

CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK



HOPE LESLIE

HISTORICAL NOVEL

Catharine Maria Sedgwick

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Here stood the Indian chieftain, rejoicing in his
glory!
How deep the shade of sadness that rests upon
his story.
For the white man came with power - like brethren
they met.
But the Indian fires went out, and the Indian sun
has set!
And the chieftain has departed - gone is his
hunting ground,
And the twanging of his bowstring is a forgotten
sound.
Where dwelleth yesterday? and where is Echo's
cell?
Where has the rainbow vanished? - there does the
Indian dwell.

PREFACE

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The following volumes are not offered to the public as being in any degree an historical narrative, or a relation of real events. Real characters and real events are, however, alluded to; and this course, if not strictly necessary, was found very convenient in the execution of the author's design, which was to illustrate not the history, but the character of the times.

The antiquarian reader will perceive that some liberties have been taken with the received accounts of Sir Philip (or Sir Christopher) Gardiner; and a slight variation has been allowed in the chronology of the Pequod war.

The first settlers of New England were not illiterate, but learned and industrious men. They seem to have understood the importance of their station. The Massachusetts colony, and some of the other establishments sparsely scattered on the coast, were illuminated spots, clear and bright lights, set on the borders of a dark and turbulent wilderness. Those who have not paid much attention to the history or character of these early settlements, if they choose to turn their attention to this interesting subject, will be surprised to find how clear, copious, and authentic are the accounts which our ancestors left behind them. The only merit claimed by the present writer is that of a patient investigation of all the materials that could be obtained. A full delineation of these times was not even attempted; but the main solicitude has been to exclude every thing decidedly inconsistent with them.

The Indians of North America are, perhaps, the only race of men of whom it may be said, that though conquered, they were never enslaved. They could not submit, and live. When made captives, they courted death, and exulted in

torture. These traits of their character will be viewed by an impartial observer, in a light very different from that in which they were regarded by our ancestors. In our histories, it was perhaps natural that they should be represented as "surly dogs," who preferred to die rather than live, from no other motives than a stupid or malignant obstinacy. Their own historians or poets, if they had such, would as naturally, and with more justice, have extolled their high-souled courage and patriotism.

The writer is aware that it may be thought that the character of Magawisca has no prototype among the aborigines of this country. Without citing Pocohontas, or any other individual, as authority, it may be sufficient to remark, that in such delineations, we are confined not to the actual, but the possible.

The liberal philanthropist will not be offended by a representation which supposes that the elements of virtue and intellect are not withheld from any branch of the human family; and the enlightened and accurate observer of human nature, will admit that the difference of character among the various races of the earth, arises mainly from difference of condition.

These volumes are so far from being intended as a substitute for genuine history, that the ambition of the writer would be fully gratified if, by this work, any of our young countrymen should be stimulated to investigate the early history of their native land.

CHAPTER 1

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“Virtue may be assail’d, but never hurt,
Surpris’d by unjust force, but not enthrall’d;
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.”

Comus

William Fletcher was the son of a respectable country gentleman of Suffolk, in England; and the destined heir of his uncle Sir William Fletcher, an eminent lawyer, who had employed his talents with such effective zeal and pliant principle, that he had won his way to courtly favour and secured a courtly fortune.

Sir William had only one child - a daughter; and possessing the common ambition of transmitting his name with his wealth, he selected his nephew as the future husband of his daughter Alice.

“Take good heed,” Sir William thus expressed himself in a letter to his brother,

take good heed that the boy be taught unquestioning and unqualified loyalty to his sovereign - the Alpha and Omega of political duty. These are times when every true subject has his price. Divers of the leaders of the Commons are secret friends of the seditious mischief-brewing puritans; and Buckingham himself is suspected of favouring their cabals - but this sub rosa - I burn not my fingers with these matters. ‘He who meddleth with another man’s strifes, taketh a dog by the ear,’ said the wisest man that ever lived; and he - thank God - was a king. Caution Will against all vain speculation and idle inquiries - there are those that are for ever inquiring

and inquiring, and never coming to the truth. One inquiry should suffice for a loyal subject. 'What is established?' and that being well ascertained, the line of duty is so plain, that he who runs may read.

I would that all our youths had inscribed on their hearts that golden rule of political religion, framed and well maintained by our good Queen Elizabeth. 'No man should be suffered to decline either on the left or on the right hand, from the drawn line limited by authority, and by the sovereign's laws and injunctions.'

Instead of such healthy maxims, our lads' heads are crammed with the philosophy and rhetoric and history of those liberty-loving Greeks and Romans. This is the pernicious lore that has poisoned our academical fountains. Liberty, what is it! Daughter of disloyalty and mother of all misrule - who, from the hour that she tempted our first parents to forfeit paradise, hath ever worked mischief to our race.

