

CHAPTER XIII.

RETURNS TO MARGARET, WHO ADVANCES IN CHILDHOOD AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD.

MILITARY Trainings we have alluded to as a sort of New England Holiday. Pluck, taking with him Margaret and Hash, Chilion and Bull, went down to the village at an early hour. The Green flowed with people, soldiers, men, women and children. Portions of the horse-sheds were converted into booths for the sale of liquors, fruits and bread; wheelbarrows and carts were converted to the same use. An angle of the Meeting-house, Mr. Smith, the Tavern Keeper at No. 4, appropriated for his peculiar calling. Pluck engaged himself as tapster in one of the horse-sheds. Margaret, having orders not to go home, till her father returned at night, sat with Bull on the grass near the Meeting-house by the side of some other boys and girls, who all moved away when she approached. Tony's beat of the troop was the signal for the soldiers to assemble. They were first marched to the south front of the church, when prayer, as usual, was offered by Parson Welles, standing on the steps. "O Lord God," for thus he prayed, "we thank thee that thou hast raised up a defence to Israel, whereby thou hast cut off the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. We humbly beseech that thou wouldst send prosperity, that thou wouldst be an enemy to our enemies, and destroy all them that afflict our soul. Let the gates be lifted up, and the Lord, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, come in. And now O God, we fall down upon our knees before thee, for and in behalf of thy cause, name, people and interest, that in this day are so deeply designed against by the serpent and his seed, and from this black cloud of tumult and confusion among the nations, wilt thou bring forth the accomplishment of those promises thy people are so earnestly looking after and waiting for."

The old man was fervid and earnest. His massive white wig fluttered in the wind, his venerable form was bent over his ivory-headed cane. Some of the people were moved to tears.

The soldiers were then drawn into a line for inspection. The

Captain was Jonas Hoag ; 1st. Lieutenant, Eliashib Tuck, from the Mill ; Corporal, Joseph Whiston, a Breakneck ; Chilion Hart, fifer ; and Tony Washington, drummer. Their equipments presented hardly so uniform and symmetrical an aspect as appears in the militia of our day. There had been, however, a gradual improvement from the primitive array of Colonial times ; when the troops were made up of pikemen, bowmen, and musketeers with match-locks. Miles Standish, and his puritan coadjutors, was dressed in a coat of mail, on his left arm he bore a target, in his right a rapier or broadsword, iron gloves shielded his hands, an iron helmet with a visor covered his head and face, his breast was plated with iron. In this Livingston Company many wore three-cornered hats, shad-bellied coats, shoe and knee buckles. Some retained the identical dress of the late war. The children who may read this memoir, and we hope there are many such, do not fancy that our Revolution was fought in cocked-hats and small-clothes !

Among the spectators, seated on the grass under the eaves of the Meeting-house, were several, whose wounds and infirmities, contracted during the war, rendered them muster-free. There were six or eight of this description ; one had lost a leg, another an arm, one had survived a shot through the groin, one had pined away on insults, blows, hunger and cold in the Jersey prison-ships, and bringing home his stark skeleton, became a town pauper. Another one, whose name was Alexis Robinson, having the side of his face shot away, and with one eye and ear, losing a moiety of his senses, and failing besides in his earnings, the certificates of which he always carried, by the depreciation of the currency, was also provided for by the town. These severally had hobbled out to see the training.

To these must be added certain soldiers of an earlier date. Prominent among whom, was lame Deacon Ramsdill, leaning with his left hand on a smooth crooked mountain-laurel cane, and having his right folded over his narrow wrinkled face, perpetually endeavoring to suppress a good-natured but somewhat undiaconal smile, a risible labitur et labetur, that spirted out like water between his fingers, and ran through the channels of his cheeks, all around his eyes, and even back to his ears. At the age of sixteen, in 1755, he was engaged in what is known as the expulsion of the Acadians, or French neutrals, from Nova Scotia ; in 1757 he was at the surrender of Fort William Henry ; and in 1759 was with Gen. Wolfe at the battle on the Plains of Abraham, where he received a wound in his leg. There was also his brother Deacon, Hadlock, of a more Pythagorean tem-

per, who was engaged in the Spanish war, and served under General Wentworth in the attack on Carthagena, 1740, and afterwards was in the defeat of General Braddock, 1755.

