amos divined the meaning of this query and answered: “She is in prison. I reckon I know now why ye’ve had a solemn look in yer eye. They’ll keep her locked up till they get their hands on you. If you have been shakin’ her skirts, keep away, or they’ll hang the two o’ ye. They’re as hard as rocks. If ye have any feelin’ for the wench stay away from there. She’s safe till they get ye. When the excitement has blowed over we can see how things look. The main thing now is to keep alive. There’s some o’ the great men who are ag’in’ this law. They’ll kill it in time.”

Robert did much thinking that night and in the nights and days that followed. Every day he tells in his diary of a sense of weariness and the need of sleep.

At daylight they went on traveling by compass. They came soon to a freshet in a valley where they sat down to eat with water to help their food on its way. The weather favored them, being still warm and clear. At the top of a high ridge Amos climbed a tree with his book and pencil to get the lay of the land and to look for Indian signs. He noted the position of mountains, lakes, ponds and rivers. Coming down he said: “There’s an Indian village about two miles north o’ here. We got to step careful now and keep our eyes peeled. There are two big mountain peaks, one due north and one a long way to west’ard. I reckon its shadow touches the big lake. A great Fresh Water River is about ten mile ahead.”

They traveled south a little to avoid a lake which Amos had outlined on his map. He bit off a mouthful of tobacco from a pressed slab of it, flavored with sugar and licorice, which he carried in his wallet, and led the way, his keen eyes sweeping the wood. In a moment he stopped and raised his hand a little. He stood listening. Then he beckoned to Robert who came to his side. He whispered:

“See that streak o’ light ahead?”

The young man nodded.

“I reckon it’s a path. Lie on yer belly here and keep yer eye on me. I’ll sneak up and take a look.”

Cautiously Amos approached the streak of light. It was above a well-worn path. At its edge, kneeling, he put his ear to the ground. He leaned over the red man's thoroughfare as he clung to a bush, looking both ways.

"Don't step in it. Put the gad on yer nags and jump," Amos whispered when Robert advanced.

With long jumps they cleared the path and went on. They skirted a great swamp and a pond on the edge of which they could see through the brush a number of deer and a moose feeding. Suddenly they came to a deer path leading down to the water. Amos stopped and pointed to a tree leaning over the path.

"See that old whelp?" he whispered.

Looking upward Robert saw a great cat with black tufted ears, crouched on a lower limb. Seeing that he was observed the cat, without stirring, emitted a low, ominous growl.

Amos smiled and whispered again: "He says: 'Ye whoresons, tend to yer own business an' let me alone.' He's a lynx and he can tear the roof off a deer in about a minute. A brother o' the Tarratines! We'll go out around him. I don't want to see him jump."

They came to a clump of moosewood, and Amos cut an armful of the lithe bushes and stripped their bark, storing it in his pack. They reached the big Fresh Water River at nightfall after hours of the most cautious travel. Amos made no stir here until he had listened with head above and below the water. The river was more than two bow-shots in width with little current. He rigged a small raft out of fallen trees, covering it with the bark of a dead spruce and lashing it with the lithe, strong, rope-like bark of the moosewood to his under timbers. After that he made long leashes of the bark.

"Now we'll undress and put our goods on this little raft and swim across to the p'int o' woods a little below us. Ye got to swim as still as a fish and keep yer flukes under water. I reckon the raft will be an easy tow."

They undressed and put the leashes over their shoulders and when it was quite dark they waded to deep water and stood a moment listening. They heard only a drag of wild geese going over far above them. Their bugling splashed into the silence. The men swam slowly in the black water. When they were half across a great horned owl shot off his arquebus, loaded with scattered shouts, that set weird echoes flying far and wide in the forest. They landed safely, dressed themselves and a little way on lay down for the night.

"We'll go no farther," said Amos. "It's like ridin' a blind jade in bad goin'

after dark."

When they lay down at night Robert's thoughts were like a procession of black-robed monks. They delayed and broke his sleep. Often Peggy Weld came tripping into his mind after the monks had passed. The look of her cheered him. He thought much of the puzzle locket now on his neck. He had had no time for its problem since he left the shore. Why had she given it to him? Of course it held a secret of hers that she wished him to know. Had she grown tired of Rosewell? Had she expected that, if defeated in his efforts to open it, he would go back to her and beg for help? Who could tell what deep plan had been in the unusual mind of Peggy? When their hurry was over and they could have a day of rest he would try to learn. But after all it didn't matter now.

So day after day they traveled on. Todkill's ingenious caution kept them out of trouble. More than one incident he mentions in his diary as a providence of God. They came upon a young deer in the edge of a stream, where he had come for water, just slain by a catamount and still warm. Amos dressed the beast and cut off its flesh, salted it and stored it in his pack. That evening they discovered a big lake. The old pioneer had seen it from a treetop on a high hill. It lay directly west of them and spread so far north and south that dodging it was not to be thought of. They would go down to its shore and consider what to do. A mile or so from the water's edge was a small wooded island.

"Now unless we're spied, which the Lord God forbid for His mercy's sake, I reckon we'll get across," said the pioneer. "You leave it to Amos."

He found a fallen spruce about a foot thick. This he trimmed and cut into three lengths with his handsaw. They carried them to the water. Then Amos cut some poles and, laying them across the logs, one by one, lashed them in place. When night fell their raft was ready. A little forward of its middle was a cross-space between the poles about a foot wide.

"It's what I call a swim-raft," said Amos. "I'll stand up with a pole and shove it toward that little island till I lose bottom. Then we both lie face down with our arms in the water and paddle dog fashion as fast as we can. If need be I can steer with this pole. There's no wind and I reckon a half-hour's work'll fetch us to dry land."

They made nearly half the distance by poling. When bottom was no longer in reach Amos laid his pole on the raft, rolled his sleeves and got down beside his friend and began to paddle with his hands. The moon had risen. Suddenly they heard a loud puffing in front of them coming nearer.

"It's a moose or a deer that's took water," Amos whispered. "He's traveled

the nighest way and is headed right for us."

It was a moose with large antlers and not two fathoms away when Amos lifted his arm and hissed. The moose turned swiftly, heading back toward the island. The raft was almost upon him before he had swung around and got under way.

Meanwhile Amos had been busy. He had slipped his climbing rope off his shoulder. As the moose turned he flung the noose over a side of his antlers and drew it taut. He paid out rope until the moose was at a safer distance and then held fast. The water began to ripple around their raft. They were moving at a good pace. Quickly Amos hauled up close and cut his rope, and the moose drew away. Soon they heard him splashing in shallow water. They drifted to a narrow sandy beach, without an effort, on the impetus that the beast had given them. As they took to their feet Robert suggested that there might be savages on the island.

"No danger o' that," said Amos. "The old moose came from the far shore and crossed this island. If there was redskins here he would never have landed with a drop o' blood in his body."

As they drew up their raft and made it fast under a leaning birch they could hear wolves howling in the distance. Then Amos added: "A pack o' them was after the big beast and he had to take water to save himself."

It was a little island with scarcely an acre of land above water and that thickly overgrown with evergreens and white birch. They found a low hollow in mossy rocks near its middle part on one side of which was a well-roofed cave reaching backward quite two fathoms. Here Amos built a small fire and broiled a good quantity of the deer's flesh in his pack. This they ate with a keen relish. Their store of meat was put on a rack of green sticks over hot coals to dry in the heat and smoke. A wind came up and heavy waves from the west began to break on the island. Lying back comfortably on a blanket, with his pipe going, the old pioneer said:

"I snum! And thanks to the Lord! Amos is happy. Fear has let go o' his hand. It's a blessing o' the good God to have a full belly and a free tongue and a careless foot and no worry. To-night we can sleep with both our eyes and ears shut."

While their meat was drying they lay under their rock roof, the trees shaking their tops and a sea breaking on the near shore.

Amos began to exercise his tongue in these reflections:

"I've been as uneasy as a pea in a hot skillet—like a bull with a short tail in

fly time. The throne o' Satan is in these woods. Ye got to watch out or he'll tear off yer finger-nails and put ye in torment. Can't bear to see any one happy. He drinks blood. When things are goin' too smooth and comf'table he'll start a fight. Old Split Foot will git druv out o' this wilderness. You'll live to see wheat growin' where we've traveled. When we've conquered the wild country and drove his ships off the sea Satan will have to move, but I reckon he'll never give up. He can behave pretty in a palace. He likes to eat and sleep with kings and bishops and lords and ladies."

"Did you ever meet Satan on the high sea?" Robert asked.

"Hell's griddles! Have I met him? Boy! I've et and slept and cursed and clawed and spit and bled with him."

It was one of those rare occasions when Amos was in the mood for communication. When important things were pressing toward his tongue he put away his pipe, bit off a chunk of tobacco and spat freely. His gestures were mostly made with his head. For tense moments it shook nervously. So he began the story of his stern adventures.

"Privateering! That's what they called it but you might as well say that hell is built o' beeswax and honey. God o' Israel! a gang o' privateers is no better than its Captain, and old Cap LaRoche had the soul of a hawk in him. We was in a ram-cat wind on the Mediterranean and lay to in the lee o' an island. We see a man on its shore wavin' to us. We sent a boat to him. He was Captain John Smith. He had shipped from Marseilles with a lot o' pilgrims bound for Rome. He was a fightin' Protestant. Near this island they threw him overboard. I reckon a gang o' Protestants would have done the like for a crabbin' Catholic. Smith was a tough stick o' timber. A keen brain and a stout pair o' hands. He could take care o' himself in any crowd with half a chance, give him a slim or a broadsword or the use o' his fists.

"We were lyin' between Corfu and Otranto in the kingdom o' Naples when we spied a Venetian argosy. We knew that she would have a rich ladin'. Old LaRoche made ready and bore down on her. She fired on us, killin' a sailor. That was the thing our Captain hoped for. We gave her a broadside. She fled. We used our chase guns and mauled her sails and tackle so that she lay to for action. We grappled and boarded her. She set us afire and got free. Od's blood! it were a hot fight. We shot her sore between wind and water. She began to sink. Then she give in. Again we grappled her. Some o' our hellions was stoppin' the leaks, some guarded the prisoners. The rest o' the gang rifled the ship. We got away with fifteen dead men on our deck and a rich booty o' the finest silks, velvets and cloth o' gold and a great store o' Egyptian, Italian and Turkish money.

“Smith and I quit the pirate ship at the first landin’. We had had enough o’ spittin’ on the front door o’ hell. We went to Rome and see Pope Clement and the Cardinals creepin’ up the holy stair, stained with the blood o’ Christ. It had been brought from Jerusalem. Where the stains was nails had been drove in.

“Some time I’ll tell ye what happened to us in the siege o’ Regall. There’s a story as good as any that Will Shakespeare ever wrote. I’m as tired as a lame grasshopper. Le’s go to snorin’.”

They covered themselves and were shortly sound asleep.

Amos awoke Robert soon after daylight.

“It’s the next day and a good time to cross,” said the old adventurer. “There’s a fog on the water as thick as smoke in a wigwam. I’ll pole the raft in place while you’re washin’. Reckon we can hit the west shore afore the fog lifts.”

They broke their fast with corn-meal and dried meat and strengthened the lashings on their raft. With his hatchet and saw and knife Amos had prepared some rude paddles more useful than a man’s hand in grabbing water. They were soon lying face downward and making better headway than by swimming. At intervals Amos consulted the compass that was corded to his neck and tucked under his shirt-band. It was a tedious, long journey. With their paddles under water there was no sound from the raft louder than a faint ripple. Suddenly Amos stopped work and touched his friend’s shoulder and shook his head. His ear had caught a faraway splash of paddles.

“Savages are on this water,” he whispered. “Lie flat. Don’t move a muscle till I tell ye.”

They lay motionless with strained ears. Soon they could hear plainly the stroking of at least a dozen paddles, then deep raucous voices that reminded the young gentleman of the grunting of swine. In a moment the fleet of canoes could not have been more than a bow-shot away. Their luck was now getting its severest test. They could only lie still and await the issue. Robert felt a pain in the hand that held his paddle. His muscles were tense, and the pressure of his hand had increased with his peril. The sounds came nearer and suddenly began to recede in the distance behind them. The fleet had passed, bound for the east shore. Fortunately they had not come near enough to be visible. The sounds grew fainter and were soon out of hearing.

Amos laughed under his breath and then whispered: “The Devil and his dogs! Was ye skeered?”

Robert answered: “I shook like a shirt in the wind. Were you?”

“Boy, I won’t lie to ye. I was skeered to spit for a minute. I were a bit cold and I sweat like a pitcher full o’ ice.”

They put their strength to the paddles and in half an hour or so they saw a thickly wooded shore looming out of the fog. They made their way through dry dead timber to a landing. There they left the raft, put on their packs and pushed through a thicket and up a long slant to the top of a high ridge, above the mist, where a grateful breeze came out of the west. Near them a landslide had gone down the steep rock slope with an acre of timber in its arms. There they could look out upon a great spread of country covered with vari-tinted verdure. It is likely that no white man’s eye, save theirs, had seen its wild beauty. Its reaches waving over hill and misty vale and far-spread mountain ranges were like the vastness of the ocean waste.

“Look there!” Amos whispered. “No end to it! I reckon it’s like it were when God divided the light from the darkness and set the stars in heaven.”

“And think of the strange wild beauty of this scene and for ages untold no eye to see it but God’s.”

Amos took his two books from his wallet. One was filled with notes and maps. He passed it to Robert, saying:

“Sit down here and read my diary whiles I go on with the map in this other book.”

So it befell that Robert read the full particulars of Todkill’s meeting with John Samp. Amos had been thoughtless in the matter. For the young man now reading them, those pages were full of soul fire. A thing had happened which he could not have foreseen. He had never dreamed that his going would put his friend in peril. He had supposed that his disappearance would be accepted as a confession. The coat, the unexpected testimony of the woman and William’s unaccountable wandering in the woods had defeated his purpose. He had felt sure that the woman would have sense enough to hold her tongue. He sprawled on the ground writhing in distress of mind. Amos saw it and came to his side.

“What’s the trouble, boy?” he asked.

“My friend—my best friend—is in danger of the gallows. He may be dead now,” Robert answered.

“Don’t worry. To begin with, the word of a tipsy constable is not worth a cracked farthin’. I wouldn’t give a penny’s worth o’ the day for all his talk. If William is convicted, why does he come after you? But suppose that Samp

told the truth, they will not hang William."

"Why?"

"They don't believe he did it. That's why the court has sent for you. They say you must be the guilty man or ye wouldn't have run away on the tavern ship. You've got the reputation o' bein' a devil with the gals. I don't know how ye got it. Probably from the busy tongues o' the women. You like a joke better than mutton. William is straighter-faced. He can laugh, but he looks and talks more like a godly man. Every one likes him. He's as friendly as a house cat. He's round and you're four-cornered. Folks may like ye or not. The whole town is sure that he is not guilty and that you be. That's why the old tub Samp come up the shore to nail us. You needn't worry 'bout William. They'll never hang him. Too many friends amongst the great men. There's some that's harm-proof. He's one of 'em."

These words were a comfort to the young man.

"I don't know what to do," he said. "We can not go back."

"Back!" Amos exclaimed. "Hell's griddles! No! I'd rather try to dodge the Mohawks—thick as flies in midsummer, savage as a bear with cubs, and get to some Dutch town. We've had luck in gettin' here. We'd never get back. I reckon we'll make the big lake in two days and a sleep. In this moon I feel the suck o' the south on me. We'll try our luck in the Mohawk country. There's water most o' the way down to the big Dutch island. If ye take my advice ye'll keep away from the colony leastways till winter weather has cooled 'em off. I reckon we better take a ship for Holland if we can sneak through."

"We'll go south, if you think there's a chance to get through," said Robert. "I wish we had tried the sea."

"Ye might as well sing a psalm over a dead horse," Amos answered. "We'll get out o' this puppy snatch. Don't worry."

The old pioneer had a different sort of comrade to deal with now—one who had suddenly changed from a confiding youth filled with a boy's relish for adventure to a stern-faced man.

"Come on," he said. "We'll take another shoe-maker's holiday."

CHAPTER VII
A Seething Broth and the Pot That Held It

Robert Heathers' concern for the safety of his friend William was well founded. Nearly five weeks passed. The constable had not returned. Word came that his overturned shallop had been discovered and that Samp was drowned. Heathers had got away. The riffraff was laughing at the court, declaring that the law was only for the poor. Everywhere, except with Sir Harry Vane and the Lady Bess, feeling ran high against William Heydon. He felt it in his prison.

William wrote to Roswell Brade offering the Lady Bess her freedom and even urging that she take it.

"I can never love another woman," he wrote, "but it may be that she can love another man. She was born for happiness, and it is her duty to find it."

Brade came to see him and asked him pointblank for the truth. William did not answer the question.

Returning from the prison, Mr. Brade called his wife and daughter into council. He said: "The more I study the matter the darker it becomes. William will give me no light. Why? If he is innocent and is trying to shield his friend Robert Heathers, why can he not confide his secret to me? He should know that I would not betray it. The posture of the case is critical. If he confessed now he would go to the gallows. He may go to the gallows without confession. These magistrates are stern men. I have conferred with one of them to-day. He feels that their evidence warrants the pain of death."

"I say again, steadfastly, that I believe him innocent," said Bess.

"But you are almost alone in that. I am myself convinced that he is guilty. We are humiliated by our association with this man who, if he is not guilty, does not trust us with the truth. Guilty or innocent, as I have said before, he is disgraced. There is but one thing for us to do. We must get away from these troubles and go back to England for a time. You and your mother are in such a nervous condition that living with you has become a burden. We must get away from these deplorable excitements or we shall all be dead."

For a time the girl stood against these convictions renewed and amplified day by day for a week. She called Sir Harry Vane to her aid but to no avail.

Her father would not be persuaded by his arguments. Roswell Brade was an able and a stubborn gentleman. He appealed to her pride and her sense of gratitude. He was slow to use his authority as the head of the house, and it must be remembered that in the seventeenth century it was a power to which women were wont to yield without question. They might think of independent action, but if so they did it secretly.

Bess had to yield at last, and so it came about that this letter was written:

> "My dearest: I love you. As long as I live I will love you, yet our ship is wrecked. Its freight of happiness is lost. If I could have my way I would stay here and do what I can for you. But you give me no rock to stand upon, and I am nearly drowned in these chilling waves of opposition. We get no assurance from you that the disgrace you suffer is undeserved. Mine are a proud and stern people. What have I to sustain me in opposing them save my faith in you? Your words to me—how are they to be interpreted? What can I do but bend to the will of my parents and return to my home in England and cherish a memory of days and of a face dearer than all others? I can not blame my father for when I search my own heart I find in it a degree of pride. It is a thing born in me. I can not help it. If it be wrong, I ask my God to forgive me. I ask also that He will give you strength and comfort according to your need.
>
> "Sincerely your friend,
> "Elizabeth Brade."

Thus gently and truthfully the Lady Bess broke with William Heydon and surrendered when the battle was by no means lost. However, it must be said that she could not foresee what was coming. William laid no blame upon her. He knew too well the pride of the born aristocrat. She had resisted it for a time but it was bound to have its way. Soon after the Brades took a ship for England.

Meanwhile the clamor of the people for justice grew. Something had to be done. Again William faced the stern magistrates. He only asked for mercy and refused to plead. He would neither deny nor affirm his guilt. The magistrates were confronted by a new and a highly serious problem. In England the penalty for refusing to plead had been the pressing machine designed to convince the felon of his error or, failing in that after a severe pinching, it proceeded to destroy him. No enlightened person in the colony could countenance that kind of practise. Was not the presser a tool of the spirit from which they had fled? Indeed certain of their kin had suffered death in its

embrace. The magistrates retired for deliberation. The evidence was in their view conclusive. A sufficient majority agreed that the prisoner should die on the gallows. They returned to deliver their verdict. Sir Harry Vane was in court. He saw in their faces the doom of the prisoner. He consulted a moment with Winthrop and Dudley who entertained a high regard for the baronet. His handsome face and figure, his magnetic personality, his brilliancy and good sense together with the prestige of his family and the eminence of his father had made him a power to be reckoned with in spite of his liberal Puritanism too advanced for the taste of certain churchmen. Even the fishermen took off their hats in his presence, while goodmen and gentlemen agreed that he should be the next Governor.

If there had been any doubt of that it passed when he addressed the court in behalf of the prisoner. His was the first of many new voices that were to be long and lovingly remembered on that coast of the New World. It was a curious thing to see this youth—not twenty-four years of age—stand rebuking those grave learned and venerable men before him, any one of whom was old enough to be his father, with a tongue which spoke for the silence of the martyrs and the vision of a prophet. A great spirit speaks always with a rhythm of its own, with a noble dignity and courtesy. So he spoke and so he won his hearers. He surprised them, also, seeing far beyond their position in the little traveled and somewhat lonely path of Liberty and Human Progress.

He reminded them of the danger of haste in reaching a verdict lest the law suffer more from the magistrates than it had suffered from the accused. They pretended to be and ought to be the administrators of the will of God, and as such the eyes not of New England only but of all the world were fixed upon them. The great need of mankind was a new example of passionless and scrupulous regard for the rights of a prisoner. They and their fathers had suffered from hasty judgments inspired by bitter feeling and imperfect knowledge. These judgments had come of men pretending, also, to administer the will of God, men who could find in His great heart, it would appear, only a cruel sternness and severity. Nothing could be surer than the knowledge that these men had misjudged the will of God. Was there one in the hearing of his voice whose kin had burned at the stake or had had their ears cut off and their noses slit who could entertain the slightest doubt that men do a gross injustice to their Creator when they forget His abundant mercy, His kindness and the slowness of His wrath? However it was not mercy that he was seeking then but justice and that calmness of judgment without which no righteous verdict was possible.

He was proud to tell them that the prisoner had been his friend, now made

dearer by his failure to plead which had so aggravated the court. He reminded them that there was nothing more sacred in the view of a well-bred gentleman than friendship. If William Heydon could not plead without incriminating a friend was it not easy to understand why he had failed to plead? There was a thing dearer than life to some men. It was the sanctity of friendship—a view approved by the Savior of the world.

Undoubtedly the crime was committed by William Heydon or Robert Heathers. William, knowing that Todkill had gone away, set out for his camp that night to appoint a new master for his men. He wandered from his path in the darkness and finding himself lost lay down and slept where he was discovered next day. Meanwhile Robert with all possible speed had put himself safely outside the jurisdiction of the court. It might even be that he had taken ship and was then far out at sea on his way to some foreign port. From such conduct only one conclusion was possible.

He presented a document signed by Mabel Hartley, then ill in bed, and duly attested. Therein she declared that she had not seen her paramour and that after deliberate thought of the matter she had decided that she might have been in error in identifying William as the guilty man. He called Mr. Grout, the constable, to the witness chair and examined him before the court. To the surprise of all, the constable admitted that in the dim light of the lantern he might have mistaken one lad for the other. He called to the chair Margaret Hooper the housekeeper of the young men by whom he proved that they often wore the same coat. Sir Harry said in conclusion:

“In view of the good character of this young man, in view of these certainties and uncertainties you can not convict William Heydon and be just to your own consciences and to the colony you serve. I ask therefore that judgment be suspended until further and more decisive evidence has been secured.”

