

"Salve!" retorted the Widow Wright, indignantly, and elbowing her way through the crowd. "*Here's* the Nommernis-stortumbug, none of your twaddle, the gennewine tippee, caustic and expectorant, good for bruises and ails in the vitals."

"I've got some plums that Siah picked under the tree that blowd down in the storm," said Mistress Hatch; "I guess the gal would like them, and if any body else would eat, they are welcome."

"Bring um along, Dorothy," said Mistress Tapley to her little daughter. "A platter of nutcakes. The chimney tumbled in while I was frying um, and they is a little sutty, but if the gal is hungry, they'll eat well."

Provisions of a different description were furnished from the Tavern, of which the multitude partook freely. People from the village also sent up quantities of fruit, cakes, &c. But they could not tarry, they must hasten to the child's home. They went up the hill, Margaret erected on the shoulders of the young men, escorted as it would seem by half the town, all wild with joy. Pluck was in transports; Obed laughed and cried together all the way up the hill; Hash was so much delighted, that he drank himself nearly drunk at the Tavern. When they came in sight of the house, a new flourish of the horns was made, three cheers given, hats and green twigs swung. Chilion, whom the good news had already reached, was seated in a chair outside the door; Bull, unable to move, lay on the grass, wagging his joy with his tail; Brown Moll took to spinning flax as hard as she could spin, to keep her sensations within due bounds; the little Isabel leaped up and down spitting her hands. Margaret was conveyed to her mother's bed. Dr. Spoor examined her wounds, and pronounced them not serious, and all the women came in and examined them and gave the same decision. Parson Welles suggested to the Preacher the opportuneness of a prayer of thanksgiving, which the latter offered in a becoming manner. A general collation was had in which the family who had tasted of nothing since the noon before, were made glad participants. Chilion, to express his own transport, or to embody and respond to the delight of the people, called for his violin. Playing, he wrought that effect in which he took evident pleasure, moving the parties in a kind of subservient unison, and gliding into a familiar reel, he soon had them all dancing. On the grass before the house, old and young, grave and gay, they danced exuberantly. Parson Welles, the Preacher and Deacon Hadlock looked on smilingly. Deacon Ramsdill's

wife declared Margaret *must* see what was going on, had her taken from the bed, and held her in her lap on the door-sill. There had been clouds over the sun all day, and mists in the atmosphere, nor did the sun yet appear, only below it, while it was now about an hour high, along the horizon, cleared away a long narrow strip of sky flushing with golden light. Above the people's heads still hung grey clouds, about them were green woods, underneath them the green grass, and within them were bright joyous sensations, and through all things streamed this soft colored light, and in all shone a pavonine irradiancy, and their faces glowed more lustrously, and their hearts beat more rapturously. Deacon Hadlock, stirred irresistibly, gave out, as for years he had been accustomed to do in Church, the lines of the Doxology —

"To God the Father, Son,  
And Spirit, glory be,  
As 't was, and is, and shall be so,  
To all eternity."

which Chilion pitching on his violin and leading off, they sung with great emphasis. When they were about breaking up, Deacon Ramsdill said, "Shan't we have a collection? We have had pretty nice times, but strippins arter all is the best milk, and I guess they'll like it as well as any thing now. We shall have to feather this creeter's nest, or the bird will be off agin. Here's my hat if some of these lads will pass it round."

A contribution was made, and thus the night of the morning became a morning at night to the Pond and the people of Livingston.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

WINTER,

An event common in New-England, is at its height. It is snowing, and has been for a whole day and night, with a strong north-east wind. Let us take a moment when the storm intermits, and look in at Margaret's and see how they do. But we cannot approach the place by any of the

