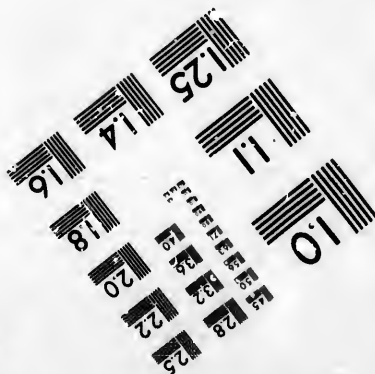
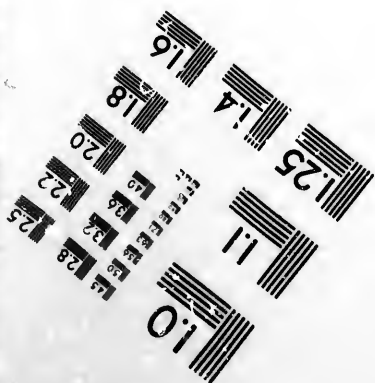
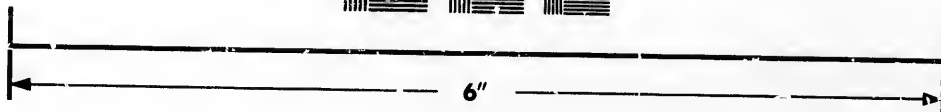
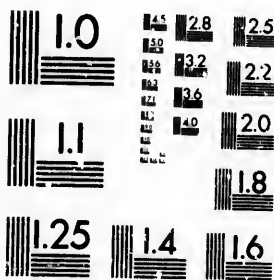


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)



Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

1.5 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.5
2.8 3.2 3.6 4.0

**CIHM/ICMH
Microfiche
Series.**

**CIHM/ICMH
Collection de
microfiches.**



Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques

10

© 1981

The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

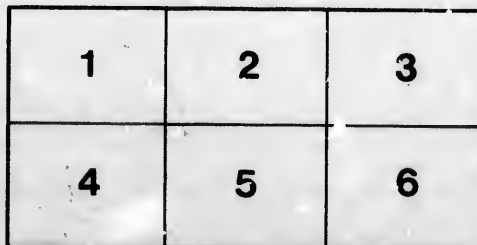
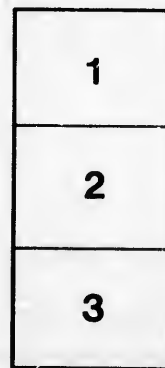
National Library of Canada

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol \rightarrow (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol ∇ (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:



L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaîtra sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole \rightarrow signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ∇ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.



HESTER HEPWORTH.

A NOVEL.

BY

KATE TANNATT WOODS.

AUTHOR OF "A FAIR MAID OF MARBLEHEAD," ETC., ETC.

MONTREAL:
JOHN LOVELL & SON,
23 ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

PZ3
W864h

2117

Entered according to Act of Parliament in the year 1889, by
John Lovell & Son, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture
and Statistics at Ottawa.

IT
H
wa
ha
ha
the
ha
pos
cer
wa
fac
sor
sile
mat
pos
and
villa
P
min
dow
wite

HESTER HEPWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE HESTER.

IT was a glorious June morning in 1692, and Desire Hepworth, the honored wife of Thomas Hepworth, was much exercised in mind. She had endured hardships and privations with wonderful sweetness, had lost her only and tenderly-loved brother through the treachery of the Indians, and within a few days had been called upon to testify concerning the supposed evil doings of an unhappy woman accused of certain arts called witchcraft and sorceries. All this was quite enough to cast a shadow on the delicate face of Madame Hepworth, and yet a new cause for sorrow had arisen, and she was struggling with silence, though much occupied with domestic matters. On the morrow Captain Hepworth proposed to raise a fine barn, the largest, most costly and sightly structure ever yet seen in or near Salem village.

Preparations for the great event had occupied the minds of many excellent people, who were weighed down with sorrow and anxiety at the horrors of the witchcraft delusion then at its height.

by
ture

Anything which approached festivity was hailed with delight.

Two days previous to the raising; Deliverance Jacobs came over from her home near Endicott river, bringing with her two children, her son Samuel, a bright boy of fifteen years, and Ruth, a daughter of nine.

Deliverance cared little for the tiresome journey on horseback through the woods with Ruth seated behind her, while sturdy Samuel trudged by her side with his rifle on his shoulder. The weather was fine, the air matchless, and the prattle of the children pleasing to the fond but stern mother. Captain Hepworth received his kinswoman with kindness and dignity, while his good wife rejoiced "in that more help had come when so much remained to be done."

While the elders bustled about in the kitchen of the "mansion," the children were instructed to hasten away to find Hester.

"The little one was singing on the beam yonder but now," said the captain, "and she is not far away."

"My father told me I was to help you, sir, and not spend my time in idleness," said Samuel, with a respectful bow to the captain.

"Did he so, my lad? Well, you cannot do better service now than in finding my little daughter and in resting yourself after your journey."

As he looked in the boy's sunburnt face and saw there a trace of disappointment, he added kindly: "I shall doubtless find heavier duties for you ere

long. My little Hester must have many things to say to her cousins, and I think you will find her in the grove yonder, where she passes some happy hours."

Samuel and Ruth hurried away, eager to meet the beautiful cousin whose father was so learned and wise, and whose mother had high connections across the sea. The Puritan children were as unlike our petted modern boys and girls as possible.

The grand gloomy forests had their own silent influence, while Indian barbarities and vague superstitions of the past, combined with present horrors, gave them an air of thoughtfulness and gravity beyond their years.

Books were rare treasures, games almost unknown, and the oft-repeated admonition "to behave in a seemly manner" naturally produced a shy awkwardness, the sure result of repression. To attend meeting on the "Lord's day" was an event in their lives, to pay a neighborly visit quite as serious and important an undertaking as a journey to Europe in the present time.

As we look back and study the history of those early days we are filled with pity for the children who were never permitted to enjoy the freedom and joyousness of childhood; nor can we marvel that the active imagination, the powers of imitation common to all, should by their surroundings culminate in the terrible superstition which brought death and disaster to so many. The customs and restraints of that period, combined with the influences under which they lived, were all calculated to increase a morbid

belief in supernaturalism and a deeper confidence in the horrible faith which made the devil able to hold communication with mortals.

Upham, in his admirable "History of Witchcraft," says: "Those individuals who were supposed to be conversant with demons were looked upon by the credulous multitude as a highly privileged class, and they arrogated the credit of being raised to a higher sphere of knowledge than the rest of mankind."

This statement is a necessary introduction to our story, for witchcraft in New England began with children, and innocent happy people often became the victims of the evil-minded, jealous and malicious.

Zoroaster, the great philosopher and astronomer, was charged with using magic arts because he possessed remarkable acquirements. So during the witchcraft period the gifted were assailed. The people of Salem village brought with them a haunting memory of the trials and executions of witches in England and Scotland. In 1645 and 1646 Matthew Hopkins was known in England as "witchfinder general," with a regular salary, and he alone caused the death of more people in one year than suffered during the entire delusion in Salem village. Even the venerable William Baxter aided this inhuman creature in his work. Can we wonder, then, that ignorant and superstitious people should find demons in the old New England forests, or detect "magic arts" in persons unusually gifted? That the educated ministers and magistrates were among the persecutors will ever remain a mystery and matter of regret.

Hester Hepworth- was the child of cultivated parents; her father was respected by all for his military bearing and knowledge, and his wealth naturally added to his power; her mother, the daughter of a proud old English family, brought with her from the Old World a rare poetic temperament, a mind well stored with general information, and a love of books which led her practical neighbors to regard her with awe. "Little Hester," as her father fondly called her, resembled both parents, possessing her father's independence and love of justice, with her mother's poetic tastes. During the child's infancy, a little brother had died, who bore the captain's name and was much beloved by the relatives across the sea. From the day when his little grave was covered in a quiet corner of the Hill Farm, Captain Hepworth never mentioned his name, and Hester soon learned that her mother alone cared to speak of the dear one in a better land.

It was a happy household despite the shadow of the little grave, and fortunate indeed were the guests at the mansion house.

On this particular morning, little Hester was very happy, even Goody Herrick, who was assisting in the kitchen, praised her, and Goody seldom spoke words of praise. Her father had caught her in his arms for a stolen kiss, and now duties being done she had gone to her "hiding spot," a place well known to her father; there he had made a little seat for her, and there he sometimes sat by her side when weary with his public and private duties.

Her chief companion was Datsy, a frousy dog

which her father had brought her one day from the famous "Orchard Farm." Here she sat on that June morning so long ago with Datsy curled up by her side, while she was tracing her father's features on a huge chip with a bit of charcoal which she had taken from the kitchen hearth. The young artist, heaven-endowed and all untrained, except an occasional lesson from the mother, worked diligently, now turning her pretty head this way, now that, to examine her work.

"The father's nose is not quite right," she said aloud; "it is a handsome nose, and his mouth neither smiles nor looks sorry. I will make him as he looks in the meeting-house on the Lord's day, for I love him best then."

"Hester! Hester!" rang through the woods, and the work ended with the soliloquy.

"What do you hide in this black place for?" asked the boy, as he looked about him. "Come out in the sun and watch the men."

"I like it here best, Cousin Samuel, but I will go wherever you like, and I am glad to see cousin Ruth again." Ruth drew Hester's hand in hers, saying, "And I am glad to see you, too, only you are looking pale and not over fleshy this summer."

"No wonder," said the boy, "she has nothing but her dog for company, and she hides in here like a witch."

"Don't say that; oh, don't!" exclaimed Ruth. "It frightens me so that I cannot sleep, and I sometimes see strange things in my room."

"Don't think about witches, then," said her sturdy

brother. "I never lose my sleep. She is so foolish, Cousin Hester, that she cried when a man told father that some witches had been drowned in England."

Hester drew close to her cousin, who said, in a low tone:

"It was a great man from Boston, and he told about Sarah Good and the rest in their Majesty's jail in Boston, and he said more trouble would come to us unless God delivered us."

Hester's eyes opened wide. Her ears were already full of horrible tales told by Goody Herrick, and she, too, had passed sleepless nights.

"It is all lies," said the boy, stoutly. "They found a broom in the apple-tree and some one said a witch did it; then two cows died within a week, and that was the witch's work, too. I care nothing for such silliness, and I know not how our elders can hear to it. But come now, let us go and watch the men."

"I am going to England some day," said Hester. "My mother gives me tasks every day, and I am to learn them well, that I may do credit to her and our kinsfolk over the water."

"I hate England, and I will never go there of my free will," said Samuel.

"Hush, brother; only this morning our mother told you that your speech was too bold, and you should ever respect your elders."

"Respect is well; but I was born here and care nothing for kings or queens. We can make our own laws and abide by them without hindrance of those over the water."

Hester's bright eyes flashed in sympathy. She did not share Ruth's alarm concerning such treasonable words, but rather delighted in the outspoken utterance of the bold lad, whose proud spirit of independence found an echo in her own heart.

Ruth grew dignified and motherly. "Brother," she said, "only last Lord's day you were reprov'd for using such wild words lest they bring you into trouble, and our mother said you were but a silly boy."

"I can think, if I am," retorted Samuel. "We came here to be free, and now who wants to be snapp'd up like a wildcat in father's wolf-pit?"

Ruth turned away sorrowfully; she could not control this headstrong brother, but Hester laid her small hand beseechingly on his arm.

"I am so glad you think without speaking sometimes," she said. "Only last night father said we must guard our lips in these troublous times, for foes might be near us."

"You are right, Hester; I will try to remember, for poor Ruth is in constant fear. What are the men shouting for? Some one is injured," said Hester. "Or the afflicted children may be here," said Ruth, as her delicate face grew pale with dread.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST ACCUSATION.

"HURRY, hurry, Cousin Ruth," said Hester as the frightened girl followed tremblingly; "see, the men are crowding about some one."

Ruth quickened her steps and reached the group in time to hear Samuel say, "It is Henry Herrick, a timber has fallen and crushed his foot."

Before others could decide what should be done, Captain Hepworth had the sufferer carried to his own room, where he stanchd the flow of blood and cared tenderly for the sufferer until the arrival of the surgeon.

Even this accident was regarded with superstitious awe, for, said the bystanders, "did he not testify against Sarah Good, whose own husband declared her an enemy of all that was good." Before the sunset whispers had grown to rumors, and all the evil done was attributed to the unfortunate and ill-tempered Sarah. Some had seen her sitting astride the beam when it fell; others saw her riding through the air on a stick, and several knew some trouble would come, for Good had appeared on the handle of Herrick's saw while he worked.

A few, like rebellious, stout-hearted, clear-headed Samuel Jacobs thought it a just punishment on Herrick for his cruel persecution of a weak-minded,

misguided woman, but these sagacious ones wisely kept silence lest they should be accused of complicity with the suspected parties.

The festive day dawned bright and fair. From hill and dale across creek and river came the staunch men and women of the time. The sick man heard their shouts of cheer and moaned over his misfortune, although little Hester ran to him often with gifts of flowers or some dainty from the table. Mrs., or Madame, Hepworth moved about, stately, tall, and most gracious to her guests while watchful and exacting with her servants.

Captain Hepworth grew in favor with his neighbors as he poured out generous libations according to the custom of the time, or inquired kindly concerning their farms and prospects.

Priest and people mingled together in the merry-making, all the more enjoyable for the sad days in which they lived.

"I am told that thy little daughter hath much knowledge of books," said Joshua Rea to their host, as Hester leaned lovingly on her father's arm.

"Only so much as becomes her station and will render her more happy," said the proud father.

In this she will resemble her mother, whose skill is a matter of pride in the village," responded the guest.

"We crave no great honor, good friends," said the captain, stroking his child's hair as he spoke, "but so much of learning and skill as is desirable to make one honest of purpose and pure in life."

Even Hester could understand this sentiment and join in the applause which followed.

The new building rose to its full stature ere the sun was down, and still the guests were urged to linger unless called home by their families or farms. Ample provision was made within and without the mansion, for many had come from homes far away, and not a few would remember until their dying day "ye greate goodness and pleasure of ye day when Captain Hepworth did raise his greate barn on ye hill."

"I wish your father would raise another one, Hester," said Samuel Jacobs when they were parting.

"He will doubtless some day, but it will be when we are older and may care less."

"I am ready for it, old or young," quoth Samuel, as he shouldered his rifle and prepared to go back as he came by the side of his mother and sister. "Good-bye, Cousin Hester," said he; "if the Indians or the witches come your way, let me know and I will give them a taste of the food my old rifle swallows."

"Samuel is but a giddy youth," said his mother in a reproving tone, although she looked proudly on her first born. "He is somewhat careless, Cousin Hepworth, and speaks lightly of solemn things, but he is bidable and kind, as his father will tell you."

"I can see it for myself, good cousin; and as your husband was compelled to tarry in Boston attending to business while we have been merry-making, let me hope to see you here soon again when he will accompany you."

"And let Cousin Ruth spend a long time with our little one," said Madame Hepworth. "It is some-

what lonely here, with no others of her age and her father so much from home."

"She shall come when I can spare her, but the day speeds on and so farewell."

When the last guest had departed and Madame Hepworth was seated, with her little daughter's book upon her knee, the good woman was startled by Hester asking, in a half-frightened tone, "Why Cousin Ruth grew so pale and cried out so in the night?"

"The child may not be well."

"She dreams of the Indian women, she says. Mother, is Tituba a witch?"

"My daughter, keep your mind at rest, and do not think of these hard matters; we may not even speak our thoughts in these troublous times."

"But, mother, the children think all the time. Last Lord's day, in the meeting-house, some of them said they had seen red and black cats and more wicked yellow birds. Does God make such evil creatures?"

Madame Hepworth was alarmed. She knew the ignorance of those about her, the terrible sufferings in Mr. Parr's family and others, and her mother's heart was filled with dread. Neither her husband nor herself believed in the delusion, although the physicians had one and all declared that the afflicted children suffered from an evil hand. Even the clergy pronounced it witchcraft, and the dreadful scenes in the meeting-house were calculated to unnerve adults, much more so sensitive and delicate children.

These things gave good Mrs. Hepworth sincere

trouble. If her child did not attend the service she would be suspected of evil, and yet how could a loving mother subject her to an exhibition of disgraceful scenes which might fill her young soul with never-to-be-forgotten horrors?

The prevailing excitement reached every corner, and Hester's poetic temperament led her to accept, or reject the popular statements. Terribly solemn were the good mother's words of warning, blended as they were with dread of the delusion.

"My dear one, I fear much that Tituba is a woman of evil mind, but God alone should judge; much in His word and works are mysterious, and we do not call them evil. Be calm and patient, my child, for He will give us wisdom to discern the good and courage to denounce sin."

"But, mother, Tituba has confessed."

"She is an ignorant creature, my child, and her testimony should not have weight against those who have led virtuous lives."

"Why, mother," said the child, this time with a burst of genuine childish grief, "Ann Putnam said I was a witch, because I wrote on my book some words which came to me I know not how."

Madame Hepworth clasped her child in her arms and soothed her tenderly. "Tell me about it, my daughter; there is nothing to fear; tell me all you think, for God will help us in time of trouble."

"The words came to me and I put them down before I thought it might be sinful, and Ann Putnam said the devil did tempt me and make me do it." The child's sobs were again silenced by the mother's caresses, who at length asked:

"What were the words, my darling?"

Hester tried to answer when the door opened and her father stood before them, much distressed to see his child weeping.

CHAPTER III.

TO GO OR STAY.

"Our friends are singing your praises, good wife," said the captain, cheerily, "and—but what is this, our daughter in tears? Was the lesson so poor after the festivities? Well, forgive it, my dear; our little one must not grieve thus early, for the days of childhood are all too short."

"I will talk with you of this hereafter. Our daughter is troubled and sorrowful, having heard too much of the afflicted children," replied Madame Hepworth.

"If that be so, rest and be happy, dear one, With thy father in the General Court and thy mother loved and respected, not only in Salem village but throughout the colonies, we have little to fear, well knowing that God is just and good, however much men go astray."

"She was about to tell me concerning some words which she was moved to write, and it grieved her much that Ann Putnam did incite the children to call her a witch."

Captain Hepworth sprang to his feet, uttering something between his teeth which in a less godly

man might have been an oath. He recovered himself speedily, and, stooping low over his prostrate child, took her in his arms, caressing her like an infant.

"Let us talk no more of it now, my darling; when you are calm we will hear all that you desire to tell us: it is enough that we are all as safe within the Almighty arms as you are now in mine. Let us sing, good wife, one of the songs our Hester loves best, and forget the babble and confusion outside."

Madame Hepworth's fine voice was often heard in the meeting house, but never did she pour it forth so fully and sweetly as in her own home.

Affection, music and rest did much to quiet the excited child, and in the early evening both parents were pleased to find her sleeping well with just a shade of sadness on the young face, which was painful to behold.

"My dear wife," said the captain, when the household was wrapped in slumber, "I have a proposal to make, which will cause you no less grief than myself, but the sacrifices of love and affection bring ultimate happiness. I have observed with sincere pain the change in our little one, and I well know that these are days of horror. Her very brightness, beauty and talent will make her a mark for the envious, and but yesterday David Skelton brought me a fanciful picture which he had found in the grove, declaring it must be the work of the evil one."

"What was it like?" asked Madame Hepworth in a tremulous tone.

"The child had dressed Datsy with sticks for horns and made him stand erect; she had then, with the

talent inherited from you, made a picture so strange and odd that I laughed heartily, although David stood by with a countenance expressing great awe.

“‘Ah, good David,’ I said, ‘fear not; my little maid hath the same cunning fingers and keenness of eye which her mother and her grandmother possess, and if it be the Lord’s will the best masters in the world shall counsel and direct both, when she comes to years of discretion.’”

“‘You are sure, captain,’ said David, ‘that she hath not covenanted with the devil, for there be those who think as much, seeing she is so unlike most of the children hereabouts.’”

“I will not repeat my words to David Skelton, good wife; they were perhaps stronger than becomes a follower of the Most High, but henceforth his voice will not be heard uttering such idle tales.”

“Did he not communicate with others concerning it?”

“It may be that he did so before speaking to me; if so, I desire to suppress the evil at once. Our little Hester has never been as robust as most maidens of her age, and after much prayer and thought I think it will be both wise and proper for me to send you both to England on a visit to our relatives, while I remain here and attend to my duties.”

“This separation would cost us both more anxiety than we could well endure. If the times are troublous, as indeed they are, we have need of each other, for only a few are like-minded with us, and the delusion will increase without steadfast opposition,” said Madame Hepworth.

"I know well your heart and mind, dear wife; it but reflects my own; and yet our child is most dear to us. She must be spared further details of these dreadful things, and the illness of your aged father in England may well demand your presence there without exciting the suspicion of the ignorant and superstitious. For myself, my duties in the General Court and the care of our lands here will not only occupy my time, but aid me in supporting my loneliness; for your dear sakes privation must needs come, and yet in no way shall I send you from me unwillingly. If after due prayer and consideration you decided otherwise and prefer to remain with me, I will, as ever before, do my utmost diligence to shield you from harm or annoyance."

Madame Hepworth slept little that night, and early on the morrow visited her child's room near her own.

Hester, blessed with the rich inheritance of children, miscalled forgetfulness, had put her trouble away for a time and appeared with a smiling face to receive her mother's kiss.

"How bright and warm the sun is, dear mother, and how sweet the air is coming over the woods yonder. The world is very beautiful, and I would like to grow on and on forever and never die."

"That you will do, my daughter, for the soul can never die; but come, your father is among his books and papers below and we must bring him to breakfast, for he leaves us for Boston as soon as may be."

"Will he be away very long?"

"No longer than duty demands, my child."

"I hope he will soon come back; we miss him so much, and the house is never the same; even Datsy is glad to welcome him home."

Seated among his books and papers Captain Hepworth had found time to think of his child; indeed she was always with him, and now, as he folded and sealed important documents, or wrote down his orders for the men in his absence, he heard her little feet on the floor above.

While the mother was brushing out Hester's luxuriant hair, he called from the hall below:

"Come, little sluggard, come; the day begins ill without you, and Datsy is begging for his breakfast."

"I am coming, father, dear; the mice have built a nest in my hair, as Goody Herrick says, and when it is in order I shall come to you."

What a pleasant picture it was when she ran to greet him. He the gallant soldier still bearing in his body a bullet in memory of the famous "Battle of Bloody Brook," standing with open arms to receive her as she flew over the grim staircase in her dainty gown of white, and the queenly, youthful mother looking upon them both with affectionate regard from the hallway above. Who can fathom the terrible anxiety of these tender parents as they watched their gifted child and thought of the careless utterances which too often became open accusations?

"Daughter," said the captain, when family worship had supplemented the morning meal, "would it give you pleasure to cross the sea and attend school for a season with some of your young cousins?"

"If you are going, too, dear father."

"I cannot leave here now, but your mother will go with you and a servant to care for you until such time as I might follow with justice to myself and others."

"Must we leave all the friends here, the beautiful forest, the river and our pleasant home?"

"Only for a time, my child. Your grandfather would be glad to see our little Puritan, and I fear he will not remain long on earth."

"Is it your wish, dear father?"

Captain Hepworth glanced at his wife before answering. Her encouraging smile led him to believe that her decision had already been formed.

"It is not our wish to separate, even for a short time, but many things combine to make it desirable, if your mother consents."

"And you wish to go, mother?"

"It would please me much to see my aged father once more, and England is my childhood's home; but I am loath to leave your father here, lest his health may suffer from overmuch care."

"Does grandfather expect us?"

"No, my daughter; he thinks I will detain you here, and the surprise will be a pleasant one. I will not send you from me unless you are willing travelers; for the ocean is often an enemy to comfort, and I should reproach myself if aught should harm my wife and child. Give the subject serious thought, and when I come to you again, before next Lord's day, we will make such arrangements as become us. Meantime let no word of this escape you, for servants are over busy in spreading news."

An hour later the good captain mounted his horse and rode away toward Boston, thinking tenderly of the dear ones who stood upon the vine-covered porch waving a fond farewell to him. Even Datsy joined in the salute, as Hester held him upon her shoulder and bade him say good-bye.

How could any of the group foresee the terrible events which were so soon to follow? Not Madame Hepworth, who entered her home with a prayer on her lips for her beloved traveler; not little Hester, who began counting the hours of his absence and planning for his return; and, least of all, the brave Christian soldier who rode away saying to himself, "Surely, God hath been most gracious to me in giving me so noble a wife and so fair a child." How changed farewell would be could we read the lines between the now and then.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER OF WARNING.

CAPTAIN HEPWORTH had been absent three days when the good people at the Hill Farm were surprised to see Samuel Jacobs ride up to the door bearing an important message from his mother.

"What sore distress hath brought you in such haste?" asked Madame Hepworth as the lad sprang from his jaded horse.

"No sickness, save that of the head, with certain ones who should know better; but I am charged to mind my peace and give you this letter, which no

other should see save our cousin, Captain Hepworth ; and, lest evil tongues should wag, my mother hath sent for some of your famous rising, which gives your bread a name throughout the village ; the rest her letter will say to you, and I will speak with my cousin Hester while you may read it and return answer."

Before opening the ponderous epistle, made secure with much wax and entrusted for safekeeping to Samuel's waistcoat, where it was doubly secured with sundry stitches, Madame Hepworth gave orders that the horse should be well cared for and her young kinsman refreshed with a substantial meal, after which she betook herself to her own apartment and sat down to read the following most remarkable and startling tidings :

"BELOVED KINSWOMAN,—Knowing well that your husband is now absent, I make bold to tell you some things concerning the welfare of your family which so grieve and torture me that I can neither sleep nor rest, and during the day such are my distractions that my children and husband do remark upon it. Verily the hand of the Lord is upon us. Before the meeting of the council at Salem in April last I did hope much and pray most fervently that the evil would remove from us and we should be once more a united people.

"But the council hath decreed otherwise, and warrants are so much increased that my heart fails me as I write. I learn with much pain and feebleness of spirit that your young daughter and our beautiful kinswoman is privately accused of strange doings, and I send you this greeting that you may be on your guard lest you offend some servants or other persons

about you and thereby make them inclined to persecute her, and ourselves through her. On last Lord's day she was absent from meeting, and not a few stated she was in league with the Evil One, but I made haste to say that having sat too long on the ground in the woods poring over her book, as is her wont, she was troubled with a lameness common to many; whereupon Elizabeth Herrick said it was most uncommon, and strange things were told of her; how she wrote strange words on her book in the meeting house and drew pictures of the devil to make the children laugh; also that she spoke in a strange tongue to her dogge, and had secret converse with certain wicked birds.

"These things filled me with much alarm, and my husband therefore forbade me to speak of them; but Samuel, my son, who is overmuch given to plainness of speech, and fears nothing save dishonor and the wrath of God, he hath spoken fearlessly and told the babblers that the child did speak the words of French which her wise mother taught her; and her grandmother in England, like the mother here, did make beautiful pictures of things seen in the world and of things thought of through the fancy, whereat some were satisfied, but more displeased. And so I write you at this present, entreating you to conceal all such works as may tend to prejudice her cause, and also to use such measures as may seem good in your wisdom, which so far exceeds my own; and such service as we may render to you or yours will be most dutifully and lovingly given by

"Your kinswoman,

"DELIVERANCE JACOBS."

When Madame Hepworth had finished reading this epistle she sat as one dumb for a few moments, and then rose and looked from the window.

Hester and her cousin were seated on the lawn playing with Datsy; the child had never before seemed so beautiful in the mother's eyes. Her slight lameness, due to an inherited rheumatic tendency, had entirely disappeared, and her nervous dread had greatly abated since that important conversation with her parents. She was herself once more, a bright, happy, gifted child, the pride and joy of her home.

