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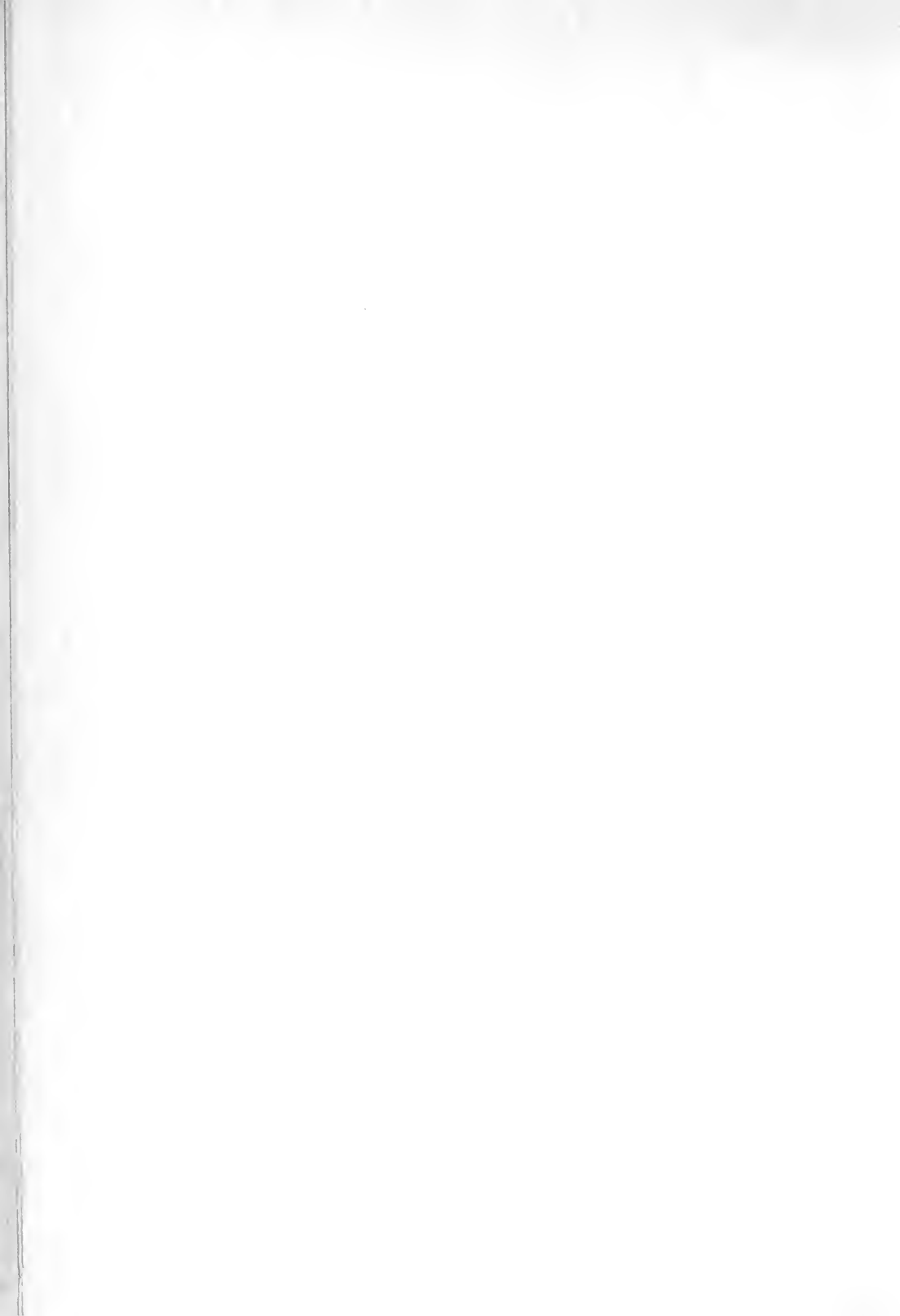
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THE COURTSHIP OF
MILES STANDISH

TERCENTENARY EDITION



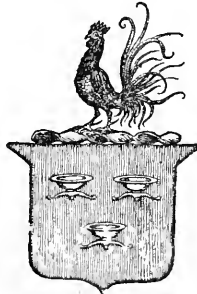


THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

BY
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

With an Introduction by
ERNEST W. LONGFELLOW

And with pictures by
N. C. WYETH



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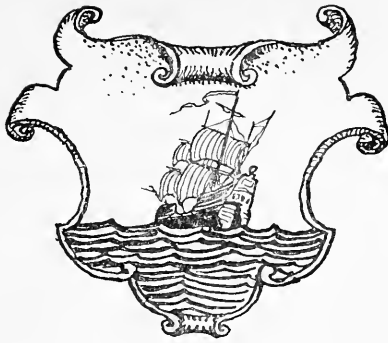


Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the landscape	10
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The title-page device is Miles Standish's coat of arms



INTRODUCTION

I AM very glad, as a direct descendant of Priscilla and John Alden, to welcome this new and beautiful edition of "The Courtship of Miles Standish," especially timely in this tercentenary year of the Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Mr. Wyeth's illustrations seem to me — and I doubt not that they would have seemed to my father — admirable all through in their richness of color and their unconventional treatment, coupled with their many evidences of the closest study of the period.

One has but to look at such a picture as the Sailing Away of the Mayflower, with the Pilgrims gathered on

INTRODUCTION

the shore, to feel the sinking of heart of the adventurers as the last link connecting them with the land of their birth faded in the distance.

