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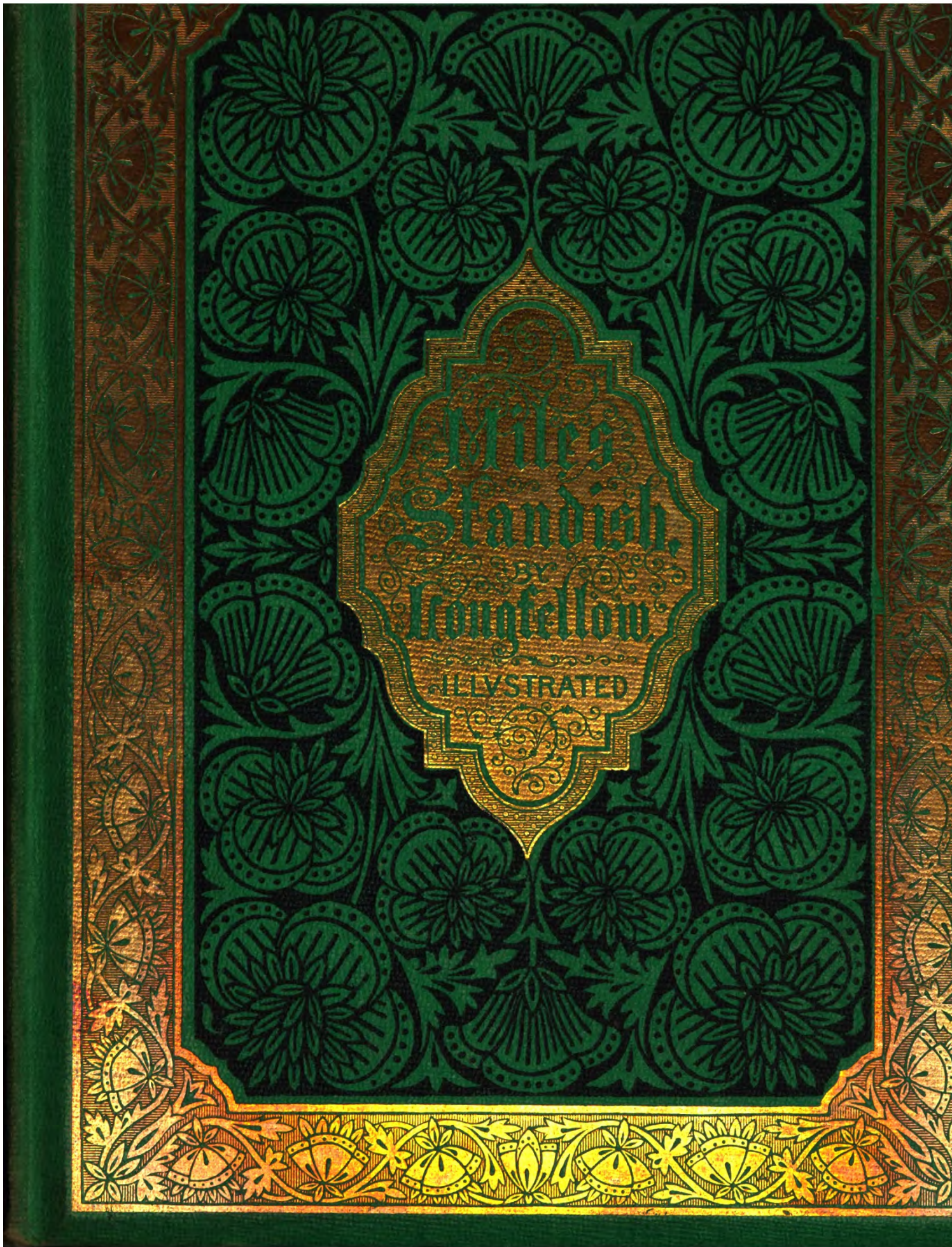
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Miles
Standish,
BY
Longfellow
ILLUSTRATED





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THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

WITH TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN GILBERT,
ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

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DRAWN BY JOHN GILBERT,

ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.



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I.

MILES STANDISH.

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of the Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive dwelling,

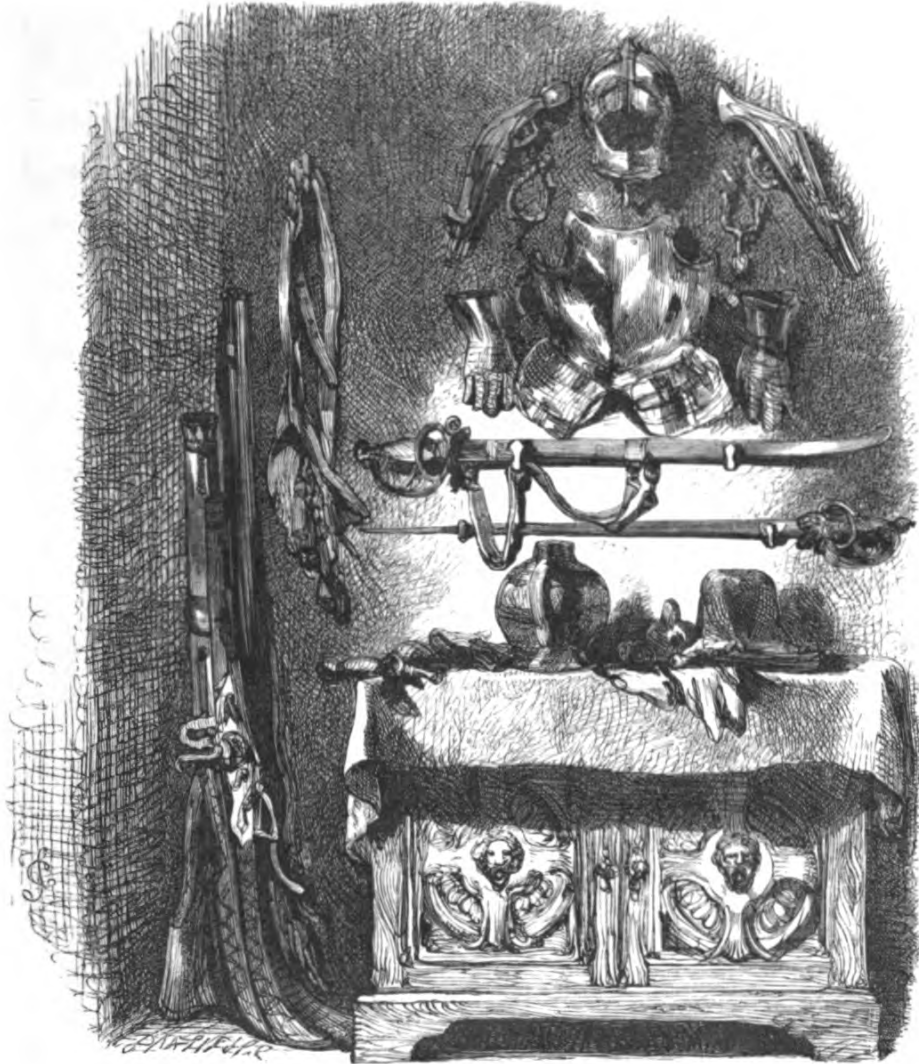
THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the Puritan Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him, and pausing
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of warfare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber,—
Cutlass and corslet of steel, and his trusty sword of Damascus,
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic sentence,
While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket, and
matchlock.

Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic,
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles and sinews of iron ;
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard was already
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes in November.
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend, and household companion,
Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the window ;
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion,
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof, as the captives
Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, “ Not Angles but Angels.”
Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the May Flower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe interrupting,
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish the Captain of
Plymouth.