Nor would one forget to notice the children on this occasion whose chief business consisted in buying gingerbread, pitching coppers, watching the exercises and following the steps of the soldiers ; or to be reminded of a difference in their habits between this and "good old Colony times," when the Legislature conceiving "that the training up of youth to the art and practice of arms will be of great use ; do therefore order that all youths within this jurisdiction, from ten years old to the age of sixteen years, shall be instructed by some one of the officers of the band, upon the usual training days, in the exercise of arms, as small guns, half pikes, bows and arrows."

Captain Hoag was an accomplished disciplinarian, esteemed such at least by his contemporaries. His hair was powdered, his coat faced with blue, on his hat appeared a large white cockade, his waist was ornamented with a scarlet sash, his shoulder rounded off with a silver epaulette, and silver lacings graced his yellow buck-skin breeches. But what more peculiarly distinguished him was the badge of the order of the Cincinnati, a gold medal with the spread eagle, and blue ribbon hanging from his coat buttons. "Attention ! At this word," said he, giving instructions designed for the younger members of the company, "you must be silent, moving neither hand nor foot. To the Left, Dress ! You will turn your heads briskly to the left, so as to bring your right eye in the direction of your waistcoat buttons." "Handle Cartridge !" — "Prime !" — "Shut Pan !" — "Draw Rammer !" — "Ram down Cartridge !" — "Return Rammer !" — "Cock Fire-lock !" — "Take aim !" — "Fire !" "At this word, Fire," continued he, "you will pull the trigger briskly, then return to the priming position, the muzzle of your fire-lock directly in front, the left hand just forward of the feather-spring, seize the cock with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand." After the inspection and manual drill, the soldiers were marched and countermarched over the Green.

There came also to the training, Master Elliman, who exempt by his profession from arms, and had always ranked as a Tory, nevertheless made it a point to appear at these times, as it would seem to air his antipathies. If he encountered Pluck, well ; but this morning he saw one whom he more fancied, Margaret, sitting with her dog.

"How do you enjoy it?" said he.

"Very well," was the reply. "I love to see them."

"Sævit toto Mars impius orbe."

"I do not understand that."

"I know you do not. You will by and by."

"Chilion plays so on his fife, and Tony drums so well,—it is almost as good as dancing; only the girls and women don't go with them. See how they follow Chilion round just like the dancers! Why don't they dance? How slow they step!"

"It is not Chilion they follow," replied the Master, "it is that little laced android with a long knife in his hand, and a lackered bunch on his shoulder. But here are Deacons Ramsdill and Hadlock, *αξιῶν προεβύτιροι ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ* Livingston, and our broad-brimmed nay nay and yea yea android, Anthony Wharfield. Salvete, Deacons; God bless thee, Friend Anthony. Miss Margaret Hart, Friend Anthony."

"How does thee do? sister Margaret;" said the latter.

"A Pond gal!" said Deacon Hadlock.

"What on arth are you doing with that little critter?" said Deacon Ramsdill. "Larnin the young pup new tricks?"

"The dog that trots about will find a bone," said Deacon Hadlock.

"Qui vult cædere canem, facile invenit fustem," responded the Master.

Bull, whether that his name was used too freely, or from an old habit in the presence of strangers, began to growl.

"Lie still," said Margaret.

"There, you see the Scriptor fulfilled. Soft words turn away wrath," said Deacon Ramsdill, with his right hand on his mouth striving in vain to curb his laughter.