The plea was granted. These stern men were more open to persuasion than Robert Brade. For fear of exciting opposition Sir Harry had been modest in his demand, believing that when his yeast had had an opportunity to work in the public mind all that he could ask for would be accomplished.

The speech was presently in many mouths. It was the theme of every fireside in the peninsula, and the deputies carried it to remote towns. A strong reaction in favor of the prisoner set in. Let us now survey the scene of this spreading ferment.

Boston was a comely, growing town spreading backward from a deep cove between two long arms of the promontory. Its largest structure, well wharfed

out to deep water, was at the point of the cove. It was the receiving and shipping center of the town. Beyond the shipping house were two towering hills on whose summits were beacons, lighted at night, and "loud babbling guns." A third hill stood farther inland. There were handsome houses on the green slopes back of the cove, some built of stone and roofed with slate, some of brick and of wood. They stood on cleanly, well-kept streets called lanes and roads. There were Green Lane, Prison Lane, Parson Lane, Church Lane, Hill Road and others. In summer their door-yards were grassed and adorned with flowers. The meeting-house on a terrace of the hillside was built of planks and roofed with them. It was the tallest structure in Boston. Its gallery and main room could accommodate seven hundred people. It was filled with the odor of resinous pine. On the main street directly back of the shipping house in the midst of the town were the stores and shops of brick and wood and stone. Plank sidewalks had been laid in deference to the women, mud having been the cause of great domestic infelicity. On these walks in fair weather were silent Indians in paint and feathers, somber-clad, sober-faced churchmen, goodmen going to and from their work in sherryvallies, slattern fish-wives, young ladies in filmy silks and dainty slippers, brawny, rough-clad sailor men with weathered skins and gentlemen as well dressed and educated as any to be met in London. The magistrates and the ministers were complaining that it was an evil, backsliding generation given over to sinful extravagance.

There were three kinds of people in the town—gentlemen, among whom were many learned graduates of English universities, goodmen and hand-to-mouth toilers who lived in huts and cabins with the sea-folk along the shores. Certain of the gentlemen's families sat with their white help at table in the center of which was the saltcellar, the servants sitting below the salt. Only a few women of high birth could read or write.

The female part of the population was mostly ignorant and high tempered. They were also cruel to the indentured slaves who served in their houses. There were some who beat them severely, and a servant in bad standing was compelled to kneel when he came into the presence of his mistress.

There were numbers of women of the type of Margaret Winthrop who had the fine manners and graceful talk of the best people in England but a narrow learning confined to reading, writing, the simplest processes of arithmetic and the knowledge derived from her study of sacred history. A book was a rare and a highly prized possession. Counting the Bibles there were probably not a thousand books in Boston. On Margaret's reading table were the Bible, a *Plea for Infants*, a *Garland of Vertuous Dames*, *The Psalme Book*, *The Ruine of Rome*, a *Troubler of the Church of Amsterdam*, Humphrey Baker's *Well Spring*

of Sciences, *The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Sixe Principles*. Such an opulence of supply excited the envy of her friends.

Most of these well-born ladies were discontented with the loneliness, the poor fare, the stern climate, the confined and dreary monotony of life in this little town on the edge of a great wilderness. They longed, albeit secretly, for the pomp and splendor, the beauty, the stir, the color, the gossip and excitement which they had left in the abundant life of the Old World. But behind them was the mighty deep with its terrors, its innumerable delays and torments. It was like the dreaded valley of the shadow of death and they were as those come to a purgatory beyond it. Some begged to be taken back, but their husbands whose savings had been flung into the great hazard were in no mood to surrender. So man and wife turned to the consolations of the church. Thus it came about that even gentle-hearted women followed the counsel of the ministers and set their faces sternly against all things likely to defeat their hope of another chance to live and be happy. They had felt a degree of sympathy for the handsome youth accused of adultery who had given them a topic of conversation which had been the solace of dreary winter days. Nearly all of them were secretly against hanging as a penalty for this crime, but they had not dared to oppose the minister and the magistrates until Harry Vane had spoken out in the hearing of certain of their number.

The gossip which follows is in large part from the diary of a lady with a gift of humor, who was one of a knitting party. It is rich with the flavor of that little segment of time.

Peggy Weld had held her peace in all the counsels of the gentlewomen. Now she opened her mind.

“Think of the circumstances,” she said. “William had just come from his sweetheart and the two were near their wedding-day and he a warm lover. The pretty wench was laying for him like a cat for a mouse on his way home.”

“Well, he is a comely lad,” said the stout, red-cheeked Mrs. Keayne, wife of the successful merchant. “Without the stay of religion what a lot of cats we would be!”

“He fell,” Peggy went on. “It was dark and there was that devilish odor of musk. He slipped. Well, you know what the best people would say of that in England. I do not try to excuse his act, still I feel for him. I reckon that Adam was not married, but the Lord did not hang him.”

“It is the worst temptation that the Devil can put upon one and may God have mercy on us,” said an honest old lady in her lace cap. “We all have the corrupt mind which cometh naturally of Adam. The Lord has been good to us.

He might have cast us into hell in our own mothers' wombs."

The gossip of the older people was always flavored with piety and the ever present fear of that vengeful tyranny which was above all others.

"I agree with Sir Harry that the Lord is kind and not at all like the kings of this world," said Peggy.

"And I agree with him that Robert and not William is the guilty man," said Margaret Winthrop.

Then Peggy Weld with much feeling made a plea for her lover. It was of no avail. They were not to be turned. They answered her with impatient carriage. He had run away. Moreover Robert had a look in his eye and a way with women that gave one dark thoughts. William was different. He might have a measure of the grace of God in him. He was a more serious man. This was the beginning of a remarkable resolution in the strong-hearted girl, Peggy Weld.

"Robert Heathers has been a kind of hitching-post for horses," she said. "Every nag in the colony has been gnawing it. I shall make you all apologize. I am going to find Robert Heathers if possible. I shall go with Henry who is eager to explore the wilderness. With God's help we shall find Robert and bring him back, and I think that we shall put you all to shame."

After that day the women of influence in Boston began to advocate the theories of Sir Harry Vane in relation to this remarkable case.

The so-called goodmen of the town were those who had saved a little money and were just beyond the need of anxious toil. They worshiped the upper classes and humbly followed their leadership. Most of them were able to write their names, to add, subtract and divide and to read the Bible in a stumbling fashion. Their wives were not so well furnished with accomplishments. They were more or less in awe of their great goodmen, but there were moments when the awe was flung off and forgotten.

John Samp was an example of this type of citizen.

Returning from their fruitless errand up the coast to the tavern ship, John Samp and the sailor with him were nearly spent and drowned in the sea. Storm lashed, their shallop broke on a shoal, turned on her beam ends and lay with her mast-top under water. Clinging to his chair Mr. Samp got to an island where after three days of intense hunger and discomfort he had been rescued by fishermen. He was a sagging and dejected figure of a man when he returned to Boston five weeks after he had left it. His flesh hung as limp as ungartered hose. He entered his humble domicile with a look which betrayed the feeling

that he was weary of life but willing to put up with it for the sake of his wife and the colony.

His wife was sweeping. She scarcely noticed him. She swept with renewed energy on his arrival as if he were a part of the dust and litter. She gave him a withering look and began to scold in a voice heard by the neighbors.

“Don’t lie to me, John Samp—don’t lie to me,” she demanded, before he had spoken. “You’ve took and rooinged yerself with drink and women. It’s writ all over ye. Don’t talk to me.”

Now Mrs. Samp really desired that he should talk to her with no unnecessary delay. She was burning for information. Her words had been intended only as a mild warning that she was not to be easily deceived.

On such occasions Mr. Samp maintained a profound gravity of deportment.

With a look of injured innocence on his big red face he sank in a chair and said nothing. His wife paused and looked at him and called out:

“Well, have ye nothink to say?”

In a loud voice he began: “I’ve been swallered and puked up by the sea. I’m rooinged. I’ve been shipwrecked and cast on a lonely island. I’ve purished o’ cold and hunger. I’ve ketched the rheumatiz. Go and get the ax and put me out o’ my misery, Mrs. Samp.”

Mr. Samp did not tell her, as he later told others, that he had seen a mereman of great size rise out of the sea and tip the shallop with his hands. She was already “too skeered o’ water.”

Invited to be his executioner, Mrs. Samp’s heart and countenance underwent a sudden change.

“What is a house for I would like to know, Mrs. Samp? And what is a man’s wife for?”

He turned to her with a severe look.

“Ain’t they to be lived in and to be lived with? And what is a man for? Is he intended to be fish or a human, Mrs. Samp? He ain’t got no gills in his throat, has he?”

The steps in Mr. Samp’s philosophy were never interrupted by his wife. He did not expect an answer at any of these interrogation points leading up to a resounding period.

“I say the place for a man’s feet is on the ground, Mrs. Samp, and the thing to be sucked into his lungs is air not water.”

He looked at the woman with a severe expression which seemed to say, “It’s hard to put up with you but for the Lord’s sake I’ll do it.”

Convinced of his purity by his loud words and innocent look Mrs. Samp brought a wooden trencher and tin-covered iron spoons and bread and beer and meat to the table.

Such was life on the basest level of the parish.

The constable and his wife gave to their neighbors and to their friends in the church confirmation of the public feeling about Robert Heathers—that there could be no question of his guilt. Moreover Mr. Samp declared that certain fishermen had heard him confess it.

Samp reported to the court that day. The Governor questioned him.

“I reckon he see me first,” Samp answered. “I chased him and Amos Todkill into the bush. They could run faster and had a mile the start o’ me. I reckoned if I met any savages they’d kill and dress me for a good dinner so I turned around.”

This confirmed the opinion of the magistrates that William was unjustly confined. Mabel Hartley had died of a fever of the lungs and before dying had emphasized her statement to Sir Harry Vane. When the young man was elected to the Governorship of the colony he moved for the release of William Heydon. The iron men who sat with him on the bench demurred. A compromise was effected. William was to be released and kept in the limits of the town. He was to wear a hempen noose around his neck with a tail two feet long until he was ready to help the cause of justice by telling the whole truth as he knew it.

In dismissing him Governor Vane made it clear that the punishment he had suffered and was still to suffer was not for the crime of adultery, but for his refusal to plead.

These were the best terms that could be secured for the young man. The confinement had impaired his health. Urged by his friends to do so he took the burden of the rope and bore it bravely and the easier because Roswell Brade and his family had returned to England.

CHAPTER VIII
In the Hempen Noose

Men differ from all other creatures in their capacity for change. Sometimes the change is swift and impressive. There was a story in old Boston of a rough, law-defying sailorman who after ten minutes with Doctor Cotton was quickly changed into another type of human being. The seed of magic thoughts fell into fruitful soil and wrought its wonders in the spirit of the man so that he became a most useful and respected citizen.

The lonely confinement of William Heydon had wrought a great change in him. His pallor, his wasted form, his face worn by fevered anxieties, were the least of it. The change in the inner man was even greater. His pride, his resignation to conditions in the colony, his sympathy with the churchmen, who had so wrecked his life, were gone. His anger had passed. It had settled into a quiet, profound resentment of the wrongs committed in the name of God. He was perhaps more deeply religious and also a more determined rebel than ever he had been. What he should do about it he did not know, but his doing would have no defiant talk in it like that of Anne Hutchinson—like that which had come from his own mouth when he was a boy in England. The departure of the Brades had sorely distressed him. He knew that it was their pride which had sent them away. Pride was the master of well-born men and women. Yet he could not think it the way of love to fail when it is most needed.

Long letters had come to him from the banished Roger Williams, radical opponent of what he called the "magisterial aristocracy" of the Bay Colony. Williams had addressed him as a brother and a child of God. His letter had been full of friendly counsel and advice:

> "I send this letter because you have come to a time when friendly words may comfort and help you and because I knew your father in England [he wrote]. Pride will cause many to turn against you. Pride is a foolish and a cruel thing. It is one of the meanest and the worst of sins. When you are free, and a letter from Vane assures me that you are likely soon to be out of prison, you will have a chance to practise the virtue of forgiveness. I would have you remember that the poor and the ignorant are your brothers no less than the rich and the learned. Bear with them and help them to think and to think rightly. If you have a great spirit when you go forth, it will appear. An opportunity the like of which comes to few men shall be yours.

Rule your own spirit and find your work and take upon yourself the grandeur of a noble humility. That, I assure you, is the beginning of great things."

William pondered over these words in the loneliness of his gloomy prison room. They fell into fruitful soil. Some of them put him in mind of things quite new to him.

William thought much in his lonely hours of the sheer cruelty of pride and of its folly. What a masterful motive it was—greater even than love! He knew many men who were proud of their ancestors, of their piety, of their riches, of their learning. How it belittled them and diminished their power! He said to himself that he liked better certain poor and humble folk he knew who were honest and who had nothing to be proud of. Always he sighed when he thought of the unfortunate Mabel Hartley. The young man had so changed that he had no serious dread of the noose to be put on his neck. Why should he care now? Still when the rope was on it seemed to choke him. For days it was a burden like the millstone of Holy Writ. It burned his neck. He could think of nothing else. He stayed at home yielding to his own pride.

Margaret Hooper, his housekeeper, said to him: "My boy, which is the stronger, you or this rope? It is a test of your soul. If your soul is the stronger I am sure that the Lord will use it to lead you unto great things. If not, the Devil will use it to pull you down."

"You are right, Margaret," he answered. "After all what is this rope but my pride? I thought that I was done with it but I still have enough."

"To keep you in mind of the value of charity," said Margaret. "Go forth and learn to be humble. It is your great need. These are dark days but a great soul is like the tail of a firefly. It is made to shine in the dark."

The first time he went abroad with the rope many were staring at him. No one gave him a kindly word. Again pride was having its way. Some laborers raising a house jeered and called him a "trundle tail." This was what he expected. He came upon Peggy Weld. She took his arm and walked beside him with friendly words.

"How dare you do this?" he asked.

"I would not have you forget that I am a Christian," she answered. "And I do not forget that you are the best friend of Robert Heathers."

"I remember Robert used to tell me that he loved you."

"And I tell you that I love him. All my friends have been opposing me

about it and saying hard things, but they do not shake my purpose. I think that you and I are the only friends of his in this New World."

"It is curious that we should meet as we do," said William. "I could love you myself for all this. The last time that Robert and I sat down for a talk together he was in despair because you were engaged to Rosewell."

"What a joy to hear you say it! I found soon that I could not love Rosewell and that I was deeply in love with Robert. I wonder if he has forgotten me."

"No. Wherever he is you may be sure that you are in every hour of his life. I know him as the eagle knows his mate. He was not easily moved. He scoffed at my enthusiasms. The love of a man for a maid had never touched him until he met you. Then, for the first time, he showed the white flag. I would bet my worthless, noosed neck that Robert has been thinking of you a hundred times this very day."

She turned to him with a look of joy and sympathy, saying:

"These are the sweetest words that have ever come to my ears. I have been starving for comfort with every one against me. My heart is stubborn. It would not give up. It would not even let me go home to my people. I have had to stay here and see this through. Is it the wisdom of a woman's heart that has sustained me?"

He answered: "It is all this opposition that has held you steadfast."

"At last I am rewarded with good news," she said. "The astrologer tells me that my lover will be coming soon."

William smiled. He had little faith in the arts of the astrologer in which the women of that time put a large dependence. He was, however, astonished at the greatness of her heart.

The two passed a number of ragged children who looked curiously at the rope on William's neck and soon began throwing pebbles at him. Peggy Weld put an end to their mischief. That was the beginning of the great things in the promise of Margaret Hooper and Roger Williams. Young Heydon had long been thinking of the children of the poor who were growing up in ignorance. They were the most pressing problem of the colony. There were a number of young ladies in Boston like Peggy Weld with nothing to do. He made a plan for organizing the male children of the toilers into groups and for interesting the young ladies in the task of teaching them reading and writing, the love of cleanliness and decency and fair play.

Vane gave him hearty support. He and William supplied the money for a

rough inexpensive structure in which the young boys were taught. It was equipped with benches and blackboards. The work began and prospered. The seamen, the goodmen and their wives brought their children to this haven of new hope. The young ones enjoyed the teaching, the play and the rewards. The church and the court were deeply interested. The ministers, deacons and magistrates were coming often to see the astonishing progress of the learners. Volunteers were offering help. Winthrop said that no better work had been done in the New World. The work was transferred to the ampler accommodations of the meeting-house and Philander Porman and Daniel Maude—two learned men—were engaged by the court to do the teaching.

Meanwhile William Heydon, out in the bay with his boat, had saved two people from drowning. He was returning in his canoe from a visit to his friend Henry Blaxton. He went immediately to their relief. The panic-stricken pair upset his canoe and dashed him into deep water. Fortunately they were not more than a fathom's length from good footing. One of those saved was a daughter of the magistrate John Haynes. The girl, as fate would have it, clung to the rope on William's neck, while the other was dragged to shallow water in his left hand.

The next day Vane prevailed upon the court to pardon him. The rope was removed from his neck and again at last he was a citizen. He joined the military company. He visited and helped the poor. Their dialect, their droll and rugged humor interested him. The flavor of the soil and the salt sea was in it. He became a popular man, and even the church folk gave him a welcome in their homes.

Peggy Weld and her brother had taken ship to New Amsterdam and were going north from there to the Lake of the Iroquois and perhaps to Kébec to find Robert Heathers.

Those who could not accept the sanctity of all the ancient Hebraic teaching were driven out of the colony. The brilliant antinomian Anne Hutchinson still tarried, having won the favor of the ladies of the parish because of her wit and charm. Governor Vane was severely criticized for giving countenance and support to her theories. It was evident that even the friendship of the influential women could not long delay her exile.

Such a quenching of the sparks of contention was not to the taste of the generous John Winthrop. The church was filled with dark sayings—a pretentious babbling as to the merits of sanctification and justification.

Yet every Sabbath a warden drummed the people out of their comfortable homes and hailed them to church. All had to go and assume a look of piety

while they shivered for hours in a dank cold atmosphere in no way improved by a dank and molded theology. William and Vane and others were Gospel-glutted.

William Heydon rode across country to see Roger Williams. At his fireside he met the distinguished Thomas Hooker. He sat for a day in the company of these great, free-minded Puritans who upheld the right of the individual to find his belief without coercion. He aroused their enthusiasm by telling of his work. That day he saw these men chiseling the spiritual blocks which were to be the foundations of a structure, immense and wonderful. They were these:

"The beginning of authority is the free consent of the governed," said the courageous, brown-bearded, gray-eyed Hooker, who had worked his way through Cambridge as a sizar in his college dining-room.

"And God knows neither Jew nor Gentile, rank nor caste," said the iron-gray, amply mustached Roger Williams. "The spirit of love manifested in the love of a man for his neighbor is the big thing. There can be no love of God without it. If neighbors are not lovable we must make them so."

Both agreed that the safety of the colonies lay in the education of the poor.

William went away encouraged by the friendship of these men. Their ideals had given him a new understanding of life and a new zest for it. Leaving there he took medicine and a nurse to a tribe of Indians who were dying, like rotten sheep, of the smallpox.

Meanwhile new evidence regarding Robert Heathers came to Governor Vane. Samp had brought some hint of it to Boston. James Rosewell had gone up the coast on the tavern ship. He went ashore at the fishing camp where Amos and Robert, fleeing from John Samp, had set out to cross the wilderness. He suspected that the fugitive was still lingering in that part of the woods. Moreover definite word had come to Boston that one Edward Mellowes, in that camp, had important information. Rosewell found him.

"I won't go down there and spend a week or two for nothing," said Mellowes. "I'm a poor man. I have to work for my living."

"If you have good evidence, I will see that you have a fair allowance for your time."

Mellowes answered: "While the tavern ship was lying here that time a shallop turned in from Boston. Her Captain said that a man named Heydon was being tried for adultery and was likely to be hung in spite of his being a blue-blooded gentleman. The young chap, who was with Todkill, said to me: 'If they hang Heydon they will hang the wrong man. I know that he is

innocent.’

“ ‘How do you know that?’ I asked. I reckon he didn’t expect to be questioned. He changed color and stammered a little and said: ‘The guilty man ran away that night.’

“I didn’t know or care who he was. I didn’t know when the tavern ship left Boston. I was spreeing all night and went up the coast fishing next day.”

Thus a gibbet was being erected for Robert Heathers.

CHAPTER IX
THE CAPTURE

Peggy Weld and her brother took a ship north from New Amsterdam to Fort Orange while Robert Heathers and Amos Todkill were still in the pathless waste.

Robert was weary after ten days of climbing and crawling and sloshing and tiptoeing and whispering in this interminable wilderness beset with perils. He had grown thin and irritable.

"Don't get pheesy," Amos said to him. "I reckon we'll be at the big lake soon. Then I'll give ye a ride and ye can rest yer nags."

They came about nightfall to the edge of a small lake. It was about a quarter of a mile in width and some two miles long. The deep silence of its wild lonely setting was broken by the distant chattering of a porcupine. They drank the lake water and ate of their meat and meal.

"Oh, God! I'm weary." Robert whispered as he lay back and spread his arms to the mossy ground.

"I don't like the feel o' this," said Amos. "We'll push on a little and nose into a thicket and lie down."

They found a stand of young pine and spruce on high ground not a falcon-shot from the lake. Under its cover they lay down. Their heads were no sooner on the ground than they heard loud cries in the distant forest. Amos sat up and listened.

A loud splashing broke the silence.

"Two canoes!" Amos whispered. "The killers have come. It's savages driving game toward the lake on the farther shore," said he. "We're lucky not to be there. A band of red men—maybe fifty or more—start miles back 'bout a hundred feet apart and drive shoreward. The killers are layin' in canoes on the lake. They have sharp lances o' ironwood. When the game takes water they thrust the lances to its heart and drag it out. They'll have a big fire and a feast down there. If there's meat enough they'll eat themselves stiff and sleep for two days."

The wild cries were coming near the lake. Weird echoes chased one another far and wide in the wooded solitudes. Suddenly they ceased. There

was a great splashing in the water below. Then the angry roaring of a moose in his death struggles and a shrilling "like that of a stampede of demons in the door-yard of hell," to quote from a quillet in the diary of Robert Heathers. The killing went on while the beast groaned and strove, helpless in the water. It ceased in the space of a few minutes. The tumult dimmed to a low chatter. They heard the crackling of fire, and soon, through their close-knit lattice of pine needles, they could see the glow of its flames.

In a moment shrill cries of anguish leaped heavenward and sped away over the ridges. They sank into frightful, sobbing, aspirated groans and rose again into a strained, tremulous, far-reaching, bugle note of agony. It was mingled with a hoarse background of devilish and gleeful laughter.

"My God!" Robert exclaimed. "Are they torturing a white man?"