“ Look at these arms,” he said, “ the warlike weapons that hang here



Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspection !
This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders ; this
breastplate,
Well I remember the day ! once saved my life in a skirmish ;

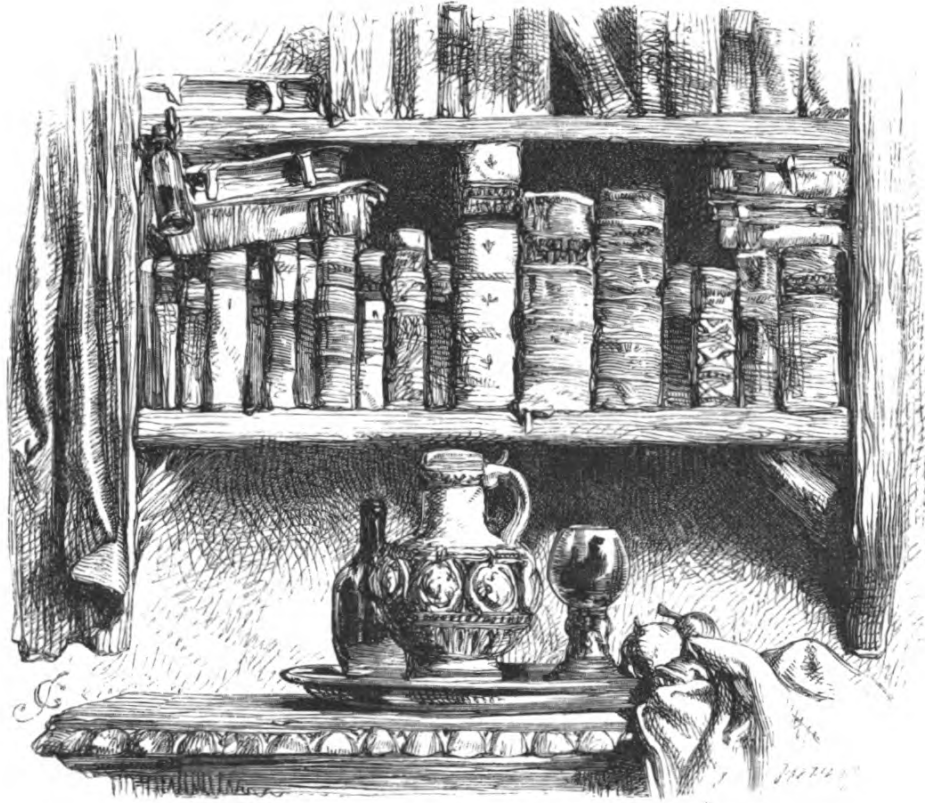
THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Here in front you can see the very dent of the bullet
Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.
Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles Standish
Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the Flemish
morasses.”

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from his writing :
“ Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the bullet ;
He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our weapon ! ”
Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of the stripling :
“ See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal hanging ;
That is because I have done it myself, and not left it to others.
Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent adage ;
So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your inkhorn.
Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, invincible army,
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his matchlock,
Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pillage,
And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my soldiers ! ”
This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes, as the sunbeams
Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in a moment.
Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain continued :
“ Look ! you can see from this window my brazen howitzer planted
High on the roof of the church, a preacher who speaks to the purpose,
Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic,
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the heathen.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the Indians ;
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they try it the better,—
Let them come if they like, be it sagamore, sachem, or pow-wow,
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon ! ”



Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the landscape,
Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory breath of the east wind,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of the ocean,
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on the landscape,
Gloom intermingled with light; and his voice was subdued with
emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded :

“ Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose Standish ;
Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside !
She was the first to die of all who came in the May Flower !
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown there,
Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our people,
Lest they should count them and see how many already have
perished !”

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down, and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and among them
Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for binding ;
Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Casar,
Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of London,
And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing the Bible.
Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish paused, as if doubtful
Which of the three he should choose for his consolation and comfort,
Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous campaigns of the
Romans,



Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent Christians.
Finally down from its shelf he dragged the ponderous Roman,
Seated himself at the window, and opened the book, and in silence

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks thick on the
margin,

Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was hottest.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,

Busily writing epistles important, to go by the May Flower,

Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God willing!

Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible winter,

Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of Priscilla,

Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla!

II.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,

Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart of the Captain,

Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius Cæsar.

After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm
downwards,

Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar!

You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow

Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally skilful!"

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely, the
youthful :

“ Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and his
weapons.

Somewhere I have read, but where I forget, he could dictate
Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs.”

“ Truly,” continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,

“ Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar !

Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,

Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after ;

Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered ;

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded ;

Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus !

Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,

When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together

There was no room for their swords ? Why, he seized a shield from
a soldier,

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the
captains,

Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns ;

Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their weapons ;

So he won the day, the battle of Something-or-other.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing to be well done,
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others !”

All was silent again ; the Captain continued his reading.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling
Writing epistles important to go next day by the May Flower,
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla ;
Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,
Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of Priscilla !
Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,
Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his musket,
Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth :
“ When you have finished your work, I have something important to
tell you.

Be not however in haste ; I can wait ; I shall not be impatient !”

Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his letters,
Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention :

“ Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,
Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish.”

Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling his phrases :

“ 'T is not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.

This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it :

Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.



Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary ;
Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.
She is alone in the world ; her father and mother and brother
Died in the winter together ; I saw her going and coming,
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the dying,
Patient, courageous and strong, and said to myself, that if ever
There were angels on earth, as there are angels in heaven,
Two have I seen and known ; and the angel whose name is Priscilla
Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.
Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to reveal it,
Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the most part.
Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth,
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of actions,
Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of a soldier.
Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my meaning ;
I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases.
You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant language,
Such as you read in your books of the pleadings and wooings of lovers,
Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired, taciturn stripling,
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered,
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with lightness,
Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his bosom,
Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by lightning,
Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than answered :

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“ Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it ;
If you would have it well done,—I am only repeating your maxim,—
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others ! ”
But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his purpose,
Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plymouth :
“ Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it ;
But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.
Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.
I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to surrender,
But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not.
I’m not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,
But of a thundering ‘ No ! ’ point-blank from the mouth of a woman,—
That, I confess, I’m afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it !
So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,
Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases.”
Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and doubtful,
Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added :
“ Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts
me ;
Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship ! ”
Then made answer John Alden : “ The name of friendship is sacred :
What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you ! ”
So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding the gentler ;
Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his errand.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

III.

THE LOVER'S ERRAND.

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his errand,
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the forest,
Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and robins were building
Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of verdure,
Peaceful, aërial cities of joy and affection and freedom.
All around him was calm, but within him commotion and conflict,
Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous impulse.
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and dashing,
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean !
“ Must I relinquish it all,” he cried with a wild lamentation,
“ Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion ?
Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped in silence ?
Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow
Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England ?
Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of corruption
Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion :
Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
All is clear to me now ; I feel it, I see it distinctly !



This is the hand of the Lord ; it is laid upon me in anger,
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.
This is the cross I must bear ; the sin and the swift retribution."

