

three-cornered hat, but the corners were now reduced to loose ragged flaps; and he wore in addition a leather apron. Her brother had a cap made of wood-chuck skin, steeple-shaped, from which the hair was pretty well rubbed off. They went to the cistern on the back side of the house, washed and rinsed themselves for dinner. The father discovered a game-some expression of face, shining scirrous skin, and plump ruby head; his eyes were bloodshot, his cheeks whealed and puffed, and through his red lips his laughter exposed a suite of fair white teeth; his head was nearly bald, and the crown showed smooth and glairy; and under the thin flossy wreath of hair, that invested the lower part of his head, you could not fail to see that one of his ears was gone. Her brother had a more catonian look, and thick locks of coarse black hair kept well with his dark russet, sunburnt face, and his lips, if by nothing else, were swollen with large quids of tobacco.

The dinner-table, appropriate to the place in which it was set, consisted of boards laid on a movable cross-frame without a cloth. A large wooden dish or trencher, contained, flummery-like, in one mass, the entire substance of the meal—pork, potatoes, greens, beans. There were no suits of knives and forks, and the family helped themselves on wooden plates, with cuttoes. A large silver tankard curiously embossed, and bearing some armorial signets, formed an exception to the general aspect of things, and looked quite baronially down on its serf-like companions. This filled with cider constituted their drink. They were seated on blocks of wood and rag-bottom chairs. Margaret occupied a corner of the table near her younger brother Chilion, and had a cherry plate with a wolf's bone knife and fork he made for her. They all ate heartily and enjoyed their meal. After dinner, Chilion went with his gun into the woods, the father and elder brother returned to their respective employments, her mother resumed her smoking and weaving, and Margaret had a new stint at quilling.

CHAPTER III.

LOCALITIES DESCRIBED.—THE FAMILY MORE PARTICULARLY ENUMERATED.—OBED INTRODUCED.

THE house where Margaret lived, of a type common in the early history of New England, and still seen in the regions of the West, was constructed of round logs sealed with mud and clay; the roof was a thatch composed of white-birch twigs, sweet-flag and straw wattled together, and overlaid with a slight battening of boards; from the ridge sprang a low stack of stones indicating the chimney-top. Glass-windows there were none, and in place thereof swung wooden shutters fastened on the inside by strings. The house was divided by the chimney into two principal apartments, one being the kitchen or commons, the other a work-shop. In the former, were prominently a turn-up bed used by the heads of the family, and a fireplace; this last, built of slabs of rough granite, was colossal in height, width, and depth; for dogs or andirons were splinters of stone. A handle of wood thrust into the socket of a broken spade supplied the place of a shovel. The room was neither boarded nor plastered; a varnish of smoke from tobacco pipes and pine-knots possibly answering in stead; and the naked stones of the chimney were blackened and polished by occasional effusions of steam and smoke from the fire. The room also contained the table-board, block, and rag-bottom chairs, and little stool for Margaret before mentioned. In one corner stood a broom made of hemlock twigs. On pegs driven into the logs, hung sundry articles of wearing apparel; sustained by crotched sticks nailed to the sleepers above, were a rifle and one or two muskets; a swing shelf was loaded with shot-pouches, bullet-moulds, powder-horns, fishing tackle, &c.; on the projecting stones of the chimney were sundry culinary articles, and conspicuously a one-gallon wooden rum-keg, and the silver tankard, as likewise pipes and tobacco. In the room, which we should say was quite capacious, hung two cages, one for a Robin, the other with a revolving apartment for a grey squirrel, called Dick. You would not also forget to notice a violin in a green baize bag, suspended on the walls, which belonged to Chilion, and was an important household article. On a