Whether Mr. Wyeth's conception of Priscilla as a piquant girl of French descent, with black hair and sparkling eyes, coincided with the demure Puritan maiden that was in my father's mind, I cannot say. On the historic grounds of her French-Huguenot ancestry, however, Mr. Wyeth is entitled to his conception, and no one can dispute the attractiveness of his Priscilla.

It is a great pleasure to me to see this poem, which has become a household word in America, and which has always been a favorite of mine, in this new dress.

ERNEST W. LONGFELLOW

July, 1920





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THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 primi-
tive 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 war-
fare,

Hanging in shining array along the walls of the cham-
ber, —

Cutlass and corselet 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 ath-
letic,

MILES STANDISH

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 house-
hold companion,

Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the
window;

Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon com-
plexion,

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
Mayflower.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Flan-
ders; this breastplate,
Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skir-
mish;
Here in front you can see the very dint 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.”

MILES STANDISH

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
ink-horn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, invincible
army,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his
matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pil-
lage,

And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my sol-
diers!”

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 con-
tinued:

“ Look! you can see from this window my brazen how-
itzer planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who speaks
to the purpose,

Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible
logic,

MILES STANDISH

Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of
the heathen.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the In-
dians;

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 Tokamaha-
mon! ”

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,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of
the ocean,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 sub-
dued with emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he pro-
ceeded:

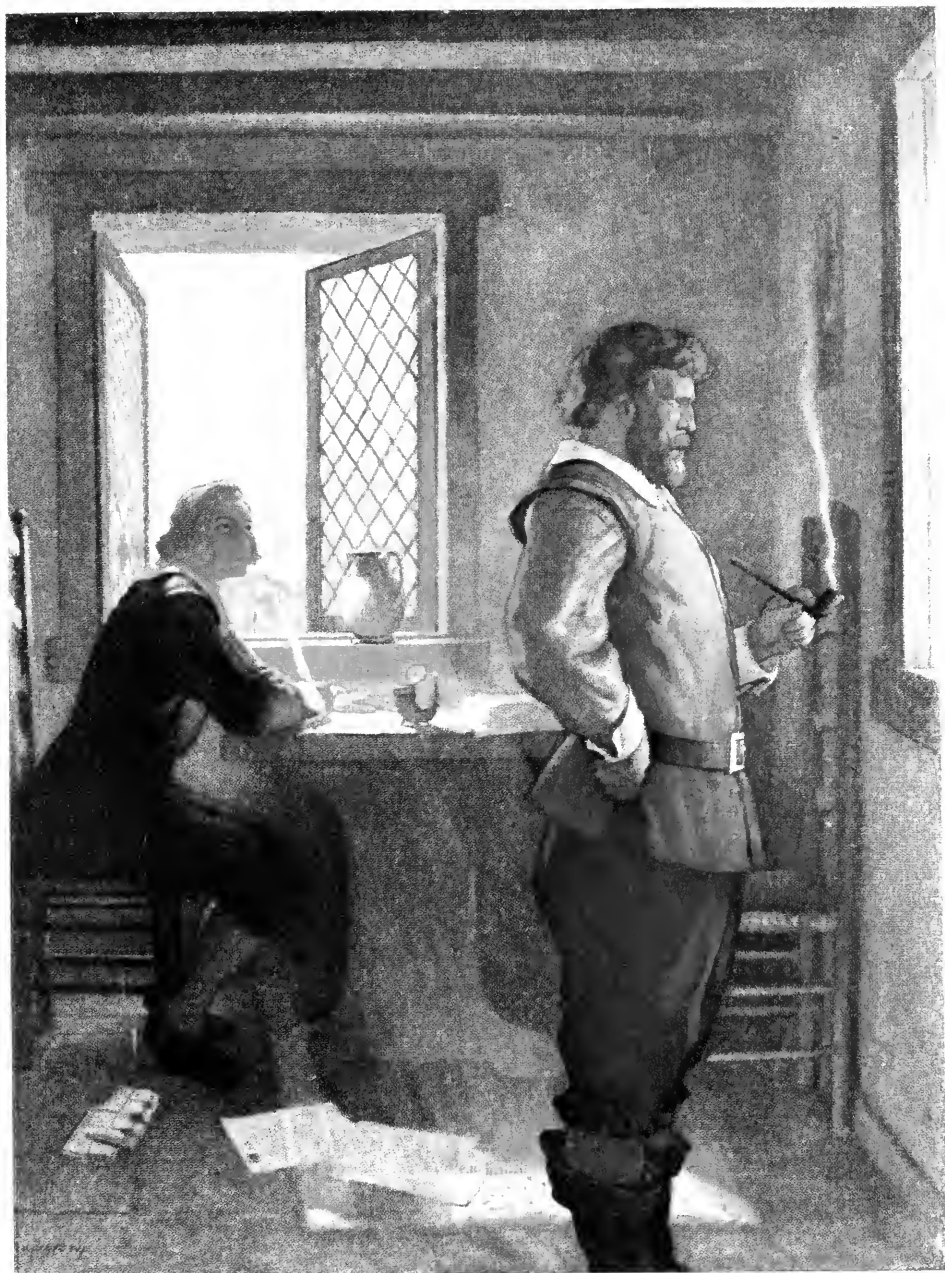
“Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose
Standish;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the way-
side!

She was the first to die of all who came in the May-
flower!

