

**WARNER SUSAN, ANNA
BARTLETT WARNER**

**SAY AND SEAL,
VOLUME I**

Susan Warner

Say and Seal, Volume I

«Public Domain»

Warner S.

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Anna Bartlett Warner

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PREFACE

It is a melancholy fact, that this book is somewhat larger than the mould into which most of the fluid fiction material is poured in this degenerate age. You perceive, good reader, that it has run over—in the latest volume.

Doubtless the Procrustean critic would say, "Cut it off,"—which point we waive.

The book is really of very moderate limits—considering that two women had to have their say in it.

It is pleasant to wear a glove when one shakes hands with the Public; therefore we still use our ancestors' names instead of our own,—but it is fair to state, that in this case there are a pair of gloves!—Which is the right glove, and which the left, the Public will never know.

A word to that "dear delightful" class of readers who believe everything that is written, and do not look at the number of the last page till they come to it—nor perhaps even then. Well they and the author know, that if the heroine cries—or laughs—too much, it is nobody's fault but her own! Gently they quarrel with him for not permitting them to see every Jenny happily married and every Tom with settled good habits. Most lenient readers!—when you turn publishers, then will such books doubt less be written! Meantime, hear this.

In a shady, sunshiny town, lying within certain bounds—geographical or imaginary,—these events (really or in imagination) occurred. Precisely when, the chroniclers do not say. Scene opens with the breezes which June, and the coming of a new school teacher, naturally create. After the fashion of the place, his lodgings are arranged for him beforehand, by the School Committee. But where, or in what circumstances, the scene may close,—having told at the end of the book, we do not incline to tell at the beginning.

CHAPTER I

The street was broad, with sidewalks, and wide grass-grown borders, and a spacious track of wheels and horses' feet in the centre. Great elms, which the early settlers planted, waved their pendant branches over the peaceful highway, and gave shelter and nest-room to numerous orioles, killdeer, and robins; putting off their yellow leaves in the autumn, and bearing their winter weight of snow, in seeming quiet assurance that spring would make amends for all. So slept the early settlers in the churchyard!

Along the street, at pleasant neighbourly intervals—not near enough to be crowded, nor far enough to be lonely—stood the houses,—comfortable, spacious, compact,—"with no nonsense about them." The Mong lay like a mere blue thread in the distance, its course often pointed out by the gaff of some little sloop that followed the bends of the river up toward Suckiaug. The low rolling shore was spotted with towns and spires: over all was spread the fairest blue sky and floating specks of white.

Not many sounds were astir,—the robins whistled, thief-like, over the cherry-trees; the killdeer, from some high twig, sent forth his sweet clear note; and now and then a pair of wheels rolled softly along the smooth road: the rush of the wind filled up the pauses. Anybody who was down by the Mong might have heard the soft roll of his blue waters,—any one by the light-house might have heard the harsher dash of the salt waves.

I might go on, and say that if anybody had been looking out of Mrs. Derrick's window he or she might have seen—what Mrs. Derrick really saw! For she was looking out of the window (or rather through the blind) at the critical moment that afternoon. It would be too much to say that she placed herself there on purpose,—let the reader suppose what he likes.

At the time, then, that the village clock was striking four, when meditative cows were examining the length of their shadows, and all the geese were setting forth for their afternoon swim, a stranger opened Mrs. Derrick's little gate and walked in. Stretching out one hand to the dog in token of good fellowship, (a classical mind might have fancied him breaking the cake by whose help Quickear got past the lions,) he went up the walk, neither fast nor slow, ascended the steps, and gave what Mrs. Derrick called "considerable of a rap" at the door. That done, he faced about and looked at the far off blue Mong.

Not more intently did he eye and read that fair river; not more swiftly did his thoughts pass from the Mong to things beyond human ken; than Mrs. Derrick eyed and read—his back, and suffered her ideas to roam into the far off regions of speculation. The light summer coat, the straw hat, were nothing uncommon; but the silk umbrella was too good for the coat—the gloves and boots altogether extravagant!

"He ain't a bit like the Pattaquasset folks, Faith," she said, in a whisper thrown over her shoulder to her daughter.

"Mother—"

Mrs. Derrick replied by an inarticulate sound of interrogation.

"I wish you wouldn't stand just there. Do come away!"

"La, child," said Mrs. Derrick, moving back about half an inch, "he's looking off into space."

"But he'll be in.—"

"Not till somebody goes to the door," said Mrs. Derrick, "and there's not a living soul in the house but us two."

"Why didn't you say so before? Must I go, mother?"

"He didn't seem in a hurry," said her mother,—"and I wasn't. Yes, you can go if you like, child—and if you don't like, I'll go."

With a somewhat slower step than usual, with a slight hesitating touch of her hand to the smooth brown hair which lay over her temples, Miss Faith moved through the hall to the front door,

gently opened it, and stood there, in the midst of the doorway, fronting the stranger. By no means an uncomely picture for the frame; for the face was good, the figure trim, and not only was the rich hair smooth, but a little white ruffle gave a dainty setting to the throat and chin which rose above it, both themselves rather on the dainty order.

I say fronting the stranger,—yet to speak truth the stranger was not fronting her. For having made one more loud appeal to the knocker, having taken off his hat, the better to feel the soft river breeze, he stood as before "looking off into space;" but with one hand resting more decidedly upon the silk umbrella.

Faith took a minute's view of decidedly pleasant outlines of shoulders and head—or what she thought such—glanced at the hand which grasped the umbrella handle,—and then lifting her own fingers to the knocker of the door, caused it gently to rise and fall.

A somewhat long breath escaped the stranger—as if the sound chimed in with his thoughts—nothing more.

Faith stood still and waited.

Perhaps that last sound of the knocker had by degrees asserted its claim to reality; perhaps impatience began to assert *its* claim; perhaps that long elm-tree shadow which was creeping softly on, even to his very feet, broke in upon the muser's vision. Certainly he turned with a very quick motion towards the door, and a gesture of the hand which said that this time the knocker should speak out. The door however stood open,—the knocker beyond his reach; and Miss Faith so nearly within it, that he dropped his hand even quicker than he had raised it.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, with a grave inclination of the head. "I believe I knocked."

"Yes, sir—I thought you had forgotten," said Faith; not with perfect demureness, which she would like to have achieved. "Will you please to come in?" And somewhat regardless of consequences, leaving the hall door where it stood, Faith preceded her guest along the hall and again performed for him the office of door-opener at the parlour, ushering him thus into the presence of her mother.

Mrs. Derrick was seated in the rocking-chair, at the furthest corner from the window, and perfectly engrossed with the last monthly magazine. But she came out of them all with wonderful ease and promptness, shook hands very cordially with the new comer, seated him in her corner and chair before he could make much resistance, and would also have plunged him into the magazine—but there he was firm.

"If you would only make yourself comfortable while I see where your baggage is?" said the good lady.

"But I can tell you where it is, ma'am," said he looking up at her,—"it is at the station, and will be here in half an hour."

"Well when did you have dinner?" said Mrs. Derrick, resolved upon doing something.

"Yesterday," was his quiet reply. "To-day I have been in the cars."

"O my! my!" said Mrs. Derrick,—"then of course we'll have tea at once. Faith!"

"I'm here, mother. I'll go and see to it, right away."

But in some mysterious manner the stranger reached the doorway before either of the ladies.

"Mrs. Derrick—Miss Faith—I told you that I had had no dinner, and that was true. It is also true that I am in not the least hurry for tea. Please do not have it until your usual time." And he walked back to his seat.

But after the slightest possible pause of hesitancy, Faith had disappeared. Her mother followed her.

"Child," she said, "what on earth is his name?"

"Mother! how should I know? I didn't ask him."

"But the thing is," said Mrs. Derrick, "I *did* know,—the Committee told me all about it. And of course he thinks I know, and I don't—no more than I do my great-grandmother's name, which I never did remember yet."

"Mother—shall I go and ask him?—or wait till after supper?"

"O you sha'n't go," said her mother. "Wait till after supper and we'll send Cindy. He won't care about his name till he gets his tea, I'll warrant. But what made you so long getting the door open, child? Does it stick?"

"Why," said Faith, baring her arms and entering upon sundry quick movements about the room, "it *was* open and he didn't know it."

"Didn't know it!" said Mrs. Derrick,— "my! I hope he ain't short-sighted. Now Faith, I'm not going to have you burn your face for all the school teachers in Connecticut. Keep away, child, I'll put on the kettle myself. Cindy must have found her beau again—it's as tiresome as tiresome can be."

"It's just as well, mother; I'd rather do it myself. Now you go in and find what his name is, and I'll have everything together directly. The oven's hot now."

"I'll go in presently," said Mrs. Derrick; "but as to asking him what his name is—la, child, I'd just as soon ask him where he came from." And in deep thought on the subject, Mrs. Derrick stepped briskly about the kitchen.

"Faith," she said, "where shall I ask him to sit?"

"Will you pour out tea—or shall I, mother?"

"What's that to do?"

"Why I was thinking—but it don't matter where you put him. There's four sides to the table."

"Don't talk of my putting him anywhere, child—I'm as afraid of him as can be." And Mrs. Derrick went back to see how time went with her guest.

It went fast or slow, I suppose, after all, somewhat according to the state of his appetite. One hour and ten minutes certainly had slipped away—if he was hungry he knew that another ten minutes was following in train—when at length the parlour door opened again and Faith stood there, with a white apron on and cheeks a good deal heightened in colour since the date of their last appearance.

"Mother, tea's ready. Cindy hasn't got back." And having made this gentle announcement, Faith disappeared again, leaving it to her mother to shew the way to the supper-room.

This was back of the parlour and communicated with the kitchen, from which Faith came in as they entered, bearing a plate of white biscuits, smoking hot, in her hand. The floor was painted with thick yellow paint, smooth and shining; plenty of windows let in plenty of light and the sweet evening air; the table stood covered with a clean brownish table-cloth,—but what a supper covered that! Rosy slices of boiled ham, snowy rounds of 'milk emptyings', bread, strawberries, pot-cheeses, pickles, fried potatoes, and Faith's white cakes, with tea and coffee!

Now as Faith had laid the clean napkin for the stranger at the foot of the table, opposite her mother, it cannot be thought presumption in him that he at once took his seat there; thus relieving Mrs. Derrick's mind of an immense responsibility. Yet something in his manner then made her pause and look at him, though she did not expect to see him bow his head and ask for a blessing on the meal before them. If that was presumption, neither of his hearers felt it so,—the little flush on the mother's cheek told rather of emotion, of some old memory now quickened into life. Her voice even trembled a little as she said,—

"Will you have tea or coffee, sir?"

And Faith offered her biscuit.

"Or there's bread, if you like it better, sir."

"The biscuits are best," said her mother,— "Faith's biscuits are always good."

And he took a biscuit, while a very slight unbending of the lines of his face said that the excellence of Faith's handiwork was at least not always so apparent.

"Miss Faith, what shall I give you in return that is beyond your reach and (comparatively) within mine?"

Possibly—possibly, the slight grave opening of two rather dark eyes confessed that in her apprehension the store thus designated, from which he might give her, was very large indeed. But if that was so, her lips came short of the truth, for she answered,—

"I don't want anything, thank you."

"Not even butter?"—with his hand on the knife.

Faith seemed inclined not to want butter, but finally submitted and held out her plate. Whereupon, having helped her and himself, the stranger diverged a little, with the rather startling question,

"What sort of a Flora have you in this neighbourhood?"

"There isn't any, mother?" said Faith, with a doubtful appeal towards the tea-tray.

A pleasant look fell upon her while her look went away—a look which said he would like to tell her all about the matter, then and there; but merely taking another of the white biscuits, he went on to ask whether the roads were good and the views fine.

"The roads are first-rate," said Mrs. Derrick. "I don't know much of views myself, but Faith thinks they're wonderful."

"I don't suppose they are *wonderful*," said Faith; "but it is pretty up the Mong, and I am sure, mother, it's pretty down on the shore towards the sunsetting."

"And how is it towards the sunrising?"

"I never saw it—we never go down there then," Faith said, with a very frank smile.

"Faith always stays by me," said Mrs. Derrick; "if I can't go, she won't. And of course I never can at that time of day. It's quite a way down to the shore."

"What shore?"

"It's the sea-shore—that is, not the real sea-shore—it's only the Sound," said Faith; "but there is the salt-water, and it is as good as the sea."

"How far off?" said the stranger, bestowing upon Faith a saucer of strawberries.

Faith would have asked him to help himself, but taking notice mentally that he was extremely likely to do so, she contented herself with replying, "It's about two miles."

"And what are some of the 'good' things there?"

"Perhaps you wouldn't think it much," said Faith modestly;—"but the water is pretty, and I like to see the ships and vessels on it going up and down; and the points of the shore and the wet stones look such beautiful colours when the sun is near set."

"I like stones—whether wet or dry," said her questioner.

"Most people here don't like them," said Faith. "But there are plenty down by the sea-shore.—And plenty on the farm too," she added.

"Ah, people like and dislike things for very different reasons, Miss Faith," he answered; "so perhaps your neighbours and I are not so far apart in our opinions as you may think. Only I believe, that while there is 'a time to cast away stones,' there is also 'a time to gather stones together'—and therein perhaps they would not agree with me."

Faith looked up, and her lips parted—and if the thought had been spoken which parted them, it would probably have been a confession that she did not understand, or a request for more light. But if her face did not say it for her she did not say it for herself.

If anybody could have seen Mrs. Derrick's face while these little sentences went back and forth, he would have acknowledged it was worth the sight. Her awe and admiration of every word uttered by the stranger—the intense interest with which she waited for every word spoken by Faith—the slight look of anxiety changing to one of perfect satisfaction,—was pretty to see.

"Faith," she said when tea was over, and her guest had walked to the front door to take another look at 'space,' "Faith, don't you think he liked his supper?"

"I should think he would—after having no dinner," said Faith.

"But it was such a mercy, child, that you hadn't gone out to supper anywhere—I can't think what I should have done. There's Cindy this minute!—run and tell her to go right away and find out what his name is—tell her I want to know,—you can put it in good words."

"Mother!—I'd rather ask him myself."

But that did not suit Mrs. Derrick's ideas of propriety. And stepping out into the kitchen she despatched Cindy on her errand. Cindy presently came back from the front door, and went into the dining-room, but not finding Mrs. Derrick she handed a card to Faith.

"It's easy done," said Cindy. "I just asked him if he'd any objections towards tellin' his name—and he kinder opened his eyes at me and said no. Then I said, says I, Mis' Derrick do know, and she'd like ter. 'Miss Derrick!' says he—and he took out his pencil and writ that. But I'd like to know *what* he cleans his pencil with," said Cindy in conclusion, "for I'm free to confess I never see brass shine so in my born days."

Faith took the card and read,—

JOHN ENDECOTT LINDEN.

She looked a little curiously at the pencilling, at the formation of the capitals and of the small letters; then laid it down and gave her attention to the dishes of the supper-table.

CHAPTER II

The next day was Saturday. The morning opened with grey clouds, covering the sky, but which were light and light-broken and promised to roll away entirely as soon as the sun should reach a commanding position in the heavens. The sun however was still quite distant from such a position, in fact was not much more than an hour high, when Lucinda, who was sweeping the front door steps, was hailed from the front door by a person not one of the party of the preceding evening, and very unlike either of them. It was a lady, not young, of somewhat small figure, trim, and nicely dressed. Indeed she was rather handsomely dressed and in somewhat French taste; she had showy gold earrings in her ears, and a head much more in the mode than either Mrs. Derrick's or her daughter's. The face of this lady was plain, decidedly; but redeemed by a look of sense and shrewdness altogether unmixed with ill nature. The voice spoke alert and pleasantly.

"So Lucindy, you had company last night, didn't you?"

"May be we did and may be we didn't," said Lucindy, brushing away with great energy at an imaginary bit of lint at the end of the upper step. "I do' know but we'd just as good call him one of the family."

"So much at home already? I missed seeing him last night—I couldn't get home. What's he like, Cindy? and what has he done?"

"Done?" said Cindy—"well he's went out a'most afore I was up. And as to like, Miss Dilly—just you look at him when he comes in. He looks some like folks, and yet he don't, neither."

"He's out, is he?"

"Yes," said Cindy, reducing a large family of spiders to temporary starvation and despair,—"he's out—if he ain't gone in nowheres. Miss Dilly, if you'll stand just inside the door I can wash the steps just as well.

"What's the gentleman out so early for? Maybe he's missed some of his luggage, Cindy."

"Hope he ha'n't got no more—without its lighter," said Cindy. "However, he carried it upstairs himself, I'm free to confess. I guess 'twarn't for luggage he went out, 'cause he asked about breakfast time, special."

"If he means to be out till then he'll have a good walk of it."

It wanted five minutes of breakfast time, and Mrs. Derrick—what with stepping into the kitchen to oversee Cindy, and stepping to the front window to oversee the street—was warm enough for a cooler morning.

"Faith," she said, referring as usual to her daughter, "Faith—what shall we do if he don't come?"

"I guess he'll come, mother;—he knows the time. The things won't hurt much by waiting a little."

As she spoke, the little front gate swung softly to, and the person in question came leisurely up the steps and into the hall. Then having just glanced into the parlour, he at once—with a promptitude which bespoke him too punctual himself to doubt the punctuality of others—advanced to the dining-room door and walked in.

Mrs. Derrick's face shewed gratification mingled with her good nature. Faith smiled; and Miss Dilly was duly introduced as Miss Delia Danforth, Mrs. Derrick's aunt, then on a visit at Pattaquasset.

"You've taken an early stroll this morning, sir," said this last lady. "View the country?"

"No," said Mr. Linden, "I have been viewing the town."

"Ah! Well I call that viewing the country. Town and country, all's one here; and it makes a very pleasant sort of place. But what do you call the *town*, sir?—Do you drink coffee?"

"The town," said Mr. Linden, in answer to the first question—receiving his coffee-cup from Mrs. Derrick by way of answer to the second,— "means in this instance, Miss Danforth, that spot of country which is most thickly settled. Yes, ma'am—I drink coffee."

"Very bad for you, sir; don't you know it?"

"Bad for me as one of the human race? or as an individual specially marked out not to drink it?"

"Dear me!" said Miss Danforth sipping her own tea—"I don't know what you are 'marked out' for. I think it's a mistake for everybody to think he is 'marked' for something special—they set the mark themselves, and generally it don't fit."

"But the fact that a man often gets the wrong mark, by no means proves that there is no right one which belongs to him," said Mr. Linden, looking gravely at Faith as if he meant she should smile.

Faith seemed to look at the question however rather seriously, for dropping her knife and fork she asked,

"How shall a man know his mark?"

"By earnest consideration and prayer," he answered, really grave this time. "I know of no other way, Miss Faith."

What a remark that was! it silenced the whole table. Knives and forks and spoons had it alone, with only words of necessity; till Faith asked Mr. Linden if he would not have another cup of coffee.

"Certainly!" he said handing her his cup. "There is so much to be said on both sides of that little bit of china—I must not be partial in my attention."

"But you can't study both sides of a subject at once," said the coffee-hater.

"Then take them alternately—and (figuratively) walk round your coffee-cup, surveying its fair proportions from different points of view. If the coffee is strong and you are nervous—that's one thing. Again, if the coffee be weak and you be phlegmatic—that's another."

"The coffee's not strong to-day," said Mrs. Derrick with a regretful shake of the head.

"Nor am I phlegmatic,"—with the slightest possible indication of a smile.

"Do you think," said Miss Danforth, "a man is better able to decide questions of common judgment for having studied a great deal?—learned a great many things, I mean."

"That depends very much upon what effect his studies have had upon his judgment. Mrs. Derrick—are you trying to break me off from coffee by degrees? this cup has no sugar in it."

"O my!" said Mrs. Derrick, colouring up in the greatest confusion. "I do beg your pardon, sir! Faith, take the sugar-bowl, child, and pick out some large lumps."

"You will get more praise from Miss Danforth than blame from me, ma'am," said Mr. Linden, submitting his cup to Faith's amendment and watching the operation.

"I don't know," said Miss Danforth goodhumouredly. "Maybe he can stand it.—If he takes two cups I should say he can. How do you like the profession of teaching, sir?"

Now to say truth, Mr. Linden did not know—not by actual practice, but it was also a truth which he did not feel bound to disclose. He therefore stirred his coffee with a good deal of deliberation, and even tasted it, before he replied,

"What would you say to me, Miss Danforth, if I professed to be fond of teaching some people some things? Miss Faith, that last lump of sugar was potent."

"What sort of people, and what sort of things, for instance?" said the lady.

"The things I know best, and the people who think they know least—for instance," he replied.

"I should say you know definitions," was Miss Danforth's again goodhumoured rejoinder.

"What did you say was the matter with the sugar, sir?" said Faith.

"I said it was potent, Miss Faith,—or I might have said, powerful. But indeed it was not the sugar's fault—the difficulty was, there was not enough coffee to counterbalance it."

"I put in too much!" said Faith, making a regretful translation of this polite speech.

"Yes"—said Mr. Linden with great solemnity as he set down the empty cup,—"but too much sugar is at least not a common misfortune. With what appreciation I shall look back to this, some day when I have not enough! What did you think of the sunrise this morning?"

"Do you mean, because the sky was covered with clouds?" said Faith. "But there was enough—the sun looked through; and the colours were beautiful. Did you see them?"

"I wonder when you did, child?" said Miss Danforth;—"up to your elbows in butter!"

"Yes, I saw them. Then you are true to your name, Miss Faith, and find 'enough' in a cloudy sky?—Pray, Miss Danforth, what depth of butter does a churning yield in this region?"

"I guess," said Miss Danforth laughing, "you never saw much of farmer's work—did you?"

"Is butter-making farmer's work?" said Mr. Linden with a face of grave inquiry.

"Here's the trustys"—said Cindy opening the door; "at least that's what they said they be, but I'm free to confess 'tain't nobody but Squire Deacon and Parson Somers."

"Do they want me?" said Mr. Linden looking round.

