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THE LOST BRIDE.

A LEGEND OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

By Mrs. Sarah J. Hale.

"A tale of th' olden time
When he was rich who had a happy home;
And love, pure virtuous love, a pearl of price,
Was placed above the show of fashion's gauds,
And piety was deemed the crown of life."

However much we may boast of our advances in knowledge and improvement in the arts, since the days of our fathers, it is by no means certain that we have advanced in the knowledge of our duties towards heaven, or in the art of living happily on earth. Abundance does not bring content, nor security insure us peace. The passion for excessive wealth, always the ruling one in an age of trade and speculation, has a far more withering influence on the tender and kindly feelings of our nature, those soft emotions whose virtuous indulgence makes so large a portion of the heart's pure happiness, than have dangers, or privations, or even poverty. That devotion to one dear object which constitutes the romance of love, is not cherished where *fortune* is considered an indispensable ingredient in the marriage contract; nor is the domestic union of such a couple cemented by that mutual confidence, those kind, yet unobtrusive attentions, and reciprocal sacrifices to promote the happiness of each other, which confer so much of the real felicity of wedded life, the felicity arising from the *certainly* of being beloved.

Neither riches nor rank influenced the choice of Robert Wilson, when he selected Mary Grant for his wife. Mary was poor and an orphan. Her father died on his passage to New England, whither he was fleeing from a religious persecution that had confiscated his property, and for three long years held him confined in a prison. He at length escaped, and with his wife and child embarked, as he hoped and prayed, for a better land. His prayer was doubtless answered in mercy, for his was not a constitution or mind that could long have struggled with the hardships of the wilderness; he died the day before the vessel entered the harbour of Boston. His wife survived him only two weeks, and the little weeping Mary was thrown upon the charity of strangers in a new world.

They had kind hearts in these old times, and though their own portion was ever so small, our pilgrim ancestors always imparted a share to the needy. Mary found many willing to wipe away her tears, and shelter her in their homes, and finally, in Captain Waldron and his amiable wife, protectors indulgent as parents.

Captain Waldron resided at Dover, New Hampshire, then considered as belonging to the Massachusetts. He found Mary Grant at the house of a friend of his in Boston, and was so interested in her story and appearance, that he carried her home, and, having obtained the consent of his wife, adopted her as his daughter.

Captain Waldron was a man of consequence in Dover, and his wife was considered one of the elite: it was frequently remarked that they would make quite a fine lady of Mary. But the qualifications for ladies were not, at that period, graduated on precisely the same scale at Dover, or indeed in New England, as is now thought indispensable. Mary was called well-educated, and yet she had never been taught dancing, painting or embroidery, nor had she had ever studied French, music or Euclid.

Mary's beauty was not of the kind that is "unchangingly bright;" it was the loveliness of sentiment, the benignity and parity of the soul within, which gave to her countenance its irresistible charm. Her chestnut hair just touched with a golden tint, curled around her lovely meek and fair forehead with a grace and luxuriance which art cannot imitate. The lily might, perhaps, have been thought

to have predominated too much in her complexion, had not the least emotion called the blood so quickly and eloquently to her cheek: and the pensiveness in her soft blue eyes always changed to the lustre of joy, when she welcomed a friend. But while she was invested with all those feminine charms which have such irresistible influence over the hearts of men, it is not strange that she should have been sought by many, nor that when young Robert Wilson had once seen and loved her he should be determined to obtain her.

Robert Wilson was a native of Boston. His father, the Rev. Mr. Wilson, was one of the first settlers of that colony; a true puritan he was, steady and sturdy in his opposition to, and abhorrence of every tenet leaning towards prelacy or popery. He was an ardent, enthusiastic and pious man; but a very proud one. He was proud of the sacrifices he had made, and the persecutions he had endured for conscience sake; and proud that he was accounted a shining light in the colony. And it is probable that the sway he acquired over the stern and strong minds among whom he mingled in the new world was more gratifying to his pride, than the homage of his vassals and dependents would have been, had he not, by his incorrigible nonconformity, forfeited the fair inheritance in England to which he might have succeeded. He was proud, too, of his son, and in that he was excusable; Robert was a son as might justly make a parent glad, if not proud.

Robert had accompanied his father on a journey through most of the settlements in the colony, whither Mr. Wilson went to examine the state of the churches, and endeavour to rouse their zeal and kindle their love. At Dover they tarried several weeks, passing the time mostly at the dwelling of Captain Waldron; and if the father's eloquence failed to warm or gain hearts, the son's persuasions were more successful. But Robert gave his own heart in exchange for Mary's which, no doubt, added much force to his eloquence.

