

# The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish



# The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish

by

James Fenimore Cooper

CAMBRIDGE  
**SCHOLARS**  
PUBLISHING

*classic texts*



The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, by James Fenimore Cooper

This book in its current typographical format first published 2009 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The copyright in this publication is in the public domain

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-0361-8, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-0361-8

# CONTENTS

DEDICATION	1
PREFACE	2
CHAPTER I	6
CHAPTER II	13
CHAPTER III	21
CHAPTER IV	31
CHAPTER V	43
CHAPTER VI	53
CHAPTER VII	62
CHAPTER VIII	75
CHAPTER IX	84
CHAPTER X	91
CHAPTER XI	101
CHAPTER XII	107
CHAPTER XIII	115
CHAPTER XIV	123
CHAPTER XV	135
CHAPTER XVI	142
CHAPTER XVII	152
CHAPTER XVIII	158
CHAPTER XIX	168
CHAPTER XX	178
CHAPTER XXI	189

CHAPTER XXII	200
CHAPTER XXIII	213
CHAPTER XXIV	221
CHAPTER XXV	232
CHAPTER XXVI	243
CHAPTER XXVII	254
CHAPTER XXVIII	262
CHAPTER XXIX	270
CHAPTER XXX	279
CHAPTER XXXI	287
CHAPTER XXXII	296
NOTES	304

THE REV. J. R. C.,  
OF  
PENNSYLVANIA

The kind and disinterested manner in which you have furnished the materials of the following tale merits a public acknowledgment. As your reluctance to appear before the world, however, imposes a restraint, you must receive such evidence of gratitude as your own prohibition will allow.

Notwithstanding there are so many striking and deeply interesting events in the early history of those from whom you derive your being, yet are there hundreds of other families in this country whose traditions, though less accurately and minutely preserved than the little narrative you have submitted to my inspection, would supply the materials of many moving tales. You have every reason to exult in your descent, for, surely, if any man may claim to be a citizen and a proprietor in the Union, it is one that, like yourself, can point to a line of ancestors whose origin is lost in the obscurity of time. You are truly an American. In your eyes, we of a brief century or two must appear as little more than denizens quite recently admitted to the privilege of a residence. That you may continue to enjoy peace and happiness, in that land where your fathers so long flourished, is the sincere wish of your obliged friend.

## PREFACE

AT this distant period, when Indian traditions are listened to with the interest that we lend to the events of a dark age, it is not easy to convey a vivid image of the dangers and privations that our ancestors encountered, in preparing the land we enjoy for its present state of security and abundance. It is the humble object of the tale that will be found in the succeeding pages, to perpetuate the recollection of some of the practices and events peculiar to the early days of our history.

The general character of the warfare pursued by the natives is too well known to require any preliminary observations; but it may be advisable to direct the attention of the reader, for a few moments, to those leading circumstances in the history of the times, that may have some connection with the principal business of the legend.

The territory which now composes the three States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island is said by the best-informed of our annalists, to have been formerly occupied by four great nations of Indians, who were, as usual, subdivided into numberless dependent tribes. Of these people, the Massachusetts possessed a large portion of the land which now composes the State of that name; the Wampanoags dwelt in what was once the Colony of Plymouth, and in the northern districts of the Providence Plantations; the Narragansetts held the well-known islands of the beautiful bay which receives its name from their nation, and the more southern counties of the Plantations; while the Pequots, or as it is ordinarily written and pronounced, the Pequods, were masters of a broad region that lay along the western boundaries of the three other districts.

There is great obscurity thrown around the polity of the Indians who usually occupied the country lying near the sea.

The Europeans, accustomed to despotic governments, very naturally supposed that the chiefs, found in possession of power, were monarchs to whom authority had been transmitted in virtue of their birthrights. They consequently gave them the name of kings.

How far this opinion of the governments of the aborigines was true remains a question, though there is certainly reason to think it less erroneous in respect to the tribes of the Atlantic States, than to those who have since been found farther west, where it is sufficiently known that institutions exist which approach much nearer to republics than to monarchies. It may, however, have readily happened that the son, profiting by the advantages of his situation, often succeeded to the authority of the father, by the aid of influence, when the established regulations of the tribe acknowledged no hereditary claim. Yet the principle of the descent of power be

what it would, it is certain the experience of our ancestors proves that, in very many instances, the child was seen to occupy the station formerly filled by the father; and that in most of those situations of emergency, in which a people so violent were often placed, the authority he exercised was as summary as it was general. The appellation of Uncas came, like those of the Cæsars and Pharaohs, to be a sort of synonym for chief with the Mohegans, a tribe of the Pequots, among whom several warriors of this name were known to govern in due succession. The renowned Metacom, or, as he is better known to the whites, King Philip, was certainly the son of Massasoit, the Sachem of the Wampanoags that the emigrants found in authority when they landed on the rock of Plymouth. Miantonimoh, the daring but hapless rival of that Uncas, who ruled the whole of the Pequot nation, was succeeded in authority among the Narragansetts by his not less heroic and enterprising son, Conanchet; and even at a much later day, we find instances of this transmission of power, which furnish strong reasons for believing that the order of succession was in the direct line of blood.

The early annals of our history are not wanting in touching and noble examples of savage heroism. Virginia has its legend of the powerful Powhattan and his magnanimous daughter, the ill-requited Pocahontas; and the chronicles of New England are filled with the bold designs and daring enterprises of Miantonimoh, of Metacom, and of Conanchet. All the last-named warriors proved themselves worthy of better fates, dying in a cause and in a manner that, had it been their fortune to have lived in a more advanced state of society, would have enrolled their names among the worthies of the age.

The first serious war to which the settlers of New England were exposed was the struggle with the Pequots. These people were subdued after a fierce conflict; and from being enemies, all who were not either slain or sent into distant slavery were glad to become the auxiliaries of their conquerors. This contest occurred within less than twenty years after the Puritans had sought refuge in America.

There is reason to believe that Metacom foresaw the fate of his own people, in the humbled fortunes of the Pequots. Though his father had been the earliest and constant friend of the whites, it is probable that the Puritans owed some portion of this amity to a dire necessity. We are told that a terrible malady had raged among the Wampanoags but a short time before the arrival of the emigrants, and that their numbers had been fearfully reduced by its ravages. Some authors have hinted at the probability of this disease having been the yellow fever, whose visitations are known to be at uncertain, and, apparently, at very distant intervals. Whatever might have been the cause of this destruction of his people, Massasoit is believed to have been induced, by the consequences, to cultivate the alliance of a nation who could protect him against the attacks of his ancient and less afflicted foes. But the son appears to have viewed the increasing influence of the whites with eyes more jealous than those of the father. He passed the morning of his life in maturing his great plan for the destruction of the strange race, and his later years were spent in

abortive attempts to put this bold design in execution. His restless activity in plotting the confederation against the English, his fierce and ruthless manner of waging the war, his defeat, and his death, are too well known to require repetition.