"I guess likely"—said Cindy. "The Squire does come here to see Miss Faith, but I guess 'tain't her he wants this time."

And Cindy vanished.

"What do the trustees want?" said Miss Danforth.

"Upon the testimony of Cinderella, they want me," said Mr. Linden. "Miss Faith, may I have a glass of water?—What they want to do with me, Miss Danforth, is a little uncertain."

"Well," said Miss Danforth, "I think you'll be able to prevent them!"

He rose to take the glass from Faith's hand, and then merely inquiring whether the ladies were coming to second him, left the room.

Parson Somers was a young-looking, good-looking, affable gentleman, who pressed the ladies' hands very cordially and was very happy to see them. Squire Deacon was younger, and likewise good looking, but affability he had never been charged with. Over the handsome cut of face, the strong well-built figure, he wore a manner as rough as a bear's great-coat; only at some times and for some people the roughness was brushed down. It never would stay, any more than the various elegant phrases with which Deacon sometimes seasoned his speech, would take root there and spread.

"Quite an agreeable variation," said Mr. Somers,—"*ha*—in such a place as Pattaquasset—to have a new arrival among us. Mr. Linden—I hope you will like our little town. You have a pleasant experience of us to begin with."

"Yes but, Parson, don't make him think we're all like some," said Squire Deacon,—and as he turned towards Faith the beaming of his face seemed almost reflected in his brass buttons. "Dreadful gloomy morning, Miss Faith!"

"Mr. Linden has probably seen too much of the world," said Mr. Somers,—"*not to know that—ha!*—too great a preponderance of good is not to be looked for."

"May as well look for as much as you can find," said Miss Danforth. "A good deal's lost by not looking for it."

"Ah," said the Squire, with another glance at Faith, "it's not so hard to find things, neither, Miss Danforth. You remember Sinbad the sailor lookin' down into the vale of diamonds?"

"Don't remember him a bit. What did he see there?"

"Nothin' *but* diamond jewellery," said Squire Deacon in a sentimental tone. "Miss Faith, you doubtless recollect the tale?"

"I hope," said Mr. Somers,—"*ha!*—friend Deacon—you don't mean that Mr. Linden should look for a valley of diamonds in Pattaquasset?"

"Whereabouts does the valley lie, sir?" said Mr. Linden.

But the Squire, as if a new idea had struck him, replied somewhat brusquely,

"It don't lie nowhere, sir, nowhere but in fancy's field."

"I suppose," said Mr. Somers smiling blandly, "Mr. Linden's peculiar course of business don't lead him much into that field."

"You can strike into it 'most anywhere," said Miss Danforth. "Mr. Linden's an early man—he'll find the valley of diamonds, if it's in the town."

"Miss Faith told me there were stones enough here," he said, "but she did not hint that any of them were precious."

"We shall expect," said Mr. Somers, "to see some of our stones—I mean, some of our hard heads and thick heads—grow precious, or—a—improve!—under Mr. Linden's management."

"Pray sir," said Squire Deacon, suddenly recollecting that he was a 'trusty,' "what do you consider the best plan for the instruction of youth? what is your method?"

Mr. Linden looked contemplatively out of the window.

"I think sir, if the boys are very rough I should first teach them manners. If they are smoother boys, I should teach them spelling,—if they have already learned spelling, I should let them read."

The Squire bowed.

"Quite satisfactory, sir. Mr. Somers—I think perhaps Mr. Linden would like to visit our little temple of litteratur."

"I should be very gratified to accompany Mr. Linden in viewing so much of Pattaquasset. I trust, Mr. Linden, that the highest—ha—the moral and religious teaching, of the youth here, will not be quite overlooked in your system."

The reply that first rose to Mr. Linden's lips came not forth. He checked himself—rather perhaps in deference to the subject than anything else, and simply answered,

"I trust not, sir."

And with many low bows from the Squire, the two gentlemen went into the hall, Mr. Linden following. But he came back the next moment to ask the dinner hour.

"We are as apt to have it at noon as any time," said Faith. "Will that do, Mr. Linden? we could have it later."

"That will do perfectly. Only if the 'temple of literature' opens and swallows me up, Miss Faith, don't wait—that's all."

And with a smile that was a strong contrast to the face he had bestowed upon the trustees, he went after them.

CHAPTER III

Monday morning came, with its hands full of work. They were willing hands that were outstretched to receive the load,—strong hands too, and skilful; but it may be, better suited to other work. Certainly as the days passed Endecott's gravity took a deeper tinge, and his words became fewer. Still maintaining his morning walk, and a like tasting of the air at night,—ever punctual at meals, and when there displaying an unruffled equanimity and cheerfulness,—the even tones of his voice shewed sometimes a little weariness, and his step grew more thoughtful. And so the week rolled on, and the afternoon sun of Friday began to near the horizon.

It was a warm afternoon, soft and balmy; a little haze on the sky, the least veil upon the Mong's further shore; the summer roses hanging their heads, heavy with sleep and sweetness. The honeysuckles on the porch grew sweeter and sweeter as the sun went down, and the humming-birds dipped into those long flagons, or poised them selves in mid-air for a survey.

In the porch sat the three ladies. Each had been busy, and now each laid down her work, obedient to unseen influences. The warm breeze was softly rubbing Faith's cheek with its rouging fingers, and her mother gazed—nor could give one look to humming-birds or roses.

Her thoughts however, took greater range—or the low chiming of the village clock sent them off; for she presently said,

"Faith, my dear, what have we got for tea?"—that meal being under Faith's special superintendence.

"Very good blackberries, mother, and beautiful raspberries; and I cut my cream-cheese; and Cindy is ready to bake the bannocks. Butter's as sweet as it can be, this churning. Will that do?—Mr. Linden likes raspberries and cream," she added a little lower.

Mrs. Derrick gave a comprehensive "Yes, child," to both parts of Faith's reply, and then stopped and looked away up the street. For down the street at that moment came Mr. Linden, walking leisurely, his head bent towards one of his older scholars who had both hands clasped round his arm. The boy's upraised eager face shewed even at a distance how earnestly he was talking.

"There he comes!" said Miss Danforth.

"Who is that with him?" said Faith.

"Reuben Taylor, child," her mother answered.

Then as they came near the gate, and stopped and shook hands, Reuben cried out (in answer to words which they did not hear)

"Let *me* go! do, please, Mr. Linden!"—and went; while his teacher opened the gate, picked one of the drooping roses, came up the steps and taking off his hat bowed to the assembled ladies.

"Well, Mr. Linden," said Miss Danforth, "how do you find the Pattaquasset diamonds?"

"I find, madam, that they shine—as is the custom of diamonds."

"Are you going to let Reuben Taylor go?"

"Whither?" said Mr. Linden.

"Why, where he asked you. Is *he* one of Mr. Somers' precious stones?"

"He has gone," was the smiling reply. "Precious?—yes,—everybody is precious in one sense."

"You haven't been to college for nothing," said Miss Danforth, who would talk about anything. "I should like you to find out in what sense *I* am precious. I've a good many friends—but there isn't one of 'em that wouldn't eat and drink just as well with me out of the world as in it."

He smiled a little—though rather soberly, and stood watching the changing colours of clouds and sky for a minute or two without speaking. Then, half to himself as it were, low but very distinctly, he repeated—

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels."

The answer to this was only in pantomime, but striking. Miss Danforth did not speak, and instead thereof turned her head over her shoulder and looked away steadily over the meadows which stretched north of the house into the distance. Faith's eyes fell to the floor and the lids drooped over them; and as plain a veil of shadow fell upon her face. Mrs. Derrick's eyes went from one to the other with a look which was not unwonted with her, and a little sigh which said she thought everybody was good but herself.

"Bain't ye never comin' in to supper?" said Cindy, framing herself in the doorway. "I want to get out after supper, Miss Faith," she said dropping her voice,— "I do, real bad."

"Is all ready, Cindy?"

"Yes marm," said Cindy. "I'm free to confess there's a pile o' cakes baked."

"Miss Faith, when do you mean to shew me the shore?" said Mr. Linden turning round.

"You have been so busy all the week," said Faith,— "and then you didn't speak of it, Mr. Linden—I can go any time."

"My dear," said Mrs. Derrick, "there comes Squire Deacon. Maybe he'll stay to supper. I'll go and put on another cup."

Mr. Linden gave one glance at the opening gate, and followed Mrs. Derrick into the house.

"Miss Faith," said the Squire, "do you think the night dews conducive to—to your comfort?"

"When they are falling," said Faith abstractedly. "Why not, Mr. Deacon?"

"To be sure!" said the Squire gallantly,— "honeysuckles and such things do. But what I mean is this. Cilly's goin' to get up a great shore party to-morrow, and she says she couldn't touch a mouthful down there if you didn't go. And like enough some other folks couldn't neither."

"Mother's gone in to tea. Will you come in and ask her, Squire?"

"Couldn't stay, Miss Faith—Cilly's lookin' out for me now. But you can tell—your mother'll go if you do,—or you can go if she don't, you and Miss Danforth. It's good for you now, Miss Faith,—the saline breezes are so very—different," said the Squire.

"When are you going, Mr. Deacon?"

"Soon as we can tackle up after dinner, Cilly thought. But fix your own time, Miss Faith—I'll call for you any hour of the twenty-six."

Faith hesitated, and pulled a leaf or two from the honeysuckle; then she spoke boldly.

"But you forget we have a gentleman here, Squire;—we can't go without Mr. Linden."

"I don't want his help to drive my horse," said the Squire, with a little change of tone,— "but whoever hinders his going, I don't. The shore's wide, Miss Faith,—it don't matter how many gets onto it. There's no chance but he'll go if you ask him. Who wouldn't!" said the Squire, relapsing into his former self.

"We'll come down then some time in the course of the afternoon," said Faith, "and see what you are doing."

"Then I sha'n't drive you down, sha'n't I?" said Squire Deacon. "Never mind—it's no matter,—come when you like, Miss Faith, we'll be glad to see you, anyhow." And the Squire closed the little gate after him energetically.

"Cinderella is in despair, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden as Faith entered the dining-room. "Miss Danforth—how could you keep Squire Deacon so long, and then send him home to supper!"

"It's all your fault, sir," said Miss Danforth cheerfully. "And I guess the Squire has got his supper."

"He must be a man of quick despatch," said Mr. Linden; while Faith after a glance to see if her bannocks were right, made her announcement.

"Mother, there's a shore party to-morrow."

"Who's going, child?"

"Squire Deacon and Cecilia—and I don't know who else—and he came to ask us. Will you go and take tea with us at the shore, Mr. Linden?"

"Does that mean that my tea is to be transported to the shore, and that I am to go there to find it, Miss Faith?"

"You have a very puzzling way of putting things," said Faith laughing, though her look bore out her words. "I don't think it means that. *Your* tea won't be there before you are, Mr. Linden. Wouldn't you like to go?"

"The Squire says there is room enough on the shore," suggested Miss Danforth. "I suppose he wants a good deal for himself, or he wouldn't have thought of it."

"Perhaps he thinks I want a good deal," said Mr. Linden. "Well—in consideration of the width of the shore, I think I will go. Is not that your advice, Miss Faith? What are the pros and cons,—if you were to state them fairly?"

"Well," said Faith, "you will have a pleasant ride, or walk, down—whichever you like;—*I* think it is very pleasant. You can go in the water, if you like, which everybody does; there's a beautiful shore; and I suppose that would be pleasant. You'll see all that is pretty about the place while the people are digging clams and preparing supper; and then you'll have supper; and then we shall come home; and I think it is all pleasant, except that there will be too many people. I like it best with just a few."

"As if we were to go down there to-night in the moonlight.—Now Miss Faith—what is the other side?"

"Just that—the too many people. There isn't a chance to enjoy anything quietly. I can enjoy the people too, sometimes, but not the other things at the same time so well. Perhaps you can, Mr. Linden."

"I can sometimes enjoy the other things at the same time—better."

Faith again looked a little puzzled, but answered with a simple

"Then I dare say you will like it."

"What I am puzzled about," said he smiling, "is, how you are to shew me the shore. Miss Danforth—why is that bread-plate so attractive to me, while I am like the reverse end of the magnet to it?"

"But my dear," said Mrs. Derrick, for the bread-plate was suggestive,— "ain't you going along with the Squire's party?"

"I said we would come after, mother."

"The Squire only said there was room on the shore," added Miss Danforth.

"Is the shore wide enough for us to drive down there? or must we walk?" asked Mr. Linden.

"But you'll eat supper with them, of course," said Mrs. Derrick.

"Of course, mother. The wagon must go, Mr. Linden. There's room enough for anything."

Mr. Linden made no comment upon that, and finished his tea in comparative silence. Then went forth, as was his custom, to the post-office, and—as was not his custom—returned very soon. Mrs. Derrick and Miss Danforth had gone out to see a neighbour, and Faith sat alone in the twilight parlour. It was very twilight there, but he walked in and stood waiting for his eyes to discover what there might be.

"There is nobody here but me, Mr. Linden," said a very soft and clear voice. "Do you want anything?"

"I wanted to see you—and am foiled by the darkness. Are you tired, Miss Faith?"

"Never. I wasn't sitting in the dark for that."

"Would you object to coming into the light?"

"Not at all," said Faith laughing. "Which way?"

"There is to be a fine illumination to-night, which I should like to have you see."

"An illumination! Where is it? Shall I want my bonnet?"

"You will be better illuminated without it,—but you may perhaps take cold."

"How do you make your scholars understand you?" said Faith. "I am sure I must need illuminating.—So much, that I had better leave my bonnet, Mr. Linden?"

"I think you may—if you will take some light substitute. Why my scholars *are* my scholars, Miss Faith."

"What then?" said Faith stopping short.

"Why then I am their teacher."

"I half wish I was a scholar too," said Faith with a tone which filled up the other 'half'—"I don't know much, Mr. Linden."

"About illuminations? I will promise you some light upon that point."

With which encouragement, Faith fetched the scarf which was to do duty for a bonnet if desired, and they set out.

"Now Miss Faith," said her companion as he closed the gate, "if you will shew me the road, I will shew you the shore.—Which will not at all interfere with your shewing it to me to-morrow."

"The shore!" said Faith. "To-night? Are you in earnest?"

"Very much in earnest. You prefer some other road?"

"No indeed—it's beautiful, and I like it very much. Cindy," she said to that damsel whom they opportunely passed at the entrance of the lane—"you tell my mother I am gone to take a walk." And so they passed on.

The way was down a lane breaking from the high road of the village, just by Mrs. Derrick's house. It was a quiet country lane; passing between fields of grass or grain, with few trees near at hand. Here and there a house, small and unnotable like the trees. Over all the country the moon, near full though not high, threw a gentle light; revealing to the fancy a less picturesque landscape than the sun would have shewn; for there were no strong lines or points to be made more striking by her partial touches, and its greatest beauty lay in the details which she could not light up. The soft and rich colours of grain and grass, the waving tints of broken ground and hillside, were lost now; the flowers in the hedges had shrunk into obscurity; the thrifty and well-to-do order of every field and haystack, could hardly be noted even by one who knew it was there. Only the white soft glimmer on a wide pleasant land; the faint lighting of one side of trees and fences, the broader salutation to a house-front, and the deeper shadow which sometimes told of a piece of woodland or a slight hilly elevation.

Then all that was passed; and the road descended a little steep to where it crossed, by a wooden bridge, a small stream or bed of a creek. Here the moon, now getting up in the sky, did greater execution; the little winding piece of water glittered in silver patches, and its sedgy borders were softly touched out; with the darker outlines of two or three fishing-boats.

And so on, towards the shore. Now the salt smell met and mingled with the perfume of woods and flowers, and the road grew more and more sandy. But still the fields waved with Indian-corn, were sweet with hay, or furrowed with potatoes. Then the outlines of sundry frame bathing-houses appeared in the distance, and near them the road came to an end.

The shore was improved by the moonlight,—its great rocks, slippery with sea-weed, glittered with a wet sheen. The Sound wore its diamonds royally, and each tiny wave broke in a jewelled light upon the sand. Far in the distance the dim shore of Long Island lay like a black line upon the water; and sloops and schooners sailed softly on their course, or tacked across the rippling waves, a fleet of "Black spirits and white."

"What do you think of the illumination, Miss Faith?" said her companion, when they had sat still for five minutes.

"What do you think of it, I think I should say. Mr. Linden, I have shewed you the shore!"

"You!"—

"Who else?"

"Were you ever here before by moonlight?"

"I don't know—No, I think not. Were you ever here before at all?"

"Is it owing to you that I am here now?"

"You couldn't have got here without me," said Faith, stooping to turn over some of the glittering pebbles at her feet;—"and I couldn't have got here without you. I am willing to allow that we are square, Mr. Linden. I must!—for you will turn a corner faster than I can catch you."

"If you really suppose that first proposition to be true," said Mr. Linden raising his eyebrows, "why of course there is no more to be said. Miss Faith, how would you like to be sailing about in one of those phantom ships?"

"I should like it very well," said Faith, "in a good time. I went to Pequot in one once. It was very pleasant. Why do you call them phantoms?"

"Look at that one standing off across the moonlight towards the other shore,—gliding along so silently with her black sails all set,—does she look real?—You cannot even hear the creaking of a rope."

Faith looked, and drew an interrupted deep breath. She had lived in a world of realities. Perhaps this was the first 'phantom' that had ever suggested itself—or been suggested—to her imagination. Possibly something of the same thought crossed her mind; for she drew her breath again a little short as she spoke.

"Yes!—it's beautiful!—But I live in such a different world, Mr. Linden,—I never thought of such a thing before."

He smiled—pleasantly and thoughtfully. "How came you to see the sunrise colours the other day, Miss Faith?"

"O I see them always. And that puts me in mind of something I have been wanting to say to you every day all the week! and I could never find a chance. You asked me that morning, Mr. Linden, if I was *true to my name, finding enough in a cloudy sky*. What did you mean? What did you mean by being true to my name'?"

"I shall have to use your name a little freely, to tell you," he said. "It is faith's privilege to be independent of circumstances. Faith always finds something wherein to rejoice. If the sky be clear,

'Far into distant worlds she pries, And brings eternal glories near.'

If cloudy, faith uses her glass as a prism, and in one little ray of light finds all the colours of the rainbow."

"I don't know what a prism is," said Faith somewhat sadly.

"A prism, in strictness, is a piece of glass cut in a particular way, so that the colourless sunbeams which pass through it are divided into their many-coloured members. But other things act as prisms,—the rain-drops in a shower—the lustres upon your church chandelier. You have seen the colours there?"

"Well, how do they do that?"

"I must take some other time to tell you,—it would be too long a matter to-night. And I doubt whether you ought to sit here any longer."

"But *this* Faith don't do as you say," she said, as she slowly and rather unwillingly rose from her seat. "And I don't understand how any faith can."

"This Faith must study the Bible then, and do what *that* says." The tone was encouraging though the voice was grave.

He was not answered; and the homeward walk was begun. But Faith stopped and turned again to look before she had gone three paces.

"I am in no hurry," Mr. Linden said,— "take your own time—only do not take cold."

Faith turned away silently again, and began trudging along the sandy road which led back to the lane. The moonlight shewed the way better now. Passing on, as they neared home one house after another shewed its glimmer of light and gave forth its cheerful sound of voices. From one, however, the sound was *not* cheerful. It was Squire Deacon's.

"Well, you'll see to-morrow, Cilly—if the sky don't fall,—you'll see. Folks thinks the water down to the shore's mighty deep—'way over their heads—till they've made its acquaintance; and then they find out they can wade round in it 'most anywheres."—

"What's the matter with the Squire?" said Faith with a slight laugh, as these strange statements reached her ears.

"I should think—to use his own phraseology—he must be 'over his head' somewhere," replied Mr. Linden.

Whereat Faith's laugh deepened, but the low sweet tone of it only sounded an instant.

"My dear!" said Mrs. Derrick, running out as they entered the gate, "ain't you very imprudent? Wasn't she very imprudent, Mr. Linden?"

"Very prudent, ma'am, for she wore a shawl."

"And didn't want that, mother," said Faith.

CHAPTER IV

The illumination lasted through the night—until

"Night's candles were burnt out, and jocund day
Stood tip-toe on the misty mountain tops."

Very jocund she looked, with her light pink veils wreathing about the horizon, and the dancing white clouds which hurried up as the sun rose, driven by a fresh wind. Mr. Linden declared, when he came in to breakfast, that the day promised to equal the preceding night.

"And whoever wants more," he added, "must wait; for I think it will not surpass it."

With which, Mr. Linden stirred his coffee, and told Miss Danforth with a little look of defiance, "it was particularly good—she had better try a cup."

Miss Danforth instituted a fierce inquiry as to the direction of the preceding evening's walk; to which Faith gave an unsatisfactory answer.

"Did you ever look at coffee in connexion with the fatigues of life?" pursued Mr. Linden.

"I shall, probably, in future," said Miss Danforth. "Now Mr. Linden, I ask you; you're a nice man to give a straight answer;—where did you and Faith go?"

"I am glad I am a nice man," said Mr. Linden, "but I can scarce give a straight answer to that question."

"Why not, for pity's sake?"

"It must needs travel a crooked road."

"Did you?"

"It has left a meandering sort of recollection in my mind."

"Where did it lead to?"

"It led to another."

"What I want to know is," said Miss Danforth, "where did you find yourselves when you were furthest from home."

"Let me shew you," said he. "Suppose your plate to be a rock, and this tumbler of radishes a tree, and the table-cloth grass,—the moon over your head, crickets under your feet. Miss Faith walks round the rock, I follow her,—and we both follow the road. On the way, the still night air is enlivened with owls, grasshoppers, family secrets. Our attention is thus divided between the moon and sublunary affairs. Miss Faith—what shall I give you?"

Miss Danforth's curiosity seemed for once willing to be satisfied with fun; and Faith's hunger was in the same predicament.

"But child," said Mrs. Derrick, who had bent her attention upon the diagram at the other end of the table, "I don't recollect any such place!"

"Mother!" said Faith,—and her gravity gave way hopelessly.

