

**HOPE LESLIE, OR, EARLY
TIMES IN THE
MASSACHUSETTS, VOL. I**

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Hope Leslie, Or, Early Times in the Massachusetts, Vol. I by Catharine Maria Sedgwick

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CATHARINE MARIA SEDGWICK

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MASSACHUSETTS, VOL. I**

Susan Sedgwick
Catharine Maria

HOPE LESLIE;

OR,

EARLY TIMES

IN

THE MASSACHUSETTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LINWOODS," "POOR RICH MAN," "LIVE AND LET
LIVE," "REDWOOD," &c.

Here stood the Indian chieftain, rejoicing in his glory !
How deep the shade of sadness that rests upon his story :
For the white man came with power—like brethren they met—
But the Indian fires went out, and the Indian sun has set !

And the chieftain has departed—gone is his hunting-ground,
And the twanging of the bowstring is a forgotten sound :
Where dwelleth yesterday ! and where is Echo's cell !
Where has the rainbow vanished !—there does the Indian dwell.—E.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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HOPE LESLIE.

CHAPTER I.

*"Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthrall'd ;
Yes, even that which mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory."*

COMUS.

WILLIAM FLETCHER was the son of a respectable country gentleman of Suffolk, in England, and the destined heir of his uncle, Sir William Fletcher, an eminent lawyer, who had employed his talents with such effective zeal and pliant principle, that he had won his way to courtly favour and secured a courtly fortune.

Sir William had only one child—a daughter ; and possessing the common ambition of transmitting his name with his wealth, he selected his nephew as the future husband of his daughter Alice.

"Take good heed," Sir William thus expressed himself in a letter to his brother, "take good heed that the boy be taught unquestioning and unqualified loyalty to his sovereign—the Alpha and Omega of political duty. These are times when every true subject has his price. Divers of the leaders of the Commons are secret friends of the seditious, mischief-brewing Puritans ; and Buckingham himself is

suspected of favouring their cabals; but this *sub rosa*—I burn not my fingers with these matters. ‘He who meddleth with another man’s strifes, taketh a dog by the ear,’ said the wisest man that ever lived; and he, thank God, was a king. Caution Will against all vain speculation and idle inquiries: there are those that are forever inquiring and inquiring, and never coming to the truth. One inquiry should suffice for a loyal subject: ‘What is established?’ and that being well ascertained, the line of duty is so plain, that he who runs may read.

“I would that all our youths had inscribed on their hearts that golden rule of political religion, framed and well maintained by our good Queen Elizabeth, ‘No man should be suffered to decline, either on the left or on the right hand, from the drawn line limited by authority, and by the sovereign’s laws and injunctions.’

“Instead of such healthy maxims, our lads’ heads are crammed with the philosophy, and rhetoric, and history of those liberty-loving Greeks and Romans. This is the pernicious lore that has poisoned our academical fountains. Liberty! what is it? Daughter of Disloyalty, and mother of all misrule, who, from the hour that she tempted our first parents to forfeit Paradise, hath ever worked mischief to our race.

“But, above all, brother, as you value the temporal salvation of your boy, restrain him from all confederacy, association, or even acquaintance with the Puritans. If my master took counsel of me, he would ship these mad canting fools to our New-

England colonies, where their tender consciences would be no more offended, because, forsooth, a prelate saith his prayers in white vestments, and where they might enjoy with the savages that primitive equality about which they make such a pother. God forefend that our good lad William should company with these misdoers! He must be narrowly watched; for, as I hear, there is a neighbour of yours, one Winthrop (a notable gentleman, too, as they say, but he doth grievously scandalize his birth and breeding), who hath embraced these scurvy principles, and doth magnify them with the authority of his birth and condition, and hath much weight with the country. There is in Suffolk, too, as I am told, one Eliot, a young zealot, a fanatical incendiary, who doth find ample combustibles in the gossiping matrons, idle maidens, and lawless youth who flock about him.

“These are dangerous neighbours; rouse yourself, brother; give over your idle sporting with hawk and hound, and watch over this goodly scion of ours—ours, I say; but I forewarn you, no daughter or guinea of mine shall ever go to one who is infected with this spreading plague.”

This letter was too explicit to be misunderstood; but, so far from having the intended effect of awakening the caution of the expectant of fortune, it rather stimulated the pride of the independent country gentleman. He permitted his son to follow the bent of accident, or the natural course of a serious, reflecting, and enthusiastic temper. Winthrop, the

future governor of Massachusetts, was the counsellor of young Fletcher, and Eliot, the "apostle of New-England," his most intimate friend. These were men selected of Heaven to achieve a great work. In the quaint language of the time, "the Lord sifted three nations for precious seed to sow the wilderness."

There were interested persons who were not slow in conveying to Sir William unfavourable reports of his nephew, and the young man received a summons from his uncle, who hoped, by removing him from the infected region, to rescue him from danger.

Sir William's pride was gratified by the elegant appearance and graceful deportment of his nephew, whom he had expected to see with the "slovenly and lawyer-like carriage" that marked the scholars of the times. The pliant courtier was struck with the lofty independence of the youth, who from the first showed that neither frowns nor favour would induce him to bow the knee to the idols Sir William had served. There was something in this independence that awed the inferior mind of the uncle. To him it was an unknown, mysterious power, which he knew not how to approach, and almost despaired of subduing. However, he was experienced in life, and had observed enough of human infirmity to convince him that there was no human virtue that had not some weak, some assailable point. Time and circumstances were not long in developing the vulnerability of the nephew. Alice Fletcher had been the companion of his childhood. They now met without any of the reserve that often prevents an intimate in-

tercourse between young persons, and proceeds from the consciousness of a susceptibility which it would seem to deny.

The intercourse of the cousins was renewed with all the frankness and artlessness of the sunny season of childish love and confidence. Alice had been educated in retirement by her mother, whom she had recently attended through a long and fatal illness. She had been almost the exclusive object of her love, for there was little congeniality between the father and daughter. The ties of nature may command all dutiful observances, but they cannot control the affections. Alice was deeply afflicted by her bereavement. Her cousin's serious temper harmonized with her sorrow, and nature and opportunity soon indissolubly linked their hearts together.

Sir William perceived their growing attachment, and exulted in it; for, as he fancied, it reduced his nephew to dependance on his will and whims. He had never himself experienced the full strength of any generous sentiment, but he had learned from observation that love was a controlling passion, and he now most anxiously watched and promoted the kindling of the flame, in the expectation that the fire would subdue the principles of civil and religious liberty with which he had but too well ascertained the mind of his nephew to be imbued.

He silently favoured the constant and exclusive intercourse of the young people: he secretly contrived various modes of increasing their mutual dependance; and, when he was certain their happi-