But above all, brother, as you value the temporal salvation of your boy, restrain him from all confederacy, association, or even acquaintance with the puritans. If my master took counsel of me, he would ship these mad canting fools to our New England colonies, where their tender consciences would be no more offended because, forsooth, a prelate saith his prayers in white vestments, and where they might enjoy with the savages that primitive equality, about which they make such a pother. God forefend that our good lad William should company with these misdoers! He must be narrowly watched; for, as I hear, there is a neighbour of yours, one Winthrop, (a notable gentleman too, as they say, but he doth grievously scandalize his birth and breeding) who hath embraced these scurvy principles, and doth magnify them with the authority of his birth and condition, and hath much weight with the country. There is in Suffolk too, as I am told, one Eliot, a young

zealot - a fanatical incendiary, who doth find ample combustibles in the gossiping matrons, idle maidens, and lawless youth who flock about him.

These are dangerous neighbours - rouse yourself, brother - give over your idle sporting with hawk and hound, and watch over this goodly scion of ours - ours, I say, but I forewarn you, no daughter or guinea of mine shall ever go to one who is infected with this spreading plague.

This letter was too explicit to be misunderstood; but so far from having the intended effect of awakening the caution of the expectant of fortune, it rather stimulated the pride of the independent country gentleman. He permitted his son to follow the bent of accident, or the natural course of a serious, reflecting, and enthusiastic temper. Winthrop, the future governor of Massachusetts, was the counsellor of young Fletcher; and Eliot, the "apostle of New England," his most intimate friend. These were men selected of Heaven to achieve a great work. In the quaint language of the time, "the Lord sifted three nations for precious seed to sow the wilderness."

There were interested persons who were not slow in conveying to Sir William unfavourable reports of his nephew, and the young man received a summons from his uncle, who hoped, by removing him from the infected region, to rescue him from danger.

Sir William's pride was gratified by the elegant appearance and graceful deportment of his nephew, whom he had expected to see with the "slovenly and lawyerlike carriage" that marked the scholars of the times. The pliant courtier was struck with the lofty independence of the youth who, from the first, shewed that neither frowns nor favour would induce him to bow the knee to the idols Sir William had served. There was something in this independence that awed the inferior mind of the uncle. To him it was an

unknown mysterious power, which he knew not how to approach, and almost despaired of subduing. However, he was experienced in life, and had observed enough of human infirmity to convince him, that there was no human virtue that had not some weak - some assailable point. Time and circumstances were not long in developing the vulnerability of the nephew. Alice Fletcher had been the companion of his childhood. They now met without any of the reserve that often prevents an intimate intercourse between young persons, and proceeds from the consciousness of a susceptibility which it would seem to deny.

The intercourse of the cousins was renewed with all the frankness and artlessness of the sunny season of childish love and confidence. Alice had been educated in retirement, by her mother, whom she had recently attended through a long and fatal illness. She had been almost the exclusive object of her love, for there was little congeniality between the father and daughter. The ties of nature may command all dutiful observances, but they cannot control the affections. Alice was deeply afflicted by her bereavement. Her cousin's serious temper harmonized with her sorrow, and nature and opportunity soon indissolubly linked their hearts together.

Sir William perceived their growing attachment and exulted in it; for, as he fancied, it reduced his nephew to dependence on his will and whims. He had never himself experienced the full strength of any generous sentiment; but he had learned from observation, that love was a controlling passion, and he now most anxiously watched and promoted the kindling of the flame, in the expectation that the fire would subdue the principles of civil and religious liberty, with which he had but too well ascertained the mind of his nephew to be imbued.

He silently favoured the constant and exclusive intercourse of the young people: he secretly contrived various modes of increasing their mutual dependence; and,

when he was certain their happiness was staked, he cast the die. He told his nephew that he perceived and rejoiced in the mutual affection that had so naturally sprung up between him and his daughter, and he confessed their union had been the favourite object of his life; and said, that he now heartily accorded his consent to it, prescribing one condition only - but that condition was unalterable. "You must abjure, William, in the presence of witnesses," he said, "the fanatical notions of liberty and religion with which you have been infected - you must pledge yourself, by a solemn oath, to unqualified obedience to the king, and adherence to the established church: you shall have time enough for the effervescence of your young blood. God send this fermentation may work off all impurities. Nay, answer me not now. Take a day - a week - a month for consideration; for on your decision depends fortune and love - or the alternative, beggary and exile."

If a pit had yawned beneath his feet, and swallowed Alice from his view, William Fletcher could not have been more shocked. He was soul-stricken, as one who listens to a sentence of death. To his eye the earth was shrouded in darkness; not an object of hope or pursuit remained.

He had believed his uncle was aware of what he must deem his political and religious delinquency; but he had never spoken to him on the subject: he had treated him with marked favour, and he had so evidently encouraged his attachment to his cousin, that he had already plighted his love to her, and received her vows without fearing that he had passed even the limit of strict prudence.