"Squire Deacon sends his best compliments of the season," said Cindy opening the door a while later, "and he says they'll be to take supper precisely at four. I'm free to confess he don't look much sweeter than common," added Cindy.

"Pray Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden as they left the table, "what is the precise depth of water down at the shore?"

Faith had very near broke down again, for she laughed and blushed, a good deal more than her wont; and at last replied that "it depended on how far people went in—she never went very far herself."

"I was naturally curious," said he.

After a dinner somewhat more hasty than usual, Mr. Linden and two of the ladies set off for the shore. The blackberry jam, or some other hindering cause, kept Mrs. Derrick at home.

The country by daylight looked rich and smooth. At not a very great distance a slight hilly elevation bounded the horizon line, which nearer seen would have been found bristling with stern grey rock, itself a ridge of rock, one of the ribs of the rigid soil. But where the lane led down to the water, fair fields and crops extended on every side, spotted very picturesquely with clumps of woodland. All looked genial in the summer light. If the distant rocks spoke a stubborn soil, the fine growth between said that man had overcome it; and the fine order everywhere apparent said too that the victory had been effectual for man's comfort and prosperity. The stone walls, in some places thin and open, told of times when they had been hurriedly put up; moss on the rail fences said the rails had been long doing duty; within them no fields failed of their crops, and no crops wanted hoeing or weeding. No straw lay scattered about the ricks; no barrack roofs were tumbling down; no gate-posts stood sideways; no barnyards shewed rickety outhouses or desolate mangers. No cattle were poor, and seemingly, no people. It was a pretty ride the party had, in the little wagon, behind an old horse that knew every inch of the way and trotted on as if he were a part of it.

"How do you like Pattaquasset, Mr. Linden?" said Faith, leaning forward to reach him where he sat alone on the front seat.

"I like it—well," he answered a little musingly.

They came to the bridge and stream; and now they could see that Awasee River did not fill its sometime channel, but flowed in a bottom of alluvial soil, rich in bright-coloured marsh grass, which stretched up the country between two of those clumps of woodland they had seen from a distance. A little further on, just where the sandy road branched off to the shore, there stood a farm house, with a conglomerate of barns and outhouses, all painted to match, in bright yellow picked out with red.

"Do you see that settlement of farm-houses?" said Faith, leaning forward again,— "of all sizes, in uniform?"

"Is it the fashion here to put 'earmarks' on buildings?" he answered with a smile.

"Mr. Linden! You should ask Mr. Simlins that. I see his wagon there—he'll be down at the shore very likely. He's a character. He lives a mile and a half further on, just where the road turns off to Mrs. Somers'."

"Simlins!" was the only reply.

"He's a good sort of man, but he's funny."

"What is a good sort of man, Miss Faith?"

The old horse was walking quietly along the sandy road, and the smell of the salt water was becoming pleasantly perceptible.

"I suppose I mean by it," said Faith thoughtfully, "a man who is not *very good*, but who is on the good side of things."

"I don't call that a good sort," said Mr. Linden,—then looking round with a little smile he said, "You ought to say 'sort o' good.'"

Faith looked serious and as if she felt half rebuked.

"But," she said, "you would not call that a *bad* sort?"

"Then you mean that he is in the same road with what you call the *best* people, only not so far advanced?"

"No," said Faith doubtfully, "I don't mean so much as that.—I don't think Mr. Simlins is in the same road with you."

"How many best roads are there to the same place? As for instance—does it matter which of these two I take to the shore?"

"Only one leads to the shore," said Faith.

"Yet they seem to lie near together at the outset. The same is true of the 'other shore.'"

Faith sat back in her place with a face exceedingly unlike a young lady who was going to a merry-making.

But they were near the shore now; not only the salt smell proclaimed it, but they could see the various bathing and other houses collected at the place, and the flag which floated high from the flag-staff, telling all who were not concerned that it was a gala day. A piece of ground immediately surrounding these buildings was fenced in; as they neared the gate, it was opened for them, and a tall farmer-looking man, whose straw hat shaded a sensible face, nodded as they passed.

"That is Mr. Simlins!" said Faith.

Mr. Simlins seemed for the present to be king of the castle. Horses there were, and wagons, standing here and there, and one or two oldish faces looked out from the windows of one long shanty; but the rest of the birds had flown—into the water! It was the time of low tide, and the long strips of rippling water which lay one beyond the other, were separated by sand banks nearly as long. In these little tide lakes were the bathers,—the more timid near shore, taking almost a sand bath; the more adventurous going further and further out, till the last party bathed beyond the last sand bank. Not dressed in the latest Cape May fashion, nor the latest fashion of any kind; for each had brought some dress too old to be hurt with salt water. Calico frocks, of every hue and pattern,—caps, hand kerchiefs, sun-bonnets,—gave additional force to the cries and shouts and screams which were wafted inshore.

But when they began to come in!—and when the bathing dresses were hung on the fence to dry!—and when mermaid visions appeared at the windows!—who shall describe the scene then? Over all, a blue smoke now began to curl and float, rising from the stove-pipe of the eating-house.

Mr. Linden had driven up to one of the fence posts, and fastening his horse stood a while watching the show, till the bathers began to draw in from the water. Then helped the ladies out.

"Which of these baskets contains my tea, Miss Faith?" he said. "I feel a particular interest in that basket."

"Perhaps your tea is in some other basket," said Faith; "but both of these must come into the eating-house. O, thank you, Mr. Linden!"

The eating-house was a long shanty, built for the express purpose of feasting picnic and other parties. At one end of it, within the house, was a well of excellent water; at the other end a door opened into a cooking-house, which held a stove; and through the length of the apartment a narrow table of boards was erected, ready to be covered with any description and any succession of table-cloths. In this room Mr. Linden with Faith's help deposited her baskets; while Miss Danforth looked on. At the door of the shanty coming out they met Mr. Simlins. Faith made the introductions.

"Happy to have your acquaintance," said Mr. Simlins. "This is a piece of Pattaquasset, sir, that we all of us rather cord'ally like. You haven't seen it before?"

"Yes, I don't wonder you like it," said Mr. Linden. "The sea-shore is no novelty to me, sir—such a shore party is."

"I hope you'll enjoy it, as the rest of us do. We all do as we like, Mr. Linden—I hope you'll use the grounds as your own. We have the flag flying, sir, and it ratifies liberty to all who amuse themselves under it."

Mr. Linden looked up at the stars and stripes, with an acknowledging smile for the benefits thereby conferred.

"Faith! Faith Derrick!" called out half a dozen mermaids from the bathing house; and Faith was obliged to go,—while her companions walked up the green slope, and entered into a deep discussion of the crops and the weather.

A while after, when Faith was busy about the supper table—twenty young voices chiming around her, another voice that she did not know spoke close at her elbow.

"Miss Faith—I am Reuben Taylor. Mr. Linden told me to come to you and make myself useful. Is there any thing I can do?—would you like some round clams?—Father's out there in the boat."

The earnest eyes said how gladly he would do 'any thing.'

"Who is your father?" said Faith, a little surprised.

"My father's a fisherman."

"The very thing!" said Faith—"if you'll help me roast 'em, Reuben. I guess nobody else'll want to do it, but I'd just as lieve. Can you have 'em here quickly? and I'll see and have the stove ready."

"O I'll fetch 'em—and roast 'em too, Miss Faith. I'm used to it," he added, with a half bashful half admiring glance at her face.

Faith had the fire ready by the time Reuben returned with the clams. The kettle was on to boil, and nothing else was wanted of the fire, as it happened, by anybody; least of all to roast clams, that necessarily making a kitchen prisoner of the roaster; so Faith and her new coadjutor had the field—i.e. the cooking house—all to themselves. Miss Danforth was to leave Pattaquasset in a day or two, and was busy talking to everybody. Readily the clams opened their shells on the hot stove-top; savourily the odour of steaming clam juice spread itself abroad; but Faith and Reuben were 'in' for it, and nobody else cared to be in.

So when Miss Cecilia Deacon had finished her toilet, which was somewhat of the longest, as it had been one of the latest, she found nobody but her brother to apply to on the score of her hostess duties.

"Sam!" said the young lady pinching her brother's arm,— "I haven't been introduced to Mr. Linden."

"He'll keep," was the encouraging reply.

"Yes, but supper won't. See, Sam!—I haven't been introduced to him, and I *must*."

The Squire nodded his head politely, and began to whistle.

"Come!—you Sam—you've got to, and in a hurry. I can't find Faith, or I'd make her."

"Well—I can't find him," said the Squire pettishly. "I haven't got neither of 'em in my pocket—nor the crown of my hat," he added, taking off that useful article of dress for the express purpose of looking into it. "My deliberate judgment is to have supper."

"Don't be a goose, Sam! What's the use of asking him, if you didn't mean to conduct yourself?"

"Didn't ask him."

"Who did?"

"I didn't hear anybody," was the Squire's reply.

"*Don't* you mean to introduce me, Sam Deacon?" said his sister in a tone which was rather over the verge of patience.

"Jem Williams!" said the Squire, calling up a spruce embodiment of blue cloth, brass buttons, and pink cravat,— "I say! here's Cilly off the hooks to get hold of the new teacher. Whereabouts do you s'pose he is?"

"Really Squire!" said Jem Williams, with a silly little laugh, "I couldn't testify! Reckon he knows Miss Cilly 'd keep hold on him *ef* she got a chance!"

"Sha'n't speak to you in a month, Jem!" said the lady with a toss of her head and some heightening of the really pretty colour in her cheeks. "You may fix it as you've a mind to, among you, and let anybody that likes bring him in to supper! *I'm* going in, out of the way, myself."

Whither she went, on the spur, as good as her word; nor shewed her pretty face again outside.

Meanwhile Reuben and Faith had worked on through their basket of clams, and now the last were sputtering on the stove. The work had been done almost in silence, for though the excitement now and then made Reuben break into a low whistle of some tune or other, he always checked himself the next moment with a very apologetic look. For the rest, if he had not done all the work himself, it certainly was not his fault. Now, watching quietly the opening shells of that last dozen of clams, Reuben remarked,

"I *hope* Mr. Linden won't forget about supper!"

"Why what about it?" said Faith. "Why should he forget? or what if he does?"

The last sentence seemed to puzzle Reuben.

"I don't know, ma'am," he said,— "it's better before everybody eats it up."

"Who's going to eat it up?" said Faith. "Where is he?"

"He went down on the sands with me," said Reuben, "but he didn't come up again. Maybe he has now. He liked it down there, real well."

Faith went to the shutter window and flung it open, and looked to see whether or no the missing gentleman had returned to the shore. It was a fair view that lay spread before her. The low beams of the sun gave a cool afternoon look to everything; the sloop sails shone and gleamed in the distance; down by the muscle rocks one little boat lay rocking on the advancing tide, which was fast covering the sand banks and connecting the strips of water; and the freshening breeze curled the little waves as they came dancing in, and brought a low sweet murmur to the shore. One or two gulls sailed floatingly about, and a brown mink—perceiving that the company had retreated to higher ground—came out and aired himself on one of the rocks.

But Faith saw none of these things,—for in swinging open her shutter (which the wind caught and clapped up against the house) she so nearly swung it against Mr. Linden that her first look was a startled one.

"Miss Faith!" he said, turning round, "what can you possibly be about!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Linden!"—said Faith.

"Is that all you are about?"

"You were anxious about your supper, Mr. Linden—Are you ready for it?"

"Much more ready than anxious, Miss Faith."

"How do you like the shore to-day?" said Faith, dropping her voice, and giving a glance of her eye to the fair, cool sunlight colours on the water and shore and shipping—fresh as the very sea-breeze itself, and glittering as the water's thousand mirrors could make them.

He turned and looked again, drawing in the breeze with a deep breath that more than answered her question.

"How do you like this?" he said, handing her through the window a little miniature tree of red sea-weed. Then, while she examined it, he repeated,—

"When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with sea-weed from the rocks;

"From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

"From the tumbling surf that buries
The Orkneyan skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate, rainy seas;—

"Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting

Currents of the restless main;
Till in shelter'd coves, and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again."

Faith's eye was upon the sprig of sea-weed while these verses were repeating,—then she looked up at the speaker with an intensesness in which oddly mingled some strong feeling of sorrow or regret.

"It's beautiful!"—she said,—"beautiful!—both the one and the other. But there are a great many things there I don't understand,"—she added once more with a smile. "If there was time—but there isn't.—Mr. Linden, Reuben and I have been roasting clams."

"Yes, Miss Faith," he said answering the smile and stepping nearer the window. "So one of my senses informed me. Do you know what that is in your hand?"

"It's sea-weed, isn't it?"

"Yes. And moreover—Miss Faith, that is part of your marine Flora. Now what about the clams?"

"My *what*?" said Faith. "First tell me, please, what you said."

"Your marine Flora."

"What is that?"

"The particular department of life in the sea, of which this is a specimen."

Faith looked puzzled, and amused.

"You don't mean to enlighten me more than you can help," she said. "But why do you call it Flora? you used that word before. And oh Mr. Linden—You can't tell me now, for supper's all ready."

His eyes looked amused too, and laying a clover head on the window, he said,

"That is part of your land Flora,"—then pushed the shutter to rather quick, but softly; and Faith heard the reason thereof as follows.

"Wal sir—ef this be you, I've looked all over for you."

"How was it that you overlooked me then, sir?" was Mr. Linden's reply.

"Don't jes know," laughed Jem Williams,— "but Miss Cilly Deacon wants you the worst kind."

"And where shall I go to receive her commands?" said Mr. Linden.

Faith heard their retreating steps, and turning to take off her apron saw the dish of hot clams still on the stove, and that Reuben had removed himself outside the door, quite beyond the conversation but not beyond call. He stood looking thoughtfully out towards the muscle rocks.

"Oh Reuben! there you are. Come!" said Faith; "you're going in with me. *You're* going to have some supper to-night, whoever else does. You open the door, and I'll take in this dish. You keep by me, Reuben."

"Please let me take the dish, then, Miss Faith,—I can open the door first."

But Faith had her own way, and followed by Reuben carried the clams into the supper room, where some of the company were already seated, and others stood waiting. Squire Deacon had not only given the desired introduction, but had (self-denyingly) placed Mr. Linden next Miss Cilly at the table,—where he stood.

"Here's a contribution," said Faith,— "if somebody 'll make a place for it. Thank you, Mr. Deacon. Now Reuben,—come here."

And refusing more than one offer of a place at the table, Faith made her way down to the 'well end' where there was room for two—at a remote distance from the tea and coffee.

What else was there not, upon that table!

"Won't you take a seat, Mr. Linden?" said Miss Cecilia. "I hope you've got room there. Jerushy, can't you shove down a little? I hope my coffee-pot's not disagreeable."

"I hope not!" said Mr. Linden, surveying the coffee-pot. "How long does it take to declare itself, Miss Deacon?"

"O it won't do anything, but spout coffee," said the young lady,—"if you don't mind that. Won't you be helped to what you like, Mr. Linden? I hope you have enjoyed our shore party this afternoon."

"Thank you"—said Mr. Linden, feeling perhaps that it was not *their* party he had enjoyed,—"there has been a combination of pleasant things. As far as I could judge the bathers enjoyed their particular expedition."

"O yes, it was delightful—invigorating. Mr. Simlins, I think Mr. Linden will like a piece of that cherry-pie with his clams. Do you take cheese, Mr. Linden? Is your coffee agreeable? There is the cold tongue by you, Jerushy.—I hope you like Pattaquasset."

"Ask Mr Linden whether Pattaquasset ain't a good place for handsome gals," said Mr. Simlins, as he handed over the piece of cherry-pie. "He knows by this time. I say there's a con-catenation of beauty now here this afternoon. If you look from the top to the bottom of the table, now, ain't it true, sir?"

Mr. Linden certainly looked from the top to the bottom of the table, and then setting the plate of cherry-pie as far from his clams as he could, he said,

"Miss Deacon—let me help you,—tell me where these cups belong, and I will convey them to their destination."

"I thought they'd shove down somehow," said the young lady. "Jerushy, *do* pass the coffee! They're for anybody down there who'll take coffee. Tea'll be along presently," added Miss Cecilia, raising her voice a little to give the information. "Don't you trouble yourself, Mr. Linden."

But Mr. Linden secured one, and carrying it down to Faith, requested her to stir it and taste it, and not give him the trouble of coming back with the sugar-bowl.

"What will you have?" he said while she obeyed his directions. "Here are all the pies that can be thought of except the musical one recorded in history."

"And so," said Faith with a laughing flash of her usually soft eye, "you immediately give me a desire for the one not here! It's like you, Mr. Linden. No, thank you—I'll have none of these. I believe Reuben has a desire for some of the clams he and I have roasted."

"I'm afraid I cannot get them away from Squire Deacon!" he said, "but I'll try."

The Squire however held fast to the dish, and rising from his place midway at the table, insisted upon taking it to Faith himself.

"Miss Faith," he said, "you have ruined my supper by sitting down here. My appetite has quite forsaken me," (whereupon Jem Williams observed, "that warn't strange.")—"and the worst is," added the Squire, "I can't maintain the constant supervision of your plate which my feelings prompt. I am too far off"—he concluded in a melancholy tone.

"I say, Squire!" said Jem Williams, "you bain't *mor'n* as far agin as *he*"—with a nod towards the upper end of the table.

Squire Deacon lowered, but for the present his feelings were restrained.

"Mr. Simlins," said Endecott, when he had resumed his seat, "I ask you—as one who knows the country—whereabouts does the concatenation you spoke of reach a climax?"

"The star you look at is always the brightest," said the farmer. "However, I think the clams is the best thing at table—or *near* the best," with a slight glance towards Squire Deacon and the dish at the 'well end.'"I've a legendary attachment to beauty, sir; my father married the three prettiest wives in the country."

"I say, Squire," said Jem Williams, "Mr. Simlins says you'r' hot."

"Hot?" said Squire Deacon, flushing up very much, and setting down the clams,—"that dish is. I'm as cool as all these cucumbers accumulated into a heap."

"Hope you'll stay where you are, then," said Mr. Simlins. "I'm cool too. Don't come near me, or we shall be in a state of concentration."

Mr. Linden remarked that that was an excellent point when reached.

"What point?" said Squire Deacon, who had returned to his seat with the strong impression that everybody was laughing at him, under the special guidance of the new teacher. "You know mighty little of the points round here, I tell *you*."

"The point of concentration is found in various places, sir," said Mr. Linden: "though I grant you it is rare."

"What do you know about Pattaquasset points?" repeated the Squire,— "or Pattaquasset people—or Pattaquasset water either, for that matter? Just you go down here when the tide's in—and afore you know where you are you'll find yourself wading round over your head."

"No sir—never," said Mr. Linden with great assurance.

"Why not? how're you goin' to help it?" said Squire Deacon.

"When I reach *that* point," said Mr. Linden, "I shall swim."

And Faith heard Reuben Taylor's smothered laugh of great gratification.

"Hope you haven't spoiled your own supper, Squire," said Mr. Simlins, "by your complacency in carrying about them hot clams. Have somethin' this way?"

While this question was getting its answer, Faith sat back in her chair and looked up and down the length of the table. It presented a distinguished 'after-supper' view, but the demands of the company had not yet ceased. Mr. Simlins was still discussing cheese and politics; Jem Williams was deep in cherry pie; plum cake was not out of favour with the ladies. The Squire was hard at work at *his* supper, which had been diversely and wickedly interrupted. He was making up for lost time now; while his sister, much disengaged, was bending her questions and smiles on Mr. Linden. Faith tried to see Mr. Linden, but she couldn't; he was leaning back from the table; and her eyes went out of doors. It was too fair and sweet there to be cooped up from it. The sun had just set. Faith could not see the water; the windows of the eating house looked landward; but the air which came in at them said where it had come from, and breathed the salt freshness of the sea into her face.

But presently every chair was pushed back. And now there was no more silence nor quiet. The busy swarm poured out of the supper room; the men to lounge or tackle their horses, the women to gather up the bathing dresses from the fence, to look round, laugh, and go in again to pack up the dishes. It would seem that this last might be a work of time, each had to find her own through such a maze of confusion. There was a spoon of Miss Cecilia's providing, in a cup of Mrs. Derrick's, beside a plate of Mrs. David's, and before a half-eaten cherry pie which had been compounded in the distant home and by the fair fingers of Miss Jerusha Fax. However, most people know their own at least; and as on the present occasion nobody had any particular desire to meddle with what was not her own, the difficulty was got through with. The baskets and hampers were packed again and stowed in their respective wagons; and everybody was bidding good bye to everybody. Noisy thanks and praises fell liberally to the share of Miss Cecilia and her brother, and the afternoon was declared to have been "splendid."

CHAPTER V

For some weeks the little town of Pattaquasset held on its peaceful way as usual. Early summer passed into harvest, and harvest gave way to the first blush of autumn, and still the Mong flowed quietly along, and the kildeers sang fearlessly. For even tenor and happy spirits, the new teacher and his scholars were not unlike the smooth river and its feathered visitors. Whatever the boys were taught, they certainly learned to be happy; and Mr. Linden's popularity knew no bounds in his own domain. Neither did it end there: those fair members of the Pattaquasset society who thought early walks good for their health, felt their sleepy eyes well paid for keeping open when they met Mr. Linden. Those who were fond of evening expeditions, declared that his figure in the twilight was 'quite a picture,' and made them feel 'so safe,'—a great slander, by the way, on Pattaquasset. Mr. Simlins was his firm friend, and many another—known and unknown. Squire Deacon, I regret to say, was an exception.

Squire Deacon declared (confidentially) that he never *had* thought the new teacher fit for his business, *no* how. As far as he could hear, Mr. Linden had never taught school before, and in that case what could you expect? "Moreover," said the Squire, "I am creditably informed, that the first day he kep' school *here*, he begun by asking the boys who made them!—as if *that* had anything to do with geography. Of course it's nat'ral for a man to ask what he knows he can answer if the boys don't," added Squire Deacon in the way of kind explanation.