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand ;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over pebble and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers blooming around him,
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweetness,
Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their slumber.
“ Puritan flowers,” he said, “ and the type of Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla !
So I will take them to her ; to Priscilla the May-flower of Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take them ;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither and perish,
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the giver.”
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand ;
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean,
Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath of the east wind ;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow ;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of Priscilla
Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting many.
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the maiden
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its motion.
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of Ainsworth,



Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a churchyard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old Puritan anthem,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of home-spun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her being !
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and relentless,
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and woe of his
errand ;

All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had vanished,
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,
“ Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look backwards ;
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to its fountains,
Though it pass o’er the graves of the dead and the hearths of the living,
It is the will of the Lord ; and his mercy endureth for ever ! ”

So he entered the house : and the hum of the wheel and the singing
Suddenly ceased ; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the threshold,
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in signal of welcome,
Saying, “ I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the passage ;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and spinning.”
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him had been
mingled

Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an answer,



Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that day in the
winter,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the village,
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that encumbered the
doorway,

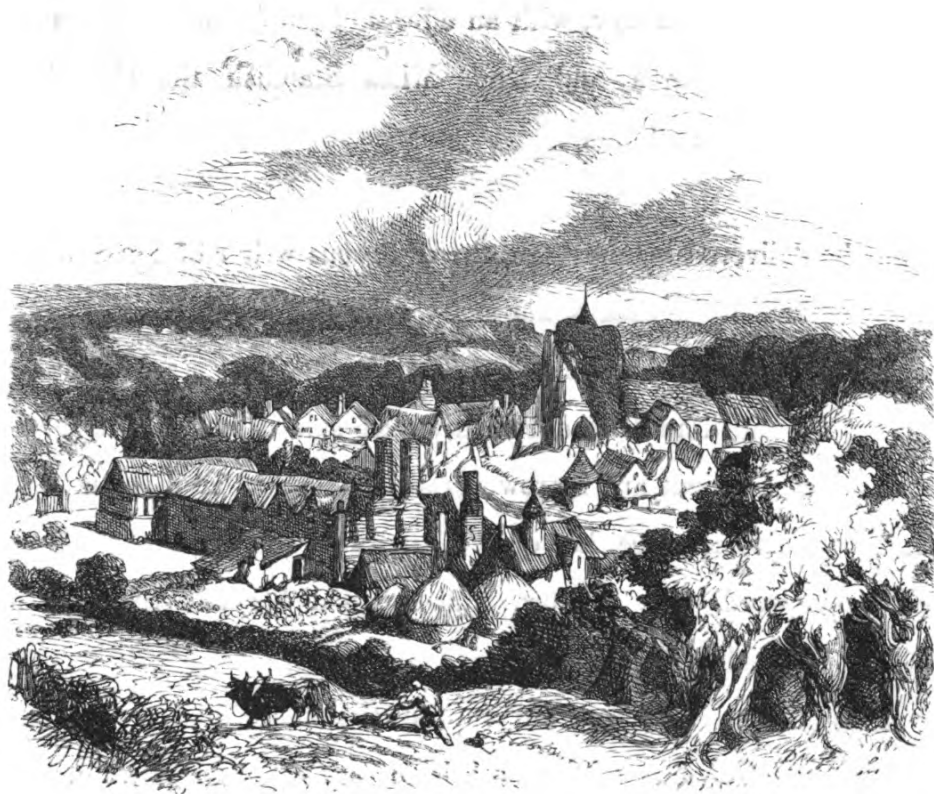
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and Priscilla
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the snow-
storm.

Had he but spoken then ! perhaps not in vain had he spoken ;
Now it was all too late ; the golden moment had vanished !
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the beautiful
Spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the May Flower that sailed on
the morrow.

“ I have been thinking all day,” said gently the Puritan maiden,
“ Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows of
England,—

They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden ;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and the linnet,
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbors
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the ivy
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in the churchyard.



Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my religion ;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it : I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and wretched.”

Thereupon answered the youth :—“ Indeed I do not condemn you ;
Stouter hearts than a woman’s have quailed in this terrible winter.
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean on ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Captain of
Plymouth !”

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of letters,—
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a schoolboy ;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puritan maiden
Looked into Alden’s face, her eyes dilated with wonder,
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered her
speechless ;

Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous silence :
“ If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed me,
Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me ?
If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the winning !”
Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter,
Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy,—
Had no time for such things ;—such things ! the words grating
harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla ; and swift as a flash she made answer :
“ Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is married,
Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding ?
That is the way with you men ; you don’t understand us, you cannot.



When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another,
Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,
And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a woman
Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.
This is not right nor just : for surely a woman's affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking.
When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.
Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved me,
Even this Captain of yours—who knows ?—at last might have won me,
Old and rough as he is ; but now it never can happen.”

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding ;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction,
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of Plymouth ;
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston de Standish ;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
He was a man of honor, of noble and generous nature ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Though he was rough, he was kindly ; she knew how during the
winter

He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's ;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and headstrong,
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always.
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of stature ;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, courageous ;
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles Standish !

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, " Why don't you speak for yourself, John ? "

IV.

JOHN ALDEN.

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by the sea-side ;
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head to the east wind,
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever within him.

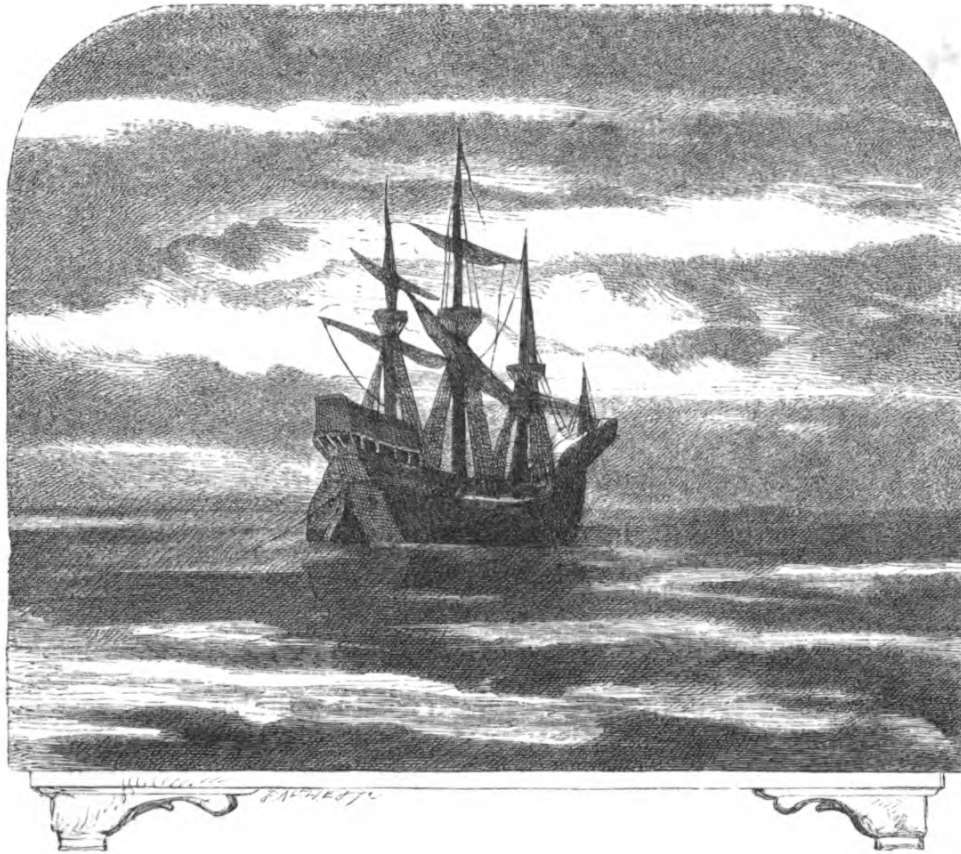
THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptic splendors,
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the city.

“ Welcome, O wind of the East ! ” he exclaimed in his wild
exultation,

“ Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty Atlantic !
Blowing o’er fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of sea-grass,
Blowing o’er rocky wastes, and the grottoes and gardens of ocean !
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead, and wrap me
Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever within me ! ”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and tossing,
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of the sea-shore.
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions contending ;
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and bleeding,
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of duty !
“ Is it my fault,” he said, “ that the maiden has chosen between us ?
Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I am the victor ? ”
Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet :
“ It hath displeased the Lord ! ”—and he thought of David’s trans-
gression,



Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle !
Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-condemnation,
Overwhelmed him at once ; and he cried in the deepest contrition :
“ It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the temptation of Satan ! ”

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld there
Dimly the shadowy form of the May Flower riding at anchor,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow ;
Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of cordage
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors' " Ay,
ay, Sir ! "

Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the twilight.
Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the vessel,
Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,
Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning shadow.
" Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured ; " the hand of the Lord is
Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me,
Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that pursue me.
Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,
Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has offended.
Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,
Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my kindred ;
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and dishonor ;
Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the narrow chamber
With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers
Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence and darkness,—
Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter ! "

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong resolution,
Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the twilight,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.
Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable Captain
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or Flanders.
“ Long have you been on your errand,” he said with a cheery demeanor,
Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the issue.
“ Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us ;
But you have lingered so long, that while you were going and coming
I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city.
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has happened.”

