

THE PIONEER: A POEM.

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The Pioneer: A Poem. by William Seton

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WILLIAM SETON

**THE PIONEER: A
POEM.**

THE PIONEER.

A POEM.

BY

WILLIAM SETON, Esq.,

Author of "Romance of the Charter Oak," "Pride of Lexington," etc.

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"Westward the Course of Empire takes its way."

NEW YORK:

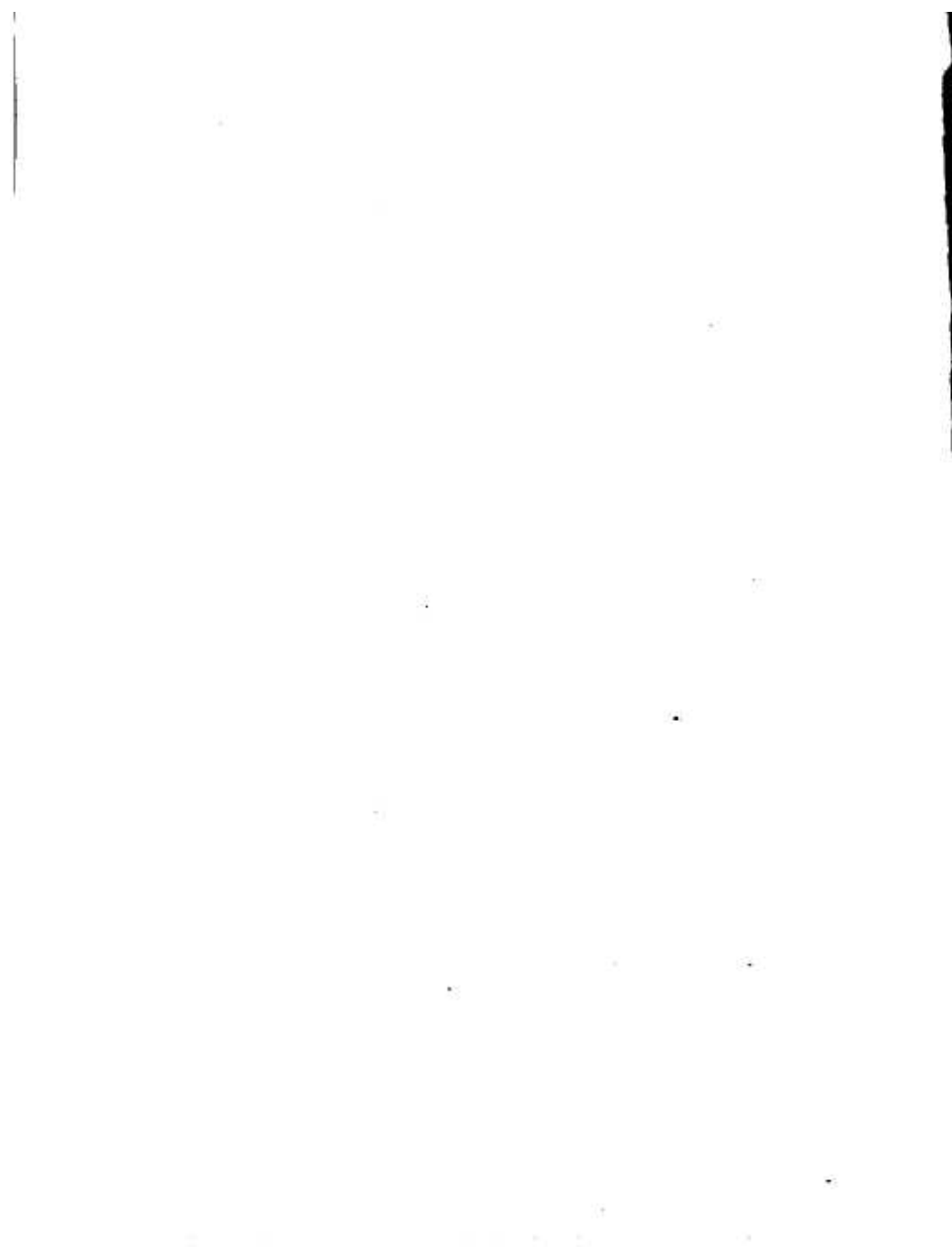
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THE PIONEER.