Whereupon, Jonathan Fax, the Squire's right hand man, requested to be informed, "*why* ef a man was poor didn't he dress as though he felt so,—and *why* ef he warn't rich did he act as though he war?" And thus by degrees, there was quite an opposition party in Pattaquasset—if that could be opposition which the object of it never opposed. By degrees too, the murmurs became more audible.

"Faith, child," said Mrs. Derrick in a cautions whisper, coining out where Faith sat on the porch, bathed in the late September light: "Faith, child, where's our Linden tree?" (Mrs. Derrick thought she had concealed her meaning *now*, if anybody did overhear.)

Faith started, more than so gentle a question seemed to call for.

"He's gone down to the post-office, mother."

Her mother stood still and thought.

"Child," she said, "I never thought we had any fools in our town before."

"I didn't know there were so many," said Faith. "What new, mother?"

"Child," she said, "you know more than I about some things—what do you s'pose fools *can* do? Isn't he a whole tree of knowledge?"

"There is no fear of him, mother!" Faith said with a smile, which if the subject of it valued any faith in the world but his own it would have gratified him to see. "They can't touch him. They may vex him."

Mrs. Derrick shook her head, softly, behind Faith's chair, then turned and went back into the house; not caring, as it seemed, to spread the vexation. Then after a little interval of bird music, the gate opened to admit Reuben Taylor. He held a bunch of water lilies—drooping their fair heads from his hand; his own head drooped a little too. Then he raised it and came firmly on.

"Is Mr. Linden home, Miss Faith?"

"No, Reuben—He will be directly, I guess. Do you want to see him?"

"No"—said Reuben, "I don' know as I do, more than usual. I *have* seen him all day. He wanted some pond lilies, Miss Faith—at least he told me to bring 'em. Maybe it was you wanted 'em."

"I'll give them to him, Reuben. What's the matter with *you*?"

But Reuben stood silent—perhaps from the difficulty of speaking,

"Miss Faith," he said at last, "is Squire Deacon all the trustees of our school, besides Mr. Somers?"

"No. Why? What about it?"

"*He's* doin' all the mischief he can," said Reuben concisely.

"What mischief has he done, Reuben?" said Faith, waiting upon the boy's answer with an anxious face.

"Well"—said Reuben, as if he could not put it in plain words,—"*he's* tryin' to turn folks heads—and some heads is easy turned."

"How did you know this?—and whose head has he turned, Reuben? Not yours?"

"They'd have to turn my *heart*, Miss Faith," was Reuben's subdued answer. Then he looked up and listened—hearing a step he well knew. Nor that alone, for a few low notes of a sweet hymn tune, seemed to say there were pleasant thoughts within reach of at least one person. Then Reuben broke forth.

"They can't keep him out of heaven, anyway!—nor me, neither," he added softly. But he ran down the steps and out of the gate, passing his teacher with only a bow; and once beyond the fence, Reuben's head dropped in his hands.

"Reuben! I want you!"—said Mr. Linden. But Reuben was out of sight. Faith stood between the house and the gate.

"Where is he? can't you make him hear? I want that boy!" she said.

"I can run after him— with doubtful success."

"The foolish fellow brought these for you, Mr. Linden," said Faith, giving the lilies where they belonged.

"Complimentary, Miss Faith!" said Mr. Linden, taking the lilies and smelling them gravely.

"*He is*," said Faith, "and you speak as if *I* wasn't."

"Will it redeem my character—or Reuben's—if I bestow the lilies upon you, Miss Faith? I think that was their destination."

Faith took the lilies back again, with a slight smile and flash, and stood attentively turning them over for a while. Then suddenly said "Thank you."

"What did you want of Reuben Taylor?" said Mr. Linden. "Cannot I do as well?"

"I should be sorry to think you wanted, Mr. Linden, what I wanted to give him."

"That sounds terrific! But Reuben is under my jurisdiction—I don't allow anybody to scold him but myself. So deliver it to me, Miss Faith, and I will give it to him—duly pointed and sharpened up."

"No," said Faith smiling, "you couldn't do it so well as I. I wanted to say two words to him to put nonsense out of his head."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Linden, looking grave,—"*I* am as anxious on that point as you can be. What nonsense has he got in his head?"

Faith hesitated, flushed and paled a little, and looked at her lilies.

"I don't know whether I ought to speak of it," she began, with much less than her usual composure of speech. "Perhaps it is not my business. Please forgive me if I speak wrong. But I half think you ought to know it."—

"I'll try to bear the knowledge," he said smiling—"if you will promise to speak the cabalistic two words that were to have such effect upon Reuben. So you want to put nonsense into my head, Miss Faith?"

"Perhaps you know it already?" said Faith. "At any rate I think I should feel better satisfied if you did know it. Mr. Linden," she said speaking low—"do you know that Squire Deacon has been trying to do you mischief?"

"Just suppose for a moment that you are one of my scholars, and give me a definition of mischief."

To judge by the unbent lines of Faith's brow, there was nothing very disagreeable to her in the supposition. Yet she had a look of care for the 'definition,' too.

"When a man is meaning to do harm, isn't he doing mischief?"

"Only to himself."

"But do you mean that one *can't* do harm to others in this world?"

"You said 'when a man is *meaning* to do harm.'"

"Ah," said Faith laughing, "I should want a great deal of teaching before I could give a definition that would suit you! Well then, isn't *harm* mischief?"

"I'm afraid I must yield that point."

"Then," said Faith simply, but very modestly,— "we come back to where we started from?"

"What shall we do there?" said he smiling.

"Nothing, perhaps," said Faith with the same simplicity. "I only thought it right to put you there, Mr. Linden."

"Thank you, Miss Faith. Now will you please pronounce over me the two words intended for Reuben?"

Faith laughed a little, but then said gravely, "Mr. Linden, I should be very sorry to think you needed them."

"It's impossible always to avoid being very sorry: I *want* them, at all events. Haven't you just been putting nonsense into my head?"

"Have I?" said Faith.

"Do you suppose there was any there before?"

"I—don't—think," said Faith, surveying his face,— "there is much there now. I guess you don't need the two words, Mr. Linden. I was going to tell Reuben he was a goose for thinking that that man could hurt you."

His face changed a little.

"Poor Reuben!" he said—then with the former look—"On the whole, perhaps it was well he did not come back. If you put those in water they will open their eyes to-morrow. Fresh water—not salt," he added as he followed her into the house,— "they are not part of the marine Flora."

Tea was ready, with its usual cheer of eatables and pleasant faces; not quite with its usual flow of talk. Mrs. Derrick certainly had something bewildering on her mind, for she even looked at her guest two or three times when he was looking at her. The pond lilies were alone in the twilight parlour.

That was probably the reason why Lucinda introduced Parson Somers into the tea-room, the parson happening to call at this identical time.

Parson Somers was always in a genial state of mind;—always, at least, whenever he came into Mrs. Derrick's parlour; by the testimony of numbers it was the same in many other parlours. He came in so now; gave a smile all round; and took an empty chair and place at the table like one who found it pleasant.

"Well, I declare, Mrs. Derrick," said Mr. Somers when he was seated,— "I don't think there's—a—a more cheerful room in Pattaquasset than this one; why, you always have everything agreeable here. A cup of tea, now—I didn't expect it"

"Why we always *do* have tea, Mr. Somers," said Mrs. Derrick, "but it don't seem strong to-night. Lucindy—take the teapot and make some fresh."

"These baked apples are strong—in numbers at least," said Mr. Linden, as he bestowed one upon Mr. Somers.

"Thank you!—it's all strong enough, Mrs. Derrick—thank you!—very good. And Mr. Linden—how are you—a—getting along with your juvenile charge? Confining work, sir,—isn't it?"

"Rather, sir—to the body."

"Not to the mind, eh? Well—I should have thought that to a gentleman like you it would prove—a—*more* deleterious to the mental faculties. But I suppose you find yourself rewarded by your pupils' improvement and—regard!"

"Yes sir—their regard is very precious to me," was the quiet reply.

"I should think so! Why there's that boy Reuben Taylor—strange father that boy has—fisherman;—I met that boy this evening, in the street, and he was crying,—down a little below here

—he was going home. I asked him—ha—if Mr. Linden had been dealing hardly with him?—and I declare!—I didn't know but Reuben would have attacked me on the spot."

"Has Mr. Linden a character in the village for cruelty?" said Faith.

"I—I declare—not that I know of, Miss Faith. I should think it could not be deserved. That boy's attachment is certainly—ha—very warm. My dear Mrs. Derrick, how well Miss Faith is looking! She always looks well; but to-night—ha—the colour of her cheeks is—to be remarked."

"You will get a character for cruelty, Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "if you ask about my character before my face."

Faith looked up as if she would willingly have asked a question; but that being in present circumstances impossible, she merely uttered a quiet little 'no,' and went on with her tea and with a colour still further improved, A quiet little 'yes,' of about equal prominence, did not divert the attention of Mr. Somers from his own remarks.

"It's delightful to see—really," said that gentleman. "But Mr. Linden—ha—I am sorry to find that you haven't the good will of our neighbour, Squire Deacon. The Squire's a valuable man—very!—the Squire's a valuable man in the town. I am sorry. Do you know, Mr. Linden—ha—how it has happened?"

"Have you asked the Squire himself, sir?" said Mr. Linden.

"Why—no, sir, I haven't. I—ha—wanted to get at the truth of it, that I might, if possible, do something to heal the breach. Now you are doing a valuable work in Pattaquasset, sir—I should be sorry to see it interrupted—very—and I thought the best way would be to try to find out what the matter was, in order if possible to its being removed. And to get at the truth it is often best to hear both sides."

"But I have no side to tell, sir," said Mr. Linden—smiling in spite of himself. "I cannot deny that Squire Deacon seems to withhold his good will—I think it is for him to tell his reasons."

"Then you really have no idea what it can be about? and I may tell him so? Because that would be a great point."

"No sir, you may not tell him that."

"Then you *have* an idea what the matter is?" said Mr. Somers eagerly. "Then, sir, if you will be so good as to let me know what it is—I have no doubt—I entertain no doubt—we shall be able to smooth it all away, and have peace."

"You cannot prove one man's ideas by another man's," said Mr. Linden.

"Then you can give me no help?" said Mr. Somers regretfully. "But Mr. Linden—ha—it strikes me that it would be useful for me to know your view of the cause of offence—whatever it is—before I know his. One may correct the other."

"There has been no offence given sir," said Mr. Linden. "That the Squire has taken offence we both know,—why he has taken it—if I know—I have no right to tell you, Squire Deacon might justly complain of me if I did. It is from no disrespect to you, believe me."

"I say!" said Cindy coming into the room with a basket,— "here's Sam Stoutenburgh been and fetched some Stoutenburgh Sweetenings—for his teacher, he says. I'm free to confess," added Cindy as she set down the basket by Mr. Linden, "he said if he *would* like to do anythin' better with 'em, it would just be to shy 'em at Squire Deacon's head—so I guess they aint over and above ripe."

"Ha!—Very pleasant, certainly!—very gratifying," said Mr. Somers rising. "Mr. Linden—I have no more to say. You are a gentleman, sir, and understand these matters. I will see what I can do. Mrs. Derrick—I thank you for your tea, ma'am—I am sorry there should be anything disagreeable,—but I have no doubt it will all be set right—The Squire is a good-feeling man—I have no doubt of it. Miss Faith—ha!—why Mrs. Derrick this colour is too deep, it isn't natural. It looks feverish!"

"Do the Pattaquasset ladies use any rouge but their own sea breezes?" asked Mr. Linden.

"Ha! we *do* get the sea breezes here—pleasantly," answered Mr. Somers. "Good evening!"—

Mr. Linden accompanied the visiter to the little gate, and returning paced up and down the moonlit porch, followed only by his shadow.

CHAPTER VI

While Mr. Somers was enjoying his cup of unexpected tea at Mrs. Derrick's, Squire Deacon and Miss Cilly had a sociable tête-à-tête over theirs; for Joe Deacon, who was in the full enjoyment of some fourteen years of boyhood, scarcely made a third in the conversation until his appetite was satisfied.

Conversation indeed hardly existed during the first portion of the meal. Miss Cilly poured out her tea and broke her biscuit with a certain prim sort of elegance which belonged to that young lady—as at least she believed. But sipping tea and nibbling biscuit went on in company with thoughts.

"Sam, what are you bothering yourself about Mr. Linden for?"

"How long since you was made a trustee?" said the Squire, beginning his sentence with an untranslatable sort of grunt, and ending it in his teacup.

"Give us the sugar bowl down this way, Cilly," said Joe,— "this apple sarce is as sour as sixty."

"I've been your trustee ever since you was up to anything," said his sister. "Come Sam—don't you begin now. What's made you so crusty?"

"It aint the worst thing to be crusty," said the Squire, while Joe started up and seized the sugar bowl. "Shews a man's more'n half baked, any how."

Miss Cilly vouchsafed a rather sour smile to these manifestations of disposition on the part of both her brothers.

"Well, what has he done?"

"Sure enough," said the Squire, (he kept his small stock of big words for company) "what *has* he done? That's just what I can't find out."

"What do you want to find out for? What ails him?"

"Suppose he hasn't done nothing"—said the Squire,— "is that the sort o' man to teach litteratur in Pattaquasset?"

"Lit—*what*?" said his sister with an arch of her head.

"Anything you've a mind to," said the Squire sulkily.

"I wouldn't say anything against Mr. Linden's literature, if I was you; because it's my belief, Sam, it'll stand any pecking you make at it. What's given you such a spite at him? You're a goodnatured fellow enough in general."

"The whole temperature of Pattaquasset's come about since *he* come," replied the Squire comprehensively.

"He's a gentleman!" said Miss Cilly bridling again. "He won't hurt anybody's manners—not the best—if they was to copy him."

"He didn't hurt mine," said Joe patronizingly. "To be sure I didn't go to him long."

"Do the boys like him, Joe?"

"Well I daresay they wouldn't if they could help it," said Joe, "if *that's* any comfort. Some other folks likes him too,—besides Sam."

"Aint he a good teacher?"

"Firstrate—" said Joe, "taught me all *I* ever learned. I didn't go but four weeks, and Sam thought 'twarn't no use for me to hold on any longer. My! Cilly—he'd make you roll up your eyes in arithmetic!"

"Now Sam Deacon, what do you expect to do by all this fuss you're making?" said his sister judicially.

"What's the use of cross-examining a man at that rate?" said the Squire restlessly. "When I do anything, you'll know it."

"You'll make yourself a fool, one of these fine mornings; that's what I count upon," said Miss Cecilia. "He's a match for you, I have a presentiment, Sam."

"He won't be for you," said the Squire with some heat.

"There's Mr. Simlins goin' along," said Joe, who having finished his supper was gazing out of the window. "O my! if he was cut up into real simlinses, what a many there'd be!"

"You hush, Joe!" said his sister wrathfully. "He's comin' in."

And Mr. Simlins' tall figure did indeed come through the gate and up the walk, from which a very few more steps and minutes brought him to the tea table.

"Well, Mr. Simlins!" said Miss Cecilia as she gave him his cup,— "you've got back. I heard you were returned."

"Yes!" said the farmer deliberately stirring his tea,— "I've got back! And I'm glad, for one. I've been visiting my relations in New Jersey; and I've made up *my* mind that the Simlinses made a good move when they come to Connecticut."

"You found them all well?" said Miss Cecilia politely.

"Well, no, I didn't," said Mr. Simlins. "How's a man to find five hundred and fifty people all well? 'Taint nature. How's things with you, Squire?"

"Wheat's done well—corn middlin'," replied the Squire, while Joe got behind his sister's chair and whispered,

"There's another name in the diction'ry *sounds* like your'n, though they aint spelled just alike."

"Goin' to school, Joe?" growled Mr. Simlins.

"No *sir*," said Joe. "Mr. Linden teached me all he knowed in a jiffy,—and all I know, too."

"Well—are the other boys learnin' yet?" said Mr. Simlins, as he spread a slice of bread pretty thick with butter.

"S'pose so"—said Joe,— "all they kin."

"It's hard work!" said Mr. Simlins. "I feel it now! Never ploughin' made my back ache like learnin'. I wonder whatever they made me school trustee for, seein' I hate it like pison. But s'pose we mustn't quarrel with onerous duties," said the farmer, carrying on sighing and bread and butter and tea very harmoniously together. "I shouldn't mind takin' a look at your last copy-book, Joe, if it would be agreeable."

"O Mr. Linden kep' that," said Joe unblushingly, "'cause it was so good lookin'."

"He was so fond of you?" said Mr. Simlins. "How come he to let you go?"

"I staid away," said Joe, drumming on the back of Miss Cecilia's chair. "Cilly's got the rest of the copy-books—she likes the writin' too."

"Joe, behave yourself!" said his sister. "Mr. Simlins knows better than to believe you."

"Did you ever get flogged, Joe, for bad writin'?" said the farmer.

"Worse'n that!" said Joe, shaking his head,— "I've had to do it over!"

"Now you've got to do it over for me," said Mr. Simlins. "You write your name for me there—the best you kin—and 'Pattaquasset, Connecticut'—I want to see what the new school's up to."

"No"—said Joe—"I aint agoin' to do it. You ask one of the other boys. It wouldn't tell you nothin' if I did, 'cause I learned writin' afore,—and I didn't go to him but four weeks, besides." And Joe at once absented himself.

"Is it workin' as straight with all the rest of 'em as it is with him?" said Mr. Simlins. "You and me's got to see to it, you know, Squire—seein' we're honorary individuals."

"Yes," said Squire Deacon, rousing up now Joe was gone—he had a wholesome fear of Joe's tongue—"Yes, Mr. Simlins,—and it's my belief it *wants* seein' to—and he too."

"Joe,"—said Mr. Simlins. "Ne-ver fear—he'll see to himself."

"Here's some of *his* writin'," said Joe, returning with a spelling book. "All the boys gets him to write in their books." And laying it down by Mr. Simlins, Joe took his final departure.

"What do the boys want him to write in their books for?" growled Mr. Simlins, surveying the signature.

"I believe," said Miss Cecilia, "he is very popular in the school."

"Well, Squire," pursued Mr. Simlins, "can Joe clinch this?"

"He aint with me—if that's what you mean," said Squire Deacon. "A man's writing don't prove much."

"Don't go no funder," said Mr. Simlins assentingly. "Well Squire—if *you*'ll go funder I shall be wiser."

And freed from the fear of contradiction, the Squire had not the least objection to going further.

"He's not the man to have here," said Squire Deacon,— "I saw that the first day I saw him. I tried him,—and he didn't toe the mark."

"How did you try him?" growled Mr. Simlins. "I'd like to know how much he's up to. *I* haint found it out yet."

"I tried him, sir," said the Squire, "I tried him with a classical story. Now Miss Faith gave in at once, and said *she* didn't know what it was; but t'other one made believe as though he knew all about it. And if a man aint classical, Mr. Simlins, what is he?"

"I aint classical," growled Mr. Simlins again, "but then I don't set up for to be. I s'pose that makes a difference, Squire; don't it?"

"Some people's more than they set out to be, and some people's less," replied the Squire.

"Well,—does *he* set up for to be classical in school? What does he teach 'em?"

"I reckon he sets up for 'most everything he ever heard spoke of, Mr. Simlins. Teach 'em? why he teaches 'em out of all sorts o' superflus books!"

"Does!" said Mr. Simlins with a surprised look. "Our boys don't want none o' your superficialities. They've got their bread to make. Give us an invoice o' them books, Squire."

"Just you look at 'em for yourself, Mr. Simlins—then you'll know. Step down there some day in school time and look over the boys. Now I can understand figurs with any man, but *what's* the use o' crosses and straight lines and Vs turned wrong side up?"

Mr. Simlins pushed back his chair and rubbed his chin.

"Well Squire—you and me are trustees—what in your judgment and opinion had we ought to do, in these precedents?"

"Get rid on him—*I* say," replied the Squire promptly. "Then here he is, leadin' all the girls round town, and for all any one of 'em knows he's a married man."

"Humph I think so?—What do the folks say of him?" said Mr. Simlins. "There's Mrs. Derrick—what does *she* say of him—he's in her house, she ought to have an idee. And Faith—now I'd take that gal's judgment on a most anything—What do *they* think about him, Squire?"

"Never asked 'em a word," said the Squire stoutly—"nor heard 'em say one, neither. But he gets fur'n letters all the time, Widow Stamp says—and female writin' too. Who knows but he's got a wife in some fur'n country?—or two"—added the Squire, without specifying where the plural belonged. "I'm a justice of peace, Mr. Simlins, and this shouldn't be let go on."

Mr. Simlins looked up from under his brows with a queer look at his host.

"If he has *two*, he must want the school—bad!"—said he. "Well Squire, I'll go along and see what can be done. If I was you, mean time, I'd not say much to no one. There's Judge Harrison, you know;—we can't act without him. Good night t'ye! Squire, I guess he haint *two*?—Anyhow, I wouldn't let fly no warrants till I saw my bird sitting somewhere. It's bad to have 'em hit in a wrong place."

And it was well it was darkish and nobody to look at him; for Mr. Simlins went grinning pretty much all the way between Squire Deacon's house and the house of Mrs. Derrick, where Mr. Linden was entertaining his shadow in the moonlit porch.

"Good even to you!" growled Mr. Simlins as he came up. The grin was gone, and the farmer stood with his wonted solemnity of face and manner. "Where's the rest o' your folks?"

"The rest of *my* folks are a good way off, Mr. Simlins," said the person addressed, giving the questioner his hand; while his shadow exchanged civilities with the shadow of Mr. Simlins. "When did you come back? I am glad to see you?"

"I'm glad to see myself," said Mr. Simlins. "There's no State like Connecticut, sir. Where's *your* bringin' up place?"

"No one place has had that honour, Mr. Simlins,—I have been brought up from one to another."

"Not Connecticut, eh?"

"Not altogether—I am here just now, as you see,—getting a part of my education. I am one of the Say and Seal people in a way. Won't you come in, Mr. Simlins?"

"Well—I'd as lief see Faith and Mrs. Derrick as a'most any other two folks in Pattaquasset,—but they're a long ways off, you say?"