Amos answered: "I do not think so. I have heard the like o' that before. It were the voice of a savage. He were imitatin' a white man under torture. Our nerves be like a fiddle string. We holler when we are hurt to the bone. We can't help it. Groans are music to them fiends o' hell. They sing or make no sound when they be put to torture. If they show that they feel pain they die disgraced. I reckon they have no more nerves than a mushrat. That fellow give a good imitation. But I knew it were fun-makin'. A white man would have had somethin' to say to God or he'd 'a' cursed 'em a murth in good French, Dutch or English. I reckon we better get away from this stinkin' hog wallow for fear they'll make a drive on this side to-morrow. I got the lay o' the land afore dark. This ridge goes north. We'll cat-foot to its top and grope along till midnight."

They shouldered their packs and cautiously moved on while the Indians were shouting and dancing and yelping around their fire. That night Robert carried the heavier burden. He got a reaction from the torture cries which he noted in his diary as follows:

> "As I lay back on the ground and listened to the cries of agony they seemed to come from my own heart. God! I think it would relieve me if I could lie on my back and sob and yell for an hour as I used to do when I was a child."

Slowly, in the exciting days that followed, the sharpness of his worries wore away. But often when he slept he dreamed of the gallows and its rope.

The weather favored them. It was a time when snow and cold winds were overdue but still the Indian summer lingered. The days were pleasant, the hazy wooded peaks and ranges bathed in sunlight. At last from a mountaintop they

saw the great Lake of the Iroquois, a long, water-filled basin reaching far north and south between two ranges, shown in the familiar map of Champlain.

At dusk they camped in a small thicket at the bottom of a deep dingle down near the lake level. Snow fell in the night sifting through the treetops. Amos, looking out in the morning, saw an inch or more of snow on the dingle sides.

"Hell's griddles!" he exclaimed. "We'll stay right here till that snow melts or wait till dark."

He had gathered leeks and dug some roots which he called wild potatoes. He filled a can with snow and held it between his legs while they ate. In that manner they were able to appease their thirst with the melted snow.

"Boy, ye're lookin' more like yerself," said Amos. "Ye've been griddled sorrowful and ye groan in yer sleep. Hold up yer heart. The Lord is with us or we'd never 'a' got this far. I'm goin' to tell ye that story o' John Smith's fight with the Turk in the siege o' Regall. It'll do ye good."

He listened a moment, peering out of the bushes. Then, having bitten off a chunk of tobacco, he lay down at Robert's side and in a voice just above a whisper began:

"We enlisted for the war in Pannonia under Henry Volda, the Earl o' Meldritch, who was fightin' the Turks. It was in the siege o' Regall that Smith had his first big adventure. That city was a hard nut to crack. We endured a terrible gallin'. One day we heard a distant trumpet and see a party sallyin' toward us under a flag o' truce. It bore a message sayin' that many believed we would make no assault but would soon show them our heels. Would we, their Lord Turbishaw hankered to know, oblige them with a fight afore leavin'? Many ladies was in and near the camp. They was crazy to see a fight. He begged that we choose one o' our Captains to fight one o' theirs, each for the other's head. Our General agreed. Our Captains was eager for the fight. They had suffered a month o' tauntin' from the enemy. They drew lots for the chance o' cuttin' off a Turk's head. The honor fell to my friend John Smith. So at the time set the troops are lined on three sides. The other side is a wall. All along the top o' it the Turkish officers and their ladies are sittin' like a row o' pigeons on a fence.

"The Turk come in first, in full armor, with long lance, on a beautiful white horse that leaped and caracoled to the sound o' the hautboys. On the Turk's shoulders was a pair o' eagle's wings bordered with silver. There was shiny ornaments on his corselet.

"The trumpets played. Smith entered in plain armor. They took their places

on opposite sides o' the square and stood a second, lances poised, waitin' for the word. They charged at a swift gallop."

Amos paused. His quick ear had caught a disturbing sound. He arose and peered through the bushes. "The Devil and his dogs!" he whispered. "We're ambushed."

The young man arose and drew his sword.

"Put that away," Amos commanded. "They'd eat us up in a fight. Just take a look."

Robert peered over the shoulder of his friend. Around the top of the dingle a ring of savages surrounded them, each sitting on his heels like a greyhound, motionless and silent as the Sphinx of Egypt, looking toward them.

Amos took two small acorns from a pocket in his doublet. He handed one to his comrade and whispered: "Put that under yer tongue. It's loaded. If it comes to torture crack the shell in yer teeth. In less'n a minute ye'll be out o' hell and on yer way to heaven. Don't resist whatever they do unless I say fight."

They put the acorns in their mouths. Amos stepped out of the bushes, took off his hat and bowed, saying: "Ho! hoo! hooo!"

The savages arose and ran toward them from all sides.

CHAPTER X

ADVENTURES IN THE AMERICAN BACKGROUND OF SAVAGERY

They were Algonquins who came around the white men chattering in low guttural tones. They were on the war-path in the enemy's country and their love of noise was therefore under restraint. There were thirty-three in the band with shiny greased hair and bodies. Their faces were grotesquely painted. Some had a curious, hobgoblin look with bands of black and red paint crossing their cheeks and foreheads. Some were tattooed with crude designs of the snake and the eagle. A few had hair only on one side of their heads. All were beardless and low-browed with small, black, glistening eyes put to no nobler uses than those of a rat—the finding of food and enemies.

They were naked save for skins hanging from a girdle above the hips and falling about half-way to the knees. Bows and quivers filled with arrows hung on their backs. Each carried a long curving shield hewn out of cedar wood.

Amos knew many words of their language. He told them that Tessohat, their great, one-eyed chief, was his friend. A savage made them to understand that Tessohat was dead.

Amos told them as best he could, with the help of many gestures, of their journey through the wilderness and of a great band of Iroquois not ten leagues away in the south. Its numbers were indicated by broken sticks. He made it clear to them that the French or the Dutch would give much wampum and many skins as a ransom for himself and comrade.

The chief of the band was a shapely young Indian, taller than the others. He touched his breast and pointed northward and said "Kébec." Amos nodded his approval and, turning to his friend, said:

"They will take us to the French unless they dream that we ought to be killed. We'll give up our weapons and trust to luck."

Amos gave up his knife and gun and saw and hatchet, Robert his sword and pistol. The savages sat down around them with grunts and ho's of delight as they examined these treasures. Suddenly a young redskin came running with a word that seemed to carry good news. Robert writes in his diary that it sounded like "*Genundequaho!*"

The band got to its feet. Long lashes of strong hide were noosed around a

leg of each captive and tightly drawn and fastened just below the knee. They were led to the great lake, the surface of which was covered by a thick fog. Canoes were quickly and silently hauled out of a thicket of evergreens and pushed into the water. There were six of them, the largest about five fathoms long. Robert and Amos were shipped with the chief, between the paddlers, of whom there were four in each of the larger craft. The fleet left the shore, the paddlers resting on their knees, and the boats were soon lined, some twenty feet apart, in deep water.

It amazed the young Englishman to observe how silently and powerfully they sped through the still water. All that day and through the night that followed it, with never a pause for food or a word spoken, they kept their pace. At rare intervals a paddler would stop and pick up a wooden cup, fill it at the side, toss its contents into a wide mouth, lay it down, take up the paddle and continue to fill the wood with his abundant strength. The next day they came out of the mist into narrow water.

By and by the great river of the north lay before them a mighty, moving caravan of waters a full falcon-shot in width under a cloudy sky. It was one of the arteries of the pulsing heart of the wilderness somewhere in the remote and mysterious inlands. Without a pause or a word spoken they sheered northeastward on the river plane roughened, here and there, by whirls and ripples. There was something admirable in the patient, Spartan-like devotion of these red men to their task. Here they began to chatter, and nearing the far shore, they greeted it with loud ho's of satisfaction.

Amos and Robert were so stiffened by the long sit that, for a little time, they endured great pain in their efforts to stand. The savages, broken to all hardship on land and water, were much amused by their discomfort and greeted it with loud laughter. They made a fire and took from one of the canoes a pot of greasy bear's flesh and set it to boil. As the heat began to stir this revolting mass, leaf mold, small twigs, hairs and pine needles were playing about on the surface of the boiling fat.

Robert wrote in his diary:

> "This repast was a torment. As a punishment it was as successful as the journey. I found some relief in them. I have thought so much of my discomfort that I had no time to think of troubles. It shocked me a little to see the savages, after they had cooled the pot in water, paw around in it with their unwashed hands and long, clawlike, dirty finger-nails. Why should I care for my own refined feeling in the matter? They ate like swine. So did I. One thing they did which I

could not do. They wiped their greasy hands in their hair and on the naked skin. Amos tells me that they keep their hair and bodies greased for two reasons: it helps them to slip through the bushes, also fleas and mosquitoes and lice find their skin a less agreeable feeding-place.

"I wonder how a pair of Puritans will make out with the French. My mother, who died when I was a lad of ten, was a French lady of the distinguished Brébeuf family. One of them—a priest—is said to be in Canada. Fortunately I have well-known friends in France and am able to speak the language, and neither Amos nor I is quarrelsome. We must do our best to make a good impression at Kébec if they take us there."

They had not long to wait. They came next day to the range of lofty cliffs crowned with a fortification, ramparted with logs, above which a French flag was flying. Down by the shore there were a number of one-story warehouses, built of logs chinked with moss. Among the savages they took the zigzag path leading upward. An officer in a plumed hat stopped them. In good French Robert told him of their plight. Taking them to be Frenchmen, unarmed and harmless, the officer said:

"I will go with you to Father LeJeune."

They found the kindly Father in the chapel—a structure built of planks and mud and thatched with meadow grass. It stood on a low plateau in a palisaded inclosure. The savages waited outside the palisade while the white men entered with the officer. The chapel's altar was decorated with images of Loyola, Xavier and the dove. It was called Notre Dame des Anges. Robert knelt in prayer before the altar. Father LeJeune, Superior of the Residence, entered. He wore a close black cassock. A rosary hung from his belt, a wide black hat, looped at the sides, was in his hand. Robert arose and bowed.

"Whence came you?" the Father asked.

"From Boston far in the south," Robert answered.

"What seek you here?"

"The mercy of God."

"Are you not English and our enemies?"

"We are English but not your enemies. We know of your devotion to the will of our common Master. It has won our admiration. I am not worthy to kiss your feet, but I love you for the spirit of sacrifice that has brought you to the

wilderness and which keeps you here. My mother was a French lady and a Catholic. Only the cruel folly of misguided rulers turned my father from the ancient church."

"The sword and the strong hand as a means of conversion will ever be a failure," the Father answered gravely as he shook his head. Meanwhile, "I have a letter which, I think, relates to you. A Dutch trader brought it from the far south to the great river and sent it to me by an Algonquin chief. It came to my hand less than a week ago."

Father LeJeune drew the letter from his pocket and gave it to Robert. It was written in French. The young man read and reread it with a thrill of joy and astonishment. The Father gave him permission to keep it and this is the letter now copied from his diary:

"From a small Trading Post in the wilderness

"North of Fort Orange on the Lake of the Iroquois

"December 5, 1636.

"To the excellent Father LeJeune: Last year I heard of your work from your Bishop in Paris. First I desire to assure you that the best wishes of myself and my friends are with you in the difficult task you have undertaken. I now seek your kind offices in a matter which involves the happiness of many good people. Six weeks ago a young man of the name of Robert Heathers went into the wilderness with his guide at a point far up the coast from Boston. Since then they have not been heard from. It is feared that they have fallen a prey to wild beasts or been captured by the savages, or that they are lost and starving in the great waste. If news of them should come to you and it should be possible for you to render them any service it would be rewarded not only with our gratitude but with such a share of our substance as would, I am sure, contribute something to your comfort and success. If perchance he should arrive at your residence I beg of you to give him hospitality and what help you can. His father is a gentleman, his mother was one of your own race. I and my brother are with trader Van Brocklin near the south end of the Lake of the Iroquois. In about ten days we shall be going south and at New Amsterdam shall take water for Boston, which we hope to reach before Christmas.

"With deep respect and hearty greetings,
"Yours faithfully,

“Peggy Weld.”

When the young man had finished with the letter Father LeJeune asked: “Who is your mother?”

“Catherine de Brébeuf.”

The Father’s interest in the young man deepened suddenly.

“Of the noble family of Brébeuf in Normandy?” he asked.

“The same.”

“You have a relative in residence here—our beloved Père Utile, Jean de Brébeuf. He is now out feeding the cattle and the swine. I will send for him.”

“Jean de Brébeuf! I remember him well. He was with us when my mother died.”

When the large gray-bearded Father Brébeuf entered in his soiled, coarse black cassock he greeted the boy with kisses and affectionate enthusiasm. Thus, favored by fortune and the sincere goodwill of the young man the captives found themselves on a friendly footing in a situation naturally difficult. Robert had brought in his pockets an ample store of English money. This he offered freely to secure what was needed for the ransom of himself and his friend.

“My cousin, you have come to a land where money is of less value than glass beads and seashells and shiny trinkets,” said Jean de Brébeuf. “I will give to each brave a hatchet and a double handful of glass beads. That will be sufficient. For this you may give me five pounds. We have been generous with the Algonquins. They are our friends. We have given them many blankets.”

Then Robert voiced his urgent feeling:

“We must be going south as soon as possible.”

The good Father answered: “You might get down to the Dutch through the lands of the Iroquois—a fierce people. You would need the help of God in this journey.”

Father Brébeuf went with Robert and Amos to the trading-post, followed by the eager band of savages. Soon the latter were shouting and chattering over their trinkets, as happy as a group of children. The captives were free, and their tools and weapons were returned to them.

This was no sooner accomplished than the red men began to gamble with their new wealth in their favorite dish game. It was played with six plum

stones, white on one side and black on the other. The players were divided in two opposing sides. A brave was chosen to shake the dish. They guessed on the number of white or black to appear when the dish was shaken and dumped. They bet heavily. In a little time a noisy contention arose between the opposing sides. Two men were chosen to decide the issue in a fight. They fought like fish-women, grabbing each other's hair. Each with fists full of hair they struggled and twisted and jerked in a frightful fashion. No word came from either. Being well-matched the encounter continued until the white men turned away wearied by its brutality and went to the house of Madame Hébert who lived with her daughter and son-in-law Monsieur Couillard. Built of logs and quite weather-proof it was the only real house in Canada. Madame had cleared and cultivated a tract of land. Her efforts kept her family and the Fathers supplied with grain, small fruits and vegetables. A cheery, kindly soul she was like a mother to those lonely men who were giving their lives in a fruitless sowing among rocks and thorns.

She greeted Brébeuf fondly as Le Bon Père Utile, his title at the Residence, and offered the hospitality of her house to the two Englishmen. With soap and towels they went down to the river with the Father for a bath. Returning at dusk by the way of the trading-post, they saw the fighters still embraced and writhing and twisting and struggling in silence like a pair of bulldogs on the ground. Only two of the band remained to watch them.

"Let us go to the Indian cabin and find the chief and try to stop this," said the Father.

The cabin was built of poles covered with bark and wattled up with boughs at one end. It was for the accommodation of visiting Indians. Clean when the warriors arrived it was now like a pig-pen, ill-smelling and the carpet of boughs covered with litter. Two fires were burning. A part of the smoke went up through holes in the roof, but much of it clouded the atmosphere of the long room and was a torment to the eyes of a white man. On every side were naked bodies, black and overheated by the fires, mingled pell-mell with dogs just arrived with a band of hunters. Father Brébeuf found the young chief and prevailed upon him to go and stop the fight.

"They like us not to interfere in their affairs and we do it with restraint," said the Father. "The young chief has been baptized but, alas, their customs and superstitions are the growth of ages. Naturally they are deeper rooted than the new faith. It is more difficult than clearing and planting the wild land. You have seen how stubborn they are. We are patient. Some will yield to us and confess their sins and take on a humble and becoming spirit. We baptize them. A dream or the arrival of an Iroquois captive will turn them back to savagery.

Still God can make the mountains to be a plain."

At the table of Madame Hébert the Englishmen sat with her family and three Fathers and two lay brothers. Three other Fathers were then out in the forest with the wild men. They had a dinner of roasted moose meat with wine and baked potatoes and good bread eaten with a conserve of dried berries.

"This luxury is in honor of the kinsmen of our dear Father Brébeuf," said madame. "We are wont to fare more simply. When the winter is far spent you would find us fasting or dining with a piece of bread and a little wine."

There was much talk of the sweet land of wheat and vines and of the good cooking to be found in Paris. It was a joy to these lonely people to hear Robert tell of the adventures of himself and his friend on their journey.

When they went to bed Robert read the letter to his wise old comrade, asking at the last word:

"What is the meaning of this?"

"That's as easy as lookin' through a window," said Amos. "The sweet gal is in love with ye. The whole town thinks ye're guilty and she don't. If she does she don't think it's anything to be hung for. There's a gal like them in the time o' Queen Bess. She believes in takin' her enjoyment while she's alive instead o' waitin' till she's dead. She's broke with Rosewell and she wants you. I'll tell ye what's behind all this. She coaxed her brother to come with her. That gal has studied the maps o' Hudson and Champlain in the Governor's house. She knew that if we got to the big waterways from north to south we'd make for Kébec or New Amsterdam. I reckon she made up her mind that if she could find ye she'd lead ye to New Amsterdam and marry ye right there, by the grace o' God, and ship ye off to Holland with her, and why not I'd like to know?"

"I can think of worse things that could happen to me," said Robert. "I wonder why she has turned against Rosewell. He's a much handsomer man."

"That all depends on the pair o' eyes that's lookin' at him. He was not the man for her. He's half dead—his body in this world, his mind in the hereafter. Argues about what it means to be justified and sanctified. How would a gal like Peggy get along with that for breakfast, dinner and supper? She'd get the cramps quick."

"Well, let's get away from here and try to push down to that Dutchman's trading-post," Robert proposed.

"As soon as ever we can," his friend answered. "I'm as anxious as a terrier

at a rat hole. Amos is happier than he has been in the last two moons."

The comfort of being out of peril in a good bed was a thing that they loved to recall in the long days ahead. They overslept that night and were not awakened till Father Brébeuf came to their door. He said that a band of Algonquins were soon going over to the Lake of the Iroquois to meet a Dutch trader who came up in the first snow moon to sell them strong water and to get the otter-skins taken far north of the great river.

"He will have a shallop on the long lake," said the Father. "You could go with him to their fort in the south. If you do, God help you to persuade him that he is damning his own soul by selling strong water to these wild folk. It is an evil thing and only a son of Satan would be doing it. Our own French people coming on the ships give us sore trouble and put our lives in danger with this vile traffic."

In leaving, Robert rewarded Madame Hébert with a generous gift for the good cause and thanks as sincere as any he had ever spoken.

"Do you see how these heathen have battered the front of our house with stones?" the Father asked as they were going away. "That was done when many were dying of the plague. They thought it due to the anger of their gods for our being here. We nursed them. We gave them food and medicine yet they stoned us, and save for God's mercy, we should have been slain. It is like living thousands of years ago with a people who have neither home nor country nor laws nor possessions."

Father Brébeuf went with them and the band of warriors to the shore. He had given Robert a letter to Father Cauvet who was with the Algonquins on an island near the Canadian shore, bounded on the south by impenetrable rapids. In their canoe he put next to the young man an old brave who had been converted and baptized and who had served a summer on the lands of the Residence. He had acquired a smatter of French. His name was Achawat. They set out under a clear sky in warm sunlight.

"I begin to think we'll get through," said Robert with a sigh. "And perhaps in time to meet our friends."

"I have held my tongue so long it is gettin' rusty," Amos answered as he bit off a chunk of tobacco.

"Then it will be a good time to tell me what happened to John Smith," Robert proposed.

Amos began: "We'll take another bite at that cherry and with good luck

we'll get it swallered. It's the right kind o' music for ye. The Turk and Cap'n John rode at each other. It was a pretty sight. We Turk haters were breathin' short. Hell's griddles! It seemed as if the horses would slam each other down. Then we split our throats yellin'. Smith's lance had gone through the sight o' the Turk's helmet. The infidel was on the ground kickin' like a beheaded rooster. Then—he lay quiet. Smith dismounted and unbraced the dead man's helmet. In a minute he had his trophy.

"He accepted the challenge to fight another Turk. They crashed together and splintered their lances. They drew pistols and fired. A bullet rang on Smith's breastplate and glanced off. Smith's bullet tore into the left arm o' the Turk who could no longer control his horse. Soon he fell faint and stunned. Smith cut off his head.

"The Turks demanded another fight. It came the next day when Smith fought a giant with battle-axes.

"Our Captain lost his ax and was nearly outdone. His horsemanship saved him until with his falchion he ran the Turk through.

"When we were defeated in battle he was wounded and lay a night with the slaughtered dead. He recovered, was taken to Axopolis and put on the auction block. He were kicked and handled and felt over like a horse and sold to the highest bidder. He went to a Bashaw in Nalbrits. When the Bashaw had nothin' else to do he'd kick Smith. It was his only amusement. He kicked once too often. They was alone in a barn where Smith was threshin' with a flail. Smith broke the Bashaw's neck and ran away. There's a man for ye—a credit to the blood in his veins! He had a rough hand in war, but in peace he were gentle as a dove. He never sored his lungs sighin'. He got back to London where we met and shipped together for the New World. Don't worry, boy, ye're born under a lucky star. Be a man like John Smith. There's the quirk that wins."

From that time on the young man was in better heart.

Old Achawat was as strong and tireless with his paddle as the younger men. There were long carries where the slanting water was rough as the sea in a storm. Clouds came out of the west and as night was falling on a long carry black clouds came over split with fiery flashes and roaring with thunder. The party halted and began to prepare for rain.

"The great bird!" Achawat exclaimed, pointing upward. In a curious dialect he asked the white men if they would some time get him a little thunder-bird. He would be afraid of a big one but he thought that a little one would be a better friend than a dog.

The red men were busy girdling great spruces and, with sharpened pole-ends, stripping off cylinders of bark about five feet long. Soon every man had a water-proof arch of bark to cover him for the night. Being on high ground under thick foliage one needed only a blanket to be fairly well protected from the weather.

Next evening they reached the big camp on the island just off the Canadian shore. In the midst of it a great fire was burning and the red men were dancing around it, their bodies bent, their heads lowered like the head of a charging bull, their arms moving as if they were kneading dough, while hoarse grunts and weird cries came from their lips.

Achawat took them to the tent of Father Cauvet who was talking with a chief of the tribe. He read Robert's letter in the firelight. He shook their hands, saying:

"I could welcome you with a better heart if Satan were not in possession of the camp. Some warriors came in to-day with an Iroquois captive and we are in the midst of a Witches' Sabbath. The girls and women have been torturing the poor creature with their teeth and presently he will be burned till he is dead and boiled in a kettle and eaten. We would better go to the far end of the island for the night than stay here and listen to his death song and the yelling of his tormentors. It would be like looking into hell."

They gathered up their blankets.

"Achawat, you come with us," the Father commanded as they went away in the darkness of the greenwood to the west shore of the island, followed by the Indian. Even there the horrors and the deviltry came faintly to their ears—the high treble of the death song, the shouting and the wild laughter.

The young man groaned as he heard it.

"Boy, it is a message good for the soul of you," said the priest. "Do you not realize how hard has been the struggle of our fathers, in ages gone, to put Satan down and how great is the blessing of industry and government? These wild folk are like the wolves, the lynxes and the catamounts of the forest always seeking prey. They even eat rats and mice as do the cat family, but they are more cruel than the beasts because Satan is in them."

