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 mediatorial 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 starving steers, in a tumbril-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 ranted. 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, her? and the widder? ask her if she can cure the yaller 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 thicket of sweet fern almost as high as her head. She descended a pitch in the road to a brook,
which was crossed by a bridge of poles. The dog stopped to drink, she to look into the water. Mimics and pinheads were flashing and skirting through the clear, bright stream. There were hair-worms fabled to spring from horse-hair, in black lines writting on the surface; caddice-worms clothed with shells and leaves, crushing on the bottom; and bee-flies swimming on their backs. The water made music with the stones. She waded in, and sported bare-feet on the smooth, shiny round pebbles. She looked under the bridge, and that shaded spot had a mystery to the child's mind, such perhaps as is more remembered in future years, than commented on at the time. She pursued a trout, that had shown its black eye and golden spotted back and vanished. She could not find it. On she went towards Mrs. Wright's. This lady had lost her husband a few years before. He left her in possession of a small farm, and a larger revision in the medicinal riches of the whole district. It had been a part of Dr. Wright's occupation to gather and prepare herbs for the sick. His materia medica was large, various and productive. He learnt as he could the nature of diseases, and was sometimes called to prescribe as well as to sell his drugs. When he died, his wife came in full possession of his secrets and his practice. She gathered plants from all the woods, sands and swamps. She knew the quality of every root, stalk, leaf, flower and berry. Her son Obad was instructing to be her servant and aid, as well as the successor of his father. The lady's habits were careful, saving, thrifty. She cultivated, in addition, a few acres of land. Her house was neat and comfortable. It was a small frame building, clap-boarded on the sides and roof. It had a warm, sunny position, on a southern slope, with rocks and woods behind. It stood in the centre of a large yard, surrounded on all sides by a stumped fence, those of hemlock-trees, with their large, spreading, tangled roots, like the feet of giants, turned towards the street, making an impenetrable and very durable barrier. You entered the yard by a stile formed of the branches of these roots. Within the enclosure were beds of cultivated herbs, caraway, rue, savory, thyme, tansy, parsley and other aromatic and medicinal plants. Obad was at work among the beds. Margaret climbed the stile. Bell leaped up after her. When Obad saw Margaret his dull face gave a recognition of joy which was succeeded by an expression of dismay.

"He's a great dog," said Obad. "He's got dreadful big teeth. Hash's ailers maskin' him bite me." The dog went and laid down in the sun under the eaves of the house. Margaret helped Obad pull the weeds from his beds, while with a hoe he loosened and aired the roots of the plants. The atmosphere was charged with the perfume of the flowers. Margaret shook the thyme-bed, and a shadowy motion, like the waving of a cloud, floated over it. Bees, flies, beetles, butterflies, were bustling upon it, diving into every flower, and searching every cup. "What d'ye think of the yarls, Moll?" said the widow, who stood in the door of her house. "They look pretty," replied Margaret. "Not looks, child, 'tis use. We'll get a hundred bunches this year. The saffron we'll cut to-morrow, and the balm 'll be ready soon." "You are not going to cut all these pretty flowers, are you?" "Yes, there's for medicine. Wait till the flowers is gone, they wouldn't be worth more'n your toed-flax and bean vines. They wouldn't fetch a bungtown copper. See here, that's sage, good for tea. That's goat's rue, good for women as has little babies. Guess you was a little baby once. I've known ye ever sen ye warn't more'n so high." "Was I so little?" asked Margaret. "Yes, and plump enough. As I fed yer warm with rue, and comfrey-root, ye never'd come teu this. Ye was thin and poor as a late chicken. Now sow some said." Margaret took the dish, and began to sprinkle the door. "Well done," said the woman. "Ye'll make a smart gal. Here's some honey and bread." The Widow Wright was dressed in the costume of the times, a white linen shirt-gown, checked apron, black petticoat. She wore on her head a large brown turban. Her eye was black and piercing, and she possessed a singular power of laughter which was employed to express every variety of emotion, whether pleasure or pain, anger or complacence. There was a bee-hive in front of the house, a close, well built shed, open to the south. The little workers were streaming through the air like a shower, dropping at the mouth of the hive, their legs laden and yellow with the dust of flowers. Margaret stood in front of the range. The bees shot by her from side to side, multitudes wheeled round her, some lit on her hat, some crawled over her neck. She watched the com-
fusion; she listened to the hum within the hive. Not one offered her harm; she was not stung.