"No further than the parlour, I believe."

Mr. Simlins was willing to go as far as the parlour, and so the party on the porch adjourned thither. A bright lamp lit the room, by which Faith was mending stockings; while Mrs. Derrick sat in an easy chair a little further off, rocking and knitting.

"Well," said Mr. Simlins, "when the sun goes down *I* think it is time to knock off work; but womenkind don't seem to think so."

"I guess when the sun goes down your work's knocked off, Mr. Simlins," said Mrs. Derrick.

"Fact, Mrs. Derrick, when I'm to home; but when a man's visiting he has to work night *and* day. Moonlight's moonlight now. I declare, in Jersey I thought it was broad sunshine.—You haven't been down to my place yet, Mr. Linden?"

"No sir, not within the gate."

"The Simlins' have held that place, sir, off and on, for nigh three hundred years. We're a good many Simlins'—and we're a good set, I'll say it! a pretty good set. Not thin-skinned, you know,—we can take a scratch without bein' killed—but we never would stand bein' trampled on. We're soft-hearted too; plenty o' what I may call *tendrils*, ready to take hold of anything; and when we take hold we *do* take hold. We cover a good deal of ground in the country, here and elsewhere—in the various branches. My mother was a Mush, and my grandmother was a Citron; a good families those, sir; can't do better than take a wife from one of them, Mr. Linden, if you are so disposed;—you haven't got one already, have you?"

"*What*, sir?" said Mr. Linden, with more sharpness than he often shewed, and which made Mrs. Derrick drop her knitting and look up.

"I thought you wasn't a married man—are you?" said Mr. Simlins, the grin just shewing itself again on his face.

"Is that one of the charges brought against me?" said Mr. Linden, a little too roused himself to pay much heed to Mr. Simlins' questions.

"Well I didn't know as you'd think it a 'charge,'" said Mr. Simlins with an unchanged tone. "I guess you mean to make it true some day, don't you?"

The question fell unheeded—the charge did not; it touched him deeply; touched the proud sense of character; though no words gave evidence of the fact.

"Faith, child," said Mrs. Derrick in that moment of silence, her whisper as low as she thought would reach across the table, "ought we to be here?"

But a very emphatic, "Yes!" from the window, prevented the need of Faith's answer.

"I was only recommending," said Mr. Simlins, "in case you wanted help to make up your mind. The Citrons are all gone to New Jersey—there's a few of the Mushes ramblin' round Connecticut yet. Well Mr. Linden—I hope you and your boys get on commodiously together?"

"Just look into that basket on the table, and see what one of em brought him to-night," said Mrs. Derrick. "Those are Stoutenburgh Sweetings, Mr. Simlins."

Mr. Simlins looked at the Sweetings and then looked towards the window.

"I'd like to hear you speak a little on that point," he said. "Fact is, there's been some winds blowin' about Pattaquasset that aint come off beds o' roses; and I'd like to find where the pison is and clap a stopper on it for the future. It's easy done."

Mr. Linden looked up with his usual expression, only the smile was grave and a little moved, and answered,

"I could say a good deal on that point, Mr. Simlins. Yet I had rather you should ask the boys than me."

"Don't want to ask the boys nothin', bless you!" said Mr. Simlins. "What I want to say is this;—what's the matter between you and the Squire? I've been askin' *him*, and he says you learn the boys to make a V wrong side upward—I can't make nothin' of that," said Mr. Simlins, with again the approach to a grin;—"taint over easy to tell whether *his* Vs are one side up or 'tother. Now I'd like to know from you where the hitch is. The Squire aint likely to set the Mong in a configuration just yet—but if he's swingin' a torch round, I'd jest as lief put it out afore the sharks fly."

"But Mr. Simlins, don't you think it is rather hard measure to ask me why people dislike me?"

"Well—I don't see as I do," said Mr. Simlins placidly;—"cause I know pretty well it's some chymistry idee of his own; and if I could get hold of it, you see, I should have a better handle. I guess the school never went on better than it's goin'; *he* don't know beans."

"How do you know that I do?" said Mr. Linden smiling. "Why don't you ask him? I think at least half his ill will arises from a mistake."

"Have asked *him*," said Mr. Simlins—"just come from there;—but he's pretty much like them V's we were speakin' about; don't spell nothin'. What's his mistake about then? if I knowed that, I could bring things to a concert."

"Why," said Mr. Linden with grave deliberation, "suppose he wants to buy your house? and takes a walk up that way to set forth his terms."

"Well—suppose he does"—said Mr. Simlins attentively.

"He finds you and Judge Harrison in the porch, you talk about the crops and the weather, and he tells you he wants your house. What do you say to him?"

"I tell him I don't sell it to no one but a Simlins—nor that neither till I can't live in it no longer myself."

"Is that your fault—or Judge Harrison's?" said Mr. Linden, setting the basket of Stoutenburgh Sweetings on the little table in the full light of the lamp. "Miss Faith, if those are 'sweetenings,' they may as well do their office."

The farmer sat with his elbows on his knees, touching the tips of his fingers together in thoughtful fashion, and softly blowing the breath through his lips in a way that might have reached the dignity of a whistle if it had had a trifle more of musicalness.

"Is them the sort of lessons you give in school?" he said at length without stirring.

"Why?" said Mr. Linden with a little bit of a smile.

"Ingen-uious," said Mr. Simlins. "It's as good as a book, Mrs. Derrick," added he glancing up at the rocking chair, "is Squire Deacon wantin' to buy your house?"

"My!" said Mrs. Derrick, again laying down her knitting, "can't he be content with his own? I hope he don't want ours," she added, some fear mingling with her surprise.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "do you think if I gave you an apple you would give me a knife?"

"I hope he don't," growled Mr. Simlins as he rose up. "I never heerd that he did. Miss Faith—them Stoutenburgh Sweetings is good eatin'." Faith after setting a pile of plates and knives on the table, had taken up her stocking again.

"Yes Mr. Simlins—I know they are."

"Then why don't you eat one?"

"I don't want it just now, Mr. Simlins—I'd rather finish my work."

"Work!" said the farmer taking an apple. "Well—good evening! I'll go and look after my work. I guess we'll fix it. There's a sight o' work in the world!"

With which moral reflection Mr. Simlins departed.

"There'll be more work than sight, at this rate," said Mr. Linden when he came back from the front door. "Mrs. Derrick, how many stockings does Miss Faith absolutely require for one day?"

"Why I don't know sir—and I don't believe I ever did know since she was big enough to run about," said Mrs. Derrick, her mind still dwelling upon the house.

"Miss Faith, my question stands transferred to you."

"Why you know," said Faith, intent upon the motions of her needle,—"*I might require to mend* in one day what would last me to wear a good many—and I do."

"But,

"The day is done—and the darkness Falls from the wing of night."

"I never mend stockings till then," said Faith smiling over her work. "Are Sam's apples good?"

"By reputation."

"I thought you were trying them! Why you asked me for a knife, Mr. Linden—and I brought it."

"I'm sure I gave you an apple. Perhaps you thought it was a ball of darning cotton."

"No, I didn't," said Faith laughing. "But what use is my apple to your knife, Mr. Linden?"

"Not much—it has served the purposes of trade."

"But what is the purpose of trade, Mr. Linden, if the articles aren't wanted?"

"I see you are dissatisfied with your bargain," he said. "Well, I will be generous—you shall have the knife too;" and Mr. Linden walked away from the table and went upstairs.

The parlour was very still after that. Faith's needle, indeed, worked with more zeal than ever, but Mrs. Derrick rolled up her knitting and put it in her basket, sighing a little as she did so: then sat and thought.

"Faith, child," she said after a long pause, "do you think the Squire would ever take our house?"

Faith hesitated, and the answer when it came was not satisfactory.

"I don't know, mother."

Mrs. Derrick sighed again, and leaned back in her chair, and rocked; the rockers creaking in rather doleful sympathy with her thoughts. Then an owl on a tree before the door hooted at the world generally, though Mrs. Derrick evidently thought his remarks personal.

"I can't think why he should do that to-night, of all nights in the year!" she said, sitting straight up in her chair. "It never did mean good. Faith—what should we do if he did?"—this time she meant the Squire, not the owl.

"Mother!"—said Faith, and then she spoke in her usual tone.—"*We'd find a way.*"

"Well!"—said Mrs. Derrick, rocking back and forth. Then she started up. "We've got to have biscuits for breakfast, whether or no! It's good I remembered 'em!" And she hurried out of the room, coming back to kiss Faith and say,

"Don't fret, pretty child, whatever happens. Go to bed and to sleep,—I'll make the biscuit." And alert and busy she left the parlour.

Faith's sleep was quiet, but not unbroken. For at that time when all well-disposed people, young or old, are generally asleep (in such a well-ordered community as Pattaquasset) it pleased the younger portion of said community to be awake. Yet they were well-disposed—and also ill! For repairing in a body to Mrs. Derrick's house they gave her nine cheers for her lodger,—thence departing to Squire Deacon's, they gave him as many groans as he could reasonably want for himself. After which the younger part of the community retired in triumph.

It was said, by one adventurous boy, that falling in with Mr. Simlins they impressed him—that his voice helped on the cheers, but not the groans: and indeed the whole story needs confirmation.

Faith heard the groans but faintly, owing to the distance, but the cheers were tremendous.

It is painful to add that Joe Deacon was vociferous in both parties.

CHAPTER VII

"I hope your rest was disturbed last night," said Faith rather gaily, as she came in to the breakfast-table with a plate of biscuits and set them down before Mr. Linden.

"Thank you! you have reason to be quite satisfied in that respect."

"But did you hear them after they left our house?"

"I heard them—really or in imagination—all night, thank you again, Miss Faith—and am as sleepy this morning as you can desire."

"It wasn't I," said Faith. "Now what notice, Mr. Linden, will you think it proper to take of such a proceeding?"

"That was one thing which kept me awake."

"But as you are sleepy now, I suppose the point is decided?"

"You are as quick at conclusions as Johnny Fax," said Mr. Linden smiling, "who always supposes that when I am not using my pen myself I am quite ready to let him have it."

"Does he get it?"

"What should you advise?"

"O Mr. Linden!" said Faith,— "I should advise you to do—just what you do!"

"Unsound!" he said,— "I thought you were a better adviser. But about this matter of the boys—I shall probably read them a lecture, wherein I shall set forth the risk they run of getting sick by such exposure to the night air; also the danger I am in of being sent away from my present quarters, because ladies prefer sleep to disturbance. Having thus wrought up their feelings to the highest pitch, I shall give them a holiday and come home to dinner."

Faith laughed her little low laugh of pleasure; at least it always sounded so. It might be pleasure at one thing or at another; but it was as round and sweet a tone of merry or happy acknowledgment, as is ever heard in this world of discordances.

"But are you really sleepy, sir?" said Mrs. Derrick. "I'm so sorry! I thought they were doing nothing but good. I never once thought of their waking you up."

Mr. Linden laughed too, a little.

"I shall get waked up"—he said,— "in the course of the day. Unless somebody has drugged my coffee."

"Judge Harrison was here this morning, Mr. Linden, with a message for you," said Faith. "Mother, will you tell Mr. Linden what Judge Harrison said?"

"I'd rather hear you, child, by half," said her mother, with a smile whereon the house cast a little shadow. "Tell him yourself, Faith." And Mrs. Derrick sighed, and took her napkin and rubbed off a spot on the coffeepot.

"Judge Harrison came—" said Faith, and paused.

"And went away"—said Mr. Linden.

"Yes," said Faith. "He stopped on his way somewhere, and came into the kitchen to talk to us. He said he would like, if you would like it, he would like to have a great exhibition of the boys—he knows about the school, he says, and there hasn't been such a school in Pattaquasset since he has been here himself; and he would like to shew it up to the whole town. So if Mr. Linden approved of it, Judge Harrison said, he would have a gathering of all the countryside in some nice place—the Judge has plenty of ground and can get anybody else's besides; and the boys should have a great examination, and after that there should be an entertainment under the trees, for boys and all. And he wanted mother to speak to Mr. Linden, and see whether he would like it. And mother wouldn't," said Faith as she finished.

Mr. Linden raised his eyebrows slightly—then let them fall and likewise his eyes. Then sent his cup to be replenished, gravely remarking to Faith that if she had any drugs, she might put them in now!

"What kind of drugs would you like, Mr. Linden?" said Faith.

"Any that are deeply sedative."

"Sedative?" said Faith, with that look which he often drew from her,—very earnest, half wistful, half sorrowful,—"I don't know what it means, Mr. Linden."

"It means," said he, his face relaxing a little, "'such as diminish the physical energy, without destroying life,'—such in short, as might qualify a man for the situation of a tame monkey on a pole."

Faith's look changed to a sort of indignant little glance, and her lips parted; but they closed again and her eyes went down to her plate.

"What were you going to remark, Miss Faith?"

Faith blushed a good deal, however the answer came steadily. "I don't think any drugs would do that for you."

"I am in a bad way, then," said Mr. Linden with unmoved gravity. "Because if I survive this trial of what I can bear, I intend to advertise for the afore-named situation. Have you heard of any vacant pole, Miss Faith?"

Faith looked at him with a grave, considering wonder, which gradually broke into a sense of fun; and then she laughed, as she did not often laugh.

Apparently Mr. Linden was well enough pleased with such answer to his words, for he not only made no attempt to stop her, but even remarked that it was good to be of a sympathizing disposition.

The day passed as usual; only of late it had got to be Faith's habit to spend a good deal of time shut up in her room. It had never been her habit before. But now, after going through her early household duties, of which Faith had plenty, she used to be out of sight often for an hour before dinner; unless when the dinner required just that hour of her attention. Nothing was left behind her to call her down. Her dairy, her bread and cake, her pies and cream-cheeses, her dinner preparations—whatever the things might be—were all ready for the day's wants; and then Faith was gone. After dinner it was still more surely the same. Yet though all this was true, it was so quietly and unobtrusively true that Mrs. Derrick had hardly observed it.

It happened this afternoon that Faith lingered upstairs,—not until teatime, but until she heard her mother call. Reuben Taylor wanted to see her. He was at the gate.

"I didn't want to disturb you, Miss Faith. I told Mrs. Derrick so. It's only some clams,—which I thought maybe you'd like," said Reuben modestly. "I left 'em in the kitchen."

"Thank you, Reuben—I like them very much. Do you feel better than you did yesterday?"

"Yes, ma'am—" said Reuben rather slowly,—"I felt a great deal better last night."

"And to-day—don't you?"

"Yes, ma'am," Reuben answered as before.

"But not so well as last night? What's the matter, Reuben?"

"Didn't you hear what they did last night, ma'am?"

"To be sure I did, but what has made you feel worse to-day?"

"Why you know, ma'am," said Reuben, "last night I forgot all about everybody but Mr. Linden. But oh Miss Faith! I just wish you could have been in school to-day for one minute!—when Mr. Linden came in! You see," said Reuben, excitement conquering reserve, "the boys were all there—there wasn't one of 'em late, and every one had a sprig of basswood in his hat and in his buttonhole. And we all kept our hats on till he got in, and stood up to meet him (though *that* we do always) and then we took off our hats together and gave him such a shout!—You know, Miss Faith," added Reuben with a smile both expressive and sweet, "basswood's a kind of linden."

"And what did Mr. Linden do?" said Faith with a smile of her own that very well reflected Reuben's.

"He didn't say much," said Reuben,—"*he looked* a good deal."

"Well, you foolish boy," said Faith gently, "don't you feel well now, after all that? What's the matter?"

A heavy, shoe-leathery step came down the street—it was Squire Deacon. Reuben knew who it was before the Squire came near, for he flushed up, and for a moment stood with his back resolutely turned towards the gate; then with an air as resolute, but different, he turned round and bowed as courteously as he knew how—far more so than the Squire did to him; for the combination of Faith and Reuben did not seem to fall pleasantly upon Squire Deacon's organs of vision; nor indeed could he have quite forgotten last night.

"Reuben, come in," said Faith touching his shoulder and smiling,— "I want to speak to you. But first answer my question—why don't you feel quite well now? You ought, Reuben."

"Yes, Miss Faith—I know I ought,—at least I oughtn't to feel just as I do," Reuben answered. "Mr. Linden told me so to-day."

"Then why do you feel so?" Faith asked with increased earnestness.

Reuben coloured and hesitated.

"Folks vex me—" he said in a low voice. "And—and Mr. Linden says I love him too well if I'm not willing to let him go when God pleases. And I know it's true—but—" and Reuben followed Faith into the house without another word.

"What do you mean about Mr. Linden's going?"

"Just that, ma'am," said Reuben simply. "Because we can't make ourselves feel well by thinking things are going just as we want 'em to—he says that's not strong enough ground to rest on."

"But does he talk of going away, Reuben?"

"O no! Miss Faith I never heard him,—he only talked so to me because of what other folks said."

"Well," said Faith with a change of tone, "you're a foolish boy. You come and see me whenever you get feeling bad again. Folks can't hurt Mr. Linden. Now look here—Wait a minute, will you!"— Faith ran upstairs; speedily came down again with a little blue-covered book in her hand.

"Is this the arithmetic you study?" she said softly, coming close to him.

Reuben took the book with some surprise in his face.

"Yes, ma'am, this is the one." And he looked up at her as if to ask, what next.

"How far have you gone?"

"I am through this now," said Reuben, "but some of the others are here—and here."

"Then you can tell me," said Faith. She turned over to a certain page, far on in the book too, and putting it into Reuben's hands, said quietly,

"I am studying it, and I cannot make anything of this. Do you remember how it was explained?"

"The book's wrong," said Reuben, after a glance at it,— "I remember, Miss Faith. See—it ought to be so—and so—" Reuben went on explaining. "All the books we could get here were just like it, and Mr. Linden said if he found any more mistakes he would send to Quilipeak and get good ones. He shewed us how this ought to be."

"That's it!" said Faith. "Thank you, Reuben. And you needn't tell anybody I asked you about it."

Reuben looked a little surprised again, but he said "No, ma'am," and made his bow.

It was Faith's turn to be surprised then, for stepping into the tea-room to look at the clock, she found not only the clock but Mr. Linden,—the former ticking sundry minutes past teatime, the latter enjoying the sunset clouds and his own reflections, and (possibly) his book. Mrs. Derrick, favouring the atmosphere of the little wood fire, which had burnt itself out to coals and ashes, sat at one corner of the hearth, taking up the stiches round the heel of her stocking; which precarious operation engrossed her completely. Mr. Linden however looked up, and took in the whole of the little picture before him. Apparently the picture was pleasant, for he smiled.

Faith's look was startled.

"I am late!" she said with a compunctious glance at the clock. And as soon as it could be made the tea came in smoking. As Faith took her seat at the table she put her question.

"When did you come in, Mr. Linden?"

"About a quarter of an hour before you did."

"By which way?"

"Why!—by the door. It is simpler than the window."

The next few seconds seemed to be employed by Faith in buttering bread and eating it, but in reality they were used for carrying on a somewhat hurried calculation of minutes and distances which brought the colour in her cheeks to a hue of pretty richness.

"Did I run over anybody in my way?" asked Mr. Linden. "What gives the question its interest?"

"I had thought you were out," said Faith quietly.

"I know a shorter way to the store than you do," said Mr. Linden with equal quietness.

"To the store!" said Faith, eye and lip quite putting quietness out of the question.

"Yes, I found your footprints there the other day, and I have been wanting to tell you ever since that it is not anything like so far up to my room. Let me recommend that way to you for the future."

Faith's colour was no matter of degrees now, for it rushed over temples and cheek in a flood. And seemed inclined to be a permanency.

"There you may take what you like," he went on, with a smile that was both amused and encouraging, "and I shall be none the wiser—unless you tell me yourself. If you do tell me, I shall be very glad. Now Miss Faith—what shall we do about Judge Harrison?"

Faith hesitated, and struggled perhaps, for it did not seem very easy to speak with that deep flush on her brow; and then she said rather low,

"I am not ungrateful, Mr. Linden."

"Neither am I—but this proposal of his gives me some trouble. I think if he would have all the fun, without any of the shewing off, it would answer every good purpose and avoid all the bad ones. And if you will intimate as much to your mother, Miss Faith, and persuade her to convey the information to Judge Harrison, it will perhaps be the best way of reply. Of course as trustee he has still the right of doing as he likes."

"Mother, do you hear?" said Faith, "or do you want me to repeat it?"

"No, child,"—said her mother abstractedly; "I didn't hear, to be sure,—how should I? Faith—what do you suppose makes Cindy break the noses off all our milk pitchers?"

This was an irresistible question. Faith's own face came back, and during the rest of supper-time she was like herself, only with a shade more than was usual upon her brow and manner.

The short September day had little twilight to lengthen it out. The cool western horizon still outshone the setting stars with its clear light, but in the east and overhead others came out, 'silently, one by one.' Mr. Linden went to take his evening walk, Faith to light the lamp in the parlour, watched and gazed at by her mother the while.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, "what makes you stay upstairs so? I never thought of it till I went to call you to see Reuben—but seems to me you are up there a great deal."

Faith smiled a little and also looked grave, as she was putting on the shade of the lamp.

"Yes, mother"—she said,—"I am."

"What for, pretty child?" said her mother fondly.

Faith was pretty, in the look with which she answered this appeal. Her smile dropped its gravity, and only love came in to make the confession.

"Mother, I am trying to learn. I want to be wiser."

"Learn!" said Mrs. Derrick in utter astonishment, and rousing out of her resting position. "Trying to *learn*, child?"

"Yes, mother—what about it? I don't know anything; and I want to know—a great deal!"

"Why you know everything now!" said Mrs. Derrick. "What don't you know, Faith?—I should like to!"

Faith smiled.

"Mother, I don't know anything!"—and then she added more brightly, "I've begun with arithmetic, for one thing."

"Arithmetic!" said Mrs. Derrick; and she paused, and leaned back in her chair, rocking gently to and fro, with a shade of soberness stealing over her face.