"So Friend Anthony gets rid of the wars, and trainings, by his soft answers, I suppose," said the Master.

"Not of paying," responded the Quaker. "Ruth and I were stripped of most we had, to support the troops."

"See how God has blest you! What an army he is raising for our defence," said Deacon Hadlock, pointing to the soldiers.

"What is that little man, with a long knife, doing to the men?" asked Margaret.

"He is preparing them for war; he will prove a Joshua to us," said Deacon Hadlock, not so much, however, in reply to Margaret, as to illustrate sentiments which he feared did not sufficiently prevail with his friends.

"I rather guess he's larnin them bagonets and hatchets to make pretty frèe work with our legs," said Deacon Ramsdill, pressing down upon his cane.

"He is teaching the science of puppetry," said the Master. "He is teaching them to break the commandments of Christ," said the Quaker.

"What is it for? what for!" exclaimed Margaret, starting up with some surprise.

"I can tell you all," said Deacon Hadlock. "It is under God, the defence of our lives, liberties and fortunes."

"How many of our people were killed in the French war, and in the last war!" said Deacon Ramsdill.

"How many of us were shut in the Jail yonder," said the Master.

"How many farms in this town were ruined," said the Quaker.

"What blunders are ye all making!" exclaimed Deacon Hadlock. "It is our enemies that we expect to kill."

"Who?" asked Margaret.

"Our enemies, I say."

"Who are our enemies?"

"Those who injure us."

"What, kill them?" said Margaret. "Now I wish Chilion would bring his violin and make them dance. They wouldn't kill one another then. Why don't he play Chorus Jig, and set them to dancing?"

"Clear nater," said Deacon Ramsdill; "I make no doubt the gal feels just so."

"Oh, Brother Ramsdill," exclaimed Deacon Hadlock, "how can you! What are we coming to! I was informed you countenanced mixed dancing; that you told Bethia Weeks, a church-member, there was no harm in it if she didn't carry it too far. Here you are encouraging that sinful amusement and opposing our military preparations! I do believe the Lord has forsaken us indeed."

"Behold your defenders, pro aris et focus," exclaimed the Master, directing attention to the soldiers. A difficulty had evidently arisen. The Captain was seen running towards the rear.

It will be remembered that Hash, the brother of Margaret, had a difference with Zenas Joy, a Breakneck, at the Turkey Shoot. We would also state that Zenas was engaged to Delinda Hoag, a daughter of the Captain. On the parade this morning, Hash's conduct had been very unmannerly to-

wards Zenas, so much so as to offend Captain Hoag, both officially and personally; and he changed Hash's place, transferring him to a platoon under command of Corporal Joseph Whiston, also a Breakneck. Hash could not brook this, and carried his resentment so far, as to strike his Corporal on the march; an offence that Joseph sought to punish by a blow in return. Obed, also, who was that day doing his first military duty, became somehow involved in the affray. The music ceased; order was lost. Several voices called for Deacon Hadlock to interfere in his capacity as Justice of the Peace. The soldiers speedily resolved themselves into a civil tribunal, and Hash and Obed were equitably tried and sentenced, the former, to twenty-four hours imprisonment in the Jail, and to pay a fine of twenty shillings; the latter, to receive twenty-nine lashes at the whipping-post. The culprits were immediately taken to their respective dooms, followed by crowds of people. Margaret, probably not understanding exactly the nature of events, went slowly after. She heard the shrieks of Obed, she forced herself through the large ring that was formed about him. He was stripped to his skin, the blood was running in red lines down his back, four or five blows only had been inflicted; she ran forward and threw herself about the culprit. The constable tried to wrench her off, she clung with an almost preternatural grasp. He threatened to lay the lash upon her. She told him he should not whip Obed. Judah Weeks, brother of Isabel, set up a cry "For shame!" Isabel herself, who was playing near by, began to utter a loud lament, all the children raised piteous moans, the older people became confused; in fine Deacon Hadlock himself, hearing Obed's entreaties, consented to remit the balance of the penalty. Margaret walked through the people, who drew off on either side as she passed, her face and clothes dabbled with blood. She went with Isabel to the brook and washed herself; Isabel going into her house, which was near by, fetched a towel to wipe her with, and asked her to walk in and see her mother. Margaret said she must go back to her brother Hash. The Jail-yard, constructed of high posts, was, as we have said, on a line with the street, and when Margaret returned she found boys and girls looking through the crevices; an example that she imitated. Deacon Ramsdill approaching, asked her if she wanted to go in; she replied that she did. After considerable parleying, the Deacon was able to obtain of the Jailer, Mr. Shooks, permission for her to enter, with Bull, whom it was not an easy matter to keep out.