They slept little and arose soon after daylight. Achawat had left them in the night and gone back to his people.

"He could not keep away," said the Father. "We shall find him lying with the others, their bellies full of flesh, in a drunken stupor."

“I should think these swine unworthy of the sacrifice that you are making,” Robert remarked.

The Father answered: “They are swine and yet they are men. Their fortitude is heroic. Their patience is sublime. They are hospitable to all save an enemy. They have keen intellects and sometimes an eloquence that is moving. They ask: ‘If God made heaven and earth where was God before heaven and earth were created?’ They ask many questions which we can not answer.”

They returned to the camp. It was silent. The fire had burned low. Achawat was lying with the others under a rude bark-covered shed alongside the smoldering embers. It was a strange mingle of dogs and bare bodies. The girls and women and young ones who always get out of the way when a feast is on, as the Father explained, had returned to camp and were eating together before a fire some ten yards aside. Their favorite dogs were with them. As they ate they wiped the grease from their hands on the hair of the dogs. They made the white men welcome, who sat down among them and ate dried fish and moose meat and blueberries. “Their heaven is paved with blueberries,” the Father explained as they began eating.

The meat was well cured but was filled with surprises, for a quantity of hair, dirt and twigs had been beaten into it.

In the four days that the Englishmen spent with these nomads of the waste they saw a life so strange and revolting that only a small part of it may be here recorded—children three years old still nursing at their mothers’ breasts, women giving birth to children without help or the slightest outcry and the same day going on with their work of building cabins for the winter, while the men were asleep by the fire. The girls could not be distinguished from the young men save for their double girdles at the middle and below the breasts, and their beads and earrings.

A band of scouts from the forests south of the river came into camp one evening and reported that they could find no Iroquois south of the great river. The Englishmen were told that their journey would begin at daylight in the morning. A band of the friendly Hurons arrived that evening.

The sorcerers began their work. The devil-killer borrowed Robert’s sword and began howling and hissing and slashing the air so furiously that the sweat poured down from his brow to his feet. With wild yells he redoubled his efforts and at last pretended to see and exterminate the accursed one. Some of the warriors had a sweat under a low arch of poles covered with blankets and heated with hot stones. They were like a dozen fighting cats in a barrel howling, hissing and kicking as the sweat proceeded.

A Huron sorcerer, hailed as Oscouta, undertook to cure a sick man by taking a small red-hot stone from the fire and putting it in his mouth and hissing and growling in the face of the invalid as he blew out his breath. Later he showed his mouth to the white men who could see no evidence of burning. Father Cauvet explained that the savages have a mysterious art in evading the effect of heat. He had seen a woman walk through red fire apparently unscathed.

He told them that the sick man would be left to die alone if he were unable to walk when the camp moved.

Robert and Amos set out with a band of twenty braves in the morning. The Indians' otter-skins were stored in a big water-proof sack of moose-hide. They reached the outlet of the great lake, but the Dutch trader had not yet arrived. The braves began to make a rude shelter when they heard a tapping in the near forest like that of a clape. It frightened them. They ceased their work. One of them tapped on a tree.

It was part of a system of mystic signals known to these children of the forest. In a moment an Algonquin scout hurried into their presence with whispered explanations. It was like shouting at a herd of deer. What a scurry of greased bodies! What a splashing as the braves sprang for their canoes, the scout among them! In a few seconds the whole fleet was out in deep water and speeding away. Their expertness in boarding their moving water-steeds astonished the white men. It was, doubtless, the result of much training in the art of getting away. There was no crossing of purposes, no confusion. Every man knew his place and went to it.

"They can move quicker than a cat before a bulldog. Ye git one o' them lazy pups skeered an' he can travel for God's sake." Amos whispered. "I don't blame 'em. It's poor fun to be burned alive and cooked. There's a big band o' Iroquois near us—you can bet on that. Hell's kettles!"

A flight of arrows hissed out of the edge of the forest near them and fell in and around the last canoes of the fleet. One struck the arm of a brave and clung there waving as he bent to his task. Another was imbedded in the bare back of the stern paddler in the last canoe. While Robert looked he saw a red line stream down below the arrow. Still the wounded men held their pace with no apparent lessening of their energy and courage. In a moment ten canoes filled with Iroquois warriors had taken water and in pursuit of the fleeing northmen.

"Now by the hazard o' the spotted die! I reckon we got to go to some other place about as rapid as our nags can carry us," said Amos.

In their haste the Algonquins had left their sack of skins and a much

smaller one half-filled with dried meat. Amos hauled out an armful of fur and stuffed it into the meat sack. He slung the burden over his shoulder.

" 'Now good bye, mother dear! for I'm a goin' away,' " he quoted as he beckoned to his comrade.

They waded and climbed over dead timber at the edge of the small river for some twenty rods where they went ashore and hurried southward, keeping their pace until darkness fell upon them. At a noisy brook they drank and ate and lay down for the night.

"My God!" Amos exclaimed with a laugh. "Them netops went as quick as a ghost at cock-crow."

"I never saw a scared cat move quicker," Robert answered.

"We made a monstrous quick move ourselves," said Amos. "My nags is tired."

"So are mine."

They were up at daybreak and continued their journey, browsing on fish and flesh as they walked. They bore southeastward and, after a tedious and uneventful journey, came to a well-trod path going due west.

"This is an Indian path," Amos whispered. "I reckon the lake is near."

They proceeded with great caution. Soon Amos said: "There's been no man travel on this path for days. A moose and two deer went over it last night. We'll spur our nags and push along faster."

Coming to the top of a high hill they could see the broad sunlit waters below them. There Amos climbed a tree and satisfied himself that the coast was clear. A mile or so out he saw a shallop with a full sail heading southward. There was no other sign of life on the water or along the shore. The sun was about two hours high in the east.

Amos descended and they hurried on to a sheltered cove and a sloping sand beach. On a flat rock near the water were the dying remnants of a camp-fire. There were tracks in the sand.

"Some fine lady has been here this mornin'," said Amos. "Look at that little shoe-print. I reckon they camped here last night. I seen their shallop headin' south. It's a place where the savages when they are in these parts come down to trade with the Dutch."

In a moment Robert saw a white handkerchief hanging over the water on a dead branch. He pulled the branch toward him, released the handkerchief and

examined it.

“Od’s blood!” he exclaimed. “This is Peggy Weld’s handkerchief. The odor of roses! I always observed that when I was near her and here are the embroidered initials ‘P. W.’ ”

“Jerusalem, the golden!” Amos answered. “We missed ’em by less than sixty minutes. Never mind, boy, Amos is happy. We’ll tag along after ’em with a shallop of our own afore midday.”

“What do you mean?” Robert asked with a look of distress in his animated face.

“I swear by the dew claws o’ the Devil, we’re in luck,” said Amos.

He pointed at a great hemlock which, leaning from the lake’s edge, had lately fallen into the water. It was hollow at the butt. A spread of its green branches protruded from the lake surface as high as a hay-stack.

“What’s in your mind?” Robert asked.

“A contrivance! I reckon it will save our legs and keep us out o’ the pot a day or two. This is a highway o’ Satan. An Englishman with his white carcass has got to be careful of it in these here parts. Ye shin up a tree and keep watch. If ye see or hear anybody, rap thrice like a clape. The time has come when I must take a chance, as the lady said when she got married.”

CHAPTER XI

The Voyage in the Whale's Belly

Amos went out to the fallen tree with his handsaw, and clinging to the upper branches, he began sawing off those below water, flush with the trunk. Soon the under side of the tree was clear of boughs. He labored until the sun had passed the middle of the heavens while Robert on his lofty perch looked out upon the lake and the silent wilderness sloping upward from the shore. He saw no sign of life. When Amos rapped on the side of Robert's tree the young man descended and saw with wonder what the ingenious pioneer had accomplished. About two fathoms from its butt he had sawed, and split out with his hatchet, an opening in the upper shell of the tree large enough for a man to enter. Beneath it he had loosened with a spud the crumbling, rotted heart of the old hemlock and tossed a wain load of its timber dust in the water until he had cleared a space under the shell wider than his shoulders and twice as long as his body. He had carefully preserved the bark-covered arch cut from the rounded side of the bole.

"The big belly of the old tree is our cabin," he said. "It's nigh two fathom long and wide enough for us to stretch out comf'table inside. The stem is a big shell o' good timber. I've made two port-holes on each side and rammed a peek hole through the punk for'ard. The wide spread o' boughs above water in the stern will keep her balanced and their weight and mine will lift her bow a little. Do ye notice how I've got 'em tied together? That turns her top into a sail."

Robert said: "But we have no rudder."

Amos bit off a chunk of tobacco and answered:

"We don't need it no more than a toad needs a pocket in his breeches. In wide water with the wind mostly goin' our way we don't have to be nervous about steerage. Daytimes I set straddle back in the riggin' near the stern. With a long stout paddle, I can help her a little to keep her tail behind her. I'll be hid by the green boughs. She'll yaw around some. She's got a right to. It'll make her look nat'ral. But whether she backs up or slips sideways or goes head first she'll be movin' south, and by the guts o' Pharaoh, I think she'll take us to the lake's end."

Amos lifted his right foot and shook it playfully. Robert tells in his diary of the old pioneer's amiable habit of lifting and shaking his right foot when

greatly pleased. The man spat and looked very wise and confident as he added: "Don't worry about old Amos. It's bad goin' when he gives up. Le's go below. I'll put on the hatch and show ye how to be Captain."

They entered the little cabin. Amos adjusted the bark-covered arch. Coming down through it was a bit of dressed hemlock about the size of a gentleman's cane. Green branches were left on its top above the arch. They resembled a natural outgrowth from the trunk.

Amos proudly set forth the duties of his young friend:

"Ye lie here in the *Whale's Belly* and keep watch. If the wind blows hard hold on to that stick. If ye see any danger on the right rap once, on the left twice, for'ard three times. Don't make much noise. Just tap gentle on the side, like that. I'll hear it."

After this day they called their ship the *Whale's Belly*.

They got their packs and wallets aboard. Amos hewed his paddle out of a long strip of dry spruce and smoothed and shaped it with his knife. They carpeted their cabin with a blanket and stored their luggage in each end.

Amos cut fathoms of robin's hedgerow—a luxurious, creeping, clinging vine, with dark green foliage, abundant in the northern forest—and asked Robert to wind it around him. On the string of this vine are tiny prickers so that it is able to cling to its footing as it grows. When Robert was done with the winding his comrade looked like a vine-covered stump.

"Now when I'm back in the boughs I reckon it'll take a sharp eye to see me," said Amos as he boarded his ship, walked astern and sat down in the thick foliage.

His weight lifted the big hollow trunk just free from the sand.

"Now you're well hid," said Robert.

Thus Amos directed the casting off:

"Take that lever and shove her out a little. Then get aboard and we'll pole her into the wind."

Slowly, after much pushing with pole and paddle, the singular craft began her journey.

There was a light breeze from the northwest. At a snail's pace the curious old tree-ship drifted into it. Before it struck her sails Amos had worked her bow toward the south. Soon she was out in broad water with small waves breaking on her side. They cleared an island and she went on as steady as a

fifty-ton pinnace. Soon Amos heard three taps. The Captain had spied through the forward peep-hole a fleet of canoes heading toward them in the distance. The breeze freshened. The ship began to swing. Amos sat motionless and let her drift as she would. Ten canoes, filled with painted warriors, passed near them going north. They gave no attention to the floating tree—doubtless a common sight on this lonely water with its shadowed, far-reaching border of towering trees. They seemed to have crowded down to look and to bathe their feet and there to have stood pushing and peering over one another's shoulders, entranced by the scene, for centuries.

The *Whale's Belly* grounded off a point on a small island many miles nearer their destination. When darkness fell Amos crept forward and lifted the hatch and lowered his feet to the cabin. Sitting down he asked:

"How do ye like the cabin?"

"It's a comfortable place, but I'll be glad to get out and stretch my legs."

"Well, there's nothing on this island. I've listened for an hour. It's well out from the eastern shore. We can slip over the side and take a quiet dip before we go to sleep."

Amos removed his cover of vines, saying that by lying down on the tree trunk in times of danger he thought that he would be well hidden.

They undressed and had a refreshing bath on the sandy beach. The breeze had sunk to almost a zephyr, idling down the vast water plane from the north.

"We'll try to push her out and she'll make a few miles with her own head while we're asleep. Amos is happy."

She was lightly grounded. They worked her free, shoved her into deep water and climbed aboard. They dressed and lay down under their blankets, with the hatch off and roped to a peg in the cabin-side. They spoke of the Iroquois warriors whom they had passed.

"A war is on with the Hurons and Algonquins," said Amos. "The Iroquois are out scouring the wilderness like a pack o' wolves before snow flies. There are six nations o' them banded together in their Long House—a chain o' villages on a path under the forest roof from near the North River to a great fresh-water sea in the west. They cultivate their lands. They rule their people smart and with a sense o' justice. But they are fierce and terrible. They have driven the Algonquins and the Hurons from these lands north o' 'em to the great Canadian river. They keep drivin' 'em north'ard. They give 'em no rest on the big split. You may be sure that the Algonquins have moved since we set out. I wouldn't bet a pig whistle that they are on that island."

“The Iroquois are at least semicivilized,” said Robert. “Wouldn’t they give us fair treatment?”

Amos answered: “I wouldn’t trust ’em. The white man is their p’ison with his meddlin’, his God and his thunder-birds that travel with him. He bothers ’em. His death song is like blueberries and honey. We have no friends among the Dutch. The Indians could do as they like with us. We better not take that bull by the horns. I’d rather have hold o’ his tail.”

The travelers fell asleep and were awakened just before daylight by the chattering of birds above them. Amos arose and looked about. A flock of pigeons flew out of the branches over the stern.

“We’re still driftin’,” he whispered. “The breeze has freshened a little. I can just make out the treetops on the east shore. Daylight is comin’. My thoughts have been playin’ around that handkerchief. Wasn’t that like a love-sick gal to hang her handkerchief out over the water? She says to herself if he comes down the lake in a canoe he’ll keep close to shore and if it’s daylight he’ll see that little white flag and grab it. It’s like a play o’ Will Shakespeare’s and me one o’ the players. We won’t have long to wait for the last act, I reckon.”

He began to browse on the dried meat and fish as he stood surveying the scene. He leaned over, scooped up a drink of water in his bark cup and swallowed it. He passed another drink to his friend.

The tinkle of his cup on the lake surface, the whispering of the hemlock boughs and a faint ripple on their ship’s side were the only sounds that broke the deep, interminable silence. Soon he was back on his perch in the stern and began slowly working her tail to the wind in a tack toward the middle of the lake. Reaching forward with his paddle between the pressing water and the side of the tree its broad long blade served as a kind of center-board.

They drifted on through a day filled with excitement. A bald eagle lighted on a branch of the old hemlock and, presently, discovering Amos, threatened him for a moment with spread wings and open beak—the wild, satanic spirit of the wilderness. He rested a little time and resumed his flight. Toward midday they passed a party of Indian women in canoes hauling up fishing lines fastened to wooden buoys. Later a solitary savage crossed their bow, scarcely ten fathoms ahead, in pursuit of a swimming deer. In the dusk of the falling night they grounded on a rock a bow-shot off a point of land. A fire was burning in the edge of the forest behind the point. The timbered slope rang with wild cries.

Those days in the *Whale’s Belly* gave Robert his first chance to try his

hand with the delicate mechanism of Peggy's locket. One day it yielded to his patient efforts and Peggy's secret lay before him. It was written on a little square of perfumed paper that bore these words:

"Dare you tell me again?"

Robert needed no interpretation of this message. In a moment he had sounded the depth of its meaning. She had decided that she could not be happy with Rosewell and was planning to break with him.

Doubtless she thought that Robert would soon return to her and beg for help in solving the mystery. Once she knew that he was eager to learn her secret she would have helped him to find it. He thought of that day with her on the forest path. How it glowed in his memory! Soon he exclaimed:

"What a pity! What a pity that my life had to be broken like a tree hit by lightning! It isn't fair."

Yet there was something in this bit of paper that gave him cheer and comfort. He examined the beautiful trinket and wondered what was the meaning of the legend engraved in Greek on its case. The day waned.

With a deep sense of relief he heard Amos crawling toward him in the darkness. Gently his friend lifted the hatch and entered. The cheerful, resourceful Amos was a comfort to the young man. He and his ship were just a part of the wilderness but a kindly part of it. He could make its winds and waters serve him.

"By the liver and lungs o' Pharaoh!" the old pioneer exclaimed in a whisper. "I'm e'en a' most tuckered out and hungry enough to eat a raw mushrat. I ain't dared to move from my perch all day."

He began to strip off the dried meat and devour it. "There goes a twig but I don't mind twigs or moose hair or sand and pebbles," he muttered. "My insides has got kind o' lonesome. They're like a lost man hollerin' for help. Ye can undress and take a quiet dip if ye want to."

Robert stood up with his head through the hatchway and began to undress. The lake was a great inland sea, so big that he was losing heart.

"This is like a sea voyage," he said. "Do you think we'll get through?"

"Well, comrade, I've been in worse fixes and got through. It's an old say ye can tie the hands and feet of an Englishman but unless ye break his head his brain will do as it pleases."

For just a moment the young man opened his heart: "A good Englishman can look death in the face rather calmly. I reckon it's true of a gentleman the

world over. I'm not that. I'm losing my manhood. I'm a trembling coward. I get worse every day."

Amos answered: "Look here, comrade, don't put no dirty word on Bob Heathers in my presence. Ye don't understand him as I do. By the toe-nails o' Pharaoh! A man that can suffer what ye have without swearin' or kickin' up a row is as good as any man ought to be in this here world we live in. Ye're half sick—that's what's the matter."

For the first time in many days Robert laughed and with tears of joy in his eyes. Then he told of the *médaillon* and showed the message which had just arrived, as it were. It relieved the young man to hear the encouraging, cheerful comments of the old pioneer.

"Come, heart o' gold!" Amos cried out. "Don't live in a coke pit. Hang on to Peggy's skirts and the black thoughts'll leave ye. Amos is happy."

"But you're not shaking your right foot and so I know it's only verbal happiness," said Robert. "It's a credit to you nevertheless."

Robert took his dip and climbed aboard and dried himself with a piece of linen in his pack.

"It's getting cold," he whispered.

"Yes. The wind has swung into the nor'east. I look for a storm."

Robert lay down and covered himself with his blanket. Amos put on the hatch and looped a cord over the stick which served to hold it down, and made it fast to the cabin-side.

"It's curious how things come to pass," said Robert. "I met this delightful girl—the kind of girl I could tie to. She was brilliant, amiable and beautiful. I know now that she liked me. I know now that probably she would have married me. Suddenly hell opened in my face."

"Hell is all right in its place," said Amos. "Leave it there. Don't try to tote it around in yer memory. It's all foolation buildin' a fire in yer brain and gettin' burnt by it. Ye must keep hold o' Peggy's hand. That gal and me is doin' our best to lift ye out o' trouble. Don't hang on to it."

While they were asleep the wind rose and a big wave washed them off the rock. They were soon jumping and splashing in a heavy sea and water was coming in at the port-holes so that Amos had to plug them on the windward side. For a time Robert did not awake but was restless with troubled dreams.

Amos had grown fond of his young comrade who was what he called "a

fair player"—unselfish, brave, taking the hardships and perils without complaint. Long before then the shrewd man had decided that Robert had best keep away from Boston. "It's the road to Egypt but we'll keep a goin'," he said to himself.

Amos was long awake tending ship, stopping leaks and worrying for fear the hatch would go over. He could hear the hiss of snow against the side. By and by the *Whale's Belly* began to bump bottom. Suddenly a wave drove her bow through the bushes and grounded her securely, to the stern branches, on a sloping shore. Then Amos lay back and slept until daylight. The wind had gone down. Amos took off the hatch and looked about. There was a scatter of snowflakes on the laurel and the small tamaracks among which the ship was hidden. A thick mist covered land and water. He left Robert sleeping and went ashore. At last the ship was grounded hopelessly. A yoke of oxen could not have moved her. She had found her last port. Near them was a burned slope of charred stumps and briars and low bushes. He looked about in the cold misty air to get his bearings. He awoke his young friend.

"We're still on the earth and another day has come," he whispered. "We must leave the ship and take to our nags."

While eating dried meat and some biscuits from Kébec, Amos said: "We're on the west shore, and I reckon it's only a few miles to the end o' the lake. It's a good time to travel. We'll take a last look at the *Whale's Belly* and be off."

"Do you think the west shore is better than the east?" Robert asked.

"It's a choice between rotten apples," said Amos. "But here we are. We'll have to take to our shanks and try to find that trading-post."

They packed their things and set out by the compass, each browsing on a piece of dried meat. There was a wet swamp along the shore southward. They had to seek higher ground to get around it. Only a light flurry of snow had fallen, scarcely enough to penetrate the roof of the forest.

"I don't exac'ly like the looks o' things," the shrewd pioneer whispered. "There's Indians near us."

"How do you know?"

"Moccasin tracks!" Amos answered.

They came to great banks of robin's hedgerow. They stuffed their hats in their packs and each covered the other with vines, head, pack and all. Amos had given his musket to the Algonquin chief, so the problem was not difficult.

Amos whispered: "Now if we hear any one near us we'll lean ag'in' a tree

and go on stump duty. Fog and vines are a help in our business."

Soon they heard a sound and both took a stand among bushes still as a pair of rocks. The shrewd woodsman knew that an Iroquois camp was probably within a falcon-shot of them. Within two minutes a warrior passed them so close that the white men held their breaths. When he had gone out of hearing they went on.

"It's an unhealthy sit for us," Amos whispered. "There's always a lot o' wounded beasts around an Indian camp. Their hunters scour the bush to find 'em. We'll stump along—slow and careful."

He drew his compass from beneath his collar and took a look at it.

They resumed their journey and had traveled scarcely a bow-shot when a young brave who had been sitting against a tree scrambled to his feet within an arm's reach of the two and ran as if the Devil were at his heels. The sight of moving stumps was more than the superstitious savage could endure. With no loss of time he sought a safer place.

The two men hurried onward in the mist, Amos laughing under his breath. They tramped on with no other alarms for an hour or so, but did not come to the lake. Amos led the way over deep moss into a thicket of young pines. The air was clear.

"We're in hell's door-yard," he whispered. "The air is full o' the stink of brimstun. We're a walkin' on the edge o' the world an' if we ain't careful we'll fall off. I'll set myself ag'in' a tree outside and look around and listen a while. You stay here."

For a few minutes the vine-covered pioneer stood on a stump searching the burned lands with his keen eye. A deep silence filled the mountain slopes and the only stir he could see was that of bushes shaking in the breeze. He returned to his young friend in the thicket.

"Can't see or hear a sign o' life," he said. "But I don't like the lay o' the land here. It's bad for us. A savage up on the slope above could see us a mile off. We'll stretch out under this cover and sleep a while. At dusk we'll go on till the darkness begins to rub hard."

