AN AFRICAN ROMANCE.

A Story Blended with Some Interesting Colonial History.

BY EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

CHAPTER III.

Thus it is that I am able to fix the date much better than if I had to rely on that business of the double fists and the rising and setting of the sun.

There were no newspapers in Boston, but there was a great deal of conversation, and whatever was posted up on the town pump, or at the town house hard by, or above the whipping post, or on the front of the meeting house, was rapidly repeated from mouth to mouth. So was it that the week had not ended before the town knew perfectly well that a "Ginny black" was offered for sale. And in one and another conference, in which Winthrop and Dudley and John Cotton took the lead, as they came out from the Thursday lecture, Telega's matter was discussed in all its relations. When John Cotton and John Williams went into the meeting house Thursday morning they did not know much about the matter, and far less did they know what they thought about it. But, after the informal conversation with the other elders, after the meeting was opened and before they left the house, both of them knew very well. Winthrop knew what they thought, and Dudley knew; for, in a fashion, Winthrop and Dudley had had their share in telling John Cotton what it was as well that he should think. And so, when people went to meeting on Sunday, there was quite a general impression in the congregation that before they came out they would know what was to be done with the black man.

The meeting-house was always as full as it would hold. On this occasion Wilson led the congregation in prayer; then he "deaconed out" one of the psalms, as versified for the congregation. Then Cotton led in prayer, and, after the prayer, he announced the text of his discourse. It was from the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth verses of the eighteenth chapter of Revelations. "Alas, alas, the great city of Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgm nt come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; the merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearl, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory; and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

The first head was a description of Babylon in all its glory. The second head showed that, although Boston was but a small town now—nay, had been called "Lost Town" in the scorn of the people around her—there was every reason why, if Poston held firmly in her loyalty to the living God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Poston should have more wealth and trade and rule and dominion than any o' the principalities and powers of the heathen. The third head showed that all this was impossible for Poston if she did not observe to the living God, and did not live by His commands. The fourth head showed, by full reference to the books of the Old Testament, that God's people made no slaves excepting in war. The fifth head pointed out the denunciations of the prophets against the Syrians, because they bought and sold slaves from the islands of the West. And the sixth head brought all this to a close, in its denunciation of Babyl n because she traded in souls and slaves.

"I have read to you," he said, "from the word of God, the names of some of those things which perish with the using, which this great Babylon bought and sold. I have read to you also the names of treasures which do not perish in the us ng, which this Babylon pretended to sell and to buy. It is all as Boston can buy corn and fish and fur, as Boston can buy beaver and otter and skin of mink and skin of bear, as Boston can send out her casafras to England and buy her cotton from the Indies, so could Babylon buy and sell cinnamon and frankincense." And then he read the whole verse. "But woe to Babylon, because she bought, or tried to buy, the souls of men! Babylon the great is fallen, because she b ught those slaves which her merchants captivated far away. And woe to this town, which we thought the Lord foundeth for His kingdom, which we thought was to come even in the wilderness, in the day when our shipmen and our merchants shall carry away from us our furs and our spices, and shall bring back, to us, for a recompense, slaves and the souls of men." Then, pausing for a moment, he went on to address the King of kings in prayer. The whole congregation thrilled and excited, rose to their fe and stood as he prayed, pouring out the anger of his e'oquence in eager words.

"O Lord God, save thy people, and save thy heritage! Let not the curse and the damnation fall on this place which fell upon those heathen. Let not thine own people, the sheep of thine own pasture and the flock of thine own hand, stray in the waste in which the Gentiles strayed. Let them not taste the fruit that was forbidden, let them not drink of the waters of Marah. Save, O God, save in this thy time. Blot out from the book of thy remembrance our follies and sins in the days that are past. Remember thine own infinite mercy, and hold fast to thine own purpose in the redemption of this land, and show thy people, in the light and majesty of thine own holy spirit, how to undo the chains that they have bound, how to turn back from the paths of their we kness, and how to proclaim liberty to the captive. O, rule in this thy land, those who are King of kings and God of gods, thou Lord of hosts. Rule for our good, and do not trample us under the feet of thy vengeance. Save us, save, we beseech thee, O Lord! Lift up him that is oppressed, break the bonds of him who is enslaved, and set the prisoner free. Save us, Lord Jesus, if it has been pleased in thine own flesh, to lead captivity captive, and thine shall be the glory and the honor, the power and the dominion, forever and ever, world without end. Amen."

And then he directed them to sing the forty-fourth psalm. Wilson, as before, gave out the lines one by one, and the congregation all joined in a fashion in the singing. Wilson pronounced the benediction and the assembly was dissolved.

