

man, and prompted her marvellous revelations."

"And well you might, had you seen the deference paid to her super-human pretensions by all ranks and classes of the community, at the period when I knew most of her, for it was then that her renown as a prophetess was at its climax—and never, indeed, were the exploits of the terrible Rob Roy more widely famed among the deep glens and heathery hills of Scotland, nor his name oftener repeated as a household word of fear and awe, in its cottage shielings, than were those of the marvel-telling and enacting Moll Pitcher, some scores of years since, in the green vallies and peaceful dwellings of New England."

"You have seen her then, dear aunt, with your own eyes, and perhaps, too, have heard the sybil utter some of her oracles?"

"Yes, and I can never forget the impression made upon me when a mere child, by her weird and witch-like appearance; nor the awe with which I learned to regard her, by observing those of riper years and tried experience around me, rendering implicit belief to the supernatural endowments which she claimed to possess. My position at that early period of my life placed me where her movements came daily beneath my notice; and as her strange arts were the constant subjects of wonder and discussion in the village, my reverence for her miraculous pretensions deepened, and my faith in them became confirmed, till after years matured my judgment, and enabled me to detect the charlatanrie, which in many instances had passed with me for superhuman wisdom. But above all, as I have said, the unhappy influence, which, with the connivance of an interested party, she exercised over the destiny of a beautiful girl, who was my school-mate, caused me not only to deprecate her assumed power, but to doubt the reality of that oracular knowledge which was attributed to her, and which she in no instance disclaimed."

"You and cousin William were speaking of this very incident, Aunt Mary, when we passed through Lynn on our way to Nahant last summer; but I was so intent in looking at the old academy where you said you received the earlier rudiments of your education, that I scarcely gave a moment's heed to the conversation."

"I recollect it, and how interested you were in marking all the spots, which I pointed out as having been familiar to my childhood. I was scarcely twelve years of age, when I was placed by my parents at the school, or academy, as it was called, which had then some celebrity, in Lynn, the well-known village in which the New-England witch, Moll Pitcher, dwelt. Though just verging on my teens, I was still untaught in all

save the very rudiments of learning—for not then had the wonderful properties of steam been applied to make the world of matter and of mind progress at rail-road speed; consequently the children of those days escaped having their brains disturbed and overwrought in the endeavour to grasp at once a dozen different theories, to unravel the abstruse difficulties of algebra and logic; and then as a *salubrious* change from the close and heated school-room, to sit chained for hours in one position at the piano, conning semibreves and quavers, till the very sight of the music book became an abomination to them. But, if instead of the multitudinous branches which perplex the youth of the present generation, those of that primitive time, could say 'by heart, word for word, and line by line,' the whole of the 'Young Ladies' Accidence,' that wonderful compendium of grammar, or could read with tolerable fluency a page in the 'Columbian Orator,' or the 'American Preceptor,' the progress of the individual was considered quite satisfactory, and looked upon as giving no ordinary promise for the future.

"Such, and not beyond this, were my attainments, when I first became an inmate of the neat white house which I pointed out to you, Bella; standing upon one side of the broad sandy common of the village. It was occupied by the preceptress, under whose care I was placed—a stately, aristocratic looking woman, who presided over the female department of the academy, which I suppose still flourishes in the town of St. Crispin, and has, I trust, ere this, had some portion of the spirit of the age infused into its stagnant life. Why I was sent to this particular seat of learning, I could never clearly divine, except it was, as I sometimes suspected, that I might be under the surveillance of the parish minister, an old college friend of my father's, of whom, for his amiable and easy temper, he retained kind and pleasant recollections. As their paths through life, however, though both had embraced the same holy calling, were widely diverse, my father had for several years known little of his early friend, except through a brief call when on his annual summer visit to Nahant, or from an unfrequent letter, which breathed as of old, the spirit of kindness and affection. But he knew not how little of true and manly dignity marked the deportment of his clerical brother; how small a portion of that wisdom which is from above, imbued his character, nor what light regard he paid to the injunction of the apostle, to think of whatsoever things are pure, lovely and of good report. At that time my father's heart was saddened by the death of a first-born and cherished son, many years my senior, who, in a voyage to Smyrna, fell overboard and