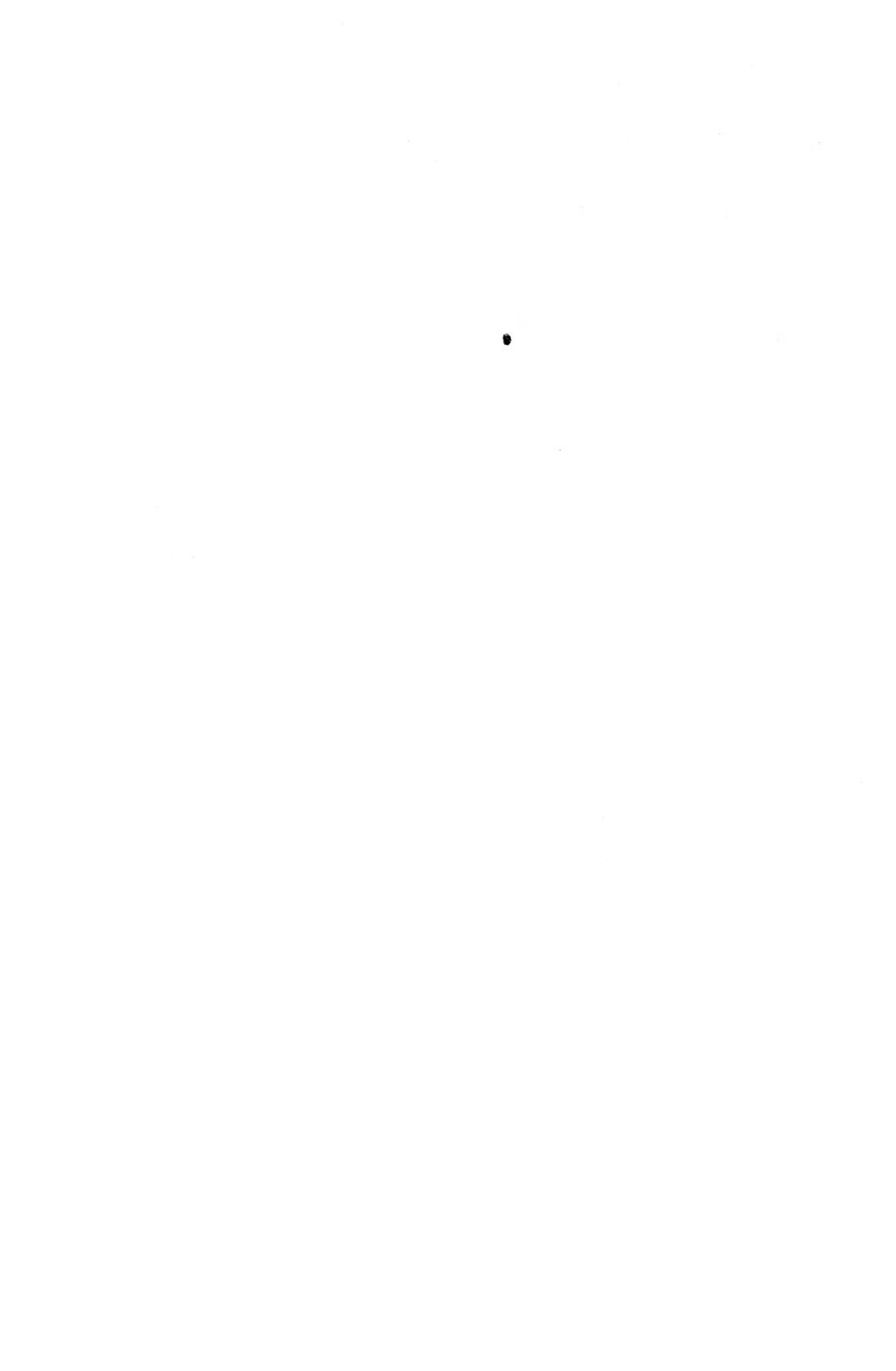
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have
sown there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our
people,



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LONG AT THE WINDOW HE STOOD, AND WISTFULLY GAZED
ON THE LANDSCAPE



MILES STANDISH

Lest they should count them and see how many already had 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 Cæsar 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

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Which of the three he should choose for his consolation
and comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous cam-
paigns 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

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,

MILES STANDISH

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

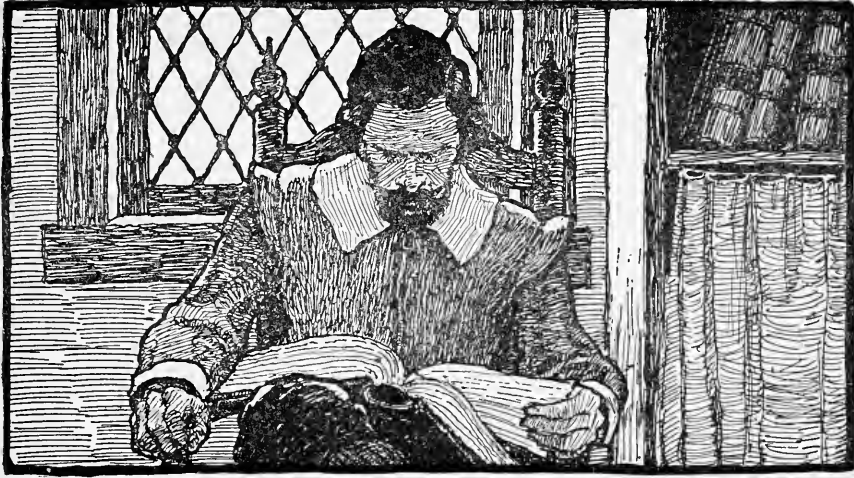
Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible
winter,

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



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.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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!"