post, near the chimney, were fastened some leaves of a book, which in examining you would find taken from the Bible, and consisting chiefly of statistical portions of the Old Testament. There were two windows or wall-openings in the kitchen, on the south and west sides. The floor of the room was warped in every direction, slivered and gaping at the joints; and, being made of knotty boards, the softer portions of which were worn down, these knots stood in ridges and hillocks all over the apartment. The workshop, of smaller dimensions, was similar, in its general outline, to the kitchen; it contained a loom, a kit where the father of Margaret sometimes made shoes, a common reel, hand reel, a pair of swifts, blades, or windle, a large, small, and quilling wheel, a dye tub, while yarn of all colors hung on the walls. The garret was divided by the chimney in a manner similar to the rooms below; on one side Margaret slept, and her brothers on the other; her bed consisted simply of a mattress of beech leaves spread on the floor, with tow and wool coverlids, and coarse linen sheets. At each end of the garret was a window, like those in the kitchen. The ascent to this upper story was by a ladder. From the back side of the kitchen, a door opened into the shed, a rough frame of slabs and poles. Here were a draw-shave, a cross-cut saw, an axe, beetle and wedges, an ox-yoke, hog and geese yokes, barking irons, a scythe, rakes, a brush-bill, fox-traps, frows, sap-buckets, a leach-tub, a small pile of wood and bark; here also hens roosted. At one corner of the shed was a half-barrel cistern, into which the water was brought by bark troughs from the hill near by, forming an ever flowing, ever musical, cool bright stream, passing off in a runnel, shaded by weeds and grasses. On all sides of the house, at some seasons of the year, might be seen the skins of various animals drying; the flesh side out, and fastened at the extremities; silver-grey and red foxes, wood-chucks, squirrels, martins, minks, musquashes, weazles, raccoons, and sometimes even bears and wolves; the many-colored tails of which, pendant, had an ornamental appearance. The house was on the west side of the road, and fronted the south. Opposite the house to the south, across what might have been a yard, saving that there were no fences, was a butternut tree,—the Butternut *par excellence*—having great extension of limb, and beautiful drooping willow-like foliage; near this was the Peach tree which has been noticed. Beyond lay the eastern extremity of the Pond. On the north was a small garden enclosed by a rude brush hedge. On the east side of the road was a log-

barn, covered with thatch, and supported in part by the trunks of two trees.

The name of the family whose residence we have explored was Hart, and it consisted essentially of six members; Mr. and Mrs. Hart, their three sons, Nimrod, Hash and Chilion, and Margaret. We should remark that the heads of this house were never or rarely known by their proper names. Mr. Hart at some period had received the soubriquet of Head and Pluck, by the latter part of which he was generally designated; his wife was more commonly known as Brown Moll. Mr. Hart had also a fancy for giving his children scriptural names; his first-born he called Nimrod; his second, Maharshalahashbaz, abbreviated into Hash; and for his next son he chose that of Chilion. It must not be thought he had any reverence for the Bible; his conduct would belie any such supposition. He may have been superstitious; if it were so, that certainly was the extent of his devotion. The subject of this Memoir was sometimes called after her mother, Mary or Molly, and from regard to one long since deceased she had received the name of Margaret. Her father and mother were fond of contradicting each other, especially in matters of small moment, and while the latter called her Margaret or Peggy, the former was wont to address her as Molly. Her brothers gave her, one, one name, another, another.

Nimrod, the oldest son, was absent from home most of the year; how employed we shall have occasion hereafter to notice. Hash worked the farm, if farm it might be called, burnt coal in the fall, made sugar in the spring, drank, smoked, and teased Margaret the rest of the time. Chilion fished, hunted, laid traps for foxes, drowned out woodchucks, &c.; he was also the artizan of the family, and with such instruments as he could command, constructed sap-buckets and spouts, chairs, a cart, cages, hencoops, sleds, yokes, traps, trellises, &c. He was very fond of music, and played on the violin and fife; in this also he instructed Margaret, whom he found a ready pupil; taught her the language of music, sang songs with her; he also told her the common names of many birds and flowers. He was somewhat diffident, reserved, or whatever it might be; and while he had manifestly a deep affection for his sister he never expressed himself very freely to her. Mr. Hart, or Pluck; if we give him the name by which he was universally recognized, helped Hash on the farm, broke flax, made shoes, a trade he prosecuted in an itinerating manner from house to house, "whipping the cat,"