There is also a wild and romantic interest thrown about the obscure history of a Frenchman of that period. This man is said to have been an officer of rank in the service of his king, and to have belonged to the privileged class which then monopolized all the dignities and emoluments of the kingdom of France. The traditions, and even the written annals of the first century of our possession of America, connect the Baron de la Castine with the Jesuits, who were thought to entertain views of converting the savages to Christianity, not unmingled with the desire of establishing a more temporal dominion over their minds. It is, however, difficult to say whether taste, or religion, or policy, or necessity, induced this nobleman to quit the saloons of Paris for the wilds of the Penobscot. It is merely known that he passed the greater part of his life on that river, in a rude fortress that was then called a palace; that he had many wives, a numerous progeny, and that he possessed a great influence over most of the tribes that dwelt in his vicinity. He is also believed to have been the instrument of furnishing the savages who were hostile to the English, with ammunition, and with weapons of a more deadly character than those used in their earlier wars. In whatever degree he may have participated in the plan to exterminate the Puritans, death prevented him from assisting in the final effort of Metacom.

The Narragansetts are often mentioned in these pages. A few years before the period at which the tale commences, Miantonimoh had waged a ruthless war against Uncas, the Pequot or Mohegan chief. Fortune favored the latter, who, probably assisted by his civilized allies, not only overthrew the bands of the other, but succeeded in capturing the person of his enemy. The chief of the Narragansetts lost his life, through the agency of the whites, on the place that is now known by the appellation of "The Sachem's Plain."

It remains only to throw a little light on the leading incidents of the war of King Philip. The first blow was struck in June, 1675, rather more than half a century after the English first landed in New England, and just a century before blood was drawn in the contest which separated the colonies from the mother country. The scene was a settlement near the celebrated Mount Hope, in Rhode Island, where Metacom and his father had both long held their councils. From this point, bloodshed and massacre extended along the whole frontier of New England. Bodies of horse and foot were enrolled to meet the foe, and towns were burnt, and lives were taken by both parties, with little and often with no respect for age, condition, or sex.

In no struggle with the native owners of the soil was the growing power of the whites placed in so great jeopardy, as in this celebrated contest with King Philip. The venerable historian of Connecticut estimates the loss of lives at nearly one tenth of the whole number of the fighting men, and the destruction of houses and

other edifices to have been in an equal proportion. One family in every eleven, throughout all New England, was burnt out. As the colonists nearest the sea were exempt from the danger, an idea may be formed, from this calculation, of the risk and sufferings of those who dwelt in more exposed situations. The Indians did not escape without retaliation. The principal nations, already mentioned, were so much reduced as never afterwards to offer any serious resistance to the whites, who have since converted the whole of their ancient hunting-grounds into the abodes of civilized man. Metacom, Miantonimoh, and Conanchet, with their warriors, have become the heroes of song and legend, while the descendants of those who laid waste their dominions, and destroyed their race, are yielding a tardy tribute to the high daring and savage grandeur of their characters.

## CHAPTER I

"I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith."

—SHAKESPEARE.

THE incidents of this tale must be sought in a remote period of the annals of America. A colony of self-devoted and pious refugees from religious persecution had landed on the rock of Plymouth, less than half a century before the time at which the narrative commences; and they and their descendants had already transformed many a broad waste of wilderness into smiling fields and cheerful villages. The labours of the emigrants had been chiefly limited to the country on the coast, which, by its proximity to the waters that rolled between them and Europe, afforded the semblance of a connection with the land of their forefathers and the distant abodes of civilization. But enterprise, and a desire to search for still more fertile domains, together with the temptation offered by the vast and unknown regions that lay along their western and northern borders, had induced many bold adventurers to penetrate more deeply into the forests. The precise spot to which we desire to transport the imagination of the reader was one of these establishments of what may, not inaptly, be called the forlorn-hope in the march of civilization through the country.

So little was then known of the great outlines of the American continent, that, when the Lords Say and Seal, and Brooke, connected with a few associates, obtained a grant of the territory which now composes the State of Connecticut, the King of England affixed his name to a patent which constituted them proprietors of a country that should extend from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the South Sea. Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of ever subduing, or of even occupying a territory like this, emigrants from the mother colony of Massachusetts were found ready to commence the Herculean labor within fifteen years from the day when they had first put foot upon the well-known rock itself. The fort of Say-Brooke, the towns of Windsor, Hartford, and New Haven, soon sprang into existence, and from that period to this, the little community which then had birth has been steadily, calmly, and prosperously advancing in its career, a model of order and reason, and the hive from which swarms of industrious, hardy, and enlightened yeomen have since spread themselves over a surface so vast as to create an impression that they still aspire to the possession of the immense regions included in their original grant.

Among the religionists whom disgust of persecution had early driven into the voluntary exile of the colonies, was more than an usual proportion of men of character and education. The reckless and the gay, younger sons, soldiers

unemployed, and students from the Inns of Court, early sought advancement and adventure in the more southern provinces, where slaves offered immunity from labor, and where war, with a bolder and more stirring policy, oftener gave rise to scenes of excitement, and, of course, to the exercise of the faculties best suited to their habits and dispositions. The more grave, and the religiously disposed, found refuge in the colonies of New England. Thither a multitude of private gentlemen transferred their fortunes and their families, imparting a character of intelligence and a moral elevation to the country, which it has nobly sustained to the present hour.

The nature of the civil wars in England had enlisted many men of deep and sincere piety into the profession of arms. Some of them had retired to the colonies before the troubles of the mother country reached their crisis, and others continued to arrive, throughout the whole period of their existence, until the Restoration; when crowds of those who had been disaffected to the house of Stuart sought the security of these distant possessions.

A stern, fanatical soldier, of the name of Heathcote, had been among the first of his class to throw aside the sword for the implements of industry peculiar to the advancement of a newly established country. How far the influence of a young wife may have affected his decision, it is not germane to our present object to consider; though the records, from which the matter we are about to relate is gleaned, give reason to suspect that he thought his domestic harmony would not be less secure in the wilds of the New World, than among the companions with whom his earlier associations would naturally have brought him in communion.