The mother struggled to conceal her tears as she saw them. Hester was evidently telling Samuel of her coming birthday, when her father promised to make merry, as the friends did in Old England, and the young people should be bidden to a little feast.

"On the 3rd day of July you are to come, and all day on the 4th from the rising to the setting sun we are to be happy. My dear mother promises me a huge cake, such as her mother made for her, and already my father's friends in Boston have spoken of their coming. It will be a great day, Cousin Samuel; greater than the raising of the new barn, only the same people will not all be here."

"It will do Ruth good," said Samuel. "She grows too grave and sad, and I sometimes wish she were more like you, Cousin Hester."

"Oh, no; not like me. Dear Ruth is so gentle and quiet; and sometimes when I feel quite well I am almost as wild as a boy. Then my father laughs and calls me Hector. He is teaching me new tricks with my horse now, and some day we are to travel with him to Boston and visit our fine friends there."

"I wish your father was not there so much, although Jonathan Kenny does well in his absence; it is very lonely for you women folks."

"Ah, but when he comes it is so fine, and we are all so happy. He hides little gifts for me in his pockets and in the saddle-bags, and I must search for them. Then he tells us all the news of the great Boston; and my mother helps him with his papers before he goes back. You see, Cousin Samuel, if he did not leave us sometimes we should never know how good he was, and only yesterday Deodat Lawson said that my father's clear head sat on broad shoulders."

"I care little for Deodat Lawson," said the boy.

"Why cousin, he is a learned man, and my father says hath seen much of the world."

"Then he should be too wise to be taken with tricks and become a believer in lies; he was among the great college men and officers of state who crowded into the meeting house to see the sorcerers play their tricks, and he it was who said they were truly bewitched."

"Did he? But, Samuel, so many people believe it now."

"I shall never believe it," said the boy, stoutly. "Those girls began it in fun, and then they were afraid to stop; even Mary Warren said 'her head was distempered,' and that is all there is to it. Why, Cousin Hester, some even say *you* are a witch, because you talk to your pet birds and make droll pictures of Datsy and queer people like John Indian."

"Yes, I know; but father says nothing can harm

us while God holds us in His arms. I love to talk with my birds, and I close my eyes oftentimes to hear the sweet music of the trees and listen to the lapping of the water under the hill; but those are pleasant things, and you know witchcraft is only evil."

"You are a good girl, cousin, and the evil tongues had best leave you in peace; if we cannot sing or speak without being watched and gossipped about, then America is not free after all, and I will find another home when I am out of my time."

"You are so brave and bold, Cousin Samuel, but you must not say such strong words when they trouble poor Ruth and your mother. See, my mother beckons us; how tired and pale she looks! She has too much care with the farm and so many under her. She must go to Boston soon and rest. My father tells her she is the bond-servant of that hard taskmaster, Duty. Do you think you could always do right because it was a duty, Cousin Samuel?"

"I might not see my duty as you would, dear cousin; I am only fifteen, you know, and as my mother says, a giddy boy, but I do a man's work, and even beat Josiah Putnam at lumber cutting, but if harm came to any I loved I would make it a duty to defend them if they hanged me for it."

"You are a brave boy, and my father says you will be a man of mark yet; but see, we must hasten; my dear mother looks troubled, and she is still waiting for us on the porch."

"Come to my room, children, I wish to talk with you," said Madame Hepworth, and even brave

Samuel Jacobs was alarmed when he saw the death-like pallor of her face.

Before many hours had passed he recalled again and again his young cousin's question, "Do you think you could always do right because it was a duty, Cousin Samuel?" and his heart made answer, "I can do my duty and die."

The grand old forests of that early time bred superstition and fostered bigotry, but let us not forget that they also gave to the world heroes and heroines, whose brave deeds can never be forgotten.

CHAPTER V.

A CONFIDENTIAL MESSENGER.

"SIT down, my dears ; young as you are ! must take you into my confidence. I think, Cousin Samuel, that you are neither giddy nor quarrelsome, and it is in my heart to trust you as if you were quite a man."

"Indeed you may, dear lady, if aught troubles you, for my good mother told me at parting to make no delay in reaching you, and to remain as long as you desired, if one so young could serve you."

"Your mother has added to my love for her by this her latest kindness ; and now, my dear boy, I must ask you if you would fear to take some important papers to my husband in Boston ; the journey is somewhat tiresome, but my own man, John Colson, shall attend you, and I will send a messenger to your mother, for it is a great thing to spare one so useful

at th
of ou
"M
Hep
"I
pape
them
even
To h
and
cousi
receiv
and e
"T
brow
to vi
open
Cousi
"V
"N
John
accus
about
young
"I
spark
fear n
"T
early
pledg
Colso
vately

at this busy season, and your father must allow one of our men to perform your duties."

"My father will be glad to have me serve Captain Hepworth and yourself."

"I find on my husband's desk some important papers which he may require. I wish you to carry them as you have brought me your mother's letter; even my own *man must not know that you have them*. To his care I will commit certain articles of dress, and also some messages to be delivered to my cousins in Boston. As my kinsman you will be received there, and I trust you will use both eyes and ears to good purpose."

"That I will," exclaimed Samuel, rubbing his brown hands together for very joy. "I have wanted to visit Boston these three years, but no way has opened; this is a case where duty is a pleasure, Cousin Hester."

"Will Samuel be in danger, mother?"

"No more than any other traveler, my child. John Colson is familiar with the road and quite accustomed to the Indians, if any chance to lurk about. I fear nothing save some fatigue to our young cousin."

"I know nothing of fatigue," said Samuel, with sparkling eyes. "I can walk if you desire it, and I fear not to go alone."

"That I cannot permit, brave as you are, and early on the morrow you will start on your journey, pledging yourself not to mention the papers to John Colson or anybody whatsoever until you speak privately with my husband."

"I promise, dear lady, and will do my utmost diligence to reach him; nothing shall separate me from the papers you entrust to me."

"We live in strange times," said Madame Hepworth. "Our own servants may at any time be our accusers, and each ear seems open for rumors of evil; therefore your mission is of great importance, while it must appear light; and you, my dear daughter, will not mistake me when I tell you that I do not wish you to hold communication with any one outside of our family until your father's return."

"Have we anything to fear now?" asked Hester.

Madame Hepworth's voice trembled as she replied:

"Our only fear is for ourselves, lest I make some unwise move, and thereby bring trouble upon those I love."

"You are never unwise, dear mother, never; the dear father always comes to you for counsel. Will my cousin ask him to return?"

"No, my daughter; I would seek him myself were it not for the cares of our home and your somewhat delicate health. But here we will remain until he desires otherwise, but my only request is that you will not walk abroad unless I am with you."

"That will be pleasant indeed, for our walks together are always happy ones, and Datsy will never answer me, no matter how much I talk to him."

Datsy, hearing his name mentioned, barked at once.

In the early morning John Colson sped away, looking very important on his grey mare, while sturdy Samuel trotted close beside him.

The evening before Madame Hepworth entered her kitchen where several servants were assembled, and inquired for Colson.

"He went out but now, lady," said the old cook, "and one of the lads will summon him."

Colson soon entered—a young, athletic man of six and twenty, with a jaunty air.

"I find," said Madame Hepworth, gravely, "that my husband has left behind some important documents, which I wish to entrust to you, and as my young kinsman, Jacobs, is here, I will give him a pleasure he has long coveted, and send him under your care to my husband, who will introduce him to friends there, and thus give the lad a pleasant holiday."

"When shall I start, madame?" asked Colson, in a haughty tone. He had made other plans for himself, and was displeased that he could not carry them out.

Madame Hepworth saw the look of vexation, and immediately sought to conciliate him.

"Early on the morrow," she said, "and you will please select some one of the men to bear a message to our kinswoman, Mrs. Jacobs, telling her concerning her son's journey, and instruct him to remain at the farm on Endicott river until Samuel may return."

"I think Kenny might be spared, madame, if it pleases you."

Kenny hearing his name called, came forward with a polite bow.

"Any service you may wish me to be at, madame, I will attend with speed."

"Thank you, Kenny; our cousin desires some of the cook's excellent emptings for bread, as they have had much trouble in their locality of late, and as I take her messenger it is but just to return another. You would not mind assisting Mr. Jacobs for a few days?"

"I am your servant, madame, and it matters little where you bid me work, whether here or there."

"I could not spare you long, Kenny, for I depend upon you for many things."

Kenny's eyes brightened, but Colson frowned.

"I wish you all speed, and as early as may be I will myself attend to your wants and give some money for the purchase of a gift in Boston, which may remind you of your journey," said madame Hepworth, addressing Colson.

The man's smiling face and polite bow did not deceive any of the observers, who inwardly resolved to speak with his mistress as soon as possible. It was a difficult matter, for Madame Hepworth spent her evenings with her books after her daughter retired, and it was well known that a visitor marred her pleasure, consequently the servants were instructed to make known their wants earlier in the day.

"I know how I will manage it," said the man; "young Jacobs is fond of me, and I will question him concerning the road betwixt our place and theirs."

Colson upon receiving his orders, hurried away for the trip, after casting a triumphant glance at Kenny.

The latter sat for a time listening to the tales

of those about him concerning Bridget Bishop and her dreadful deeds as a witch, and then rose with a start, saying :

“I must go speak a word with young Jacobs, if I am to fill his place.”

In a few minutes he was seated on the door stone of an outbuilding with Samuel beside him

“Is the bridle path good beyond Bradstreet’s, or do you still go by the creek ?” asked Kenny.

“My father and Mr. Bradstreet have mended all that, and the way is clear and fair now to the meeting house.”

“Thank you sir,” replied Kenny respectfully ; “it’s more than a year since I was that way, and a young man like yourself can give a little information, I see. What might be the work you were at when you left home ?”

“Chiefly fighting the weeds in the corn fields and helping about the garden place. My mother is fond of that, and we raise some good vegetables for our table.”

“I think I have heard some one say that you were in nowise idle, and that your things took much credit with Captain Hepworth, both for size and goodness. I remember some turnips which he remarked were finer than any on the Hill Farm.”

“Captain Hepworth never waits for kindness in speech ; he himself gave me an abundance of seeds, and my mother has knowledge and skill in such matters. My father cares more for the heavier work of the farm, and is so busy with clearing his new land

that he takes little heed of our work until he eats the fruits of it at table."

"I dare say it is of the best, lad, and when I am at your farm I will make bold to see if there is anything I can do to help you, although it is no goodness of heart which sends me from my own work when the crops need my eye and hand. In this Mr. Colson has his way, but an old man is sometimes a match for a young one."

"Does Mr. Colson oversee the Hill farm in our cousin's absence?"

"Indeed that would be his pleasure, but he is neither wise enough nor industrious enough, and Captain Hepworth bade him come to me for counsel, a thing which vexes him much."

"I should think it a good thing to ask instruction of you, for my cousin tells me that you were a long time with Madame Hepworth's brother in England."

"Yes, yes, lad; so long that I will not see harm come to them without speaking or striking. My good mistress is in sore distress, although she strives to hide it, and I would help her. The man she trusts is not trusty, my young lad. I will not grieve or alarm her. Can I trust you?"

"In all things where my cousin may be served."

"Would you, for their sakes, be willing to suffer even seeming wrong?"

"I would be willing to do anything for them."

"Then listen to me. If this man ask questions, be ignorant; if he tempt you to visit any place whatever, refuse him; if he rail at those you love, keep silence. Whatever your message from our good lady,

deliver it, though he use force, and you fight your way to my master. I have keen eyes, young man, and I have knowledge of this man's doings which he thinks not of. God bless you and bring you safe to my master, who is a good man and true."

Samuel shook the old man's hand heartily and thanked him for his warning while he pondered on his words.

Could John Colson be treacherous? Would he prove false to his kind mistress? Surely Kenny must know, for all through the village men, women and children called him "Honest Kenny."

Before the day dawned Samuel was astir, and "Honest Kenny" on his way to Endicott River.

CHAPTER VI.

GOODY HERRICK'S REVELATIONS.

MADAME HEPWORTH bade adieu to her young kinsman with a smiling face and a heavy heart.

The rumors which she had for a long time tried to conceal from her husband were now open accusations, and the very air was full of absurd falsehoods. Even the family physician who attended young Herrick until he was able to be removed to his home declared that the afflicted ones were bewitched, and the minister had invited neighboring clergy to unite with him in invoking the aid of the Almighty.

Madame Hepworth attempted argument with the doctor and found it useless; no reasoning power

could affect him, however much he might respect the fair combatant.

"Indeed, madame, after much examination, I am most truly convinced that the Evil One has taken possession of these people."

Madame Hepworth replied: "But the Lord Himself is mightier than the Evil One, and medical men should surely understand the peculiarities of mental diseases."

Whereupon the doctor shook his head and made no further speech, evidently thinking Madame Hepworth a woman of strange mind.

This apparently innocent conversation was turned to evil as we shall see.

Madame Hepworth went about her duties quietly and serenely. Having despatched her messengers she must await the result, and activity would shorten the time. With the assistance of Hester and Goody Herrick, the great chests, where much bedding was stored for ye colde weather, were examined carefully, and the captain's room was refreshed with new window hangings and fresh flowers.

"Are you expecting the master soon?" asked Goody, who was unconsciously an inveterate gossip.

"I know not," replied madame; "but it pleases me to have things in such order that he seems to be here when he is not."

"I like to put the flowers on his table," said Hester, "because he told me one day he knew they were standing here, however busy he might be far away."

"Priscilla Pease said to me at meeting that all witches could tell the doings of their friends; and for

that she was 'charged,' and her husband testified against her."

Madame Hepworth was silent.

"I should think he would be ashamed to speak ill of his wife," said little Hester; "would you like to be so treated, Goody?"

"We know not what may chance, Miss Hester, for when the Evil One takes possession all good is driven out, and the men should speak the words of truth."

"But it cannot all be true," persisted Hester, with childish zeal. "John Londer did tell in court that a black pig came into his room when the doors were shut, and he tried to kick it away, and he himself was sick. I cannot believe it, for sick people have strange fancies, do they not, mother?"

"Very often, my dear," said Madame Hepworth, while she was secretly wondering how to silence the conversation.

"Don't you know how strangely dear father talked after he was wounded, and the young man did the same when his fever came upon him? I never can think that men and women are so evil."

"Better be careful of your words, Miss Hester, or there will be some to say that you favor the witches. It is well known that William Bly found puppets in the cellar wall of the house where Bridget Bishop lived, and they were full of headless pins and hogs' bristles."

"Hester, my dear, will you go to my room and arrange my work-box until I come?" said Madame Hepworth. "I will teach you the pretty lace stitch you so much admired, when our task here is ended."

Hester walked quickly away, for in 1692 children revered and obeyed their elders.

When the child was fully occupied, her mother did not reprove Goody for her chatter, but permitted her to continue her talk, thinking she might gain some knowledge of the feeling among her own servants.

“Have you heard of any new arrests, Goody?”

“Indeed, madame, each hour increases them; and but this very day, before Mr. Colson left us, he was telling us that not only the jail in Prison Lane was full, but also other prisons in Ipswich, Boston and Cambridge. And then he told us much of the wonderful preachment given by Mr. Lawson concerning witchcraft. I was bad with my back that day, you remember, but Mr. Colson tells us it was very grand, and did make many quake and tremble. You heard it yourself, mistress, and are wiser than all of us to understand much learning.”

“I heard it, and it was dreadful indeed; but he charged the people to give no place to the devil by rash censuring of others.”

“Did he not say also that if innocent ones were suspected it must be ascribed to God’s pleasure?”

“He did.”

“Such words did Mr. Colson speak, and he charged it upon us that it was God’s will for us to denounce at once any suspected person, even if it be a husband, a child, or a wife, that thereby the evil might cease.”

“I fear that much wrong may be done in haste, and suffering both now and in the future come from this thing, for many have already declared themselves innocent.”

"Ah, mistress, all the doctors and Mr. Parris himself, beside the council, are sure of the evil in our village, and women are neither so wise nor so strong. When Mr. Parris told us at the communion concerning Mary Sibley using diabolical means by the making of a cake, through his Indian man, I was made to feel that neither high nor low would escape the clutches of Satan, and she did confess."

"Only concerning the temper which caused her to leave the meeting house after her sister had been treated so ill. The door did not slam through her evil, but owing to the wind. Much that seems strange to others seems but natural to me, and I pray that no wrong-doing may trouble our souls in the future."

"There be those who think you are now favoring the witches," said Goody, leaving her work to look earnestly in her mistress' face; "and though I could never be of like mind, or find evil in one so gracious and good to me and mine, still I thought to speak with you about it before I slept, for save Kenny and myself there is not about the place any who are disposed to think it impossible for evil to abide with you or Miss Hester."

"Surely," said Madame Hepworth, "surely my good woman, no one has dared—"

She paused. Had the accusers not dared all things? Were not good women and excellent wives and mothers now in irons in the jails? Could she forget Sarah Cloyse, whose sensitive soul was harrowed until physical exhaustion ensued and she fainted? Was not the air filled with cries of evil against her and that pious woman Rebecca Morse?

It was dreadful. The mockery, the screaming, the contortions of the girls, and John Indian's writhings and twistings so repulsive to behold.

Never could it be forgotten. She had endeavored to screen Hester from such madness; she did not wish to darken her sweet young life with such memories, and more than once her thoughts had turned lovingly toward the English home where she was sure of shelter and quiet.

How could she leave her husband? How respect herself when seeking only her personal safety? If he were but near at hand he could speak calmly the right word; but she, a woman with only one child to love, and that child under suspicion, what could she say?"

With the sweet faith and trust of that early time she sought relief in prayer.

Goody Herrick looked on in silence. Could it be true? Her mistress neither spake nor stirred, but sat with clasped hands, while her lips moved,

Goody watched her for some time, and then approached her, taking her mistress by the hand.

"My speech was over bold, mistress," she said, "and I should have heeded Kenny's words, that you were not strong like most of the women hereabouts, and nothing should grieve you."

"Thank you, Goody. I was only asking God for strength, and He will give it. Say no more of this to any one save myself, and tell me of such evil things as may be planned against us."

"Ah, mistress, your lips are white as the dead, and your face is ill. Miss Hester will see it, and why should her heart be troubled?"

"True. Bring me some water, Goody, and I will go to her. I fear it was not wise to send Kenny from me."

"You sent your best friend, dear lady, but Mr. Colson was pleased, knowing your dependence on him."

"Does Mr. Colson dislike him?"

"He hates him, madame, for being under him in place and wages since April, and but two days since Kenny did threaten to strike him sore if he so much as breathed aught against Miss Hester or yourself. Since then Colson hath hidden his rage only to increase it. I fear his anger greatly, dear lady. He was close at hand when you talked with the doctor, and he it was who carried Miss Hester's toys to the minister's house.

"My daughter's?" gasped Madame Hepworth.

"Yes, mistress; the dolls and puppets she is fond of making to call her brothers and sisters while she plays in the grove; and Sarah Churchill showed us a bit of verse which Miss Hester had made about the talk of the trees in the forest. It sounded over sweet to be the work of Satan, for Kenny read it aloud and was angry with the maids for their foolish words."

"My child! my child!" exclaimed Madame Hepworth. "Surely God's gifts are turned to evil, and your pretty bits of verse will be ascribed to Satan's power. Oh, my darling! my darling! why can I not suffer for you!"

"Be quiet, dear lady," said Goody, alarmed by the effect of her own words. "Lie down here on this couch, for you tremble so. Miss Hester will suffer, and the master will punish me for my speech."

Madame Hepworth sank upon the pillow and groaned in anguish. Again and again her lips moved in prayer, as she sought for aid in this dire distress.

CHAPTER VII.

SAMUEL IS DESERTED.

"I WILL go to my child now," said Madame Hepworth, after a season of intense mental agony. "Let me bathe my face, Goody, and bring me a glass of milk. The wife of a soldier must not faint, and daughters must take courage from the mothers. I will be brave and fear not, for God reigneth."

Hester, all unconscious of the threatening danger, met her mother with a smiling face.

"Here is the box all in order, mother, and the needles are ready. I want to be a fine needle-woman, for Cousin Deliverance tells me that your lacework and embroidery was the pride of your family in England, and I shall strive to be like you."

How can we best paint the picture of the Puritan mother as she sat with breaking heart beside her gifted child, already doomed to be the prey of an infuriated community? How can we portray the bitter woe and the brave spirit which struggled within that mother as the lesson went on?

"How patient you are, dear mother, when I make mistakes; and how gentle, too! Does your head pain you again, that you say so little?"

"My head pains me, darling, and I have much to think of."

"Then we will put the lace away now, for your hand is feverish and your eyes bright. You must not be ill while my father is away, dear mother," said the affectionate child as she smoothed the mother's hair.

"I will be strong for your sake, my love. Sit by me while I rest on the couch and advise myself, since no one is here to counsel with."

"If I were older I might help you, but now I trouble you so much and tax your strength, which my father says is never great since you came to America."

"Would you like to go with me to England, Hester?"

"I would go wherever you might wish if you would never look pale and ill, dear mother."

"I shall be better soon, my love. You always rest and comfort me, dear child."

"Then why do your eyes fill with tears as you speak, and why are you so sad?"

"Matters distress me which you will hear of soon, but now I await your father's return. Will my daughter read to me?"

"Anything you please, dear mother; shall it be one of the psalms?"

"Yes, my child, something from the Word may come to me now as never before."

During the reading Madame Hepworth shaded her eyes with her hand, lest her child's beautiful face might distract her attention. As Hester closed the Bible reverently, she saw that the fair, June sky was overcast, and she exclaimed earnestly, "Oh, mother,

a heavy shower is coming, and what will become of Samuel?"

Madame Hepworth concealed her uneasiness, and replied lightly that the boy would seek shelter somewhere, for Mr. Colson was very careful of his own fine clothes.

"I hope he will think more of our cousin than of himself," said Hester, "when he has charge of him. If the papers should get wet, mother, dear, would it not worry father?"

"I trust not; they are well secured."

The sky grew darker and darker and the thunder rolled heavily. One by one the men hurried from the fields and took shelter in the large barn, while Goody Herrick kept the frightened maids in order within the kitchen.

"Where is madame," asked a young woman who was crouching in one corner.

"In her own room, of course, with Miss Hester."

"Is she not timorous?"

"Madame fears nothing, as you should know by this time," replied Goody, testily.

"Those who are in league with the Evil One fear naught," retorted the girl. Suddenly a terrible crash came, and a large tree fell, breaking the kitchen window and scattering glass among the frightened group.

"The witches did it," exclaimed the excited girl.

"I know it; I saw one riding upon a stick."

"Peace, girl," exclaimed Goody. "Bestir yourself to remove the sticks and glass; there's many a tree falls in the forest by the storm, and surely one may come down on a hill-top like this."

The maid at once began to weep and laugh hysterically, all the while exclaiming that the witches were working evil on the house and its inmates. Confusion reigned, notwithstanding Goody's efforts, and the noise within drowned that without.

Madame Hepworth in her room far away saw the tree when struck by lightning, and with Hester in her arms watched the storm in its fury.

"I am afraid some one was hurt, mother. I hear a sound of crying."

"The branches may have touched the wing near the kitchen; we will go and see." Adown the old staircase they went hand in hand, through the long dark hall, the sombre dining-room, and into the kitchen. In the doorway mother and child stood amazed. Sarah Churchill, the young maid whose chief duty it was to serve at table, lay prone on the floor filling the air with shrieks, while Goody bent over her and the other servants cried aloud in terror.

"Bring me some water, Goody," said Madame Hepworth. "There is no cause for fear. God guides the storm, and although we have lost our beautiful tree and the window is broken, we are unhurt." Her calmness reassured all but the prostrate girl, who still continued to writhe, moan and scream. Madame Hepworth threw a plentiful supply of water upon her, which caused her to be very angry, and the shrieks changed to abusive words. "You bewitched me," said she, "and now you free me when you like. The whole village knows you are a witch, and your child also. I will go away when it is fair once more, lest you still further torture me." Madame Hepworth had

not power to reply, while Hester clung to her mother and sobbed.

"She doesn't know her words, mistress," said Goody; "she has been fretting since last Lord's day, and her mind is unsettled."

"Put her to bed at once," said Madame Hepworth, "and show her every kindness. If need be we will call a doctor." As the storm abated some of the men came from the barn to examine the fallen tree and comment upon its destruction. The hysterical, ill-tempered maid was put to bed, where Madame Hepworth visited her, showing her much kindness and attention. During all this excitement Hester never left her side, and the patient little face might well have reproved the rebellious Sarah. Not so. Envy and jealousy raged within her, and while the soft hand of Madame Hepworth was bathing her brow she was plotting evil and longing for the return of Colson. The travelers were well on their way when the storm arose, and as the woods were dense they thought it best to halt for a season. Colson soon discovered a wood choppers' hut, where they took refuge until the storm had spent its fury.

During their journey the man had used all arts to impress the lad with a sense of his great importance, but the sturdy Yankee was a match for his witty opponent. "Why do you not return to England if you like it so much better?" asked Samuel, after his companion had described his former home.

"I came expecting better wages and fair treatment, but a gentleman is of less account here than a rough husbandman, and Captain Hepworth has seen fit to

reduce my salary and place a low-born man over me."

"Do you mean Kenny?"

"Aye, Kenny; it is better worth in the captain's eyes to raise a field of turnips than to keep a fine lawn or trim the hedges as they should be."

"My cousin likes everything well done; the Hill farm has long been famous for its neatness and order, and its crops as well. Whatever Captain Hepworth touches prospers. Only last week I heard my father say he would make a noble governor."

"He will never be that, lad; he has enemies like all men."

"I see no reason for enemies. He is much too good, and he is always striving to make people wiser and better."

"You will be wiser before you die. See here, my lad, when we reach Boston I wish to call on a friend of mine before we find the captain,"

"I heard you promise Madame Hepworth to use all diligence to reach her husband."

"So did I; but an hour, more or less, will not matter, and this friend knows every part of the city."

Samuel pondered much concerning this act on the part of Colson, and recalled Kenny's warning. For himself he must see his kinsman without delay. Could he go alone?

When the storm had passed by and they were once more in their saddles Colson renewed his talk about the captain, which Samuel heard for a long time in silence.

"They say he has the witches' mark upon him, and

if it be so there is little hope for him. As to his wife and child, they have been in league with the devil this six months. Even Ann Putnam so said, but it was silenced, because they had wealth and were of good family."

Samuel's hot blood was stirred, but he remembered his errand, and only replied: "Idle rumors are all about, and no one will believe evil of such good people."

"But numbers do, lad, and trouble is to come. I shall slip over to England ere long, and wait there until America is a place of safety."

"I shall stay here and fight it out if need be," said the boy. Colson laughed derisively.

"Well, lad, this turn will bring me to my friend's house," said Colson, when they were safe within the limits of Boston, "and we will go just there."

"Not I!" exclaimed Samuel. "I will first see my cousin, and take directions from him——"

"But you will lose yourself, and you are in my charge."

"All that may be, but right is not less than right, and I promised to use all speed. A civil tongue will win a civil answer, and I can find my way."

Colson seized the bridle of the lad's horse, and would have detained him, but Samuel pulled quickly away, and was soon galloping up the street.

"If Mr. Colson is plotting evil against my kinfolk, he can do without me," said the boy as he hurried on.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLSON DISAPPEARS.

"THERE'S a lad without who would like to have speech with you, sir," said a servant to Captain Hepworth, who was seated in his room, engaged in writing.

"Show him in, Stephen; lads are always welcome here."

"He is much bespattered with hard riding, sir."

"Then all the more important must be his message, Stephen; show the lad in."

"You are to go in, boy," said Stephen haughtily, "but mind the mat and the scraper when you call on quality." Samuel's ruddy face wore an amused smile as he followed this pompous servant, who threw open the door of a small room and announced him as "The lad, sir," in a scornful manner. Great was the good captain's astonishment and hearty his greeting, while Stephen stood amazed when he heard him addressed as "My dear, young kinsman."