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous adventure
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened ;
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his courtship,
Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,
Words so tender and cruel : “ Why don't you speak for yourself, John ? ”
Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the floor, till
his armor
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister omen.
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion,
Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

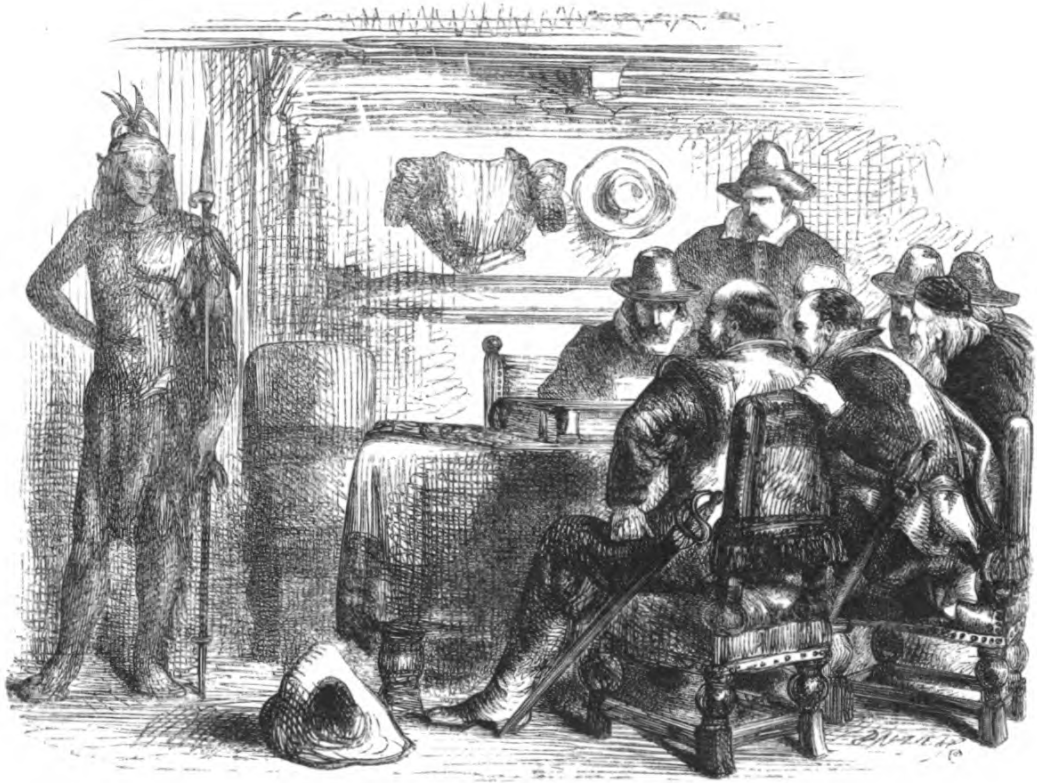
Wildly he shouted, and loud : “ John Alden ! you have betrayed me !
Me, Miles Standish, your friend ! have supplanted, defrauded, betrayed
me !

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of Wat Tyler ;
Who shall prevent me from running my own through the heart of a
traitor ?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to friendship !
You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved as a
brother ;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup, to whose keeping
I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the most sacred and secret,—
You too, Brutus ! ah woe to the name of friendship hereafter !
Brutus was Cæsar’s friend, and you were mine, but henceforward
Let there be nothing between us save war, and implacable hatred ! ”

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode about in the chamber,
Chafing and choking with rage ; like cords were the veins on his temples.
But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at the doorway,
Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance,
Rumors of danger and war and hostile incursions of Indians !
Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further question or parley,
Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its scabbard of iron,
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely, departed.
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scabbard



Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the distance.
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into the darkness,
Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot with the insult,
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his hands as in childhood,
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful away to the council,
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his coming ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deportment,
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of Plymouth.
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this planting,
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation ;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of the people !
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and defiant,
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect ;
While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed in Holland,
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake glittered,
Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal and challenge of warfare,
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy tongues of defiance.
This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and heard them debating
What were an answer befitting the hostile message and menace,
Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, objecting ;
One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the Elder,
Judging it wise and well that some at least were converted,
Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian behavior !
Then outspoke Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain of Plymouth,
Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was husky with anger,
“ What ! do you mean to make war with milk and the water of roses ?
Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted
There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils ?

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage
Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of the cannon!"
Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder of Plymouth,
Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language :
" Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles :
Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire they spake with!"
But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain,
Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued discoursing :
" Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it pertaineth.
War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that is righteous,
Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I answer the challenge !"

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a sudden, contemptuous
gesture,
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder and bullets
Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the savage,
Saying, in thundering tones : " Here, take it ! this is your answer ! "
Silently out of the room then glided the glistening savage,
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself like a serpent,
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths of the forest.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

V.

THE SAILING OF THE MAY FLOWER.

JUST in the gray of the dawn, as the mists uprose from the meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering village of Plymouth ;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative, " Forward !"
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his valorous army,
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of the white men,
Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of the savage.
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men of King David ;
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the Bible,—
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines.
Over them, gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning ;
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,
Fired along the line, and in regular order retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the village of
Plymouth
Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labors.



Sweet was the air and soft ; and slowly the smoke from the chimneys
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward ;
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the weather,
Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the May
Flower ;
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that menaced,
He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his absence.
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women
Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his coming ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains ;
Beautiful on the sails of the May Flower riding at anchor,
Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the winter.
Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her canvas,
Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the sailors.
Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ; anon rang
Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the echoes
Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of departure !
Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people !
Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the Bible,
Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent entreaty !
Then from their houses in haste came forth the Pilgrims of Plymouth,
Men and women and children, all hurrying down to the sea-shore,
Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the May Flower,
Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he had lain without
slumber,

Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest of his fever.
He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late from the council,
Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and murmur,
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it sounded like swearing.
Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a moment in silence ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Then he had turned away, and said : “ I will not awake him ;
Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the use of more talking ! ”
Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself down on his pallet,
Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the morning,—
Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his campaigns in
Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for action.
But with the dawn he arose ; in the twilight Alden beheld him
Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of his armor,
Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damascus,
Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out of the chamber.
Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned to embrace him,
Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for pardon ;
All the old friendship came back, with its tender and grateful emotions ;
But his pride overmastered the nobler nature within him,—
Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning fire of the insult.
So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but spake not,
Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and he spake not !
Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the people were saying,
Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and Richard and Gilbert,
Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down to the sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as a door-step
Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a nation !

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

There with his boat was the Master, already a little impatient
Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might shift to the eastward,
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor of ocean about him,
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming letters and parcels
Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled together
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewildered.
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on the gunwale,
One still firm on the rock, and talking at times with the sailors,
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for starting.
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his anguish,
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel is or canvas,
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would rise and pursue him.
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form of Priscilla
Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all that was passing.
Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his intention,
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring, and patient,
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its purpose,
As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.
Strange is the heart of man, with its quick mysterious instincts ;
Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine !
“ Here I remain ! ” he exclaimed, as he looked at the heavens above
him,
Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist and the madness,



Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering headlong.
“ Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above me,
Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning over the ocean.
There is another hand, that is not so spectral and ghost-like,
Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for protection.
Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether !

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me ; I heed not
Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil !
There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,
As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her footsteps.
Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence
Hover around her for ever, protecting, supporting her weakness ;
Yes ! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock at the landing,
So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the leaving !”