"You never did have much chance,"—she said at length, "because I couldn't give it to you then. My heart was broke, Faith, and I couldn't bear to have you out of my sight for a minute. But somehow I thought you knew everything." And she sat still once more, looking at Faith as if trying to reinstate herself in her old opinion. Nor altogether without success; for with a little smile coming over her face, Mrs. Derrick added,

"You won't be any sweeter—learn as much as you will, child,—you needn't think it;" and the rockers would have certainly come into play again if Cindy had not opened the door and claimed attention.

"I s'pose likely you don't want to go down to Widder Stamp's?" she said. "'Cause she wants you to come. I'm free to confess she's got the high-strikes wonderful."

"Mother," said Faith, giving her one or two kisses as Mrs. Derrick rose to prove the contrary of Cindy's supposition, "I shall be a great deal *happier*;—and I am getting along nicely."

Which sent Mrs. Derrick off in triumph. But when she was gone, Faith did not take her basket of stockings, nor yet her arithmetic; but sat down by the table with her head in her hands and sat very still. Still, until Mr. Linden came in, laid one paper on the table at her side, and sat down to read another. Faith's darning-needle came into play then, and worked quick and silently. Mr. Linden glanced towards it as he laid down his paper.

"I see you evaded my question last night," he said,— "there could not be such a *constant* supply, if there were not also a constant demand."

"Mr. Linden," said Faith, her colour a little raised and her voice changing somewhat,— "I want to ask you something—if you are not busy about anything."

"I am not but you might ask just as freely if I were."

"I couldn't," said Faith. She drew her hand out of her stocking and put her thimble on the table.

"Mr. Linden," she said without looking at him,— "a while ago, when you were speaking of faith and a cloudy day, and I told you I wasn't like that,—you said I must read the Bible then, and do what that said. I have been trying to do it."—

Shading his eyes with his hand, he looked at her—as if waiting to hear more.

"And I don't understand it," she said.— "I don't know how to get on."

"Do you mean, with the Bible? Is it *that* you do not understand?"

"I don't understand some things—I don't know exactly what I ought to do."

"In what respect?—where is the difficulty? Some things in the Bible you never will understand, perhaps, in this world, and others you must learn by degrees."

"I don't understand exactly what makes a Christian—and I want to be one."

It was spoken low, and timidly; but Faith was in earnest. Mr. Linden sat silent a minute, without changing his position.

"A Christian is one, who trusting in Christ as his only Saviour, thenceforth obeys him as his only King."

Faith hesitated and thought. "I don't understand," she said folding her hands, "—about the trusting."

"Suppose there was something you wanted done too hard for your strength but not for mine, —would you know how to trust it in my hands?"

She bowed her head and said, "Yes!"

"Suppose I consented to do it only upon condition that for the rest of your life my will and pleasure should be your only rule of action,—would the great work still be yours or mine?"

"Why, yours," she said, still looking at him.

"Cannot you see Christ—standing between God and man, offering his own blood where justice demands ours, and with his perfect righteousness covering our imperfect obedience? So 'that God may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' Can you apply any words? Can you see that Christ only is 'mighty to save'?—Are you willing to trust yourself in his hands?"

Faith dropped her eyes for a minute or two, but the lines of her face were changing.

"I know what you mean now," she said slowly. "I couldn't see it before." Then with a little smile she went on—"Yes, Mr. Linden, I am willing. But what must I do?"

"Only believe—" he answered. "Do what you say you are willing to do."

"But," said Faith, looking at him with a face which certainly spoke her near the 'little child' character which Christians do bear,— "there must be something else. I must not be like what I have been. I want to know what I ought to *do*."

"Christ's own words tell you better than I can,—'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me'—that is the description of a Christian on earth. And then it follows—'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.'"

There was silence; and then Faith said,

"But how am I to follow him?"

"How did the people do to whom he said those words when he was on earth?"

"I don't know!"

"They arose, and left all, and followed him."

"Well, Mr. Linden?"—

"It is just such a following that we are called to now—only that it must be in heart and life instead of actual footsteps. Just so must we rise up from doing our own will and pleasure, fix our eyes upon Christ, and follow him!"

"But how are we to know—how am *I* to know," said Faith, "what *I* ought to do?"

"Study Christ's summing up of the ten commandments,—does not that cover the whole ground? And then—do every little duty as it comes to hand. If we are truly ready to do God's will, he will send us work,—or if not—

"They also serve, who only stand and wait."

Faith looked an earnest, wistful, sorrowful look at him.

"But then," she said,— "I don't do anything well—how can I know that I am right? You know what you said—of the two roads only one led to the shore. I keep thinking of that—ever since."

"A traveller in the right road," said Mr. Linden, "may walk with very weak and unsteady pace,—yet he knows which way his face is set. Which way is yours?"

Faith's face was in her hands. But Mrs. Derrick's step just then sounding at the front door, she sprang away before it could reach the parlour.

CHAPTER VIII

The decision of Mr. Linden on the school question was duly communicated to Judge Harrison; and the time fixed was Thursday, the fifth of October. The place chosen, after much care, was the Judge's own house and grounds adjoining, which were spacious enough, and afforded good opportunity for setting tables and also for spreading them. So all that was fixed; and all Pattaquasset was a tip-toe; and Mr. Linden submitted to what he could not help, with as good a grace as he might. And September was sliding off into October with the gentlest, sunniest, softliest grace.

With much the same sort of grace Faith Derrick walked up and down in her mother's household; from the dairy where she made her butter, to Mr. Linden's room which it was her care to keep in order; and where she might if she chose amuse herself with Mr. Linden's books. If she did, it was unknown to their owner; he surely found every volume lying where he left it. There was chance enough for Faith, in his long absences from the house; and the books offered temptations. There were a good many of them, stowed in old-fashioned corner and window cupboards; good editions, in good bindings, and an excellent very choice selection of subjects and authors. There were books in various languages of which Faith could make nothing—but sighs; in her own mother tongue there were varieties of learning and literature enough to distract her. All however that the owner could know of other hands about his books, was that there was no dust upon them.

Perhaps he had a mind to know more—or that there should be more to be known; for about this time two remarkable things happened. One was, that Faith found a little French book ensconced among the stockings in her basket,—and the very next morning as Mr. Linden was setting off for school, he stopped at the threshold and inquired—

"Miss Faith—whereabouts are you in Prescott?"

That same colour flushed in Faith's face; it did not rise to her temples this time, but glowed richly in her cheeks. She looked down and up, and down; words seemed confounded in their utterance.

"You do not mean that you have finished it already?" he said with an excellent look of astonishment.

"I have almost,"—said Faith. "Mr. Linden, how could you tell?—I don't know what makes me do so!" she said putting both hands to her cheeks,— "there's no shame in it."

"I didn't suppose there was," he said smiling, and closed the door.

Very oddly, in spite of morning duties, Faith's next move was to go to her basket, pull out that little French book and examine it all over inside and out. Not one word of it could she read, not one sign of it did she know; what was the meaning of its place in her basket? Faith pondered that question probably while her cheeks were coming back to their usual tint; then the book was slipped back again and she hurried away to help her mother with the dishes.

"You needn't come, child," said Mrs. Derrick,— "what do you think I'll make of such a handful of things as that? To be sure Cindy's cleaning up to-day, but I'm pretty smart, yet. Go off and study arithmetic if you want to. Have you got through that yet?"

"Almost through, mother," Faith answered smiling.

"Well why don't you go and finish?" said her mother.

"Mayn't I finish these first?" said Faith, through whose fingers and the towel the cups and saucers slipped with a dexterity that was, to say the least of it, pretty. "Why mother, you were not so keen after arithmetic the other day."

"Keen after it!" said Mrs. Derrick,— "la, child, I don't pretend to be keen. But I never could bear to see a thing half done,—I'd rather do it twice over."

There was something else running in Faith's mind; for after abstractedly setting down one after another several saucers, polished from the hot water and huckaback, she dropped her towel and flung both arms round her mother's neck.

"Mother!—there is one thing I want you to do—I want you to be a Christian!"

There was persuasion in the soft head that nestled against her, if Faith's words lacked it.

To the words her mother gave no answer, but she returned the caress with interest; wrapping Faith in her arms, and drawing her down to the next chair, as if—literally—she could not stand that.

"Pretty child!" she said—and more than one tear fell upon Faith's bright hair,—"you're the best child that ever was!—and always were!"

"No, mother," said Faith kissing her.—"But will you?"

"I don't know!" said Mrs. Derrick,—"that's what your father used to say, Faith,—and I used to think I'd like to, to please him,—but somehow I never did."

"Never wished it for your own sake, dear mother?"

"Yes—sometimes—when I saw him die—" said Mrs. Derrick. "Hush child—don't say another word to me now, for I can't bear it." And giving Faith an embrace which took off all thought of roughness from her words, Mrs. Derrick rose up and went about her dishes again.

And Faith tried to do as much; but the dropping tears were too fast for her towel; her hand sought in vain to forbid their coming; she laid down her work and went away.

Truth however is always at one with itself, and so is right feeling, and so is duty. Faith as well as her mother had plenty of business on hand that morning; and it was not long before she was as hard at work in the kitchen as if there were no other interests in the world. There was bread to make. That was done. There was an elaborate chicken pie to concoct for dinner, which Faith would not leave to her mother to-day. There was a certain kind of muffins which Mrs. Derrick suggested Mr. Linden would be apt to like, and which they had never had since he was in Pattaquasset. To hear was to obey, and Faith compounded the muffins. Then fresh yeast must be made, and Faith always did that. Let it not be thought that Mrs. Derrick was idle while thus indicating floury fields of exertion to her daughter. Very far from it. There was all the house and all the rest of the dinner to see to; besides Cindy, who was one woman's work. The butcher was to be met, and farm questions settled with the farmer; and Mrs. Derrick was still deep in vegetables when Faith quitted the kitchen. How much time she had left for study before dinner it doesn't appear.

After dinner, this day, there was small study chance—or at least small chance to get books; for it was Wednesday,—and Wednesday was in every Pattaquasset school a half holiday. Indeed that arrangement of things extended beyond the schools; and on this particular Wednesday, Mrs. Derrick devoted the holiday time to a far-off neighbour—declaring that she "felt like a good long walk." And after her departure the dreaminess of a warm fall afternoon settled down upon the house and its inhabitants. Faith sat sewing by the parlour window, or reading—stealthily; for Mr. Linden with his book sat in the porch not three feet from her; but it is not too much to say that neither made great progress. Who could read or work—or think—vigilantly, in that hazy sunshine?—the very bees took a siesta on the wing, and rocked to and fro in the soft air.

About the middle of the afternoon a small white-headed boy was seen revolving down the main street of Pattaquasset. I say revolving—for the slight suggestion of a small stone in the road—or a spot of particular dustiness—was enough to make the boy break the monotony of his walk with a somerset; by which style of progress he at last arrived at Mrs. Derrick's door, entered the gate and came up the steps. There he paused and gazed at Mr. Linden.

"What is your name?" inquired that gentleman, with the benevolent idea of setting the boy's thoughts in motion in a straight line.

"Charles twelfth" replied the boy promptly.

"Charles twelfth!" said Mr. Linden. "Are there eleven more of you?"

The boy put his finger in his mouth but brought forth no answer.

"Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, "are you the planet which has attracted this small star out of its usual orbit?"

Faith came to the door.

"Who are you, little fellow?" said she, eyeing the dusty white head.

"Who be you?" said the boy.

"The centre of your solar system at present," said Mr. Linden. "Is that the way satellites generally ask questions?"

"What a queer man!" said the boy looking at Mr. Linden.

"What a queer boy—" said that gentleman gravely.

"What do you want?" said Faith, biting her lips and laughing at both of them.

The boy gazed at her, but he also gazed at the scraper!—and the attraction of that was irresistible. Down went his white head, and over went his dusty feet, and then Charles twelfth was himself again.

"My ma' kep' your 'ma to supper," he said. "And she says you may come too, if you want ter—and bring *him*. We've got lots o' pies." And stimulated by this recollection, the boy turned without delay and began his revolutions homeward. Faith ran down the two or three porch steps and laid hold of the little invader.

"Here! You Charles twelfth!—who are you, and where does your ma' live?"

"She lives down to our house."

"Where's that?"

"Down the woody road—" said the boy,—"next after you come to CaptinSamp's blackberry field. There's sunflowers in front."

"Then you are Mrs. Seacomb's boy? Very well," said Faith, letting him go. "Mr. Linden, there is an invitation for you."

"Is there a carriage road into Sweden? or do we walk?" he replied.

"Sweden?"—said Faith,—"it is in the woods, two or three miles from here. A woman lives there—the widow of a man that used to sail with my father. My father was captain of a ship, Mr. Linden. Mr. Seacomb was one of his mates, and very fond of him; and we go to see Mrs. Seacomb once in a while. I don't think, perhaps, you would like it. It's a pretty ride."

"That is a kind of ride I do like."

"But I don't know whether you would like it all. If you say so, I will have up the wagon."

"Thank you—*that* I should not like. I prefer to have it up myself, Miss Faith—if you will have up your bonnet."

Faith's face gave way at that, and the bonnet and the wagon were up accordingly.

The way led first down the high road, bordered with gardens and farms and the houses of the village—if village it were called, where the neighbours looked at each other's distant windows across wide tracts of meadow, orchards and grain fields. The road was reasonably dusty, in the warm droughts of September; nevertheless the hedgerows that grew thick in many places shewed gay tufts of autumn flowering; and the mellow light lay on every wayside object and sober distance like the reflection from a butterfly's wing. Except the light, all changed when they got into the woody road.

It was woody indeed!—except where it was grassy; and woods and grass played hide and seek with each other. The grass-grown road, its thicker grass borders—where bright fall flowers raised their proud little heads; the old fence, broken down in places, where bushes burst through and half filled the gap; bright hips on the wild rosebushes, tufts of yellow fern leaves, brilliant handfuls of red and yellow which here a maple and there a pepperidge held out over the road; the bushy, bosquey, look which the uncut undergrowth gave the wood on either hand; the gleams of soft green light, the bands of shadow, the deeper thickets where the eye looked twice and came back unsatisfied,—over all the blue sky, with forest leaves for a border. Such was the woody road that afternoon. Flocks of little birds of passage flitted and twittered about their night's lodging, or came down to feast on wintergreen or cedar berries; and Mrs. Derrick's old horse walked softly on, as if he knew no one was in a hurry.

"With what a glory comes and goes the year'!" Mr. Linden said.

"And stays all the while, don't it?" said Faith rather timidly and after an instant's hesitation.

"Yes, in a sort—though to my fancy the other seasons have rather beauty and splendour, while autumn keeps the glory for itself."

"I think it is glorious all the year round," said Faith;—"though to be sure," she added with a sudden check, "perhaps I don't use the word right."

"Yes, it is glorious,—but I think 'glorious' and 'glory' have drifted a little apart upon the tide of human speech. Glory, always seems to my mind a warm, glowing, effulgent thing,—but ice-peaks may be glorious. The old painters encircled the heads of their saints with a 'glory' and you could not imagine that a cold light."

Faith listened, with the eyes of one first seeing into the world of wonder and beauty hidden from common vision. She did not answer, till her thoughts came back to the road they were travelling, and catching her breath a little she said,

"*This* isn't a cold light."

"No, truly. And just so far as the saints on earth walk in a cold light, so far, I think, their light is less glorious."

"I don't see how they can,"—said Faith timidly.

"They do—sometimes,—standing aloof like those ice-peaks. You can see the white garments, but no glory transfigures them. Such a face as Stephen's, Miss Faith, is worth a journey to see."

Faith thought so; wondered how many such faces he had seen. Her meditations plunged her too deep for words.

"What are you musing about?—if I may ask," Mr. Linden said presently.

She coloured but answered, "I was thinking what one must be, to have a face like Stephen's."

"That is the promise, you know—from 'glory to glory.' 'From grace to glory' must come first. 'What one must *be*'—yes, that is it. But it is good to measure the promises now and then."

Faith laid that last remark up in her heart, enshrining it in gold, as it were. But she said nothing.

"How is it with you?" he said turning his eyes full upon her,—"*you* have not told me lately. Are the clouds all gone?"

Her look met his, wistful, and simple as her answer.

"I see the light through."—

"'Unto the perfect-day!'" Mr. Linden said, his smile—slight as it was—bringing a sort of illumination with it. After a few minutes he turned to her again.

"Miss Faith, one whom Christ has called into his army should wear his uniform."

"What, sir?"—she said, the colour starting readily.

"With the private vows of allegiance, there should be also a public profession."

"Yes,"—she said, "I suppose so.—I am willing—I am ready."

Timid, modest, even shrinking as she was, more in view of the subject than of her adviser, her face was as frank as the day. His hand quitted the reins a moment, taking hers and giving it a sort of 'right-hand-of-fellowship' clasp, glad and warm and earnest, as was his look.

"I am not going to ask you anymore questions," he said,—"*you* will tell me if there are any you wish answered."

Her "Thank you" was a little breathless.

For a while the old horse jogged on in his easy way, through the woods and the fall flowers and the sunny glow; and the eyes of the two travellers seemed to be busy therewith. Then Faith said with a little timid touch upon her voice,

"Mr. Linden—I suppose it was you that put a little green book in my basket last night?"

"Jumping at conclusions again!" he said. "What sort of a little green book was it?"

"I don't know! I suppose you can tell me."

"Do you suppose I will?"

"Why not? What did you expect me to do with it, Mr. Linden?"

"Find out what sort of a book it is."

"You know I can't read a word of it," said Faith rather low.

"Look at that old house," said Mr. Linden.

They were passing a cleared field or two, one of which seemed yet under cultivation and shewed corn stalks and pumpkin vines, but the other was in that poverty-stricken state described by the proverb as 'I once had.' The house was a mere skeleton. Clapboards, indeed, there were still, and shingles; but doors and windows had long since been removed—by man or Time,—and through the open spaces you could see here a cupboard door, and there a stairway, and there a bit of partition wall with its faded high-coloured paper. No remnant of furniture—no rag of old clothes or calico; but in the dooryard a few garden flowers still struggled to keep their place, among daisies, thistles and burdocks. The little field was bordered with woodland, and human voice or face there was none. The sunbeams which shone so bright on the tinted trees seemed powerless here; the single warm ray that shot through one of the empty window frames fell mournfully on the cold hearthstone.

"Yes," said Faith.—"I don't know who ever lived there. It has stood so a good while."

The road grew more solitary still after that, passing on where the trees came close upon either hand, and arched their branches overhead, casting a deep and lonely shadow. The flowers dwindled, the briars and rank grass increased.

"As to 'Le Philosophe sous les toits,' Miss Faith," said Mr. Linden, touching the horse with his whip, "there are just two things to be said. In the first place—with the help of another book or two which are not beyond reach—you may make his acquaintance quite comfortably by yourself. In the second—no, I shall not tell you the second,—that you may find out by yourself too. There is Charles twelfth—and all his subjects one might judge."

For on Captain Samp's blackberry hill—albeit blackberries were bygone things—a troop, a flock of children were scattered up and down, picking flowers. Golden rod and asters and 'moonshine,' filled the little not-too-clean hands, and briars and wild roses combed the 'unkempt' hair somewhat roughly. Whiteheaded youngsters all of them, looking (but for small patterns of blue calico and nankeen) not unlike a drove of little pigs. Next appeared an imposing array of sunflowers, below which prince's feather waved in crimson splendour, and the little brown capital of 'Sweden' stood revealed. Or I should say, partially; for the house stood in the deepest corner of the shade, just where the road took a sharp turn towards the sunlight; and Mr. Linden alighted and tied his horse to a tree, with little fear that anything would happen to him unless the darkness put him to sleep.

"Charles twelfth has the best of it just now, Miss Faith," he said as he opened the gate for her. "Why do people build houses where they cannot see the sun!"

They were met at the door by Mrs. Seacomb.

"Do tell!" she said—"why if this aint you! But what made you come so late? and how slow your horse did come when he was about it. I've been watchin' you this age. Well Faith—I declare—you're as pretty as a posie! And this is the teacher I s'pose—Guess likely you haint been down this way afore, sir,—it's a good ways, and the road's lonesome, but it's a fine place when you're here—so retired and shady."

All Mr. Linden's command of countenance only enabled him to answer the last remark with a strong affirmative.

"Yes sir," said Mrs. Seacomb, "it is; and there's a good many of the trees is evergreens, so the shade never goes off. I do s'pose, if I could keep the children more to home they wouldn't get nigh so brown as they do; but if I was to run out in the lot and whip 'em home every half hour they'd be back again afore I could count one. Now Genevievy—she does stay round under the trees a good deal, but then she's fond of flowers. She'll be real glad to see you Faith, and so'll your mother"—and Mrs. Seacomb at last got her visiters into the parlour.

The parlour was as brown as the rest of the house. The visiters had not time to remark more particularly; for their attention was claimed by a tall girl of about Faith's age, with a loosely built,

strong jointed frame, in as marked contrast as possible to the clean outline and soft angles of the other. She shook hands very cordially with Faith, but made a reverence to the 'teacher.'

"Won't you take a chair, sir," she said, setting one for the gentleman. "Aint it an age since we've looked at you, Faith! Your mother's been here a long spell. Ma' was proud to see her come it. You haint been here, seems to me, ever before!"

"How do you do, Genevieve?"

"I'm respectable well. Can't do nothin' uncommon, you know, down in this 'eclusion. I guess it's as good to see company as blackberries. We don't get it though.—I hope you don't mind a lonely situation, sir?" The last words with deep gravity and a bending head.

"It agrees well with a contemplative mind," replied the gentleman, resolving that the young lady should not talk 'high english' alone.

"It does!" said Genevieve admiringly, taking him all in with her eyes. "There is always something to look at to make you contemplate.—Then you don't think it an objection, sir, to live so far away from society as this?"

"I have lived further away from society than this," said Mr. Linden. "I have seen regions of country, Miss Seacomb, where you could not even hear of anybody but yourself."

"I declare!—And war' n't it awful still, sir?"

"It was beautiful, still," said Mr. Linden.

"I reckon it was!"