Like himself, his consort was born of one of those families which, taking their rise in the franklins of the times of the Edwards and the Henries, had become possessors of hereditary landed estates, that, by their gradually increasing value, had elevated them to the station of small country gentlemen. In most other nations of Europe, they would have been rated in the class of the *petite noblesse*. But the domestic happiness of Captain Heathcote was doomed to receive a fatal blow from a quarter where circumstances had given him but little reason to apprehend danger. The very day he landed in the long-wished-for asylum, his wife made him the father of a noble boy, a gift that she bestowed at the melancholy price of her own existence. Twenty years the senior of the woman who had followed his fortunes to these distant regions, the retired warrior had always considered it to be perfectly and absolutely within the order of things, that he himself was to be the first to pay the debt of nature. While the visions which Captain Heathcote entertained of a future world were sufficiently vivid and distinct, there is reason to think they were seen through a tolerably long vista of quiet and comfortable enjoyment in this. Though the calamity cast an additional aspect of seriousness over a character that was already more than chastened by the subtleties of sectarian doctrines, he was not of a nature to be unmanned by any vicissitude of human fortune. He lived on, useful and unbending in his habits, a pillar of strength in the way of wisdom and

courage to the immediate neighborhood among whom, he resided, but reluctant from temper, and from a disposition which had been shadowed by withered happiness, to enact that part in the public affairs of the little state, to which his comparative wealth and previous habits might well have entitled him to aspire. He gave his son such an education as his own resources and those of the infant colony of Massachusetts afforded, and, by a sort of delusive piety, into whose merits we have no desire to look, he thought he had also furnished a commendable evidence of his own desperate resignation to the will of Providence, in causing him to be publicly christened by the name of Content. His own baptismal appellation was Mark; as indeed had been that of most of his ancestors, for two or three centuries. When the world was a little uppermost in his thoughts, as some-times happens with the most humbled spirits, he had even been heard to speak of a Sir Mark of his family, who had ridden, a knight, in the train of one of the more warlike kings of his native land.

There is some ground for believing that the great parent of evil early looked with malignant eye on the example of peacefulness, and unbending morality, that the colonists of New England were setting to the rest of Christendom. At any rate, come from what quarter they might, schisms and doctrinal contentions arose among the emigrants themselves; and men who together had deserted the firesides of their forefathers, in quest of religious peace, were ere long seen separating their fortunes, in order that each might enjoy, unmolested, those peculiar shades of faith which all had the presumption, no less than the folly, to believe were necessary to propitiate the omnipotent and merciful Father of the universe. If our task were one of theology, a wholesome moral on the vanity, no less than on the absurdity of the race, might be here introduced to some advantage.

When Mark Heathcote announced to the community in which he had now sojourned more than twenty years, that he intended for a second time to establish his altars in the wilderness, in the hope that he and his household might worship God as to them seemed most right, the intelligence was received with a feeling allied to awe. Doctrine and zeal were momentarily forgotten, in the respect and attachment which had been unconsciously created by the united influence of the stern severity of his air, and of the undeniable virtues of his practice. The elders of the settlement communed with him freely and in charity; but the voice of conciliation and alliance came too late. He listened to the reasonings of the ministers, who were assembled from all the adjoining parishes, in sullen respect; and he joined in the petitions for light and instruction that were offered up on the occasion, with the deep reverence with which he ever drew near to the footstool of the Almighty; but he did both in a temper into which too much positiveness of spiritual pride had entered, to open his heart to that sympathy and charity which, as they are the characteristics of our mild and forbearing doctrines, should be the study of those who profess to follow their precepts. All that was seemly, and all that was usual, was done; but the purpose of the stubborn sectarian remained unchanged. His final decision is worthy of being recorded.

"My youth was wasted in ungodliness and ignorance," he said, "but in my manhood have I known the Lord. Near two-score years have I toiled for the truth, and all that weary time have I passed in trimming my lamps, lest, like the foolish virgins, I should be caught unprepared; and now, when my loins are girded and my race is nearly run, shall I become a backslider and falsifier of the word? Much have I endured, as you know, in quitting the earthly mansion of my fathers, and in encountering the dangers of sea and land for the faith; and, rather than let go its hold, will I once more cheerfully devote to the howling wilderness, ease, offspring, and, should it be the will of Providence, life itself!"

The day of parting was one of unfeigned and general sorrow. Notwithstanding the austerity of the old man's character, and the nearly unbending severity of his brow, the milk of human kindness had often been seen distilling from his stern nature in acts that did not admit of misinterpretation. There was scarcely a young beginner in the laborious and ill-requited husbandry of the township he inhabited, a district at no time considered either profitable or fertile, who could not recall some secret and kind aid which had flowed from a hand that, to the world, seemed clenched in cautions and reserved frugality; nor did any of the faithful of his vicinity cast their fortunes together in wedlock, without receiving from him evidence of an interest in their worldly happiness, that was far more substantial than words.

On the morning when the vehicles, groaning with the household goods of Mark Heathcote, were seen quitting his door, and taking the road which led to the sea-side, not a human being of sufficient age, within many miles of his residence, was absent from the interesting spectacle. The leave-taking, as usual on all serious occasions, was preceded by a hymn and prayer, and then the sternly-minded adventurer embraced his neighbors, with a mien in which a subdued exterior struggled fearfully and strangely with emotions that more than once threatened to break through even the formidable barriers of his acquired manner. The inhabitants of every building on the road were in the open air, to receive and to return the parting benediction. More than once they who guided his teams were commanded to halt, and all near, possessing human aspirations and human responsibility, were collected to offer petitions in favor of him who departed and of those who remained. The requests for mortal privileges were somewhat light and hasty, but the askings in behalf of intellectual and spiritual light were long, fervent, and oft-repeated. In this characteristic manner did one of the first of the emigrants to the New World make his second removal into scenes of renewed bodily suffering, privation, and danger.

Neither person nor property was transferred from place to place, in this country, at the middle of the seventeenth century, with the despatch and with the facilities of the present time. The roads were necessarily few and short, and communication by water was irregular, tardy, and far from commodious. A wide barrier of forest lying between that portion of Massachusetts Bay from which Mark Heathcote emigrated, and the spot near the Connecticut River to which it was his intention to proceed, he

was induced to adopt the latter mode of conveyance. But a long delay intervened between the time when he commenced his short journey to the coast, and the hour when he was finally enabled to embark. During this detention he and his household sojourned among the godly-minded of the narrow peninsula, where there already existed the germ of a flourishing town, and where the spires of a noble and picturesque city now elevate themselves above so many thousand roofs.

The son did not leave the colony of his birth and the haunts of his youth with the same unwavering obedience to the call of duty as the father. There was a fair, a youthful, and a gentle being in the recently established town of Boston, of an age, station, opinions, fortunes, and, what was of still greater importance, of sympathies suited to his own. Her form had long mingled with those holy images which his stern instruction taught him to keep most familiarly before the mirror of his thoughts. It is not surprising, then, that the youth hailed the delay as propitious to his wishes, or that he turned it to the account which the promptings of a pure affection so naturally suggested. He was united to the gentle Ruth Harding only the week before the father sailed on his second pilgrimage.