There is no diary nor notebook which gives any account of the conversation in excited circles on that day or the next. But in the colony records, dated as fate but no less decided, is the memorandum:

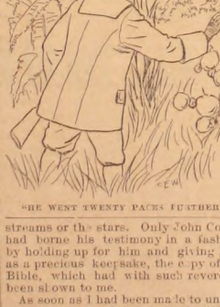
"The court wrote to Mr. Williams of Piscataqua, requesting him to send the negro which he had of Mr. Smyth that they might send him back to Ginny."

CHAPTER IV.

It was this promptness of the general court which brought about the dramatic close to the story, as it was finally told me by my four interpreters.

At the first, even after the interest I had shown in the necklace and in the book, they had not understood how intense was my curiosity, and how eager I was to gratify it in every detail. As I have intimated already, they had one and another of it to give me, each of as I should search for vanity, though I should go up and down among the oldest people in Boston, and ask to tell me what they remembered of October, 1645. Alas, so soon as we give ourselves over to printing-presses and libraries, this matter of tradition, from father to son, and from mother to daughter, dies out. But this tale of the days and weeks and months which Telega the "Ginny Black" spent in Boston, while they were waiting for a mast-schooner to sail from Piscataqua, which might transfer him to a Guinea trader, which should take him to the Congo—this tale had been repeated, without any "Russian scandal," and without any vagueness of detail, for seven generations. Cotton and Wilson and Winthrop and Dudley, with all the pride o' paper and ink, have been more ret cent. They have not told whether he dined with them or breakfasted with them or took his tea with them. Winthrop has not told by what efforts of interpreters he tried to find out whether this man knew that he was a grandson of Ham or whether he did not know. This is certain, that Telega picked up some words of English, and I found that they still had the name of the shillings in the necklace, and they still knew and could speak the word Smyth in a fashion, and more plainly the word Cotton, and they knew, and still that the wampun necklace was a treasure of a different sort from the string of silver and gold.

Telega had seen and driven horses and oxen; Telega had been taught to sail in a boat and to fish with English fishing tackle; Telega had once been trusted with the care of sheep; Telega had been able to tell of the cocks and hens for whom he had scattered corn morning and evening; and at last, when Telega had been sent, as I found, to the Piscataqua for his farewell—sent with the blessings of priests and the hearty hand-shaking of many others—he had been told that the money that was given him was to be used for any purpose of his passage, if he should find himself in a strait; but, as the reader will see, he fell into no misfortune which an intelligent black like himself, with a smattering of two languages besides his own, could not fairly meet. He had carried in a bag at his neck, concealed under his clothing, the three joes and thirty-one shillings, which had been given him by the treasurer in the town house in Boston, and he had brought them out safely when he arrived at his home. He had also brought with him the copy of the Scripture, which he had been made to understand was more precious by far than the joes and the shillings. After he had gained some little knowledge of the English language, I suppose that one and another attempt had been made to rescue his soul from its certain danger. But it was clear enough that nobody pretended that he had thus gained any understanding of the vital truths of the religion of John Cotton. There had been no blasphemous baptizing, and he had been left—unwillingly, I dare say—to worship such gods as he found in the



"HE WENT TWENTY PACES FURTHER"

streams or the stars. Only John Cotton had borne his testimony in a fashion, by holding up for him and giving him, as a precious keepsake, the copy of the Bible, which had with such reverence been shown to me.

As soon as I had been made to understand this I begged that the book might be brought to me again. I opened and examined it carefully, hoping to find John Cotton's name, or some notes from his hand. But there was hardly a written word. Once or twice a palpable printer's error had been corrected. For the rest, it was as it had been sent to Poston from London. Why, O why did not dear John Cotton, if it were he, write something on that dyleaf, which seemed made for writing? Or, putting it in general, why did people who wrote so much that is dull, and said so much that there was no need of saying—why did they hold the pen, just when we their children are most eager to read and hear?

CHAPTER V.

This ends the story, so far as the Massachusetts records go. A year after, the Bay people had to send back a "Ginny interpreter" and another black, who had slipped into their hands in much the same way. Telega, who had had the name of "Cotton" given him also, in sign, I suppose, of the friendship of that preacher, went, I think, to Bristol in England. Certainly it was to some English town larger than the American Boston. Clearly he was no fool, and in Bristol he needed no one to take care of him. There were enough of his own race there, though I suppose none of his own village. For a special reason he was eager to be at home. He had, however, to take care what vessel he chose. Fortunately for him he did not choose wrong.

