

**THE OLD HARBOR
TOWN: A NOVEL**

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The Old Harbor Town: A Novel by Augusta Campbell Watson

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AUGUSTA CAMPBELL WATSON

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A NOVEL

BY

AUGUSTA CAMPBELL WATSON

*"Entering from the sea; a sheltered harbor,
upon whose broad expanse float the ships of
nations; around whose rock-bound shores,
the hills rise high toward heaven, like faith-
ful guardians, ever at their post"*

NEW YORK

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31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1894

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THE OLD HARBOR TOWN.



CHAPTER I.

THE CHESTERS.

It was Sunday morning in the old harbor town of New London, in the month of June, 1774. A dark cloud hung over and menaced the future of the country, and the good people of the quaint little town were on their way to church to receive comfort and assistance from the discourses of their different pastors.

Noticeable among those who were treading their way along the uneven and grass-grown street, was a tall, distinguished-looking man, handsomely attired; with an air of superiority he bowed right and left, but did not pause to chat, or pass the time of day with his neighbors. By his side walked a fashionably-dressed woman,

her gaily-flowered petticoat, large hoop and high-heeled shoes, with flashing silver buckles, attracting glances of envy in some cases, sincere admiration in others, from her passing friends and acquaintances. On his other side, her eyes demurely cast down, her small hands clasping her prayer-book, walked a young girl.

These three persons were among the great people of the town. The gentleman was Mr. Nathaniel Chester, a descendant of the second son of Lord Hardman Chester, of the great English baronetcy of that name. Hardman Chester, the second son, settled at New London the latter half of the previous century, married a lady in the colony, became prosperous as years passed by, and died bequeathing a fine old estate to his heirs. The present Mr. Chester was a widower with one child, Letitia Hardman Chester, but generally known as Letty. This household was skillfully managed by his widowed sister, Mrs. Prudence Saltonstall, quite a grand dame in her way.

As Mr. Chester walked he held his head very high, and swung his heavy gold-headed cane almost jauntily; his attire consisted of a dark blue, flowered waistcoat, dark satin knee-

breeches, shoes with steel buckles, and a magnificently embroidered coat. On his head was placed a full curly wig, surmounted by a three-cornered hat.

Sweet Letty Chester, the idol of the stern, proud man, was but seventeen, and a winsome, lovable girl. She was simply attired in a scant white frock reaching to the ankles, the short full waist coming nearly under the arms; her neck was bare, save where a lace scarf partially concealed its whiteness, the arms were also bare, but long silk lace mitts were drawn tight above the elbow and confined with a ribbon. Her hair was dressed very high, and an immense bonnet covered with waving ostrich plumes surmounted the heavy coil of hair. She was uncommonly pretty, with dark brilliant eyes, fair complexion, dainty hands and feet, and was of an exceedingly small stature. She had been affianced for more than a year to her cousin, Lord Percy Seldon, of Suffolk, at present a lieutenant in his majesty's army. The cousins had never met, the *affaire* having been settled by letter between the parents.

As the three walked on they said little, their faces were grave and set. Nathaniel was think-

ing intently; he was a strong adherent of the king, and had no sympathy whatever with the discontent and agitation then gathering throughout America.

"Prudence," he said, suddenly, turning to his sister, "didst hear to-day that they have formed a company and taken a pledge among themselves to stand against his most honored majesty?"—he removed his hat as he spoke—"they want liberty, those hounds; aye, they'll get it—liberty to seek another world!"

"Tut! tut! Nathaniel, do not lose your temper." Prudence smoothed down her rich brocade as she spoke. "The people are grieved at the Edict of Parliament to close the port of Boston. 'Tis hard on the colonists, but 'twill all come right, the king will be more lenient to them."

"Never! he should not give them one inch; they should obey him," he answered, stubbornly. Suddenly, after a moment's thought, he turned to Letty.

"You walk on apace; we will follow, and you can wait at the church door for us."

He looked after his child a moment a shadow