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and important,
Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the weather,
Walked about on the sands ; and the people crowded around him
Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remembrance.
Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,
Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,
Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,
Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel !
Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the Pilgrims.
O strong hearts and true ! not one went back in the May Flower !
No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this ploughing !

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the sailors
Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous anchor.



Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west wind,
Blowing steady and strong ; and the May Flower sailed from the harbor,
Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the southward
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First Encounter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open Atlantic,
Borne on the sand of the sea, and the swelling hearts of the Pilgrims.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel,
Much endeared to them all, as something living and human ;
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a vision prophetic,
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth
Said, " Let us pray !" and they prayed, and thanked the Lord and
took courage.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and above them
Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and their kindred
Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer that they
uttered.

Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard ;
Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of escaping.

Lo ! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an Indian,
Watching them from the hill ; but while they spake with each other,
Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying, " Look !" he had
vanished.

So they returned to their homes ; but Alden lingered a little,
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash of the billows
Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and flash of the sunshine,
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the waters.



VI.

PRISCILLA.

THUS for a while he stood, and mused by the shore of the ocean,
Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like the loadstone,
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its nature,
Lo ! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing beside him.

“ Are you so much offended, you will not speak to me ? ” said she.
“ Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were pleading
Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and wayward,
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of decorum ?
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for saying
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never unsay it :
For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of emotion,
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a pebble
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered together.
Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles Standish,
Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into virtues,
Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in Flanders,
As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,
Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting your hero.
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse.
You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friendship between us,
Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken ! ”
Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the friend of Miles
Standish :

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“ I was not angry with you, with myself alone I was angry,
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my keeping.”
“ No ! ” interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt and decisive ;
“ No ; you were angry with me, for speaking so frankly and freely.
It was wrong, I acknowledge ; for it is the fate of a woman
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is speechless,
Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.
Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women
Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers
Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, unseen, and unfruitful,
Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profitless murmurs.”
Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man, the lover of women :
“ Heaven forbid it, Priscilla ; and truly they seem to me always
More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of Eden,
More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah flowing,
Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the garden ! ”
“ Ah, by these words, I can see,” again interrupted the maiden,
“ How very little you prize me, or care for what I am saying.
When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret misgiving,
Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and kindness,
Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and direct and in
earnest,
Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with flattering
phrases.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in you ;
For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is noble,
Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.
Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the more keenly
If you say aught that implies I am only as one among many,
If you make use of those common and complimentary phrases
Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking with women,
But which women reject as insipid, if not as insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden : and listened and looked at Priscilla,
Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more divine in her beauty.
He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause of another,
Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in vain for an answer.
So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined
What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward and
speechless.

"Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all
things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship.
It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it :
I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you always.
So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear you
Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain Miles
Standish.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

For I must tell you the truth : much more to me is your friendship
Than all the love he could give, were he twice the hero you think him.”
Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly grasped it,
Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleeding so
sorely,
Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice full of
feeling:
“ Yes, we must ever be friends ; and of all who offer you friendship
Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and dearest ! ”

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of the May Flower,
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,
Homeward together they walked, with a strange, indefinite feeling,
That all the rest had departed and left them alone in the desert.
But, as they went through the fields in the blessing and smile of the
sunshine,
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very archly :
“ Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit of the Indians,
Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a household,
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened between you,
When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you found me.”
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole of the story,—
Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles Standish.
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between laughing and earnest,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

“ He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment ! ”

But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how much he had
suffered,—

How he had even determined to sail that day in the May Flower,
And had remained for her sake, on hearing the dangers that
threatened,—

All her manner was changed, and she said with a faltering accent,
“ Truly I thank you for this : how good you have been to me always ! ”

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys,
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly backward,
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of contrition ;
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his longings,
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by remorseful misgivings.

VII.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH.

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was marching steadily
northward,

Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of the sea-
shore,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of powder
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the forest.
Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort ;
He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden,
Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most he had trusted !
Ah ! 't was too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed in his armor !

“ I alone am to blame,” he muttered, “ for mine was the folly.
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray in the harness,
Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing of maidens ?
'T was but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like so many others !
What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is worthless ;
Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away, and henceforward
Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of dangers ! ”
Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,
While he was marching by day or lying at night in the forest,
Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian encampment
Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the forest ;
Women at work by the tents, and the warriors, horrid with war-paint,
Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together ;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the white men,
Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and musket,
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them advancing,
Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present ;
Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.
Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers gigantic in stature,
Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan ;
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.
Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,
Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.
Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.
“ Welcome, English ! ” they said,—these words they had learned
from the traders
Touching at times on the coast, to barter and chaffer for peltries.
Then in their native tongue they began to parley with Standish,
Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,
Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for muskets and powder,
Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with the plague, in his
cellars,
Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the red man !
But when Standish refused, and said he would give them the Bible,
Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast and to bluster.
Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front of the other,
And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain :



“ Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of the Captain,
Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of the brave Wattawamat

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman,
But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree riven by lightning,
Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him,
Shouting, ‘ Who is there here to fight with the brave Wattawamat ? ’ ”
Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his left hand,
Held it aloft, and displayed a woman’s face on the handle,
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning :
“ I have another at home, with the face of a man on the handle ;
By and by they shall marry ; and there will be plenty of children ! ”

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles Standish :
While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his bosom,
Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he muttered,
“ By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah, ah ! but shall speak not !
This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to destroy us !
He is a little man ; let him go and work with the women ! ”

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of Indians
Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-strings,
Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of their ambush.
But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them smoothly ;
So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days of the fathers.
But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the taunt, and the insult,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston de Standish,
Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his temples.
Headlong he leapt on the boaster, and snatching his knife from its
scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness upon it.
Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the war-whoop,
And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.
Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud came the lightning,
Out of the lightning thunder ; and death unseen ran before it.
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp and in thicket,
Hotly pursued and beset ; but their sachem, the brave Wattawamat,
Fled not ; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had a bullet
Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands clutching the
greensward,
Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors lay, and above
them,
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the white man.
Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of Plymouth :
“Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength, and his
stature,—

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man ; but I see now
Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before you ! ”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the stalwart Miles
Standish.

When the tidings thereof were brought to the village of Plymouth,
And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once was a church and
a fortress,

All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took courage.
Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror,
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles Standish ;
Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his battles,
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of his valor.

VIII.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

MONTH after month passed away, and in Autumn the ships of the
merchants

Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and corn for the Pilgrims.
All in the village was peace ; the men were intent on their labors,
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and with merestead,
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass in the meadows,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in the forest.
All in the village was peace ; but at times the rumour of warfare
Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of danger.
Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scouring the land with his forces,
Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien armies,
Till his name had become a sound of fear to the nations.
Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse and contrition
Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate outbreak,
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of a river,
Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habitation,
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the firs of the forest.
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was covered with rushes ;
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes were of paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were excluded.
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an orchard :
Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well and the orchard.
Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and secure from annoyance,
Raghorn, the snow-white steer, that had fallen to Alden's allotment
In the division of cattle, might ruminant in the night-time
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by sweet pennyroyal.

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager feet would the dreamer

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the house of Priscilla,
Led by allusions romantic and subtile deceptions of fancy,
Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the semblance of friendship.
Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the walls of his dwelling ;
Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil of his garden ;
Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible on Sunday
Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described in the Proverbs,—
How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her always,
How all the days of her life she will do him good, and not evil,
How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh with gladness,
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth the distaff,
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her household,
Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet cloth of her weaving !