"And why am I thus favored?" asked the captain. "Truly I did not know how much I was longing for a sight of my dear ones until you came. Are all well? I left them in great haste to prepare some papers much needed in court."

"They bade me farewell from the porch at day-

break, and for further tidings I will give you shortly your good lady's message, which is securely sewed in my waiscoat."

"The best tidings a busy man can have is the safety of his dear ones, my boy; but how, pray, did you travel, and why did your cautious mother send you to me in these perilous times unattended?"

"I came as Madame Hepworth's messenger, sir, and her own man Colson came with me until we reached the town, and then left me to meet a friend."

"Did not his mistress desire him to accompany you hither?"

"Her orders were most particular, sir, but his speech throughout the journey has been angry and untruthful. Once or twice I was minded to answer him with sharpness, but Madame Hepworth and Cousin Hester both made me give solemn promise not to reply to any man's words with more than civil speech until these papers were safe in your hands."

"And you came on alone, my boy, and found me here, without serious hindrance?"

"I asked but twice concerning the way, and I was determined to find you; though my horse should fail I would not."

"The poor fellow must be well cared for, Samuel; let me speak a word or two to my Cousin Willard, whose house we are in; she will welcome you, so soon as we despatch our business."

While the captain was issuing orders concerning the weary animal before the door Samuel was engaged in removing sundry stitches from a large letter covered with seals which Madame Hepworth had

fastened securely. When this was done, the captain returned. "And you tell me that Colson left you in this cowardly manner," said the captain after he had read the first lines of his wife's letter? "My good wife says: 'I send our young kinsman in charge of Colson with strict orders to deliver him to you in safety.'"

"You will find more by further reading, sir."

Captain Hepworth's handsome face clouded as he read.

"This business is most distressing," he said, "and, as you know its import and have already shown your zeal and love for us, I may talk with you concerning this. Does my daughter know aught of these charges?"

"I know not how much, sir, but something, for she has told me some things which Ann Putnam said to her; also some evil words of Abigail Williams; and last winter they were vexed with her because your good lady would not permit her to attend the meetings at Mr. Parris' house where the children told fortunes and did much magic."

"Abigail Williams is older than my little girl, is she not?"

"She is eleven, sir, and Ann Putnam is twelve, but neither do seem so wise and good as my Cousin Hester, although she is but ten."

"My child has been wisely taught by her good mother," said the captain. "But tell me, did Colson speak of any evil?"

"He was much vexed at the promotion of Kenny, and said your wife and child were in league with the

devil, and it was well known, for so it was publicly charged."

"Did he mention his wages?"

"Only to say he expected better when he came, and he would soon return to England."

"Do you fear any evil act from him?"

"I think he is full of evil, sir, and his refusal to deliver the messages entrusted to him proves him dishonest. My mother is wont to say that he who withholds a message is a thief."

"He has done more, my boy; Madame Hepworth gave him some money to purchase a good suit of clothes for you, the money to be delivered to me, with a list of things to be purchased."

"I knew nothing of that, sir."

"Let me read her words: 'For some reason I do not like the manners of Colson; for several months he has been surly and almost rude, but I made no complaint, seeing that you were already much perplexed. In order to conceal from him the real intent of this hurried journey, I have given him a small packet of papers marked "Important," also the sum of £4, all I now have by me, with which, should you have time, you will please make purchase of the following:

'Knee breeches, waistcoat, long hose, buckles and shoes, with one large handkerchief of handsome pattern, all for our kinsman, Samuel Jacobs, who has shown us much love in this undertaking. You will direct Colson to attend to this matter if you are much occupied, and whatever gift you may think wise and good for our Cousin Deliverance you will pay

for her in my name. The sore anxiety in which you are now placed should lead us to increase our affectionate regard for those who are true and faithful."

"Well, my boy, the four pounds is still with Colson, and I much wish my good wife had given it to her trusty messenger; however, you shall not miss her kind intent, for we will go about the furnishing at once and make you in good trim for the table of our Boston cousin."

"I do not desire better, or deserve it, Captain Hepworth. I care now only to place my cousins out of danger, and while you make ready to return I can look about me and see much of this famous town."

"I cannot think that danger is so imminent; verily they would not dare annoy my wife and child, save with their tongues; true, I do not like this sudden move of Colson, and I mourn that our people should be so misguided, but a noble and good lady of fine family and most exemplary life should be unmolested in her home while her husband is doing honest service, although faulty, in the court."

"I think, sir, you believe all others to be as just and good as yourself, but the people are given over to this thing and unbelievers are suspected. Your good wife said to Mr. Parris that she prayed God to open their eyes to the truth, and this was turned to her evil. Then she refused to appear at the hearings, and the servants have told of her much praying."

"Surely, my lad, her piety cannot be a sin! I am no believer in necromancy, and the treatment of the afflicted children has been unwise in my eyes; but there can be no treason in prayer, nor evil in honest

opinion. This I shall assert boldly, fully believing that God will not permit further wrong-doing."

"So thought Martha Corey, sir, and although she said many times 'I am a gospel woman,' they paid no heed, nor would they allow her to utter prayer. I am but a young boy, sir, but I hear and see much, and am made to suffer many things because of my unbelief in witchcraft, but I am made to laugh also for some of the tricks. Only last week I thought to make sport of a stupid maid who was helping my mother, and I made of some hay and a bit of rag or two a queer puppet which I placed in her room; I thought only of sport, but the puppet was carried to the minister, and he has been to visit my mother about it, declaring it the work of the Evil One. My Uncle Cheever told his boys to put up in the corn-field an image to frighten the birds and lo, the afflicted call that the Evil One."

"Well, well, lad, jests are no longer jests. I remember our own sports in England, and I sometimes think with pity of our lads here, therefore I raise a barn, or build a wall, or offer a prize for a canoe race that they may know the pleasure of youth. Come, now, let us go out and find some tidy dress before we meet the guests in our house. My young kinsman must do credit to himself and Salem village. After that I must leave you to be entertained as you may while I have speech with the governor and make ready for our departure. We may chance to meet our recreant messenger while we are out, and I will leave special charge to detain him if he calls in our absence."

Colson was not seen that night, or ever after, but the evil he had wrought stirred Salem village to its depths, and brought misery to once happy hearts in both New and Old England.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DESOLATE HOME.

IT was a beautiful morning when Captain Hepworth mounted his horse before the door of the old Willard mansion in Boston and bowed his adieux to Madame Willard, her daughter and guests.

Samuel was resplendent in his new suit, while his homespun garments were neatly folded and packed in his saddle-bags. The Boston relatives were much pleased with his manly bearing, and many small gifts were stowed away in his capacious pockets.

Captain Hepworth had not made known the cause of his sudden return to Salem village, and it was sufficient for these excellent women to learn that matters at home required his presence.

"Bring Madame Hepworth and our small cousin with you," said Mrs. Willard, as they rode away; "we would much like to greet them."

"I will do my best to urge them," said the captain, "if all things favor."

In his secret heart he said: "Please heaven they shall be on the sea forthwith, until this pestilential talk and delusion is overcome."

But human love cannot always guard its objects.

During the journey Samuel found his kinsman very silent; sometimes they would ride a mile without speaking, and again the captain would surprise the lad with a question which completely showed his train of thought.

“Do I understand that Kenny is at your farm, my lad, by Colson’s desire?”

“Yes, sir; Madame Hepworth thought to please him, and allowed him to send whom he liked; he at once said Kenny.”

“Because of all men I trusted him most, and had but last month given him special charges concerning my wife and child.”

“Then you feared some evil, sir?”

“One knows not what to expect when men otherwise sober accuse simple-minded invalids and babes of four and five years of age of sorcery and witchcraft, and cry out upon all who disagree with them. I am sure future generations will recall these things with shame.”

“My sister,” said Samuel, “wept bitterly when little Dorcas Good was accused and carried to the jail in Boston, where her mother is in chains, and I will never think that the poor babe knows aught of evil. Mr. Parris so alarmed Ruth that she was sick with fever for many days. He told her the devil had lodgment in Salem village, and some of the most pious were in his power; and Mr. Lawson hath said many times that this village was singled out for the first seat of Satan’s tyranny.”

“How is it that one so young should not believe these scholarly men?”

"I know not; my father calls me perverse, for he is much stirred with these things, and my sister is so affrighted with Indians and witches that she cannot sleep; but my mother, like your good lady, speaks boldly against the sin. My mother hath often told us of a maid servant at home who would fall in a fit and foam at the mouth if she were reprov'd for wrong doing, and whenever it pleased her to want her own way. Some of these children seem of like mind, and John Indian and his wife Tituba were of low and evil design."

Captain Hepworth smiled.

"You are indeed a bold, brave lad to speak in this manner, seeing you listened to the talk of the ministers and magistrates, and have witnessed such things at the meeting house. Beware, lest the evil tongues assail you, and thus cut you off from defending your mother and sister, if need be."

"I do not talk freely with others, sir, and I can fight for the truth if I am but a boy."

Again silence fell, and they journeyed on over the wooded turnpike, or "highway," until they saw before them the house of a friend.

"Here is good Neighbor Swimerton's," said the captain, "and we will dismount and ask for a glass of milk. It may be that he can tell us how matters go in the village."

Mr. Swimerton greeted the gallant captain with great respect and urged him to tarry and rest.

"I am in haste to reach home, good friend; but tell me what tidings have you, and when were you in the village?"

"I came from there this morning; there has been another sad murder at Newbury, and Captain Haynes was shot while mounting his horse before his own door."

"A brave man and true; but what of matters nearer home, good friend?"

"Alas, the air is filled with rumors, and you can judge of their truth shortly."

It was useless to question the old man; he had knowledge which he could not or would not impart, and after a few moments' rest, while the horses were drinking, with a kind word or two for the children of the house, Captain Hepworth and his companion hurried homeward.

"Ah, my lad," said the captain, as they came near enough to see the mansion house on the hill, "the lightning of yesterday has made sad havoc with our trees, and the great one near the porch has fallen. Well, well, trees are plentiful, but this one we could ill spare from our lawn, for my wife and child were so fond of it."

"It was the largest hereabouts," said Samuel, "and I have heard my father say that travelers took it for a guide, and counted themselves safe when they could see the big tree at the Hill farm."

As they came nearer and saw the windows, no one appeared to be in sight; an ominous silence reigned.

In response to the captain's cheerful call, a young boy came forward and took the tired horses. Samuel saw his pale, frightened face, but the captain, in his eagerness to greet his loved ones, hurried in after asking, "Are all well within?"

"All here are well, sir," was the guarded answer.

No loving faces greeted the captain; no childish voice gave him joyous welcome.

"My poor wife is ill again," said he, as he stepped softly over the stairs.

At the upper landing Goody Herrick met him, wiping her eyes on her huge check apron.

"Ah, Goody, where is your mistress?"

"Alas, master, they carried her to jail, and the child also."

"Do you speak the truth, woman? My wife and child in jail?"

"Aye, master; I would that the truth need be better for your hearing, for my heart breaks with thinking of them."

Captain Hepworth sank down upon an old settle in the hall and buried his face in his hands. Goody stood by attempting his comfort after her own ignorant fashion, while Samuel, who had followed the captain closely, leaned against the staircase, unable to speak in the presence of such a sorrow.

After a few moments of agonized silence the captain raised a haggard face, saying, "Tell me all, Goody, and briefly."

"Well, sir, a dreadful shower overtook us yesterday, and the great tree fell down; some of the maids were sore affrighted, and one, Sarah Churchill, was seized with fits. My poor mistress was most kind, and never left her for long until the supper was brought in. After supper she returned to Sarah, who never ceased to abuse her and call her a witch. Being much worn out, I besought our lady to go to

her rest ; so she summoned all to prayers, and soon after went to her room, the child with her. There I followed her and bathed her head, and was just saying good-night when the officers came in. Had I been below they should not have entered ; but they came to her straightway, and did read the warrant to her while she lay with the child's arms about her neck. I did entreat them to let her abide in peace until day, but they would not hearken to us, and hurried her away."

Goody paused, overcome with her emotions, and Samuel clenched his fists with boyish, nay, manly resentment, that a delicate woman should receive such treatment.

"Go on, Goody ; each moment is precious, and I must know all that happened here."

Goody ceased her sobs and continued :

"When the officer said she must go with him, my mistress made answer that God's will should be done ; she feared nothing and was ready to die ; and the child called most pitifully for you, sir, but her mother said, 'Be patient, my darling ; even here we find mercy, for did they take you from me my heart would break ; now we go together.' Then the officer said that several had charged her and her child, but chiefly her own servants, John Colson and Sarah Churchill. When my dear mistress heard this she said to me, 'Acquaint your master with these facts, and care most kindly for the girl Sarah, for no doubt her mind is disordered ; she therefore requires pity rather than blame.' Then they went away in the darkness and dampness of the evening, our dear lady holding her

child fast, while her lips moved in prayer, and the officer said that new chains had been ordered for them, which should cost the matter of fourteen shillings."

Captain Hepworth groaned aloud.

Samuel ventured to approach him and, putting his hand on his shoulder, said :

"I was bidden by my parents to remain with you as long as you desire it, and now there is much to be done, and Kenny is most trusty ; if you will it so, I will return to Endicott river speedily and send him to you."

"Stay with me, lad ; stay with me ; I have need of your stout heart, and the love they bear you brings you near to me in this sorrow ; Kenny will come when he hears the tidings. Let us go now to my wife's room and see if she hath left a word to guide us."

"Indeed no, good sir," said Goody, "that you cannot do, for all her belongings are under lock and key, and the officer said none might enter until all should be examined ; so they could not leave a message, save the words I told you and the child's whispered good-bye to me, asking me to tell you to come for them speedily."

"God willing, I shall do so, but the blow is sudden and it strikes deep. Courage is not wanting, but the Ruler of all must supply wisdom."

CHAPTER X.

A CALL FOR HELP.

CAPTAIN HEPWORTH arose and paced the long hall with bowed head.

His wife and child prisoners, even loaded with chains, her private papers attached subject to the investigation of a bigoted, curious crowd, and his own servants unfaithful.

What could he do? How move to avoid suspicion and help his dear ones? How guard himself that he might secure consideration for them?

One rash act, one hasty speech might cause the afflicted to denounce him, and if so who could defend his helpless ones?

Danger in some form confronted him in every direction; for his personal safety he cared but little, save as it endangered others. What could he do? Ministers, doctors and magistrates were zealously engaged in the persecution.

At the council held in Salem in April the deputy-governor, Thomas Danforth, with James Russell, John Hathorne, Isaac Addington, Major Samuel Appleton, Captain Samuel Sewall and Jonathan Corwin, Esquires, had conducted the examinations, and did not this "honorable council" commit some excellent and worthy women to jail after submitting them to much indignity?

Could a man of refined tastes and manly sentiments think of such scenes without a shudder?

Judge Sewall, filled with a sense of the horror, although a member of the council, made this record in his diary, and yet the evil went on:

"Went to Salem, where, in the meeting house, the persons accused of witchcraft were examined; was a very great assembly; 'twas awful to see how the afflicted persons were agitated," and on the margin was written, "*Væ, væ, væ!* Alas, alas, alas!"

If such men were deceived, could any one hope for mercy?

Before that council met the subject had been local, now it was widespread and under the control of the colonial government at Boston. Salem could not be held responsible.

Would Captain Hepworth, an active participant in public affairs, receive grace or favor? Should he intercede with the authorities at Boston or appeal to the sheriff at Salem?

"There is one source of help, and one only," said he. "I will first ask counsel of the righteous Judge."

"Samuel, I will be with you presently," he said. "When dire distress visits us we need Divine aid and assistance," and he entered his library, closing the door behind him.

"I never saw his face like that before," said Goody, to the boy who had taken the captain's place on the settle. "Even when he came from Bloody Brook it was not so white or so sad."

"He could better bear pain himself than think of them," said Samuel, "and I wish the Boston folks had not meddled with it."

"Take heed to your speech, lad; it is less than two weeks since Colson said you were writing in a book, and there is much talk of that sort."

"I would that John Colson's head was beneath my knuckles now," said Samuel, with spirit; "he is not worthy to be called a man when he will lie and steal. Did he not leave me alone in Boston and take away with him all Madame Hepworth's money and the message she sent to his master?"

"How could I know that; but tell me about your book."

Poor Goody was curious, and, although she stoutly maintained the innocence of her mistress, she was ignorant and superstitious, and wholly unable to explain the marvellous phenomenon she had witnessed.

"My book," said Samuel, bravely, "is my own, and has neither sin nor wickedness between its boards; if you will stop but a little to think, you will find cause for laughter, as I do, or did before my kinsfolk were dragged away. Last winter my mother, who is wise in such matters, said to my father that I was worth more to him than any help on the farm, and she thought it but fair that I should have my way to make some trials for myself; so my father said, as I was the only son, I would have all I could desire, for his farm was large, and he should give me a good portion of it when I was out of my time; but my mother knew that a boy wanted many things, and I was thinking of a new gun, so she said much concerning it to my father, and before the spring came he told me that he would give me the southwest lot to be as mine for the year, and I might do my pleasure with

it. Thus far it has done well, and each week my sister and I send to our kinsfolk in Boston such things as they like for their table and they send us good payment for them. All this I write in my book."

"But why did you write in it on the Lord's day while you were on the ground outside of the meeting house?"

"Who says that I did?"

"John Colson told me."

Samuel thought earnestly for a few moments, and then exclaimed:

"He is right, too. My mother was sick at home, and she charged me to bring the place of Scripture from which the minister spoke to us, and for a little time I carried it in my mind, but I feared that it might escape me, so I wrote it down in my book, where are also the records of my garden lot. That is all, and you see now how innocent things are made evil."

Before Goody could reply Captain Hepworth came out and gave Samuel a letter.

"You will eat something, my lad, and take a fresh horse from my stable before you deliver this to my worthy friend, while I will go at once to Nathaniel Ingersoll and, if possible, have speech with my wife."

"Stay for food, good sir," said Goody. "I will have something for you at once."

"I care nothing for food or rest until I can relieve my family."

"Pardon me, sir," said Goody, respectfully. "There is a long task to be done, and much strength will be needed. In order to help my mistress you must keep

yourself at the best, and the wound may give you trouble, as it has done, unless you are most prudent."

"You are right, Goody, and my young kinsman should be cared for; let us take food and hasten away, for help must be given quickly. While we eat let some one call William Robinson to bear the lad company, for it is a long ride to the Orchard farm, and he is already worn with his journey from Boston.

Nothing could make the large dining-room cheerful with the graceful mistress of the house away and Hester's chair vacant. Captain Hepworth did not trust himself to look about, but diligently served his companion while he talked earnestly of things to be done, and Goody served them herself.

"Will you have speech with Sarah Churchill, sir, before you leave?" she asked.

"Is the woman still here?"

"Yes, sir; and a child of the house could not be better cared for. A committee, with the minister at its head, visited her a few hours since, and she hath openly charged our lady and the child. When they came she was quiet, but no sooner did they enter the room than she was taken and handled grievously, saying the child sat upon her and was pinching her."

"Send her away to her own people," said Samuel, indignantly. "She is not worth your care."

"Madame herself besought us to show her kindness," said Goody.

"And she is right. Let us not profess more than we feel when we pray for enemies, persecutors and slanderers; give the maid of the best we have, Goody; and now, my lad, I will speed you once more, for I

know your heart is in this matter. You may give the letter to our good friend Endicott, and he will deliver it safe in Boston, and you had best remain there over night for it is now late. Early on the morrow I hope to tell you that our dear ones are more comfortable."

"You should have power to release them sir," said the boy.

"I have none, Samuel, and the friends we have known for years may prove false. I will see some of our leading men, and perhaps I may obtain for them comforts which are necessary."

Samuel once more sprang into his saddle and went away to the Orchard Farm, while Captain Hepworth rode with all speed to the house of Nathaniel Ingersoll.

In our wealth of rapid transit, our telephones and telegraphs, we forget the poverty and fatigue of that early time, when long rides over highways and by-roads, over marshes and hills, made interchange of thought a laborious operation. The journey from Salem to Boston was then attended with difficulty; now we fly through thriving towns and villages, almost literally performing the operation described by the afflicted concerning the witches, who "rode on sticks and were soon where they would be." Canoes or, as it was then spelled, canowes, or "water-horses," were much used, and their lightness rendered it easy to transfer them from point to point.

Samuel Jacobs was fond of listening to his grandfather's stories of that early period, and many times had he rehearsed to Hester the first celebration of

the Fourth of July in America. It was in 1636, and an order was issued that all canoes should be examined and the surveyor's seal set upon them. "It was a great day," said Samuel, "for every man who neglected to bring his canoe for inspection was fined for his fault ten shillings. Grandfather says it was a goodly sight. All the boats were out, and the women and children wore their best clothes. When the men ran races the women on the shore cheered them, and much fun was made when some were tipped over. I wish I could have seen it ;" and then the girls, Ruth and Hester, would urge him to tell more stories of the past.

All that was far away from the boy's thoughts now, as he rode along the bridle path to the Orchard farm. He had always loved his sister Ruth tenderly, and he had sometimes said that Cousin Hester was like another sister to him. He had been calm and quiet in the captain's presence, but once alone his feelings overcame him.

"Poor little cousin, poor girl!" he said ; "so young and beautiful, so wise and good. These brutes will hang her, I am sure ; they have long hated her. No one was so prompt in the scripture lesson, none knew half so much, and there she is in that wretched prison, with chains on her dear small hands and feet. I would suffer for her if I might. I would die to save her," and for the first time in many years tears came to the boy's eyes.

In his boyish zeal he longed to rush upon the jail and deliver his relatives from their enemies, but Madame Hepworth had taught him the wisdom of self-control.

William Robinson eyed him suspiciously as they rode on their way, but did not speak, for well did he know the power of Samuel's stout arms, and many times had he envied him at the wrestling matches on lecture days.

It was late when our travellers arrived at the famous Orchard farm, and learned, to Samuel's great distress, that its master was even now in Boston; and, as good Madame Endicott suggested, they could not do better than to rest themselves.

Already the sad tidings had reached her, and she was filled with anxiety for the beautiful and gifted woman who had so often been her guest.

In the privacy of her own room she questioned Samuel concerning the arrest, and entreated him to be most discreet for evil tongues spake out the evil thoughts of bad hearts.

"My heart is indeed sore for all these grievances," said the lady of Orchard farm, "but my chief distress is that dear Madame Hepworth's health may fail, and the child be left to suffer alone. Would that she had been speeding to England ere now."

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE JAIL.

WHILE Samuel was sleeping, or trying to sleep, in a comfortable bed at Orchard farm, Captain Hepworth was vainly endeavoring to visit his wife. Like one distracted he went from friend to friend, hoping

to find ready assistance where he had so often aided others, but, alas! madness had seized upon the people and disorder reigned.

No pen could describe the horror and dread which filled every heart. If a lady of such worth and sweetness was cried out upon, who was safe? If beautiful babes were victims, surely the prince of darkness was on the throne.

Captain Hepworth found to his dismay that all were supposed guilty who were charged, and the high position of a suspected one only increased their danger. In vain he besought the sheriffs to permit him to send a bed to his family, but he was gruffly told that, "ministering to witches was a crime." Even the brief note which he penned was destroyed before his eyes.

Hope turned to despair, and he left the village to hasten into Boston, where he might make a personal appeal to members of the council.

Meantime Jonathan Kenny had heard the sad news at the farm on Endicott river, and made all possible haste to reach his master. Well did he remember the recent disgraceful scenes when Captain John Alden was examined; how a ring was formed in the street before Deacon Ingersoll's door, and how the reckless, audacious girls abused the noble gentleman.

"There's not a speck of good in it," said Honest Kenny, as he hurried on, "and they will never be spared. Many times have I worried over it, for madame never fears the evil she knows nothing of, and the captain worships her next his Maker. It's a

bad business, and worse than all else is the little lass. Dear little lass, how bright she was, and how pleasant her words to us all, and what playful ways she had. Ah, there's few like her in the world, and now these inhuman creatures would be at her and hang her. Go on, old horse, go on; let's speed to the master; there's trouble before and behind. Good woman Jacobs is down with sickness since the word came, and her child is nearly dazed with the wretchedness. Go on, old horse, go on; if this work continues the sweetest flowers of the colony will be buried from sight."

Morning was dawning at last, and the first rays of light struggled into the gloomy bare room in Prison lane. Madame Hepworth was seated on the floor holding her child's head. Neither chair nor cot was there, and the night had been chill for June.

"Daylight is coming, mother, and I am glad for your sake."

"I know not whether to rejoice or grieve, but God will care for us."

"How I should like a drink of water," said Hester.

"When they are astir outside I will ask for some. You are feverish, my darling; the weight of the chains must oppress you; let me plait your hair."

"Your own hands are very hot, mother; did you rest? I fell asleep, for the long, dark ride tired me, and I was not afraid while you were with me."

"I have not rested, child. Long ere this Samuel has seen your father, and I am thinking of him and his sore distress. His unhappiness hurts me more than these galling chains."

"He will come soon to us, I know, and then he will set us free, will he not?"

"My darling, I know not; let us rejoice that we were not separated; it is my only consolation."

"Do you suppose that Cousin Samuel knows we are here?"

"He must, now, dear; but rest again; you are much worn, and we must keep ourselves calm and clear for the examination."

"What examination, dear mother?"

"Do you not know that the accused must be brought into the presence of the accusers, and there answer such questions as are put to them?"

"Oh, mother, like poor Goody Corey?"

"Yes, dear."

"And can no one save us? Must those dreadful girls point their fingers at me and make their wild screams, as they did in the meeting house?"

"Your father will be there, my child; and although he cannot save us he will help us."

"Mother, I wish I might die now and be buried near my seat in the grove; the thought hurts me; I fear all those people, I fear the cruel sheriff, and, mother, mother, I cannot go there, I cannot."

"Be patient, darling, God will sustain us; let us pray to Him; do not move, my love, lest these hard chains injure you. We will ask a merciful Father to protect His children."

The excited, feverish child grew calmer as she listened to her mother's voice, and once more she fell asleep.

Madame Hepworth sat motionless, lest she might

disturb the child, the wall behind supporting her exhausted form.

Owing to the large numbers confined within the jail it was late before food was brought them. Hester roused from her slumber, but could not eat; she was thirsty, worn and nearly ill.

"Take but a little, my child," said Madame Hepworth, "that you may be strong to greet your father."

Thus entreated, Hester tried to eat but could not.

"If I had some water, dear mother, like that on the Hill it would cure me."

"I'll bring water, miss, if you wish," said the keeper, "but it will be harder if you do not eat a bit; there be those you know who think it a sure sign, for even some of the judges say a witch hath no need to eat."

"I am not a witch, sir, only a little girl, and I would harm no one."

"There be plenty to charge it upon you, miss, but that is neither here nor there; I have a little lass of my own, and I am sorry to see you in such plight, although I must do my duty. Did you chance to own a little doggy, miss?"

"Yes, sir; have you seen him? His name is Datsy, and he knows very much. Might I have him, sir?"

"The sheriff would never allow that, miss; but a small doggy hath been howling around here since daybreak, and he whines and cries most piteous. Some about said he was bewitched, but I told them he seemed seeking his master. All of a sudden it came to me that it might be yours, for I have heard of queer doings with a doggy at your place."

"Call him Datsy, please, sir, and he will come to you and harm no one. Poor Datsy, I want him, and he needs me."

The child burst into tears, and the keeper withdrew, looking much vexed, but in reality moved by her sorrow.

Madame Hepworth had remained silent while her child talked with the keeper.

"It will do her good," she said to herself, "to find a friend even in her jailer."