ordinary methods of travel; the roads, lanes and by-paths are blocked up: no horse or ox could make his way through those deep drifts, immense mounds and broad plateaus of snow. If we are disposed to adopt the means of conveyance formerly so much in vogue, whether snow-shoes or magic, we may possibly get there. The house or hut is half sunk in a snow bank; the waters of the Pond are covered with a solid enamel as of ivory; the oxen and the cow in the barn-yard, look like great horned sheep, in their fleeces of snow. All is silence, and lifelessness, and if you please to say, desolation. Hens there are none, nor turkeys, nor ducks, nor birds, nor Bull, nor Margaret. If you see any signs of a human being, it is the dark form of Hash, mounted on snow-shoes, going from the house to the barn. Yet there are the green hemlocks and pines, and firs, green as in summer, some growing along the flank of the hill that runs north from the Indian's Head, looking like the real snow-balls, blossoming in mid-winter, and nodding with large white flowers. But there is one token of life, the smoke coming from the low grey chimney, which, if you regard it as one, resembles a large, elongated, transparent baloon; or if you look at it by piece-meal, it is a beautiful current of bluish-white vapor, flowing upward unendingly; and prettily is it striped and particolored, as it passes successively the green trees, the bare rocks, and white crown of the hill behind; nor does its interest cease, even when it disappears among the clouds. Some would dwell a good while on that smoke, and see in it manifold out-shows and denotements of spiritualities; others would say, the house is buried so deep, it must come up from the hot mischief-hatching heart of the earth; others still would fancy the whole Pond laid in its winding-sheet, and that if they looked in, they would behold the dead faces of their friends. Our own sentiment is, that that smoke comes from a great fire in the great fire-place, and that if we should go into the house, we should find the family as usual there; a fact which, as the storm begins to renew itself, we shall do well to take the opportunity to verify.

Flourishing in the centre of these high-rising and broad-spreading snows, unmoved amid the fiercest onsets of the storm, comfortable in the extremity of winter, the family are all gathered in the kitchen, and occupied as may be. In the cavernous fire-place burns a great fire, composed of a huge green back-log, a large green forestick, and a high cob-work of crooked and knotty refuse-wood, ivy, hornbeam and beech. Through this the yellow flame leaps and forks, and the bluish-

grey smoke flows up the ample sluice-way of the chimney. From the ends of the wood the sap fries and drips on the sizzling coals below, and flies off in angry steam. Under the forestick great red coals roll out, sparkle a semibrief, lose their grosser substance, indicate a more ethereal essence in prototypal forms of white, down-like cinders, and then fall away into brown ashes. To a stranger the room has a sombre aspect rather heightened than relieved by the light of the fire burning so brightly at mid-day. The only connection with the external air is by the south window-shutter being left entirely open, forming an aperture through the logs of about two feet square; yet when the outer light is so obscured by a storm, the bright fire within must anywhere be pleasant. In one corner of the room sits Pluck, in a red flannel shirt and leather apron, at work on his kit mending a shoe; with long and patient vibration and equipoise he draws the threads, and interludes the strokes with snatches of songs, banter and laughter. The apartment seems converted into a workshop, for next the shoemaker stands the shingle-maker, Hash, who with froe in one hand and mallet in the other, by dint of smart percussion, is endeavoring to rive a three-cornered billet of hemlock, on a block. In the centre of the room sits Brown Moll, with still bristling and grizzly hair, pipe in her mouth, in a yellow woollen long-short and black petticoat, winding a ball of yarn from a windle. Nearer the fire, are Chilion and Margaret, the latter also dressed in woollen, with the *Orbis Pictus*, or *World* displayed, a book of Latin and English, adorned with cuts, which the Master lent her; the former with his violin, endeavoring to describe the notes in *Dr. Byles's Collection of Sacred Music*, also a loan of the Master's, and at intervals trailing on the lead of his father in some popular air. We shall also see that one of Chilion's feet is raised on a stool, bandaged, and apparently disabled. Bull, the dog, lies rounded on the hearth, his nose between his paws, fast asleep. Dick, the grey squirrel, sits swinging listlessly in his wire wheel, like a duck on a wave. Robin, the bird, in its cage, perched on its roost, shrugs and folds itself into its feathers, as if it were night. Over the fire-place, on the rough stones that compose the chimney, which day and night through all the long winter are ever warm, where Chilion has fixed some shelves, are Margaret's flowers; a blood-root in the marble pot Rufus Palmer gave her, and in wooden moss-covered boxes, pinks, violets and buttercups, green and flowering. Here also, as a sort of manteltree ornament, sits the marble kitten which Rufus made, under a cedar