Whatever the vessel was, as they passed the latitude of the Straits of Gibraltar, they fell in with a pirate rover from Salle, one of the Moorish ports. Of the fight which followed all my story-tellers had much more to tell than of anything that happened to him in Piscataqua or in Boston. In the fight poor Te ega had a bullet shot through his chest, and of this shot I am told he bore the mark when he died, seventy years after.

His real dangers did not begin—and this he knew—until he was in the Bight of Benin. Had not his English captain been true as steel he would have sold him there to the first Portuguese trader he found. But Telega had not chosen a knave nor a pirate among the British

"TELEGA, GUN IN HAND, SPRANG OUT."

shipmasters. He had chosen a God-fearing man, who would have kept his promise though he had "promised to his loss." I was told, in delightful detail, how he was kept below until the ship was fairly at her anchorage off the mouths of the river. Then I was told how, on a dark night in July, he was called and how the English captain bade him good-by. He was put upon a boat, with a good store of hard bread and a bit of dried beef and, what he prized more, what we might call a carbine, a pouch with match and bullets and a flint and steel. The captain fell on his knees on the deck and prayed to his God and bade Telega good-by. A sea breeze was blowing so that the sailors could put sail on the boat, and when morning came she was well up the river. I was told how long they kept themselves from Portuguese marauders and then, at length which I could have well spared, I was told where at last he was landed on the northern bank, not an hour too early, as it proved.

In what followed in this long story, the reason appeared for his pressing haste. On the morning of the fourth day after he parted from his British friends, he came out on the hillside, where I first saw the village. It was a year to a day since the wedding procession had been interrupted so wretchedly. He knew that, and he knew what depended on the passage of a year. By all the customs of his tribe, his sweetheart, his a most wife, was a widow for that year. But it was for that year only. When the year was ended she might be betrothed again. Telega did not believe that there would be any careful astronomy in this affair. He knew very well that when twelve moons were over every man in the village would think he had a right to the prettiest girl and the most lovely in the village. Here was his reason for refusing to wait with the English captain till he should have gone to Fernando Po, and still he should have come up the river to trade for ivory.

As I have said, he was not an hour too early.

As he approached the village no one met him. He was afeared, it was so still." This was Philip's phrase to me, in interpreting. He hurried all the faster. He passed a close grove of pepper trees to see in it the pretended ambush of a bridegroom and his men in full dress waiting for the bride's procession.

Telega had been stealing along as a cat does, and this merry group did not see him. But he seems to have seen his advantage. He passed them on the instant, he went twenty paces further, he hid himself under a heavy tuft o' banana plants, and he had not to wait long. The bride came, wretched enough for all her bridal foggery. She had insisted on wearing two or three sea-gull feathers, which were tokens of deepest mourning. She wept as if she were at her husband's funeral. She flung away a bunch of flowers which the new bridegroom's mother gave to her. None the less was this a bridal procession. Banjos and tomtoms and the whole village behind and before made this certain.

A large stone to-day marks the corner where Telega, gun in hand, sprang out like a tiger, and, in literal fact, seized his bride. Pluto was not less expected in Enna. The girl screamed now to some purpose, and in a minute was sobbing with her head upon his shoulder. The banjos and the tomtoms were silent. And bridegroom number two, with his handsome cohort of "best man" — hearing nothing after they should have heard music and song—after a mysterious minute or two came out from their lair to learn what had hindered the procession.

At this point the story, which I heard two or three times at least—once as we went up the river, twice as we came down—varies in its forms. Who can wonder, after nearly 250 years? But there can be no doubt that when Telega caught his bride with his left arm, and when she sobbed upon his shoulder, his right hand held the matchlock, and he blew the match to be sure that it was a live coal. And then that braggart, groom No. 2, came up, howling and storming, Telega turned over his bride to one of her women, dropped the gun to a level, and, in very classical language of Mandara, told bridegroom No. 2 that, if he did not keep a civil tongue in his head, he would blow his brains out. Nay, more, I am afraid that Elder Cotton's seed had sprouted so ill that Telega would have done what he said, had there been occasion.

But there was no occasion. The game was played through. There were elders in the villa e who had as much to do with its affairs as in that other village of mud walls and thatched roofs called Boston, where John Cotton and John Wilson and Thomas Dudley and John Winthrop did the thinking for the rest, and told them what was right and what was wrong. Nay, the evident public opinion of the procession was in favor of the handsome young traveler, who had been in Europe, not to say America, and had brought home its latest fash ons. There were bride-maidens, as you saw, and they whispered: "Twere better by far to have matched our fair cousin to her old sweetheart." And so, after some flourishing of clubs and knives, much scolding, swearing, threatening and other debating, three or four elders, much like those I have described, I think, stilled all voices and bade the tom-toms and the banjos begin again.