IN the loveliest valley of New Hampshire,
Hard by a stream whose fountain home is hid
Among the Laurel crags of Mount Kearsarge,
A cabin stood. Upon its sloping roof
Old Time had spread the moss ; its chimney leaned
A little to the South, bent by the blasts,
Which in the winter months, with scarce a pause,
Blew down with fury from the cold Nor'west.
Under its eaves the Marten's nest was hung ;
The Woodchuck had his den beneath the floor,
Where generations of them came and went—
Blessing a spot which was the haunt of Peace.
Around the acres which the axe had cleared

The melancholy Pines a circle formed ;
And in the clearing, 'tween the stumps and stones,
Josiah Willey raised his scanty crop
Of corn and pumpkins,—blunting many a hoe,—
And often wond'ring how he ever came
To settle in the shadow of the hill.
Yet was Josiah, in his faithful spouse,
Blest with a treasure such as few men find.
Her temper kindly, and her willing hand
Was never idle from a lack of health :
Broom, churn, and spinning-wheel, the livelong day,
Kept steady chorus to her tuneful voice ;
And in the evenings, when his work was done,
She'd place her 'specs' upon her drooping nose,
And read him off to sleep with Holy Writ ;
Then rouse him from his dream with some sweet hymn
Which would recall the day when first they met—
A Sabbath, in the choir at Intervale.
And as a cherished flower doth grow more fair,
And bloom each season with a sweeter breath,
So, with the passing years, Josiah thought
His mate more beautiful than in her teens :
For when a soul to soul is truly wed
There is no ending of the honey-moon.

J. W. P.

One night in May, just when the Dogwood buds
Unfolded, and the Marten on her nest
Laid her last egg, Josiah Willey's home
Was blest with twins. And, from the beginning,
Helen and Martha grew what you'd expect
Ought to grow up from such a parent stem.
Yet better were they—for all goodness tends
To betterment ; often on earth we find
Virtue rewarded by a fairer mould :
So in their rustic beauty was revealed
The father and the mother's Godly lives.
Nor did they ought to mar kind Nature's gifts :
Their feet uncramp'd, their waists no fetters bound,
And in their faultless symmetry of form
You might have taken them for works of art
Come from Immortal Greece. Their joyous looks
Told of the mountain air, the azure sky
Mirrored in their eyes its heavenly blue,
And the wild roses which their cheeks adorned,
Bloomed all the year. Yet 'tis not clay alone
Which makes true worth : shell is but shell, the pearl
Doth lie within. So in their gentle breasts
Love and obedience reigned. With willing hands
They helped their mother in the household work ;

And in the winter months the path which led
Through the dark pine wood to the District School
Did never miss their step. The merry crowd,
Who came together with their books and slates,
Much wondered at their quickness. Day by day
Helen and Martha, from the lowest bench,
Moved nearer to the front ; and many a boy,
Destined in time to play a Statesman's part,
Would whisper to them—" Tell me what comes next ;"
And by their friendly aid escape the rod.
At length, in course of time, the District School
Was taught by Helen—though 'twas often said
That Martha came instead ; yet none could tell—
The twins were so alike—which really came.
But all agreed the school was ne'er so good ;
The roughest boy obeyed, and meckly took
The chiding for his faults ; and Helen's reign
Was long remembered as the Golden age.

Fair was the vista which these years spread out
Before Josiah Willey, blind Josiah !
The babbling brook that hurried by his door,
The impatient broods which left the Marten's nest,
Taught him no lesson. 'Twas an April day ;