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 have I 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 hear-
ing the other,

"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar!

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

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 re-
corded;

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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and com-
manded the captains,
Calling on each by his name, to order forward the en-
signs;
Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their
weapons;
So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.
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 read-
ing.

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of
the stripling
Writing epistles important to go next day by the May-
flower,

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

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 Cap-
tain 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 im-
patient! ”

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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;

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

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 com-
ing,

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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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.”

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired,
taciturn stripling,
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, be-
wildered,
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:
“ 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! ”

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 gain-
say 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,

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

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! "

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding
the gentler,
Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his
errand.

III
THE LOVER'S ERRAND



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 bluebirds and robins
were building

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of
verdure,
Peaceful aerial 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 lamen-
tation, —
“ Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the
illusion?
Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and wor-
shipped in silence?

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the
shadow

Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New Eng-
land?

Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of
corruption

Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of pas-
sion;

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 retri-
bution."

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 Pris-
cilla!
So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the Mayflower of
Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I
take them;



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SO THROUGH THE PLYMOUTH WOODS JOHN ALDEN
WENT ON HIS ERRAND

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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 comfort-
ing many.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 raven-
ous 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 to-
gether,

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 LOVER'S ERRAND

She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of
homespun
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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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,
After the first great snow, when he broke a path from
the village,
Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that en-
cumbered 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;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Mayflower 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

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to
lean on;

So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of
marriage

Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Cap-
tain 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 school-boy;

Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more
bluntly.

Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puri-
tan maiden

Looked into Alden’s face, her eyes dilated with wonder,

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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:

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

“ 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 wed-
ding?

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,

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 sus-
pected,

Does not attain at a bound the height to which you
have been climbing.

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Thurs-
ton de Standish;

Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely de-
frauded,

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 na-
ture;

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

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, cou-
rageous;

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 elo-
quent language,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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? ”



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SAID IN A TREMULOUS VOICE, "WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK
FOR YOURSELF, JOHN?"

IV
JOHN ALDEN



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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever within
him.

Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptical splen-
dors,

Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the
Apostle,

So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sap-
phire,

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,

JOHN ALDEN

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 pas-
sions contending;

Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded
and bleeding,

Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings
of duty!

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

“ 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 transgression,

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! ”

JOHN ALDEN

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and
beheld there
Dimly the shadowy form of the Mayflower riding at
anchor,
Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the mor-
row;
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 phan-
tom,
Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckon-
ing shadow.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

“ 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;

JOHN ALDEN

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 here-
after! ”

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his
strong resolution,

Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the
twilight,

Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and
sombre,

Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plym-
outh,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 be-
tween 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.

JOHN ALDEN

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.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion,

E'en as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.

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

JOHN ALDEN

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 impla-
cable 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 im-
portance,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 scab-
bard of iron,

Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely,
departed.

Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scab-
bard

Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the dis-
tance.

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,

JOHN ALDEN

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;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deport-
ment,
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 na-
tion;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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,

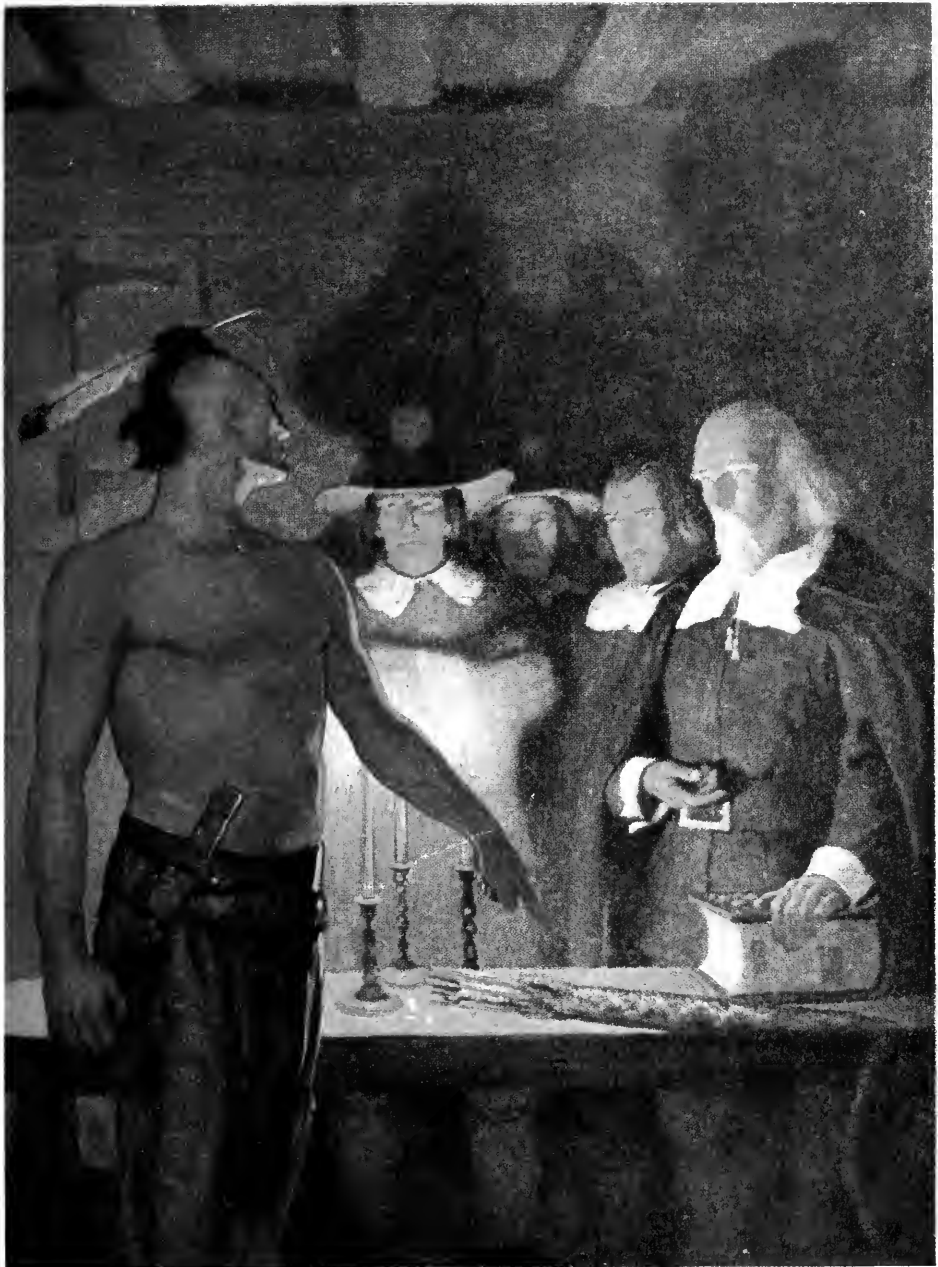
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed in
Holland,