She found Hash in a small, dimly lighted cell, rolling and blubbering on the floor. She aroused him, and he took her in one arm, and held the head of the dog by the other, and seemed very much pleased to have them with him. She said she would stay all night, but he told her that would not be allowed. She saw another man in the cell, who, Hash whispered to her, was a murderer. She saw him sitting, muffled like an owl, in his long, black beard, long tangled hair, dark begrimed face, and ragged clothes. She went to him, he took her in his lap, pressed her hard to his breast, and stroked her hair. She called Bull, and he patted the dog's head. He said he had a little boy about as old as she was, whom he had not seen for a long time, and never expected to see again. She gave him some gingerbread which she had in her pocket, and he munched it greedily. Hash offered him a quid of tobacco, whereat he seemed greatly delighted, and tears ran down his cheeks. Margaret said she would bring some flowers the next time she came to the village. He thanked her and said he should be glad to see them, that he had not seen a flower for two years. The door was opened, the Jailer entered, and Margaret was ordered to leave. She crossed the Green to the Horse sheds, where her father was employed selling liquors. He seated her on a cider barrel, and gave her another piece of gingerbread and cheese, which she ate with a good appetite, as she had hardly eaten anything since morning. The day approached its close, and the soldiers drew up to ballot for officers, Captain Hoag's term of service having expired. In the result, Lieutenant Eliashib Tuck was chosen Captain, and all the subaltern officers advanced their respective grades, excepting Corporal Joseph Whiston, whose name, for some reason, disappeared from the canvass. Captain Tuck replied as follows: "Fellow soldiers, I lack words to express my sense of the honor conferred upon me, as unexpected as it is undeserved. We live in a glorious era, one that eclipses all past time, and will be a model for future ages. The close of the eighteenth century is sublime as its meridian was grand. It were an honor for a man to be born in this period, how much more so to be honored by it! My brave compatriots! Military life is the path to distinction, and the means of usefulness. An immortal crown awaits the head of the hero! The Lion of Britain we have bound, and the Unicorn of France shall ere long bite the dust! Livingstonians! my blood is aroused, my ambition fired to be at the head of such a corps! Your fame has spread from Bunker Hill to Saratoga, from Genessee

to King's Mountain. I will lead wherever you will follow, I will dare all dangers with your support."

Agreeably to custom, he then announced a treat. The company was marched to the Crown and Bowl, and dismissed. The citizens, old and young, thronged to the scene. Pluck, leaving Margaret and his tapstership, joined in the general exhilaration. Pails of toddy were brought from the bar-room. The men drank freely, gave huzzas, and sang patriotic songs. Ex-Corporal Whiston, however, and his particular friends, dignifiedly indignant, withdrew, and went to the Store for their entertainment. The old men drank, and the young men; boys crept under the legs of the soldiers, and lifting the pails, tugged at the slops; little children on their bellies lapped the gutters, and sucked the grass, where the liquor fell.