There was no accommodating flexibility in his principles; his fidelity to what he deemed his duty could not have been subdued by the fires of martyrdom, and he did not hesitate to sacrifice what was dearer than life to it. He took the resolution at once to fly from the temptation that, present, he dared not trust himself to resist.

“I shall not again see my Alice,” he said. “I have not courage to meet her smiles; I have not strength to endure her tears.”

In aid of his resolution there came, most opportunely, a messenger from his father, requiring his immediate presence. This afforded him a pretext for his sudden departure from London. He left a few brief lines for Alice, that expressed without explaining the sadness of his heart.

His father died a few hours before he arrived at the paternal mansion. He was thus released from his strongest natural tie. His mother had been long dead; and he had neither brother nor sister. He inherited a decent patrimony, sufficient at least to secure the independence of a gentleman. He immediately repaired to Groton, to his friend Winthrop; not that he should dictate his duty to him, but as one leans on the arm of a friend when he finds his own strength scarcely sufficient to support him.

Mr Winthrop is well known to have been a man of the most tender domestic affections and sympathies; but he had then been long married - and *twice* married - and probably a little dimness had come over his recollection of the enthusiasm of a first passion. When Fletcher spoke of Alice's unequalled loveliness, and of his own unconquerable love, his friend listened as one listens to a tale he has heard a hundred times, and seemed to regard the cruel circumstances in which the ardent lover was placed only in the light of a fit and fine opportunity of making a sacrifice to the great and good cause to which this future statesman had even then begun to devote himself, as the sole object of his life. He treated his friend's sufferings as in their nature transient and curable; and concluded by saying, “the Lord hath prepared this fire, my friend, to temper your faith, and you will come out of it the better prepared for your spiritual warfare.”

Fletcher listened to him with stern resolution, like him who permits a surgeon to probe a wound which he is himself

certain is incurable.

Mr Winthrop knew that a ship was appointed to sail from Southampton in a few days for New England. With that characteristic zeal which then made all the intentions of Providence so obvious to the eye of faith, and the interpretation of all the events of life so easy, Mr Winthrop assured his friend that the designs of Heaven, in relation to him, were plain. He said, "there was a great call for such services as he could render in the expedition just about to sail, and which was like to fail for the want of them; and that now, like a faithful servant to the cause he had confessed, he must not look behind, but press on to the things that were before."

Fletcher obeyed the voice of Heaven. This is no romantic fiction. Hundreds in that day resisted all that solicits earthly passions, and sacrificed all that gratifies them, to the cause of God and of man - the cause of liberty and religion. This cause was not to their eyes invested with any romantic attractions. It was not assisted by the illusions of chivalry, nor magnified by the spiritual power and renown of crusades. Our fathers neither had, nor expected, their reward on earth.

One severe duty remained to be performed. Fletcher must announce their fate to Alice. He honoured her too much to believe she would have permitted the sacrifice of his integrity, if he would have made it. He, therefore, had nothing to excuse; nothing but to tell the terrible truth - to try to reconcile her to her father - to express, for the last time, his love, and to pray that he might receive, at Southampton, one farewell line from her. Accompanying his letter to Alice was one to Sir William, announcing the decision to resign his favour and exile himself for ever from England.

He arranged his affairs, and in a few days received notice that the vessel was ready to sail. He repaired to Southampton, and as he was quitting the inn to embark in

the small boat that was to convey him to the vessel, already in the offing, a voice from an inner apartment pronounced his name - and at the next moment Alice was in his arms. She gently reproved him for having estimated her affection at so low a rate as not to have anticipated that she should follow him, and share his destiny. It was more than could have been expected from man, that Fletcher should have opposed such a resolution. He had but a moment for deliberation. Most of the passengers had already embarked; some still lingered on the strand protracting their last farewell to their country and their friends. In the language of one of the most honoured of these pilgrims - "truly doleful was the sight of that sad and mournful parting, to hear what sighs, and sobs, and prayers, did sound amongst them; what tears did gush from every eye, and pithy speeches pierced each other's hearts."

With the weeping group Fletcher left Alice and her attendants, while he went to the vessel to prepare for her suitable reception. He there found a clergyman, and bespoke his holy offices to unite him to his cousin immediately after their embarkation.

All the necessary arrangements were made, and he was returning to the shore, his eye fixed on the lovely being whom he believed Heaven had interposed to give to him, when he descried Sir William's carriage guarded by a cavalcade of armed men, in the uniform of the King's guards, approaching the spot where she stood.

He comprehended at once their cruel purpose. He exhorted the boatmen to put forth all their strength; he seized the oars himself - despair gave him supernatural power - the boat shot forward with the velocity of light; but all in vain! - he only approached near enough to the shore to hear Alice's last impotent cries to him - to see her beautiful face convulsed with agony, and her arms outstretched towards him - when she was forced to the carriage by her father, and driven from his sight.