twig. At one end of the crane in the vacant side of the fire-place hang rings of pumpkin rinds drying for beer. On the walls are suspended strings of dried apples, bunches of yarn, and the customary fixtures of coats, hats, knapsacks, &c. On the sleepers above is a chain-work of cobwebs, loaded and knapped with dust, quivering and gleaming in the wind that courses with little or no obstruction through all parts of the house. Near Hash stands the draw-horse, on which he smooths and squares his shingles; underneath it and about lies a pile of fresh, sweet-scented, white shavings and splinters. Through the yawns of the back door, and sundry rents in the logs of the house, filter in, unweariedly, fine particles of snow, and thus along the sides of the room rise little cone-shaped, marble-like pilasters. Between Hash and his father, elevated on blocks, is the cider barrel. These are some of the appendages, inmates and circumstances of the room. Within doors is a mixed noise of lapstone, mallet, swifts, fiddle, fire; without is the rushing of the storm. Pluck snipsnaps with his wife, cracks on Hash, shows his white teeth to Margaret; Chilion asks his sister to sing after his playing; Hash orders her to bring a coal to light his pipe; her mother gets her to pick a snarl out of the yarn she is winding. She climbs upon a stool and looks out of the window. The scene is obscured by the storm; the thick driving flakes throw a brownish mizzly shade over all things, air, trees, hills and every avenue the eye has been wont to traverse. The light tufts of snow hiss like arrows as they shoot by. The leafless Butternut, whereon the whip-poorwill used to sing, and the yellow warbler make its nest, sprawls its naked arms, and moans pitifully in the blast; the snow that for a moment is amassed upon it, falls to the ground like a harvest of alabaster fruit. The Peach-tree, that bears Margaret's own name, and is of her own age, seems to be drowning in the snow. Water drops from the eaves occasioned by the snow melting about the hot chimney.

"Something of a storm, an't it, Molly?" said Pluck, looking up, at the same time strapping his knife on the edge of the kit.

"As much as you are a cobbler," rejoined Brown Moll, "keep us wet the whole time;—can't step out but our shoes let in all the snow that falls and all the water that makes."

"Glad to hear you speak of water," said her husband. "It reminds me that I am getting very dry.—Who did the Master tell you was the God of Shoemakers?" he asked, addressing himself to Margaret.

"St. Crispin," replied the child.

"Guess I'll pay him a little attention," said the man, leaving his bench and going to the rum bottle that stood by the chimney. "I feel some interest in these things, and I think I have some reason to indulge a hope that I am among the elect."

"He wouldn't own you," said his wife tartly.

"Why so?" inquired Pluck.

"Because you are not a man; you are not the thrum or rag of a man. Scrape you all up, and we shouldn't get lint enough to put on Chilion's foot."

"Look at that," said her husband, exposing his bare arm, flabby and swollen; "what do you think of that?"

"Garbage!" replied the woman. "Grand grease, try you up, run you into cakes, make a present of you to your divinity to rub into his boots. The fire is getting down, Meg, can't you bring in some wood?"

"You are a *woman* really!" retorted Pluck, "to send the child out in such a storm, when it would take three men to hold one's head on."

"Ha, ha!" laughed out Brown Moll, withdrawing her pipe to spit. "You must have stitched your own on; I don't wonder you are afraid.—That is the way you lost your ear, trying to hold on your head in a snow-storm, ha ha!"

"Well," rejoined Pluck, "you think your are equal to three men in wit, learning, providing, don't you?"

"Mayhaps so."

"And weaving, spinning, coloring, reeling, twisting, cooking, clinching, hen-pecking?—Well I guess you are. Can you tell, dearest Maria, what is Latin for the Widow's Obed's red hair?"

"No. But I can for the maggot that makes powder-post of our whole family, Didymus Hart."

"Well done!" said Pluck with a laugh, and staggered towards his bench.

"I knew we should have a storm," said his wife, "after such a cold spell; I saw a Bull's Eye towards night; my corns have been pricking more than usual; a flight of snow-birds went by day before yesterday. And it won't hold up till after the full, and that's to-night."

"And I thought as much too," answered Pluck. "Bottle has emptied fast, glums been growing darker in the face, windle spun faster, cold potatoes for dinner, hot tongue for supper."

"You *shall* fetch some wood, Meg, or I'll warm your back

with a shingle," said her mother, flinging out a threat which she had no intention of executing. "Hash is good for something, that he is."