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



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NEAR THEM WAS STANDING AN INDIAN, IN ATTITUDE
STERN AND DEFIANT

JOHN ALDEN

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 con-
verted,

Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian
behavior!

Then out spake 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

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils?

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 St. 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,

JOHN ALDEN

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.

V

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER



V

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

JUST in the gray of the dawn, as the mists
uprose from the meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumber-
ing village of Plymouth;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order impera-
tive, "Forward!"

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Phil-
istines.

Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morn-
ing;

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

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 east-
ward;
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 Mayflower;
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers
that menaced,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the moun-
tains;

Beautiful on the sails of the Mayflower 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

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the
echoes

Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of de-
parture!

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 Pil-
grims 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.

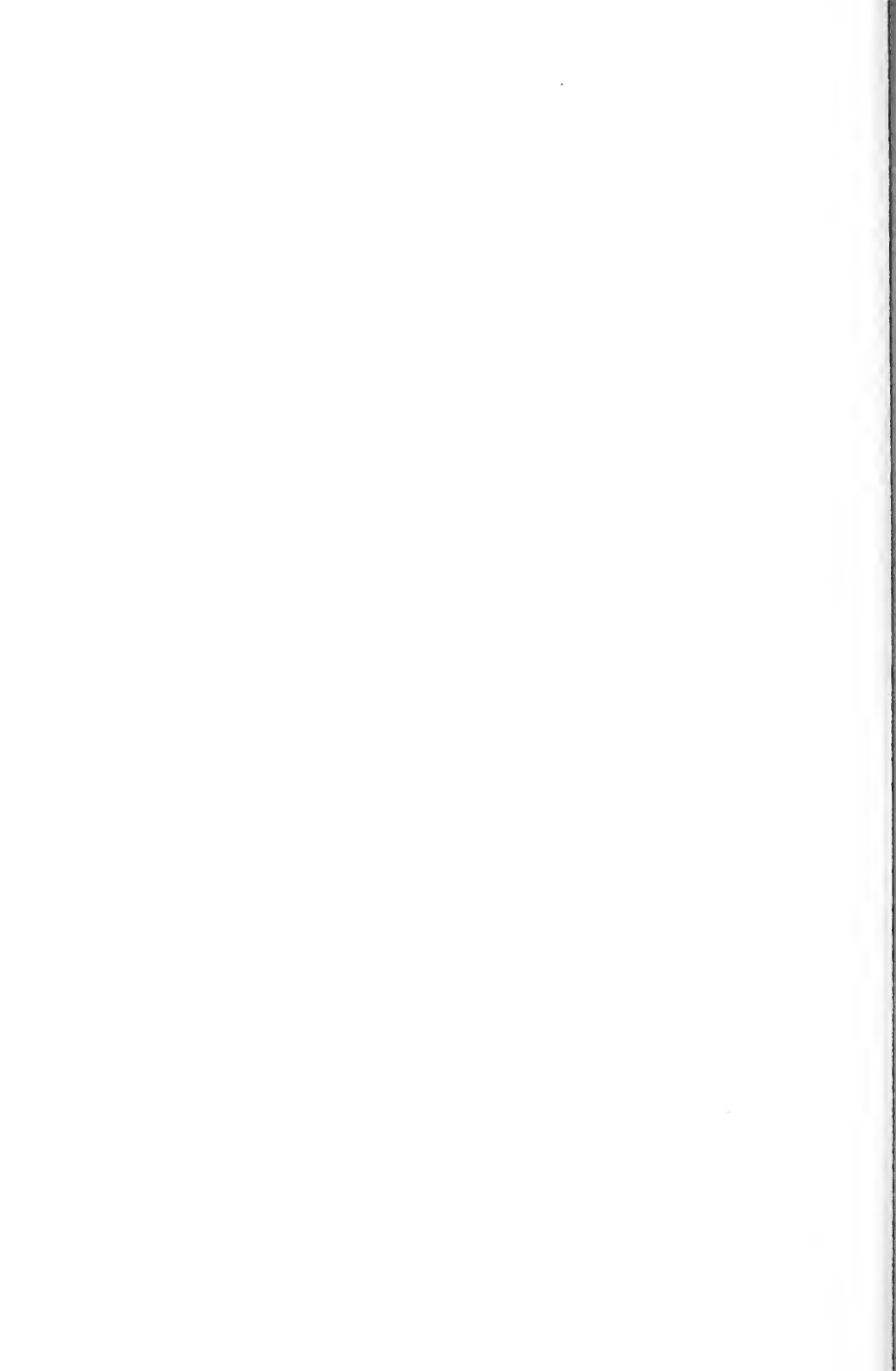
THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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;
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,