He leaped on the strand; he followed the troop with cries and entreaties; but he was only answered by the coarse jeering and profane jests of the soldiery.

Notice was soon given that the boat was ready to return to the ship for the last time, and Fletcher in a state of agitation and despair, almost amounting to insanity, permitted it to return without him.

He went to London and requested an interview with his uncle. The request was granted, and a long and secret conference ensued. It was known by the servants of the household, that their mistress, Alice, had been summoned by her father to this meeting; but what was said or done, did not transpire. Immediately after, Fletcher returned to Mr Winthrop's in Suffolk. The fixedness of despair was on his countenance; but he said nothing, even to this confidential friend, of the interview with his uncle. The particulars of the affair at Southampton, which had already reached Suffolk, seemed sufficiently to explain his misery.

In less than a fortnight he there received despatches from his uncle, informing him that he had taken effectual measures to save himself from a second conspiracy against the honour of his family - that his daughter, Alice, had that day been led to the altar by Charles Leslie; and concluding with a polite hope, that though his voyage had been interrupted, it might not be long deferred.

Alice had, indeed, in the imbecility of utter despair, submitted to her father's commands. It was intimated at the time, and reported for many years after, that she had suffered a total alienation of mind. To the world this was never contradicted, for she lived in absolute retirement; but those who best knew could have attested, that if her mind had departed from its beautiful temple, an angelic spirit had entered in and possessed it.

William Fletcher was, in a few months, persuaded to unite himself with an orphan girl, a ward of Mr Winthrop, who had, in the eyes of the elders, all the meek graces that

befitted a godly maiden and dutiful helpmate. Fletcher remained constant to his purpose of emigrating to New England, but he did not effect it till the year 1630, when he embarked with his family and effects in the ship Arabella, with Governor Winthrop, who then, for the first time, went to that land where his name will ever be held in affectionate and honourable remembrance.

CHAPTER 2

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“For the temper of the brain in quick apprehensions and acute judgments, to say no more, the most High and Sovereign God hath not made the Indian inferior to the European.”

Roger Williams

The magnitude of the enterprise in which the first settlers of New England were engaged, the terrific obstacles they encountered, and the hardships they endured, gave to their characters a seriousness and solemnity, heightened, it may be, by the severity of their religious faith.

Where all were serious the melancholy of an individual was not conspicuous; and Mr Fletcher’s sadness would probably have passed unnoticed, but for the reserve of his manners, which piqued the pride of his equals, and provoked the curiosity of his inferiors.

The first probably thought that the apostolic principle of community of goods at least extended to opinions and feelings; and the second always fancy when a man shuts the door of his lips that there must be some secret worth knowing within.

Like many other men of an ardent temperament and disinterested love of his species, Mr Fletcher was disappointed at the slow operation of principles, which, however efficient and excellent in the abstract, were to be applied to various and discordant subjects. Such men, inexperienced in the business of life, are like children, who, setting out on a journey, are impatient after the few first paces to be at the end of it. They cannot endure the rebuffs and delays that retard them in their course. These are the

men of genius – the men of feeling – the men that the world calls visionaries; and it is because they are visionaries – because they have a beau-ideal in their own minds, to which they can see but a faint resemblance in the actual state of things, that they become impatient of detail, and cannot brook the slow progress to perfection. They are too rapid in their anticipations. The character of man, and the institutions of society, are yet very far from their possible and destined perfection. Still, how far is the present age in advance of that which drove reformers to a dreary wilderness! – of that which hanged Quakers! – of that which condemned to death, as witches, innocent, unoffending old women! But it is unnecessary to heighten the glory of our risen day by comparing it with the preceding twilight.

To return to Mr Fletcher. He was mortified at seeing power, which had been earned at so dear a rate, and which he had fondly hoped was to be applied to the advancement of man's happiness, sometimes perverted to purposes of oppression and personal aggrandizement. He was shocked when a religious republic, which he fancied to be founded on the basis of established truth, was disturbed by the outbreak of heresies; and his heart sickened when he saw those, who had sacrificed whatever man holds dearest to religious freedom, imposing those shackles on others from which they had just released themselves at such a price. Partly influenced by these disgusts, and partly by that love of contemplation and retirement that belongs to a character of his cast, especially when depressed by some early disappointment, he refused the offices of honour and trust that were, from time to time, offered to him; and finally, in 1636, when Pynchon, Holioko, and Chapin formed their settlement at Springfield, on Connecticut river, he determined to retire from the growing community of Boston to this frontier settlement.