It is not our intention to dwell on the incidents of the voyage. Though the genius of an extraordinary man had discovered the world which was now beginning to fill with civilized men, navigation at that day was not brilliant in accomplishments. A passage among the shoals of Nantucket must have been one of actual danger, no less than of terror; and the ascent of the Connecticut itself was an exploit worthy of being mentioned. In due time the adventurers landed at the English fort of Hartford, where they tarried for the season, in order to obtain rest and spiritual comfort. But the peculiarity of doctrine on which Mark Heathcote laid so much stress was one that rendered it advisable for him to retire still farther from the haunts of men. Accompanied by a few followers, he proceeded on an exploring expedition, and the end of the summer found him once more established on an estate that he had acquired by the usual simple forms practised in the colonies, and at the trifling cost for which extensive districts were then set apart as the property of individuals.

The love of the things of this life, while it certainly existed, was far from being predominant in the affections of the Puritan. He was frugal from habit and principle, more than from an undue longing after worldly wealth. He contented himself, therefore, with acquiring an estate that should be valuable, rather from its quality and beauty, than from its extent. Many such places offered themselves, between the settlements of Wethersfield and Hartford, and that imaginary line which separated the possessions of the colony he had quitted from those of the one he joined. He made his location, as it is termed in the language of the country, near the northern boundary of the latter. This spot, by the aid of an expenditure that might have been considered lavish for the country and the age; of some lingering of taste, which even the self-denying and subdued habits of his later life had not entirely extinguished; and of great natural beauty in the distribution of land, water,

and wood, the emigrant contrived to convert into an abode that was not more desirable for its retirement from the temptations of the world, than for its rural loveliness.

After this memorable act of conscientious self-devotion, years passed away in quiet, amid a species of negative prosperity. Rumors from the Old World reached the ears of the tenants of this secluded settlement, months after the events to which they referred were elsewhere forgotten, and tumults and wars in the sister colonies came to their knowledge only at distant and tardy intervals. In the meantime, the limits of the colonial establishments were gradually extending themselves, and valleys were beginning to be cleared nearer and nearer to their own. Old age had now begun to make some visible impression on the iron frame of the captain; and the fresh color of youth and health, with which his son had entered the forest, was giving way to the brown covering produced by exposure and toil. We may say, for, independently of the habits and opinions of the country, which strongly reprobated idleness, even in those most gifted by fortune, the daily difficulties of their situation, the chase, and the long and intricate passages that the veteran himself was compelled to adventure in the surrounding forest, partook largely of the nature of the term we have used. Ruth continued blooming and youthful, though maternal anxiety was soon added to her other causes of care. Still, for a long season, naught occurred to excite extraordinary regrets for the step they had taken, or to create particular uneasiness in behalf of the future. The borderers, for such by their frontier position they had in truth become, heard the strange and awful tidings of the dethronement of one king, of the *interregnum*, as a reign of more than usual vigor and prosperity is called, and of the restoration of the son of him who is strangely enough termed a martyr. To all these eventful and unwonted chances in the fortunes of kings, Mark Heathcote listened with deep and reverential submission to the will of Him in whose eyes crowns and sceptres are merely the more costly baubles of the world. Like most of his contemporaries, who had sought shelter in the western continent, his political opinions, if not absolutely republican, had a leaning to liberty that was strongly in opposition to the doctrine of the divine rights of the monarch, while he had been too far removed from the stirring passions which had gradually excited those nearer to the throne to lose their respect for its sanctity, and to sully its brightness with blood. When the transient and straggling visitors, that at long intervals visited the settlement, spoke of the Protector, who for so many years ruled England with an iron hand, the eyes of the old man would gleam with sudden and singular interest; and once when commenting after evening prayer on the vanity and the vicissitudes of this life, he acknowledged that the extraordinary individual who was, in substance if not in name, seated on the throne of the Plantagenets, had been the boon companion and ungodly associate of many of his youthful hours. Then would follow a long, wholesome, extemporaneous homily on the idleness of setting the affections on the things of life, and a half-suppressed, but still intelligible commendation of the wiser course which had led him to raise his own tabernacle in the wilderness, instead of weakening the chances

of eternal glory by striving too much for the possession of the treacherous vanities of the world.

But even the gentle and ordinarily little observant Ruth might trace the kindling of the eye, the knitting of the brow, and the flushings of his pale and furrowed cheek, as the murderous conflicts of the civil wars became the themes of the ancient soldier's discourse. There were moments when religious submission, and we had almost said, religious precepts, were partially forgotten, as he explained to his attentive son and listening grandchild, the nature of the onset, or the quality and dignity of the retreat. At such times, his still nervous hand would even wield the blade, in order to instruct the latter in its uses, and many a long winter evening was passed in thus indirectly teaching an art that was so much at variance with the mandates of his divine Master. The chastened soldier, however, never forgot to close his instruction with a petition extraordinary, in the customary prayer, that no descendant of his should ever take life from a being unprepared to die, except in justifiable defence of his faith, his person, or his lawful rights. It must be admitted, that a liberal construction of the reserved privileges would leave sufficient matter to exercise the subtlety of one subject to any extraordinary propensity to arms.

Few opportunities were however offered, in their remote situation and with their peaceful habits, for the practice of a theory that had been taught in so many lessons. Indian alarms, as they were termed, were not unfrequent, but, as yet, they had never produced more than terror in the bosoms of gentle Ruth and her young offspring. It is true, they had heard of travellers massacred, and of families separated by captivity, but either by a happy fortune, or by more than ordinary prudence in the settlers who were established along that immediate frontier, the knife and the tomahawk had as yet been sparingly used in the colony of Connecticut. A threatening and dangerous struggle with the Dutch, in the adjoining province of New Netherlands, had been averted by the foresight and moderation of the rulers of the new plantations; and though a warlike and powerful native chief kept the neighboring colonies of Massachusetts and Rhode Island in a state of constant watchfulness, from the cause just mentioned the apprehension of danger was greatly weakened in the breasts of those so remote as the individuals who composed the family of our emigrant.

In this quiet manner did years glide by, the surrounding wilderness slowly retreating from the habitations of the Heathcotes, until they found themselves in possession of as many of the comforts of life as their utter seclusion from the rest of the world could give them reason to expect.

With this preliminary explanation we shall refer the reader to the succeeding narrative for a more minute, and we hope for a more interesting account of the incidents of a legend that may prove too homely for the tastes of those whose imaginations seek the excitement of scenes more stirring, or of a condition of life less natural.

## CHAPTER II

"Sir, I do know you;  
And dare, upon the warrant of my art,  
Commend a dear thing to you."  
—*King Lear*.

