

The Peril of Martha Warren, A STORY OF THE AMONDOCK RIVER.

"Good-bye, Martha. God help you! I shall be back in three days, the fairest."

The hardy White Mountain pioneer, Mark Warren, kissed his young wife, held his two-year-old boy to his breast for a moment, and then, leaving the sack of corn which was to be converted into meal at the rude mill forty miles away, trudged off through the wild woods.

Martha Warren stood at the door of the log cottage, gazing out after the retreating form of her husband. An angle of the dense shadowed woods hid from her view what she did not return to the solitary kitchen. It looked so dark and lonesome there, she shrank from it; so perhaps the grand sublime of the wild woods, the great forest, held her attention and thrilled her soul with awe, but less, perhaps, than something that we all feel when standing thus far to face with the works of His fingers.

She gazed with a sad, melancholy view of the White Mountains, which is that which presents itself from what is now the town of Bethlehem, on the road to Littleton and Franklin. Mount Washington, the king among peaks, is there seen in all its grandeur, but the tall old tree of Postomus, to which the Indian gave the name of the "giant who was in the earth," and spent no time in the world, was in the east, out of sight, his great eyes fixed on her bosom.

She turned again to her arm with her hands clasped. Her face was pale, her eyes were dimmed with tears. A look of fear and anxiety crossed her features, but she did not return to the kitchen. Martha Warren ate her dinner alone, and when she had finished, she went to the door, and gazed out over the silent scene of the forest, the sunlight filtering through the trees, the bright rays of the sharp sun, the shadows of the clouds, the sound of the wind, and the murmur of the brook.

The messenger arrived, and she sent him back with a message.

"He will be back in three days, the fairest."

The messenger left, and she returned to the kitchen.

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