Mrs Fletcher received his decision as all wives of that age of undisputed masculine supremacy (or most of those of our

less passive age) would do, with meek submission. The inconveniencies and dangers of that outpost were not unknown to her, nor did she underrate them; but Abraham would as soon have remonstrated against the command that bade him go forth from his father's house into the land of the Chaldees, as she would have failed in passive obedience to the resolve of her husband.

The removal was effected early in the summer of 1636. Springfield assumed, at once, under the auspices of its wealthy and enterprising proprietors, the aspect of a village. The first settlers followed the course of the Indians, and planted themselves on the borders of rivers - the natural gardens of the earth, where the soil is mellowed and enriched by the annual overflowing of the streams, and prepared by the unassisted processes of nature to yield to the indolent Indian his scanty supply of maize and other esculents. The wigwams which constituted the village, or, to use the graphic aboriginal designation, the 'smoke' of the natives gave place to the clumsy, but more convenient dwellings of the pilgrims.

Where there are now contiguous rows of shops, filled with the merchandise of the east, the manufactures of Europe, the rival fabrics of our own country, and the fruits of the tropics; where now stands the stately hall of justice - the academy - the bank - churches, orthodox and heretic, and all the symbols of a rich and populous community - were, at the early period of our history, a few log houses, planted around a fort, defended by a slight embankment and palisade.

The mansions of the proprietors were rather more spacious and artificial than those of their more humble associates, and were built on the well known model of the modest dwelling illustrated by the birth of Milton - a form still abounding in the eastern parts of Massachusetts, and presenting to the eye of a New Englander the familiar aspect of an awkward friendly country cousin.

The first clearing was limited to the plain. The beautiful hill that is now the residence of the gentry (for there yet lives such a class in the heart of our democratic community) and is embellished with stately edifices and expensive pleasure grounds, was then the border of a dense forest, and so richly fringed with the original growth of trees, that scarce a sunbeam had penetrated to the parent earth.

Mr Fletcher was at first welcomed as an important acquisition to the infant establishment; but he soon proved that he purposed to take no part in its concerns, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the proprietors, he fixed his residence a mile from the village, deeming exposure to the incursions of the savages very slight, and the surveillance of an inquiring neighbourhood a certain evil. His domain extended from a gentle eminence, that commanded an extensive view of the bountiful Connecticut to the shore, where the river indented the meadow by one of those sweeping graceful curves by which it seems to delight to beautify the land it nourishes.

The border of the river was fringed with all the water loving trees; but the broad meadows were quite cleared, excepting that a few elms and sycamores had been spared by the Indians, and consecrated, by tradition, as the scene of revels or councils. The house of our pilgrim was a low-roofed modest structure, containing ample accommodation for a patriarchal family; where children, dependants, and servants were all to be sheltered under one roof-tree. On one side, as we have described, lay an open and extensive plain; within view was the curling smoke from the little cluster of houses about the fort - the habitation of civilized man; but all else was a savage howling wilderness.

Never was a name more befitting the condition of a people, than 'Pilgrim' that of our forefathers. It should be redeemed from the puritanical and ludicrous associations which have degraded it, in most men's minds, and be hallowed by the sacrifices made by these voluntary exiles.

They were pilgrims, for they had resigned, for ever, what the good hold most dear – their homes. Home can never be transferred; never repeated in the experience of an individual. The place consecrated by parental love, by the innocence and sports of childhood, by the first acquaintance with nature; by the linking of the heart to the visible creation, is the only home. There there is a living and breathing spirit infused into nature: every familiar object has a history – the trees have tongues, and the very air is vocal. There the vesture of decay doth not close in and control the noble functions of the soul. It sees and hears and enjoys without the ministry of gross material substance.

Mr Fletcher had resided a few months in Springfield when he one day entered with an open letter in his hand, that apartment of his humble dwelling styled, by courtesy, the parlour. His wife was sitting there with her eldest son, a stripling of fourteen, busily assisting him in twisting a cord for his crossbow. She perceived that her husband looked disturbed; but he said nothing, and her habitual deference prevented her inquiring into the cause of his discomposure.

After taking two or three turns about the room, he said to his son, “Everell, my boy – go to the door, and await there the arrival of an Indian girl; she is, as you may see, yonder by the riverside, and will be here shortly. I would not that Jennet should, at the very first, shock the child with her discourteous ways.”

“Child! coming here!” exclaimed the boy, dropping his bow and gazing through the window – “Who is she? – that tall girl, father – she is no more a child than I am!”

His mother smiled at an exclamation that betrayed a common juvenile jealousy of the honour of dawning manhood, and bade the boy obey his father’s directions. When Everell had left the apartment, Mr Fletcher said, “I have just received letters from Boston – from Governor Winthrop” – he paused.

“Our friends are all well, I hope,” said Mrs Fletcher.

“Yes, Martha, our friends are all well – but these letters contain something of more importance than aught that concerns the health of the perishing body.”