AT the precise time when the action of our piece commences, a fine and fruitful season was drawing to a close. The harvests of hay and of the smaller corns had long been over, and the younger Heathcote, with his laborers, had passed a day in depriving the luxuriant maize of its tops, in order to secure the nutritious blades for fodder, and to admit the sun and air to harden a grain that is almost considered the staple production of the region he inhabited. The veteran Mark had ridden among the workmen during their light toil, as well to enjoy a sight which promised abundance to his flocks and herds, as to throw in, on occasion, some wholesome spiritual precept, in which doctrinal subtlety was far more prominent than the rules of practice. The hirelings of his son, for he had long since yielded the management of the estate to Content, were, without an exception, young men born in the country, and long use and much training had accustomed them to a blending of religious exercises with most of the employments of life. They listened, therefore, with respect, nor did an impious smile or an impatient glance escape the lightest-minded of their number during his exhortations, though the homilies of the old man were neither very brief nor particularly original. But devotion to the one great cause of their existence, austere habits, and unrelaxed industry in keeping alive a flame of zeal that had been kindled in the other hemisphere, to burn longest and brightest in this, had interwoven the practice mentioned with most of the opinions and pleasures of these metaphysical though simple-minded people. The toil went on none the less cheerily for the extraordinary accompaniment, and Content himself, by a certain glimmering of superstition, which appears to be the concomitant of excessive religious zeal, was fain to think that the sun shone more brightly on their labors, and that the earth gave forth more of its fruits while these holy sentiments were flowing from the lips of a father whom he piously loved and deeply revered.

But when the sun, usually at that season, in the climate of Connecticut, a bright, unshrouded orb, fell towards the tree-tops which bounded the western horizon, the old man began to grow weary with his own well-doing. He therefore finished his discourse with a wholesome admonition to the youths to complete their tasks before they quitted the field; and, turning the head of his horse, he rode slowly, and with a musing air, towards the dwellings. It is probable that for some time the

thoughts of Mark were occupied with the intellectual matter he had just been handling with so much power; but when his little nag stopped of itself on a small eminence, which the crooked cow-path he was following crossed, his mind yielded to the impression of more worldly and more sensible objects. As the scene that drew his contemplations from so many abstract theories to the realities of life was peculiar to the country, and is more or less connected with the subject of our tale, we shall endeavor briefly to describe it.

A small tributary of the Connecticut divided the view into two nearly equal parts. The fertile flats that extended on each of its banks for more than a mile had been early stripped of their burden of forest, and they now lay in placid meadows, or in fields from which the grain of the season had lately disappeared, and over which the plough had already left the marks of recent tillage. The whole of the plain, which ascended gently from the rivulet towards the forest, was subdivided into inclosures by numberless fences, constructed in the rude but substantial manner of the country. Rails, in which lightness and economy of wood had been but little consulted, lying in zig-zag lines, like the approaches which the besieger makes in his cautious advance to the hostile fortress, were piled on each other, until barriers seven or eight feet in height were interposed to the inroads of vicious cattle. In one spot, a large square vacancy had been cut into the forest, and though numberless stumps of trees darkened its surface, as indeed they did many of the fields on the flats themselves, bright green grain was sprouting forth luxuriantly from the rich and virgin soil. High against the side of an adjacent hill, that might aspire to be called a low rocky mountain, a similar invasion had been made on the domain of the trees; but caprice or convenience had induced an abandonment of the clearing, after it had ill requited the toil of felling the timber by a single crop. In this spot, straggling, girdled, and consequently dead trees, piles of logs, and black and charred stumps were seen, deforming the beauty of a field that would otherwise have been striking from its deep setting in the woods. Much of the surface of this opening, too, was now concealed by bushes, of what is termed the second growth, though here and there places appeared, in which the luxuriant white clover, natural to the country, had followed the close grazing of the flocks. The eyes of Mark were bent inquiringly on this clearing, which by an air line might have been half a mile from the place where his horse had stopped, for the sounds of a dozen differently toned cow-bells were brought on the still air of the evening to his ears, from among its bushes.

The evidences of civilization were the least equivocal, however, on and around a natural elevation in the land, which rose so suddenly on the very bank of the stream as to give to it the appearance of a work of art. Whether these mounds once existed everywhere on the face of the earth, and have disappeared before long tillage and labor, we shall not presume to conjecture; but we have reason to think that they occur much more frequently in certain parts of our own country than in any other familiarly known to ordinary travellers, unless, perhaps, it may be in some of the valleys of Switzerland. The practised veteran had chosen the summit of this

flattened cone for the establishment of that species of military defence which the situation of the country, and the character of the enemy he had to guard against, rendered advisable, as well as customary.

The dwelling was of wood, and constructed of the ordinary frame-work, with its thin covering of boards. It was long, low, and irregular, bearing marks of having been reared at different periods, as the wants of an increasing family had required additional accommodation. It stood near the verge of the natural declivity, and on that side of the hill where its base was washed by the rivulet, a rude piazza stretching along the whole of its front, and overhanging the stream. Several large, irregular and clumsy chimneys rose out of different parts of the roofs, another proof that comfort rather than taste had been consulted in the disposition of the buildings. There were also two or three detached offices on the summit of the hill, placed near the dwellings, and at points most convenient for their several uses. A stranger might have remarked that they were so disposed as to form, as far as they went, the different sides of a hollow square. Notwithstanding the great length of the principal building, and the disposition of the more minute and detached parts, this desirable formation would not, however, have been obtained, if it were not that two rows of rude constructions in logs, from which the bark had not even been stripped, served to eke out the parts that had been deficient. These primeval edifices were used to contain various domestic articles, no less than provisions; and they also furnished numerous lodging-rooms for the laborers and the inferior dependants of the farm. By the aid of a few strong and high gates of hewn timber, those parts of the building which had not been made to unite in the original construction were sufficiently connected to oppose so many barriers against admission into the inner court.

But the building which was most conspicuous by its position, no less than by the singularity of its construction, stood on a low, artificial mound, in the centre of the quadrangle. It was high, hexagonal in shape, and crowned with a roof that came to a point, and from whose peak rose a towering flagstaff. The foundation was of stone; but, at the height of a man above the earth, the sides were made of massive, squared logs firmly united by an ingenious combination of their ends, as well as by perpendicular supporters pinned closely into their sides. In this citadel, or block-house, as from its materials it was technically called, there were two different tiers of long, narrow loop-holes, but no regular windows. The rays of the setting sun, however, glittering on one or two small openings in the roof, in which glass had been set, furnished evidence that the summit of the building was sometimes used for other purposes than those of defence.