They tore off their vine cover, now in streaming rags, covered themselves and slept. When the sun was low a cow moose and her calf, going down for water, passed so near that Amos awoke. He arose and peered out at the beasts slowly going down the slope. It was to him an unfailing sign that no Indians were near. He awoke his friend. Again they set out, following the tracks of the animals to a pond where they camped for the night. There the roaring and

splashing of moose disturbed their rest.

“It’s the rutting time and when they get together at night the bulls raise hell,” said Amos.

They were up and off at daybreak with no mist to favor them. After an hour of tramping, Amos stopped.

“My God! We’ve hit another ketchowl,” he whispered. “Have ye got yer acorn?”

“Yes.”

“Slip it under yer tongue when ye get a chance—not now.”

They stood side by side, motionless. Suddenly the trap sprang upon its victims. Two warriors, until then hidden behind trees, rushed upon them with raised javelins. One of them struck at Robert. He dodged, receiving a slight wound in the thigh.

There was no time for taking thought.

The motions of the two were as swift as those in the closing of a pair of hostile cats. Robert seized the weapon aimed at him. The savage stepped in a hole, lost his footing and fell. The young white man stood over him with stripped sword.

Amos had wisely made the peace sign throwing down his sword and pistol. He shouted to the young man.

“Don’t draw blood, for God’s sake!”

Many warriors had come out of hiding. They now sat on their heels, motionless and silent, watching Robert who immediately threw down his weapons. Again the white men were captured and at the mercy of a band of Iroquois braves going north to join their friends and sweep the country south of the great river clear of their enemies before the winter hunting began. A little later many beasts would be moving southward on the ice-roofed flood of the big river to escape the deep snows. In this migration the mountain passes, south of the river valley, were a fruitful hunting-ground.

The party was in command of an old, one-eyed chief with a ragged, moth-eaten pelt screening about half his body on which were many scars. He was dried up like an old tree, without leaves, and ill-favored. Yet he bore himself like a king, haughty and erect. His stern, wrinkled face was like that of an ancient Roman.

“I am graveled for lack of words,” said Amos as he presented to him the

otter-skins, his hatchet and a handful of shelled corn. By signs he made the chief to understand that he and his friend were going to the Dutch who would give many skins and hatchets and sacks of corn and much strong water to have them sent to the fort on the big river beyond the eastern gate of the Long House.

The old chief opened his medicine bag and took out of it a bone decorated with feathers. In deep chest-tones and with a look of affection he addressed the bone. He lighted his pipe and blew into the feathers a few whiffs of tobacco smoke. The two white men, knowing that their fate depended on the result of this interview with a bone, sat watching the process.

In a moment the chief returned the sacred treasure to its resting-place and solemnly arose. With great dignity he blew the smoke from his mouth. In a current it moved northward. His wrinkled, weathered face did not change. He went to Amos, touched the compass on his breast and pointed in the direction whence the smoke had gone. He made the gesture of drawing the bow. His right hand swept from east to west. He scattered dust on a sheet of birch-bark and with a stick drew a rude map in the dust marking different points. By like signs he made Amos to comprehend his decision and his plans.

The pioneer turned to Robert, saying: “The tide has set ag’in’ us. They are going to join other warriors massed near the upper waters o’ the Lake o’ the Iroquois. They will move westward and sweep their enemies from the country. We are to go with ’em. I am to help ’em with the compass and their guns. They think that the great spirit is in the compass and that a little thunder-bird lives in every gun. There are two guns in the party. I reckon that they got ’em from the Dutch. Don’t know much about guns. A little scared o’ the thunder-bird. Ye needn’t to worry. We’re a godsend to this band o’ ragamuffins. Keep a smilin’ face. They’ll take us down to the fort, by and by, and trade us off like a pair o’ beaver-skins. Amos is happy.”

Robert, however, was far from happy. Safety and happiness had been near him and yet utterly beyond his grasp. His was a dejected figure as he yielded to this vile durance.

They headed northward with the fighting red men, of whom there were nearly two score, and came that night to an Indian camp. The haughty wrinkled chief was regarded with awe and veneration by his brothers, and the captives were well treated.

In the camp were fourteen warriors who sat around a fire drinking bear’s fat out of cups of birch-bark held together by thorns. On a fire the flesh of the bear was boiling in a pot. By and by the white men helped themselves at the

source of supply with their hands and ate heartily if not as greedily as the others. Tepees had been built for the newcomers who were apparently expected. Amos and Robert slept with a crowd of half-naked, scratching, ill-smelling savages around a fire in a tepee so filled with smoke that it pained their eyes until the fire burned low. The captives would have had to step on the bodies of at least half a dozen warriors to escape. Late at night a small party came in, from meeting a trader on the lake, with a store of strong water. They were boiling drunk. They whooped and yelled and chanted weird songs for an hour or more until their senses were literally drowned in drink. If any of the sleeping savages awoke they gave no heed to these noisy joy bringers. To those stuffed with grease and meat sleep is better than joy.

CHAPTER XII
THEY COME TO ADVENTURES STERNER THAN ANY THEY HAVE KNOWN

Next day the haughty old chief was unable to control his men. The camp became a scene of the wildest deviltries. Fortunately for Amos and Robert, the old man kept his head. A savage would sit down with a bottle of rum or gin, bite the cover off its top, ram down its cork and drink as if it were water, stopping only when he strangled. Getting his breath he would utter a few hoarse grunts of satisfaction and continue to fill his stomach, going crazy with wild excitement before the bottle was finished.

It was a day in hell for the captives. The campground and the tepee bottoms were soon filthier than a pig-pen. The old chief destroyed many bottles and a barrico, meanwhile shaking his head and muttering. By nightfall a grateful silence had come. The fountains of liquid fire had gone dry.

The braves were lying in a drunken stupor. One was dead from a hatchet blow. He had made no outcry of pain, protest or resentment. He had sat quietly, drenched with blood, until he fell over dead. No one paid the slightest attention to him—save the white men who saw that he was beyond help. Two or three were groaning with sickness. The old chief and three warriors, who had kept their lips from the kill-devil, sat around Amos and Robert by the dying fire.

"Think what the greed of the white man is doing to these poor children of the wilderness," said Robert. "Here is the great injustice."

"Yes, it will make the savages hate us," Amos answered. "But we mayn't stop it. The country is big and wild. The greedy hell-makers sneak away with boatloads o' this devil water to some God-lonesome place where there's no more law than ye'd find in the heart o' a lynx. A million constables couldn't stop it."

"I like this old chief," said Robert. "There's something great about him. He looks now as if all the sorrows of the world—including my own—were resting on his back. He seems not to hear us."

They had heard his name. It was Tawandoha.

Amos answered: "Oh, he is a wise old man of many wars. I reckon he's been fightin' Algonquins and Hurons since he were a boy. He knows 'em and

every path in the north and secret ways o' retreat. The follies o' youth are behind him. His pride is no longer in cover and gewgaws but in his history and the things he knows."

They sat a long time looking at the old chief and his faithful warriors who sat motionless, gazing at the fire. Sleep had silenced the sick men.

At length Robert spoke: "Each day is like the story of the ages. It ends in sleep and silence. Races come and fill the world with noise. Then night and old faces stern with wisdom and sadness in the dying firelight and sleep."

Soon a distressed warrior groaned in his dreams. Then Amos spoke: "And the sleep is what ye make it. Some have good dreams and some are ridin' nightmares. I reckon that's hell."

There is an entry in Robert's diary for that day, which can not be omitted. He writes a brief account of the debauch and describes the camp at night, adding: "One satisfaction fills my wretchedness. I am probably as unhappy as my dear friend in Boston if he still lives. I find a degree of comfort in this thought."

The party broke camp next day, leaving two dead and one who was so ill that he could not travel. They went northward in a path between nicked trees, the younger men under packs, camping at nightfall.

Deep snows and bitter winds fell upon them in the high country and halted the caravan. The Indians put on their moccasins and buckskins. Soon the white men were sorely put to it to keep from freezing. In a mountain valley the warriors wallowed a moose in deep snow and slew him with their javelins. They ate all this great creature, as big as an ox, in one feast. Escape being impossible the white men were left unguarded. They had dug a deep pit in the snow until they uncovered a flat rock. On this Amos built a fire. When the rock was well heated he put out the fire. The metal having cooled till he could put his hand upon it with no discomfort he covered its surface with balsam boughs. On these they lay down for the night after the feast and with a sense of comfort.

Old Tawandoha had been worried by the early coming of deep snow. He immediately put his braves to the task of making racquets to sustain them in travel for which he had the needed tools and fiber. They were ready to go forward next day. The main force of the Iroquois were still two marches below in the northeast. Tawandoha had sent out his scouts, two of whom had been slain by a big force of Algonquins coming from the west. Guided by the tracks of one of the scouts in the moonlight this force of one hundred and two Algonquin warriors, equipped with racquets for their feet, descended on the

sleeping camp at midnight. A revolting massacre followed. Many of the glutted Iroquois, stupid with meat, were slain on their backs. A few that did not perish broke through the cordon and got away in the black thickets. When the white men in their pit about ten fathoms aside heard the uproar and tumult of this deviltry Amos knew its meaning.

"There's no use in runnin'," he said. "The camp is surrounded. If we got away we'd freeze to death. We'll have to shift kings and take a chance."

They came out and surrendered. The Algonquins had taken possession of the camp around which the snow was streaked with red. There were the grim realities of Indian warfare. Yet it was not unlike scenes which the eyes of Amos Todkill had beheld in the battles of white men. "In war," he was wont to say, "all men are savages." But a time had come when he was to know the difference between fixed savagery and that born in the raging passions of an hour.

The old wrinkled chief, still proud and haughty, was tied to a tree with one of his braves. The invading warriors were like wolves who have tasted blood. The white men were seized and roughly handled. In a moment they were stripped and tied to trees near the unfortunate Tawandoha and his brave. The fire was kindled. The warriors who bound them stepped aside and indulged in devilish laughter as they whetted their knives.

"I reckon they'll torture us," said Amos. "But don't crack yer nut till they begin. They may wait to get meat for a feast. If you have any influence with God now is the time to use it."

Often the hand of the historian falters in the task of describing the primitive savage. The unrestrained lewdness of the young, brutal details in the torture of captives may well be hid in the dusty darkness of old records, made by many witnesses and known only to those who love the truth. The cruelties of that night shall not be here described. It is enough to record the central fact that the wise old chief and his brave were singing their death songs until their voices failed in the morning light.

Before the tortures began Robert recognized the Algonquin chief. He called out to Amos: "This chief is our friend. We met him in Father Cauvet's tent on the island."

"So we did and God be praised for it!" Amos answered. Knowing a number of words in the Algonquin and Huron tongues, he cried out: "*Niecanis Doistan Cauvet iatican Achawat iatican.*"

The chief understood and came to Amos and touched his chin and

shoulders. He turned and spoke to his warriors, one of whom hurriedly went away. It was evident that he remembered the beard and broad shoulders of Amos.

It happened that old Achawat was with this war-party, although on account of his age he had had no part in the raid. He knew those of the pale face and when they were in question he was the wise counselor of the tribe. The Algonquin chief had sent a brave for Achawat, the interpreter, and asked that the white men be spared till the “Friend of God” could open their minds and give his counsel. He who had gone down to the island with Amos and Robert, having finished his work on the farm of Madame Hébert, came and greeted them. Robert spoke with him in French.

The old warrior made a speech in their behalf. He told of their coming to Kébec; that they were friends of the good men who talked with God and friends of the children of the North Wind. The palefaces were going down to their brothers in the south. He told how they had been left in a sudden attack on the spitting water and been captured by Iroquois. His words, his gestures, his tones, rising and falling, like gusts of wind in the treetops, impressed the listeners.

The white captives were released. The Algonquin party, learning of the great force of their enemies in the east, turned westward. Amos and Robert traveled with them.

There were women and children in the camp. The women hauled the loaded sleds as they went on and put up the tepees at night. The weather grew colder, the snow deeper. Every morning hunters went out to get food. For days they would have nothing to eat. Then the hunters would come in with the meat of wallowed deer or a moose. The carcasses would be consumed in hours of gluttonous feeding with no thought of the future.

The sick, when the sorcerer advised that they would die, were given no food. Cold water was poured upon their breasts to hasten what their friends regarded as the inevitable end. One savage who had been hauling his aged and infirm mother on a sled sent her sliding at breakneck speed down a steep hill. She was hurled over a drop near the bottom and was stone dead when he found her. These details of that journey and many that are more revolting are in the diaries of the two men.

The Indians were insatiable beggars so that the white men found it difficult to keep even the coats on their backs. They were mocked and jeered and made a target for missiles by the boys and girls of the tribe who were as sacred as the gods of old. Their mischiefs were neither punished nor prevented. The

sorcerers were base impostors. One of them took offense because Amos would not trade blankets, the one offered being covered with filth and vermin.

"God's body!" Amos exclaimed one day. "I feel like a horse with the bots. We've got to do something desperate or we'll die o' the scurvy. Any night a band o' Iroquois may come down on us, and we know it's unsafe to be caught in bad company. I've got some meat saved up and hid in a snow bank and I've contrived some runners for our feet. When we get a chance we'll slip away."

For days Amos had been whittling on long strips of dry spruce.

"Bime by I'll show ye what I'm a doin' of," he said to Robert.

At nightfall the camp was in a panic. Achawat came to the white men with news. Scouts had come in and reported a great force of Iroquois coming, only one march in the east. The camp would move that night.

"Better you go," he said, pointing to the south. The sorcerer had had bad dreams.

Amos nodded. He knew that the dream was to red men a revelation. The sorcerer had only to dream that the great spirit was offended by the presence of the white men and that he had clogged their paths with snow as a warning that other troubles would follow if these unwelcome guests were not put away. It is likely that they would not have seen the light of another day save for the kindness of old Achawat. Their packs and blankets were always with them or they would have been quickly appropriated. Without exciting suspicion in the hurry-scurry of the camp they put on their racquets and prepared to move. Amos tied his strips of spruce together and carried them under his arm as they slipped away in the darkness. He stopped a moment at his snow-bank and shoved the frozen meat into his pack.

The camp was a little west of a hill, bared by fire, the top of which, commanding a long slope to the east and north, was a favorable point for observation, watchmen being stationed there at all hours. It is likely that the chief and his counselors were glad to be relieved of their guests. However that may be, the fugitives got to the edge of the timber apparently unobserved. Their weapons, their hatchet and their pack-saw had been given away. They had only two pocket knives and a diminutive pocket saw.

The snow-shoe moon was up and in a slash Amos was able to read the compass. By a big boulder in the thick wood beyond, they took off their racquets and with them dug a deep hole in the snow. The able pioneer had a store of tinder and kindlings in his pack for a fire which was soon crackling against the side of the rock. They covered their pit bottom with hemlock

boughs, wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down to rest. The heat from the rock and the pure air gave them a welcome sense of comfort.

"Thank God! I am beyond the smell of smoke and Indians," said Robert.

"I'd rather be turned out with cattle and have to eat grass and suck a goat for a livin'," Amos answered. "We'll have to make out the best we can. Our only tools are teeth, toe-nails and a jack-knife. But Amos is happy. We're still on the earth and stout for travel."

In the morning Amos made a kettle out of a big roll of white-birch bark and thorns and filled it with wet snow and put it on the hot coals. Soon he had it nearly full of boiling water. In this he submerged the ends of the four pieces of spruce timber. When the ends were penetrated by the heat and moisture he bent them in a rock crevice and stayed them there until the bends were stiff with frost.

Amos began his cheerful talk. "We're too late to ketch Peggy but that'll give ye a chance to use yer religion as the flea said when he bit the minister. I'll ship ye off to Holland where ye can wait for her safe and out o' danger. I'll go to Boston and tell her where ye be. She won't let no grass grow under her feet."

Robert smiled, but made no answer.

They broiled some meat and broke their fast. Before setting out, standing before the fire, they had a refreshing bath in warm water. Amos cut creases in the bottom of each runner to accommodate the leashes of moose-hide with which it was to be fastened to the foot. With rising ground ahead they put on their racquets. Coming soon to long slants of rock, burnt clean, they made rapid progress on the hard crusted snow with their runners under them, steering and keeping their balance with short poles. Over flat country and lake and pond levels they could "slip along," as Amos put it, much more swiftly than by lifting racquets. They acquired great skill in the use of the runners. Their course had been mostly eastward after the first day's travel as Amos thought it best to get across to the Lake of the Iroquois and go south on the ice level with nothing in their way.

In a desperate mood since leaving the frightened Algonquins they traveled recklessly and with little thought of their peril. Amos said that the Iroquois warriors would be detained a while in the north by the war and that until they began to come south there would be few Indians in the lower country save in and near the Long House. He reckoned that those at home were not apt to travel much in bad weather.

This had not long been said when they were hailed and pursued by three Indians in a stretch of open burnt lands. They slipped along to the top of a slope and took a reckless rush to its bottom. The shouting Indians were soon far out of hearing.

“By the thigh bone o’ Methusaleh, I’ve thought it out!” Amos exclaimed as they went along. “Them Indians are the ones that got away the night o’ the massacre. The poor devils was lonesome.”

They camped that night on the shore of the Lake of the Iroquois. In the morning Amos made a sail of thick boughs of hemlock by tying the branches into a broad mass. The pioneer set forth his plan:

“This lake is a kind of a blow hole in the bush. The North Wind has his mouth to the hole in cold weather. We go out on the lake and stand side by side with the sail on our backs. Each of us will have a tree stem in one hand to stay it. All we have to do is to face south and ride on the runners. I reckon we’ll go somewhere and nigh as fast as the wind goes. Don’t worry about old Amos. He keeps a thinkin’.”

They slipped out into the wind and began their ride over the smooth, crusted snow. For long stretches the strong winds had swept the ice clear. With little effort they kept the pace of horse travel. It was the most agreeable adventure of these weary men. Near nightfall they saw smoke on the western shore not more than two bow-shots away. They lowered their sail and stopped. Amos took a look at the smoke.

“I swear by the mercy o’ God!” he exclaimed. “It’s a smokin’ chimney. White men! Oh, comrade! I love it as the bird loves the green tree.”

They looked at each other and as they looked a little moisture came to their eyes. They breathed fast like those near exhaustion. Neither uttered a word as they turned and pushed their runners toward the smoke. Nearing the place whence it proceeded they saw back in the timber, now bare of foliage, the hull and mast of a large shallop. Built upon it and around the mast was a little house with gray bark sides and small windows of isinglass. Alongside the hull and reaching upward some three fathoms a stone chimney had been built. At the steps leading to its door they got the grateful odor of frying fish. Suddenly a white man of middle age opened the door and looked down upon them with astonishment.

“In the name o’ God who are you?” he asked in Dutch.

“Wanderers in the waste who have lived through a dozen miracles,” Amos answered in the same language. “I think that you are an angel at the gate o’

Paradise."

"Are you the lost men that Miss Weld and her brother have been looking for?" the Dutchman asked.

"The very same men," Amos answered. "This is Mr. Heathers. My name is Todkill."

"Well, well! We scoured the lake for you and some friendly Indians were helping us. I am Nicholas Van Brocklin. Miss Weld left a letter here for Mr. Heathers. Come in, come in and share my food and drink and shelter. I'm as lonely as a buck deer in the summer."

"I snum! This is splendidious!" the old pioneer exclaimed. "I'm kind o' slewed with happiness."

Amos and Robert sat on a rustic lounge covered with a beaver-skin robe. For a moment neither spoke. There was a grateful sense of warmth in the room. Its floor was swept clean. A clock was ticking on a shelf. On a hearth stone before a rude fireplace fish were frying in an iron skillet over hot coals. Back of that potatoes were boiling in a pot. At the end of the room were two small beds with clean pillow-cases and blankets. A broom and dust-pan hung on a wall. The cheery, kindly face of a white man and these tokens of civilized life that surrounded him filled the newcomers with a deep joy like that of the returning prodigal. It stilled their tongues.

Amos blew his nose and wiped his cheek and said presently, "I'm made o' hard stuff but now I reckon we're like the boy who went off with Satan and by and by got back to his father's house."

Robert read the letter from Peggy aloud to Amos. These are its words:

> "Dear Robert: We have spent a month in the wilderness trying to find you. I think that you may wonder why, but I am sure that if you have kept the *médaillon* and have had the patience and the curiosity to wrest from its embrace the secret which it held, you will know why I have been glad to endure hardship and peril for your sake. It may be all in vain but I had to do my best. I pray God that this may fall in your hands. If it does it will open my heart and mind to you. Whatever you may have done I wish you to know that they are filled with the charity of St. Paul and of Jesus Christ. The magistrates, the church and every one I meet in Boston believes you to be in hiding because of your guilt. I do not share their opinion. It has been hard to stand against them but I stand. In the present state of feeling you would better not come to the colony. Take a ship for Holland at New

Amsterdam. Let Todkill come and tell me what you have done and, if you wish it, I will go to you. We could meet at my father's house in dear old England.

"We have remained here to the last day and must now be going. I give this the caress you once begged of me not in vain.

"Yours faithfully,
"Peggy Weld."

Robert lifted the rose-scented sheet of paper to his lips and kissed it as Amos exclaimed:

"By the liver and lights and all the other organs o' old Pharaoh! There's a woman after my own heart. Will Shakespeare would 'a' put her in a play—he would surtin. I got it about right, didn't I, up there in Kébec? It was as easy as seein' a fish in a fountain. I don't take no credit for that but allow me to tell ye once more that Amos is happy."

This latter remark was inspired by a slight show of emotion in the face of the young man.

They told the Dutchman of their adventures since leaving Kébec. Van Brocklin astonished them by relating how he and Miss Weld and her brother in crossing from the east side of the lake one night in a high wind on their way home had narrowly escaped a collision with a great floating tree whose branches swept their faces as it passed them.

"That was our last night aboard when we were both lying in the *Whale's Belly*," said Amos. "Well, I reckon God had His own plans for us."

Of this they were sure when Van Brocklin told them that the Indians they saw back of the great swamp when they were disguised with robin's hedgerow were his messengers. They had returned to the post and one had told of his fright when he saw two vine-covered stumps walking like men. Van Brocklin had dismissed the story as a bit of fiction in the invention of which the savages were ingenious.

"Well, boys, supper will be ready in a minute," said their host as he took the fish and potatoes from the fire and began setting the table. He descended to the hold through a hatch in the floor and brought up butter and cold baked beans and bread and pumpkin sauce and a jug and a bottle of wine. He gave each of his guests a dram of gin and molasses called "black strap."

"That's the smoothest stuff that ever slipped down my gullet," said Amos with a shake of his right foot.

They spent a most delightful hour at the table.

Robert had thrown off his depression and was in a mood to celebrate the loss of it. His fear for his beloved friend William had left him, for it was clear that all the brethren were convinced of his innocence. As they ate, Amos told of Tawandoha and his melancholy fate in the far mountain country.

“Old Tawandoha!” the Dutchman exclaimed. “Always I bowed my head to him. He would never drink fire-water. He was the bravest fighter, the wisest chief in the Long House. He was humane. Many a white man owes his life to old Tawandoha. He had a noble dignity and that was his only ornament. He would have no feathers and no gewgaws on his person.”