"Yes, Maharshalalhashbaz, my second born," interjected Pluck, "sell your shingles to the women; they'll give you more than Deacon Penrose; it is such a nice thing for heating a family with.—We shan't need any more roofs to our houses—always excepting of course, your dear and much honored mother, who is a warming-pan in herself, good as a Bath Stove."

Hash, spurred on by this double shot, plied his mallet the harder, and declared with an oath that *he* would not get the wood, that they might freeze first; adding that he hauled and cut it, and that was his part.

Chilion whispered his sister, and she went out for the purpose in question. It was not excessively cold, since the weather moderated as the storm increased, and she might have taken some interest in that tempestuous outer world. Her hens, turkeys and ducks, who were all packed together, the former on their roost under the shed, the latter in one corner, also required feeding; and she went in and got boiled potatoes, which they seemed glad to make a meal of. The wind blazed and racketed through the narrow space between the house and the hill. Above, the flakes shaded and mottled the sky, and fell twirling, pitching, skimble-scamble, and anon, slowly and more regularly, as in a minuet; and as they came nearer the ground, they were caught up by the current, and borne in a horizontal line, like long, quick spun, silver threads, afar over the white fields. There was but little snow in the shed, although entirely open on the south side; the storm seeming to devote itself to building up a drift in front. This drift had now reached a height of seven or eight feet. It sloped up like the roof of a pyramid, and on the top was an appendage like a horn, or a plume, or a marble jet d'eau, or a frozen flame of fire; and the elements in all their violence, the eddies that veered about the corner of the house, the occasional side-blasts, still dallied, and stopped to mould it, and finish it; and it became thinner, and more tapering, and spiral; each singular flake adjusting itself to the very tip, with instinctive nicety; till at last it broke off by its own weight—then a new one went on to be formed. Under this drift lay the wood Margaret was after, and she hesitated to demolish the pretty structure. The cistern was overrun with ice; the water fell from the spout in an ice tube, the

half barrel was rimmed about with a broad round moulding of ice, and where the water flowed off, it had formed a wavy cascade of ice, and under the cold snows the clear cold water could be heard babbling and singing as if it no whit cared for winter. Her great summer gobbling turkey attempted to mount the edge of the cistern to drink, but the wind blew, his feet slipped, and back he fell. She took a dish and watered her poultry. From the corner of the house the snow fretted and spirted, in a continuous stream of spray. While she looked at this, she saw a flock of snow-birds borne on by the winds, endeavoring to tack their course, and run in under the shelter of the house, but the remorseless elements drifted them on, and they were apparently dashed against the woods beyond. One of the birds was seen to drop, and Margaret darted out, waded through the snow, caught the luckless or lucky wanderer, and amid the butting winds, sharp snow-rack, and smothering sheets of spray, carried it into the house. In her Book of Birds, she found it was a snow-bunting, that it was hatched in a nest of rein deer's hair near the North Pole, that it had sported among eternal solitudes of rocks and ice, and come thousands of miles. It was purely white, while others of the species receive some darker shades. She put it in the cage with Robin, who welcomed the travelled stranger with due respect.

That day and all that night the snow continued to fall, and the wind raged. When Margaret went to her loft, she found her bed covered with a pile of snow that had trickled through the roof. She shook the coverlid, undressed, laid herself on her thistle-down pallet—such a one had she been able to collect and make—to her sleep. The wind surged, swelled, puffed, hissed, whistled, shrieked, thundered, sighed, howled, by turns. The house jarred and creaked; her bed rocked under her; loose boards on the roof clattered and rattled; the snow pelted her window-shutter. In such a din and tustle of the elements lay the child. She had no sister to nestle with her, and snug her up; no gentle mother to fold the sheets about her neck, and tuck in the bed; no watchful father to come with a light, and see that she slept safe. Alone and in darkness she climbed into her chamber, alone and in darkness she wrapt herself in the bed. In the fearfulness of that night she sung or said to herself some words of the Master's, which he, however, must have given her for a different purpose—for of needs must a stark child's nature in such a crisis appeal to something above and

superior to itself, and she had taken a floating impression that the Higher Agencies, whatever they might be, existed in Latin:—

“ O sanctissima, O purissima,  
Dulcis Virgo Maria,  
Mater amata, intemerata!  
Ora, ora pro nobis!”