The morning passed and the evening came, but still no word reached the captives, and the long night of pain wore slowly away. Hester slept little, while her mother's eyes were only closed in prayer, and her thin, small hands grew parched with fever. All night long she heard the howling of a dog not far away, and she knew that one poor, dumb friend was faithful to her and her child.

Poor Datsy, he did not know that even dogs were hung for the crime of witchcraft; he only knew that the little mistress he loved was taken from him, and his pitiful cries grew almost human like the love he bore her.

During the day men spurned and kicked him near the prison door, and at night he crept farther away, where he could still see the prison walls and express grief in his own way.

"She does not hear him," said the weary, anxious mother, "and it is well, for her tender heart would break. Datsy has been companion and friend since

the day he was given her, and my poor darling loves him as she might a brother or sister."

Hester moved restlessly and moaned in her sleep, while the mother watched and prayed.

CHAPTER XII.

MADAME HEPWORTH'S ILLNESS.

CONFIDENT that neither reason nor justice could assume sway in the present state of public feeling, Captain Hepworth hurried back to Boston, after interceding in vain with the jailer and authorities in Salem. True, he was permitted to pay for "her diet in prison," but the food must be such as the authorities might dictate.

With all the eloquence he could master did he beseech them to allow his delicate wife and fragile child the luxury of a bed.

After his visit in Boston two blankets were permitted, which must have been luxurious to the weary bodies of the prisoners.

Madame Hepworth grew faint and weary as the heat increased. Always scrupulously neat and painstaking about her toilet she suffered much, but her chief anxiety was for her husband and child.

"It is very warm, dear mother," said Hester on the following day. "I wish we might have a bath; do you think our jailer would let us?"

"No, dear; we must not ask too much. In our hurried departure from home I did not think of aught

save your father's misery. We might have taken some little comforts for you."

"For yourself, mother; how bright your eyes are and how rosy your cheeks; you are very pretty; I wish dear father could see you now."

"God help us; I would that he might," replied the fevered captive.

Well did she understand the fatal prettiness which pleased her child, and most earnestly did she pray that the dread fever might spare her reason. Once before she had suffered in the same manner, and then everything which love could suggest or wealth furnish was hers. How tender and thoughtful her husband was; how hushed the house; how cheerful the room; how delicate the cooling drinks. It was a precious dream—making the horrors of the present more terrible.

When the keeper came at night he found her prostrate on the floor, unconscious of all about her, while Hester patted the fevered cheeks and begged her to speak.

"Dear Mr. Jailer," said the child, "my mother is very ill. She will not speak to me. Please call the doctor and send for my father and give me some cooling drink. See, the chains hurt her; they are heavy and she is weak."

"Your own chains are heavy too, miss, but I have no power to remove them."

"Please remove my mother's, sir? I care not for mine until my father comes; but my mother is often ill, and all the spring and summer my father was most careful of her. I am only a little girl, Mr. Jailer,

but I will pray to God every day and every night to bless you if you will help my mother."

The jailer frowned.

The child continued her entreaties.

"See, good jailer; on my finger is this little ring, sent me from England; it is costly, my father says, but you shall have it for your little girl if you will bring a pillow for my dear mother, and some cloth to bind those cruel bruises."

"Child, you must not tempt me to sin. I would that you were free and your mother also, for many times have I watched you in the meeting house and thought your face as pure and sweet as an angel's might be could we see one; but I must do my duty, child; an officer in my place must needs be wary."

Hester bent over her mother and kissed the burning cheeks once more, while her tears fell upon them.

"We are all God's children, sir; my father and mother tell me that daily, and do you think He would want my mother to suffer for drink in His beautiful world? Please hear me, sir; take my ring; carry it to the sheriff, to the judges, and tell them that a little girl will pay them if they will give her but cool water every day to bathe her sick mother. No; that will not do; they will not hear me if they refuse wiser and better ones. Take it, as I said, to your little girl, and tell her that Hester Hepworth entreated you, and you would not hear, though her mother was dying."

The child's chains clanked as she threw herself beside the prostrate form and sobbed aloud, while the keeper made all possible haste to get away.

After an hour's absence he returned, bringing a pewter tankard filled with water under his coat and some fragments of cloth.

Hester had fallen asleep holding her mother's hand, while the sick woman neither moaned nor moved, so complete was her prostration.

The keeper, after closing the door and looking about, carefully placed the tankard on the floor and the rags beside it, hoping to steal away unobserved, but the child stirred and opened her eyes.

"Ah! you came, good sir; I knew you would; I have been praying for you since you left, and then I slept. Give me the water, and let me wet her lips. Poor, poor mother! the help you asked for has come."

The moisture revived Madame Hepworth for a moment, and she tried to move, but the cruel chains hurt her, and she sank back, saying:

"Hester, my love, my darling, I fear I am dying. Be brave and true."

"It's a hard place for a lady of your quality," said the keeper, "but the heat and the journey have overcome you. Drink this sup which I found here, and you will be stronger to care for the lass."

"Stronger for the lass." Through the mental mist which enthralled her, despite the burning fever and the racking pain, this thought inspired her. She must live for her child. God would not let her die and leave her darling in the hands of these cruel judges.

The sup proved to be a drink of herbs which the keeper's own wife had prepared when he told her the story of Hester, and he, notwithstanding his desire to

help his beautiful prisoner, was loath to carry it, lest he might defeat the ends of justice. A woman's argument won the victory.

"Take it at once, good man, for see you not that the court now coming together here she must be examined soon, and how can she stand before them all unless you do your duty to keep her alive?"

"You are right, wife; to keep her in heart for the court I must allay the fever; but put it in a small jug that I may conceal it under my waistcoat, for there be many who will not see this thing as you do."

"I will wrap it in cloth to keep it warm," said the wife, "for its taste may be over bitter if too chill, and a fine lady like Madame Hepworth is not likely to know much of prison fare or prison ways."

Blessed forevermore be the ingenuity of woman; thrice blessed that kindly dame of long ago.

Enrolled within some harmless bits of cast-off garments was the blank page of an old copy book, and on it, in quaint figures of the time, simply Joshua x. 25.

The keeper, half ashamed of a tenderness he could not wholly conceal, poured out a second potion of the medicine and gave it with clumsy eagerness to the thirsty patient.

"There, lass, you may keep the rest, and if you will bathe her face and hands well she will be better on the morrow. Keep your ring on your finger, child; I have no use for it, and the time may come when you will need it more."

"I knew you would be kind to us; we have never harmed any one, and I know my dear father will repay you," said Hester.

"Take no thought of that, miss; your father fought at Bloody Brook, and I fought under him. A braver man cannot be found, and this poor lady, my good wife tells me, sat by her in her sickness while I was gone, and brought her many a plate of dainties. You must not think hard, miss, if my ways and speech seem rough, for I am sworn to do my duty like a man."

"I shall always love you, good jailer, for helping my mother, and you will not believe evil of her, I am sure."

"Ah, miss, the devil is crafty indeed if he can possess the heart and mind of so grand a lady, and so sweet a child, but there be those who think it true. Sleep if you can, lass, and good-night; I will look in upon you when I may."

Again the night came and went, but no tidings reached the prisoners from Captain Hepworth.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOODY HERRICK'S RESOLVE.

CAPTAIN HEPWORTH neither slumbered nor slept; all day he went from one to another trying in vain to soften hard hearts, and at night planned methods of escape for his dear ones. Many who witnessed his grief and saw his haggard face were moved to pity, but few dared express it. During these bitter hours Honest Kenny was his steadfast friend, while Samuel Jacobs forsook the farm and took employment near

Prison Lane that he might be near to furnish information, or if need be, aid and comfort to the prisoners.

It was Samuel Jacobs who first learned that Madame Hepworth was ill, and his ready wit led him to prepare and send into the prison a loaf of bread containing a letter from Captain Hepworth to his wife and child. No prisoners had ever received such consideration, and none were more closely watched. Wherever Madame Hepworth was known her wisdom and learning were regarded with superstitious awe, save by the few who knew her well.

The multitude pitied her husband in that he had a witch wife and child, while the afflicted children never ceased to cry out upon them.

"I will keep the Hill farm well in order," said Honest Kenny, "for every tide turns, and when the master comes he must find naught to distract him."

"Little will he care for the farm with his wife and lass under the sod," said Goody Herrick with a sob, "and the talk is that our dear lady was examined in her cell by the committee and the doctor yesterday, and the witches mark was found upon her."

"Curse them for idiots," exclaimed Kenny indignantly. "What can't a pack of old women say with a fool of a doctor to help them? It angers me past all speech to think of their laying hands on my mistress while she is out of her head with fever."

"Are you so sure of it?"

"I know it well. Young Jacobs is keen as the best of them, and the child got word out about it. If you were but as close-mouthed as you are kind of heart, Goody Herrick, I might tell you about the letter she wrote to her cousin."

"I can be as secret as the dead when I choose, and if you think I would raise a finger or wink a lash to the hurt of the sweetest mistress in America, then you must think ill of your neighbors, Mister Kenny, and that is not being honest or kind according to the Word."

"No offence to you, Goody," said Kenny, eagerly, "but they are as dear to me as my own eyes, and I could well fight the council, sheriffs and judges if the strength of my arm was equal to the indignation I feel. You see it's not oversafe speaking here in the master's house."

"Then hold your silence, Mister Kenny, until such time as you find a person to trust that loves our lady as well as yourself. If the truth be told, I have never slept since they were torn away from us, and"—here Goody's sobs choked her speech. When was a man of tender feelings and brave deeds ever proof against a woman's tears? Honest Kenny was surprised and troubled, and as Goody Herrick thought of her young charge her sobs increased until Kenny declared he would tell her, not only all he had heard in the village, but much also that he feared, if she would cease fretting and aid him in his efforts to clear the mistress and child they both loved.

Goody's broad face beamed upon him once more, and Kenny produced a letter written or copied upon some brown paper which he read to the listening woman.

"I am not to mention how things come to us," said Kenny, "for a servant has many ways unbecoming to a fine gentleman like our master, and young Jacobs

ca
th
wo
"t
to
her
"
she
that
"
hurt
smo
as it
back
"V
said
our y
Go
eager
DEA
you fo
which
meant,
Bible v
words
I read
knows
my fath
hers; h
much.
when th
wall, wl
will wat
women

carries a head on his shoulders which will match that of any king. These are the young lassie's own words."

"Poor dear! poor little heart," exclaimed Goody, "to think of her writing in that prison, with no bed to sleep on and her own pretty room waiting for her here."

"How many times have you made that bed since she was carried away?" asked Kenny, fearing much that Goody's tears would flow afresh.

"Every morning, Mister Kenny. It eases the hurt a little; and when I tucks in the sheets and smooths the pillows I can see her pretty head there as it used to be, and I am hoping she may soon come back."

"We must think how we can best get them back," said Kenny, "but here is the note or letter which our young lady wrote."

Goody rested her elbows on the table and looked eagerly in Kenny's face while he read:

DEAR COUSIN SAMUEL :—I found your letter and thank you for it. Before it came some one sent me a paper on which was written "Joshua x. 25." I knew not what it meant, but after it came the jailer brought my mother's Bible which my dear father had sent, and in it I read the words "Fear not nor be dismayed." I cried for joy when I read them, for my mother still suffers from fever and knows nothing of our trouble. All day long she calls for my father, and is never quiet save when my hand is in hers; her mind is greatly disturbed although she prays much. I too pray day and night. It is very dark here when the sun is gone, and the rats make much noise in the wall, which tries me somewhat, but I fear not since God will watch over us. Yesterday was a most bitter time, the women came in with a doctor to examine my dear mother's

body to see if she had the witches' mark upon her. I cried and begged them to leave her in peace, but they had neither pity nor shame, and when they found on her shoulder a small scar, which was made by a fall in her English home, they said it was the witches' mark, although I told them many times how it came there. The doctor made the women examine me also, and I think I must have fainted through fear, for when I awoke the horrible women were gone, and I was lying on the floor near my mother. I tell this that you may know how prisoners are cared for in this place. If my mother is not soon removed she must die; but this you need not say to my dear father. I pray daily to be strong for the examination, which fills me with fear. Let me hear through your messenger all that goes on outside. Our jailer tells me that many grand people have signed a paper, asking the judges to release us. We have done no harm and lived in peace; why can we not return to our homes? Please care for Datsy, Cousin Samuel, and make my dearest love to your sister and mother.

HESTER.

Before Kenny had finished reading, Goody's head was bowed upon the table, but no sound escaped her.

"You have heard the dear lassie's own words, and now what can you say to help her?" asked Kenny.

"I can say that vengeance will come to them," said Goody, angrily; "that such inhuman deeds must be punished. How dared they put their vile hands on our mistress? How dared they touch the child who is as innocent as the bird on the tree yonder? No wonder the mistress is distempered and she is crazed in speech; no wonder the lass fainted. I tell you, Kenny, that God will punish these unmerciful men and women."

Kenny sat looking at the woman in silent admiration. For several years he had been under the same

roof, and knew well her skill in cooking and her orderly habits, but he had yet to learn the power of a woman's righteous indignation, and Goody's devotion to her mistress formed a new bond of union between them.

"Tell us what we can do, Goody, and I am ready to strike though I die for it."

"You may do as you please, Mister Kenny, but this night I will go to the jail and be with my mistress. If she is a witch, I am one, and there I will stay until we are free, for the child must not suffer alone."

Kenny's eyes sparkled with pleasure. He had been anxious for days to secure some help for the sufferer, and Goody might further his plans.

"They may try you and hang you," said Kenny.

"Have they not tried better women and men, too? Did they not torture my Cousin Cary, who was a gospel woman and harmed none? I shall go to the jail and make no lie when I ask to be with my mistress that I may tell all the evil she utters, and this I would do if they bid me die to-morrow."

"Heaven will bless you for this," said Kenny, taking her hands in his and reverently kissing them. "Heaven will indeed bless you, and I shall be near at hand whatever may come."

"Tell the master why I go, and if I confess to being a witch for their sakes, tell him he will know the truth. While I am away Sarah Houlton will mind the work; and now let us hasten with all speed, for there be many little things which I would hide in such fashion that my mistress may have comfort therein."

In the darkness of night two figures stole quietly from the doorway of the Hill farm and walked rapidly away toward the jail in Prison lane.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOODY'S STRATEGY.

UPHAM, in his concise history of witchcraft at Salem village, to which we have referred before, says : " We cannot, by any extent of research or power of imagination, enter fully into the ideas of the people of that day, and it is, therefore, absolutely impossible to appreciate the awful condition of the community at the point of time to which our narrative has led us.

" At Andover, Mr. Bradstreet, the magistrate, having committed forty persons to jail, refused to arrest any more, and he was immediately cried out upon, and with his wife obliged to fly for their lives. Fear sat on every countenance, terror and distress were in all hearts, silence pervaded the streets ; all who could, quit the country. A special court of Oyer and Terminer was appointed for the witchcraft trials. This court was opened in Salem in the month of June, 1692. After the condemnation of Bridget Bishop, the first victim, the court took a recess and consulted the ministers of Boston, who earnestly recommended that the proceedings should be vigorously carried on."

All this was known to the gallant Hepworth, and most strenuous efforts were made by himself and

friends to relieve the victims of persecution in Salem jail.

The clergy, physicians and magistrates were united, while the unbelievers either fled or suffered death. On June 29 the courts would reassemble, and no time could be lost. Captain Hepworth worked unceasingly, but was steadily refused admission to the jail. The fever which held its course spared the delicate and refined woman much mental agony, but the child suffered bravely. Owing to the crowded condition of the prison and the constantly increasing numbers of accused, little care was bestowed on the victims, whose limbs were worn with galling chains and their bodies neglected. To add to the horrors of the situation July was fast approaching with its heat and the diseases peculiar to the season, but little Hester's heart never failed. Day by day she searched the Scriptures for words of comfort, nursed the unconscious mother and wrote by stealth brief notes to the nearly frantic father, whose remorse was grievous "in that he had retained them in America."

One close uncomfortable night, as the child sat fanning her mother with some feathers given her by the jailer, the door opened, and a woman's form could be dimly seen. Hester shrunk back in alarm, but soon a whispered "Miss Hester, dear young lady, I am here," roused her into new life, and she was folded once more in Goody Herrick's arms.

"Oh, Goody, how came you? Are you accused? Are we to be free? Can you help my mother? Did my father sent you?"

"There, there, darling; one question must hold for

a first answer, and I'm here safe, thanks to the good God and that noble man, Mister Kenny. Let me see to the mistress now, and we will have speech hereafter, for many long days will pass, I fear, before we go hence."

"Ah, Goody, I care not, now you have come. It all seems brighter, and dear mother will soon speak to us again. The doctor is not kind, seeing we are accused, and the jailer can only do his duty."

"Dear mother, do you see Goody? She has come to nurse you," said Hester, bending over the fragile form on its hard bed.

Madame Hepworth turned her head wearily as Goody spoke to her, calling her "Dearest mistress," "Most noble lady," and many other endearing names.

The familiar voice arrested the attention of the sufferer, but consciousness was not restored.

"Ah, the poor child, the poor dear lady, it would break her old father's heart to see her now. Give me your hand, Miss Hester, while I put into it some small matters I have brought."

"Did they not search you, Goody?"

"No, no, Miss Hester. Kenny and Samuel Jacobs have managed well, for I was wilful to come, and they dared not have your father seen in the matter. Here, lass—here is a small bottle of rose water from your mother's own store closet, and also some cordial to strengthen her. There must needs be a place for hiding them here, since I brought them in my own hair from the Hill Farm."

"Oh, Goody, how could you?"

"Well, Miss Hester, I have a full mop of my own,

both long and heavy, and you yourself have laughed at the queer big comb I would never part with, save to sleep. It has done you a good turn, dear child, for close to it I put the bottles, and drew over it the hair it pleased God to give me, and there's many another thing hid in my 'kerchief and petticoat, not to mention these shoes. If it were but light now, dear heart, you would see such shoes as Goody Herrick never wore before, and the lining is most uncommon."

"You dear, kind Goody, you have thought of everything."

"There's many a thought of thing left behind, Miss Hester; but here is a spoon for the cordial, and I must give some to our dear lady without delay."

Goody raised the sick woman's head from her blanket, the only support Captain Hepworth had been permitted to furnish, and administered the medicine.

"There, dear, if you could keep your poor eyes shut now and hear Miss Hester sing a bit, you might sleep," said Goody, as she stroked the fevered brow.

"She does not hear me when I sing," said Hester. "I have tried it often, but her back is weary with the hard floor, and the sores made by the chains fret her. If they would take mine off I could help her, but they clank when I stir and it always makes her shudder."

"May those who put them on wear chains themselves," said Goody. "But listen, Miss Hester, you must not seem fond of me, you must seem to fear me. I have promised the sheriff to nurse your mother

and fit her for the examination. Moreover I have sworn to tell them the words you utter if aught should sound evil. Be cautious; when no one is near I am your faithful servant Goody; while other ears listen I am acting for these men to discover all I may."

"Did they make you tell falsehoods, Goody?"

"No, dear heart, I told none, for sure am I that no word of yours or our dear mistress will be evil. Still I must remain with you while our friends outside strive with the judges."

"You will not leave me again, Goody, will you? I do not fear, but the nights are long and my mother talks, talks, talks, until I grow sick, for she does not know me now."

"Listen, Miss Hester; Goody Herrick will never leave you until she is dragged away. But rest, now, little one; here, put this shawl under your head and sleep. I wore it through the long way here, hoping it might be of service to you. When morning comes and the jailer has gone his round you shall see the gifts I have for you in the folds of my garments."

The invalid passed a more comfortable night, and the jailer duly reported that Lady Hepworth's maid had done her much good and, without doubt, she would be strong enough to answer the questions of the examiners ere long. During the day Samuel Jacobs sent in the food permitted, and great was Hester's surprise when she found it nearly double in quantity.

"They must have known you were here," said Hester.

"They well knew it, my child. Young Master

Jacobs sewed the money in my skirt and hid the books in my sleeves, well knowing that I must show a clean bag and simple kerchief."

Goody looked on in silence as Hester dipped from the soup a small nut-shell and proceeded to open it.

"This is our mail-bag, Goody," she said; "here is my father's last word of love and comfort; they will not let him come to me when we need him so much."

Hester pinned the dampened paper in her bosom and waited patiently until she might read the precious words.

"Is my father much changed, Goody?"

"No more than he must be, Miss Hester; he sleeps little and his wound wears upon him, but his spirit never fails, and only last Lord's day he made a prayer which set us all to weeping, so gentle and gracious were his words."

"Does he speak of us often?"

"Ah, child, he thinks of nothing else. He is at the farm but seldom now, for he lodges near here that he may see the window where you are. I saw him but a moment, and dared not tell my errand lest he forbid me, but his eyes never left the portraits of your mother and yourself which once hung in his room."

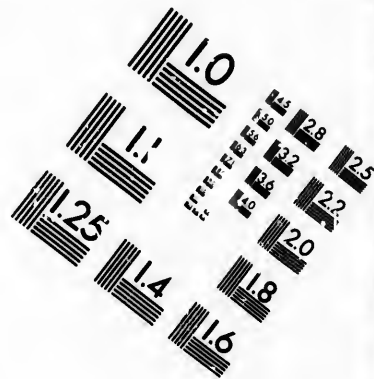
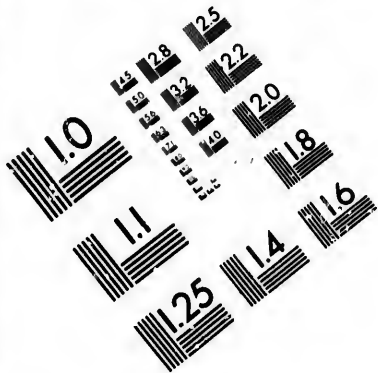
"Who cares for him, Goody; who is near him?"

"I thought he had told you how Samuel Jacobs or Kenny are always near, though the lad Jacobs is on hire with the baker near by."

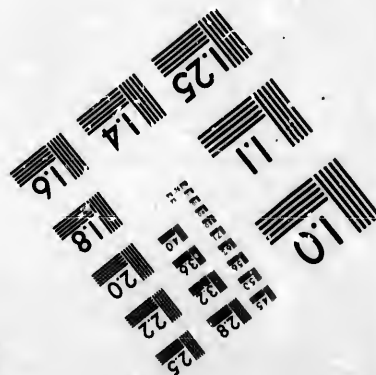
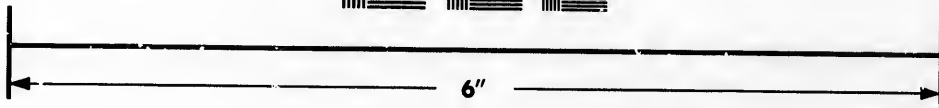
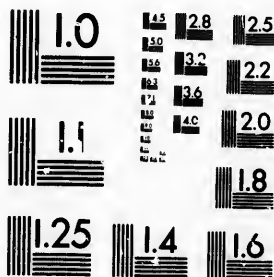
"And Cousin Samuel, what does he say?"

"His tongue is idle while his brain works, Miss Hester. Your father leans upon him as true when many are false, and the lad has the sense and strength





**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



**Photographic
Sciences
Corporation**

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

01

of a judge. Only once did he show signs of weakness."

"Why, Goody?"

"Your father gave him a little locket you had worn, and bid him keep it until you should meet again."

"Yes, and cousin Samuel?"

"Kissed it as if it were the Book itself, and went his way with it in his bosom, and tears in his eyes."

"What of his mother, Goody?"

"Ah, miss, her husband was cried out upon and is now in prison, and Samuel hath sent Ruth and his mother to friends in Newbury where they may rest in safety."

"Dear Cousin Samuel," said Hester," he told me nothing of this sorrow, Goody."

"Hush, miss, the jailer is coming."

CHAPTER XV.

THE RED BOOK.

WHILE Madame Hepworth and her young daughter were languishing in prison the work of death went on outside.

Rev. Mr. Parris had prudently removed his daughters to a place of safety while he diligently pursued the investigations. Delusion, fraud and impostures increased. Falsehoods were overlooked, and truth given the lie. Brave women met their fate unflinchingly; to confess themselves to be witches would restore them to liberty; to stand firm and declare the truth was certain death.

Knowing the uprightness of his wife's character, Captain Hepworth was convinced that neither threats nor agony would induce her to utter the monstrous confession, and, although the news of her severe illness filled him with dread, he counted it a mercy that the trial was delayed. Her sweet faith would sustain her spirit, if the flesh failed. In this case he felt that delay was most precious, and little by little the friends of the accused gained ground.

Letters were written from the prisons to the judges; honest men and women dared to sign depositions concerning the worthiness of the accused, and the petitions of Rebecca Nourse and others still tell a sad story of that fatal summer.

"Will they examine us while my mother is so ill, Goody?" asked Hester after a wretched night.

"There's no knowing, miss; if so good a Christian woman as Rebecca Nourse must suffer, and she in years, too, none may escape."

"How long have we been here now, Goody?"

"More weeks than I care to count, Miss Hester; but your mother is coming to her mind a little now, and if the ministers will keep aloof until she is able to speak, and not weary her with their words, we may be heard before the jury ere long."

"I do not like Mr. Parris, Goody; his eyes make me shake, and when he was last here he said he would not pray with me because I was a witch."

"And Cotton Mather is like minded. How did you speak with him, Miss Hester?"

"I told him God was in heaven, and He could know that I was innocent, and to Him I prayed daily,

whereupon he said: 'The devil's teachings have made you old for your years.' I know nothing of the devil, Goody, and when they asked me if I had a red book I told them that my mother had a beautiful one, which my grandfather had sent her from London."

"Ah, Miss Hester, the innocence of your heart may lead to evil; do you not know the talk of Abigail Williams and others about the books?"

"Was it not the Bible, Goody?"

"No, no, lass; they were brought by the devil, and in them are many lines written, and at the end of every line a seal."

"And were they red books, Goody?"

"Yes, lass, as red as blood, they say, and full of evil."

"I know naught of such books, Goody, and so I will say when they question me: but I tremble much at the thought when all the people look upon me. My father says God will sustain me if they call me to go alone. Shall I see my father, Goody?"

"None can tell, Miss Hester, for all is wild and strange. Ann Foster hath made a confession, which many will hear. Last night, while you slept, I had speech of the jailer, who is greatly distressed in mind. He said much concerning the witches' meeting, to which they did go on sticks, and there promise to serve the devil. They were carried in the air over the tree tops, and there were in all three hundred and five witches. I should much like to hear Mr. Kenny's mind in this matter."

"I fear that Ann Foster has a distempered brain, as my father calls it."

"Say nothing of your father, Miss Hester, if they call on you to speak, lest you draw him into the prison and our hopes of escape be destroyed."

"You will escape, dear Goody, for you are not accused."

"You little know the evil of the times, my young mistress, for no sooner did I come hither than Ann Putnam cried out upon me and Mercy Lewis did likewise."

"And will you be tried also?"

"I know not; but such trial as is given me I must endure, being thankful to be near my dear mistress in her sore need."

"Why did the jailer put heavier chains upon me, Goody?"

"Lest, being a witch, you might fly away or distress the children; one of the afflicted said you sat on her breast all night."

"How could I when I was sleeping on this floor or listening to my dear mother's moans?"

"The children make no hardship of coming at the thing they wish to say."

"I have never harmed them."

"True, young mistress; but their word is taken, and none will believe you."

"My parents know that I speak the truth."

"Neither your father nor mother can defend us," said Goody. "We must stand firm and fear not, though we die."

"I fear not to die, Goody, here or in my home; but to die in that dreadful way, to be mocked by the crowd, to be called a witch, and never never again

to see the dear home and my father. Goody, it is horrible to die so. Can we not go free? Will not my father or the Governor help us? Can Cousin Samuel do nothing? Must my dear dear mother stay here and suffer without me? God must be very angry when we suffer so much. Where are the friends my father loved? Where are the men he has protected in trouble, and the people who crowded about him when he fought the Indians?"