"A marvelous wonderful gal," uttered the widow to herself, as she surveyed the scene from the door. "Pity 'ta she's Brown Moll's child."

Margaret had an errand at the place, to get some honey for a bee-hunt Chilion had proposed for the next day, and stated her desire to the widow. There was an old feud between the two families, not affecting intercourse and acquaintance, so much as matters of interest. The widow received the message rather coldly, and beginning in unwillingness, ended with invective.

"He's a lazy, good for nothin' fellow, Chil is. He's no better than a peaking mud-sucker. He lives on us all here like house-kick. He's no more use than yer rigged up creepers. He is worse than the witches, vairn nor dill won't keep him away. I tell ye, Chilshan't have no honey."

Margaret was abashed, silenced. She could understand that her brother would feel disappointed; that he was not so bad. Beyond that, she did not discriminate.

"Chilion is good," she stammered out at last.

"Good! what's he good for?" rejoined the woman. "Does he get any money? Can he find yarbs? He don't know the difference between snake-root and lavender."

"He's good to me," said Margaret. This was an appeal that strick the woman with some force. She seemed to soften.

"Ye are a good child; ye help Obed."

"Yes," said Margaret, as if watching her cue, "I will help Obed. I'll mind the beds when the birds are about. I'll go into the woods and get plants. I'll keep Bull off from him."

"Brin ye'll help Obed, I'll give ye the honey. But don't come again."

Margaret, taking the article in question on some green leaves, went merrily home.

We cannot dismiss this chapter without remarking that the Widow Wright revered the memory of her husband. It was certainly of some use for her to do so, as his reputation had been considerable in the line of his practice. The representation of the deceased, which she herself bore, she designed by degrees to transfer to her son. The silver buttons, which shone on Obed, as well as other articles of dress he occasionally wore, belonged to his late father. With all her thrift and care, the lady liked our Margaret very well.

"She was so feat and spry, and knowing, and good-tempered," she said, "she could be made of some use to somebody."

CHAPTER V.

THE BEE-HUNT. — MARGARET GOES FARTHER INTO NATURE. — SHE HUNTS AND EXAMINES. — THE HONEY.

The next morning, Chilion and Margaret, joined by Obed, staked out a bee-hunt. Obed was to remain with them till they should have been successful in this enterprise, then Margaret agreed to help him gather such plants and roots, growing wild in the woods, as could be of use to his mother. They took with them the honey, an axe, leather-mittens for the hands, and screens for the face, some brimstone and a tinder-box, a basket, spade, &c., for their several purposes. They entered the woods lying to the south of the Pond, an unlimited range, extending in some directions many miles. The honey was placed on a stump, and several bees, springing up as it were from vacancy, laden themselves with it, darted off. Our hunters pursued, watching the course of their flight, and were conducted by the unconscious guides to their own abode. This was a chestnut tree, hollow at the root and partially decayed in the top. Not many strokes were requisite to bring it crashing to the ground. It was a more difficult job to possess themselves of the honey. The angry bees seemed to spurt out from their nest like fire, their simultaneous start, their mixed and deepened buzz, their thousand wings beating as for life, made a noise not unlike a distant waterfall, or the hidden roar of an abyss. Their persecutors speedily covered their faces and hands and waited for the alarm to subside. Margaret said she thought they would not hurt her, as those at the widow's did not. It is said there are some persons whom bees never sting. She kindled the brimstone each side of the tree. The bees within, called out by a rap on the trunk, and those without, flying and crawling about their nest, fell dead in the smoke. Chilion cut out about the cavity where the comb was deposited. Margaret, looking in, and seeing