Mr Fletcher again hesitated, and his wife, perplexed by his embarrassment, inquired, “Has poor deluded Mrs Hutchinson again presumed to disturb the peace of God’s people?”

“Martha, you aim wide of the mark. My present emotions are not those of a mourner for Zion. A ship has arrived from England, and in it came” –

“My brother Stretton!” exclaimed Mrs Fletcher.

“No – no, Martha. It will be long ere Stretton quits his paradise to join a suffering people in the wilderness.”

He paused for a moment, and when he again spoke, the softened tone of his voice evinced that he was touched by the expression of disappointment, slightly tinged by displeasure that shaded his wife’s gentle countenance. “Forgive me, my dear wife,” he said. “I should not have spoken aught that implied censure of your brother; for I know he hath ever been most precious in your eyes – albeit, not the less so, that he is yet without the fold – That which I have to tell you – and it were best that it were quickly told – is, that my cousin Alice was a passenger in this newly arrived ship. Martha, your blushes wrong you. The mean jealousies that degrade some women have, I am sure, never been harboured in your heart.”

“If I deserve your praise, it is because the Lord has been pleased to purify my heart and make it his sanctuary. But, if I have not the jealousies, I have the feelings of a woman, and I cannot forget that you were once affianced to your cousin Alice – and” –

“And that I once told you, Martha, frankly, that the affection I gave to her, could not be transferred to another. That love grew with my growth – strengthened with my strength. Of its beginning, I had no more consciousness than of the commencement of my existence. It was sunshine and

flowers in all the paths of my childhood. It inspired every hope - modified every project - such was the love I bore to Alice - love immortal as the soul! -

“You know how cruelly we were severed at Southampton - how she was torn from the strand by the king’s guards - within my view, almost within my grasp. How Sir William tempted me with the offer of pardon - my cousin’s hand - and, - poor temptation indeed after that! - honours, fortune. You know that even Alice, my precious beautiful Alice, knelt to me. That smitten of God and man, and for the moment, bereft of the right use of reason, she would have persuaded me to yield my integrity. You know that her cruel father reproached me with virtually breaking my plighted troth, that many of my friends urged my present conformity; and you know, Martha, that there was a principle in my bosom that triumphed over all these temptations. And think you not that principle has preserved me faithful in my friendship to you? Think you not that your obedience - your careful conformity to my wishes; your steady love, which hath kept far more than even measure with my deserts, is undervalued - can be lightly estimated?”

“Oh, I know,” said the humble wife, “that your goodness to me does far surpass my merit; but bethink you, it is the nature of a woman to crave the first place.”

“It is the right of a wife, Martha; and there is none now to contest it with you. This is but the second time I have spoken to you on a subject that has been much in our thoughts: that has made me wayward, and would have made my sojourning on earth miserable, but that you have been my support and comforter. These letters contain tidings that have opened a long sealed fountain. My uncle, Sir William, died last January. Leslie perished in a foreign service. Alice, thus released from all bonds, and sole mistress of her fortunes, determined to cast her lot in the heritage of God’s people. She embarked with her two girls - her only children - a tempestuous voyage proved too much

for a constitution already broken by repeated shocks. She was fully aware of her approaching death, and died as befits a child of faith, in sweet peace. Would to God I could have seen her once more - but," he added, raising his eyes devoutly, "not my will but thine be done! The sister of Leslie, a Mistress Grafton, attended Alice, and with her she left a will committing her children to my guardianship. It will be necessary for me to go to Boston to assume this trust. I shall leave home tomorrow, after making suitable provision for your safety and comfort in my absence. These children will bring additional labour to your household; and in good time hath our thoughtful friend Governor Winthrop procured for us two Indian servants. The girl has arrived. The boy is retained about the little Leslies; the youngest of whom, it seems, is a petted child; and is particularly pleased by his activity in ministering to her amusement."

"I am glad if any use can be made of an Indian servant," said Mrs Fletcher, who, oppressed with conflicting emotions, expressed the lightest of them - a concern at a sudden increase of domestic cares where there were no facilities to lighten them.

"How any use! You surely do not doubt, Martha, that these Indians possess the same faculties that we do. The girl, just arrived, our friend writes me, hath rare gifts of mind - such as few of God's creatures are endowed with. She is just fifteen; she understands and speaks English perfectly well, having been taught it by an English captive, who for a long time dwelt with her tribe. On that account she was much noticed by the English who traded with the Pequods; and young as she was, she acted as their interpreter.

