

## THE STORY OF WAITSTILL BAXTER

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accustomed lights and voices break the stillness, lessening the gloom of the long grass-grown lane of Lois Boynton's watching in days gone by. On sunny mornings there is a merry babel of children's chatter, mingled with gentle maternal warnings, for this is a new brood of young things and the river is calling them as it has called all the others who ever came within the circle of its magic. The fragile harebells hanging their blue heads from the crevices of the rocks; the brilliant columbines swaying to and fro on their tall stalks; the patches of gleaming sand in shallow places beckoning little bare feet to come and tread them; the glint of silver minnows darting hither and thither in some still pool; the tempestuous journey of some weather-beaten log, fighting its way downstream; — here is life in abundance, luring the child to share its risks and its joys.

When Waitstill's boys and Patty's girls come back to the farm, they play by Saco Water as their mothers and their fathers did before them. The paths through the pine woods along the river's brink are trodden smooth by their restless, wandering feet; their eager, curious eyes search the waysides for adventure, but their babble and laughter are oftenest heard from the ruins of an old house hidden by great trees. The stones of the cellar, all overgrown with black-