As she slept amid the passion of the storm, softly did the snow from the roof distil upon her feet, and sweetly did dreams from heaven descend into her soul. In her dream she was walking in a large, high, self-illuminated, marble Hall, having flowers, statues and columns on either side. The top or roof of the Hall was neither covered nor open, but seemed ceiled in a sort of opaline-colored invisibility. The statues, of clear white marble, large as life, and the flowers in marble vases, alternated with each other between the columns, whose ornamented capitals merged in the shadows above. There was no distinct articulate voice, but a kind of low murmuring of the air, a sort of musical pulsation, in the place, which she heard. The statues seemed to be for the most part marble embodiments of pictures she had seen in the Master's books. There were the Venus de Medicis; the Apollo Belvidere; Diana, with her golden bow; Ceres, with poppies and ears of corn; Humanity, “with sweet and lovely countenance;” Fortitude, with her hand on a pillar; Temperance, pouring water from a pitcher; Diligence, with a sickle and sheaf; Peace, and her crown of olives; Truth, with “her looks serene, pleasant, courteous, cheerful and yet modest.” The flowers were such as she had sometimes seen about the houses in the village, but of great size and rare beauty;—cactuses, purple dahlias, moss-roses, carnations, high nodding geraniums, large pink hydrangeas, white japonicas, calla lilies and others. Their shadows waved on the white walls, and it seemed to her as if the music she heard issued from their cups. She went on till she came to a marble arch, or door-way, handsomely sculptured, and supported on caryatides. This opened to a large rotunda, where she saw nine beautiful female figures swimming in a circle in the air. These strewed on her as she passed, leaves and flowers, of amaranth, angelica, myrtle, rose, thyme, white jasmin, white poppy, bluebell, bittersweet nightshade, acacia and eglantine; and spun round and round in silken silence. By a similar arch, she went into another rotunda, in the centre of

which was a marble monument or sarcophagus, arising from which were two marble youths with wings, and also above them she saw two butterflies with iris-colored wings, flying away. Through another door-way she entered a larger space, opening to the heavens. In this she saw a woman, the same woman she had before seen in her dreams, with long black hair, and a pale beautiful face, who stood silently pointing to a figure far off on the rose-colored clouds. It was Christ, whom she recognized. A little distance from him, on the round top of a purple cloud, having the blue distant sky for a back-ground, was the milk-white Cross, twined with ever-greens; about it, folding one another's hands, she saw moving as in a dance, four beautiful female figures, clothed in white robes. These she remembered as the ones she saw in her dream at the Still, and she now knew them to be Faith, Hope, Love, and their sister, who was yet of their own creation, Beauty. She tried to speak, but could not. Then she returned through the Rotundas and Hall, and at the door she found a large green bull-frog, with great goggle eyes, having a pond-lily saddled to his back. She seated herself in the cup, held by the gold threads as a pomel, and the frog leaped with her clear into the next morning, in her own little dark chamber. When she awoke the wind and noise without had ceased. A perfect cone of pure white snow lay piled up over her feet, and she attributed her dream partly to that. She opened the window-shutter; it was even then snowing in large, quiet, moist flakes, which showed that the storm was nearly at an end; and in the east, near the sun-rising, she saw the clouds bundling up, ready to go away. She went below; Pluck and his wife were just out of bed; a dim, dreary light came in from the window; Chilion, who unable to go up the ladder to his chamber had a bunk spread for him of the pelts of wild beasts, near the fire, still lay there. Under a bank of ashes and cinders, smoked and sweltered the remains of the great back-log. Bull rose and stretched at her feet; Dick pawed round his tread-mill in fresh morning glee; Robin chirruped faintly and winterishly. Little heaps of snow that had blown in during the night, and other rubbish about the room, her mother set her to sweeping out with the green spruce-twig broom. Pluck with the slice raked open the ashes, drew forward the charred log, which cracked and crumbled in large deep-crimson, fine-grained, glowing coals, throwing a ruddy glare over the room. He dug away the ashes, as if he were laying a cellar-wall, and with the aid of his wife