At this juncture Charles twelfth made his appearance, and Mr. Linden at once turned to him—

"Well sir—how are the Turks?"

To which Charles twelfth, being taken much by surprise, replied,

"They're pretty well."

"Genevievie," said her mother, "if you'll make yourself agreeable, I'll go hurry tea afore the rest of the children comes. They *will* all come to table, and there's so many." And Mrs. Derrick as in duty bound, followed her to help.

"I'll go tell 'em!" said Charles twelfth as Mrs. Seacomb went out.

"No you will not"—said Mr. Linden,—"you will not go out of the house again till I give you leave. Why don't you come to Sunday school and learn to behave yourself?"

"What else?"—said Charles twelfth.

"What else!" said Mr. Linden,—"that will take you some time. Afterwards you will learn all the lessons your teacher gives you."

"Who'll he be?" said Charles twelfth coming a little nearer. "You?"

"No indeed," said Mr. Linden, "I have quite enough to do now. I dare say this lady will take you into her class—if you ask her politely."

It was worth while to see Faith's face now, for the little stir and the flush and the sweet gravity that was in it. Not so much as a glance went to Mr. Linden, but leaning forward towards the young enemy of Peter the Great, she said in her sweet tones,

"Will you come?"

Charles twelfth looked up at her rather earnestly, though his finger was in his mouth the while; and then having ended his scrutiny gave a grave little nod of assent, and moved round and stood at her side.

"Look here," said Faith,—"don't you want to shew me how the sunflowers grow in your garden?"

"They bain't mine—" said Charles twelfth.—"I'll shew you my house—if he'll let me go."

That difficulty being got over, Charles twelfth trotted out of the front door, and on through the long grass, to a remarkable edifice of clam shells, broken earthenware, moss and corn cobs, which was situated close by the fence. Faith commented and asked questions, till she had made herself slightly familiar to the young woodsman's mind; and then it was agreed that he should come Sunday

morning bright and early to Mrs. Derrick's and he and Faith would go to Sunday school together. By the time this arrangement was thoroughly entered into, the summons came to tea.

"Now do just set down and make yourselves at home," said Mrs. Seacomb, "and eat as if you were home too. Faith," she added in a good sized whisper—"I did like to forgot all about it!—and your mother could have telled me, too, but you'll do just as well,—does he always take cold pork and potatoes to his supper?"

Faith's eyes involuntarily opened; then as the meaning of this appeal broke upon her she answered with a very decided "No, ma'am."

"'Cause we've got some handy," Mrs. Seacomb said. "Now Mr. Simpson, he staid with us a spell, and he couldn't do without it—if I had pound cake and plum cake and mince pie for supper, it made no differ—and if there warn't but one cold potato in the house it made none either; he wanted that just the same. To be sure he was easy suited. And I didn't know but all school teachers was the same way. I never had much experience of 'em. Genevievvy—just lock the front door and then the children can't get in,—the back door is locked. I do take to peace and quiet!"

"Is Charles twelfth much like his brothers and sisters, ma'am?" said Mr. Linden.

"Well no—" said Mrs. Seacomb, dealing out blackberry jam,— "he always was an uncommon child. The rest's all real 'sponsible, but there's none of 'em alike but Americus Vespucius.—It's fresh, Faith—the children picked the blackberries in Captain Samp's lot.—Charles twelfth does act sometimes as if he was helped. I thought he took a turn awhile ago, to behave like the rest—but he's reacted." And having emptied the dish of jam Mrs. Seacomb began upon the cheese.

"Which is Americus?" said Faith. "Is he older or younger than Charles twelfth Mrs. Seacomb?"

"Well he's older," said Mrs. Seacomb;—"that's him," she added, as a loud rattling of the back door was followed in an incredibly short space of time by a similar rattling at the front, after which came the clatter of various sticks and clods at the window.

"I guess you won't care about seein' him nearer," said Mrs. Seacomb, stirring her tea composedly. "Only don't nobody open the door—I do love peace and quiet. They won't break the window, 'cause they know they'd catch it if they did."

"Children *is* a plague, I do s'pose," remarked Genevieve. "Is your tea agreeable, sir?"

Which question Mr. Linden waived by asking another, and the meal proceeded with a peace and quietness which suited no ideas but Mrs. Seacomb's. At last tea was over; the ladies put on their bonnets again, and the old horse being roused from his meditations, the party set forward on their pleasant way home.

Doubly pleasant now, for the sun was just setting; the air was fresher, and the glow of the sunset colours put a new 'glory' upon all the colours of earth. And light and shadow made witching work of the woody road as long as the glow lasted. Then the colours faded, the shadows spread; grey gathered where orange and brown had been; that glory was gone; and then it began to be shewn, little by little, as the blue also changed for grey, that there is "another glory of the stars." And then presently, above the trees that shaded Mrs. Seacomb's retreat, the moon rose full and bright and laid her strips of silver under the horse's feet.

Were they all exhausted with their afternoon's work? or was this shifting scene of colour and glory enough to busy their minds? Mr. Linden found his way along the road silently, and the two ladies, behind him seemed each to be wrapped in her own thoughts; and moonlight and star light favoured that, and so on they jogged between the shadowy walls of trees tipped and shimmering with light, and over those strips of silver on the road. Out of the woods at last, on the broad, full-lit highway; past one farm and house after another, lights twinkling at them from the windows; and then their own door with its moon-lit porch.

The old horse would stand, no fear; the reins were thrown over his back, and the three went in together. As Mrs. Derrick passed on first and the others were left behind in the doorway, Faith turned and held out her hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Linden!"—she said softly.

He took the hand, and inquired gravely, "whether she was taking leave of him for the rest of his natural life?"

Faith's mood had probably not been precisely a merry one when she began; but her low laugh rung through the hall at that, and she ran in.

CHAPTER IX

Mr. Simlins stood on his doorstep and surveyed such portion of his fair inheritance as his eye could reach from that point. Barns and outhouses already in good order, Mr. Simlins favoured with a mental coat of paint; fences were put up and gate-posts renewed, likewise in imagination. Imagination went further, and passed from the stores of yellow grain concealed by those yellow clapboards, to the yellow stubble-fields whence they had come; so that on the whole Mr. Simlins took rather a glowing view of things, considering that it was not yet sunrise. The cloudless October sky above his head suggested only that it would be a good day for digging potatoes,—the white frost upon the ground made Mr. Simlins 'guess it was about time to be lookin' after chestnuts.' The twitter of the robins brought to mind the cherries they had stolen,—the exquisite careering of a hawk in the high blue ether, spoke mournfully of a slaughtered chicken: the rising stir of the morning wind said plainly as a wind could (in its elegant language) that 'if it was goin' to blow at that rate, it would be plaguey rough goin' after round clams.' With which reflection, Mr. Simlins turned about and went in to his early breakfast of pork and potatoes,—only, as he was not a 'teacher,' they were hot and not cold.

Thus pleasantly engaged—discussing his breakfast,—Mr. Simlins was informed by one of his 'help,' that a boy wanted to see him. Which was no uncommon occurrence, for all the boys about Pattaquasset liked Mr. Simlins.

"Just as lieves see him as not," said Mr. Simlins—"if he don't want my breakfast. Come in, there, you!"—

And Dromy Tuck presented himself.

"'Early bird catches the worm,'" said Mr. Simlins. "Don't want my breakfast, Dromy, do you?"

"Had mine afore I started," replied Dromy. "But the thing's here. Mr. Linden says as how we wants your nuts off o' them trees over to Neanticut—and he says if you don't want 'em, why it'll fit, he says. And if you do, why you may keep 'em that's all."

"What's Mr. Linden goin' to do with the nuts, s'pos'n he gets 'em?"

"'He aint agoin' to get 'em,'" said Dromy—"it's us;—us and him. You see we did somethin' to please him, and so now he said as how he'd like to do somethin' to please us, if he only knowed what it was. And there wa'n't a boy of the hull on 'em as didn't say he'd rather go after nuts than any other livin' thing whatsomedever."

"And now I s'pose you're askin' for them particular nuts to please me. It's a round game we're on," said Mr. Simlins. "How're you goin' to get to Neanticut? same way Jack went up his bean?—won't pay."

"He didn't tell—" said Dromy. "He don't say everything to oncet, commonly."

"When 'you goin'?"

"Don' know, sir. Mr. Linden said as how we'd better go afore the nuts did. And Saturday aint fur off."

"Saturday—well! You tell Mr. Linden, if he'll send Reuben Taylor here Saturday morning, he can take the big wagon; it'll hold the hull on ye, and I guess I'll do without the team; and if he wants to go into the old house and make a fire in case you want something to eat afore you get home, there's not a soul in it and no wood nother—but you can pick it up; and I'll give Reuben the key. Now don't you splice the two ends o' that together by the way."

Great was the stir in a certain stratum of Pattaquasset that day! Many and startling were the demands for pies, cheese, and gingerbread, to be answered on the ensuing Saturday. Those good housewives who had no boys at school or elsewhere, thought it must be 'real good fun' to help them get ready for such a frolic,—those who *had* boys—wished they had none! As to the rest, the disturbance spread a little (as disturbances are wont) from its proper sphere of action. Two boys even invaded Mrs. Derrick's peaceful dwelling, and called down Faith from conquering Peru. These were Reuben

Taylor and Joe Deacon; for Joe with a slight variation of the popular adage, considered that 'once a scholar, always a scholar.' Reuben seemed inclined on his part to leave the present business in Joe's hands, but a sharp nudge from that young gentleman's elbow admonished him not only to speak but to speak quickly. Reuben modestly preferred his modest request, guiltless of any but the most innocent arrangement of his words.

"We boys are all going over to Neanticut nutting, next Saturday, Miss Faith," he said, "and we thought as Mr. Linden was going, maybe you'd like to go too—and we'd all enjoy it a great deal more."

"There ain't room in the wagon," put in Joe—"but I s'pose you kin fix that."

"Joe!" said Reuben flushing up. "There's plenty of room, Miss Faith—there isn't one of us that wouldn't find it, somehow. I could walk easy enough, I know that."

Faith flushed up too on her part a little, unconsciously; and asked who else was going.

"Sam *aint*"—said Joe, as if that was all he cared about.

"Only the boys, Miss Faith," said Reuben with another glance at his comrade. "But it's a pretty place over there,—and so's the ride. There's room for Mrs. Derrick too if she'd like it," Reuben added,—"I suppose we shall be gone all day."

"It's very good of you to come and ask me, both of you," said Faith, evidently in perplexity;—"and I should like to go dearly if I can, Reuben—but I am afraid I can't. I am glad if the wagon's big enough to hold you all without me. You'll have a great time."

"You may say that!" said Joe—while Reuben looked down, disappointed.

"We didn't know whether you would," he said—"but Mr. Linden said you wouldn't be displeased at our asking. We asked him first, Miss Faith—or we shouldn't have made so free. And you shall have some of the nuts, anyway!"

A little cheered with which view of the subject, Reuben made his bow, and Joe Deacon whistled after him out of the gate.

Faith looked after them, disappointed too. There was a grave set of the lines of her mouth, and it was with rather a thoughtful face that she looked down the road for a minute. Then remembering the volume of Prescott in her hand, which her finger still kept open, she went up stairs again and set herself down to finish her treasure. Faith's reading-place, it must be known, was no other than a deep window-seat in Mr. Linden's room. That was a large, old-fashioned room, as has been said, with brown wainscottings and corner and window cupboards; and having on two sides a pleasant exposure, the light generally made it a winsome place to look at. Now, in this October weather, it came in mellow and golden from a softened sun and changing foliage; the brown wood and white walls and dark old furniture and rich bindings of books, all mingled in the sunlight to make a rich sunny picture.

There were pictures outside too and pleasant ones. From the south window, straight down the street, the houses and trees and the brown spire of the Methodist church stretched away—roofs and gable ends and the enormous tufty heads of the elm trees that half hung over them. At the back of these houses, the eye went uninterruptedly over meadows and fields to the belt of woods which skirted at a little distance the line of the shore from the Lighthouse to Barley Point—here and there a break through which a schooner might be seen standing up or down the Sound; elsewhere only its topsails might be discerned above the woods. The western window took in the break where Barley Point lay; and further on in the southwest a distant glimpse of the Sound, with the little brown line of Monongatesak Point. The lane leading to the shore ran off due west, with houses, gardens, orchards, bordering it and spotting the country generally. A fair country—level and rich—all the range west and northwest was uninterrupted smooth fields; the eye had full sweep to the wide horizon; the dotting of trees, barns and houses, only enriched it, giving the sweet air of peaceful and happy occupation.

Faith's place was the deep low sill, or seat, of that western window. There often Faith's book rested, while on the floor before it the reader sat. This time the book was near finished, and a few more leaves turned over changed the 'near' into 'quite.' Faith stood then considering the books. The name of Prescott on another volume had tempted her, for she had taken it down and considered the

title page; before settling to it, Faith laid her hand on one of another set not yet much examined; a set of particular outside beauty. But what was the inside? For Faith stood by the cupboard door, not looking here and there, but leaf by leaf walking into the middle of the book. Faith rested the volume on the shelf and turned over more leaves; and at last dropped down by her window seat, laid the book there, put her cheek on her hand as usual, a cheek already flushed, and lost herself in the very beams of the afternoon sun.

It might have been a dream, it might have been a vision (only that *vision* it was not)—it might have been reality; wrapped up in her book, what should Faith know? Yet when some crisis was turned over with the leaf, and the real world began to supplant the unreal, Faith started up and looked round. Had she heard a step? a rustling of paper on the table? The door was firmly shut, the shadowy corner near by had lost the sunbeams, but was else unchanged; the table looked just as before—unless—Had there been a letter lying there when she came in?—Faith never could tell.

The door opened now, however, and Mrs. Derrick entered—peering in somewhat anxiously.

"Why here you are, pretty child!" she said, "I began to think you were lost! Mrs. Somers has been here, and so's Miss Harrison, and they wanted to see you ever so much. I don't think that's a good cheese we cut last night, Faith,—I guess I'll cut another."

Faith was an image of innocent guilt; and without daring to ask if it was tea-time, she ran down stairs. Her mother followed and stood by, not with any thought of overseeing but for the pleasure thereof.

"Well child," she said, "are you learning all the world up? What's in the oven now?"

"Don't you think that is good?"—

The question had reference to the freshly cut cheese, of which Faith presented her mother with a small morsel. Mrs. Derrick tasted—critically, but the first topic was the most interesting.

"What's made your cheeks burn?" she said laying her hand softly against the rose-colour. "If you're going to study yourself into a fever, Faith, I'm not going to stand by and see it."

"No fear, mother. I forgot myself. Is Mr. Linden come in?"

"He must be—he always is by this time. Miss Harrison says the Doctor's got back, Faith."

Faith took up her cheese and walked in with it. The tea-table stood alone. But the tea hour being come, and Mr. Linden known to be surely there within five minutes of the tea hour, the tea was made—and not a minute too soon.

Faith was not on this occasion talkative, nor anybody else. The meal proceeded rather silently. Spoons spoke in low tones, knives made themselves busy; and Cindy put her head in at the door and withdrew it with the mental ejaculation,

"My! if they baint settin' there yet!"

At this point Mr. Linden spoke. "And so, Miss Faith, you have no fancy for nuts to crack?"

Faith flushed a little and hesitated.

"I didn't say so, Mr. Linden."

"Have you any dislike to Neanticut?"

"Not the least," she said laughing.

"I dare not go further, and inquire as to the company. Don't you know how to drive, Miss Faith?"

"And what if I do?" said Faith.

"Is there any insuperable objection to your driving Mrs. Derrick over to Neanticut Saturday morning? It would be so comfortable to know there were people there—and fires—in case it was a cold morning," said Mr. Linden demurely. "I could send Reuben with you, and the key."

"O that's good!" cried Faith clapping her hands. "Mother, will you go?"

"Why don't I always, just where you want me to, child?" said her mother. "I should like to go to Neanticut, besides. I haven't been there this long while. But I guess you and I can open the house, Faith, without Reuben Taylor."

"After all, Mr. Linden," said Faith, "there is a great objection to my driving mother over there,—because she'll drive me."

"There is a great objection to your opening the house—for Reuben has the key—or will have it; and keys you know, are matters of trust, and not transferable. I don't know but Mr. Simlins would make an exception in your favour,—but I shall not ask him."

"I am glad to have Reuben along," said Faith. "And I suppose we must take our dinner with us, Mr. Linden?"

"I have no doubt there will be dinner enough from other quarters," he answered, "but how much of it will be like Mrs. Seacomb's tea I cannot say. I think it would be safe to take a very little basket—such as would suffice for two ladies."

"O with Reuben we can manage nicely," said Faith joyously. He looked at her—pleased with her pleasure.

"Don't make any grand preparation for me," he said,—"you know I must eat in commons—for the same reason that I cannot offer to drive you over."

"Does that mean that you will have to take a piece out of everybody's basket?"

"As near as possible!"

Faith shook her head, but made no further remark.

Early Saturday morning, before any other steps had brushed the dew from the grassy roadside, Reuben Taylor was on his way from the rocky coast point where he lived to the smooth well-ordered abode of Mr. Simlins. Receiving from that gentleman the key of the old house at Neanticut, and having harnessed the horses to the big wagon under his special directions, Reuben drove down to the village, put horses and wagon in safe keeping, and reported himself at Mrs. Derrick's. All things there being in readiness, that small turn-out was soon on its way; leaving Mr. Linden to look after his own much larger consignment. And despite the presence of Reuben Mrs. Derrick chose to drive; because, as she said, "when she had the reins in her own hands, she knew which way the horse was going."

The road for awhile went on towards Mrs. Seacomb's, but passing the turn into the woods kept on its uneven way to the ferry. The natural hedges—all glittering with dew—shewed little colour but in the leaves. The fair clethra and the sweet clematis had ended their short reign and were gone, and high-coloured sumachs flamed out in insurrection. Now the country became more hilly, and where the eastern portion of Pattaquasset lay close upon the Mong, the road went down by a succession of steep pitches to its shore. Then the road ran on through a sort of half drained marsh—varied in its course by holes and logs and a little bridge, and then they were at the ferry.

Now the ferry between Pattaquasset and Neanticut was—and is, as I trust it will always be—propelled by wind power. No plodding horses to distract one's eyes from the surrounding peace,—no puffing steam to break with its discord the sweet rush of the water,—but a large, flat-bottomed boat, a white sail, and a Yankee steersman. The only evil attendant upon these advantages is, that the establishment cannot be upon both sides at once—and that the steersman, like other mortals, must take his dinner. This time it happened to be breakfast; for having been much interrupted and called for at the hour when he should have taken that refreshment, long Tim declared "he would have it now, and no mistake!" The little fact that two ladies were waiting for him on the other side, did not in the least affect his appetite or his deliberation.

"Faith," said her mother when they had waited about a quarter of an hour, "if 'tother wagon should catch up we shouldn't get there first!"

Faith laughed and said, "Well, mother!"

"Well, child," said her mother cheerfully, while Reuben waved fresh signals to the obdurate ferryman, "I'm sure I don't mind, if you don't."

"He's coming out now!" said Reuben,— "or his wife is—and that's just as good."

And so it appeared; for a short vision of a red petticoat and blue jacket on the other bank, was followed by the ferryman himself,—the white sail rose up above the little boat, and she floated

smoothly over. Then Mrs. Derrick drove carefully across the boat bridge, and long Tim pushed off into the stream. How pretty it was! the winding river above, with its woody banks, and villages, and spires; and its broader bends below, towards the Sound. They were about midway in the stream when Reuben suddenly cried out—

"Look, Miss Faith!"—

And there came the great wagon, at not the slowest possible rate, over the long marsh road.

The first sight of the ferryboat and her freight was the signal for a simultaneous shout from the whole wagon load—which long Tim took for a summons to himself.

"'Taint no sort o' use hollerin' like *that*," he said, with a little turn of his steering oar; "'cause I aint a goin' back till I get somewheres to go back *from*—nor then neither mabbe. I kin count dollars whar they kint count cents, neow."

And 'neow' the little wagon was beyond pursuit,—up the hill from the ferry, on over the farm road, drove Mrs. Derrick—somewhat at the quickest; until the old untenanted house rose just before them, and Reuben sprang down to take the reins and help the ladies out.

It was a pleasant old farmhouse that, in spite of its deserted condition. They went to the kitchen, bright with windows looking out to grass fields and trees. Mrs. Derrick stood at open door and window, recalling scenes and people she remembered there, or watching for the big wagon to make its appearance; while Reuben and Faith went to the outhouses, and finally by dint of perseverance found a supply of wood in an old rotten tumbled-down fence. Mrs. Derrick proclaimed that the wagon was coming, as the foragers returned; but there was a splendid blaze going up chimney before the aforesaid conveyance drew up at the door, and the whole first party turned out to see it unload.

The wagon was unloaded in the twinkling of an eye; then came rummaging for baskets; then so many boys and so many baskets hopped and hummed round, like a little bevy of wasps—with nothing at least of the bee business-character about them.

"Mr. Linden, be we going to stop here?"—

"Is here where the trees be, Mr. Linden?"—

"Mr. Linden, Joe Deacon aint behaving nohow!"

"Mr. Linden, will we leave our baskets and come back to the house? or will they be to go along?"—inquired a more sober tongue.

While others were giving their opinion in little asides that it was 'prime'—and 'fust-rate'—and arguing the comparative promise of chestnut and hickory trees. And one of the bigger boys of the party, *not* distinguished for his general good qualities, sidling up to Reuben, accosted him under breath with a sly,

"So you druv Mr. Linden's sweetheart. Aint you spry!"

If Reuben had been in that line, he would probably have sent the offender head first down the bank,—as it was, he said quietly,

"I wouldn't let Mr. Linden hear me say that, Phil, if I was you."

"Don't mean ter. Aint you great! But I say,—Joe Deacon says you did."

"Joe Deacon's made a mistake for once in his life," said Reuben rather contemptuously—"and it isn't the first, by several."