The sun went down, clouds darkened the sky, and in swollen masses drifted over the town. Solomon Smith, son of the Tavern-keeper from No. 4, set a pine-torch in his stand, and with knap-sack, shoulder-straps, and dangling priming wire and brush, called around him as many as he could, while his father went after the little boys whose coppers he exchanged for rum. Lights broke out from the wheel-barrows and carts, all over the Green, which rung with shouts and song, and the tramping of feet. At the Store they drank and sung. But the excessive use of alcoholic stimulants aggravates the ordinary symptoms of good cheer, and produces effects which the most considerate do not always foresee. Intoxication supervenes, accompanied by a paralysis of the physical, or an inflammation of the nervous system. Captain Tuck was borne dead-drunk by his reeling soldiers, and laid on the floor of the bar-room. Ex-Corporal Whiston with his friends sallied from the Store; a brawl ensued between the two parties, and Deacon Hadlock, interposing to quell the fray, was knocked to the ground. Some were seized with nausea, and repaired for relief to the Horse-sheds. Margaret was driven from her seat by Delinda Hoag, who bore thither her espoused Zenas Joy. She went in pursuit of her father. She stumbled over a little boy that lay helpless on the grass. This was Aurelius Orff, whom his sister Beulah Ann, and Grace Joy, who had been making a visit to Hester, niece of Deacon Penrose, were looking after; whereupon Grace called her a hoddy-doddy guzzletail, and Beulah Ann gave her a smart push, as if to test her condition; whereby she was brought in involuntary contact with Paulina Whiston, who having grasped her brother, the ex-Corporal, by the collar, was punching and twitching him to the shed where

their horse was tied. She had also slung over her shoulders a pair of saddle-bags, filled with articles for which she had been bartering at the Store. She helped her brother mount, but he was too weak to retain his seat, and before she gained the pillion, he fell to the ground. Margaret seized the horse's bridle, and curbed the animal, while Paulina recovered her brother. Lights blinked and glowed from booth to booth. The black shadows of men showed unearthly, like demons in a pit. Boys yelled their excitement, Indian-like, across the Green. Horses breaking loose, plunged madly through the crowd. Corporal Whiston's horse was frightened and tore away. It began to rain, the clouds emptied themselves in torrents, as it might seem to animate and refreshen the people, but really to superadd a burthen on such as already had more than they could carry, and bury those who were fallen deeper in the soil. Margaret hurried she knew not where; she slunk from the rain under a cart, but was thrust away by its drunken owner and his drunken customers. She ran towards the Tavern, that was full of men. A thick darkness had come on, the lights on the Green were extinguished. The faint glare from the Tavern discovered her standing out in the rain. Solomon Smith, leaving his own now deserted and useless stand, coming along, kindly took her with him into the house. Men in various stages of intoxication, stood, sat, and lay in the stoop, and in the bar-room. Through these Solomon led her into the kitchen. Here was a parcel of men and women, boys and girls, some drying themselves by the fire, some waiting for the rain to hold up, some singing, laughing and drinking. Here also was Tony with his fiddle playing to a company of dancers; and Pluck, sitting on his hams near the fire, with his full-orbed cabbage-head, swaying to and fro, beating time with his arms and legs, and balancing in one hand a mug of flip. "Ha! my little lady!" said he, catching Margaret with a bounce into his lap, and holding her near the fire, "won't you drink a little, now do drink a little. See how it creeps; don't be snuffy, Molly, none of your mulligrubs. Here's blood now, Obed's blood on your pinafore. A brave deed that; you must have something to take. It's training day, and they don't come only four times a year. There's Beulah Ann, she loves it as well as a calf likes to be licked. Sweet pinkey-posy, it is as good for your wet clothes, as the Widder's horse-radish for dropsy, ha! ha!" Whereat as he was pressing the mug to Margaret's lips, Tony, reaching over with his fiddle-bow, struck it from his hand into the fire. The