and Margaret and divers prying and pushings, he rolled in a fresh green log, at least four feet long, and nearly two thick. Hash came lumbering down the ladder, thrusting out one arm then the other hustling on his coat, and calling the name of God over Margaret, for hitting his saw with the froe—a kind of family prayer she was quite accustomed to—and then putting on his snow-shoes he went to the barn. Mistress Hart went about getting breakfast, not putting on the teakettle, for she had none, and only at rare intervals did they drink tea or coffee—but a pot of potatoes, which served alike for family, hens and the pig. After breakfast Margaret opened the front door to look out. Here was raised a straight and sheer breast-work of snow five feet or more in height, nicely scarfing the door and lintels. Pluck could just see over it, but for this purpose Margaret was obliged to use a chair. The old gentleman, in a fit of we shall not say uncommon good feeling, declared he would dig through it. He went round by the back-door, waded through the snow breast-deep to a spot in front of the house, where the whiffing winds had left the earth nearly bare, and commenced with a shovel his subnaivean work. Margaret saw him disappear under the snow, which he threw behind him like a rabbit. She waited in greatest frolicksomeness imaginable his coming in sight at the door, hallooed to him, and threatened to set the dog on him as a thief. Pluck made some gruff unusual sound, beat the earth with his shovel; the dog growled, and thrust violently at the snow; Margaret laughed. Soon this mole of a man poked his shovel through, and straightway followed with himself, all in a sweat, and the snow melting like rain from his hot red face. Thus was opened a snow-tunnel, as good to Margaret as the Thames, two or three rods long, and three or four feet high. Through this she went to the hollow beyond. The storm had died away; the sun was struggling through the clouds as if itself in search of heat from what showed us the white, radiant, warm face of the earth; there were blue breaks in the sky over head; and far off, above the snow-strown western hills, lay violet-fringed cloud-drifts. A bank of snow, reaching in some places quite to the eaves, covered the front of the house, and buried many feet deep the grass, mallows, dandelions, rosebushes, flowerbeds, hencoops.

The Chesnuts shone in the sun with their polished, shivering, cragged limbs, a spectacle both to pity and admire. The evergreens and other trees drooped under their burdens like

full-blown sunflowers. The top of Indian's Head was nearly bare; its bleak and wild summit being scathed and polled by the storm, and the peeled and naked old hemlock or Feather stood up a sullen and derisive monument of the desolation of the race to which it was fancifully supposed to appertain. The dark, leafless boughs and twigs of the taller trees around looked like bold delicate netting or linear embroidery on the blue sky, or as if the trees, interrupted in their usual method of growth, were taking root in mid-winter up among the warm transparent heavens. Pluck came out and began playing with Margaret, throwing great armsful of snow that burst and scattered over her like rocks of down, then suffering himself to be fired at in turn. He set her astride the dog who romped and flounced, and pitched her into a drift whence her father drew her by her ankles. As he was going in, stooping under the tunnel, a pile of snow that had formed itself on the house and jutted over, fell, and breaking in the roof of the frail passage-way, completely buried the old man in the ruins. He gasped, floundered and thrust up his arms through the superincumbent mass, like a drowning man. Margaret leaped with laughter, and Brown Moll herself coming to the door was so moved by the drollery of the scene as to be obliged to withdraw her pipe to laugh also. Bull was ordered to the rescue, who, doing the best he could under the circumstances, wallowing belly-deep in the snow, seized with his teeth the woollen shirt-sleeve of his master, and tugged away, till he raised the old man's head above the drift. Pluck, unchilled in his humor by the coolness of the drench, stood, sunk to his chin in the snow, and laughed as heartily as any of them, his shining bald pate and whelky red face streaming with moisture and shaking with merriment. At length both father and child got into the house and dried themselves by the fire.

Margaret took her book to study, but her mother called her away, and set her to picking over butternut, peach and sumach leaves, and other coloring stuff. Chilion likewise demanded attention; his foot pained him; it grew swollen and inflamed. Margaret bathed it in rum; a poultice was applied, and she held it in her lap, and soothed it with her hand. A preparation of the Widow's was suggested. Hash would not go for it, Pluck and his wife could not, and Margaret must go. Bull could not go with her, and she must go alone. She was wrapped in a hood, mittens, and martin-skin tippet; her snow-shoes, a pair that she had often gone on the snows with, were fastened to her feet. She mounted the