"You ask more questions than my ignorance can meet, Miss Hester; but this I have seen, that it is a sin to befriend the accused, and a crime even to offer them aid or comfort; therefore I say we must stand in the strength of the Most High, and live or die as He wills. Your mother is restless again. Sing to her once more while I bathe her hands with the water we saved from dinner. It is hard, indeed, when a lady of her quality is reduced to such straits."

Hester drew near while Goody put the mother's weary head into her lap.

"They tell me that new chains are being made, Miss Hester, and the delay is for our pleasure. When these old feet are in fetters, it will be hard to care for my dear mistress and move her poor worn body."

"Do you think she hears us to-day; she is so silent now, and no longer moves about her head and hands in that restless way?"

"Ah, dear heart; the strength has gone with the fever, and there is neither bite nor sup fit for her. I Mr. Kenny or young Jacobs could get us a bottle of wine from your father's cellar it would give her new life. She seems content when you sing, lass, and the

ears are often open to hearing when the tongue is past speech."

Hester caressed the dear face and began to sing in a low tone the hymn her mother had taught her during a severe illness :

When dangers, woes, or death are nigh,
Past mercies teach me where to fly ;
Thine arm, Almighty God, can aid,
When sickness grieves or pains invade.

The last note still resounded through the gloomy cell when the door opened, and the sheriff, in all the pomp and glory of his office, stood before them.

"Hester Hepworth, you are called," said the jailer. "Come forth and answer to the charges."

With reverent, trembling hands the girl once more placed her mother's head on the blanket which had so long been her bed, and rose slowly, while Goody Herrick whispered, "Fear not, God will hear your prayer."

"Make all speed," said the jailer, gruffly, as the girl's chains dragged slowly on the bare floor. "The court waits, and you witches are wont to move faster on your sticks."

CHAPTER XVI.

HESTER BEFORE THE COURT.

IT was midsummer, and the once beautiful farms of Salem and vicinity were now desolate and neglected. Many of the owners were in prison charged with the

crime of witchcraft, others had fled "over the seas," and others still were vainly endeavoring to aid their friends and relatives.

Captain Hepworth was not idle. He knew that the blow struck at his accomplished and much beloved wife caused many to waver. He had listened with silent indignation to the insults offered the accused when called for examination. He was in the meeting-house when that excellent woman and devout Christian, Rebecca Nourse, was excommunicated and delivered over to Satan. He had witnessed the unfeeling handling of her feeble frame, and sick with dread and horror had seen her ascend the rocky path to the place of execution. She went to the gallows protesting her innocence and praying for her tormentors. Would not his beloved wife do the same if spared to undergo such horrors? Must he permit it and still live? Could nothing stay the wrath and madness of the rulers?

Even George Burrough, the faithful, true-hearted, guileless pastor, was among the accused, and subjected to most degrading insults. His marvellous strength was attributed to dealings with Satan, and his character blackened by malicious slanders. Surely none could hope to escape.

In this time of trial Captain Hepworth received several secret letters, showing him that friends were strong, though few in numbers.

Joseph Putnam, forevermore to be honored, denounced the proceedings of the council, and boldly took his life in his hands against relatives and rulers.

A few—so few that their power was not felt openly—stood courageously and fearlessly for the truth.

When a messenger reached Captain Hepworth saying his child had been called for examination, he hurried to the court room.

Crowds were already assembled, and, as the pale delicate girl was brought in, silence prevailed. This subdued feeling did not suit the purpose of the afflicted children, who immediately cried out, causing Hester to look that way, whereupon their distress increased, and such was the confusion that the afflicted were ordered to be removed.

Captain Hepworth requested permission to support his child, who, weak from long confinement and improper diet, was seen to stagger as if about to faint, but the court denied him his request.

"If she be strong enough to afflict these, she may stand alone," said the judge.

Her father drew nearer that she might feel sustained by his presence, but the child was commanded to look neither to right nor left, lest her evil eye might afflict some, and her slender arms were extended by order of the court.

"Hester Hepworth, you understand whereof you are charged, viz., to be guilty of sundry acts of witchcraft. What say you to it? Speak the truth as you will answer it before God another day."

Hester trembled visibly, but could not speak.

"Speak the truth, girl," demanded the judge in a loud tone.

The girl raised her eyes with an appealing look, and almost whispered, "I am innocent;" then, like a pure lily broken on its stem, she fell fainting to the floor.

Her father rushed forward to her rescue and was rudely pushed aside, while Honest Kenny covered the captain's eyes, that he might not see the rude handling of that precious form.

One heart in the assembly beat wildly; one hand grasped hers as she fell, and then, as the pompous officers bore her away, he left the building and hurried to the river's brink.

He did not seek death; his was no coward's heart; but he must be free to think, to act, if need be.

Hester's pale, patient face was before him; it danced on the water, it mocked him in the sunlight and forbade him to close his eyes.

"'I am innocent,' she said. God knows she is; innocent as His stars, pure as His truth. Hester, Hester, poor little cousin, I wish I could die for you. Why did the captain feel so secure? Why did he not send her away? Why must we see her die and make no sign?"

For hours the youth sat there unmolested, until the summer sun went down and the stars came out.

Something came to him which renewed his courage, some plan which fed his hopefulness.

"I will try," said he, rising. "Oh, God, if you still hear prayer, if you know the misery upon us, help us now," he said, as he hurried away.

Well was it that he could not see within the dungeon. Well for his peace of mind that thick walls obscured his vision.

Captain Hepworth left the court room with Kenny, who hurried him to his lodgings near the jail.

"Do not despair of the lass, my dear master, for

fainting is a trick of maids, and it spared her further questioning."

"But her thin, haggard face, her sorrowful eyes, her weak helpless form. My darling, my darling, you are doomed for ever. Surely a just God will punish such iniquity."

"True, He will, captain, for generations to come, but now we must bestir ourselves to get such things as they may need. If Goody be not taken from them the lass will not suffer."

"Ah, Kenny, she has suffered ; she does suffer. Her face is old with care and grieving, her dear eyes sad and dull. She is dying, Kenny, and they are her murderers."

"Hush, good captain. Thoughts are secret weapons. Now and there be folk who are ever listening. Bestir yourself to write some word of cheer which young Jacobs will contrive to send them. Do you not remember the charge of Miss Hester in the letter she last sent, that you must not grieve over much for it would weaken you, and the whole strength must be kept for better need ?"

"Yes, yes, Kenny, but such speech from one of her years betrays the sudden age which has come to her. I was strong until I saw her face ; hopeful until I heard her voice. Why was I mad enough to keep them here ? But for my selfish love my precious ones would now be over the sea."

"Write your word, good captain, and let it be brief, while I find your young kinsman, who is only less wounded than yourself, but he carries a brave heart in his bosom."

"Did he see my child?"

"He was near her and caught her as she fell. I saw him clasp her hand a moment, and, if I mistake not, the lad has found means of his own for further converse with them. Be of good cheer; so grand a soldier must bear to see his dearest friends stricken down, and my own heart is neither light nor joyous while my dear mistress and the lass are in peril."

"Peril; yes, Kenny, that is the word, deadly peril; death would be welcome if my wife and child were free; but find young Jacobs and deny me to all visitors, save those you trust."

"I have searched for your kinsman in vain, captain," said Kenny, after a brief absence. "The baker tells me that he asked liberty to look after matters at the farm, and he is doubtless traveling thither; but it is more than strange for him to leave us without a word."

"The boy has need of rest, Kenny, and I am sure his cause for leaving will yet appear. When he comes send him to me, for I find great comfort in his presence. It speaks ill for humanity that yourself and the lad are so faithful to me in this sorrow, while hundreds of friends are not heard of."

"It speaks well, good captain, for two at least, and many a man would rejoice to see you and your household at ease once more who would not dare speak boldly, knowing the danger they would be in. Here is a letter I had but now from Madame Willard in Boston, in which she bids me remember the family I served in England, and for their sakes to be true and faithful to you in your distress."

"Good kinswoman. She urged my remaining there for a time; but I am torn with restlessness, and must be near the scene of action."

"Here is a postscript which may please you, sir. The lady writes: 'I charge you, good Kenny, to see the lad Jacobs, who is so manly he is less lad than his years, and bid him come to me for the time until these troubles are better understood. With his mother now absent and his father committed, he must needs be worn with care, and I beseech you to remind him that he is our kinsman, and therefore we claim the honor of his charge until such time as he may see fit to leave us.'"

"Good Madame Willard," exclaimed the captain; "she is quite right, and I will speak to our cousin at once; no selfish thought shall keep him by my side to incur danger. When he returns, Kenny, send him to me, and we will urge him to Boston as quietly as may be. What of his father, Kenny; do you hear more?"

"Only that he will surely be sentenced, and no better man or honester lives in the colonies."

"Can we do nothing for him, Kenny?"

"To do more would endanger others' lives, sir."

"What tidings did Samuel bring us from the jail this morning, Kenny; the examination has made me forgetful?"

"Your wife was sleeping since we got the wine to them, and Goody's irons were not yet on."

"Yes, I remember now; it is a long time s'nce morning, Kenny; a long, weary time, and the chains are still on my wife and child. Chained, helpless,

insulted, handled in the most unfeeling manner, and subject to judicial oppression, could human cruelty add more?"

"Will you write the note now, sir?"

"What can I write, Kenny? Shall I bid them hope when others are condemned? Shall I tell them false words and despise myself? Shall I seem courageous when my heart fails, and able to help them when cruel hands thrust me away and would not let me embrace my child?"

"Write something, sir, and briefly, for by special permission the soup goes in from here in an hour and the message must be concealed."

Thus urged, the captain seized a pen and wrote:

MY DARLINGS,—While God reigns we will hope; while I live I will love and labor for you. T. H.

An hour later Goody Herrick opened the message and delivered it to her young mistress.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SECRET MESSAGE.

WHEN Hester was carried back to her cell unconscious, Goody Herrick received her with well simulated anger.

"Well, well," she said, "we are beginning to find out now how matters may be; I feared as much, and your honors can leave her with me. A strange case might disturb her if she was moved to talk, and it's a poor day that does not give us something new to ponder upon, your honors."

"How is your fine witch lady?" asked one of the men, gruffly.

"She hath more knowledge of things since morning, and if she could have the food she is best used to I dare say she would soon speak to your honors for herself. It is plain that her testimony would help you in your worriment, if you have patience and wisdom to wait for it."

"All right, woman; pay good heed to her words."

"That I will, your honors."

No sooner had the door closed than the woman's whole manner changed. Taking the child in her arms she hugged and kissed her frantically until the large eyes slowly opened.

"Oh, my sweet mistress, my dear lamb! they will kill you with their cruel eyes and evil words. Here, precious, take this sup of wine, it will warm you and give you courage. That is right; a little more—just a little. Dear heart, it is so cold and still! Put its head on old Goody's breast and forget it, my lamb—forget it all and we will ask heaven to forgive them. How they dragged her in and threw her on the hard floor! How they kicked her pretty feet and rattled the cruel chain! There, deary, there; if you might sleep forever it would not matter, seeing the world you must come back to. She opens her eyes, poor thing! It is only Goody, dear lamb; they are all gone now, every one, and the mother is better. Can she speak now? Does she feel all right, sweet one?"

"Goody?"

"Yes, miss, I am holding you; it was a faint like, and you are better.

"Where is my father? I saw him."

"Thank God for that, my lamb."

"He looked so ill, and they would not let me speak to him."

Goody was silent.

"Goody?"

"My dear mistress."

"How came I here? Those girls were screaming, then all was still, and I tried to speak, but could not."

"What did you try to say, dear?"

"I am innocent! That was all; but the words did not come farther than my lips. I saw the judges, the sheriff, the cruel faces, and then it was dark, and Samuel whispered. I am sure it was Samuel."

"Whispered what, my lamb?"

"Heip is coming."

"Only those three words, miss?"

"Yes, Goody. Was Cousin Samuel in the court room?"

"Dear heart, I could not tell you; I was here on my knees beside your mother, praying for your better wisdom, and then they brought you in, pale and still."

"What is it in my sleeve, Goody, which pricks me like a pin?"

"Oh, heaven spare us! Dear Mistress Hester, must you go that way, too, and be like all the rest?"

"I am like my parents, I know, dear Goody; but raise my head; why am I so weak, and why do my fingers tremble?"

"You were faint but now; take one more drop of the wine and rest."

"We must keep the wine for my mother, Goody."

"But more may come, Miss Hester; see here is enough."

The girl swallowed it obediently, and again lay quietly in the woman's arms.

"How beautiful you are, Miss Hester," said Goody, as faint bits of color crept into the girl's cheeks; "it is an evil heart that can find aught but goodness in you."

"And I used to trouble you, Goody, in the old days. I am sorry now. Do you know how often Datsy walked on your clean linen and carried away your shoes? I laughed then, Goody, but I shall never laugh again; it seems such a long, long time ago, and you will forgive me, will you not?"

"Oh, Miss Hester, there is nothing to forgive; you was the brightness of your beautiful home, and we were proud of you. Often have I said on a Lord's day, when we were in the meeting house, that no maid was as fair as our young lady, and none so sweet."

"You were always kind to me, Goody, even when I took your seed-cakes for my birds, and fed Datsy with your nice fruit puddings. Goody?"

"Yes, miss."

"If I die you will go back to Hill farm and stay there with my father and mother, will you not?"

"But you must not die, Miss Hester. Your father could not live without you, and your mother's heart would break. You are to live and comfort them when they are old."

"Dear Goody, you do not know how cruel they are

even to me. Men look on me with scorn, and women hate me, calling me a vile witch. In all the crowded houses I saw only hard, stern faces, and when I turned to my father they bade me look away. They will hang me, Goody; I know it now. Until I saw them I thought they would spare me, being so young and my father so much loved; but the people are blind; they neither see goodness nor truth."

Goody's tears fell on the girl's face.

"Oh, Miss Hester, say no more lest I forget to act my part, and they take me from you—surely heaven will be merciful."

"I must tell you many things, dear Goody, for we know not how soon we part. They will not hurt you, I am sure; you do not trouble them, and they will make you free ere long. Will you promise to remember all I say?"

"I promise, dear lamb."

"When I am gone you will care for them first, my father and mother, and you will tell them how I loved them, and was not afraid to die. You will ask them to bury me in the little grove where we used to sit—Goody, are you listening?"

"With ears and soul, Miss Hester."

"Give my books and clothing to Cousin Ruth, and to Samuel—" she paused.

"Your young kinsman, Samuel Jacobs, Miss Hester?"

"Yes, Goody; tell him I loved him always, and always will; tell him he was like a brother in my heart; and ask him to be patient for my sake, and noble for his own. Can you remember, Goody?"

"The words are like fire in my ears, Miss Hester; but you will not die. It will be long yet ere you can be tried, and some hand will appear to save you. Tell me, dear lamb, why you spoke of something pricking your arm but now?"

"I feel it yet, Goody; here, just here, within my sleeve. Do you not find it?"

Goody raised the slender arm tenderly and shook it. Something fell upon the floor near them.

"It is a word of some sort, Miss Hester, and we must get the feeble light upon it."

Hester crept softly from the sheltering arms and held it to the light. It was indeed a note, and in the handwriting of Samuel Jacobs. In the moment when she felt he had concealed it in her sleeve while all about was confusion.

"Hath the lad more tidings, Miss Hester?"

"He says: '*Be not alarmed. Receive all visitors kindly and watch their hands.*' What can he mean, Goody?"

"More than appeareth, it would seem. The lad is quick to think and swift in action: we may safely trust him."

"Can my father be coming to us?"

"I know not, Miss Hester, but there can be no evil to us where your kinsman is. Only the day before I came hither Mr. Kenny told me of his brave doing, and more than one in the village has learned to fear the strength of his arm."

"My father said that Cousin Samuel would yet appear as a great man, since he is true and fearless as well as kind, and my mother makes much of him and

has sought Cousin Deliverance to spare him to us that he may study with my father, since he reads much and can get few things for study at the farm."

"Talk no more now, miss, for you are over-weary, and my mistress may call for you as she comes to herself. Take my shawl for your pillow, lassie, and dream while you can."

"Do you think they will take me away from my mother and you, Goody?"

"Not while my tongue serves me and my will holds, for it is better here with you in darkness and want than outside without you at the Hill farm. Rest, lassie, rest!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MADAME WILLARD MAKES A PROPOSAL.

Two days and nights passed before Samuel Jacobs returned to the bakery in Prison lane and reported to his master, bearing certain gifts in his hands calculated to appease any anger which might have been stirred by his long absence.

"How are matters at Endicott river?" asked the baker as Samuel rubbed his tired horse.

"Bad enough to bring ruin on us all, sir; the crops are neglected, the cattle have strayed and my poor father might well be dazed could he see matters as they now stand."

"They tell me your father will not confess, although he is urged and threatened," said the baker.

"Why should he confess to a lie? He knows his own heart and it is pure; he wronged no man or woman."

"Sarah Churchill saith otherwise, but that is neither here nor there, lad. I need your quick hands in the shops, for the crowd will gather to-morrow, when more examinations are to be had, and plenty of bread must be ready for their eating."

"Are you sure that to-morrow will be the day, sir?"

"Only sure that more are condemned, and will be executed soon, and a messenger hath just said that Mr. Parris and others were eager to push matters speedily."

Samuel shook his head.

"I must see Captain Hepworth," said he, "and then I will make good all the hours of my absence,"

"If I mistake not, the captain has friends with him; some gentlemen from Boston were going to him a short while since, and Mr. Kenny is at the prison. You have quick wit, Master Jacobs, and might contrive some way of getting food convenient to such others as are able to pay us for it. The sheriff is not easily reached now, and if some one would speak a word or two in his ear, your friends in prison would be none the worse and our pockets somewhat fuller for the business."

Samuel's first impulse was to retort that money made out of others' misery would bring little peace, but the youth had learned the wisdom of silence and was already planning new methods of assistance, so he answered pleasantly:

"True, friend, and in these dull days of business he who thrives must needs help all. I have little power myself, with my father in prison and my kinsman in deep sorrow, but I will counsel with a friend, and if there be a chance to further your work it shall be done."

"Spoken well, my lad, spoken well; and since you can go to the prison on my errands, there will none be the wiser if a loaf more or less should slip into the cell where that fine lady and her child are held. How they stared when the little maid was brought in, and how frightened she was. My wife's sister was faint when she saw her, and thought of her own dead girl the age of this one; you see she hath an uncommon face, neither like father nor mother, and yet like both. Did you not see her, lad?"

"I saw her, sir?"

"Did you heed the long, flowing hair, which hung in wavelets below her knees, and her large, full eyes, which made me think of a young fawn's?"

"I minded all, sir."

"Well, well, it was a great sight, Master Samuel. The great men of the court, the sheriff and his deputy, so grand and fine, the crowd of people about, the tortures of the afflicted children, and in the midst that tall, slender figure, over-tall for her years, standing alone, so young and beautiful; oh, it was a great sight, and many were sad like my wife and her sister, until Mercy Lewis and the rest cried out that she was tormenting them. Yes, it was a great showing of faces, and one man said he should see that face of the girl's before him until his dying day."

Samuel was still silent, and the garrulous old man went on :

"I did think they might have let her father stand by her, seeing she is so young, but when he would do so they drove him back, and being close to him I saw great drops like rain fall down his cheeks, and his lips were white as the child's face. It's a sad time, lad, when the devil takes possession of a rich man's only child, and he must see her scorned in open day."

"If you will give me my duty, sir, I will do it at once," said Samuel, rising from his seat on the door stone.

"Yes, yes, my lad. Well, you are eager to be doing; I was myself at your age. Sandy has the oven ready now, and we will be at the loaves, after which you may find by hints or questions how we shall brew and bake for the days to come. If they hang the little lassie great crowds will be sure to come, for my cousin in Newbury tells me that the people are stirred by it far and near, and an Andover parson, who is free to speak, and as brave as our noble Captain Hepworth, hath written a letter, which many have signed, against persons of good fame and upright lives being charged by children who are distempered."

"The two ministers of Andover are good men," said Samuel.

"There is some who dare, but more are fearful. I hear it said that Joseph Putnam keeps a horse saddled night and day that he may fly if the magistrates dare attack him. From first to last he has stoutly maintained the innocence of the accused, and hath openly said that a sound horse-whipping would stop the proceedings."

"Better be good man Putnam fleeing for his life and honest than some I wot of stirring up strife while they pray," said a deep voice, and on looking up from his work Samuel saw his good friend Kenny.

"The captain wishes to see you, lad, when you can be spared," said Kenny.

"I will be there presently, when the loaves are in and the doors shut. Is he alone?"

"Scarce five minutes alone since the child was carried back to her cell, and it is better so, for he never ceases to reproach himself."

"No one has less cause."

"If he had sent them to England they would now be safe, he says; but Mr. Green tells him that no man can be always wise. The captain is much worn, and unless some measures can be taken for the further comfort of his sick wife I fear he will be overcome, for his wound is painful, and food is distasteful to him."

At last the crisp loaves were deposited on the table ready for delivery, and Samuel was free for a time.

Hurriedly brushing his clothes and smoothing his hair, he walked quickly into the lane and upstairs to the captain's lodgings. Some one was within, and the boy knocked softly, but no response came. He knocked once more, and this time the door opened slowly, revealing two gentlemen and a lady dressed in deep mourning.

"This is my young kinsman, Samuel Jacobs," said the captain; "he is in deep sorrow himself, but never fails me in mine."

The lady arose and took the young man's hand.

"You do not know me, Cousin Samuel, although it is but a short time since you left my house. This is my cousin, Rev. Samuel Willard, and we are here to give you such help as we may. Did you receive my message, sent to good man Kenny?"

"I did, dear lady, and thank you for it; but my duty is here now, and I care nothing for my own comfort until some are relieved from their sore distress."

"You may better help your friends at a safer distance, my lad," said the clergyman; "the home my cousin offers will be your best refuge until such time as matters change hereabouts."

"Madame Willard will pardon me if I seem stubborn, but I could neither sleep nor eat elsewhere while my father is condemned to die and my dear kinsfolk suffering in prison. I have but now a plan for getting better food to them, and, if we fail not, some few comforts for Madame Hepworth."

Captain Hepworth drew the youth toward him and rested his hand on his shoulder.

"I could not urge the lad, good friends, neither will I plead with him to stay. He can do more than any of us in this sad business, for his employment was taken for that purpose, and his wit serves me often when mine fails. I can ill spare him from my side, and yet no word of mine shall hold him, for he is as dear to me as a son."

The young man clasped the hand of his relative, and said, with much feeling:

"You see I must remain here; I am like to be fatherless ere long, and he who needs me most regards me as a father."

"And he may well be proud of you, sir," said the clergyman, with glowing eyes; "if the evil of our time hath wrought out bad passions it hath also developed most noble traits; I would that you were my kinsman as well."

Samuel's sterling good sense kept him all unspoiled, while the hardness of his lot and the care suddenly thrust upon him rendered him mature for his years. His mother's health was extremely delicate since her husband's imprisonment, and Ruth required all her care. Anxiety for them added to the youth's burdens, for letters were expensive and mails irregular.

Madame Willard and her daughters regarded the boy as a hero, and great was their disappointment when he refused to join them in Boston and thereby escape annoyance and trouble.

"I honor the lad more than I can tell," said Madame Willard to the clergyman, "and I would that his mother and sister had come to us since he might see them."

"It is better for the good woman's peace of mind that she is far from these trying scenes, for I am told that she would speak fearlessly even to her cost, and the girl has been prostrated by much talk concerning witches and evil-doers."

"Ruth is frail at the best," said Madame Willard, "for our Cousin Deliverance hath often written of it, and I have counselled her to send her away to a less trying climate."

While Madame Willard and her friends were discoursing with the captain, Samuel crept away unobserved, for night was coming, when once more the

fires glowed in the oven and preparations must be made for the morrow. But the youth had other business on hand, as we shall see.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOODY MORALIZES.

“My child!”

It was a feeble voice which uttered the words in that dreary, unwholesome prison, but Hester heard them.

“Mother, dear mother,” she said, as she groped about in the darkness for the mother’s hand.

“I am very ill, my darling.”

“You have been, mother, dear. You are better now.”

“Are we alone, Hester?”

“Goody is with us, mother. She is sleeping now. Poor Goody followed us here and she has nursed you. Shall I call her. She is heavy with sleep, for it has been many nights since she left you.”

“Let her rest, my child; I must talk with you. Have you any tidings from your father?”

“He is near us, mother, and is hopeful.”

“Tell him nothing of our sufferings, my child, lest it add to his. How long have I been ill?”

“Some weeks, mother, I know not quite how long; it seems years to me, but Goody knows; she has marks on the wall for the days and hours.”

“I cannot move, dear child, and the pain and

burning in my back is great, but it cheers me to hear your voice and touch your lips once more. Have they been very cruel to you, my Hester?"

"Not over kind, mother, but it matters not while you suffer."

"Could your father visit us?"

"No, mother; but I saw him once when they called me before the examiners, only a moment."

"How was he, did he look ill, was he much worn? Tell me, my darling?"

"He looked older and graver, dear mother, but it could not be otherwise."

"My poor husband, my dear one, what bitterness is his."

"He is free, dear mother, while you are a prisoner, loaded with chains, sick, sore and neglected."

"But I know his heart, dear child; he will take blame to himself that he kept us here, for no one is more tender, none more loving or noble."

"These are his words, mother, written on the evening after I saw him 'My darlings, while God reigns we will hope; while I live I will love and labor for you.' Is it not like him, dear mother?"

"It is himself, my child; only his wife can know the sweetness and strength of his character."

"Kenny is with him, and Samuel; they never leave him. Cousin Samuel sends us food and drink each day, with hidden messages."

"Heaven bless them; Hester, is Samuel's father still living?"

"He lives, and is condemned!"

"And his mother?"

"With Ruth, at Newbury."

"Did my letter reach the wife of Sir William Phips?"

"It did so, mother, and she hath sent many loving messages to you, her 'dear friend,' but they will not allow her to send such gifts as she desires. Our Cousin Willard has been most kind also, and hath sent word that she must be present when we are again questioned. She cheers my father, I doubt not. Is she very beautiful, dear mother?"

"No woman in Boston hath a more charming presence. She is tall and fair, with a gentle countenance, and most winning manners."

"I have not seen her for a long time, mother; but do not talk more, your voice is so feeble and your hand trembles; you are very weak, dear mother."

"So it pleases heaven to make me; have we water here?"

"Both wine and water. When you are stronger I shall make you smile with stories of our secret larder. Cousin Samuel conceals many things in one, and the jailer wonders much that we seem loath to eat when he is by."

"Is the jailer kind to you?"

"He fears to be, since I am called that hated thing—a witch—and yet his eyes sometimes belie his speech. It is a grievous thing to see the hate and scorn in people's faces, mother."

"Our Saviour knew it well, my child, and yet He bore it meekly."

"So I tried to think when that cruel man spoke to me in such savage fashion. I used to think the

world was very beautiful and all people were good, but now it seems another place, and I look in vain for kind faces."

"Ah, my precious one, sorrow is your portion far too early, and I mourn that the fever has kept me from you when you needed my love and care. Have I talked much aloud?"

"At times, dear mother; but you prayed often, and I have cried to hear you lest you might die."

"I feared that I might leave you forever, and your sweet voice is pleasant to my ears; when day is here I shall look in your face once more."

"Goody hears you, mother; she is waking."

"Did you call me, mistress?" asked the woman as she crept closer to the invalid. "I was weighed down with sleep and thought I heard your voice."