"She is the daughter of one of their chiefs, and when this wolfish tribe were killed, or dislodged from their dens, she, her brother, and their mother, were brought with a few other captives to Boston. They were given for a spoil to the soldiers. Some, by a Christian use of money, were

redeemed; and others, I blush to say it, for 'it is God's gift that every man should enjoy the good of his own labour,' were sent into slavery in the West Indies. Monoca, the mother of these children, was noted for the singular dignity and modesty of her demeanor. Many notable instances of her kindness to the white traders are recorded; and when she was taken to Boston, our worthy governor, ever mindful of his duties, assured her that her good deeds were held in remembrance, and that he would testify the gratitude of his people in any way she should direct. 'I have nothing to ask,' she said, 'but that I and my children may receive no personal dishonour.'

"The governor redeemed her children, and assured her they should be cared for. For herself, misery and sorrow had so wrought on her, that she was fast sinking into the grave. Many Christian men and women laboured for her conversion but she would not even consent that the holy word should be interpreted to her; insisting, in the pride of her soul, that all the children of the Great Spirit were equal objects of His favour; and that He had not deemed the book he had withheld, needful to them."

"And did she," inquired Mrs Fletcher, "thus perish in her sins?"

"She died," replied her husband, "immoveably fixed in those sentiments. But, Martha, we should not suit God's mercy to the narrow frame of our thoughts. This poor savage's life, as far as it has come to our knowledge, was marked with innocence and good deeds; and I would gladly believe that we may hope for her, on that broad foundation laid by the Apostle Peter - 'In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.'"

"That text," answered Mrs Fletcher, her heart easily kindling with the flame of charity, "is a light behind many a dark scripture, like the sun shining all around the edges of a cloud that would fain hide its beams."

“Such thoughts, my dear wife, naturally spring from thy kind heart, and are sweet morsels for private meditation; but it were well to keep them in thine own bosom lest, taking breath, they should lighten the fears of unstable souls. But here comes the girl, Magawisca, clothed in her Indian garb, which the governor has permitted her to retain, not caring, as he wisely says, to interfere with their innocent peculiarities; and she, in particular, having shewn a loathing of the English dress.”

Everell Fletcher now threw wide open the parlour door, inviting the Indian girl, by a motion of his hand and a kind smile, to follow. She did so, and remained standing beside him, with her eyes rivetted to the floor, while every other eye was turned towards her. She and her conductor were no unfit representatives of the people from whom they sprung. Everell Fletcher was a fair ruddy boy of fourteen; his smooth brow and bright curling hair, bore the stamp of the morning of life; hope and confidence and gladness beamed in the falcon glance of his keen blue eye; and love and frolic played about his lips. The active hardy habits of life, in a new country, had already knit his frame, and given him the muscle of manhood; while his quick elastic step truly expressed the untamed spirit of childhood – the only spirit without fear and without reproach. His dress was of blue cloth, closely fitting his person; the sleeves reached midway between the elbow and wrist, and the naked, and as it would seem to a modern eye, awkward space, was garnished with deep-pointed lace ruffles of a coarse texture; a ruff, or collar of the same material, was worn about the neck.

The Indian stranger was tall for her years, which did not exceed fifteen. Her form was slender, flexible, and graceful; and there was a freedom and loftiness in her movement which, though tempered with modesty, expressed a consciousness of high birth. Her face, although marked by the peculiarities of her race, was beautiful even to an

European eye. Her features were regular, and her teeth white as pearls; but there must be something beyond symmetry of feature to fix the attention, and it was an expression of dignity, thoughtfulness, and deep dejection that made the eye linger on Magawisca's face, as if it were perusing there the legible record of her birth and wrongs. Her hair, contrary to the fashion of the Massachusetts Indians, was parted on her forehead, braided, and confined to her head by a band of small feathers, jet black, and interwoven, and attached at equal distances by rings of polished bone. She wore a waistcoat of deerskin, fastened at the throat by a richly wrought collar. Her arms, a model for sculpture, were bare. A mantle of purple cloth hung gracefully from her shoulders, and was confined at the waist by a broad band, ornamented with rude hieroglyphics. The mantle and her strait short petticoat or kilt of the same rare and costly material, had been obtained, probably, from the English traders. Stockings were an unknown luxury; but leggings, similar to those worn by the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's court, were no bad substitute. The moccasin, neatly fitted to a delicate foot and ankle, and tastefully ornamented with beadwork, completed the apparel of this daughter of a chieftain, which altogether, had an air of wild and fantastic grace, that harmonized well with the noble demeanor and peculiar beauty of the young savage.

Mr Fletcher surveyed her for a moment with a mingled feeling of compassion and curiosity, and then turning away and leaning his head on the mantelpiece, his thoughts reverted to the subject that had affected him far more deeply than he had ventured to confess, even to the wife of his bosom.

Mrs Fletcher's first feeling was rather that of a housewife than a tender woman. 'My husband,' she thought, 'might as well have brought a wild doe from the forest to plough his fields, as to give me this Indian girl for household labour; but the wisest men have no sense in these matters.' This

natural domestic reflection was soon succeeded by a sentiment of compassion, which scarcely needed to be stimulated by Everell's whisper of "do, mother, speak to her."