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the Autumn,
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous fingers,
As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and his fortune,
After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the spindle.
“ Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “ when I see you spinning and spinning,
Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others,
Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a moment ;
You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful Spinner.”
Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter ; the spindle
Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in her fingers ;



While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mischief, continued :
“ You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen of Helvetia ;
She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of Southampton,
Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o’er valley and meadow and mountain,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to her saddle.
She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed into a proverb.
So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-wheel shall no longer
Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its chambers with music.
Then shall the mothers, reprovng, relate how it was in their childhood,
Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the spinner ! ”
Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise was the
sweetest,
Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spinning,
Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases of Alden :
“ Come, you must not be idle ; if I am a pattern for housewives,
Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands.
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting ;
Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed and the
manners,
Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John Alden ! ”
Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she adjusted,
He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before him,
She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread from his fingers,
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how could she help it ?—
Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger entered,
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the village.
Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian had brought them the
tidings,—

Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front of the battle,
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of his forces;
All the town would be burned, and all the people be murdered!
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the hearts of the hearers.
Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face looking backward
Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in horror;
But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the arrow
Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own, and had sundered
Once and for ever the bonds that held him bound as a captive,
Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his freedom
Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what he was doing,
Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form of Priscilla,
Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his own, and exclaiming:
“Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them asunder!”

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,
Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and pursuing
Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;
So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing asunder,
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.

IX.

THE WEDDING-DAY.

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple and scarlet,
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his garments resplendent,
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his forehead,
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pomegranates.
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapor beneath him
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his feet was a laver !

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan maiden.
Friends were assembled together ; the Elder and Magistrate also
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the Law and
the Gospel,
One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing of heaven.
Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of Ruth and of Boaz.
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of betrothal,
Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's presence,



After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of Plymouth

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were founded that day in
affection,

Speaking of life and of death, and imploring divine benedictions.

Lo! when the service was ended, a form appeared on the threshold,
Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrowful figure!
Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the strange apparition?
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on his shoulder?
Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral illusion?
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the betrothal?
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, unwelcomed;
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an expression
Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart hidden beneath them,
As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain-cloud
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by its brightness.
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips, but was silent,
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention.
But when were ended the troth and the prayer and the last benediction,
Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amazement
Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish, the Captain of Plymouth!
Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion, "Forgive me!
I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I cherished the feeling;
I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is ended.
Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh Standish,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of John Alden."

Thereupon answered the bridegroom: "Let all be forgotten between us,—

All save the dear, old friendship, and that shall grow older and dearer!"

Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted Priscilla, Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned gentry in England, Something of camp and of court, of town and of country, commingled, Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding her husband. Then he said with a smile: "I should have remembered the adage,— If you would be well served, you must serve yourself; and moreover, No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and greater yet their rejoicing, Thus to behold once more the sun-burnt face of their Captain, Whom they had mourned as dead; and they gathered and crowded about him,

Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride and of bridegroom, Questioning, answering, laughing, and each interrupting the other, Till the good Captain declared, being quite overpowered and bewildered,

He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment, Than come again to a wedding to which he had not been invited.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood with the bride at
the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beautiful morning.
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in the sunshine,
Lay extended before them the land of toil and privation ;
There were the graves of the dead, and the barren waste of the
sea-shore,
There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the meadows ;
But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of Eden,
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound of the
ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and stir of departure,
Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient of longer delaying,
Each with his plan for the day, and the work that was left uncompleted.
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of Priscilla,
Brought out his snow-white steer, obeying the hand of its master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a saddle.
She should not walk, he said, through the dust and heat of the noonday ;
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along like a peasant.
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the others,
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the hand of her husband,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

Gaily, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.
“ Nothing is wanting now,” he said, with a smile, “ but the distaff;
Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful Bertha !”

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their new habitation,
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing together.
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the ford in the forest,
Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of love, through its
bosom,
Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the azure abysses.
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pouring his splendors,
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches above them suspended,
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the pine and the fir-tree,
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of Eshcol.
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral ages,
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca and Isaac,
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,
Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.
So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the bridal procession.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

.. COME I GRU VAN CANTANDO LOR LAI,
FACENDO IN AER DI SÈ LUNGA RIGA.—*Dante.*

PROMETHEUS,

OR THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

OF Prometheus, how undaunted
On Olympus' shining bastions
His audacious foot he planted,
Myths are told and songs are chaunted,
Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition
Of that flight through heavenly portals,
The old classic superstition
Of the theft and the transmission
Of the fire of the Immortals !

First the deed of noble daring,
Born of heavenward aspiration,
Then the fire with mortals sharing,
Then the vulture,—the despairing
Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

PROMETHEUS.

All is but a symbol painted
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer ;
Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,
In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations,
The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,
All this toil for human culture ?
Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
Must they see above them sailing
O'er life's barren crags the vulture ?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,
By defeat and exile maddened ;
Thus were Milton and Cervantes,
Nature's priests and Corybantes,
By affliction touched and saddened.

PROMETHEUS.

But the glories so transcendent
That around their memories cluster,
And, on all their steps attendant,
Make their darkened lives resplendent
With such gleams of inward lustre !

All the melodies mysterious,
Through the dreary darkness chaunted ;
Thoughts in attitudes imperious,
Voices soft, and deep, and serious,
Words that whispered, songs that haunted !

All the soul in rapt suspension,
All the quivering, palpitating
Chords of life in utmost tension,
With the fervor of invention,
With the rapture of creating !

Ah, Prometheus ! heaven-scaling !
In such hours of exultation
Even the faintest heart, unquailing,
Might behold the vulture sailing
Round the cloudy crags Caucasian !

PROMETHEUS.

Though to all there is not given
Strength for such sublime endeavor,
Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
And to leaven with fiery leaven
All the hearts of men for ever ;

Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted
Honor and believe the presage,
Hold aloft their torches lighted,
Gleaming through the realms benighted,
As they onward bear the message !

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

SAINT AUGUSTINE ! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame !

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less ;
The revel of the treacherous wine,
And all occasions of excess ;

The longing for ignoble things ;
The strife for triumph more than truth ;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth ;

All thoughts of ill ; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill ;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will ;—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar ;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are crossed by pathways, that appear
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

IN Mather's Magnalia Christi,
Of the old colonial time,
May be found in prose the legend
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,
And the keen and frosty airs,
That filled her sails at parting,
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

“ O Lord ! if it be thy pleasure ”—
Thus prayed the old divine—
“ To bury our friends in the ocean,
Take them, for they are thine ! ”

But Master Lamberton muttered,
And under his breath said he,
“ This ship is so crank and walty,
I fear our grave she will be ! ”

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

And the ships that came from England
When the winter months were gone,
Brought no tidings of this vessel,
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying
That the Lord would let them hear
What in his greater wisdom
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered :—
It was in the month of June,
An hour before the sunset
Of a windy afternoon,

When, steadily steering landward,
A ship was seen below,
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,
Right against the wind that blew,
Until the eye could distinguish
The faces of the crew.

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

Then fell her straining topmasts,
 Hanging tangled in the shrouds ;
And her sails were loosened and lifted,
 And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,
 Fell slowly, one by one ;
And the hulk dilated and vanished,
 As a sea-mist in the sun !

And the people who saw this marvel
 Each said unto his friend,
That this was the mould of their vessel,
 And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village
 Gave thanks to God in prayer,
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,
 He had sent this Ship of Air.

DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT.

In broad daylight, and at noon,
Yesterday I saw the moon
Sailing high, but faint and white,
As a schoolboy's paper kite.

In broad daylight, yesterday,
I read a Poet's mystic lay ;
And it seemed to me at most
As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day
Like a passion died away,
And the night, serene and still,
Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon, in all her pride,
Like a spirit glorified,
Filled and overflowed the night
With revelations of her light.



And the Poet's song again
Passed like music through my brain ;
Night interpreted to me
All its grace and mystery.

HAUNTED HOUSES.

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died
Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the door-way, on the stair,
Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions on the air,
A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table than the hosts
Invited ; the illuminated hall
Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear ;
He but perceives what is ; while unto me
All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands ;
Owners and occupants of earlier dates

HAUNTED HOUSES.

From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,
And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit-world around this world of sense
Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere
Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense
A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise
By opposite attractions and desires !
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,
And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar
Of earthly wants and aspirations high,
Come from the influence of an unseen star,
An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud
Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,
Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd
Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends
A bridge of light, connecting it with this,
O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,
Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE.