About half-way up the sides of the eminence on which the building stood, was an unbroken line of high palisadoes, made of the bodies of young trees, firmly knitted together by braces and horizontal pieces of timber, and evidently kept in a state of jealous and complete repair. The air of the whole of this frontier fortress was neat

and comfortable, and, considering that the use of artillery was unknown to those forests, not unmilitary.

At no great distance from the base of the hill, stood the barns and the stables. They were surrounded by a vast range of rude but warm sheds, beneath which sheep and horned cattle were usually sheltered from the storms of the rigorous winters of the climate. The surfaces of the meadows immediately around the outbuildings, were of a smoother and richer sward than those in the distance, and the fences were on a far more artificial, and perhaps durable, though scarcely on a more serviceable plan. A large orchard of some ten or fifteen years' growth, too, added greatly to the air of improvement which put this smiling valley in such strong and pleasing contrast to the endless and nearly untenanted woods by which it was environed.

Of the interminable forest, it is not necessary to speak. With the solitary exception on the mountain-side, and of here and there a wind-row, along which the trees had been uprooted by the furious blasts which sometimes sweep off acres of our trees in a minute, the eye could find no other object to study in the vast setting of this quiet rural picture, but the seemingly endless maze of wilderness. The broken surface of the land, however, limited the view to an horizon of no great extent, though the art of man could scarcely devise colors so vivid or so gay as those which were afforded by the brilliant hues of the foliage. The keen, biting frosts, known at the close of a New England autumn, had already touched the broad and fringed leaves of the maples, and the sudden and secret process had been wrought upon all the other varieties of the forest, producing that magical effect which can be nowhere seen except in regions in which nature is so bountiful and luxuriant in summer, and so sudden and so stern in the change of the seasons.

Over this picture of prosperity and peace, the eye of old Mark Heathcote wandered with a keen degree of worldly prudence. The melancholy sounds of the various toned bells, ringing hollow and plaintively among the arches of the woods, gave him reason to believe that the herds of the family were returning voluntarily from their unlimited forest pasturage. His grandson, a fine, spirited boy of some fourteen years, was approaching through the fields. The youngster drove before him a small flock, which domestic necessity compelled the family to keep at great occasional loss, and a heavy expense of time and trouble; both of which could alone protect them from the ravages of the beasts of prey. A species of half-witted serving-lad, whom charity had induced the old man to harbor among his dependants, was seen issuing from the woods, nearly in a line with the neglected clearing on the mountain-side. The latter advanced, shouting and urging before him a drove of colts, as shaggy, as wayward, and nearly as untamed as himself.

"How now, weak-one," said the Puritan, with a severe eye, as the two lads approached him with their several charges from different directions, and nearly at the same instant; "how now, sirrah! dost worry the cattle in this gait when the eyes of the prudent are turned from thee? Do as thou wouldst be done by, is a just and healthful admonition, that the learned and the simple, the weak and the strong of

mind, should alike recall to their thoughts and their practice. I do not know that an over-driven colt will be at all more apt to make a gentle and useful beast in its prime, than one treated with kindness and care."

"I believe the evil one has got into all the kine, no less than into the foals," sullenly returned the lad; "I've called to them in anger, and I've spoken to them as if they had been my natural kin, and yet neither fair word nor foul tongue will bring them to hearken to advice. There is something frightful in the woods this very sun-down, master; or colts that I have driven the summer through would not be apt to give this unfair treatment to one they ought to know to be their friend."

"Thy sheep are counted, Mark?" resumed the grandfather, turning towards his descendant with a less austere, but always an authoritative brow; "thy mother hath need of every fleece to provide covering for thee and others like thee; thou knowest, child, that the creatures are few, and our winters weary and cold."

"My mother's loom shall never be idle from carelessness of mine," returned the confident boy; "but counting and wishing cannot make seven-and-thirty fleeces where there are only six-and-thirty backs to carry them. I have been an hour among the briers and bushes of the hill logging, looking for the lost wether, and yet neither lock, hoof, hide, nor horn, is there to say what hath befallen the animal."

"Thou hast lost a sheep! this carelessness will cause thy mother to grieve."

"Grandfather, I have been no idler. Since the last hunt, the flock hath been allowed to browse the woods; for no man, in all that week, saw wolf, panther, or bear, though the country was up, from the great river to the outer settlements of the colony. The biggest four-footed animal that lost its hide in the muster was a thin-ribbed deer; and the stoutest battle given was between wild Whittal Ring, here, and a woodchuck that kept him at arm's-length for the better part of an afternoon."

"Thy tale may be true, but it neither finds that which is lost, nor completeth the number of thy mother's flock. Hast thou ridden carefully throughout the clearing? It is not long since I saw the animals grazing in that quarter. What hast thou twisting in thy fingers, in that wasteful and unthankful manner, Whittal?"

"What would make a winter blanket, if there was enough of it—wool; and wool, too, that came from the thigh of old Straight-Horns; else have I forgotten a leg that gives the longest and coarsest hair at the shearing."

"That truly seemeth a lock from the animal that is wanting," exclaimed the other boy. "There is no other creature in the flock with fleece so coarse and shaggy. Where found you the handful, Whittal Ring?"

"Growing an the branch of a thorn. Queer fruit this, masters, to be seen where young plums ought to ripen!"

"Go, go," interrupted the old man; "thou idlest, and misspendest the time in vain talk. Go, fold thy flock, Mark; and do thou, weak-one, house thy charge with less

uproar than is wont. We should remember that the voice is given to man, firstly, that he may improve the blessing in thanksgivings and petitions; secondly, to communicate such gifts as may be imparted to himself, and which it is his bounden duty to attempt to impart to others; and then, thirdly, to declare his natural wants and inclinations."

With this admonition, which probably proceeded from a secret consciousness in the Puritan that he had permitted a momentary cloud of selfishness to obscure the brightness of his faith, the party separated. The grandson and the hireling took their several ways to the folds, while old Mark himself slowly continued his course towards the dwellings. It was near enough to the hours of darkness, to render the preparations we have mentioned prudent; still, no urgency called for particular haste in the return of the veteran to the shelter and protection of his own comfortable and secure abode. He therefore loitered along the path, occasionally stopping to look into the prospects of the young crops that were beginning to spring up in readiness for the coming year, and at times bending his gaze around the whole of his limited horizon, like one who had the habit of exceeding and unremitted care.

One of these numerous pauses promised to be much longer than usual. Instead, of keeping his understanding eye on the grain, the look of the old man appeared fastened, as by a charm, on some distant and obscure object. Doubt and uncertainty, for many minutes, seemed to mingle in his gaze. But all hesitation had apparently disappeared, as his lips severed, and he spoke, perhaps unconsciously to himself, aloud.