as it was termed, and drank excessively. Mrs. Hart, or Brown Moll, carded, spun, colored and wove, for herself and more for others, nipped and beaked her husband; drank and smoked. At the present time she was about forty-five or fifty; she had seen care and trouble, and seemed almost broken down alike by her habits and her misfortunes. She was wrinkled, faded and grey; her complexion was sallow, dark and dry; her expression, if it were not positively stern, was far from being amiable; she was a patient weaver, impatient with everything else. Her dress was a blue-striped linen short-gown, wrapper, or long-short, a coarse yellow petticoat and checked apron; short grizzly hairs bristled in all directions over her head. If in this family you could detect some trace of refinement, it would not be easy to discriminate its origin or to say how far removed it might be from unmixed vulgarity.

The term Pond, applied to the spot where this family dwelt, comprised not only the sheet of water therein situated but also the entire neighborhood. In the records of the town the place was denominated the West District. Sometimes it was called the Head, or Indian's Head, from a hill thereon to which we shall presently refer, and the inhabitants were called Indians from this circumstance. An almost unbroken forest bounded the vision and skirted the abode of this family. They had only one neighbor, a widow lady, who resided at the north about half a mile. A road extending across the place from north to south terminated in the latter direction, about the same distance below Mr. Hart's, at a hamlet known as No. 4. In the other course, directly or divergingly, this road led to sections called Snakehill, Five-mile-lot, and the Ledge. On the south-west was a plantation that had been christened Breakneck. The village of Livingston, or Settlement, as it was sometimes termed, lay to the east about two miles in a straight line. If a stranger should approach the Pond from the village he would receive the impression that it was singularly situated up among high hills, or even on a mountain, since his route would be one of continual and perhaps tedious ascent. But those who abode there had no idea their locality was more raised than that of the rest of the world, so sensibly are our notions of height and depression affected by residence. From the village you could descry the top of the Head, like a tower upon a mountain, elevated far into the heavens. To this hill, it being a striking characteristic of the Pond, we ask attention. Directly to the west of Mr. Hart's house and not more than six rods distant its ascent commenced. It rose

with an abrupt acclivity to the height of nearly one hundred feet. Its surface was ragged and rocky, and interspersed with various kinds of shrubs. From the edge of the water its south front sprang straight and sheer like a castle-wall. The top was flat and nearly bare of vegetation save the dead and barkless trunk of a hemlock, which, solitary and alone, shot up therefrom, and was sometimes called the Indian's Feather. This hill derived its specific name, Indian's Head, from a rude resemblance to a man's face that could be traced on the south front. This particular eminence was not, however, a detached pinnacle; it seemed rather to form the abrupt and crowned terminus of a mountainous range that swept far to the north and ultimately merged in those eternal hills that in-wall every horizon. Behind the hill, at the northern extremity of the Pond proper, where its waters were gathered to a head by a dam, and a saw-mill had been erected, was the Outlet; which became the source of a stream, that, proceeding circuitously to No. 4, and turning towards the village where it was again employed for milling purposes, had been denominated Mill Brook:

Mr. Hart had cleared a few acres in the vicinity of his house, for corn, potatoes and flax, and burnt over more for grain. He enjoyed also the liberty of brooks, rivulets and swamps, whence he gathered grass, brakes and whatever he could find to store his barn. Beyond the barn was a lot of five or six acres, known as the Mowing or Chesnuts. It was cleared, and partially cultivated with clover and herdsgrass. This consisted originally of a grove of chesnut trees, which not being felled, but killed by girdling, had become entirely divested of bark even to the tips of the limbs, and now stood, in number two or three score, in height fifty or seventy-five feet, denuded, blanched, a resort for crows, where woodpeckers hammered and blue-linnets sung. The otherwise sombre aspect of this lot was agreeably relieved, though we cannot say its solid advantages were enhanced, by a variety of shrubs, small green chesnuts starting from the roots of the old ones, white birches, choke cherries and others.