I doubt if it were the march in "Midsummer Night's Dream," but it answered every purpose of that midsummer noonday as well. Bridegroom No. 2 sulked off. But all his men joined in the procession, and afterward, I fancy, partook of the banquet. And, though his cabin was not occupied for a day or two, a sufficiently good cabin was found for all purposes of Telega and his bride.

This happy conclusion to a story so sad was brought when the general court in the bay voted to send the "Ginny black man" home. But I should never have heard it but for "King Charles' Shilling."

[THE END.]

He Wasn't a Captious Man.

A night or two since, as a policeman was making his way up Beaubien street, says the Detroit Free Press, he was accosted by a colored man with the remark:

"I doan' want to seem capshus, sah, 'deed I doan', but dar's trouble in my house ober dar."

"What sort of trouble?"

"Why, sah, a cull'd pusson called Williams sits dah wid his feet on de stove convarsin' wid my wife. I'se ordered him to vacate, sah, but he refused. What am de proper course in sich a case?"

"Go and order him out once more."

In about ten minutes the man returned and reported:

"I doan' want to seem capshus, sah, but I doan ordered him out, just as you said."

"And he didn't go?"

"No, sah; he said he'd see me in Texas furst. What would be your advice under such circumstances?"

"If a man was in my house and wouldn't go out, I would put him out."

"Wouldn't it seem capshus, sah?"

"I don't think so."

"Just as you say, sah—jist so, sah. I feel sartin that I ketch the ideah."

He turned into the house, and the officer remained to see the end. It came in about two minutes. Three or four yells were heard, somebody's feet seemed to strike the wall, and then the door opened and Williams flew into the street like a half-filled straw bed. He was scarcely on his feet before he bolted up the walk and the owner of the house came down the steps to explain.

"I doan' like to seem capshus, sah, but now dat I've got my han' in I'd like your advice about cuffin de ole woman up to a peak! 'Pears to me dat she sorter encouraged Williams to believe dat I couldn't lick one side of him."

The policeman said the mayor could best attend to the woman question, and bid him good-night.

Just "a Man."

When the landlady entered the apartment he rose from his chair and remarked:

"You have a room to rent, I believe?"

"Yes, sir—front room on the second floor," she replied. "Are you one of the gentlemen who advertised for a room with board?"

"I'm one of the men who advertised for a fair-sized room well lighted."

"One of the men?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"How did your advertisement read?"

"Oh, I just said, 'A business man desires a fair-sized room, with board, within a mile of the business part of the city.'"

"The advertisement read 'a man?'"

"Certainly."

"Not 'a refined gentleman?'"

"No, indeed."

"Well, I'll take a few dollars off of the price, then. I've been looking for 'a man.' I'm rather tired of 'refined gentlemen.' They generally play poker all night, and leave without paying their bills."

Slang from a Good Source.

An English paper recently alluded to the expression "dark horse" as a piece of American slang. It would probably surprise that editor to know that Thackeray in "The Adventures of Philip," and Beaconsfield in "The Young Duke" both used the expression, and in each case in precisely the sense in which it is now employed, to denote a candidate who early in the race does not appear at all.

His Veins Wore Out.

A most peculiar disease was the cause of the death of a Philadelphian recently, and one which puzzled many physicians. It is called purpura hemorrhagia, or hemorrhage of the veins. When an autopsy was made it was found that the body was nearly empty of blood and small holes were found worn in the veins. The disease is extremely rare.

Pity the Men of Burmah!

Burmah must be a heavenly place for women. In that country the members of the fair sex select their own husbands, and when they tire of them procure divorce for the asking and marry again.

MAINE has abandoned the old-fashioned method of voting and when she next speaks it will be in accordance with the Australian system.

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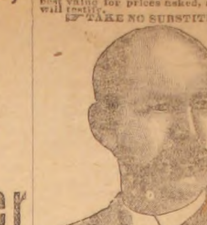

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$4 and $5 Hand-sewed, fine calf shoes. The most stylish, easy and durable shoes ever sold at the price. They equal fine imported shoes costing from $6 to $8.

$3.50 Police Shoe, worn by farmers and all $3 others who want a good heavy calf, plain toed, extension edge shoe. Will keep the feet dry and warm.

$2.50 Fine Calf, $2.25 and $2.00 Workingmen's Shoes will give more wear for the money than any other make. They are made for service. The first trial will show that our working shoes have found their place.

Boys' $2.00 and Youths' $1.75 School Shoes are worn by the boys everywhere. The most serviceable shoes at the prices.

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