Their host lived at Fort Orange on the North River. His sons and himself traded with the savages. In August the great hurricane which swept over the country drove their shallop ashore and bedded her so fast in the rising ground that they had not been able to get her back to water. They had built the little house above her to serve as a camp and headquarters on the Lake of the Iroquois, and brought timber for another shallop. The early deep snow had delayed their moving. His sons were over in the west end of the Long House more than a hundred leagues away. If Amos and Robert would stay and guard his camp he would go home for Christmas and return as soon as possible with sleds and help for his moving. Then Amos and Robert could go down to the fort with the party.

Sitting by the fireside with pipes and tobacco Nicholas said that the Iroquois would be coming south in a month or so with sledloads of meat and many captives. The meat taken in the upper mountains would come down the lake bound for the Long House. Unlike the nomad tribes of the north the Iroquois had learned to be a provident people but were quite as cruel as their neighbors. Many white men had been tortured and slain by them. They were now at peace with the Dutch but it was like thin ice liable to break any moment. Power was the only thing they respected. White men would be secure when the savages were destroyed and not till then. Yes, he traded strong water for skins. If they didn’t get it from him they would get it from others. He knew it was bad for them but poisoned corn was also bad for crows. They were pests, and anything bad for them was good for the white man. You might as well try to make a hog fit for the parlor as try to civilize a savage.

Thus he voiced the sophistries of the rum trader, but Amos and Robert were in no mood to argue with him. After all they had seen they were quite willing to agree that savages were nearer to the beast than to men. Yet they were human with certain admirable virtues which had rightly given hope to the good fathers in the north and to the rulers in New England.

Robert spoke: “In experience the white and red races are thousands of years apart. Not in ages could they be reconciled. We have not the charity and patience to put up with them. These belated people are too far behind the caravan. Our purposes do not interest them. They can not march with us, but they will hinder and provoke and prey upon us. They may sell the land but with no appreciation of the right to possess it. To them only the strong have rights. Property is for him who can seize and hold it. Their god is power and power will undo them. By and by they will vanish like a whirl of dust in the wind, but I hate to see their going hastened by strong drink.”

“They are such a cruel lot o’ cats it don’t matter much,” said Amos.

“They are no worse than the kings and queens and bishops of our own land,” Robert answered. “How many Puritans have they burned alive? There was Alexander Leighton, a cousin of my father. In 1628 he published a mild protest against prelacy. They seized his property, set him in the stocks with both ears cut off and his nose slit. Then they threw him in prison for life.”

“Curious how a man can think it’s right to defend God with all kinds o’ deviltry,” Amos remarked. “I can be savage now and then, but these red men are never exac’ly safe company.”

“There’s the difference,” said Robert. “The rulers of England can be trusted when ye agree with ’em. The savage is as unreliable as a pet lion.”

Amos served as the boy’s interpreter to their host, leaving out the reference to strong water as a youthful indiscretion. Yet Amos had been pleased and astonished by the understanding and the far-seeing vision of his young friend. Robert had begun to rival Captain John Smith in his esteem.

The Dutchman gave them hot water for a bath, ointment with which to rid themselves of unpleasant company acquired in the Indian camps, and insisted that they occupy the two beds while he took the lounge. They had a night of rest the like of which they had not known since leaving the hospitable roof of Madame Hébert.

In the morning, after a meal of dried fish and potatoes and blueberry cake with a refreshing hot drink made by stewing dried leaves of spearmint and raspberry, Van Brocklin washed the dishes and left his new friends.

These were his parting words: “You will find meat and flour and vegetables and drink in the hold. Help yourselves freely to anything you want. There is an abundance of fish in the lake. You have only to cut holes in the ice and bait and set your hooks. I shall return within ten days. I do not think that any Indians will be coming down the lake before then. Most of my strong

water is buried in a snowdrift. If you stand firm and talk Dutch to them, they'll give you no bother."

CHAPTER XIII

THE COMING OF JAMES ROSEWELL AND ITS REVELATIONS

They had three delightful days of rest and comfort in the interesting boat-house of Nicholas Van Brocklin. Amos read aloud from a Dutch book filled with sermons. The only books they had seen in America were Bibles and collected sermons. Protestant people who could read and write were harried by an overwhelming sense of wickedness and of responsibility for the welfare of their souls.

Robert interrupted the reading as he said:

"Amos, we don't have to go to a book to get our hair raised. It would be better for me to play with the Dutchman's cards or pitch a bullet at the mark."

"Ye're growing more and more like Captain John Smith—damned if ye're not," Amos answered as he closed the sacred book. "The next thing I know ye'll be fightin' a duel."

Late in the third day a bitter wind from the northwest filled with snow began to whistle in the chimney and hiss against the bark walls. The bare branches of beech, birch and maple sang like whips. The frozen trees creaked and groaned, and now and then a report like a pistol-shot rang through the timbered slope when links of frost were broken. Leagues of the forest roof were bending and billowing in the blast. It reminded Amos of artillery fire when a great tree near them crashed down, clearing its way to the ground. They brought in a good store of wood.

Suddenly a band of twelve Iroquois hunters arrived, crowded into the house and literally took possession of it. They took off their racquets at the door. Their leader spoke a word of greeting. Then they shook themselves like dogs and sat down facing the fire, their blankets over their heads. There was no note of ill-nature in their conduct, but for a long time they were silent. Indians gave freely to honored guests. So presently they arose and began to help themselves to the stores of the little trading house—no doubt they felt entitled to its best hospitality. In spite of all the efforts of Amos to restrain them they ransacked the hold and drank all the wine and strong water they could find. They seized the meat, fish and vegetables, put them all in Van Brocklin's big brass kettle, boiled and devoured them. That evening the neat and cleanly room had become a noisome pen of prostrate, ill-smelling savages on the beds,

lounge and the floor. Some of them were drunk but not sufficiently so to make them violent or quarrelsome. After a long tramp in the cold they had filled themselves with drink, meat, fish, onions and potatoes and lain down to sleep, never seeming to doubt their right in the premises.

The storm abated next morning and there being nothing to eat in the cabin, the Indians went away on their racquets. Amos and Robert hung the bed covers on a line for the day, washed the linen and scrubbed the floors, for the house had suddenly become a rookery. It was no light matter to be visited by a number of savages.

The white men were on short rations of fish and wild duck—two of which Robert brought down with a musket which hung in the cabin—until about ten days had passed. The Dutchman came with sleds and two helpers and two unexpected guests—Mr. James Rosewell, of Boston, and his guide and protector, an officer from the fort below. He had come by ship to the island of the Manhados, then up the North River in a pinnance to the Dutch Fort Orange. There Van Brocklin had given him news of the men he sought. He coldly shook hands with Robert and Amos, saying:

"I have come a long way to find you."

"Thanks. It is a friendly thing to do," said Robert. "I am glad to tell you that we do not need help."

"But there are those in Boston who need your help," Rosewell rejoined.

"Who needs my help?"

"I reckon you know as well as I that William Heydon is suffering punishment for a crime. Most people are convinced that you committed it. I have come here on my own responsibility to ask you as a gentleman to tell me the truth and I rely wholly on your sense of justice and right."

"Tell me what has happened to my friend William Heydon," said Robert.

"He is suffering for adultery with one Mabel Hartley, once a servant in your house. At first she swore it on William. She fell ill and confessed to Harry Vane that she might have been in error as to the man. Later she said in my presence that her mind had changed—that as she gave more thought to the matter she was convinced that you and not William had been with her that night. Two days later the woman died of a fever in her lungs. William was released from prison and put on the limits of the town pending your return, the inhabitants and certain members of the court, especially Governor Vane, believing him to be innocent. But he has to wear around his neck a noose of hempen rope with a tail two feet long. This is a heavy burden, and it is your

duty to him and to his friends to remove it."

It was a well-spoken argument, full of the note of sincerity. They were standing, on the cleaned ice at the edge of the lake. Robert paced up and down in the shoveled area. He stood a moment looking off at the snow-laden forest. His face had paled. Both Amos and Rosewell watched him with interest. Amos' hands were trembling a little. There was a touching note of despair in Robert's voice as he turned and said:

"A rope on his neck! Every morning he gets up to be hanged again by the neck and to be gazed at by the crowd. My God! This is torture! It is burning a man up by inches. And Harry Vane is Governor!"

Amos touched the shoulder of his young friend with a curious tenderness in his big rough hand, as he said:

"Don't murder yerself with worry! Leave this thing to me. Vane is William's friend. He'll do everything that can be done."

Rosewell said: "Vane is sure of his innocence. He had to compromise with the rest of the court to get him out of prison. He consulted with William and they took the best terms they could get. He had refused to plead and for that the rope is his punishment."

"It's a hell of a fuss over a small matter," said Amos. "I'll go to Boston myself and swear that I done it. All the wives and old maids and young maids would be sayin' that they always knew I was a devil with the gals."

"Robert is the man to go," said Rosewell.

Amos answered: "I can tell ye that he will not go."

"I prefer that he speak for himself. If he refuses to go with me there will be no longer any doubt of his guilt."

"When I go to Boston I shall choose my own time and company," said Robert.

He went to the house to get his coat for a cold blast was blowing down the lake.

"Cat's foot!" Amos exclaimed. "Ye say that the people o' Boston think that Robert is guilty. I reckon there's one who don't think so."

"Who is that?" Rosewell demanded.

"Peggy Weld. I'll bet my head on it I am right."

Amos had been whittling as he spoke. He rested his knife and looked at the

newcomer, who said:

"I am not authorized to express Miss Weld's opinions."

"Yes, I know," said Amos. "Ye haven't thought 'bout yerself a minute. Ye're so interested in justice and right that ye've app'inted yerself to look into the facts, and ye've traveled three hundred leagues in doin' it. I declare, Rosewell, ye're one o' the saints o' God. O' course ye'll tell Peggy that ye didn't know any more 'bout Robert when ye left here than ye did when ye come."

"What I say to any one will depend wholly on my own judgment and conscience," Rosewell answered.

Robert returned from the house. He brought the puzzle locket which Peggy had loaned to him when he left her.

"How long do you stay with us?" he asked.

Rosewell answered: "Only a few minutes. My ship will be leaving New Amsterdam in nine days. I shall have to hurry to make it. Before I go I have a question to ask you. The truth involves no peril to you. Being beyond the jurisdiction of the court you can safely go to the Dutch town and take a ship for Holland. The happiness of your friend depends on your answer. Are you the man whom the constable found with Mabel Hartley in a thicket the night you left Boston?"

"You have no right to ask me that question, and I refuse to answer it," said Robert.

With perfect composure Rosewell answered:

"Then my work is finished, and we will return to the fort. We shall lodge to-night at a Dutch trading-post twelve miles south of here. If you change your mind, as I hope you may, you can find us there until eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

"I have this little trinket that belongs to Peggy Weld," said Robert. "She let me take it the night I left you and her and others at the Governor's house. I expected to return it the next day when we were to see each other. As I may never see her again, will you have the kindness to take it back to her? It is an old keepsake of her family, and I am sure that she will want to have it."

"I shall see that she gets it," Rosewell answered coldly.

Forthwith he and the Dutch officer set out on their journey to the south.

"He didn't like that," said Amos with a chuckle and a flirt of his foot.

“There’s pages o’ history behind this journey o’ his. Peggy has turned cold on his hands. She stands for ye ag’in’ the whole town. He knows that she is in love with ye. He come here to show her that he’s a better man than you be. He’ll make out that ye confessed to him, but Peggy is no fool. She’ll grig him good.”

Robert made no answer until they got to the steps, when he said: “If Rosewell goes too far he’ll have to fight me.”

“That’s proper talk!” said Amos. “It’s what Captain John Smith would say.”

“I never saw a more conceited man than Rosewell,” Robert observed.

“And conceit is like a set o’ whiskers. Needs to be trimmed often or it’ll trip ye.”

The Dutchman swore when they told him of the visit of the Iroquois hunters.

“If I had been here they would have been damned careful of their behavior. They are like animals, quick to see it if you are a little scared of them. Then they’ll walk on your face. They know that the fort is behind me. They call me the ‘Son of Thunder’ and I treat them like a lot of schoolboys.”

They helped the Dutchman with his packing. Next morning in good weather they left the trading-post with the Dutchman and his men, the casks, bedding and kitchen utensils lashed upon sleds. After four days of hard travel they reached the fort on a hill overlooking the North River and a stretch of cleared lands west of it. On the slopes beneath it were two mills, a smithy, a store and quite a colony of Dutch folk living in small houses near the shore of the great waterway and scattered up the wooded hillside. At a little inn they learned that Rosewell had left some days before in a sleigh. For a week the river had been thinly iced. They could only wait for it to be well covered.

“Let yer lungs rest,” the old pioneer said to Robert. “Ye trust to Amos. His mazzard has done a little contrivin’. He’ll shoot ye down to open water comf’table and as fast as ye want to ride. All we need is ice without too much snow on it. I reckon this north wind will put a stout roof on that river in two or three days.”

The reckoning of Amos was not far wrong. Within a week laden sleighs drawn by horses were crossing the river, and the young folks sped over the glimmering ice plane on their skates. Meanwhile Amos had made friends with the village carpenter. The two had built a sled, with a beam of unusual width, and stout enough to carry a short mast. Robert found them at work in the shop.

“What is that?” he asked.

“Well, sir, she looks like a Dutch dog, but she’s an ice-boat,” said his friend. “All she needs now is a sail and a pair o’ sharp iron shoes that’ll grab hold o’ the ice. She’ll be rigged proper to-night. I don’t know how ye feel, but Amos has nary a cloud in his sky.”

“I am as happy as a caged squirrel,” Robert answered. “When do we start?”

“To-morrow at sunrise and with a small tent and a store of beef, bread and b’iled eggs. If the wind keeps up we’ll do a lot o’ slippin’ afore dark—ye set yer mind a chawin’ that cud.”

They sped away at daybreak with a stiff cold wind blowing down the river valley, their goods and provisions lashed to the deck and Amos on the stern where he could manage the steering lever and the rope. They went in long tacks even faster than the wind at times.

“I’m like a man on a horse that’s runnin’ away,” said Amos with a laugh. “She’s got the bit in her teeth, and I don’t know how to stop her.”

They were cold and hungry when at a bend in the ice plane Amos steered his curious craft in the lee of a high shore and skidded her into rough ice hard by the bank.

“Now, old mare, you stand there a while,” said Amos. “Don’t be so crazy to go. You’d starve us to death—you busy old bird. We’re goin’ to build a fire and warm up and get a fresh hold on happiness.”

They went ashore and gathered wood. With flint and tinder and a pinch of gunpowder Amos got his fire going. Near it they sat on a rug of hemlock boughs and ate their food with a bottle of good wine to help it on its way.

“That dinner has improved the look o’ the world,” said the pioneer as he arose and gathered up the remnants. “Amos has no fault to find. We’ll shove her out into the wind and get aboard. The old mare will be as busy as a scared pismire in about a minute.”

Soon they raced into a deep, shadowed vale between high mountains. Its crystal paving, sheltered from the wind, had a thin covering of hard snow. Here they made slower headway and had to do some hauling.

Rounding a bend as night was falling, they saw ahead of them on a long, wide, natural terrace the glimmering windows of a cabin. It was the home of a Dutch shepherd and tobacco grower. He and his family received them with joy and gave them food and lodging. On a wide plateau back of the terrace edge were a number of bouweries. In summer his sheep grazed on the hill slopes

and at night were turned into the fenced fields of his neighbors to fertilize them at a certain price per head. His winter fold near the river shore was also a source of profit, for it yielded a large amount of dung, some of which went down in a shallop every spring to the gardens of New Amsterdam with a number of his fatted sheep. Now that the river was well iced he was going down with a sleighload of venison and tobacco to the market in New Amsterdam. He was a prosperous man.

Snow fell in a windless night. So much of it that the ice-boat was no longer of any use to the travelers. They gave it to the Dutchman who took them many miles down the long ice way with his team and farm sled. A booby-hut had been fastened to the sled and the three men sat in it. Their host left them under the high rock cliffs on the west shore, that being as far as he thought it prudent to go with the weight of horses. From there Amos and Robert shouldered their packs and went on afoot. They carried letters from the Dutchman to the Dominie Bogardus and to Francis Molemacker who ran the Horse Mill.

The afternoon was far spent when they came to the lofty river wall, the top of which was some two hundred feet above the ice plane on the northwestern corner of the island. On its summit was an Indian camp and a number of warriors and their chief, in his feathered head-dress, looking down upon them. Beyond this elevated table-land was a wooded wilderness with high rock ridges, inland, denuded by fire. They came soon to a low shore and sand hills made no doubt by strong west winds blowing over the strand at low water. Far southward they saw the smoke of a house rising above the forest and soon a rude roadway, bridged from the ice, over which sleighs and horses had lately traveled. They took this path in the snow and came before long to a log house in a large clearing. There they learned from farmer Van Dincklagen that they had come to “The Bouwerie in the Forest” and that New Amsterdam was less than two miles below. The farmer told them how to reach the Indian Path which led southward to the city gate. They crossed Bestaver’s Brook and came to a high hill commanding the lower end of the island. They could see many roofs, the fort and its windmill and masts and rigging in the harbor.

“There we be at last!” Amos exclaimed. “The place where ye take water from this heathen land! Now silence and a prayer to God! I eye it as a piece o’ Providence.”

They hurried on without speaking until the pioneer said, “Ye ought to be happy, boy.”

“I know it. I’ve got the habit from you. It has been a trip to hell and back. You kept me from burning up. I’m blistered, but to please you, my friend, I’ll call it happiness.”

Descending the hill they crossed a boggy flat and came soon to a lake with a small island in the midst of it. Dusk was falling and many skaters were leaving and hastening toward the gate with merry talk and laughter. At the “top of the town” was a wooden palisade of strong pickets driven into the ground. The gate, beyond a rude roadway called the Indian Path, was wide enough to admit a team of horses abreast. A watchman halted them at the gate. Amos showed his letters and in Dutch dispelled all doubt of their good intentions. It was now quite dark, and the windows of the big warehouse of the West India Company and in many small dwellings were aglow.

Here and there groups of children were candle jumping. Each group had three candles stuck in the snow, one of which was painted black. They were dancing and shouting and singing around the candles.

“Upon my word! It’s Twelfth Night,” said Amos. “I hadn’t thought of it.”

They went with their letter to the house of Dominie Bogardus on Perel Street to which some of the children had directed them. The good man received them warmly and listened to their plans. Amos told him that they were Puritans who had been captured by the Indians. He told of their escape and of the Dutch trader through whose friendly offices they had arrived at Fort Orange. He spoke also of their deep sense of obligation to the Dutch which his young friend—a man of ample means—wished to signalize with a gift to the parish, and of their desire to take the first ship to Holland.

“You may have to wait long before you can get a ship,” said the Dominie. “Meanwhile I am sure that the Director General will make you comfortable. Come with me. We will go to his house.”

CHAPTER XIV
How the Night in New Amsterdam Changed Their Plans

They went along the Strand to the fort which stood near the water's edge. Between its bastions and the village was an open plain used for drill and a market-place and public meetings. Within the enclosure of the fort they were admitted to the house of the Director General, Mr. Wouter Van Twiller, who sat drinking with a jolly burgomaster. Amos describes the latter in his diary as "a proper, lusty man, with a brain like a cork and a body like a sponge." The Director General smoked silently as the Dominie said: "Here are two worthy men just arrived from Fort Orange to take a ship for Holland. They are Protestants of substance and good manners, who have come down on the ice. They will be glad to pay for entertainment while they stay here."

The jolly burgomaster spoke for his friend so preoccupied with his pipe, his beer and his thoughts.

"God give you peace," he said as he shook their hands. "The Governor will give you his best room and his best slave to serve you. If that is not enough he will hire a fiddler and a wit to keep you merry and a lady to curl your hair and tell you love stories."

Meanwhile the Governor himself sat smoking a long Turkish pipe wrought of amber and jasmine wood. He smiled and looked at the strangers but said nothing. His feet could never bask in the sunlight of his smiles, being shadowed by his own periphery. He was as silent as a beer barrel whose structure his mid-section resembled. He was almost a neckless man, his head setting close to his shoulders. On account of his bulging cheeks the wags were wont to call him "onion head." He was a man of unusual gravity mental and specific. He consumed much beer and wine. The more he drank the calmer he became, and his wildest exuberance of spirit expressed itself only in a smile.

The jolly burgomaster bade the negro, who had opened the door, take the newcomers to their room with their luggage. Robert put on a new tan coat, hose, shoes and doublet which he had bought at Fort Orange.

"They'll have to take me as I am in this suit of new buckskin which I put on at the Fort," Amos remarked. "It's as good as new. Anyhow I'm nothin' but a guide."

"A guide from hell to cooler places," Robert added.

Coming below they found the house lighted for the great fête of Twelfth Night. Mr. Van Twiller and the Dominie sat at a table drinking together.

"Sit down with us and drink to all the wise men," said the Dominie as he ordered beer to be brought for them. "The women are busy baking the great cake. It will look like a snow-covered mountain. Here's hoping that one of you may be the Bean King."

Soon men, women, boys and girls began arriving. The women wore caps of lace with ruffle-shaped battlements high above their foreheads, love hoods, ear spangles and Spanish shoes with high red heels. Amos said of them that they were "a trinketty lot o' females." Many of the young ladies wore chatelaines that held a scent bottle, pomander, pencils, charms and other trinkets. Their chatelaines indicated that they were bespoken. Their hair, combed back, was braided behind and the braids were wound around their heads. The men wore baggy breeches, adorned with buttons of wrought silver, and coats of bright colors. The Governor was in a suit of plain black velvet as was also Mr. Kilien Van Renssalaer, the famous patroon.

Numbers of Englishmen from Virginia and from the colonies in New England—dissatisfied with the outlook or the courts—had come to New Amsterdam. More than a score of these malcontents were now at the fête. Suddenly in a group of noisy merrymakers Robert discovered Roderick Leighton—the friend of James Rosewell—whom he had seen as a guest at the Governor's house in Boston. A fear came to Robert for he knew that the friends would probably have met in New Amsterdam when Rosewell came down from the north. He asked an Englishman for information and learned that Leighton was agent of the Earl of Sterling on the Long Island and that he was sailing for Connecticut next day. Leighton was overcupped. With three hundred merrymakers in the big house there was little danger of a recognition. Robert and Amos made their way to another room and sat down in a shadowed corner with some happy Dutchmen who were smoking and drinking beer at a round table. Near them a little group of Englishmen were telling drolls and gossiping. They said that there were not five people in New Amsterdam outside the Company's office who could read or write and that the Governor himself signed with a cross.

It would seem that Fate had its own plans for the boy Robert. Suddenly a singular event thrust him into unwelcome prominence. It was an event which, owing to his ignorance of Holland customs, he could not have dodged. The great Twelfth Night cake was a kind of treasure mountain. A gilded bean had been dropped into its batter before the baking. He who found it in his portion was the Bean King—the Balthasar of the fête—to whom all present had to

render homage. Robert Heathers drew the bean. Immediately he became the center of interest. The crowd gathered around him. The burgomaster led him to the big room and introduced him in a humorous speech. The young man accepted this in excellent good humor. He summoned Amos who translated each sentence after it was spoken.