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**EAGER, WITH TEARFUL EYES, TO SAY FAREWELL TO THE MAYFLOWER,
HOMEWARD BOUND O'ER THE SEA, AND LEAVING THEM
HERE IN THE DESERT**



THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the
morning, —

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his cam-
paigns in Flanders, —

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for
action.

But with the dawn he arose; in the twilight Alden be-
held him

Put on his corselet of steel, and all the rest of his
armor,

Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damas-
cus,

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 par-
don;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Rich-
ard 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,

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their
feet as a doorstep

Into a world unknown, — the corner-stone of a nation!

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 let-
ters and parcels

Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled to-
gether

Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewil-
dered.

Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on
the gunwale,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 an-
guish,

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 in-
tention,

Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring, and
patient,

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

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 mo-
ments,

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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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!

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 whole-
some,

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 pres-
ence

Hover around her forever, protecting, supporting her
weakness;

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

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 re-
membrance.
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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 ponder-
ous anchor.

Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the
west-wind,

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Blowing steady and strong; and the Mayflower 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 En-
counter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open
Atlantic,
Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts of
the Pilgrims.

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

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 forever all hope of escap-
ing.

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,

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying,
“ Look! ” he had vanished.

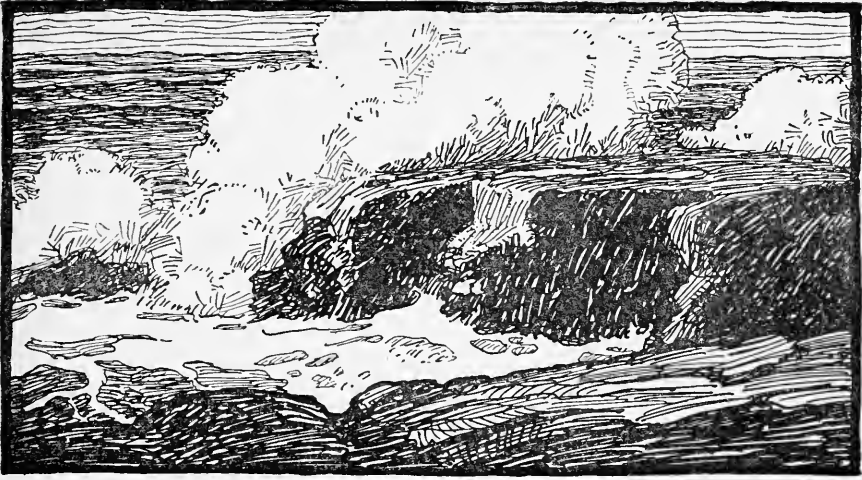
So they returned to their homes; but Alden lingered
a little,

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



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;

And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like
the loadstone,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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,

PRISCILLA

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 friend-
ship between us,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken!"

Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the
friend 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

PRISCILLA

Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, un-
seen, and unfruitful,
Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profit-
less 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 Havi-
lah 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.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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.

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,

PRISCILLA

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 imag-
ined

What was at work in his heart, that made him so awk-
ward and speechless.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

“ 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.

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,



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SO THE MAIDEN WENT ON, AND LITTLE DIVINED OR IMAGINED
WHAT WAS AT WORK IN HIS HEART, THAT MADE HIM
SO AWKWARD AND SPEECHLESS

PRISCILLA

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
Mayflower,

Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,
Homeward together they walked, with a strange, in-
definite 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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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,

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

PRISCILLA

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

How he had even determined to sail that day in the
Mayflower,

And had remained for her sake, on hearing the dangers
that threatened, —

All her manner was changed, and she said with a falter-
ing 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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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



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,
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

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 dan-
gers! ”

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and dis-
comfort,

While he was marching by day or lying at night in the
forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond
them.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 warriors, horrid with
war-paint,
Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking to-
gether;
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.