"Mother is better and knows me, Goody; she is nearly well now, and we have been talking."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Goody. "But you must not talk, dear mistress, being yet weak. When morning comes I will give you such care as we may in this vile place, and the child will have much to tell you."

"She has already told me how brave and faithful you are, Goody."

"I have neither sores nor chains, dear lady."

"But you have given up all for us, and I fear we can never repay such love."

"The sound of your voice cancels any debt of your owing, my mistress, and many a bitter hour have I thought that I might have spared you this by telling more of the speech had about you. I feared to grieve you then, and now it is too late,"

"Blame no one, Goody, least of all yourself; when all is over my friends will care for you, and your great love for us comforts my sore heart."

"You will yourself care for me, mistress, and when we are once more safe at the Hill farm we will speak lightly of our present hardships. How grand it will be!"

"You are very hopeful, Goody."

"Because hope fattens and fear kills."

"You will care for my daughter, Goody, will you not, and so far as may be shield her from harm?"

"Ah, mistress, you need scarce ask it, since I am here; but you will mind her yourself ere long, and Miss Hester will soon be a fine young lady, with lovers wanting to marry her and merry-makings for all of us."

"I shall never marry, Goody," said the girl, solemnly; "never, even if they spare my life and I grow to be the fine young lady you speak of."

"Plenty of girls have said the same in years past, Miss Hester, and many more will; but the time comes for them, and I shall be happy in making your wedding cake. Let me see, it was sixty pounds that I made last for that sweet friend of yours in Boston; but yours shall be finer and richer, weighted with fruit, and worth the eating of your grand English kin."

Hester could not see the grey eyes which were full of tears as Goody tried to cheer her mistress, grey eyes so true and strong which might never see the happy hours she pictured.

Faithful Goody, hiding in her heart the evil she

had cause to dread, as she talked lightly of the future. While the drops stood on her lashes, her voice never faltered. Was she not serving the dearest mistress in the world, and had not Kenny sent her word that her brave soul within the prison cheered those without? So through the midnight hours she fondled the sick woman, and gave both mother and child words of hope and cheer, which concealed her own anxiety.

"How much better, dear mother, is Goody? As soon as the daylight comes I must write to my father and Samuel."

Goody stifled a sigh as she made answer: "Yes, dear lamb; say the boldest word you can, for you need it, and by your own mother's teachings even a dungeon hath some ray of light if the soul be free."

"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," said the sick woman softly.

"To stand fast, mistress; yes, that is the test. One may be an old woman with great sorrows behind and deep troubles before, but the crown will be waiting for those who stand."

"I never knew how brave you were, dear Goody, until now," said Madame Hepworth, freely.

"And I have doubts of it, mistress, but pleasure can never bring people close like sorrow, and once together in tribulation should mean forever together in heart. I'm thinking fewer court speeches would be spoken and fewer quarrels made if only the folk could but look into hearts and pay less heed to words, for we are all backward to show the good in us until we are bound in chains and made to speak. Ah, mistress dear, when I have heard fine ladies say cruel

things of each other I have said could they see one of them dead now their hearts would ache, but folks, even knowledgable great folks, are slow to learn until trouble comes home to them."

"You have seen great trouble, Goody, I am sure."

"Great troubles and small, dear lady."

"Will you tell us about it, Goody?" asked Hester.

"If a plain serving-woman's story can please you, Miss Hester, I will tell it, but not now, for your mother must sleep."

CHAPTER XX.

THE KEEPER'S GUEST.

JULY wore away and still Madame Hepworth and her child were imprisoned.

Five more had suffered on Witch Hill, and many condemned remained to be executed.

From Prison lane through the public streets the cart with its victims toiled over the rough way. Large as it was it could not hold all the doomed, and many waited prayerfully for their release.

Captain Hepworth grew desperate with resolve as he witnessed these pitiful scenes.

"Samuel," said he, one evening early in August, "I am told that several more are to be executed this month, and my beloved wife sends word that she realizes her danger, but is too ill to do more than pray for patience."

"She is indeed weak, as I hear, sir, and Madame

Willard has written a letter asking for her release until such time as she can be nursed back to strength in order to bear her trial."

"What answer was made to it?"

"By some secret ways I hear that it was refused."

"For what cause?"

"Chiefly through some who are not friendly to you, and also because the ministers say that no man's life is safe if a witch be unchained."

"I have heard much of this, and have seen in person several friends who have great influence, beside which, that most estimable lady and dear friend of my wife, the good Lady Phips, has written me a letter by her own hand, saying such monstrous persecution must be put down. She herself has besought release for my wife until such time as her health will permit her to be examined. Each hour of her imprisonment is dangerous. I hear that her cough is much increased, and her body afflicted with painful sores by reason of fever and long resting on the hard floor."

"Did you hear that the wife of Sir William was cried out upon for her defence of the prisoners?"

"I did, indeed, Samuel. I was present, and was much pleased to see how quickly the judges silenced the accusers. We must contrive means to liberate our dear ones or they will die in prison, for I am told by those who are much with the persecutors that they fear to bring them out at present lest the people rebel. The question of moment now is, how shall we proceed to deliver them?"

"You will, then, evade the law, sir?" asked Samuel, with sparkling eyes. "Hitherto you have felt that right must triumph."

"Ah, my lad; I have lived to learn that men's passions and tricks will lead them to pervert the law and distort testimony. I am quite sure that this present council is not legally brought together, and this opinion is not mine alone."

"You will not think me bold if I tell you, sir, that whatever is done for Madame Hepworth must be done quickly."

"Why, lad, have you fresh tidings? Is the disease progressing? Has she made known to you something which her kindness has withheld from me? Speak, my son; these days of anxiety are making me most impatient and fearful."

"There is no fresh cause for anxiety, sir, save the need of fresh air and bathing, which cannot be had while she is in prison; she herself fears nothing but for you and her child."

"Why do you speak with such surety? why do you speak like one having seen her?"

"I have seen her, sir."

"My wife and child, Samuel? Tell me quickly how this was done, when all avenues have been guarded and my every act and word is looked upon with suspicion."

In his eagerness to hear more, Captain Hepworth seized the youth's hands almost roughly.

"I delayed telling you, sir, until I was sure that you were ready for work which others have not feared to undertake."

"To aid in their escape? Aye, lad, I am ready indeed. The time has passed for justice, and self-defence demands decisive action. Tell me, lad, what

you have done. Brave as you are I tremble when I think of you in that wretched place."

"We must not so much as whisper this to others."

"Speak, my boy, and I will be dumb."

"Wait until the darkness is upon us and I will show you the disguise. Even your keen eyes would fail to see me in it."

"It must be strange indeed if I could miss your honest face, Samuel."

"When I left her after my cousin was returned to her cell I hastened to our farm, where I must go at times although my heart is here. There I found the thing I sought: all the dress of a traveling doctor who once stopped for some weeks at our house. He was my grandfather's friend, and had great knowledge of roots and herbs; he could also read the thoughts of sick people. My parents have often talked of him, and, although he was strange, mourned for him when he crossed the sea. Some of his belongings were with us, and when I sat by the river grieving over our cousins, suddenly the thought came to me—I will put on his garments and assume his name; if they find me out and kill me, it matters little. In the night I returned and changed my dress in the woods; then I came in about day and went to the prison, asking for the keeper, who had known good Doctor Trehorn when he was about. I was old and feeble, much bent with years, and my voice trembled. He was glad to see me, and asked me if I could remember how at one time I had cured his mother of a vile sore throat. I said my memory was not so good as of old, but I should be glad to have him tell me."

"Then," he said, "his mother was sick unto death, with her throat much swollen and past use; the doctors gave her over to die, and you were sent for. At once you gave orders to find a black cat, and, when she was found, you took her skin from her body and bound it warm upon her throat, whereupon she was speedily well."

"Ah, yes," I said; "you remember well, and also how I told the thought passing in the minds of people, especially the sick."

"I would you might do it now," said he, "for some under our care will not speak for themselves."

"I can never reach their mind unless I am much alone with them, and then I could find out their thought."

"I remember so my mother said, and you told her once where to find the cow which had strayed."

"I dare say, I dare say; if I were not pressed for time I would tarry and see some of your prisoners; but I must be in Boston without delay."

"There is one I would like much to have you see, even for a few moments. She is a fine lady, the wife of one of our most wealthy and learned men, but she lies now in great sickness within, charged as a witch, while her child is by her also charged."

"Have you not other women so charged?"

"Many of them; but her beauty and noble family make her the chief talk; she hath been very ill and is now weak from fever, but she speaks to me these three days, and will doubtless soon be called for trial."

"If I had time I would speak with her, but if it were known that I did so, many would come to me

and so press for care and cure that my affairs in Boston would suffer."

"None save ourselves need know this matter; I may take you to her myself, and if aught comes of it we will be in fine favor at the trial; if not, none will be wiser."

"But time is short, good friend, although I am tempted to please you for the sake of that good woman, your mother."

"Then come with me soon, before many are astir."

"How do I know that harm may not come to me through this thing?"

"I will shield you, good Trehorn, and make all clear to the authorities, but first I must tell you that the lady's own servant, Goody Herrick, is with her, and I dare not remove her. Can you use your art in her presence?"

"It will be more difficult, sir; but I will do my best."

"And you," asked Captain Hepworth, with almost breathless eagerness; "and you saw them?"

"As I will tell you shortly, sir."

CHAPTER XXI.

WITHIN THE WALLS.

SAMUEL'S story was interrupted by Kenny, who came to tell them that Madame Hepworth would be privately entreated with and examined in her cell on the morrow, while the child and Goody were to be brought before the court.

Captain Hepworth sprang to his feet and paced the floor in great distress, while Samuel hurried away to keep an appointment.

The sultry August day at last dawned, and eager, curious crowds again gathered about the prison or surged up and down the narrow streets. Again fair Hester stood before her accusers and could not speak.

"The Devil hath stopped her mouth," said one, and a yell of fury arose.

Calm and pale she stood before them, her large eyes unconsciously pleading for her, while Goody Herrick, now in chains, answered promptly all questions put to her.

"Has your young mistress talked with you of sorceries and witchcraft?"

"Not often."

"What hath she said?"

"That God was good and men evil."

"Hath she written strange things in strange places?"

"I know not."

"Did you ever hear her talking with familiars in the woods?"

"Only with her dogge and such pets as she loved."

"Is it true that the birds would feed from her hand?"

"Yes, even as the chickens and cattle."

Here the afflicted made a terrible outcry, and said the girl had written something in a book.

One of the examiners held a scrap of paper before Goody, and asked if she had seen it before.

"Yes, in John Colson's hands," answered Goody.

"Did the child write it?"

"I do not know; ask her yourselves."

The paper being placed before her, Hester nodded her head affirmatively, but could not speak, so great was her terror and confusion.

"She admits that she wrote it," cried one of the examiners, "and John Colson deposed that she did so on a Lord's day."

"She did! she did!" exclaimed the afflicted.

The words were then read, while a faint flush was seen on Hester's face:

The earth is still, this bright Lord's day,
While here we sit to watch and pray.
The birds pray in their songs, I know,
For heaven to them is here below.

This simple childlike thought came to her as she sat in the quiet of the meeting house where she had often heard the birds singing outside. It was the fancy of a child who buried her pet birds, and had been taught that they were soulless.

Not so did the stern counsel regard it. The afflicted made haste to cry out, "The birds are her familiars; she hath yellow birds sitting on her thumb," and then the outcry being great, Hester was sent to her cell, while Goody remained to endure severe questioning.

Captain Hepworth's anguish was intense as he heard her own truthful utterances turned against her.

"Have you never hurt these children?"

"No."

Whereupon the afflicted were immediately seized with a fit, and the magistrate in awful tones asked:

"How can you be clear, when your appearance is thus seen producing such effects before our eyes?"

Then the children went into fits all together, and halloaed and shouted greatly.

Poor Goody! Even her stout heart trembled, but she would not confess. Over against the wall she saw Honest Kenny's face full of sympathy and compassion. This comforted her, and again and again she affirmed that neither she nor her mistress knew aught of these things, and stoutly maintained that their innocence was known to the great God in heaven.

Goody was condemned and confined in a dungeon from that hour. In vain Hester looked for her coming; all in vain did the sick woman call for her.

When Hester was carried back to her cell, she was surprised to see an old man seated with her mother, who had grown weaker by reason of the excitement.

"Are you a doctor, good sir?" asked the girl eagerly. "If so, please do something for my dear mother; only yesterday she prayed with us, but now she has grown feeble, and when I was carried out could not speak to me."

The old man bent his head lower over the prostrate form, as if scanning the pale face, and answered:

"I have tried to help her; when I was here before you were sleeping and we did not waken you; now I have many charges to give you."

"I will heed them all, good sir, every one, if they will help my mother and Goody. Goody is our maid; did you see her, sir."

"I saw her and talked with her; we are old friends. If she should be given other lodgings I pray you will not grieve, lest it add to your mother's care."

"My mother was much better; why is she so feeble, now?"

"The air is close for her here, and she has been in sore distress of mind."

"None can help her but my father; he knows all her ways, and if he might come to her I am sure she would soon grow better. Could you not advise it, good doctor?"

"I have little power, dear miss; my life is endangered by coming here, but I value it lightly."

"Why should you, when you are not accused, and can go as you like in the world? If you were a prisoner like us you might well think so."

"Those I love are prisoners."

"Ah, good doctor, then I am sad for you; can nothing be done for them?"

"Only one thing, and that I fear they will not do."

"Why do they wait when you desire?"

"Dear miss, they do not know the evil forces at work as I do; they cannot see victims going to the gallows; their prison walls shut out much speaking and shut in much sorrow."

"I would tell them to listen to your words, for you are wise and kind; how can they refuse if they love you?"

"I said that I loved them, miss."

"True, it is much the same."

"Far different; my love for them might lead me to propose plans which they would not follow."

"Truly, they must, if you put your life in peril. My father would gladly do the same for me if he might."

"Is there no one else who would venture for your sake?"

"Goody has done so; poor Goody, I wonder why she does not return?"

"Have you no other friends save your father and the servant?"

"Oh, yes, kind friends, but they cannot help us, save one—he has done much."

"A brother, miss?"

"No, only a cousin; yet he is very dear to us, and my father loves him like a son."

"If he should wish you to follow his plans, as I ask these friends of mine to do, would you consent?"

"Oh, yes, but he never can; he has been most wise and wary, sir, but he is young, and my heart aches for him, as his father is condemned."

The doctor was silent for a moment as if lost in thought.

"Would you promise this cousin to remain silent if he desired it; would you go where he might direct, and trust him in all things, if he could aid you as I can aid these dear friends of mine?"

The old man's voice was strangely tender, and the girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Ah, you do not know my cousin; he is brave and manly, strong and tender; I could trust him in all things, for since I was babe he has been kind to me."

"Have you heard from him since you have been in distress; has he proved all that you say?"

"You do not know him, sir, or you would not ask; his wit and care has provided us with many comforts, his words have cheered this dear mother, and I shall never see him again, never."

Again silence fell upon them, and the sick woman seemed to sleep.

"If he is not a coward he will try to assist you in escaping, for some fine men and women have learned that flight is wisest now, until men's minds are calm."

"My cousin a coward! You speak ill, sir, of the absent, and that is strange for one so gentle; were you younger I should be angry with you, for in all the world there is none save my parents dearer to me than my brave noble cousin, Samuel Jacobs."

There was a sudden movement of the old man's hands, and Hester's were imprisoned, while a voice neither tremulous with age nor fearful, said:

"Hester, my darling cousin; do you not know me?"

CHAPTER VIII.

STRANGE TESTIMONY.

THE streets were silent once more when the keeper opened the door of the cell where Madame Hepworth lay and beckoned to the old man, who went out slowly, casting lingering glances behind.

"Do you read her mind freely, doctor?" asked the keeper when they were once more seated in his private room.

"Freely as one can when she is weak and feeble; I have gained much since the last visit, and if I can spare a day from my duties in Boston and elsewhere I may find out matters which will astonish you."

"That is well, good doctor; be private about your coming, for many are suspicious in these days, and I have need of your skill myself, having a troublesome knee, which often pains me by night."

"That I will bring a remedy for if I can spare time to return; this witchcraft business hath stirred up many complaints and disorders of the nerves; but I must not tarry, my friend; here is a coin for good luck until we meet again; it shall never be said that the old doctor forgot his friends. Good-night to you and good luck."

The keeper gazed after the old man as he hobbled away, and said meditatively:

"Ah, he is a knowing one. If my poor mother was alive how she would rejoice to see him, for he has done wonderful cures hereabouts."

Not long after, Samuel Jacobs entered the baker's shop and set to work with a will.

"Well, lad, I looked for you everywhere at the court, for, as I told you, the women folks could mind the shop, and when I did not see you I hurried home, for my wife was grumpy and cross not to see the pretty little maid once more."

"I was attending to some duty for my Cousin Hepworth, sir, as he himself must be there."

"And did you hear a word about the extra loaves?"

"Only a secret order, sir, which you may not like to undertake."

"Try me, lad, try me; my old master in England was wont to say that it matters not to us who ate the bread if we received our pence for it."

"You will in this case, sir."

"Let me hear the order."

"Twelve good loaves of bread and meat for each, with such drink as you can furnish, and I am to deliver all and pay you whatever sum you think is just."

"Bravo, lad; you are well worth your hire; even my wife, who seldom likes the same one with me, declares that you are better worth double than some we have had, and she is often at me to give you an extra hour or two."

"I thank her heartily, sir, but since this trouble with my father I am not quite myself, and whenever I have taken from your time I have repaid it."

"Yes, yes; and quite honest it is, too; but an hour here or there is not much when you can do a man's work."

"I am a man in stature, sir," said Samuel, proudly, "and therefore must do more."

"True, lad, true; only yesterday we were saying that you were as tall as the captain himself, and he is a good six feet without his shoes, and your shoulders are broad for your years; most people would think you out of your time, and there's many at twenty-one with less knowledge."

"You are very good, sir; as to age, I feel twice my own, and have almost forgotten that I ever was a boy fond of wrestling and setting snares. If these trials keep on, the boys and girls will be old men and women before they are out of frocks."

"Keep up good heart, lad ; if your father's goods and chattels are not all seized by the officers I will take you into business some day, and you may save a snug pound or two and marry some pretty maid."

"As to my father's goods, sir, they have taken so much as they could, but the farm is my mother's, and that they will not touch while I live to protect her."

"Then we will have you in the business yet, lad, and build another oven, not to say a room or two beyond the shop where you could be snug."

Samuel smiled and answered cheerily :

"That must be as my mother might say ; she shall never have want of care if I can help it, and my sister is likely to be slender for a long time to come ; but the flour must be made ready, and you can think over the matter of drink to add to your order."

"The little lass was stubborn again, Samuel," said the baker, as the youth put on his apron and cap. "Not a word could they get from her, but the old one, the maid, spoke sharply and shortly ; I think she sometimes puzzled the judges."

"What did they say to her ?"

"Told her she was a witch and she knew it, and the sooner she confessed the better it would be for her, but she stoutly said, ' God knows I am no witch ; I speak but the truth. ' "

"Did they commit her ?"

"Yes ; ordered new fetters on legs and hands, and sent her to the dungeon."

"What was done with my young cousin ?"

"Ah, lad, you should have seen her ; when she was out before she was beautiful enough, but this time she

seemed to be minding other things, and stood with her hands clasped and her eyes raised to heaven."

"Did she answer her accusers?"

"Not one word; they say the devil hath made her dumb, but in all my life I never saw a face like that. Do you remember the schooner that ran hard on the island four winters since?"

"I heard much of it, and my father saw it."

"Well, on board that schooner was a woman with a young babe in her arms. The sailors tried for hours to save them, and when at last two stout men brought them ashore, their faces were turned up to the sky and they were dead. This lassie's face looks like the dead baby's, so gentle and yet so sad; I could not find it in my heart to harm her, and yet the sheriff was as stern and harsh as if she had murdered some before his eyes."

"Did they send her back to her cell?"

"Yes, lad, and she seemed too eager to go; glad to be free from them all. Just as they dragged her out of the door she gave one look back and caught her father's eyes, and her whole face was one beaming smile. Thus more than one who saw would like to have taken her in his arms then and carried her to her own home and bed, be she witch or no; but I am talking nonsense, lad; you see I'm always thinking of my own lass we buried in the sea, and that makes me care more for the poor captain, who holds up in all his trouble like a soldier, though it's plain to see his heart is breaking. Have you seen him since then, Samuel?"

"I have not, sir; but I will go to him soon and see if he has any word to give to friends away."

"Get the loaves well in and I will mind them for you, lad, while you attend him ; he walked away from the court dazed with grief, and I saw good man Green draw his arm in his. I suppose you heard that Mary Walcot was taken to see a sick woman, and found there the apparition of Goody Herrick, who did torment her ?"

"When was this ?"

"Soon after the examination, and now the orders are that Goody's chains must be doubled and fastened well to the dungeon floor."

Samuel was seen to shudder but did not reply.

"You see the officers have said that if one chain did not keep a witch from going abroad to trouble others 'in her opposition,' two might, and so many more besides your kinswoman will have heavy chains upon them now. I saw a bill but this day for fetters and mending of them, also some handcuffs, and old Goodman Roots had orders for ten pairs of shackles, with chains for Sarah Good, Sarah Osburn, and others now in prison ; their trade is good in iron now, and some will be getting rich, but I cannot see how women can bear such weight, seeing that their hands and feet are over small."

"Have you never heard that women will endure far greater agony than men ?" asked Samuel.

"I have not so heard, but must believe it, seeing these things. Did not Martha Carrier have most piteous hands from her chains, and yet she was brave to speak though her lips were white with pain ?"

"It was most cruel to cause her children to testify against her," said Samuel.

“Why not, when husbands appear against wives and parents against children?” asked the baker. “I was present when one of Martha Carrier’s did answer, and my brother being quick with his pen put down her words. I have them here, and it reads strange for one so young. I will read it.

“‘How long hast thou been a witch?’ asked the magistrate.

“‘Ever since I was six years old.’

“‘How old are you now?’

“‘Near eight years old; brother Richard says I shall be eight in November next.’

“‘Who made you a witch?’

“‘My mother. She made me set my hand to a book.’

“‘How did you set your hand to it?’

“‘I touched it with my fingers and the book was red; the paper of it was white.’

“She said she had never seen the black man; the place where she did it was in Andrew Foster’s pasture, and Elizabeth Johnson was there. Being asked who was there beside, she answered her Aunt Toothaker and her cousin. Being asked when it was, she said when she was baptized.

“‘What did they promise to give you?’

“‘A black dog.’

“‘Did the dog ever come to you?’

“‘No.’

“‘But you said you saw a cat once. What did that say to you?’

“‘It said it would tear me in pieces if I would not set my hand to the book.’

"She said her mother baptized her, and the devil, or black man, was not there, as she saw, and her mother said when she baptized her, 'Thou art mine forever and ever. Amen.'

"How did you afflict folks?"

"I pinched them."

"She said she had no puppets, but she went to them that she afflicted. Being asked whether she went in her body or her spirit, she said in her spirit. She said her mother carried her thither to afflict.

"How did your mother carry you when she was in prison?"

"She came like a black cat?"

"How did you know it was your mother?"

"The cat told me so that she was my mother. She said she afflicted Phelps' child last Saturday, and Elizabeth Johnson joined with her to do it. She had a wooden spear about as long as her finger, and she had it of the devil."

"Now, Master Samuel, you must confess that such talk is strange for a child but eight years of age. Strange indeed, sir; also the words of Dr. Cotton Mather concerning the mother, that 'the devil had promised her she should be Queen of Hell.' I cannot but wonder what will be said of these things fifty years hence."

CHAPTER XXIII.

GOODY'S STORY.

WHILE Honest Kenny was assisting his master and Samuel Jacobs think out new plans of assistance, we must glance backward and recall the events which transpired in the prison before the good Doctor Trehorn made his second appearance there.

It was the night before the second examination, so graphically described by the old baker, and Madame Hepworth had wearied herself with talking.

"I must tell you these things now," she said, "for we know not what may happen, and at times I fear that my reason is not quite clear by reason of the pain I bear."

"Say no more, dear mistress," exclaimed Goody, "for your words have made the child ill with weeping; that good man who called on us the other day said you need never fear for Miss Hester, and the medicine he brought has eased your cough. Dry your tears, dear Miss Hester, and let us think of something far from this. Shall we talk of your Cousin Ruth?"

"Her father will die and leave her," sobbed Hester, "and my mother would have me think she will also leave me. Mother, dear mother, you must be better soon."

"Better sooner than you think, my darling; but the words must be spoken that you may not suffer hereafter. Kiss me, daughter, and cease weeping, for your tears add to my pain."

"Then I will not shed another, dear mother," but even as she spoke great drops fell on her mother's face.

"Goody," said the sick woman, "it is too dark for reading from the book, and the hours are long; you can, if you will, tell us the story which you promised. Put your face close to mine, my daughter, for so I have strength and hope."

The girl obeyed, and Goody, with many apologies for the poorness of her speech, began :

"I was one of a large family in England, and my father was a hard-working man, so it chanced that quite young I was sent to be lady's maid to a gentleman's daughter near by, and we grew to be more like friends than mistress and servant. When my young mistress traveled I went with her, and often she read aloud to improve her voice while I would be making or mending some of her pretty gowns. We were very happy, and none could be kinder than Miss Mary; but young folks can never rest easy, and after some years the gardener's son wished me to marry him, and Miss Mary herself gave me my wedding gown. We lived at the manor house as before until my lad took crazy for coming to America, and would not let me come until he should make a home for me, So we saw him sail away, and Miss Mary wished him good luck, while I cried and could not see him for the tears at last, although my mistress told me that

he was kissing his hand to me. If I had only known all then I would have looked long and hard at my poor lad. We had good news from him at times, and just before my baby came he sent me some money and wrote to Miss Mary a letter as fine as a gentleman might, asking her to be careful of me, for so soon as the child should be old enough he should want us to come to him where he was saving money for a little home. Ther my little lassie was born, and as winsome a child as you could wish, with brown hair like Miss Mary's and the same sweet look out of her eyes. How good my young mistress was, sitting by me day after day, making pretty gowns for the baby, or painting pictures to hang on the wall! She was a real lady, like your mother, Miss Hester, and sometimes I have thought she had the same look, but her folks were from the North country. She had trouble herself, poor girl, but I did not know it then. When my lassie was near one year old my lad sent for me and I was wild with joy. Such fine times as we had getting ready for the long voyage; such pretty things as my mistress made for us; and then with her own hands she painted our pictures to keep when we should be gone. The night before we sailed she stayed with me in Liverpool, and then she told me that she had a lover, a young artist, who was in America, and her father would not listen to his suit, for he was a younger son and poor; so, heartsick and alone, he had crossed the sea, saying no other woman would win his love. When she told me this I said I would look for him everywhere, but I did not know America was such a great country when I said it. It is very

lan
tra
I t
bah
was
wee
in a
but
pret
I sh
dizz
jostl
lady
capta
her g
the t
"
"
"
"
"
A
been c
"
"
V
garden
tion M
"
O
would
"
Th
band a
came b
"
Fr

large, indeed, Miss Hester, and some day you will travel and see it all. When the ship was at New York I thought to see my husband's face first, so I took my baby and went on shore, but Joseph was not there. I was young then and much downcast, so I began to weep, for the child was tiresome and I had no home in all the land. Every one had friends to greet them, but I was alone, and I sat down on my box full of pretty things Miss Mary had made, wondering what I should do next. I was too dazed to think, and dizzy with the water; beside, some rough men were jostling about and looking in my face. Presently a lady came down with a gentleman to talk with the captain, and as she passed me my baby tried to catch her gown. She turned about and smiled, but seeing the tears in my eyes, she said :

“‘Are you alone, good woman?’

“‘Alone and strange, lady.’