"Reuben," said Mr. Linden approaching the group, "you may all go and find where the best trees are, and then come back and report to me. I put you in charge. Understand"—he added, raising his voice a little, "Reuben Taylor is leader of the search—whoever does not obey his orders, does not obey mine."—And in a minute the courtyard was clear. Then Mr. Linden turned and walked up to the house.

"Now what are you ladies going to do with yourselves?" he said. "Will you come out and sit under the trees and look on—taking the chance of being hit by a stray nut now and then?"

"We can't go wrong to-day," said Faith, with whom the spirit of enjoyment was well at play. "When mother feels in the mood of it we'll come. We can find you—we know where to look. Weren't you obliged to us for doing the waiting at the ferry?"

"And for looking so picturesque in the distance,—it was quite a thing to be grateful for. I think you will have no difficulty in finding where we are—there will be noise enough to guide you. I hope you have not brought a book along, Miss Faith."

"Why, Mr. Linden?"

"The 'running' brooks are good letter-press," he said—"and the grey stones, and that white oak in the meadow. And is not that woodpecker a pretty illustration?"

"I have looked at them often," said Faith. "I don't know how to *read* them as you do. There isn't any brook here, though, that I know of, but Kildeer river. You'll like Neanticut, Mr. Linden. I'm so glad you let us come. I'll read everything—that I can."

"I don't know how long everything'll last you, child—at the rate you've gone on lately," said Mrs. Derrick who stood in the doorway.

Faith smiled again, and shook her head a little at the same time as her eye went from the woodpecker to the green leaves above his head, then to the bright red of some pepperidge trees further off, to the lush grass of the meadow, and on to the soft brownish, reddish, golden hues of distant woodland. Her eye came back as from a book it would take long to read thoroughly.

"I am so glad it is such a day!" she repeated.

"I see my boys are coming back," Mr. Linden said, with a smile which hardly belonged to them,—"I must go and get their report. Au revoir, Miss Faith." And he went forward into the midst of the little swarm—so manageable in his hands, so sure to sting anybody else.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, looking over Faith's head from her more elevated position of the door-sill (looking *at* it too); "Child, why don't you get—" and there, for the first and last time in her life, Mrs. Derrick stopped short in the middle of a sentence.

"What, mother?"

But Mrs. Derrick replied not.

"What do you want me to get, mother?"

"I don't know as I want you to get anything,—child you've got enough now for me. Not that he wouldn't like it, either," said Mrs. Derrick musingly—"because if he wouldn't, *I* wouldn't give much for him. But I guess it's just as well not." And Mrs. Derrick stroked her hand fondly over Faith's head, and told her that if she stood out there without a bonnet she would get sunburnt.

"But mother!" said Faith at this enigmatical speech, "what do you mean? *Who* wouldn't like *what*?"

"What does it signify, child?—since I didn't say it?"

"But mother," persisted Faith gently, "what had I better get that I haven't?"

"I don't know as you *had* better get it, child—and I never said he wouldn't like it, I'm sure," said Mrs. Derrick with a little self-vindication.

"Who, mother?"

"Why—nobody," said Mrs. Derrick,— "who's talking of anybody?"

"Dear mother," said Faith, "don't you mean to tell me what you mean?"

"I guess it's just as well not," her mother repeated. "The fact that he'd like it don't prove anything."

Faith looked at her, coloured a little, laughed a little, and gave up the point.

The morning passed on its pleasant way in quietness; at least with the old farmhouse and its two occupants. Mrs. Derrick was not without her knitting, and having come from the door sat comfortably click-clacking her needles together—and her thoughts too perhaps—before the cheerful blaze of the fence sticks. Faith *had* a book with her—a little one—with which she sat in the kitchen doorway, which looked towards the direction the nut party had taken; and apparently divided her attention

between that volume and the one Mr. Linden had recommended. For she looked down at the one and looked off at the other by turns, in a sort of peaceful musing and note-taking, altogether suited to the October stillness and beauty. Now and then she got up to replenish the fire. And then the beauty and her musing got the better of the reading, and Faith sat with her book in her hand, looking out into the dream-provoking atmosphere. No sound came from the far-off nut trees; the crickets and grasshoppers and katydids alone broke the stillness of the unused farm. Only they moved, and the wind-stirred leaves, and the slow-creeping shadows.

When these last were but an hour's length from the tree stems, Faith proposed an adjournment to the nut trees before the party should come back to lunch. The fire was mended, the pot of coffee put on to warm; and they locked the door and set out.

It was not hot that day, even under the meridian sun. They crossed an orchard, and one or two farm fields, on the skirts of which grew single trees of great beauty. White oaks that had seen hundreds of years, yet stood in as fresh and hale green youth as the upstart of twenty; sometimes a hemlock or a white pine stretching its lithe branches far and wide and generously allowed to do so in despite of pasture and crops. Then came broken ground, and beyond this a strip of fallow at the further border of which stood a continuous wall of woodland, being in fact the crest of the bank of the little river Faith had referred to.

And now, and truly for one or two fields before, the shouts and cries of the nut-hunters rang through the air. For just edging, and edging into, the border of trees last spoken of, were the great chestnuts and hickories; and underneath and among them many little dark spots were flying about; which spots, as Mrs. Derrick and Faith came up, enlarged into the familiar outlines of boys' caps, jackets, and trowsers, and ran about on two legs apiece.

CHAPTER X

The two ladies paused at a safe distance,—there seemed to be nothing but boys astir—boys and nuts; and these last not dropping from the tree, but thrown from hand to hand (hand to head would be more correct) of the busy throng. Some picking up, some throwing stones to bring down, others at some flat stone 'shucking,' others still filling their baskets. And four boys out of five, cracking and eating—whatever else they were about. The grass, trodden down by the many feet, lay in prostrate shadow at the foot of the great tree; and the shadows of other trees fell and met in soft wavy outline. From the side of one old tree a family of grey squirrels looked out, to see the besiegers lay waste the surrounding country; in the top of another—a tall hickory, full clad with golden leaves, Mr. Linden sat—to view the same country himself; well knowing that he had given the boys full occupation for at least fifteen minutes. He was not very visible from below, so thickly did the gold leaves close him in; but Faith heard one of the boys call out,

"You Johnny Fax! if you throw stones in *that* tree, you'll hit Mr. Linden."

"Trust Johnny Fax for not never throwin' so high as *he* is," said Joe Deacon.

"I don't *want* to—" said Johnny Fax—"I don't want to fetch *him* down."

Whereupon there was a general shout, and "Guess you'd better not, Johnny!"—"He might come, if you didn't just hit him," vociferated from various quarters.

"My!" Mrs. Derrick said, surveying the golden hickory, "how on earth did he ever get up?—And how *do* you s'pose, Faith, he'll ever get down!"

Faith's low laugh was her only answer; but it would have told, to anybody who could thoroughly have translated it, Faith's mind on both points.

Apparently he was in no haste to come down—certainly meant to send the nuts first; for a sudden shower of hickory nuts and leaves swept away every boy from the tree near which Faith and her mother stood, and threw them all into its vortex. Drop, drop, the nuts came down, with their sweet patter upon the grass; while the golden leaves fell singly or in sprays, or floated off upon the calm air.

"Child," said Mrs. Derrick, "how pretty it is! I haven't seen such a sight since—since a long while ago," she added with a sobering face.

"I want to be there under the tree," said Faith looking on enviously. "No mother—and I haven't seen it before in a long time, either. It's as pretty as it can be!"

"Run along then, child," said her mother,—"only take care of your eyes. Why shouldn't you? I don't want to pick up nuts myself, but I'll go down and pick you up."

Faith however kept away from the crowd under the hickory tree; and went peering about under some others where the ground was beaten and the branches had been, and soon found enough spoil to be hammering away with a stone on a rock like the rest. But she couldn't escape the boys so, for little runners came to her constantly. One brought a handful of nuts, another a better stone—while a third told her of 'lots' under the other tree; and Reuben Taylor was ready to crack or climb as she chose to direct.

"If you'll come down the other side, Miss. Faith," said Reuben, "down by the bank, you could see it all a great deal better."

Faith seized two or three nuts and jumped up, and Reuben led the way through the leaf-strewn grass to the other side of the mob. But mobs are uncertain things! No sooner was Faith seen approaching the hickory, though yet full three feet from the utmost bound of its shadow, than a sudden pause in the great business of the day was followed by such a tumultuous shout of "Three cheers for Miss Faith Derrick!—the prettiest girl in Pattaquasset!"—that she was well nigh deafened. And promptly upon that, Joe Deacon stepped up to Reuben and whispered,

"*That'll* fetch him down!"

Faith did not hear the words—she only heard Reuben's indignant,

"Joe Deacon! behave yourself. What makes you always leave your manners home? that big basket of yours would have held 'em all, easy."

"I didn't know but Sam might want 'em," replied the unabashed Joe, dashing back into the midst of his compardons, while Reuben at last reached the pretty look-out at the edge of the woods where Faith could see the whole meadow and its scattered trees. And having placed her there ran off again. Standing half hidden by the oaks and chestnuts, she could see the whole group clustering about the climber now, for he had come down from his high post.

"Boys," he said, "I am going back to the house to dinner. Any boy who prefers nuts to dinner may stay and pick them up."

A sudden recollection came over Faith that her fire was probably well down and coffee not in a state presentable. Taking a survey of the ground, and calculating that so large a company would want a little time to get under weigh, she slipped round to where her mother sat, and giving her a word, set off fleetly and skilfully under cover of some outstanding chestnuts across the fallow. If she had known it, Faith need not have shunned to shew her running, for prettier running could not be. She was soon hidden in the further woodland.

The rest of the party took it more leisurely, so their outrunner easily gained her point; and having put the fire in order stood at the door to watch the progress of the coming invasion. It looked enough like that. For though excellent order of march had been kept for most of the way, the main body of the troops maintaining a proper position in the rear of their captain who was quietly escorting Mrs. Derrick over the meadows, no sooner did the whole band come in sight of the distant place of lunch baskets, than it became manifest for the hundred thousandth lime that liberty too long enjoyed leads to license. Scattering a little from the direct line of march, the better to cover their purpose or evade any check thereto, as if by concert, first one and then another set off on a run,—sprang the orchard fence,—and by the time the mid-orchard was reached all of Mr. Linden's force with the exception of one or two of the very steadiest, were ahead of him and straining in full run, if not in full cry, for the now near-at-hand farmhouse quarry. Beyond all call or hindrance. Standing at the kitchen door, Faith watched their coming; but discerning beyond the runners the one or two figures that did not indeed 'bring up the rear' but that covered it, and supposing that the invaders' object was to storm the wagon in which the lunch baskets were hid, she stood her ground; till she perceived that the foremost of the band were making straight for the kitchen door, and all the rest in their order. Faith gave back a little and the whole horde poured in. The fire was in a brisk blaze; the table had nice white cups and naperies on it; the nose of the coffee-pot was steaming. It looked altogether an inviting place. Down went hats and caps on the floor, from some of the party, and the whole of them with flushed faces and open mouths took the survey.

"Ain't it jolly here!"

"I wonder if he'll let us take our dinner in here. There's lots o' room."

"It's good shady."

"It's a long sight better under the trees."

"Coffee!—I'm blessed!"—said a fifth speaker bending over the fireplace; while a sixth began slyly to inspect what lay under Faith's napkins on the table.

"Charley," said Mr. Linden's quiet voice from the doorway, "did MissDerrick desire you to uncover her dishes?"

The hand slipped from what it touched, as stealthily the boy's eye went to the face of the speaker, in the one place if not in the other 'to see what there might be.'

"I will bear witness that you have 'carried' the house," Mr. Linden went on,— "now I should like to see you carry the wagon. It will be a more useful enterprise than this. Only remember that one of the first duties of a surprise party is to go forth softly."

"Where will we carry the wagon to, sir?" inquired one of the party.

"As far from the house as you can," said Mr. Linden, with a little glance at Faith. "Come! be off!—great enterprises are never finished till they are begun."

"I'd like to begin dinner, anyhow," said one, catching up his cap and leading off.

As quick and more quick than it had been filled, the room was cleared; and laughing Faith watched the busy swarm as they poured towards their magazine. Then remembered her own and came back to offer it.

"You may as well rest, Mr. Linden," said Faith as she offered him a cup of coffee. "I'm sure *they* are all comfortable. Besides, you particularly desired a fire and somebody in the house, you know."

"Miss Faith," he said, (taking the cup however) "I'm afraid your notions of duty are very slack! What sort of a captain would you make to a beleaguered city? I shall make you read the story of Catherine Douglass."

"Will you?" said Faith looking very pleased. "And what is 'beleaguered,' Mr. Linden? in the meantime."

"'Beleaguered' means, to be beset with a swarm of invaders who want to come in and ought to be kept out."

"I didn't know I ought to keep them out," said Faith laughing, "or I'd have done it."

Mr. Linden shook his head doubtfully. "I saw you give way!" he said,— "I doubt whether there was even a show of resistance. Now Catherine Douglass—But I must go. No, don't tempt me with apple pie—you have no idea of the pies in that wagon. Perhaps if I get successfully through them, I'll come back and dispose of yours. What are you reading to-day?—'Le Philosophe'?"

A little soberness came over Faith's smile as she shook her head and said no.

"I can't stay to ask a question upon that—but I'll ask you two by and by to pay for it."

And he went out to that little cluster of life that hung about the great wagon, making himself at once the centre of pleasure and interest and even fun, as Faith's eye and ear now and then informed her. It was pretty, the way they closed in about him—wild and untutored as they were,—pretty to see him meet them so easily on their own ground, yet always enticing them towards something better. Mrs Derrick thought so too, for she stood in the doorway and smiled very pleasantly.

"He's a real nice man, Faith," she said. "I don't wonder the boys like him."

Faith did not wonder at it, but she did not answer, though she too stood looking.

The ladies had finished their lunch, and Mr. Linden had perhaps *not* finished his, for he came in again to take another cup of coffee while the boys were disposing of that very ragged piece of time which the end of a boys' feast invariably is. So much peace and quietness he gave himself, if he did not give himself a sandwich—of which I am not certain.

"Mr. Linden," said Faith, "I want to ask something—will you tell me if you don't like it?"

"Don't like to have you ask me, do you mean? I do like it."

"Then," said Faith half laughing, "will you tell me if you don't quite like what I mean?"

"I'll see—" Mr. Linden replied with a smile. "It's not safe for teachers to commit themselves."

"But I must commit myself," said Faith. "I want to go and pick up nuts with the boys under the trees—may I?"

She looked for her answer with an eye that thought *he* might possibly find an objection where she saw none.

He paused a little before he replied,

"I think you may—if I could be among them and answer for their good behaviour I should not need to think about it; but you know a man loses power when he is too far above the heads of his audience. Yet I think I may trust them—and you," he added with a little smile. "Especially as the first tree touched this afternoon is yours."

"What does that mean?" said Faith, her doubt all gone.

"Do you think I shall so far forget my office as to let them pick up nuts for nobody but themselves? Therefore the first tree this afternoon is for you—or if you please for your mother; the second for Mr. Simlins. If that will take away your desire for the 'fun,' why I cannot help it."

"I have no objection to pick up nuts for mother, not even for Mr. Simlins," said Faith smiling. "And I am not afraid of the boys—I know half of them, you know. Thank you, Mr. Linden!"

"You might, if I could take you up into the tree-top. There is fine reading on those upper shelves."

Her eye shewed instantly that she liked that 'higher' fun best—not the tree-top, verily, but the reading, that she could not get at. Yet for Faith there were charms plenty below the tree-tops, in both kinds; and she looked very happy.

"Well"—Mr. Linden said, "as the successful meeting of one emergency always helps us in the next, and as it is quite impossible to tell *what* you may meet under those nut trees,—let me give you a little abstract of Catherine Douglass, before you read it and before I go. The said lady wishing to keep the door against sundry lords and gentle men who came with murderous intent against her sovereign; and finding no bar to aid her loyal endeavours,—did boldly thrust her own arm through the stanchions of the door. To be sure—'the brave lady's arm was soon broken,'—but after all, what did that signify?"

And with a laughing gesture of farewell, he once more left the house. With which cessation of murmuring voices, Mrs. Derrick awoke from her after dinner nap in the rocking chair. Faith was standing in the middle of the floor, smiling and looking in a puzzle.

"Mother, will you go over to the nutting again?"

"I'm a great deal more likely to go to sleep again," said Mrs. Derrick rubbing her eyes. "It's the sleepest place I ever saw in my life—or else it's having nothing to do. I don't doubt you're half asleep too, Faith, only you won't own it."

The decision was, that Mrs. Derrick preferred to sit quiet in the house; she said she would maybe run down by and by and see what they were at. So Faith took her sunbonnet, kissed her mother; and went forth with light step over the meadow and through the orchard.

The nutting party she found a little further on in the same edge of woodland. It seemed that they had pitched upon a great chestnut for her tree; and Faith was half concerned to see what a quantity of work they had given themselves on her account. However, the proverb of 'many hands' was verified here; the ground under the chestnut tree was like a colony of ants, while in the capacious head of the tree their captain, established quite at his ease, was whipping off the burrs with a long pole.

Faith took a general view as she came up, and then fell upon the chestnut burrs like the rest of them; and no boy there worked more readily or joyously. There seemed little justification of Mr. Linden's doubts of the boys or fears for her. Faith was everywhere among them, and making Reuben's prophecy true, that 'they would all enjoy themselves a great deal better' for her being there; throwing nuts into the baskets of the little boys and pleasant words at the heads of the big ones, that hit softly and did gentle execution; giving sly handfuls to Reuben, and then hammering out for some little fellow the burrs that her hands were yet more unfit to deal with than his; and doing it all with a will that the very spirit of enjoyment seemed to have moved. *She* in any danger of rude treatment from those boys! Nothing further from the truth. And so her happy face informed Mr. Linden, when he at last descended to terra firma out of the stripped chestnut tree.

He did not say anything, but leaning up against the great brown trunk of the chestnut took a pleased survey of the whole—then went to work with the rest.

"Boys!" he said—"aren't there enough of you to open these burrs as fast as Miss Derrick can pick out the nuts? You should never let a lady prick her fingers when you can prick yours in her place."

There was a general shout and rush at this, which made Faith give way before it. The burrs disappeared fast; the brown nuts gathered into an immense heap. That tree was done.

"Hurrah! for Mr. Simlins!" shouted all the boys, throwing up their caps into the air,—then turning somersets, and wrestling, and rolling over by way of further relief to their feelings.

"The chestnut beyond that red maple for him," said Mr. Linden, flinging a little stone in the right direction; at which with another shout the little tornado swept away.

"Will you follow, Miss Faith? or are you tired?"

"No, I'm not tired yet. I must do something for Mr. Simlins."

"Well don't handle those burrs—" he said. "They're worse than darning needles."

"Have you seen Kildeer river yet, Mr. Linden?"

"I have had a bird's eye view."

Faith looked a little wistfully, but only said,

"We must look at it after the nutting is done. That's a bit of reading hereabout you ought not to pass over."

"I mean to read 'everything I can,' too," he said with a smile as they reached the tree.

"Now Mr. Linden," said Joe Deacon, "*this* tree's a whapper! How long you suppose it'll take you to go up?"

"About as long as it would you to come down—every-one knows how long *that* would be. Stand out of my way, boys—catch all the burrs on your own heads and don't let one fall on Miss Derrick." And amidst the general laugh Mr. Linden swung himself up into the branches in a way that made his words good; while Joe Deacon whistled and danced 'Yankee Doodle' round the great trunk.

Half at least of Mr. Linden's directions the boys obeyed;—they caught all the burrs they well could, on their own heads. Faith was too busy among them to avoid catching some on her own bright hair whenever her sunbonnet declined to stay on, which happened frequently. The new object lent this tree a new interest of its own, and boys being an untiring species of animals the sport went on with no perceptible flagging. But when this tree too was about half cleared, Faith withdrew a little from the busy rush and bustle, left the chestnuts and chestnut burrs, and sat down on the bank to rest and look. Her eye wandered to the further woodland, softest of all in hazy veils; to the nearer brilliant vegetation; the open fallow; the wood behind her, where the trees closed in upon each other; oftenest of all, at the 'whapper' of a tree in which Mr. Linden still kept his place, and at the happy busy sight and sound of all under that tree.

And so it happened, that when in time Mr. Linden came down out of Mr. Simlins' chestnut, besides the boys he found nobody there but Mr. Simlins himself.

"Well!"—said that gentleman after a cordial grasp of the hand,—"*I* reckon, in the matter of nuts you're going to reduce me to penur'ousness! How you like Neanticut?"

"It's a fine place," said Mr. Linden.—"*And* for the matter of nuts, you need not take the benefit of the bankrupt act yet, Mr. Simlins."

"Over here to see a man on business," Mr. Simlins went on in explanation,—"*and* thought I'd look at you by the way. Don't you want to take this farm of me?"

"I might want to do it—and yet not be able," was the smiling reply; while one of the smallest boys, pulling the tail of the grey coat which Mr. Simlins wore 'on business,' and pointing to the heap of nuts, said succinctly,

"Them's yourn!"

"Mine!" said Mr. Simlins. "Well where's yourn? What have you done with Miss Faith Derrick?"

"Why we hain't done nothin' to her," said the boy—"she's done a heap to us."

"What has she done to you, you green hickory?"

"Why—she's run round, firstrate," said little Rob,—"*and* she's helped me shuck."

"So some o' you's thanked her. 'Twan't *you*. Here, you sir," said Mr. Simlins, addressing this time Joe Deacon,—"*what* have you been doing with Miss Faith Derrick?"

"I bain't Sam," was Joe's rather cool rejoinder, with a slight relapsing into Yankee Doodle.

"Hollo!" said Mr. Simlins—"I thought you'd learned all school could teach you, and give up to come?"

"Only the last part is true, Mr. Simlins," said Mr. Linden, who while Joe spoke had been himself speaking to one of the other boys.

Mr. Simlins grunted. "School ain't all 'nuts to him," he said with a grim smile. "Well which of you was it?—'twas a fellow about as big as you here, you sir!"—addressing in a more assured tone another boy who was swaggering near,—"*you!*"

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