In the village churchyard she lies,
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,
 No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs ;
At her feet and at her head
Lies a slave to attend the dead,
 But their dust is white as hers.

Was she a lady of high degree,
So much in love with vanity
 And foolish pomp of this world of ours ?
Or was it Christian charity,
And lowliness and humility,
 The richest and rarest of all dowers ?

Who shall tell us ? No one speaks ;
No color shoots into those cheeks,
 Either of anger or of pride,
At the rude question we have asked ;
Nor will the mystery be unmasked
 By those who are sleeping at her side.

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE.

Hereafter?—And do you think to look
On the terrible pages of that Book
 To find her failings, faults, and errors?
Ah, you will then have other cares,
In your own short-comings and despairs,
 In your own secret sins and terrors!

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S NEST.

ONCE the Emperor Charles of Spain,
 With his swarthy, grave commanders,
I forget in what campaign,
Long besieged, in mud and rain,
 Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,
 In great boots of Spanish leather,
Striding with a measured tramp,
These Hidalgos, dull and damp,
 Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,
 Over upland and through hollow,

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S NEST.

Giving their impatience vent,
Perched upon the Emperor's tent
In her nest they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,
Built of clay and hair of horses,
Mane, or tail, or dragoon's crest,
Found on hedge-rows east and west,
After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
As he twirled his gray mustachio,
" Sure this swallow overhead
Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,
And the Emperor but a Macho ! "

Hearing his imperial name
Coupled with those words of malice,
Half in anger, half in shame,
Forth the great campaigner came
Slowly from his canvas palace.

" Let no hand the bird molest,"
Said he solemnly, " nor hurt her ! "
Adding then, by way of jest,

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S NEST.

“ Golondrina is my guest,
’T is the wife of some deserter ! ”

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,
Through the camp was spread the rumor,
And the soldiers, as they quaffed
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed
At the Emperor’s pleasant humor.

So unharmed and unafraid
Sat the swallow still and brooded,
Till the constant cannonade
Through the walls a breach had made,
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
Struck its tents as if disbanding,
Only not the Emperor’s tent,
For he ordered, ere he went,
Very curtly, “ Leave it standing ! ”

So it stood there all alone,
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
Till the brood was fledged and flown,
Singing o’er those walls of stone
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.

LEAFLESS are the trees ; their purple branches
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
Rising silent
In the Red Sea of the Winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,
Smoky columns
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light ;
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,
Social watch-fires
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,
And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree
For its freedom
Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.



By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,
Asking sadly
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,
Asking blindly
Of the Future what it cannot give them.

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.

By the fireside tragedies are acted
In whose scenes appear two actors only,
 Wife and husband,
And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,
Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,
 Waiting, watching
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-stone ;
Is the central point, from which he measures
 Every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it ;
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,
 As he heard them
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,
 Drives an exile
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead.

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations !

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

How strange it seems ! These Hebrews in their graves,
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
Silent beside the never-silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down !

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
Wave their broad curtains in the south wind's breath,
While underneath such leafy tents they keep
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent, and of different climes ;
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

“ Blessed be God ! for He created Death ! ”
The mourners said, “ and Death is rest and peace ; ”
Then added, in the certainty of faith,
“ And giveth Life that never more shall cease.”

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected ; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire ;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha ! was the cry
That rang from town to town, from street to street ;
At every gate the accursed Mordecai
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand
Walked with them through the world where'er they went ;
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,
And all the great traditions of the Past
They saw reflected in the coming time.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT.

And thus for ever with reverted look
The mystic volume of the world they read,
Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,
Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah ! what once has been shall be no more.
The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.

OLIVER BASSELIN.

IN the Valley of the Vire
Still is seen an ancient mill,
With its gables quaint and queer,
And beneath the window-sill,
On the stone,
These words alone :
“ Oliver Basselin lived here.”

Far above it, on the steep,
Ruined stands the old Château ;
Nothing but the donjon-keep

OLIVER BASSELIN.

Left for shelter or for show.
Its vacant eyes
Stare at the skies,
Stare at the valley green and deep.

Once a convent, old and brown,
Looked, but ah ! it looks no more,
From the neighboring hillside down
On the rushing and the roar
Of the stream
Whose sunny gleam
Cheers the little Norman town.

In that darksome mill of stone,
To the water's dash and din,
Careless, humble, and unknown,
Sang the poet Basselin
Songs that fill
That ancient mill
With a splendor of its own.

Never feeling of unrest
Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed ;
Only made to be his nest,

OLIVER BASSELIN.

All the lovely valley seemed ;
 No desire
 Of soaring higher
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine ;
 Were not songs of that high art,
Which, as winds do in the pine,
 Find an answer in each heart ;
 But the mirth
 Of this green earth
Laughed and revelled in his line.

From the alehouse and the inn,
 Opening on the narrow street,
Came the loud, convivial din,
 Singing and applause of feet,
 The laughing lays
 That in those days
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,
 Knights, who fought at Agincourt,
Watched and waited, spur on heel ;

OLIVER BASSELIN.

But the poet sang for sport
Songs that rang
Another clang,
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in gray,
Sat the monks in lonely cells,
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,
And the poet heard their bells ;
But his rhymes
Found other chimes,
Nearer to the earth than they.

Gone are all the barons bold,
Gone are all the knights and squires,
Gone the abbot stern and cold,
And the brotherhood of friars ;
Not a name
Remains to fame,
From those mouldering days of old !

But the poet's memory here
Of the landscape makes a part ;
Like the river, swift and clear,

OLIVER BASSELIN.

Flows his song through many a heart ;
Haunting still
That ancient mill,
In the Valley of the Vire.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS.

OTHERE, the old sea-captain,
Who dwelt in Helgoland,
To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,
Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,
Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,
Like a boy's his eye appeared ;
His hair was yellow as hay,
But threads of a silvery gray
Gleamed in his tawny beard.

Hearty and hale was Othere,
His cheek had the color of oak ;
With a kind of laugh in his speech,



Like the sea-tide on a beach,
As unto the King he spoke.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Had a book upon his knees,
And wrote down the wondrous tale
Of him who was first to sail
Into the Arctic seas.

“ So far I live to the northward,
No man lives north of me ;
To the east are wild mountain-chains,
And beyond them meres and plains ;
To the westward all is sea.

“ So far I live to the northward,
From the harbor of Skeringes-hale,
If you only sailed by day,
With a fair wind all the way,
More than a month would you sail.

“ I own six hundred reindeer,
With sheep and swine beside ;
I have tribute from the Finns,
Whalebone and reindeer-skins,
And ropes of walrus-hide.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

“ I ploughed the land with horses,
 But my heart was ill at ease,
For the old seafaring men
Came to me now and then,
 With their sagas of the seas ;—

“ Of Iceland and of Greenland,
 And the stormy Hebrides,
And the undiscovered deep ;—
I could not eat nor sleep
 For thinking of those seas.

“ To the northward stretched the desert,
 How far I fain would know ;
So at last I sallied forth,
And three days sailed due north,
 As far as the whale-ships go.

“ To the west of me was the ocean,
 To the right the desolate shore,
But I did not slacken sail
For the walrus or the whale,
 Till after three days more.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

“The days grew longer and longer,
Till they became as one,
And southward through the haze
I saw the sullen blaze
Of the red midnight sun.

“And then uprose before me,
Upon the water’s edge,
The huge and haggard shape
Of that unknown North Cape,
Whose form is like a wedge.

“The sea was rough and stormy,
The tempest howled and wailed,
And the sea-fog, like a ghost,
Haunted that dreary coast,
But onward still I sailed.

“Four days I steered to eastward,
Four days without a night :
Round in a fiery ring
Went the great sun, O King,
With red and lurid light.”