"It is no deception," were the low words, "but a living and an accountable creature of the Lord's. Many a day has passed since such a sight hath been witnessed in this vale; but my eye greatly deceives me, or yonder cometh one ready to ask for hospitality, and, peradventure, for Christian and brotherly communion."

The sight of the aged emigrant had not deceived him. One who appeared a wayworn and weary traveller had indeed ridden out of the forest, at a point, where a path, that was easier to be traced by the blazed trees that lay along its route, than by any marks on the earth itself, issued into the cleared land. The progress of the stranger had at first been so wary and slow as to bear the manner of exceeding and mysterious caution. The blind road along which he must have ridden not only far but hard, or night had certainly overtaken him in the woods, led to one of the distant settlements that lay near to the fertile banks of the Connecticut. Few ever followed its windings but they who had especial affairs, or extraordinary communion, in the way of religious friendships, with the proprietors of the Wish-Ton-Wish, as, in commemoration of the first bird that had been seen by the emigrants, the valley of the Heathcotes was called.

Once fairly in view, any doubt or apprehension that the stranger might at first have entertained, disappeared. He rode boldly and steadily forward, until he drew a rein

that his impoverished and weary beast gladly obeyed, within a few feet of the proprietor of the valley, whose gaze had never ceased to watch his movements, from the instant when the other first came within view. Before speaking, the stranger, a man whose head was getting gray, apparently as much with hardship as with time, and one whose great weight would have proved a grievous burden, in a long ride, to even a better-conditioned beast than the ill-favored provincial hack he had ridden, dismounted, and threw the bridle loose upon the drooping neck of the animal. The latter, without a moment's delay, and with a greediness that denoted long abstinence, profited by its liberty, to crop the herbage where it stood.

"I cannot be mistaken, when I suppose that I have at length reached the valley of the Wish-Ton-Wish," the visitor said, touching a soiled and slouched beaver that more than half concealed his features. The question was put in an English that bespoke a descent from those who dwell in the midland counties of the mother country, rather than in that intonation which is still to be traced, equally in the western portions of England and in the eastern States of the Union. Notwithstanding the purity of his accent, there was enough in the form of his speech to denote a severe compliance with the fashion of the religionists of the times. He used that measured and methodical tone which was, singularly enough, believed to distinguish an entire absence of affectation in language.

"Thou hast reached the dwelling of him thou seekest; one who is a submissive sojourner in the wilderness of the world, and an humble servitor in the outer temple."

"This then is Mark Heathcote!" repeated the stranger in tones of interest, regarding the other with a look of long, and, possibly, of suspicious investigation.

"Such is the name I bear. A fitting confidence in Him who knows so well how to change the wilds into the haunts of men, and much suffering, have made me the master of what thou seeest. Whether thou comest to tarry a night, a week, a month, or even for a still longer season, as a brother in care, and I doubt not one who striveth for the right, I bid thee welcome."

The stranger thanked his host by a slow inclination of the head; but the gaze, which began to partake a little of the look of recognition, was still too earnest and engrossing to admit of verbal reply. On the other hand, though the old man had scanned the broad and rusty beaver, the coarse and well-worn doublet, the heavy boots, and, in short, the whole attire of his visitor, in which he saw no vain conformity to idle fashions to condemn, it was evident that personal recollection had not the smallest influence in quickening his hospitality.

"Thou hast arrived happily," continued the Puritan; "had night overtaken thee in the forest, unless much practised in the shifts of our young woodsmen, hunger, frost, and a supperless bed of brush would have given thee motive to think more of the body than is either profitable or seemly."

The stranger might possibly have known the embarrassment of these several hardships; for the quick and unconscious glance he threw over his soiled dress should have betrayed some familiarity, already, with the privations to which his host alluded. As neither of them, however, seemed disposed to waste further time on matters of such light moment, the traveller put an arm through the bridle of his horse, and, in obedience to an invitation from the owner of the dwelling, they took their way towards the fortified edifice on the natural mound.

The task of furnishing litter and provender to the jaded beast was performed by Whittal Ring, under the inspection, and at times under the instructions, of its owner and his host, both of whom appeared to take a kind and commendable interest in the comfort of a faithful hack, that had evidently suffered long and much in the service of its master. When this duty was discharged, the old man and his unknown guest entered the house together; the frank and unpretending hospitality of a country like that they were in, rendering suspicion or hesitation qualities that were unknown to the reception of a man of white blood; more especially if he spoke the language of the island which was then first sending out its swarms to subdue and possess so large a portion of a continent that nearly divides the earth in moieties.

## CHAPTER III

"This is most strange; your father's in some passion  
That works him strongly."

—*Tempest.*

A FEW hours made a great change in the occupations of the different members of our simple and secluded family. The kine had yielded their nightly tribute; the oxen had been released from the yoke, and were now secure beneath their sheds; the sheep were in their folds, safe from the assaults of the prowling wolf; and care had been taken to see that everything possessing life was gathered within the particular defences that were provided for its security and comfort. But while all this caution was used in behalf of living things, the utmost indifference prevailed on the subject of that species of movable property which elsewhere would have been guarded with at least an equal jealousy. The homely fabrics of the looms of Ruth lay on their bleaching-ground, to drink in the night-dew; and ploughs, harrows, carts, saddles, and other similar articles were left in situations so exposed as to prove that the hand of man had occupations so numerous and so urgent as to render it inconvenient to bestow labor where it was not considered absolutely necessary.

Content himself was the last to quit the fields and the outbuildings. When he reached the postern in the palisadoes, he stopped to call to those above him, in order to learn if any yet lingered without the wooden barriers. The answer being in the negative, he entered, and drawing-to the small but heavy gate, he secured it with bar, bolt, and lock, carefully and jealously, with his own hand. As this was no more than a nightly and necessary precaution, the affairs of the family received no interruption. The meal of the hour was soon ended; and conversation, with those light toils which are peculiar to the long evenings of the fall and winter, in families on the frontier, succeeded as fitting employments to close the business of a laborious and well-spent day.

Notwithstanding the entire simplicity which marked the opinions and usages of the colonists at that period, and the great equality of condition which even to this hour distinguishes the particular community of which we write, choice and inclination drew some natural distinctions in the ordinary intercourse of the inmates of the Heathcote family. A fire so bright and cheerful blazed on an enormous hearth in a sort of upper kitchen, as to render candles or torches unnecessary. Around it were seated six or seven hardy and athletic young men, some drawing coarse tools carefully through the curvatures of ox-bows, others scraping down the helms of axes, or perhaps fashioning sticks of birch into homely but convenient brooms. A demure, side-looking young woman kept her great wheel in motion, while one or

two others were passing from room to room with the notable and stirring industry of handmaidens busied in the more familiar cares of the household. A door communicated with an inner and superior apartment. Here was a smaller but an equally cheerful fire; a floor which had recently been swept, while that without had been freshly sprinkled with river sand; candles of tallow, on a table of cherry-wood from the neighboring forest; walls that were wainscoted in the black oak of the country, and a few other articles of a fashion so unique, and of ornaments so ingenious and rich, as to announce that they had been transported from beyond sea. Above the mantel were suspended the armorial bearings of the Heathcotes and the Hardings, elaborately emblazoned in tent-stitch.