"Magawisca," she said in a friendly tone, "you are welcome among us, girl." Magawisca bowed her head. Mrs Fletcher continued: "you should receive it as a signal mercy, child, that you have been taken from the midst of a savage people, and set in a Christian family." Mrs Fletcher paused for her auditor's assent, but the proposition was either unintelligible or unacceptable to Magawisca.

"Mistress Fletcher means," said a middle-aged serving woman who had just entered the room, "that you should be mightily thankful, Tawney, that you are snatched as a brand from the burning."

"Hush, Jennet!" said Everell Fletcher, touching the speaker with the point of an arrow which he held in his hand.

Magawisca's eyes had turned on Jennet, flashing like a sunbeam through an opening cloud. Everell's interposition touched a tender chord, and when she again cast them down, a tear trembled on their lids.

"You will have no hard service to do," said Mrs Fletcher, resuming her address. "I cannot explain all to you now; but you will soon perceive that our civilized life is far easier - far better and happier than your wild wandering ways, which are indeed, as you will presently see, but little superior to those of the wolves and foxes."

Magawisca suppressed a reply that her heart sent to her quivering lips; and Everell said, "hunted, as the Indians are, to their own dens, I am sure, mother, they need the fierceness of the wolf, and the cunning of the fox."

"True - true, my son," replied Mrs Fletcher, who really meant no unkindness in expressing what she deemed a self-evident truth; and then turning again to Magawisca, she

said, in a gentle tone, "you have had a long and fatiguing journey - was it not, girl?"

"My foot," replied Magawisca, "is used to the wildwood path. The deer tires not of his way on the mountain, nor the bird of its flight in the air."

She uttered her natural feeling in so plaintive a tone that it touched the heart like a strain of sad music; and when Jennet again officiously interposed in the conversation, by saying, that "truly these savages have their house in the wilderness, and their way no man knows," her mistress cut short her outpouring by directing her to go to the outer door and learn who it was that Digby was conducting to the house.

A moment after Digby, Mr Fletcher's confidential domestic, entered with the air of one who has important intelligence to communicate. He was followed by a tall gaunt Indian, who held in his hand a deerskin pouch. "Ha! Digby," said Mr Fletcher, "have you returned? What say the Commissioners? Can they furnish me a guide and attendants for my journey?"

"Yes, an' please you, sir, I was in the nick of time, for they were just despatching a messenger to the Governor."

"On what account?"

"Why, it's rather an odd errand," replied Digby, scratching his head with an awkward hesitation. "I would not wish to shock my gentle mistress, who will never bring her feelings to the queer fashions of the new world; but Lord's mercy, sir, you know we think no more of taking off a scalp here, than we did of shaving our beards at home."

"Scalp!" exclaimed Mr Fletcher. "Explain yourself, Digby."

The Indian, as if to assist Digby's communication, untied his pouch and drew from it a piece of dried and shrivelled skin, to which hair, matted together with blood, still adhered. There was an expression of fierce triumph on the countenance of the savage as he surveyed the trophy with a grim smile. A murmur of indignation burst from all present.

“Why did you bring that wretch here?” demanded Mr Fletcher of his servant, in an angry tone.

“I did but obey Mr Pynchon, sir. The thing is an abomination to the soul and eye of a Christian, but it has to be taken to Boston for the reward.”

“What reward, Digby?”

“The reward, sir, that is in reason expected for the scalp of the Pequod chief.”

As Digby uttered these last words Magawisca shrieked as if a dagger had pierced her heart. She darted forward and grasped the arm that upheld the trophy. “My father! – Mononotto!” she screamed in a voice of agony.

“Give it to her – by Heaven, you shall give it to her,” cried Everell, springing on the Indian and losing all other thought in his instinctive sympathy for Magawisca.

“Softly, softly, Mr Everell,” said Digby, “that is the scalp of Sassacus, not Mononotto. The Pequods had two chiefs you know.”

Magawisca now released her hold; and as soon as she could again command her voice, she said, in her own language to the Indian, “My father – my father – does he live?”

“He does,” answered the Indian in the same dialect; “he lives in the wigwam of the chief of the Mohawks.”

Magawisca was silent for a moment, and knit her brows as if agitated with an important deliberation. She then undid a bracelet from her arm and gave it to the Indian: “I charge ye,” she said, “as ye hope for game in your hunting grounds, for the sun on your wigwam, and the presence of the Great Spirit in your death-hour – I charge ye to convey this token to my father. Tell him his children are servants in the house of his enemies; but,” she added, after a moment’s pause, “to whom am I trusting? – to the murderer of Sassacus! – my father’s friend!”

“Fear not,” replied the Indian; “your errand shall be done. Sassacus was a strange tree in our forests; but he struck his