Mr. Wilson beheld their mutual attachments with more complacency than those who knew his pride would have expected. Several reasons contributed to this. The maiden's manners pleased him exceedingly; he saw her always industrious and very attentive to oblige him, and then he very much wished to have Robert married. It was his favourite maxim, that early marriages made men better citizens; and, moreover, there was a fine-piece of land on the banks of the Cochecho which Robert might easily obtain for a farm. Some occurrences in Boston had highly chagrined and disgusted the elder Mr. Wilson—the inhabitants of Dover treated him with vast respect, and he secretly indulged the intention of removing thither, should his son be prospered. So matters were soon arranged to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. Robert's farm was secured, and after he had accompanied his father to Boston, and procured necessaries for beginning the world, he was to return to Dover, prepare a house, and the means of house-keeping, and then he was to be blessed with Mary's hand.

No lover will imagine that Robert would make his stay at Boston of much duration. Despite the many warm friends among his youthful companions, none could supply the void in his heart which his absence from Mary caused; and he was soon seen wending his way back to Dover, equipped to settle in the forest.

In one year from the time of his striking the first blow in the forest, his land wore the appearance of a pleasant cultivated farm. The trees had nearly all disappeared from an area of twenty acres, and the surface was covered and stumps nearly all concealed by a luxuriant harvest. There was the golden wheat, the bearded rye, and tasselled

corn as tall and straight as a company of grenadiers; with pumpkins and squashes innumerable, reposing on the ground quietly ripening in the mellow heats of August.

On a gently rising ground, in the middle of the young plantation stood a small dwelling; I wish I could with propriety, call it a *cottage*, because to many young ladies it would give such a romantic interest to my story—but truth compels me to confess that, although prettier and more comfortable than their *real* cottages, it was not at all like a cottage of the imagination. It was a building twenty feet by twenty four—formed of neatly hewed logs the roof covered with boards, the inside divided into two apartments, with one little closet, and the whole lighted by three small glass windows. On either side of this dwelling rose a large elm tree, and several small ones were on the lawn in front of the house, purposely left standing for ornament, and wild rose bushes and laurel and other flowering shrubs had been spared or transplanted by Robert, to give additional beauty to his rural seat. Thick, dark forests and hills crowned with trees, formed the boundary on every side; but in front of the house the clearing extended to the Cochecho, whose bright waters were seen dancing in the sunbeams, thus affording a charming relief to the eye, after it had dwelt on the gloom of the surrounding wilderness.

To a person always accustomed to the city's elegance or the retreats of ease and opulence, this wild place would doubtless have looked like a dreary prison—gloomy, lonely and terrifying; but to Robert, who would almost call it the creation of his own hands, it was a little Paradise, and when his bird of beauty should be within his bower, he would not have exchanged his home in the woods for those stately halls his mother had often told him of right should have been his habitation.

The wedding day at length arrived. It had always been anticipated by Robert as one that would bring unalloyed happiness: but Mary had often felt a sadness, something like a foreboding of misfortune, come over her mind whenever her marriage was alluded to. She could not tell, even her own heart, the cause of this depression; it was not that she felt any doubt of Robert's character or affection: she loved him better than all the world beside, and trusted in the perfection of his goodness as a catholic does in his saint—nor did she fear to dwell in the wilderness—there had not for a long time been an alarm from the red men. Why is it that, at times, a shadow will fall on the spirit which no efforts of the mind, no arguments addressed to the reason can dispel?

There were great preparations for the wedding. Captain Waldron liked a parade, and his wife liked to show her housekeeping, and the marriage afforded a justifiable occasion to gain popularity by a display of hospitality. Three o'clock was the hour for the ceremony; then followed the feast; and lastly all the wedding guests who had horses were invited to join and escort the young couple to their dwelling.

The Rev. John Reyner officiated as clergyman; and then the whole party sat down to dinner—the long table covered with all good things which the country could supply. At the head of the feast appeared an enormous Indian pudding, served up in a huge pewter platter. The plates were of the same substantial material, all shining like silver from a recent scrubbing—then they had roast beef and lamb, and wild game and fowls, and all the fruits and varieties of the season. But they had no wine nor strong drink of any kind, and the most ultra temperance advocate would have found nothing to censure in the arrangements.

Robert Wilson's house stood about two mile from that