blue blaze whirred up the chimney and darted into the room. There was a cry of fire, and Mr. Stillwater, summoning himself, lifted Pluck to his feet, and shoved him into the street. The old toper anticipating some such issue of the day, agreeably to custom, had taken Margaret with him to the village to be conducted home by her at night. Margaret leading the way, they ascended the hill, crossed the Pasture, and entered the woods. The clouds hung low, and their floating skirts seemed to be pierced and hatched by the trees. The rain had thinned into a fine close mist. The path, to inexperienced eyes, would have been absolutely indistinguishable. They had threaded it before in similar darkness. They came to the Brook, which, increased by the rain, flowed with a dismal sound. They entered the ravine, that brought them now on a level with the Brook, whose hissing waters rolled over their feet. They attained the summit above, where the Tree-Bridge lay. Pluck seemed terrified, and hesitated to cross. He sat down, then extended his length on the grass, and ere long fell asleep. Margaret would have been unwilling that her father should go over, and was not sorry to have him stop; though it was night, and rainy, and they were alone, and still a mile from home. The rain-drops from the trees showered on her head and lap, the grass was wet underneath her, and her clothes were drenched with water. But of this she hardly thought; what she more feared was the ways of her father in his drunken sleep, his mysterious sufferings, his frenzied utterance, his spasmodic agitation. This, and for this she feared; she looked for it, and it came. She tried to quiet him, and as she rubbed his arm he said she was a dove feeding him with milk; and then he scratched and tore at his breast, which she soothed with her hand, hot, rough, and hairy as it was; then he said he was boiling in the still, and Solomon Smith was holding the cap on; he shrieked and yelled till his roar exceeded that of the Brook. Then he began to laugh wildly. "Old Nick is turning the North Pole. There comes out of the sea a whale walking on his tail; Parson Welles has got astride of his gills with a riding stick, ha! ha! There comes a star rolling on its five points, and next comes old Suwarrow in his boots. Grind away, old fellow. Round, round they go over the mountains, splash, splash across rivers. Can't you hear the pismires laugh? There's St. Paul with a cat-o'-nine-tails, and Deacon Hadlock going to take me to the whipping post. I'll be poxed, if you do. Ho, Molly, Molly! help." He leaped from the ground, Margaret clung to the skirt of his

coat. He broke away. "The Bridge! the Bridge!" he exclaimed. "They can't catch me then!"

"Father! father!" she screamed in uttermost agony, "you'll fall, you'll fall!" He slipped from the uncertain tree; he struck the sides of the chasm, and dashed into the stream. Aroused by the shock of the fall, and the stimulus of the water, he called aloud for aid, as he was borne on by the dark, invisible rush of the stream. Margaret then, for the first time in her life, felt the shuddering, appalling *sense of danger*. What could be done? She ran down the ravine, she seized the struggling arm of her father, and detained him till by his own efforts he was able to bring himself to his feet. In silence, and sickness, and weariness, she fagged homewards; in darkest dead of night she went to her bed as to her grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SABBATH.—MARGARET GOES TO MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME.—HER DREAM OF JESUS.

It was a Sabbath morning, a June Sabbath morning, a June Sabbath morning in New England. The sun rose over a hushed, calm world, wrapt like a Madonna in prayer. It was The Day, as the Bible is The Book. It was an intersection of the natural course of time, a break in the customary order of events, and lay between, with its walls of Saturday and Sunday night on either side, like a chasm, or a dyke, or a mystical apartment, whatever you would please liken it to. It was such a Sabbath to the people of Livingston as they used to have before steam, that arch Antinomian, "annihilated time and space," and railroads bridged over all our vallies. Its light, its air, its warmth, its sound, its sun, the shimmer of the dawn on the brass Cock of the steeple, the look of the Meeting-house itself, all things were not as on other days. And now when those old Sabbaths are almost gone, some latent indefinable impression of what they were comes over us, and wrenches us into awe, stillness and regret.

Margaret had never been to Meeting; the family did not go. If there were no other indisposing causes, Pluck himself