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

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 scab-
bards 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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend
of the white man,
Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for mus-
kets 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,

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of the brave
Wattawamat
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 han-
dle;
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister mean-
ing:
“ I have another at home, with the face of a man on
the handle;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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, ha! 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

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

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,

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 leaped on the boaster, and, snatching his
knife from its scabbard,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the
savage

Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiend-like 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,



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**HEADLONG HE LEAPED ON THE BOASTER, AND, SNATCHING
HIS KNIFE FROM ITS SCABBARD**

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

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, —
Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man;
but I see now

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 Watta-
wamat

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,

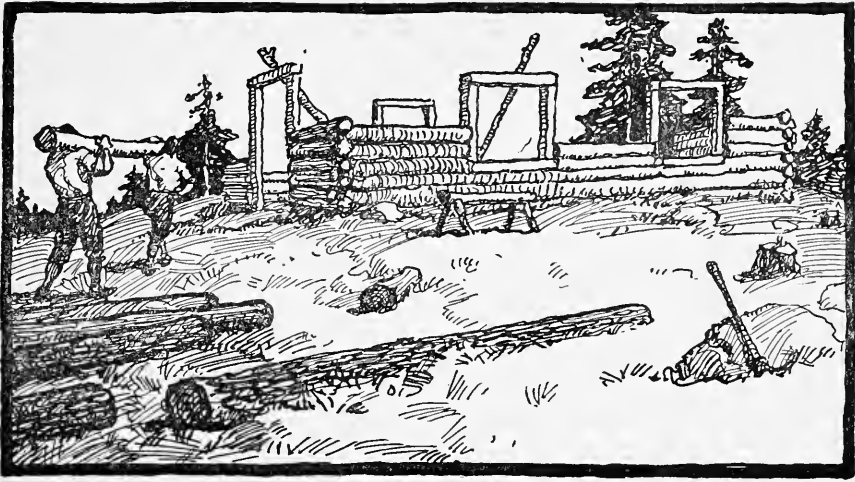
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married
Miles Standish;

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his
battles,

He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and re-
ward of his valor.

VIII
THE SPINNING-WHEEL



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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and
with merestead,

Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass
in the meadows,

Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in
the forest.

All in the village was peace; but at times the rumor of
warfare

Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of
danger.

Bravely the stalwart 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 na-
tions.

Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse
and contrition

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate out-
break,
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 habi-
tation,
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.

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 bull, 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

Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the
house of Priscilla,

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

Led by illusions 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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 dexter-
ous 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,

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

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 mis-
chief, continued:

“ You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen
of Helvetia;

She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of South-
ampton,

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, reproving, 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,

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

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,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,
ing,

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.

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,

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

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 forever the bonds that held him bound as a
captive,

Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his
freedom,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 forever 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;

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,

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



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 fore-
head,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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.

THE WEDDING-DAY

Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of
betrothal,
Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magis-
trate's presence,
After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of
Holland.
Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of
Plymouth
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 fig-
ure!

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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 illu-
sion?

Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the
betrothal?

Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, un-
welcomed;

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.

THE WEDDING-DAY

Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips, but was
silent,

As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting inten-
tion.

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 emo-
tion, " 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, —

THE WEDDING-DAY

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 sunburnt 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 interrupt-
ing the other,
Till the good Captain declared, being quite over-
powered and bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Than come again to a wedding to which he had not
been invited.

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.

THE WEDDING-DAY

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 bull, obeying the hand of
its master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nos-
trils,
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;

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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,

Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.

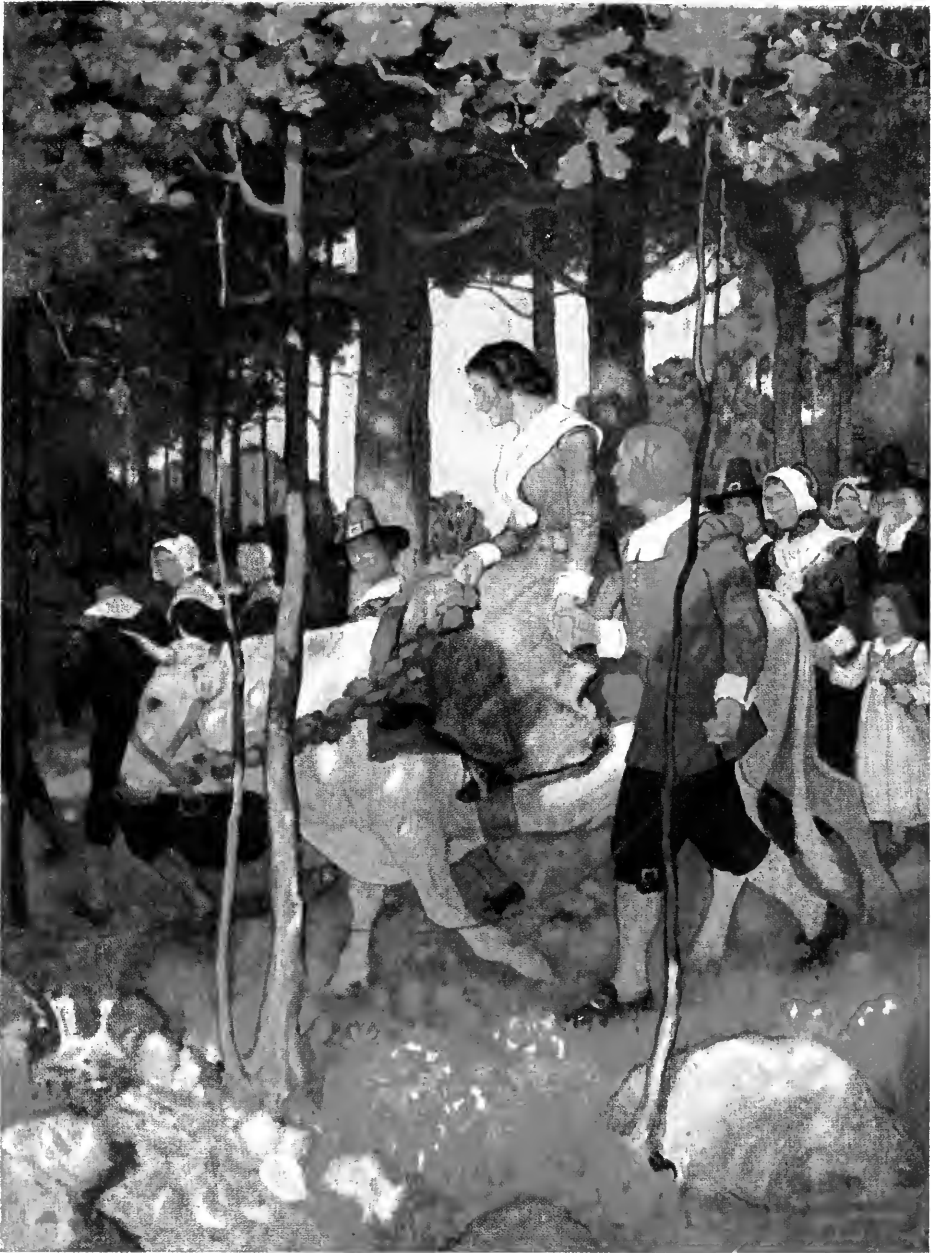
“ Nothing is wanting now,” he said with a smile, “ but
the distaff;

Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful
Bertha!”

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their
new habitation,

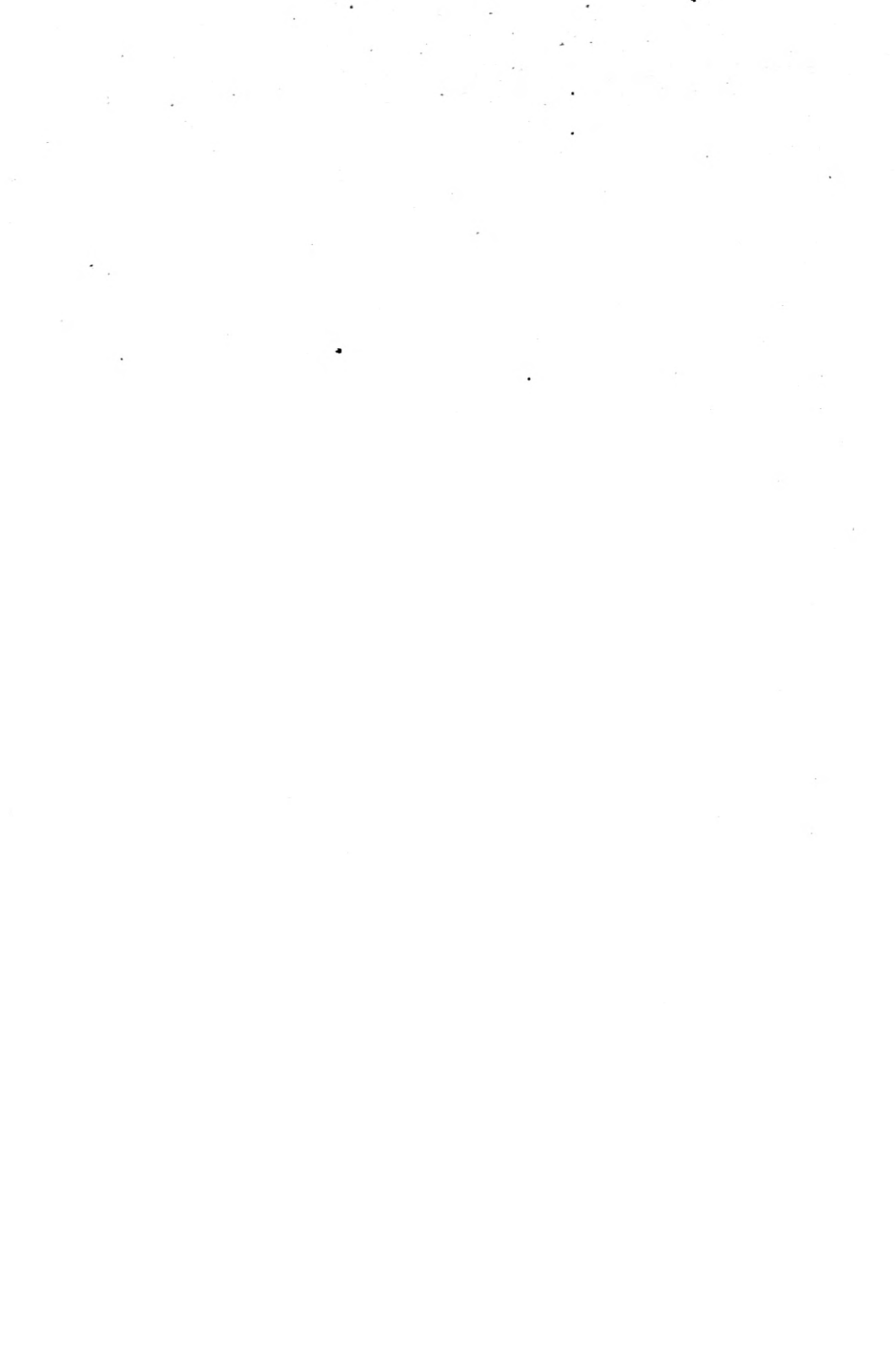
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing
together.

Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the
ford in the forest,



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SO THROUGH THE PLYMOUTH WOODS PASSED ONWARD
THE BRIDAL PROCESSION



THE WEDDING-DAY

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 Eshrol.

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 al-
ways,

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

Love immortal and young in the endless succession of
lovers.

So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the
bridal procession.

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