“‘Did you expect to meet friends here?’

“‘My husband, lady.’

“‘And he is not here? Well, do not weep; he has been delayed, perhaps. What was his name?’

“‘Joseph Herrick, ma'am.’

“‘Why, that is the name of my cousin's young gardener up the river. Do you ever hear him mention Mr. Van Cortland?’

“‘Often, in his letters; and he told me his master would have him meet me here when the ship was in.’

“‘Then she looked surprised and called her husband and talked with him aside for a time, and she came back to me with a sweet smile saying :

“‘Fret no more, my good girl; Major Van Cort-

land was called away to his son, who was injured while hunting, and my husband thinks he took the young man with him; it was very sudden, and the ladies of the house are abroad now. Will you come home with me until such time as we may hear from them?’

“So I went with her to her grand home, and although she was most kind and tender to the baby and me, I grew sick with longing for home and my lad. After long weeks she came to me one day with a letter, which said that the boy who was ordered to meet me and take me to the home he had nearly ready had proved dishonest, and my kind mistress had told him where I was, to be quiet and content for his sake, for his master was much pleased with the new country, where game was plenty, and he would remain for some time longer. So I did my best, being maid to my new mistress and waiting on her day and night. One day a card was brought while she was dressing, and she exclaimed:

“Now, little woman, you will be happy indeed, for Major Van Cortland has come, and baby will see her papa.’

“I was faint and trembling for joy, and it seemed like months and years before she came back with a sad face, saying the major would like to see me. I went down, and a tall, fine man said, pleasantly:

“So you are Joe’s wife, are you? Well, I left him out with my son, for we bought some land where game is plenty, and he could do nothing without Joe. I miss the rascal myself, and you may go with me to our home up the river or stay here with Cousin Ellen

until he returns. There will be none but servants there now, and you may be homesick, but you will see Joe's work everywhere, and can do as you like until my wife and daughters return.'

"I thought it would be better so, for I missed the country air, and the lassie did not thrive well through my own fretting and the climate. The major was a gentleman, and, although I saw him seldom to speak with, I knew he was pleased with me, for whenever his grand friends came to dinner or lunch, he would ask me to lay the table in good old English style. Madam and her daughters came back, but not my lad. Sometimes his letters were full of new plans for me and the baby; sometimes he called his master a silly-headed fellow. It was clear he wanted to be back in the garden, and the major wanted him also, for the old gardener was getting feeble and nothing looked as it used to. At last they wrote they would be home on a Saturday and I dressed baby smartly and put on a new frock myself.

"What did he say to the baby?" asked Hester, who was listening intently.

Goody was dumb for a few moments, and then, as if remembering her present purpose to distract their minds from the great evil, she went on:

"He never saw her, miss; never. The young master left him by the way, ill of fever, and none ever saw my lad again. I was a long time sick after that, and the family were patient with me, but I could not work. At last the baby went, too, and I was alone. One day, a long time after, so long that I cannot tell, a gentleman came home with the major

to spend a few days, and he said he was sore distressed about more help in his home, for his lady was frail and the climate tried her; he would like a settled, trusty woman as housekeeper, if such could be found. I heard the talk, and I told my master I would like to go; it was clear I could never be happy there for thinking of my lad. The master was loth to let me leave him, but he spoke a kind word for me and did not tell my sorrow, as I asked him not. I wanted to go far away and work God's will, as I could not with the baby's grave so near and Joe's name so often spoken. So I came with your father, Miss Hester, and here I have been since, and often I have wanted to tell you that I watched you because I thought of the little lassie asleep on the river shore far away. She might have been like you, Miss, but God knows best."

"A re you sleeping, mistress, dear?"

"No, Goody, only wishing I had known all this before. God bless you, my brave woman."

And silence fell upon them, broken only by Hester's sobs as she recalled Goody's story.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

WHEN Dr. Trehorn surprised Hester by asking if she did not know him, she was speechless for joy.

"You praised me but a moment since, cousin; do you trust me less now?"

"No, oh no; I will do whatever my mother wishes or my father directs."

Madame Hepworth tried to touch her daughter's hand, and Hester with much difficulty assisted her.

"Daughter?"

"Yes, dear, dear mother."

"My time on earth is short; whatever your cousin suggests, that do for my sake."

"You will not, cannot, must not leave me, mother."

"It is so ordered, my darling; I have tried to prepare you for it, and Goody has been taken from us. Remember her story, and be brave; trust Samuel, and live for my sake and your father's."

"You cannot mean that I should leave you here?"

"Even that, my darling; I am past all harm, and only wait for my release from the court above."

It was Samuel's arms which supported the girl as she fell prostrate on the floor; his voice which first reached her ears as she struggled back to consciousness.

"Listen to me, cousin," he said, in a half whisper.

"The time is short indeed; if I leave you here I may not be able to return again; each visit is dangerous. Will you go with me at such time as your father and I may arrange, or will you remain here and suffer?"

"I must remain with my mother."

"Then they may hang you; cruel as they are, they will not harm her in her present condition; with you it is widely different. Only yesterday the afflicted children made new charges against you, and your poor little dog was executed because they declare it was bewitched. Your father says there is

no end to the madness ; he urges you to escape while you can, and your mother also desires it."

"I urge it with my dying breath ; nothing can harm me now, and my last prayer is that you may be spared. Hester, my precious, it will not be long now ; I shall soon be free !"

The girl was on her knees by her mother's side kissing again and again the dear face, but she did not speak.

"Hester, dear cousin, will you not hear me? our plans are complete ; already two prisoners are on their way to England and others are with friends in New York. Will you go with me?"

The girl rose and drew herself up proudly, while the vile chains clanked.

"Can you ask me to leave my mother, now?" she said. "Can you think me so inhuman? No, if she cannot be free neither will I; if she must die in prison so will I. What would freedom be without her? Could I sleep with her face haunting me? Could I go anywhere and not hear her voice? You are cruel to think of it, and I should be mad to hear you."

"My darling, it was my wish, my own; and your cousin is but fulfilling my request."

At the first sound of the gentle voice the proud look left the girl's face, and she knelt once more beside the sufferer, weeping and penitent.

"Oh, mother, mother, do not break my heart; I cannot live without you; there is nothing outside the prison to care for while you are here, save my father, and surely they will let him come when they know—when they hear—"

"That I shall soon be free? No, dearest, nor will you escape. When I am gone, when this poor body can be no longer tortured, they will torture you."

"Cousin Hester, will you hear me?" said Samuel. "I honor you for your devotion to your mother, and I promise you that she shall not be left alone. She shall have far better care than you could give, and time is flying. Will you go or stay?"

The girl's face was pale as death, while she answered:

"I will stay."

The sick woman whispered faintly:

"Your father's child, my Hester," and then, as the doctor adjusted his wig and drew his ruffles over his hands, she said:

"Come soon, very soon, again, and heaven bless you."

The aged doctor bent low and bade her a fond good-bye.

With mingled feelings of displeasure at his defeat and admiration for the heroic girl, he once more sought his friend the jailer.

"Your patient has coughed less since you gave her your powders," said the keeper, to which the doctor replied that her cough would soon leave her entirely, but her back being bad from long lying upon it, he must as soon as might be bring a famous salve for its healing.

"She is over-sensitive," said the keeper. "Why, some have been here since March who are much better than she in health and spirits; but your fine ladies are reared tenderly."

"Quite true," said the doctor, who, after giving a lotion for the troublesome knee, went his way and was seen no more that night.

Captain Hepworth was quite sure that his daughter would not leave her mother. All day he had been urging the great need of seeing his wife, but the authorities were stubborn. So strong was her will, and so firm her faith, that none save the strange doctor and Goody realized her danger. At her request the real truth was kept from her husband, lest in his zeal he might use harsh language and thereby endanger his liberty.

That she was very ill he was sure, but his hope was unfailling, and Mrs. Willard was constantly cheering him with the thought that a few weeks of good nursing, followed by a sea voyage, would completely restore her. Other friends had also counselled him to have the child removed, for should the mother appear in court she would doubtless be acquitted. Not so with Hester, who, by reason of great talent and beauty, was frowned upon by all the "afflicted."

These considerations, added to his wife's strong entreaties sent through Samuel, led the harassed, anxious father to assent readily to the plans made by Mrs. Willard and others. When their faithful messenger returned good Madame Willard was filled with dismay.

"The child is not wise enough to judge, my dear captain, and you should lay your commands upon her. It is, indeed, terrible to think of her in that condition, and ere long these wise magistrates who see evil in the winds of heaven, and find witchcraft

in everything they are too ignorant to understand, will separate them, and all our hopes will be destroyed."

"I know not what step to take," said the perplexed captain.

"Let us not worry needlessly, sir," said Samuel. "I may have further tidings through my friend the doctor ere long, and I must speak my honest mind in this matter, that my Cousin Hester has only done her duty."

"The lad is right, Madame Willard; he sees farther than we do, and we will still hope and pray," replied the captain.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EXECUTION OF REV. GEORGE BURROUGHS.

THE escape of several prisoners had alarmed the prosecutors, and the growing leniency of the magistrates caused them to fear; consequently, a letter was written to "Honored John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwing praying them to be a terror to evil doers." This condition of affairs made any movement on the part of Captain Hepworth or his friends suspicious, and Samuel Jacobs well knew that discovery in his case would be punished with immediate death. He feared not. His father's case was hopeless, Goody Herrick would, doubtless, soon be executed, Madame Hepworth was slowly fading away, and unless he could rescue Hester his work was useless.

"If I am detected," said he to the captain, "you will see to it, sir, that no further evil comes to my mother and Ruth ; if I succeed, I shall have greater courage to work for them. All this evil to my father comes through the maid he saw fit to correct for neglect of duty, and it is plain to see that John Colson began the slanders against you and our cousins, well knowing that you were much talked of for governor, and they who are jealous are only too glad to injure you."

"My innocent wife and child should not suffer, my lad, because some would put me out of their way."

"That is true, sir, but the afflicted children know when and where to strike ; some who were set free have been again arrested in answer to their cries."

"Yes, yes ; it is maddening to think of, and the treatment of the prisoners here, as well as in Boston and Ipswich, is cruel beyond words. Think of it, my lad, the prisoners are brought in one by one, and as soon as they are seen the girls begin their dreadful screams. Thus the poor victims are placed some seven or eight feet from the justices and the accuser between them. The prisoners must stand before the justices with an officer appointed to hold each hand lest they should use them to afflict, and they must stare constantly at the justices, for the afflicted will fall into fits if they look at them. Ah, it is bitter mockery, my boy, especially when they are asked to repeat the Lord's prayer as evidence of their guilt. The great crowd, the uncomfortable position, the rude manners of those about deprive some of speech and cause others to faint, while the weak-minded are wholly distempered."

"The thing which makes me most angry is when the afflicted are carried to them to be touched, whereupon the justices cry out at once, 'They are now well,' before those who look on can see any change whatsoever. Only this day the keeper said to me that many of the prisoners had convulsions through the great weight of irons on their legs," said Samuel.

"Ah, lad! I have entreated in vain to have them removed from my dear wife, but none would hear me. How was she, Samuel, still hopeful?"

"Still hopeful, but very weak; she bade me urge you again and again to remove Hester if it could be done without endangering your own life."

"And she will suffer alone, trusting to these men for her own release?"

"No, sir; she is never alone, she bade me say, and her release was but a question of time."

"Do our friends in Boston and New York know how the case now stands, Samuel?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"I am more than anxious since Madame Willard commands one to silence, and yet bids me hope. She tells me that the child's freedom is a great movement, but so also is the freedom of the mother."

"You forget, sir, that Madame Hepworth is too ill to take a journey and too weak to help herself."

"I never forget it, my lad. Long, bitter, dreary weeks have passed since she bade me farewell on the porch. If I might see her for an hour the trial would be less severe, but this they will nor permit. My good kinswoman has implored them to admit her, that

she may converse with her of affairs in England, and she has pledged most solemnly that no word will be uttered which the keeper may not hear, and yet they refuse her."

"Madame Hepworth has always a pleasant word for the keeper when he enters, although she is much weakened, and the man seems kindly disposed, but he fears the officers above him. He does not see that she needs more than she has, for the uncomplaining may always suffer while the fretful call constant attention to their troubles."

"My lad," said Captain Hepworth with deep feeling, "I would gladly die to-morrow if they would permit me to see my wife and care for her. I have left nothing undone. I have worked early and late, but all to no purpose. Such is the animosity of these people that all whom they choose to cry out upon must die either by suffering in prison or upon the gallows."

"We will free your daughter, sir, and then you will have heart for other things. Her escape will comfort your wife more than the most luxurious bed or the daintiest food."

"Speed your part, lad, and she will be free. When I think of that godly man George Burroughs, and his horrible death, I am filled with zeal which may seem unbecoming in one of my profession."

"You followed him to the last, sir, did you not?"

"Yes, lad, I had so promised, and nothing but death would make a soldier break his word. It was cruel, lad; never on the field of battle did I see greater bravery. Mr. Burroughs was without fear,

and in all his preaching he has striven to make men holier and happier; when he tried to explain some of the charges brought against him they called it 'twisting and turning.'

"Great stress was laid upon his feats of strength, but my mother knew a slighter man who could do as well, and none called it witchcraft."

"Poor Burroughs, poor veteran; he was guileless and gentle; wiser than they, and they marveled; truer, and they despised him."

"He has gone, good captain," said Kenny, who was near by, putting various garments into a knapsack; "think no more of it. I believe you have not closed your eyes since you saw his body thrust into that hole between the rocks."

"I can never forget it, Kenny, never; think of it, Samuel, they crowded his once strong vigorous frame into a wretched place, scarce two feet deep, with the bodies of others, and one hand with other parts of his body were left exposed. Oh, lad, it is monstrous, and I much wonder that vengeance does not come upon them."

Captain Hepworth buried his face in his hands, trying in vain to shut out the horrible sight.

"Better give him the message from Miss Hester now," said Kenny; "he is not fit for his part of the work without something rouses him."

"He has been roused too long," replied Samuel, in the same low tone.

The captain sat motionless and did not heed them. How could one so refined and manly soon forget the

dreadful scenes enacted on Gallows hill? How could he think of his beloved in prison without trembling for their fate, when a kind pastor and godly man was so brutally murdered?

CHAPTER XXVI.

HESTER'S LONE VIGIL.

ONCE more night in the old prison, and still Hester Hepworth sat by her mother.

"Could you write a few lines, my child?" said the sick woman.

"If I could see, mother, these shackles seem to hurt me less when I am trying to send a word or two; how strange it is that we can learn to do the things we must. Think of writing in the old days with my pretty desk before me; we were very happy then, mother?"

"Happy, happy!" repeated the sick woman.

"What can I write for you, mother dear? When day comes I will put all down which you desire."

"Only this, love, and write it in your Bible: I am dying; innocent, as God knows; happy in His eternal love. My beloved husband and child, farewell.' Can you write it now, dear one?"

"I will try, mother. You know Ruth and I once played we were blind, and I am nearly so in this gloomy place."

She was indeed blind with tears, but her mother knew it not.

Groping in the darkness she found the Bible and felt carefully along its opening pages ; then taking from her bosom Samuel's latest gift, she wrote the words.

"It is finished, mother dear, but you will smile to-morrow when you see the crooked letters ; it will remind you of my first lessons in the nursery at home. Did I vex you much then, mother ?"

"Never, darling ; we were very happy. Hold the book near me and guide my hand in the darkness. I would write my name once more, once more."

Hester followed her directions and the sick woman struggled bravely for strength.

"Is that all, mother ?" asked the girl, "let me do something more ? Will you have wine, mother ?"

"The tired lips made no sign.

"Mother, dear, dear mother, can you hear me ?"

The feeble fingers clasped the girl's. "Ah, I will get you some wine, dear, and you will be better."

A few brief moments of torturing silence after the wine was given and again the girl asked :

"Do you hear, my mother ?"

"Yes, my darling. God bless you !"

"You are tired, mother ; sleep a little."

"Tired, tired, but the weary shall have rest."

"Shall I sing that, mother, you taught me so long ago ?"

"Sing," was the only response.

"And you will sleep, dear, while I sing ?"

"Kiss me, my precious one, my brave girl, and I will try."

Hester began. Every word was dear to her, every

note familiar ; and as she forgot herself and thought only of the loved and feeble form beside her, her strength came, the tremulous tones grew stronger, each chord was full and clear. When the hymn was finished, she drew closer to her mother and touched her brow with her lips. "She is sleeping," she said. "Dear mother, I am so happy, for often in papa's books I have read of sleep which rests and cures. I will pray for it now ; surely none could speak so well and death be near."

The girl nestled close and fell asleep.

Gray morning came and Hester was awake, but the woman did not stir. "Are you better, dear ?" she asked, as she touched the face beside her.

A sudden chill seized her, and she turned to look upon her dead. With a smothered cry of agony she bowed her head upon the breast where she had often fled for comfort and wept most bitter tears. Suddenly a new thought came to her, and she struggled with herself until the tears were dry.

"I must not weep," she said. "I must protect her. Samuel knew it all when he was here. Mother, dear, precious mother, they have killed you, but they shall not touch you now. When the keeper comes he must think she sleeps, and I will wait until they bring my food. I will wait ; they shall not harm you, mother, you are free."

Later when the keeper came he found her reading her Bible, while the woman's face was turned away.

"She is resting, is she ?" he asked as the girl raised her finger.

"Yes, sir."

"
"
"
you
old
him
your
have
"F
good
say.
you
wife.
"I
is alw
some
"I
sir. I
and if
fret ag
her m
"S
"N
wound
one b
and I
"A
"W
could
den to
you wi
little g

"Did she have food or drink in the night, miss?"

"I gave her wine and sang to her."

"All right, miss; when it's later on I'll look in upon you again. Here's breakfast for you, and soon the old doctor will come to see my wife, and I will bring him here. He's a master hand for healing. Why, your mother's cough was grievous till he came, and I have scarce heard her once for days."

"He helped her greatly, sir, but do not waken her; a good sleep brings back health, my nurse was wont to say. You are very kind, good keeper, and some time you will be glad you helped my father's child and wife."

"Duty forbids much kindness, miss, but my wife is always at me night and day to give you ease in some way, and yet I know not how."

"I would be glad if you were free to do her bidding, sir. My hands are red and swollen with these chains, and if they could be rested but an hour I would not fret again. Your little girl would find it hard to nurse her mother with those upon her wrists."

"She is no witch."

"Nor yet am I. Were I, these chains could not wound my flesh. Good keeper, may I have rest for one brief hour, and none know aught of it but you and I?"

"Ah! lass, you show your craft in pleading."

"Were I a witch I would not ask you, sir; for I could do all things without your help. See, one sudden touch, one little click, one movement made by you will make me as free to eat my food as your dear little girl."

The keeper approached her and looked at the swollen hands, much bruised and torn by constant efforts to use them.

"It is a hard showing, lass."

"More hard to feel, sir."

"If you affirm that neither now nor ever you will afflict me or mine if I give you ease for a brief space?"

"Never, good keeper; and if the time should come when my poor hands can do you a good turn I will make haste to help you."

"You have made a fool of my girl. Why should you fare better than others?"

"Because you are wise, and have a little girl who might be here."

"There, lass, they're off. I'll hide them here, and if some one should call keep quiet until I am free to come to you again."

"Heaven bless you, dear keeper, I will use my freedom to send this with Hester Hepworth's love to the little lass you love so well. It is a book with pictures which our Goody bought thinking to please me. I know them all; please give it to your child."

"You will want it yourself, miss?"

"No, sir; you see I have counted all the toes and eyes and hands and feet, and know the crook of every nose and what each one is doing. We grow wise in prison with so little else. Why, sir, I've counted every crack upon this floor, the seams along the wall and all the window joints up yonder, and I know exactly how that spider works."

"You are a queer lass, witch or no witch; the old doctor tells me he can read your mind, and fails to

find
miss
fast,
fares

"C

"C

He

she e
follow

"Z

All w

"H

little e

can I

will fi

dear fa

dark

gruel

will sit

is so st

said.

and ne

glad to

fair!

eternal

forever

I will

Mother

your ha

smile to

find it evil ; he thinks your mother most uncommon, miss, and you may yet be like her. But eat your breakfast, girl ! I'll come again to see how your mother fares."

" Good-bye, kind friend."

" Good-bye, lass, for a little season."

Hester's breakfast stood before her untouched, while she eagerly read a message it contained. It was as follows :

*" Trust the friend who comes to you and follow him.
All will be well.*

J. H."

" He does not know," said the girl, wearily ; " he little dreams of this loss. Oh, mother, darling, how can I bear it ? I must not weep again, or the keeper will find out the cause, and I must shade that dear, dear face lest he see. This wretched cell has been too dark before, now it is too light. I must drink this gruel sent for her that I may have strength, and I will sit close by her side that no one can see why she is so still. Death is not dreadful as some hymns have said. I do not shrink or start ; she is my mother, and her face is smiling ; she was so glad to rest—so glad to be forever free. How cold she is and yet so fair ! What were the words she said—' Happy in His eternal love ? ' Ah, mother, and your love has fled forever. I wish tears were not always in one's eyes. I will not weep. They shall not have her body. Mother dear, love, I move my hands now ; I can stroke your hair and touch your cheeks. How you would smile to see my poor little hands free from the fetters.

I could not help you when I liked, dear, and now Goody has left us, too. I will dress your hair once more as my father loved to see it, and you shall be beautiful to all, beautiful in your last sleep."

Tenderly she smoothed the hair which even the cruel fever had not burned away; reverently she touched the lips and knelt beside her mother, saying once more the prayer she had learned in childhood.

The door opened; not suddenly, as when the keeper entered, but quietly, and there, unseen by the kneeling girl, unheard by her or the mother, stood—Dr. Trehorn.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FLIGHT.

"MAKE no outcry, be calm, and do my bidding," said the old man.

Hester raised her eyes and answered, "Am I not calm? I have concealed it from the keeper, he does not dream, he must not until my father knows, and then—"

The old man's eyes grew strangely moist as he took one swollen hand in his.

"And then, dear cousin, all will still be well. When did she find release?"

"I cannot tell, she was so tired, she said, and then she fell asleep. I found her cold this morning."

"You have been watching with her alone since then?"

"
"bea
fear
"
"
hap
her
"
"bea
victi
"
"M
beau
miser
"
"T
of, bu
your
"
"W
"
"I
me an
"
"Ye
"
"TI
away ;
story.
my ins
and go
no one
friend."
"Ye
"I h
This yo

"No. the jailer came, and while my heart was beating like a drum I talked and talked. Do you fear death?"

"Not now."

"I never shall henceforth, she was so glad to go, so happy; but for us, we must go on and on without her unless they hang me, cousin."

"That they would gladly do, but you are too beautiful to suffer such a death, too good to be the victim of such cruelty."

"My mother lies here dead, and she was good and beautiful. There's nothing left upon the earth but misery and wrong."

"The outrage is deep, deep as the hell they talk of, but, cousin, you must live; she wished it, and your father is even now pleading to be with you."

"What does my father wish?"

"What were his written words?"

"I know them all—to trust the friend who came to me and all would be well."

"I am the friend; can you trust me, Hester?"

"Yes, dear cousin; it was my father's wish."

"Then, listen. Before night comes we must be far away; we cannot wait, for her sad fate tells its own story. For her sake we must hasten, and these are my instructions. I have obtained permission to come and go to-day. Seeing your mother's low condition, no one will question me, and the keeper is my friend."

"Yes, Cousin Samuel."

"I have here with me a wig and suit like mine. This you must wear."

"But, cousin, it is man's attire."

"True, and in it lies your safety."

"Three times before I bid you go. I will, myself, go out and then return with mixtures for the sick; the fourth, you go and pass beyond the walls, walk feebly, yet like this, holding your stick thus, bending your head, and turn once to your left when just beyond the door; keep on straight to the water's edge, and there, if some one says: 'Doctor, my child is ill,' make haste to step within the boat."

"Should no one speak, dear cousin?"

"There is no failure unless you should fail. Courage and hope should cheer you. Life is at stake, Your father waits to welcome you. No matter who may speak you must keep silence. Can you remember?"

"Turn to the left without the door and walk on to the water's edge?"

"Yes; do not forget the step or bend and deafness. You are old; and friends are watching as well as foes."

"Can I not wait for darkness?"

"Dear cousin, our dead must soon be cared for, and you must hasten that I may escape."

"What will you do?"

"As soon as you are safe I shall be far away seeking my mother and poor Ruth, while one good faithful friend will make all clear behind us."

"Do I know him, cousin?"

"You will see him ere long."

"My father?"

"No, cousin; he has yet to suffer striving for this

dear form we all have loved. Can you be brave still for her sake, and quiet for your own?"

"There are no cowards in our race, but I am over weak, and these fierce, heavy chains eat into flesh upon my limbs."

"I thought that—so did we all. While I am gone use this strong file in this way; when I return I will assist you. Now I go to tell the keepers that none must weary her while I am by to see what some good remedies may do. Are you ready, cousin? Your swollen wrists will make poor work upon these fetters."

"I could work forever with some hope in view, and I must see my father, for I fear these cruel men will even steal the body when the soul has fled."

"Ah, cousin, I am proud of you; even here and now you neither weep nor fret like other girls, or make me anxious with your dread forebodings."

"Nothing could be worse than this, and I have spent my tears before you came. I prayed to be like her, so calm and brave, and if I seem so it is well, for even now my poor hands shake with eagerness."

"I'll leave you now and come again quite soon. You have the courage of your father, with all the endurance of this silent friend; good-by, dear cousin."

"Good-by; it must be years since yesterday, and months since we came in."

Dr. Trehorn's bent figure moved in the direction of the keeper's room, where he chatted cheerfully and made such statements as he deemed wise concerning his patient. Then he was seen hurrying along Prison lane, shuffling his feet and bobbing his wig as he had

done for many a year. Dozens of old patients greeted him, and many requested him to call, but to all he gave promises of future aid when he should come again. Just now the keeper's child was ill. And then he must return to Boston, where friends were waiting, and even in New York some were rejoiced to hear he had returned to heal and tarry for a time. With hands full of bottles, back he went to Prison lane.

This time the keeper did not enter with him, for the cautious doctor said "her life hangs by a thread, and we must not disturb her." Whose life he did not say. Hester had worked faithfully despite pain and weariness. With strong, vigorous arms the "doctor" aided her, and soon one limb was free.

"Now, I will go again, this time to bring some soup to strengthen one who needs it."

Again the young girl waited and labored upon her fetters with a calm, patient face, unlike her own; more like the silent woman near her.

"They do not notice me now," said the old man on his return. "I chanced to hear one man say, 'That is good old Doctor Trehorn who has wrought many cures and never takes a fee.'"

"I thought the old man died some two years since," replied the other.

"No; only went to England and has just returned for a brief time. He is so busy and so strange no one can get his care, save some old friend. I heard he cured the keeper's wife at once when the doctors failed, and now the child is ill."

"He makes a sorry figure for one so learned—his

cro
shu
"
as
lon
"
Hes
"
you
"
"
I wi
A
a fe
his c
saw
"
dow
brigh
spee
H
earth
cise,
on.
said,
court
you,
lips v
press
Th
figure
is ill.

crooked back and heavy stick, his curling wig and shuffling gait.'

"Yes, yes ; but his deeds of goodness are as true as those with straighter backs. I heard him once long years ago pray with a dying woman."

"You make a fine old man, Cousin Samuel," said Hester.

"And you will do as well. Come, now, rehearse your part."

"Wait till the fetters are off."

"True, you will limp because you must ; I, because I will."

Again the doctor left the cell and trotted away for a few moments. This time the keeper's child received his care, and when he once more visited the girl he saw no half-grown woman but his counterpart.

"Most excellent, good doctor, now obey, bend down your head a trifle more, those eyes are over-bright ; there, now 'tis well ; good-bye, and heaven speed you."