When Margaret had done her task, she was at liberty to repair the effect of Hash's spleen and attend to her other own little affairs. Obed Wright, the son and only child of their only neighbor, was at hand to assist her. She had beans, hops and virgin's bower trained up the side of the house, and even shading her chamber window. To prevent the ravages of hogs and geese, Chilion had fenced in a little spot for her

near the house. Obed brought her new flowers from the woods and instructed her how to plant them. He was thirteen or fifteen years of age, homely but clever, as we say, a tall knuckle-jointed, shad-faced youth; his hair was red, his cheeks freckled; his hands and feet were immense, his arms long and stout. He suffered from near-sightedness. He was dressed like his neighbors, in a shirt and skilts, excepting that his collar and waist-bands were fastened by silver buttons; and he wore a cocked hat. It seemed to please him to help Margaret, and he stayed till almost sunset, when Hash came in from his work. Hash hated or spited Obed partly on Margaret's account, partly because of misunderstandings with his mother, and partly from the perverseness of his own nature; and he annoyed him with the dog, Bull, who always growled and glared when he saw the boy. Margaret stood between him and the dog and saved him from serious harm. In the present instance, she held Bull by the neck, till Obed had time to run round the corner of the house and make his escape.

Margaret seated herself on the door-step to eat her supper, consisting of toasted brown bread and watered cider, served in a curiously wrought cherry-bowl and spoon. The family were taking their meal of bread, potatoes and cold pork in the kitchen. The sun had gone down. The whippoorwill came and sat on the Butternut, and sang his evening note, always plaintive, always welcome. The night-hawk dashed and hissed through the woods and the air on long, slim, quivering wings. A solitary robin chanted sweetly a long time from the hill. Myriads of insects swarmed and murmured over her head. Crickets chirped in the grass and under the decaying sills of the house. She heard the voice of the waterfall at the Outlet, and the croaking of a thousand frogs on the Pond. She saw the stars come out, Lyra, the Northern Crown, the Serpent. She looked into the heavens, she opened her ears to the dim evening melodies of the universe; yet as a child she was interrupted by the sharp voice of her mother, "Go to your roost, Peggy!"

"Yes, Molly dear," said her father, very softly, "Dick and Robin are asleep; see who will be up first, you or the silver rooster; who will open your eyes first, you or the dandelion?"

"Kiss me, Margery," said Chilion, as she went through the room,—she climbed into her chamber, she sank on her pallet, she closed her eyes, she fell into dreams of beauty and heaven,

of other forms than those daily about her, of sweeter voices than either father or mother.

We conclude this chapter by remarking, that the scenes and events of this Memoir belong to what may be termed the mediæval or transition period of New England history, that lying between the close of the war of our Revolution, and the commencement of the present century.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WIDOW WRIGHT.

MARGARET was up early in the morning, before the sun. She washed at the cistern and wiped herself on a coarse crash towel, rough, but invigorating, beautifying and healthy. She did her few chores, and, as she had promised, started for the Widow Wright's. Hash was getting ready his team, a yoke of starveling steers, in a tumbrel-cart, the axle fast in the wheels, which were cut from a solid block of wood. He set her in the cart, he desired to show his skill in driving, perhaps he wished to tease her on the way. "Haw! Buck, hish! Bright, gee up!"; vigorously plied he his whip of wood-chuck skin on a walnut stock. The cart reeled and rattled. It jolted over stones, canted on knolls, sidled into gutters. The way was rough, broken, unfinished. Margaret held fast by the stakes. "Good to settle your breakfast, Peggy. Going to see Obed, hey? and the widder? ask her if she can cure the yallers in Bright." Margaret was victimized and amused by her brother. She half cried, half laughed. Her brother came at last to the lot he was engaged in clearing. He lifted Margaret from the cart. She went on, and Bull followed her. Hash called the dog back, and in great wrath gave him a blow with his whip. The animal leaped and skulked away, and joined again with Margaret, who patted his head, and he ran along by her side. She entered woods; the path was narrow, grass-grown. She picked flowers, and followed the cow-tracks through the thickets of sweet fern almost as high as her head. She descended a pitch in the road to a brook,