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Ceased writing for a while ;
And raised his eyes from his book,
With a strange and puzzled look,
And an incredulous smile.

But Othere, the old sea-captain,
He neither paused nor stirred,
Till the King listened, and then
Once more took up his pen,
And wrote down every word.

“ And now the land,” said Othere,
“ Bent southward suddenly,
And I followed the curving shore
And ever southward bore
Into a nameless sea.

“ And there we hunted the walrus,
The narwhale, and the seal ;
Ha ! ’twas a noble game !
And like the lightning’s flame
Flew our harpoons of steel.

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE.

“ There were six of us altogether,
Norsemen of Helgoland ;
In two days and no more
We killed of them threescore,
And dragged them to the strand !”

Here Alfred the Truth-Teller
Suddenly closed his book,
And lifted his blue eyes,
With doubt and strange surmise
Depicted in their look.

And Othere the old sea-captain
Stared at him wild and weird,
Then smiled, till his shining teeth
Gleamed white from underneath
His tawny, quivering beard.

And to the King of the Saxons,
In witness of the truth,
Raising his noble head,
He stretched his brown hand, and said,
“ Behold this walrus-tooth !”

VICTOR GALBRAITH.

UNDER the walls of Monterey
At daybreak the bugles began to play,
Victor Galbraith !
In the mist of the morning damp and gray,
These were the words they seemed to say
“ Come forth to thy death,
Victor Galbraith ! ”

Forth he came, with a martial tread ;
Firm was his step, erect his head ;
Victor Galbraith,
He who so well the bugle played,
Could not mistake the words it said :
“ Come forth to thy death,
Victor Galbraith ! ”

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,
He looked at the files of musketry,
Victor Galbraith !

VICTOR GALBRAITH.

And he said, with a steady voice and eye,
“ Take good aim ; I am ready to die ! ”
Thus challenges death
Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,
Six leaden balls on their errand sped ;
Victor Galbraith
Falls to the ground, but he is not dead ;
His name was not stamped on those balls of lead,
And they only scath
Victor Galbraith.

Three balls are in his breast and brain,
But he rises out of the dust again,
Victor Galbraith !
The water he drinks has a bloody stain ;
“ O kill me, and put me out of my pain ! ”
In his agony prayeth
Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,
And the bugler has died a death of shame,
Victor Galbraith !

VICTOR GALBRAITH.

His soul has gone back to whence it came,
And no one answers to the name,
When the Sergeant saith,
“ Victor Galbraith ! ”

Under the walls of Monterey
By night a bugle is heard to play,
Victor Galbraith !
Through the mist of the valley damp and gray
The sentinels hear the sound, and say,
“ That is the wraith
Of Victor Galbraith ! ”

CHILDREN.

COME to me, O ye children !
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplexed me
Have vanished quite away.

CHILDREN.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow ;
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah ! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more ?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children ;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.



Come to me, O ye children !
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

CHILDREN.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks ?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said ;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

MY LOST YOUTH.

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea ;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

MY LOST YOUTH.

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
 And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
 Of all my boyish dreams.
 And the burden of that old song,
 It murmurs and whispers still :
 “ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
 And the sea-tides tossing free ;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
 And the magic of the sea.
 And the voice of that wayward song
 Is singing and saying still :
 “ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
 And the fort upon the hill ;
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o’er and o’er,

MY LOST YOUTH.

And the bugle wild and shrill.

And the music of that old song

Throbs in my memory still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I remember the sea-fight far away,

How it thundered o’er the tide !

And the dead captains, as they lay

In their graves, o’erlooking the tranquil bay,

Where they in battle died.

And the sound of that mournful song

Goes through me with a thrill :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

I can see the breezy dome of groves,

The shadows of Deering’s Woods ;

And the friendships old and the early loves

Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves

In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,

It flutters and murmurs still :

“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,

And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

MY LOST YOUTH.

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
 Across the schoolboy's brain ;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
 Are longings wild and vain.
 And the voice of that fitful song
 Sings on, and is never still :
 “ A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

There are things of which I may not speak ;
 There are dreams that cannot die ;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
 And a mist before the eye.
 And the words of that fatal song
 Come over me like a chill :
 “ A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
 When I visit the dear old town ;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,

MY LOST YOUTH.

As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

And Deering’s Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still :
“ A boy’s will is the wind’s will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

SANTA FILOMENA.

WHENE’ER a noble deed is wrought,
Whene’er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

SANTA FILOMENA.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
 And lifts us unawares
 Out of all meaner cares.

Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
 And by their overflow
 Raise us from what is low !

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
 The trenches cold and damp,
 The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
 The cheerless corridors,
 The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
 Pass through the glimmering gloom,
 And flit from room to room.

SANTA FILOMENA.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.



SANDALPHON.

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told

SANDALPHON.

Of the limitless realms of the air,—
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer ?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the City Celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night ?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chaunt only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress ;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands listening breathless
To sounds that ascend from below ;—

SANDALPHON.

From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
 In the fervor and passion of prayer ;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
 Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
 Into garlands of purple and red ;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal
 Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,
A fable, a phantom, a show,
 Of the ancient Rabbinical lore ;
Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
 But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
And the welkin above is all white,
 All throbbing and panting with stars,

SANDALPHON.

Among them majestic is standing
Sandalphon, the angel, expanding
His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
The frenzy and fire of the brain,
That grasps at the fruitage forbidden,
The golden pomegranates of Eden,
To quiet its fever and pain.

DAYBREAK.

A WIND came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

DAYBREAK.

It said unto the forest, " Shout !
Hang all your leafy banners out !"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, " O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, " O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow ; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
" Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
" Awake, O bell ! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, " Not yet ! in quiet lie."

NOTES.

PAGE 72. *That of our vices we can frame
A ladder.*

The words of St. Augustine are, "De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus."—SERMON III. *De Ascensione.*

PAGE 75. THE PHANTOM SHIP.

A detailed account of this "apparition of a Ship in the Air" is given by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi*, Book I. Ch. VI. It is contained in a letter from the Rev. James Pierpont, Pastor of New Haven. To this account Mather adds these words:—

"Reader, there being yet living so many credible gentlemen, that were eyewitnesses of this wonderful thing, I venture to publish it for a thing as undoubted as 'tis wonderful."

PAGE 84. *And the Emperor but a Macho.*

Macho, in Spanish, signifies a mule. *Golondrina* is the feminine form of *Golondrino*, a swallow, and also a cant name for a deserter.

PAGE 92. OLIVER BASSELIN.

Oliver Basselin, the "*Père joyeux du Vaudeville*," flourished in the fifteenth century, and gave to his convivial songs the name of his native valleys, in which he sang them, Vaux-de-Vire. This name was afterwards corrupted into the modern *Vaudeville*.

PAGE 103. VICTOR GALBRAITH.

This poem is founded on fact. Victor Galbraith was a bugler in a company of volunteer cavalry; and was shot in Mexico for some breach of discipline. It is a common superstition among soldiers, that no balls will kill them unless their names are written on them. The old proverb says, "Every bullet has its billet."

PAGE 110. *I remember the sea-fight far away.*

This was the engagement between the *Enterprise* and *Boxer*, off the harbor of Portland, in which both captains were slain. They were buried side by side, in the cemetery on Mountjoy.

PAGE 112. SANTA FILOMENA.

"At Pisa the church of San Francisco contains a chapel dedicated lately to Santa Filomena; over the altar is a picture, by Sabatelli, representing the Saint as a beautiful, nymph-like figure, floating down from heaven, attended by two angels bearing the lily, palm, and javelin, and beneath, in the foreground, the sick and maimed, who are healed by her intercession."—MRS. JAMESON, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, II. 298.







Miles
Standish,
by
Longfellow

ILLUSTRATED