Hester's heart beat rapidly as she once more felt the earth beneath her feet ; but her instructions were concise, and she said them over and over as she shuffled on. A little child remarked her as she passed, and said, "There is the funny doctor," and dropped a courtesy ; and an old man called, "Heaven spare you, sir ; you saved my life." But the compressed lips were white and silent, while the trembling feet pressed on.

The few steps necessary seemed as miles, until a figure seated in a boat called out, "Doctor, my child is ill." One moment more and the trembling feet

were resting in the boat. One hour more and Hester Hepworth was speeding far from the horrors of Prison lane.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RELEASE.

FOR three long hours Doctor Trehorn sat beside the dead woman and then crept out to tell the jailer she could not live until day; he would request him to look in upon her say in half an hour, but he must leave now as the Boston friends were suffering for his care.

"Better get some woman to be with her," said the keeper.

"Oh, no; that would distress the girl; let her see none but yourself, my friend, and when I come this way again I hope to find you all both strong and well. Being blessed with substance, keep this bit of gold for me, and if they question as to what I found within the mind of those two yonder, tell them, we quite remember that, no evil, none whatever."

"Good-bye, old doctor; I will heed your word, but none will ask, for all about think you come to visit me; seeing now all things turn to evil, I have told many of my good wife's cure, and now the lad is nearly healed. Farewell, sir; come whenever you may choose, we'll bid you welcome."

With eager haste the shuffling figure made its way along the street and soon was lost to view.

With slow, deliberate step young Samuel Jacobs entered his master's shop and asked discharge to see his mother.

"Could you not wait, lad? I've missed you sorely going to your farm, but better that thou staying."

"I have a letter, sir. My sister is quite ill and my horse is ready, if I can return I will, for matters need me much, and I have always found you kind and gracious."

"Well, well, return as quickly as you choose, for there will be great doings hereabouts; a goodly number will be hanged next month, they tell me, and none may know whose turn will come. When an old man of more than eighty years, like Goodman Corey, must be pressed to death, why things look dark for younger ones more full of sport and evil."

"They will not carry out the threat, will they, sir?"

"Have they feared to do anything, lad? I tell you they will follow the vile practice of the old country, for he will not speak, and you know they have been mute there at times to save their property from confiscation. A man may die, Samuel, even under the weights, and it is a cruel death, but it would go hard with him to know that all his lands would not make his heirs the better."

"And no man can be justly brought to trial if he will not speak, I have heard the captain say?"

"That is true, lad; but speaking of the captain reminds me that he has just heard that his wife was dying, and they have told him still he could not see her."

"Poor man—but I must go now, as I have company a good bit of the journey."

"Good luck to you, lad, for you have a clear head and if your father is hanged I'll call you mine and be proud to."

Samuel shuddered as he turned away. His father's case had been almost hopeless from the first, owing to the false and cruel testimony given. With a sad heart he rode away towards Newbury. Sad and yet not cast down. Was Hester not free at last? He longed to remain and assist the captain, but he dared not delay. Ruth was ill, and his absence from Salem Village just now was desirable.

Dr. Trehorn's wig, cane and clothing were once more safely at the farm, while buried beneath the earth in Madame Willard's garden the companion garments were hid from sight. Madame Willard's daughters were famous house-keepers, and why should not their mother visit New York for a season?

While Samuel Jacobs is plodding on toward Newbury, and Kenny, having returned from a recent boating excursion, is assisting Captain Hepworth in his efforts to recover his wife's body, let us pay one more visit to the wretched, ill-smelling, small jail in Prison lane.

The keeper's duties had made him quite weary and forgetful, and thus it chanced that the sick woman was not thought of until his good wife asked for her while he drank his tea. To her surprise he sprang from the table and hurried out without a word.

In a few moments he returned, with his countenance expressing great alarm.

"What has happened? is the beautiful lady worse?"

"She is dead," said the keeper in a husky voice.

"Then she can be no further harmed," said his wife, "and you need not be pale and troubled, sad as it is that one so noble should die in prison."

"That is not all," said the keeper, "the lass has escaped."

"Were the locks secure?"

"Yes, for our good doctor bade me see to it and I did; it was fast and he left her there. I must go straightway and see the sheriff."

"Wait, man, ponder it; great blame will come to you if you are not careful; be sure to speak of witches going through the keyhole as the girls have often stated; as for the lady that is another matter, and she should be soon laid out for her burial."

"The doctor could vouch for me if he were here," said the keeper, rubbing his head.

"He would only draw thee into trouble for letting him in as I have said. Speak to none of this about here, but go to the sheriff and say the lady is dead; when all will get together, none can marvel that the child has gone. Only be you most sure to mention the keyhole witches."

"You are right, good wife. I will do as you wish; but I much fear trouble will come."

"None if you are wise. Go now and send them at once to dress the body decently, for so fine a lady is not to be handled like one of low degree."

The crestfallen keeper found her advice most agreeable in his disturbed condition, and went away to seek the sheriff.

Captain Hepworth expressed less astonishment than grief when he was told of the flight and his wife's death. "Now, good sirs," he said, in broken tones, "you will not refuse me the poor comfort of receiving her remains and caring for them as becomes her station."

At first many objected, while others saw no harm in this.

"She was a witch, and therefore should not be buried like a Christian," said one, and this remark had its weight.

"It would not answer to have show and parades, or even such services as is usual said," said a pompous divine; "seeing she was much beloved and well known, it would increase the boldness of evil-doers."

Still Captain Hepworth entreated them to deliver to him the body.

Late in the evening men were seen removing something from the prison, but none cared and few questioned; many had died there, and more must, for the great heat and wretched accommodation told heavily on people who were accustomed to fresh air and liberal diet.

Midnight once more. The jailer had returned lighter of heart and was now sleeping, for the theory that bolts and bars were no obstacles to witches was firmly rooted in the minds of the masses.

Out from Prison lane came a slow and small procession, bearing to its last home the body of the gifted and beautiful Desire Hepworth. Lights flashed to and fro as they moved along, and Goodman Kenny led the way.

In a carriage following sat the agonized husband, partly supported by Rev. Mr. Willard of Boston, who was trying to offer consolation

“Do not despair ; the child is safe, and the mother knew her own life must be short.”

“Care and tenderness might have lengthened it ; they have murdered her—cruelly, fearfully, disgracefully. Ah, friend, nothing can console me now—nothing.”

“Think of the living. This thing will arouse people. Already many doubt—and when it is known that one so pure and gentle died from neglect while suffering under false accusation, more will awake to the truth.”

“I can only thank God that she is beyond their reach.”

“And the child also. The heart sickens at the deeds now done, but the tide will turn, and we shall live to hear these martyrs praised for their heroic lives ; now men dare not express their feelings openly.”

It was a mournful sight when they laid the once lithe, graceful form to rest beneath the waving trees, near her own home, now desolate and almost forsaken. It was wretched beyond all tragedy to see the wasted, thin face of the anguish-stricken husband.

Thus they laid her to rest in the darkness of night ; she as wife and mother had been most faithful, and as a follower of the meek and lowly One most sincere. Years after tears now forbidden would fill many eyes, and blessings now unspoken rest upon her name.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OLD ENGLAND.

It was many weeks ere Hester Hepworth could realize that she was once more free. Amid the elegance of her New York home, provided by Madame Willard's thoughtful care, the girl still heard the clanking chains, still lived over the bitter hours in prison. Great prostration seized upon her, and her father, who seldom left her side, saw it with anxiety. At night Hester would start from sleep to call her mother or entreat the jailer; by day she moaned for those in prison, her faithful Goody and Cousin Jacobs. All amusements failed to divert her, and the once joyous child appeared a sober woman.

"We must rouse her," said Madame Willard to the doctor. "She must go where no sound of these terrors can reach her, and where her friends can still be with her. The poor girl has suffered death many times."

"Take her to her friends in England," said the doctor, "and keep young people about her. She has naturally a fine constitution and a brave soul."

Madame Willard at once began preparations. Captain Hepworth, already weaned from his New England home, gave his matters into Kenny's hands, with instructions to obey Samuel Jacobs as the true proprietor.

Only one request was made in private, that ever more the grave under the trees should be tended with loving care.

Then came further tidings from Salem. The elder Jacobs with many more were hanged; old Giles Covey, brave and firm, had suffered a most horrible fate by being pressed to death. He would not confess or yield, and thus the venerable man was crushed, while those about insulted him.

"It was most horrible," wrote Samuel to the captain, "and I would not here repeat it but for the hope that it may cause you to be thankful for the quieter release of our dear ones. The old man begged them to increase the weight and pile on the rocks, for he would not yield. This they did until his tongue protruded from his mouth, and one standing by forced it in with his cane. He was indeed brave, and his treatment has caused many to doubt concerning the action of the authorities. It is still whispered about that the people at the parsonage are most active in the prosecutions, as also those at Thomas Putnam's house."

All these things were kept from the ears of Hester; to her Samuel wrote most cheerfully, telling her how Ruth longed to see her, and hoped she would one day come back.

"Captain," said Madame Willard one evening when Hester had left them, "I have revolved some matters in my own mind, and if you please will submit them to your approval."

"Anything you like, good kinswoman."

"Why should Ruth and our Hester be separated?"

It will never answer to send that child back to the farm on Endicott river, and if Hester must cross the sea why not send Ruth also?"

"My dear friend, it is a most excellent thought, and if her mother will consent to take charge of both I shall indeed be pleased!"

"Deliverance Jacobs is so crushed by her sorrow and misfortune I think she will gladly leave all behind her and strive to forget the horrors of the past months. I will write at once and invite her to join us. Meantime let us keep this matter from Hester, lest she suffer from disappointment."

"Many have already sold out their lands and have left the country, while others are as far as may be from Salem Village. I am sometimes sorely tempted to dispose of my own property and go far from all these dreadful memories," said Madame Willard.

"I share your feeling to some extent, good cousin. Still, being a soldier, I am unwilling to fly from any foes. I am convinced that life is short for me, and I would gladly make wise provision for my dear child and all others who have befriended me in this great sorrow."

"You will go with Hester to England, will you not?"

"That I will; and when once she is happily settled I will return, if my life be spared, and devote my energies to the comforting of those who are bereft during these dark days."

"You speak confidently. Do you think the delusion has reached its highest?"

"I know it, good cousin. When my beloved wife

was imprisoned, doubts increased, and when the wife of Rev. Mr. Hale of Beverly was accused it spread rapidly—even the husband saw then the spirit of persecution, and changed his views. I am almost convinced that Jonathan Corwin and other great men have long doubted, and Corwin's attempts to protect some, especially my dear wife, led the girls to cry out upon his mother-in-law. I pray that these poor afflicted mourners may live to see the stain removed from their name and the memory of their dear ones."

"There can be no stain without guilt, and only those who persecuted and condemned them are guilty."

"True, good cousin, so your children's children will see it even as I do now."

Deliverance Jacobs wrote in reply to Captain Hepworth's invitation that she would most gladly take charge of Hester and count it a great mercy to be absent for a season from so cruel a place, but through the neglect of crops and losses, fees, and otherwise she was unable to purchase the necessary furnishings for a long voyage, their house at Endicott river having suffered much in her absence.

Madame Willard again smoothed her way, her daughters were coming to New York to join her, and as they were well versed in making all manner of garments, being trained thereto by their mother, it would be only pastime for them to aid the maids in purchasing and fitting such things as might be needed for the journey, and for the matter of payment, Captain Hepworth desired to advance a goodly sum for the care of his child.

All these important duties being attended to, our good friends at last set sail. Samuel Jacobs with Goodman Kenny bade them farewell, and then returned to Massachusetts, where Samuel took up his abode at Hill farm, and at the request of its owner began there a course of study calculated to increase his usefulness. With some assistance and much hard labor the home farm was cleared and put in order, and the name of Jacobs forevermore connected with it.

Faithful in small things, Honest Kenny was made ruler over many, and, although he long mourned for Goody, to whom he was fondly and secretly attached, he chose for a wife a stout lass from among the farmers' daughters, and thereby increased the comforts at the Hill Farm.

Captain Hepworth remained abroad a year and then returned to his once-loved home, where he spent time and fortune in building up schools and assisting the heart-broken survivors of the families about him. He was indeed a peace-maker and a blessing to all who knew him. Samuel Jacobs was his constant companion until he entered college, where his energy and courage won him honors and his strict integrity scores of friends.

It was well known to the Endicotts, the Willards and other friends that the captain desired him to change his name and become legally his son. This the young man refused to do, with many kind and grateful words to his benefactor. "They cast dishonor on my father," said he, "and for his sake I will bear it; for his sake I will strive to make it known in the land."

Thus they lived for years, while Ruth and Hester studied side by side in the old English home. Captain Hepworth visited his daughter from time to time, and then returned to his duties in America, confident that she was receiving most tender care and wise instruction. Overcome by her afflictions and the loss of her husband, Deliverance Jacobs died two years after his execution, but Ruth still remained with Hester.

"At my next coming," said Captain Hepworth to his daughter, "I must take you back with me, and Ruth's brother is longing to see his young lady sister."

"Then Ruth may go with you, papa, dear, for unless my mind greatly changes I can never again see the place where my mother suffered so much."

"And will you compel me to bear it alone, my child?"

"Forgive me, dear, dear father. I will go when you wish, although I suffer whenever I hear the slightest mention of those dreadful days."

"Ann Putnam has made an honorable confession, my love, and begged forgiveness of those she made wretched; can you not forgive her, also?"

"That will not bring back our dead or wipe out the horrors, my father."

"It will bring peace, my child; but I will not urge you, although I need you at my side, and, if I mistake not, there is one in America who will welcome you most gladly?"

"Old Kenny, papa?"

"Old Kenny has a wife, my dear."

CHAPTER XXX.

PRETTY RUTH'S FATE.

IF Hester Hepworth was beautiful in childhood she was doubly so in womanhood. In her mother's early home, surrounded by loving friends and all the refinements of life, she had become even more accomplished than the mother she so closely resembled. Ruth, less vigorous and more shy, had also found hosts of friends, and was even now betrothed to a young man every way desirable and trustworthy.

Hester found none to please her; suitors came and went, much to the amusement of her relatives, who were delighted to keep her still free.

"I suppose we must let you go to America, my love," said her uncle one day when he had received a long letter from her father. "It is horribly selfish in us to keep you here while your father finds it necessary to live there, and yet I do not see how we can spare you."

"You know I only promised to complete my studies here," said Hester, "and I see more and more that my duty lies there; indeed I should have gone long ago."

"Yes, I suppose so. It is hard for poor Thomas, but he will go on bravely doing for others all his life. Whatever you do, child, don't marry one of those unsophisticated, superstitious Yankees, after having a title at your feet."

"My mother refused a title, sir," said Hester, proudly.

"Aye, so she did, and won a man who is every inch a king ; he'll get his crown hereafter."

Hester thanked him with a kiss.

"Come to America with us, uncle, come ; I need you very much : your children are all scattered ; you are here quite alone since grandfather died, and why not come with us ? If the Hepworth name dies with my father, let my mother's live in the new land."

"What nonsense you are talking, child. Isn't my Jack in India, and won't he be coming home to me some day ? Why, lassie, I want to see him settled here where your mother and I played, and here he must keep up the Winthrop name."

"Cousin Jack can come to America, too, uncle ?"

"Pooh, pooh, child ; think of leaving this place for your wretched climate and your barbarous people. I am a stubborn old man, girl, and those rascals over there murdered my beautiful sister. Deliverance told me many things about it, and yet I should like to see your home if it were possible."

"It is possible, uncle ; come ; I shall not be happy leaving you here, and the aunties are so busy with weddings and grandchildren they will not miss your help so much as I. Won't you come, uncle, dear ?"

"Bless my soul, girl, I believe you could bewitch me into anything."

Hester's face flushed. The slightest allusion to witchcraft was painful.

"I will use no art save that of genuine love for you," she said.

"Will you promise not to marry a boorish Yankee if I will consent to spend a year with you?"

"Yes."

"Will you ride with me and sing to me as you do now?"

"Yes, dear uncle."

"Then I will go, for the thought of this place without you and Ruth is unbearable, and that little sly, pale-faced girl has gone and given her heart to a fellow who will carry her off to Paris and keep her there, just like his selfishness."

"You have had her a long time, uncle."

"Of course I have, and you too; and now when my hair is getting white and my temper spoiled you both leave me lone."

"Ah, uncle, you are smiling; you cannot be cross, if you try. We will stay for Ruth's wedding, and then we will make dear papa as happy as we can."

Ruth's wedding was a grand affair. Did not all the cousins far and near make much of this delicate American? Did they not feel a certain family pride in her choice, and rejoice that she would remain in dear old England? Captain Hepworth came to it and brought with him Ruth's brother, who said he could not, would not come, until the captain insisted that his duty pointed that way.

How pleased Uncle Winthrop was to see the young lawyer's surprise when Ruth and Hester appeared before him; how he rubbed his hands with glee, when Ruth walked all about the young man, wondering if it could indeed be brother Samuel, and how the uncle's eyes grew moist, when Captain Hep-

worth gave him some flowers from a grave in far away New England.

"Are you not surprised to see our Samuel so tall and handsome?" asked Ruth, as the girls sat together for their bed-time talk.

"No; I thought he would look like that."

"How droll; I should not have known him."

"I should have known him anywhere; his eyes are just the same, and his voice always deep."

"He would not have known you," he says, "you are so beautiful, and when he bade us farewell you were so pale and sad."

"You were even more so, dear Ruth, and yet your mirror tells a different tale now."

Ruth laughed merrily.

"I have news to tell you, dear," she said. "Your father will take you to Paris with us, if you will go; you wish to, do you not?"

"Much—very much. Do you remember, when my aunts first took us there, how we were pleased with everything, and you would not speak French?"

"I dreaded being laughed at, I dread it still. I never could be brave and fearless like you, Hester."

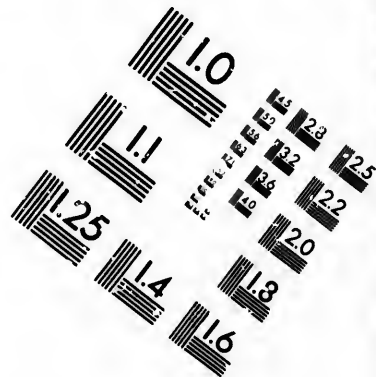
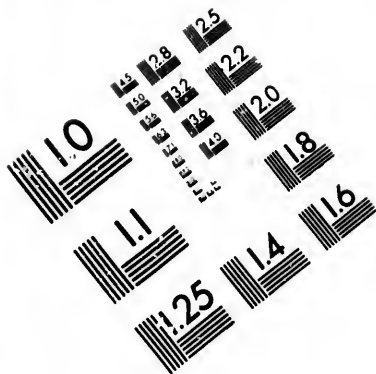
"I learned my lesson in a different school, dear; but we must sleep, or your bridegroom will find fault with faded cheeks and heavy eyes."

"He would not, dear," said Ruth.

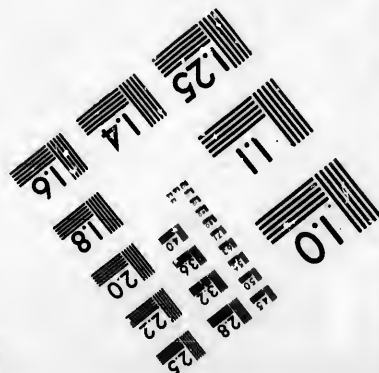
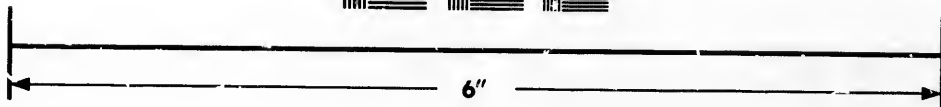
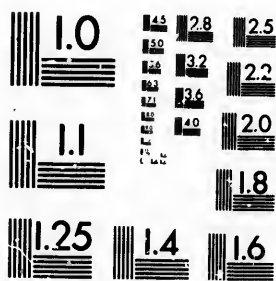
In a darkened room not far away Samuel was thinking of many things, with wide open eyes.

"Dear little Ruth, how like she is to father with her quiet ways. I wish my mother could see her now; perhaps she does. It is well if they can





**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



**Photographic
Sciences
Corporation**

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

18
20
22
25

10
11

see the happiness which comes to us and yet are blind to all our woes. And Hester, she is royal and queenly; she might have taken the title and worn it well. I wonder if she ever thinks of those dark days when I alone could see her? Now she is courted, petted, rich, beautiful and learned, but not proud, except with pride I like to see; a certain stately step, a kind of easy grace with just a touch of haughtiness which keeps her to herself. She little knows how long I have loved her, from her cradle up, in all her plays, her dangers, my distress; and yet she would not, could not love me, I am sure. It's something to be near her, much to find her valued, more to hear her voice. How prettily she said: 'Here, uncle, is the one who saved my life and thought a witch worth saving.'

"The old man truly wept and hugged me, but her eyes were dry. Poor Hester, she learned to hide her feelings in that prison. It was like her to thank me for my care of her father; she forgets that he has cared for me through all these years. When she returns to keep his house I shall remain in Boston; he will not miss me then, and I should miss the more all I have longed and prayed for."

Captain Hepworth and his brother-in-law slept soundly.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WAS SHE A WITCH.

PARIS, gay, bewitching Paris, kept our friends enthralled for many weeks, and then Captain Hepworth must turn his face homeward once more. Hester declined Ruth's invitation to travel with her, well knowing that her father's duties required his presence, and henceforth she resolved that he should not be alone. She detected a weariness quite new to him, and saw with sorrow that his lonely life had told heavily upon him. Both Hester and her father urged Samuel to visit Switzerland and take a more extended rest.

"You have no one but yourself to care for now," said Ruth. "I am happily disposed of, and it is neither wise nor just for you to bury yourself among books."

"I have a profession, dear sister, and I must work if I would succeed."

"Quite right, quite right," said Uncle Winthrop. "Whenever you find genuine success, you may be sure there has been hard fighting back of it; it never comes when you sleep."

"You are dreadfully hard and practical, uncle," said Ruth; but in her secret heart she was proud of her manly brother.

* * * * *

America once more. Great changes had taken place in Hester's absence; she found it hard to recall places she had left, and her father rejoiced that it was so. To her great delight her father purchased a fine house in Boston and only spent a portion of his time at Hill farm. Miss Hepworth became an acknowledged belle, and more than one proud man sought her for his wife; still, she remained the light of her father's home, the wise house mistress and the gracious benefactor. Samuel Jacobs worked on in his profession with the same energy which distinguished him as a boy.

"Your young kinsman will soon be on the bench, Miss Hepworth," said an old lawyer one evening. "He works unceasingly. If you can influence him, do request him to work less and exercise more."

"He has always been accustomed to athletic sports," said Hester, "and he misses them."

"Better invite him to join you on horseback," said her father; "he has neglected it of late, and I myself have seen a certain weariness about the eyes I do not like. Speak to him as soon as may be."

Some days after they were seen galloping out of the city, for Hester's slightest wish was better law than Blackstone to this young man.

"Some time, Cousin Samuel," said Hester, "we must take the ride you took that day with Colson when you sought my father."

"With pleasure, if you will grant me one small request."

"What can it be?"

"No longer call me cousin,"

"Ah, I see, Judge Jacobs is no relative of mine; plain Samuel was," said Hester proudly.

"Not so; Judge Jacobs would be much nearer if he might. He is not satisfied to know that his parents and yours were cousins two removes. My one-time Cousin Hester, will you be my wife?"

Hester started visibly, but did not reply.

"I know I'm over bold; I always was, you will remember. I've watched your lovers come and go and still I dare. For all your life, from baby days to this, I've loved you, and though I am over blunt and no way given to daintiness of speech, I ask in manly, honest fashion if you, with all your beauty, wit and worth, will be my wife?"

Hester's lips trembled, and still she did not speak.

"Have you no word of answer, Hester? Forgive me if I pained you."

"You—you—saved my life," she stammered.

"That must not influence your answer. You saved mine also; for I was mad for vengeance, and might have done some dreadful wrong but for your calm and gentle words. I will not take your gratitude since my own debt is larger. I want love, most pure and simple, such as your mother gave your honored father when she left home and friends and luxury to live with him. You need not have these, but still the love I need and want must be as strong to mate my own."

"Your legal learning has made you critical."

"My years of patient waiting have made me less than patient now. I am not answered yet."

"I cannot give you more than is my own to give. I gave it long ago."

"To whom?"

"Yourself, my own true cousin."

"Do I hear rightly? Speak the answer well! Once more, dear Hester, will you be my wife?"

Slowly but clearly came the solemn words, "I will."

"Thank heaven, I am content."

Still on they went, those lovers of the long ago; she with her proud head half turned aside, he stately as a king. The sun was setting when they turned their horses' steps; and in the Boston home a white-haired man was saying, "How long the children are in getting back! I have a letter here from my dear boy, and in it a kind message for Hester. Jack says he'd rather settle in America than be an elder son in England. He's proud, the rascal—thank God he is not poor."

"Here they come to us at last," said Captain Hepworth, who was looking from the window. "How well my dear girl holds herself on horseback."

"Thank me for that, sir. I trained the chit myself, and I must admit she was a ready scholar, being her father's daughter. Ah, there she is, and not a finer face was ever seen in your old Yankee town. My Jack will lose his heart when he sees her."

They came in together hand in hand, and Hester's conscious blush grew deeper as Samuel said, "Your daughter promises to be my wife if you will but consent, sir."

"Consent? You have been my son for years. Dear ones, God bless you. My precious girl, I only add by law the son I've loved so long. Wish them much joy, good brother Winthrop."

"I'll not ; no, no, I'll not ; the saucy jade gave me her solemn word she would not wed a Yankee."

"Ah, uncle, you said an 'unsophisticated, superstitious, boorish Yankee,' and Samuel, is he quite that?"

"No, on my soul he is not. Here, judge, give me your hand ; girl, kiss your old uncle. My Jack is coming to America, and here I'll stay."

"Hester, upon my soul you are a witch—a shy, heart-stealing, man-beguiling witch. I never saw a woman who was not."

THE END.

Burdock
B
BLOOD
B
BITTERS

THE KEY TO HEALTH unlocks all the clogged secretions of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels and Blood, carrying off all humors and impurities from the entire system, correcting Acidity, and curing Biliousness, Dyspepsia, Sick Headache, Constipation, Rheumatism, Dropsy, Dry Skin, Dizziness, Jaundice, Heartburn, Nervous and General Debility, Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Scrofula, etc. It purifies and eradicates from the Blood all poisonous humors, from a common Pimple to the worst Scrofulous Sore.

JOHNSTON'S FLUID BEEF



THE GREAT
Strength Giver

THE GLORY OF A MAN IS HIS STRENGTH



An Invaluable Food
FOR

Invalids & Convalescents

— BECAUSE: —

Easily Digested by the
WEAKEST STOMACH.

Useful in domestic economy
for making delicious Beef Teas
enriching Gravies and Soups.

Burdock
BLOOD
BITTERS

THE KEY TO HEALTH unlocks all the clogged secretions of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels and Blood, carrying off all humors and impurities from the entire system, correcting Acidity, and curing Biliousness, Dyspepsia, Sick headache, Constipation, Rheumatism, Dropsy, Dry Skin, Dizziness, Jaundice, Heartburn, Nervous and General Debility, Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Scrofula, etc. It purifies and eradicates from the Blood all poisonous humors, from a common Pimple to the worst Scrofulous Sore.

REAT

Giver

Food

lesce ts

by the
MACH.

economy
Beef Tea
d Soups.

unlocks
ch, Liver,
mors and
ing Acid-
tick Head-
pay, Dry
Nervous
rysipelas,
from the
common

