

CHAPTER XVIII

"Fire! Fire! A house is on fire
See the firemen run.
It is a crime to set a
House on fire."

—Oldtime Primer.

IT was March. The snow had gone except on the north side of buildings and in sheltered spots. The roads leading to Exeter were seas of mud by day and frozen ruts by night. The sun rose brightly every morning, and the air was balmy, and everyone said: "What a beautiful spring day! It seems as if spring had really come."

At noon the sky became overcast, a piercing northeast wind began to blow directly from the land of icebergs, people resumed their heavy overcoats, scarfs and earmuffs, and solemnly declared that never was there a colder or more backward spring.

In the stores, hoes, rakes, shovels, spades, seed corn and sprouting potatoes were exposed for sale; but even with this encouragement the