The principal personages of the family were seated around the latter hearth, while a straggler from the other room, of more than usual curiosity, had placed himself among them, marking the distinction in ranks, or rather in situation, merely by the extraordinary care which he took that none of the scrapings should litter the spotless oaken floor.

Until this period of the evening, the duties of hospitality and the observances of religion had prevented familiar discourse. But the offices of the housewife were now ended for the night, the handmaidens had all retired to their wheels, and, as the bustle of a busy and more stirring domestic industry ceased, the cold and self-restrained silence which had hitherto only been broken by distant and brief observations of courtesy, or by some wholesome allusion to the lost and probationary condition of man, seemed to invite an intercourse of a more general quality.

"You entered my clearing by the southern path," commenced Mark Heathcote, addressing himself to his guest with sufficient courtesy, "and needs must bring tidings from the towns on the river side. Has aught been done by our councillors at home, in the matter that pertaineth so closely to the well-being of this colony?"

"You would have me say whether he that now sitteth on the throne of England hath listened to the petitions of his people in this province, and hath granted them protection against the abuses which might so readily flow out of his own ill-advised will, or out of the violence and injustice of his successors?"

"We will render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and speak reverently of men having authority. I would fain know whether the agent sent by our people hath gained the ears of those who counsel the prince, and obtained that which he sought?"

"He hath done more," returned the stranger, with singular asperity; "he hath even gained the ear of the Lord's anointed."

"Then is Charles of better mind and of stronger justice than report hath spoken. We were told that light manners and unprofitable companions had led him to think more of the vanities of the world and less of the wants of those over whom he hath

been called by Providence to rule, than is meet for one that sitteth on a high place. I rejoice that the arguments of the man we sent have prevailed over more evil promptings, and that peace and freedom of conscience are likely to be the fruits of the undertaking. In what manner hath he seen fit to order the future government of this people?"

"Much as it hath ever stood—by their own ordinances. Winthrop hath returned, and is the bearer of a royal charter which granteth all the rights long claimed and practised. None now dwell under the crown of Britain with fewer offensive demands on their consciences, or with lighter calls on their political duties, than the men of Connecticut."

"It is fitting that thanks should be rendered therefor where thanks are most due," said the Puritan, folding his hands on his bosom, and sitting for a moment with closed eyes, like one who communed with an unseen being. "Is it known by what manner of argument the Lord moved the heart of the prince to hearken to our wants; or was it an open and manifest token of his power?"

"I think it must needs have been the latter," rejoined the visitor, with a manner that grew still more caustic and emphatic. "The bauble, that was the visible agent, could not have weighed greatly with one so proudly seated before the eyes of men."

Until this point in the discourse, Content and Ruth, with their offspring, and the two or three other individuals who composed the audience, had listened with the demure gravity which characterized the manners of the country. The language, united with the ill-concealed sarcasm conveyed by the countenance, no less than the emphasis of the speaker, caused them now to raise their eyes, as by a common impulse. The word "bauble" was audibly and curiously repeated. But the look of cold irony had already passed from the features of the stranger, and it had given place to a stern and fixed austerity that imparted a character of grimness to his hard and sunburnt visage. Still he betrayed no disposition to shrink from the subject; but after regarding his auditors with a glance in which pride and suspicion were strongly blended, he resumed the discourse.

"It is known," he added, "that the grandfather of him the good people of these settlements have commissioned to bear their wants over sea, lived in the favor of the man who last sat upon the throne of England; and a rumor goeth forth, that the Stuart, in a moment of princely condescension, once decked the finger of his subject with a ring wrought in a curious fashion. It was a token of the love which a monarch may bear a man."

"Such gifts are beacons of friendship, but may not be used as gay and sinful ornaments," observed Mark, while the other paused like one who wished none of the bitterness of his allusions to be lost.

"It matters not whether the bauble lay in the coffers of the Winthrops, or has long been glittering before the eyes of the faithful, in the Bay, since it hath finally

proved to be a jewel of price," continued the stranger. "It is said in secret that this ring hath returned to the finger of a Stuart, and it is openly proclaimed that Connecticut hath a charter!"

Content and his wife regarded each other in melancholy amazement. Such an evidence of wanton levity and of unworthiness of motive, in one who was intrusted with the gift of earthly government, pained their simple and upright minds, while old Mark, of still more decided and exaggerated ideas of spiritual perfection, distinctly groaned aloud. The stranger took a sensible pleasure in this testimony of their abhorrence of so gross and so unworthy a venality, though he saw no occasion to heighten its effect by further speech. When his host stood erect, and in a voice that was accustomed to obedience called on his family to join, in behalf of the reckless ruler of the land of their fathers, in a petition to Him who alone could soften the hearts of princes, he also arose from his seat. But even in this act of devotion, the stranger bore the air of one who wished to do pleasure to his entertainers, rather than to obtain that which was asked.

The prayer, though short, was pointed, fervent, and sufficiently personal. The wheels in the outer room ceased their hum, and a general movement denoted that all there had arisen to join in the office; while one or two of their number, impelled by deeper piety or stronger interest, drew near to the open door between the rooms, in order to listen. With this singular but characteristic interruption, that particular branch of the discourse which had given rise to it altogether ceased.

"And have we reason to dread a rising of the savages on the borders?" asked Content, when he found that the moved spirit of his father was not yet sufficiently calmed to return to the examination of temporal things; "one who brought wares from the towns below, a few months since, recited reasons to fear a movement among the red-men."

The subject had not sufficient interest to open the ears of the stranger. He was deaf, or he chose to affect deafness, to the interrogatory. laying his two large and weather-worn, though still muscular hands, on a visage that was much darkened by exposure, he appeared to shut out the objects of the world, while he communed deeply, and, as would seem by a slight tremor, that shook even his powerful frame, terribly, with his own thoughts.

"We have many to whom our hearts strongly cling, to heighten the smallest symptom of alarm from that quarter," added the tender and anxious mother, her eye glancing at the uplifted countenances of two little girls, who, busied with their light needle-work, sat on stools at her feet. "But I rejoice to see that one who hath journeyed from parts where the minds of the savages must be better understood hath not feared to do it unarmed."

The traveller slowly uncovered his features, and the glance that his eye shot over the face of the last speaker was not without a gentle and interested expression. Instantly recovering his composure, he arose, and turning to the double leathern