

## NEW CHRONICLES OF REBECCA

bed ; her aunt and her mother were stemming curtains on the side porch.

A blue spot at one of the Perkins windows showed that in one vestal bosom hope was not dead yet, although it was seven o'clock.

Suddenly there was the sound of a horse's feet coming up the quiet road ; plainly a steed hired from some metropolis like Milltown or Wareham as Riverboro horses when through with their day's work never disported themselves so gayly.

A little open vehicle came in sight, and in it sat Abijah Flagg. The wagon was so freshly painted and so shiny that Rebecca thought that he must have alighted at the bridge and given it a new polish. The creases in his trousers, too, had an air of having been pressed in only a few minutes before. The whip was new and had a yellow ribbon on it ; the gray suit of clothes was new, and the coat flourished a flower in its button-hole. The hat was the latest thing in hats, and the intrepid swain wore a seal-ring on the little finger of his right hand. As Rebecca remembered that she had guided it in making capital G's in his copy-book, she felt positively maternal, although she was two years younger than Abijah the Brave.

He drove up to the Perkins gate and was so long about hitching the horse that Rebecca's heart beat tumultuously at the thought of Emma Jane's heart