"Greatness was always beyond my hope," Robert answered. "Like most greatness it comes to me by accident. It's an ill fit. I feel as I did once years ago when I put on my father's breeches. My throne is founded on a bean but no king could have a fairer kingdom—lovelier ladies and more gallant gentlemen to yield him homage as undeserved as that of the king of my native land. I only wish it were my prerogative to kiss all my female subjects, but I am happy nevertheless in looking at them."

He was a popular king. All the ladies came and congratulated him and made deep curtsies as they shook his hand, and some offered him their cheeks to be kissed. Then they brought him food and drink and souvenirs. The men came to drink with him and if he had taken all that was offered he would have needed bearers to carry him to his room. The house rang with merry laughter and loud talk. Most of the company took more steps than were quite necessary on their way home at midnight.

Amos hugged the boy when they went to their room.

"I am proud o' ye!" he exclaimed. "When somethin' has to be said ye know what to say as well as Captain John Smith ever did."

"Well, for a long time I've had nothing to do but think. I'm different. I reckon thinking has been good for me. Now I'm a man—not of much account—but a kind of man. We have faced so many perils that a Twelfth Night fête ought not to worry us."

But he did worry when he had got into bed. A suspicion loomed out of the mysterious depths of his inner self that the bean would grow into a tree with death in its shadow. He would not dispel the happiness of his friend with his own fears. He bore them alone. If he had been less considerate one may be almost sure that the history of his life would have been very different, for the shrewd old pioneer with his clear vision would have been up and doing instead of lying down for needed sleep.

Robert slept little and often heard the schout calling the hours and declaring that all was well. The beautiful Spanish bells from Porto Rico, then in the tower of the Horse Mill, rang at daybreak. The negro slave brought them a sop of hot milk and bread and some dried venison. That eaten, Amos dressed and went out through the Sally-Port to the plain. Half an hour later Robert

followed him.

Near the fort a large windmill was grinding grain for the military force and the family of the Director General. Just north of the plain another windmill was grinding for the public. Near it was the cooper's shop, the smith, the bakery and a general store. The newest dwellings in the town were on the Strand—a part of Perel Street. There were the houses of the cooper, the smith, the corporal, the midwife, and those of higher functionaries of the company. The wooden church stood among them. Here and there on Whitehall Street and near the end of Broad were a number of small log houses. The Commercial Center of New Amsterdam was on this latter thoroughfare with its creek running down to the bay. The Brewer's Bridge spanned the creek, and near its mouth was the great shed where boats were built. On either side of the creek for some distance above this shed were shops and stores and houses. There were nearly a thousand people in the village. One man who had prospered in the fur trade had torn down his log house and built a handsome two-story structure of brick with crow-step gables. It was called "the pride of the commonwealth." He was planning a three-story Harberg or tavern to be built of stone, fifty feet square. Mud was the great source of domestic trouble.

It was a muddy burg in soft weather and dusty in summer, being on a treeless, windy flat, but the houses and the door-yards were scrupulously kept.

The celebration of Twelfth Night continued twenty-four hours with a diminishing and diverted fervor, some time being needed for recovery.

Robert and Amos were among the crowd that gathered on the plain at ten o'clock to witness the lively, merry pastime of Clubbing the Cat. A lightly coopered barrel with a cat in it was roped upright between posts. The contestants stood about a hundred feet away and threw clubs at the barrel. The one who broke it and released the cat got a bottle of good wine. The barrel was no sooner broken than all the throwers set out in a rush for the scared cat who got away from that place with no unnecessary delay. If one succeeded in catching the cat one was rewarded with a bottle of wine.

The noisier game of Pulling the Goose followed. A goose whose neck and head had been thoroughly greased was hung by its feet to a cord stretched between posts about ten feet high. Men rode under the goose at a gallop and by seizing its head endeavored to pull it free—a most difficult undertaking. The slippery goose was himself the reward of the successful contestant.

At midday Robert and Amos returned to the house of the Director General to find that its atmosphere had changed. Their host met them with a sober face in the hall. He was polite but eager to get rid of them. He had ceased to smile.

He had learned that the *Hector*, an English ship, was anchored in a harbor off the Connecticut shore near a small settlement called Quinnepiac. It would be sailing within a week or so. Many traders on the Long Island were taking their furs to that ship, as there might be a moon's wait or more before a Dutch vessel would arrive. At a point beyond the Hellegat River they could cross in a shallop to an English trading-post on the East Bay. There they could soon find conveyance to the ship. He would give them horses and a guide to take them northward to the shallop ferry.

The matter was not open to argument. They went that afternoon.

They found a small settlement of English people a mile or so from the landing.

There they learned that the *Hector* was iced in and would not be sailing before the moon of the bright lights late in March or early in April. They were made welcome by a man who lived in a comfortable cabin and who spent his winters hunting and trapping and clearing his land. A small farm kept him busy in the summer. That evening Amos said to Robert: "I didn't like Mr. Van Twiller's change o' front. Can ye explain it?"

"It's an easy riddle," said Robert. "Roderick Leighton fell in with Jim Rosewell and Jim told him that I was trying to escape the hangman's noose waiting for me in Boston. Of course, he couldn't help seeing me last night. He has told the Director General that I'm an outlaw and a fugitive. The poor man was anxious to wash his hands of me before the news spread."

"I see through that barn door," Amos answered. "I wish ye had told me this afore now. It's that hang-by cullion Rosewell just because he wants to kill ye out o' his way as a rival. Some men have no guts o' mercy for a man that's down. Don't let it plague ye. We'll fix the flint o' this worricarl. I've got some news o' him in the pimply Dutch town. He hired a pinnace and took one o' the pretty gals out for a sail. They were becalmed and what happened I don't know, but next day her brother give him a bloody nose and a good trouncin'. Old Molemacker told me the news when I took his letter to the Horse Mill this mornin'."

"Let's forget it," said Robert. "Gossip of that sort is for millers and old wives. It might spring out of nothing. I'm not much in love with those rollicking Dutchmen. Van Twiller is a curious man for a colonial Governor."

"Yes, but we can not blame him for sending us away," Amos answered. "He's had trouble enough with our colonies and he has no high opinion of us beef-eaters."

Robert laughed, saying: “By Jove! As to the thing which Endicott calls ‘light carriage,’ New Amsterdam is its home.”

“And always will be,” Amos answered. “The place will grow. It’s a grand site for a city.”

“But these fun-loving Dutch will be always kicking up their heels with a foaming cup in one hand after the day’s work,” said Robert. “Light carriage will be the habit of the place. Boston will be always like Endicott and Dudley and Winthrop—feet for carrying the load, mind on eternal things, sin-hunting eyes, brows like Will Shakespeare’s. It’s the root that makes the tree and the tree is planted.”

They spent seven weeks in this little settlement on the Long Island, helping their host with his clearing and burning near the cabin. In the first thaw of the spring they went in a pinnace loaded with furs to Quinnepiac.

They reached the ship’s side only to learn from her Puritan Captain that he could take no more passengers. At the little settlement on the shore they ran upon John Samp—the Boston constable who immediately seized Robert and disarmed him.

“I began to see it as soon as you told me,” said Amos. “We’ve stepped into a trap. Rosewell got it all set and ready before he left the Island.”

The constable showed his warrant.

“Well, I’m glad to see you,” said Robert. “You need look for no resistance. I’m tired of this matter and am ready to see the end of it, whatever it may be.”

His friend put in a word here: “And before it ends Amos Todkill will have something to say. Hang on to yer courage.”

The ample Samp with a look of wise severity thus admonished his prisoner: “Make a clean breast and throw yerself on the mercy o’ the court. It will be better for ye. If ye don’t I wouldn’t give a cat’s whiskers fer yer life.”

“Do ye think that ye can scare this boy, ye old nincompoop!” Amos answered. “He’ll throw himself nowhere. He’ll just stand still and keep still and let ’em prove it if they can.”

The last entries in the diaries of Robert and Amos were written while they waited in the rude house of a settler as the constable was storing his pack with food for the journey. It is likely that they followed the Pequot Path, but the historian has no knowledge of their adventures on the way.

CHAPTER XV

Peggy Weld Takes Charge of the Case of Robert Heathers

Peggy had bought a bit of wild country that pleased her. She had built a house on it. The planning and the superintending of the craftsmen had given grateful employment to her mind and body. She and her brother—an amiable youth much devoted to his sister and two years younger than she—would be moving into it soon, with a number of servants.

When Rosewell, having returned from his quest, came to see her at the house of the Ex-Governor Winthrop he gave her a dark account of Robert's look and behavior.

"He is a scapegrace—a roynish clown," Rosewell said. "We have evidence to hang him. He will try to get across the sea, but I think that the righteous arm of the law may prevent it and bring him to the punishment he deserves."

The keen-minded Peggy answered: "If anything pulls him here it will not be the righteous arm of the law, it will be the jealous arm of James Rosewell."

"Will you never come to your right mind in this matter?" he asked. "I am trying to save you from disgrace. Have you no thought of your soul?"

"Yes, but it is not like a sore finger. It gives me time to think of others. You have a kind of inflammation of the soul. You mistake it for righteousness, but where is your charity?"

"I have no charity for proved adulterers."

"Yet you are very human and I have a fancy that you could slip and fall as easily as any man I know. You ought not to be judging other men so freely. I have no faith in your evidence."

Rosewell was irritated. He arose and said: "Peggy, I think that I shall be able to show you that I do not misjudge the man or the evidence. He asked me to give you this love token which you sent to him the night of his escape. You were then engaged to me."

He put the *médaillon* in her hands.

"True, but I had learned that I could not love a man worshiping a God of iron related to the Tudors and the Stuarts. I frankly confess to you that I had begun to love Robert Heathers."

Rosewell's handsome face was red with indignation. He behaved with admirable restraint. His British temper could not accept defeat.

"Well, Peggy, I love you in spite of all this," he said. "What I have done has been for your sake. You will know soon that this man is not worthy of your love. Then, if you will let me, I shall try to show you that I am not so stern as you think me."

With that he left her. The drama began to quicken its pace. While this talk was going on, William, sitting by the fireside with Margaret Hooper, who had mothered him through his troubles, was unconsciously weaving threads for the curious pattern of the last act. The woman told him of events which had come to pass aforetime in England. She told how her grandfather, John Hooper, the Bishop of Worcester, had been burned at the stake by Mary Tudor, how her mother and uncle had fled from home and hidden in the greenwood, how at last they had been captured by the horsemen of the bloody Queen and driven before them in a storm, like cattle, and shut up in dungeons all because they had been identified as members of a conventicle. These recitals came in a melancholy, monotonous tone as she sat knitting by the fireside.

"Margaret, I am glad to have heard of these things," said William. "They help me to understand this drooping mouth of yours, the sadness in your eyes and voice."

"I am like most of the others here," she went on. "They have lived in terror and thick darkness lighted by the flash of death fires. Some have heard the cry of the martyr. Some have nearly perished of cold and hunger in the first comings and have seen their friends sicken and die for the lack of wholesome food. When you complain of the sternness of the church folk and look at their sober faces I beg of you think of these things, my boy. We are jealous of our candle in the wilderness, knowing how easily it could flicker out. We hate the evils that flourish in the courts of kings. If we were not stern with them we should soon be again a handful among a people as godless as those from whom we fled. We should bring to these shores not our own kind but sinners who do not find it now a comfortable place. By and by some cunning-head, perhaps of Stuart blood, would come and rally them around him and set up a throne and put us again in bondage. Mr. Williams has charged that we have ourselves set up a tyranny, but we only demand of our people virtue and honor and good faith and fair dealing, and a proper respect for the Creator of the world lest we all be drowned in damnation."

"I respect the church," said William, "but I do think that it should have more love and charity for those outside its membership. It has established a spiritual aristocracy as stony hearted as that around the throne of our King

Charles. They regard, or seem to regard, outsiders as enemies fighting under the flag of Satan. They are not that. They are brother human beings to be led upward into the ranks by love and sympathy and help and a forgiving spirit."

Near nine o'clock that evening Peggy and her brother came to see William with important news. Peggy was in high spirits. James Rosewell had returned.

"He brought me great happiness," said Peggy. "It was shut up in this tiny housing of gold."

She held up the shining locket, saying: "I lent it to Robert the night he went away. He gave it to Rosewell to bring to me. I found in it a secret—a wonderful secret. I am the happiest person in this world. He is alive. He is well. I had to come and tell you."

In a transport of joy she threw her arms around William and kissed him.

"I think that I can guess the secret," he said.

"I am sure that you can. He still loves me and may the good God keep him! The rest I can not tell you now. You see, this little thing has a secret lock. It is like the riddle of Samson. It holds a mystery. No one can reach it save those who know how. Robert would not be denied. He got its secret. Observe the warning lettered in Greek on its case. It says:

" 'Only the true lover can open this.' "

"And are you going to England?" William asked.

"Only if God wills it," Peggy answered. "It is late and we must go. I hope you will soon come to visit us at Moondawn. That is the name of our new home. From my windows I see the rising of the two kings of light."

"I shall come when the war ends," said William.

They went away. Margaret had gone to bed. William sat a long time by the fireside thinking as he smoked his pipe while the wind whistled in the chimney. His thinking was mostly of Robert. Should he return to England? he asked himself. But he was going to the war with the Pequots and who could tell what would come of that?

Margaret Hooper felt the force of William's argument about the church and discussed it with her sisters of the parish. Many fell into his way of thinking. It came to the ears of John Winthrop who forthwith invited William to his house. The great man and his wife received the boy warmly.

"The sweet and cunning hand of Nature has wrought a wonderful work upon you," said Winthrop when they were seated by the fireside. "You have

the face of a saint. May I ask just what is your criticism of the church?"

"My position is that of one humbly seeking the truth," William answered. "My opinions are privately expressed. I would not create dissension, knowing as I do that the church is the mainstay of law and order. Now that you ask for my opinions I give them to you frankly. I have had to learn how to forgive and be humble. If it has been good for me to learn those things I conclude that it would be good for the church."

He then briefly presented his argument as he had done with Margaret Hooper.

"The work you have started among the poor may make the things of your vision possible," Winthrop answered. "I look forward to a time when the children of every poor man will be educated and led upward to apply their hearts to understanding and the love of all good things. This, I hope, will be done at the public expense. That work has already begun—thanks to you."

Next day William went away to the war with his company. Two weeks later the town was in a fever of excitement. John Samp had arrived with Robert Heathers and Amos Todkill. Within half an hour the news had reached a thousand ears. The court was in session. Its seats and anteroom were soon crowded. The constable and his prisoner, waiting in a house near, were summoned to the court. John Samp entered with Robert Heathers, his wrists manacled, followed by Amos Todkill. Robert was smiling. Governor Vane asked the constable why his prisoner was in irons.

"Your Excellency, he struck me."

In a calm voice, standing with his hat in his hand, Todkill spoke: "I hope that you will ask the prisoner why he struck the constable."

Governor Vane turned to the prisoner with a look of inquiry, whereupon Robert said: "Your Excellency, I struck only because in ill temper he called me a vile name."

Samp undertook to speak but the Governor put him to silence, saying: "A prisoner is presumed to be innocent until his guilt is proved, and if he obeys the officer, should be treated with all possible respect and subjected to no unnecessary harshness."

He turned to Robert and told him that he was accused of adultery with one Mabel Hartley, then deceased, on the twelfth of the last October. He presented the evidence against him supported by the fact that he had fled from the jurisdiction of the court. The Governor asked the young man if he wished to take counsel before he pleaded.

Robert answered: “Your Excellency, I shall need only the counsel of my own conscience but I have just arrived here. I am weary and in need of rest. Give me time, I pray you, to compose myself and leave to confer with my friends.”

His plea was granted and Robert was sent to the prison house for the night. His purpose was to see William, if possible, and be apprised of what had come to pass. Amos learned that William had gone out with Captain Mason to fight the Pequots. He learned that Peggy Weld had built a house on a lake in the deep greenwood about three miles from the edge of the town and was there. He was told that a good path led to it.

The spring had come early and warm. It was in the moon of the bright lights late in April. The buds were coming out. Amos got a horse and rode to Peggy’s house. It stood in a grove of steepled cedars on the top of a hill. From her door a long open aisle in the dark green foliage sloped to the lake walled in by steep, thick-timbered slopes. Around the margin of the lake was a fringe of feathery tamaracks. Above them was a belt of the darker green of spire-like balsams. Farther up the hillsides were the towering crowns of white pine. The house, built of spruce logs with the bark left on them, had two floors with overhanging windows and wide eaves. It reminded Amos of chalets he had seen in the Alps. The sun had set. The sky-glow was in the ambered waters. The early dusk was falling. Amos dismounted, hitched his horse at a post and, entering the veranda through gray-barked, spruce columns, pulled the latch-string of the door. Peggy sat with her brother before a blazing fire playing cards.

“I am Amos Todkill,” he said.

The two rose to their feet. “Amos Todkill!” Peggy Weld exclaimed. “Where is Robert?”

“I hate to bring bad news to Paradise,” said Amos in a low tone that reflected his depression. “I hate it no less than the gates o’ hell. Robert is in Boston prison.”

Amos shook his head and looked very solemn. His figure drooped a little as if he were under a heavy, invisible burden.

For a breath the girl stood looking at him, her hand upon her breast.

“In prison!” she whispered. “So—they have brought him here. I will go to him at once.”

She sent a servant to the stable for her horse. She turned to her brother, saying: “Henry, you do not need to go. Todkill will be with me through the

forest and there is room for me at the Governor's house. I shall want to talk with him before I go to the prison."

She went to her room and soon returned in her coat, hat and riding-boots. She and Amos mounted and rode through a green, winding, cedarn alley to the path.

"This is monstrous grand—good enough for a king," said Amos.

"One day I heard Robert describe the kind of house and setting that he would enjoy. I have found the setting and built the house. I thought that some time he might like to come here."

"I know it would pleasure him," said Amos.

She stopped by the path side. "Tell me quickly how it happens that you and Robert came to Boston," she said.

Briefly Amos told the story of Rosewell's trap.

"Well, let us make haste," she answered. "It is growing dark."

They hastened into the dim forest aisle and onward as rapidly as its rough footing would allow and were soon in sight of the beacons. The Governor was at home. He was writing letters at a table near the fireside. He was a most comely figure in a coat and breeches of brown velvet with white hose and golden buckles on his shoes. Snowy linen covered his neck and wrists. Above the row of brass buttons on his embroidered doublet was a puff of white lace. He said:

"Miss Weld, lay off your coat and sit down and tell me what I can do for you."

"As soon as possible I want to see Robert Heathers," she answered.

In his most gracious and gentle manner the Governor spoke these friendly words: "I know that you have stood for Robert Heathers in this sorry business while the rest of us have had no doubt of his guilt. I question your judgment and also admire the noble quality of your friendship. My dear, I do advise you to keep your hands clean of this matter. I would gladly save him if I could but he will, I fear, go to the gallows. You can not help him. You will only increase his wretchedness."

Peggy Weld was in no way discouraged by this dark counsel.

"Governor, it is my duty to go. William is away and I am the only friend that he has in this town. Surely it is his right to know what has come to pass in his absence and to receive friendly advice."

The Governor smiled.

"You may think that I am moved only by a romantic temperament," Peggy went on. "If so you will misjudge me. I have a line of defense for him. I think that I shall be able to disprove your theories."

"Have you new evidence?"

"New evidence," she answered. "And it is of such a nature that I shall ask you to allow me to present it to the court in my own way. I am a woman and it will be an uncommon proceeding, but I shall not impose on the dignity or the patience of the court. What I have to say can be quickly said and you shall hear no malicious or improper words."

He smiled again, saying: "Peggy, I think that you will have to be listed among the wonders of the world. You are the best archer in Boston, and if your arguments go as straight as your arrows we shall have no cause, to complain of them. May I ask what is the nature of your evidence?"

"Your Excellency, there is a new witness. With his help I expect to solve the mystery. I seek not to increase the confusion of the court but to end it."

The Governor lighted his pipe and said: "Why should not women be heard in such a democracy as we aim to establish? There is no man in the colony who is the equal of Anne Hutchinson in wit or diction or in her power to see straight to the heart of a subject. I shall call on you for a statement of your case to-morrow morning. There are precedents in the procedure of the English courts. I shall never forget my father's vivid account of the remarkable speech of the great Queen Bess at the trial of Mary of the Scots. I am sure that we shall get from you a shining example of what a woman can do."

"Do not expect me to be brilliant. I am no Anne Hutchinson. But I promise to be honest and well behaved, and I shall pray God to help me to show the women of Boston that cricketing in idle gossip is a poor kind of business to be doing."

She could have said nothing more pleasing to the Governor. Forthwith he sat down at his table and hurriedly wrote a note and sent a servant to deliver it to the prison warden. He turned to the young lady and said:

"I shall go with you when the streets are clear at ten. Already I have been criticized because I rebuked the constable for needless brutality to the prisoner, and certain deputies have accused me of aristocratic leaning because I gave Heathers time to rest and compose himself before pleading. Here beyond the sea is a strange new atmosphere. I am not quite happy in it, but I shall continue to do my duty as the Lord showeth it. Lay off your coat and sit down with me

here. My father sent me a little book by the last ship. It holds a charming poem by the son of a scrivener whom I knew in London. The poet's name is John Milton—a graduate of Jesus College in Cambridge. The poem is entitled *L'Allegro*. It is for people like you and me who would wish to be merry Puritans if our brothers would allow it. The author has broken through the dark shell of his religion and is dancing with joy. I shall read it to you."

He read while Peggy listened. When he had finished she took the book in her hands lovingly and said: "The spirit of my new home is between these covers. Will you lend me the little volume? I have already devised lanthorns to hold its light."

At a quarter of ten they set out for the prison led by a servant in uniform with sword and halberd.

"This man is deaf—very deaf," said the Governor. "There are times when I need such a servant. He is a most respectable-looking creature and he understands every movement of my hand. I shall send him into the room with you and Robert. You can talk freely. He will not hear you."

Peggy was shown to a room beyond the warden's office where prisoners were brought to see their counsel and their friends. The servant stood erect in a corner, his halberd at his side. Robert entered. He was pale and thin but still as straight as an arrow. The two met in the middle of the room and embraced each other. For a moment neither spoke.

"I thought that I would be braver than this," said Peggy as she wiped her eyes. "Come, let us sit down together."

Still he did not speak. They sat down. They looked into each other's eyes.

"I am but a sorry shadow," he said. "I wonder that you know me. I think that I should have died but for the locket and a memory."

In a cheery tone she told him of William's refusal to plead and of his confinement, of the testimony against him, of the circumstances that led to his release, of the humiliation of the hempen rope, of his courageous conduct which had won the admiration of the community, of the growing conviction that he, Robert Heathers, was guilty because he had fled from the jurisdiction of the court and refused to return to it, of William's going with Captain Mason to fight against the Pequots.

"Now I am to be your lawyer and for once in your life I shall ask you to obey my wishes," said Peggy. "You will be brought into court to-morrow. You will of course plead that you are not guilty. I think that I know of evidence that will delay action until it can be produced in court. I have seen men fail so often

there that I am going to see what a woman can accomplish with those sturdy, iron magistrates. Their wives have no trouble in managing them."

"I had already determined to plead that I am not guilty," said Robert. "I suppose that they will hang me. I saw my fate in those stern faces on the bench. Well, I have suffered so many terrors that dying seems easy, and then I have learned one thing from the red men. It is fortitude. I have seen one of them die twenty deaths without a murmur!"

She drew his face to hers and kissed him.

"You shall not die," she said. "I am going to save you. Be of good cheer. I love you. I need you. If my plan goes through no further harm shall come to you or to William."

"And seeing you and hearing your voice has made me long to live," said the young man. "Since I have been sitting here some strange power has come out of your spirit into mine. I begin to share your faith."

Peggy held his hand in hers and said: "Whatever happens to-morrow after you have pleaded, hold your peace and let no word pass your lips. For once—just once I must do all the talking. I wish that I could sit with you the whole night, but we must both seek our rest and the Governor is waiting for me."

So this meeting of lovers came to its end. Preceded by the dignified halberdier, Peggy walked with the Governor to his house where she spent the night. They were an hour by the fireside discussing the strange eventful story with details known only to them and laying their plans. The Governor wrote a note to Porman. The maid, who brought her night clothes and helped her to bed, was told to awake her at seven and bring her sop and beer. So Peggy was up betimes and on her way to the house of the Reverend Philander Porman. She had worked with him in the new school for the children of the poor. He was a learned man of rare insight, who was fond of Peggy and knew of her devotion to Robert. He had given her friendly counsel. Lately he had told her of knowing a new witness in the famous adultery case who would, he felt sure, change the complexion of the whole matter. He had been alone by the bedside of Mabel Hartley when she died and had taken her last confession. Therein the name of the witness was disclosed. Peggy was the only person who had shared his confidence in this matter. Peggy found him in his study and was heartily welcomed. She told Porman of the arrival of Robert and of his great peril from hasty action. She delivered the note from Governor Vane.

"But now the deputies have to be reckoned with," said Porman. "They like to curb the severity of the magistrates."

“Still Robert is a hated aristocrat. I hope to engage their sympathy. But I dare not go to court without the help you can give me.”

“Do you wish me to go to the witness chair?”

“Not yet. But I would like a written statement, signed by you, regarding the new witness—something that will give strong support to my plea for the delay we need to find him and bring him into court. Do you know where he is?”

“Yes, and I think that we could bring him here within a week. I shall need a trusty messenger.”

“You shall have Amos Todkill.”

“Send him to me,” said Porman as he sat down at his desk and began to write.

Soon he read to Peggy the letter which he had addressed to the magistrates, deputies and assistants of the court of the colony of Massachusetts Bay. It was an admirable letter of a temperate and convincing tone. The girl was pleased with it. She went to the inn to find Amos Todkill. They told her that he had gone to the prison. She found him sitting alone on the prison steps, his head resting on his hands. He arose and came to her with a sad look in his face.

“Oh, miss! I’m all wilted down like an empty sack throwed on the ground,” he said sorrowfully.

“Cheer up, man,” said Peggy. “They can not hang him. I am going to defend him with good evidence.”

Amos bowed, his hat in his hand, and then looked at her face: “The candle o’ the Lord is in yer soul,” he said. “I can see the shine o’ it in yer eyes. I reckon that’s why Robert loves ye so.”

“How do *you* know that he loves me?” Peggy asked.

“Good Lord o’ mercy, gal! If he hadn’t had hold o’ that little hand o’ yours do ye think he could ’a’ hopped into hell and clim’ out ag’in? Every day he were thinkin’ o’ you. Ye know when a man is sick and sufferin’ it’s a right smart help for his mind to have a cud like that to chaw on.”

“Thanks, Amos! I wouldn’t have missed hearing that. I have come to tell you that I need your help. Go to the Reverend Philander Porman who lives in Church Lane. He will send you to find a new witness for Robert. Bring him to me as soon as you can. Here is money.”

She gave him a generous supply of funds and hurried to the house of the young Governor who was getting ready to go to court. His six halberdiers who

accompanied him to court and to church were waiting at the door. She left her horse with a groom, changed her garments and set out for the house of justice not less worried than the prisoner himself. It seemed to the girl that the angel of Death was courting her, hovering above her head. “If I fail,” she said to herself, “my life will be no more to me than a broken straw.”

Many people were on their way to the court-house. When she arrived there its seats were filled and the area behind them was crowded. She entered the space near the throne of justice reserved for prisoners, officers of the court and counsel. She sat down. The grave-faced magistrates, in black robes and broad white collars, entered, followed by the assistants and deputies. Two constables came with the prisoner. The court was called to order. Robert Heathers was arraigned and asked to plead. He declared that he was not guilty.

Governor Vane said: “Before we proceed with this trial there is one here who has asked for the privilege of addressing the court and presenting a communication relating to important evidence lately discovered bearing on the point at issue. We will now give our attention to Miss Weld.”

Peggy Weld arose and bowed. She was dressed in sober black with a white collar and snowy lace beneath her throat and on her wrists. The costume was cunningly chosen. It was the right accessory for her color and her beauty and the singular charm of her manner. In a moment all those stern-faced men were deeply interested. With a modest bearing and a voice filled with the music of a deep sincerity she won their sympathy. What she said is in the records of the court:

“Gentlemen, not long ago we were all impressed by the eloquent words of our Governor when he spoke of the peril of haste in seeking justice, when he told how our fathers had been wronged by hasty judgments inspired by bitter feeling and carried out with an imperfect knowledge of the truth. Remembering those words I now ask you for a brief delay in these proceedings. I ask it not because the prisoner is my lover, not because his life is dearer to me even than my own, but because I have discovered new evidence which may save you from an error the consequences of which, in ruined lives and afflicted consciences, you could never repair. I have the honor of bringing to your minds a communication from one whom you all know and respect—the Reverend Philander Porman.”

She read the letter:

> “ ‘To the magistrates, assistants and deputies of the General Court, Gentlemen: I had not thought that it would ever be necessary for me to address you as I now do. But the time has come when I

must tell you that I know who was guilty of adultery with Mabel Hartley on the night of October twelfth. He is not either Robert Heathers or the beloved William Heydon. He is quite another individual. I know a witness to his misbehavior who can, I hope, be brought here within a week or so.

" 'With deep respect I am
" 'Your obedient servant,
" 'Philander Porman.' "

Peggy sat down. Her plea for time was granted. There was a great stir in the crowd as the people began to leave their seats. The Governor beckoned her to the bench and whispered: "Well done." John Winthrop shook her hand and the stern Dudley smiled as he looked down upon her.

This modest maiden had become a toast and a theme in the colony.

CHAPTER XVI

William Returns from the War and Is Praised for Heroic Conduct

The Pequot Indians had fallen on the English settlers in Connecticut and slain men and women as they worked in the fields. John Tilly had been ambushed and slain on the Fresh Water River. A whole family in that valley had been massacred. It all came of an ancient grievance when Thomas Hunt, an irresponsible man, seized twenty-seven inoffensive Pequots in 1614 and took them away in the hold of his ship and sold them as slaves. It was a grievance against the white man. The colony had given them no cause of ill will. The resentment of the red outlaws grew hot again when they saw white settlers coming near, to lands duly purchased. These red men had kept aloof in their western strongholds and had been a terror to the friendly tribes, so that they never dared to look a Pequot in the face.

The battles at their well-built fort on Mystic River, in the swamp and at the last stronghold of the tribe on a hilltop above the Pequot River, were a stern lesson to the wild men of the forest. No other was needed for nearly half a century. It was significant that some five hundred friendly Indians in the attacking force cherished the notion that their white comrades would not dare to face the terrible Pequots. These red recruits in the small colonial army were so touched with fear that they fled in disorder at the first outcry of "*Owanux!*" from the Pequot warriors. The white men marched up to their biggest stronghold, drew away their brush barriers, entered it and slew between six and seven hundred of these torturers and murderers and burned their wigwams. It was swiftly done. The survivors scattered. They carried to their brothers of the wilderness a warning that the pale-faced people had the voice of thunder, the hand of lightning and a heart as fearless as the great father of the bears and that they came like the tumbling river in the west.

Of the heroic conduct of William Heydon one may read in Mason's own account of the campaign, how he cut the bowstring of a savage aiming at his commander from a point so close that the arrow would no doubt have done serious damage. It was fighting hand to hand and face to face. His sword flashed at Mason's side as swift as a cat's foot and many fell before it. The burning wigwams increased the panic of the Indians. Their palisaded two acres were soon wet with their blood. The work was finished by pistol and musket fire. It was a decisive battle between sorcery and industry, between civilization

and savagery.

The victorious company returned to Boston three days after Peggy Weld had changed the plans of the General Court. In his report to the Governor Captain Mason declared that his life had been saved by William Heydon who "from the beginning to the end of the campaign had behaved in the fashion of a hero." The new-won fame of the young man quickly spread from house to house. A committee of the leading citizens went to his home to express their appreciation. It did not find him. Margaret Hooper reported that he had gone to the prison to see his friend Robert Heathers.

It is only known that the young men spent an hour together in the room where Peggy had sat with Robert. Dusk was falling and the beacons were aglow when William came away and walked to his home. His supper was on the table. Margaret Hooper was wont to tell of the kindly tone of his voice and of the smile on his face when he declined to eat and went to his room.

The next morning the sun shone warm and bluebirds were streaking the air with color and with their dulcet phrases. It was the Sabbath day. At nine Margaret heard William stirring and began to get his sop and meat ready. He came out by and by carefully dressed. He went to his stable.

He came into the house and ate his sop and meat and drank a glass of wine. When he arose from the table he said: "Margaret, make haste and put away the dishes. We will go to the church together."

She turned to him with a look of surprise, saying:

"Oh, sir, I am only a poor, homely working woman who spends her time teasing wool by the fireside. You would put the sin of pride in me?"

"Margaret, I shall be proud to walk with you in the heavenly road and to kneel at your side before the people. And I would ever pray for the strength that is in you."

The Church Lane at that hour was crowded with rich and poor on their way to the house of God. Many seized the hand of the new-come hero and spoke words of praise unwelcome to his ear. The stern-faced Endicott and Dudley stood by the great doors waiting for the Governor. They smiled upon the young man and touched his shoulder and invoked the blessing of God upon him.

"Thank you. I am in sore need of it," he answered.

The Governor arrived with his six swordsmen and halberdiers—the one colorful token of pomp in the colony. Peggy Weld stood with Philander

Porman a little beyond the entrance.

"We were waiting for a look at you and to tell you of our love," said Porman.

William smiled. He shook their hands, saying to Peggy:

"You great lawyer! Why are you so pale and anxious? Be of good cheer."

They went to their seats. In a moment or so the meeting-house was filled. Even the stairways were crowded with the young. The prisoners filed in, led by the ponderous John Samp, with sword and pistol hanging from his belt. They were followed by three armed constables. All heads were turned to look at the children of Satan among whom was Robert Heathers with the hempen noose around his neck.

"Why has that humiliation been put upon him?" William asked himself as he looked.

A like query was in the minds of many. Was it a warning to the evil-minded—a token of the dreadful punishment he was soon to suffer? The truth is the noose was put on Robert's neck that morning in compliance with a special order from the Governor.

Now in front of the pulpit, wherein sat the minister, was a platform for elders and, a little lower, one for the deacons of the parish. There was no musical instrument. The presenter arose, blew on a little box of wood, with a movable slide, to get his pitch and led the congregation in the opening hymn.

Doctor Cotton said in the first prayer: "When the Devil maketh a man to boil against his brother and urgeth that he be hardly treated I pray that the man may consider himself and say: 'I have offended God more than this poor sinner hath offended me.' "

No doubt the heart of the good Doctor was touched by the plight of the young man who had been his friend.

The Reverend John Wilson asked those who wished to be prayed for to arise and present their bills.

William Heydon arose and walked to the side of his friend who sat at the end of the prisoner's pew next to the aisle. The stage had been carefully set for this dramatic moment by the Governor.

William took the hempen noose from Robert's neck and put it on his own.

"This is my confession," he said. "Before this day I should have made it. Long have I walked among you with this burden on me waiting for the chance

to prove my courage and my manhood for I could not bear to die unregretted and a coward. Now I stand here covered with my shame. When you pray for me pray also for the soul of her who shared my sin. To justify my act in your hearing I have not the will to try. I set myself before another judgment seat and of its finding I have no fear. The man whose shame and burden I now take upon me ran away in the hope that by so doing he could save my life. He has suffered much for his love of me. Of that I would not fail to tell you. Only one fear is in my heart—that my small service to the public and my many friends may embarrass the court. I have suffered the torment of the damned. My hope, my pride, my cherished plans have been swept away. I stand before you stripped and naked. I shall go hence to my home and there await your further wishes. I no longer fear you. If you would tighten this noose upon my neck until my life is ended you will only grieve my friends—not me."

He went to his seat. It was a tense moment. A little groan came from the lips of Margaret Hooper. Tears were flowing down her cheeks. She could fathom the depth of his words as could no other. The young man bent his head and whispered in her ear. A deep, electric silence had fallen upon the crowd emphasized by little signs of emotion. The hand of God was being laid on the souls of the people.

The Reverend Philander Porman arose and went to William. He took the noose from his neck. These were his words: "I have said to the magistrates and I say again that the William Heydon who has spoken to you, with the grace of God in his heart, is not the man who broke a law of the court but one who has risen through suffering to a manhood noble and beloved, the like of which is not in this colony. Heydon the sinner has already suffered the pain of death. He is not here. Only the name remains—a thing without substance. If there be one among you who dares to think that he is as free of sin as this young friend of mine let *him* hurl the first stone, but I warn him that his conceit shall not pass unnoticed."

The prayer, the sermon followed, but for once not many could have told what was said in them. The psalm singing and the benediction! There were many benedictions that morning as the people crowded around William and Robert and shook their hands.

"It was a sight as comely as the curtains of Solomon," said Margaret Hooper. "Dear son, the grace o' God was poured upon your face."

No stone was hurled then or later. Again free the young men walked to their home with Margaret and Peggy and Porman. The sun shone and song sparrows and bluebirds were singing on either side of them as they walked and talked together.

They found Amos Todkill waiting on the small veranda.

"I tried to travel by the light o' the moon," he said to Porman. "I were lost and foundered in the darkness. So they got by me on the path."

His words had reference to William and his returning company.

"Faithful soul!" Peggy exclaimed. "It does not matter. Robert is free."

Amos threw his hat high above his head and lifted his right foot and shook it vigorously.

"You are to go out to my house to-morrow prepared to stay," said Peggy. "I need your help there. It may be that Robert will come to see us now and then."

"I think that it is very likely," said Robert with a smile.

"But you are not to come until Thursday," said Peggy. "Then we shall be ready for you."

For a time the young men were engaged with their business affairs. On Thursday they went out to Moondawn. The sweetest music of *L'Allegro* was in legends well lettered on its walls. This couplet was above the fireplace:

Hence loathed Melancholy
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born

And this above a window half hid with drooping vines:

At my window bid good morrow
Through sweet briar or the vine
Or the twisted eglantine

This couplet was above another window:

Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees

The boat-house below on a broad sand beach had above its door these lines:

On the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.

"It is very beautiful," said Robert. "I should love to live here."

"Well, I built it hoping that you would," she answered with a smile.

He kissed her lips and said as he looked down into her eyes:

“I now ask you to marry me. It’s the first chance I’ve had.”

She answered with a laugh: “Come to the house and I will perform my last act as your lawyer. I will collect my fee. The Reverend Mr. Porman is there and William and Amos Todkill. In business I neglect no detail.”

Again he kissed her.

Amos came upon them suddenly while they were in this tender attitude.

“Don’t mind me,” he said. “This is as nat’ral for the young as goin’ barefoot to a goose. May nothin’ worse than a moonbeam ever cross yer path.”

As they walked together up the hill Peggy said: “Dear Robert, tell me the story of that black night when you went away with Amos on the tavern ship and took my heart with you and left us in a cloud of mystery.”

“Now it may be told,” the young lover answered. “I was returning to our home about nine thirty-five. I found Amos waiting for me in the door-yard. I heard a dog barking and a loud yelp down the road and the feet of a man running toward the house. I left Amos and went out into the road. It is a thing that I can not explain but those footsteps seemed to tell me that they were William’s and that he was in trouble. I ran toward the sound of them. About ten rods from our door William came out of the darkness and fell into my arms. He was nearly spent. He told me what had happened in the thicket. He knew that the penalty was death. I had my wits about me. I said:

“ ‘It was dark in the thicket. The constable could not tell whether it was you or I. That little woman will not betray you. I will run away with Amos. They’ll be sure to think that I am the guilty man. You go up now to the camp and tell Beggs to take charge of the men in the morning.’

“He set out for the camp. I told Amos that I had to get away from there and quickly. He knew that the tavern ship was going out at midnight. Its Captain had been trying to hire him. I had to go or be a witness against my friend. I was in eager haste. I got my wallet and gun and we set out for the shore where Amos had a boat house and a canoe. We reached the tavern ship in good time. When news came to the ship that William was to be tried for his life I did what I could to turn suspicion upon myself and that was a help to my friend as time went on.

“One thing was not in my reckoning. Mabel Hartley revealed the identity of her companion though she tried later to take it back. It is likely that for some time she and William had been well acquainted, but all this is to be forgotten. She was fair—very fair to look upon and one can not help being human even

in America."

"Be of good cheer," said Peggy with a smile. "I shall try to keep you out of danger."

"Often I wonder at what has come to pass in the soul of my friend," the young lover remarked. "I reckon a man is like a tree. If he is well rooted, strength, from the source of all power, comes into him and he grows. But a man can make his own soil and sunlight so that there is a kind of magic in his growth."

Peggy answered: "Somehow William got in touch with that power which hung the earth upon nothing and keeps it spinning in the sky. So I wonder not that we have seen a miracle."

Near the end of his term Governor Vane was voted down because of his liberal views. He returned to England and became one of the great figures in its history—a member of Parliament in 1640; Treasurer of the Navy when Blake won his victories; a member of the Long Parliament wherein he led the opposition to the Royalist Party and was largely responsible for the trial and execution of the Earl of Strafford. He went to Scotland as a Commissioner to negotiate an alliance. Through his persuasion the Solemn League and Covenant was adopted. He was on all commissions treating with the King. He led the minority. In 1649 he had the control of the Navy and of all foreign wars. In 1653 he opposed Cromwell's Dissolution of Parliament by force and became his enemy. After Cromwell's death he led the Republican Party. Then the Restoration and the famous letter of Charles II in which he wrote to his counselors: "He (Vane) is too dangerous a man to let live if we can honestly put him out of the way." Vane was tried for treason and, although innocent, was denied the benefit of counsel or a day's delay to secure witnesses. He went to the block and in his last words he sounded the keynote of the Puritan character:

"I can die but I can not violate my conscience."

William Heydon, a wealthy planter and shipbuilder in America and quietly influential in its Liberal Party, was in England at that time. He was among the many friends of Sir Harry Vane who went to speak a friendly word to him and take a last look at his beloved face. William was then forty-eight years old. He had never married. A modest, unpretentious citizen rarely seen and never heard in public assemblies it is nevertheless true that for many years the rulers of the colony were named by the master of Heydon Hall. It was his friend Richard Bellingham, twice Governor, who late in 1661 sent him cheering news from England.

"I have seen Bessie Brade [he wrote]. She is the victim of a father's stubborn pride. Like you she is living with a memory. I learn that she wrote to you long ago. I wonder if the letter ever came to your hand. Probably not. Then a friend of her father coming over reported that you were soon to marry. Discouraged by this false report she engaged herself to a son of the second Earl of Warwick who before their wedding was killed in a battle at sea. She loves you. In the last year her father has passed away. You are still in the full strength of your manhood. You owe it to yourself and to her to go to England and there amend the remarkable story of your life and hers. She has suffered not less than you but through it all she has kept her beauty."

So it happened that William Heydon took a ship for England. In the crowd at Vane's funeral he met the Lady Bess. He took her hand.

"The glory of youth is gone but still you are beautiful," he said.

"If so it is because I have had a memory and a hope," she answered.

She took his arm and they walked away together.

THE END

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Many Americans would seem to have an imperfect knowledge of the character of the fathers of New England and the nature of the problems, perils and difficulties with which they were beset. Hasty judgments based on hostile or ill-informed criticism are flung about by people whose knowledge goes little beyond the date of the landing of the Pilgrims.

For years I have addressed myself to a study of the facts revealed in many available and creditable sources of information. The understanding, the estimates and the color which I have obtained relating to the background, foreground, environment and character of the founders are developed in the story of *A Candle in the Wilderness*. I think that I have taken only one liberty with recorded dates in delaying by a few months the election of Vane.

For those who may desire details not admitted to my story—and of these I trust there may be many—I append the following notes:

Conditions in Plymouth in 1622 as described early in my story are taken from *Bradford's Journal*.

For the incidents of the voyage I am indebted to Bradford's account of the plight of the *Anne*, to sundry paragraphs in the letters of the Jesuit fathers and to a note of Dean Swift relating to his *Tale of a Tub*.

The description of New Boston is from color gleaned from many sources, the chief of which are Winthrop's *Journal* and Johnson's *Wonder Working Providence.*

Todkill was one of the pioneers who were with Captain John Smith in Virginia. See Smith's account of his own life and adventures.

Blaxton (not William) and Peggy Weld represent the spirit of the post-Elizabethan time in England.

There are biographies of Sir Harry Vane in many libraries. From them and from Winthrop I got my knowledge of this remarkable man.

The tavern ship is spoken of in many histories of the colony.

In Winthrop's *Journal* and other books one learns of the curious habit of imitating the cries of tortured white men by savages apparently for their own amusement.

The hempen rope worn as a punishment was used in the case of Dan

Fairfield of which there is some account in Bradford's *Journal*.

My knowledge of the Iroquois is derived from Morgan, Parkman and O'Callaghan's *Documentary History of New York*.

My knowledge of the amusements, customs, superstitions and character of the Algonquins and Hurons comes of a careful reading of twenty-seven volumes of the letters of the Jesuit fathers who lived among them. The letters were written to the Provincial of Paris.

I present the following data for those who may desire a fuller knowledge of the northern tribes.

As to the cruelty of their women, see letter of Paul LeJeune, Volume V, p. 49.

The same letter describes the treatment of the old and the sick.

A full account of the gluttony of these tribes will be found in Volume VI.

Life on a hunting expedition is described by LeJeune in Volume VII.

One may learn how an Iroquois captive was treated by those tribes in Volume IX.

Life in an Indian cabin is described in Volume XVII by LeJeune.

A good description of Indian fortitude is on page 69 in Volume XVII. The dish game is also described in the same volume.

William Heydon's heroism is briefly described in Mason's account of the Pequot campaign.

THE AUTHOR

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected or standardised.

Inconsistency in accents has been corrected or standardised.

Space between paragraphs varied greatly. The thought-breaks which have been inserted attempt to agree with the larger paragraph spacing, but it is quite possible that this was simply the methodology used by the typesetter, and that there should be no thought-breaks.

[The end of *A Candle in the Wilderness* by Irving Bacheller]