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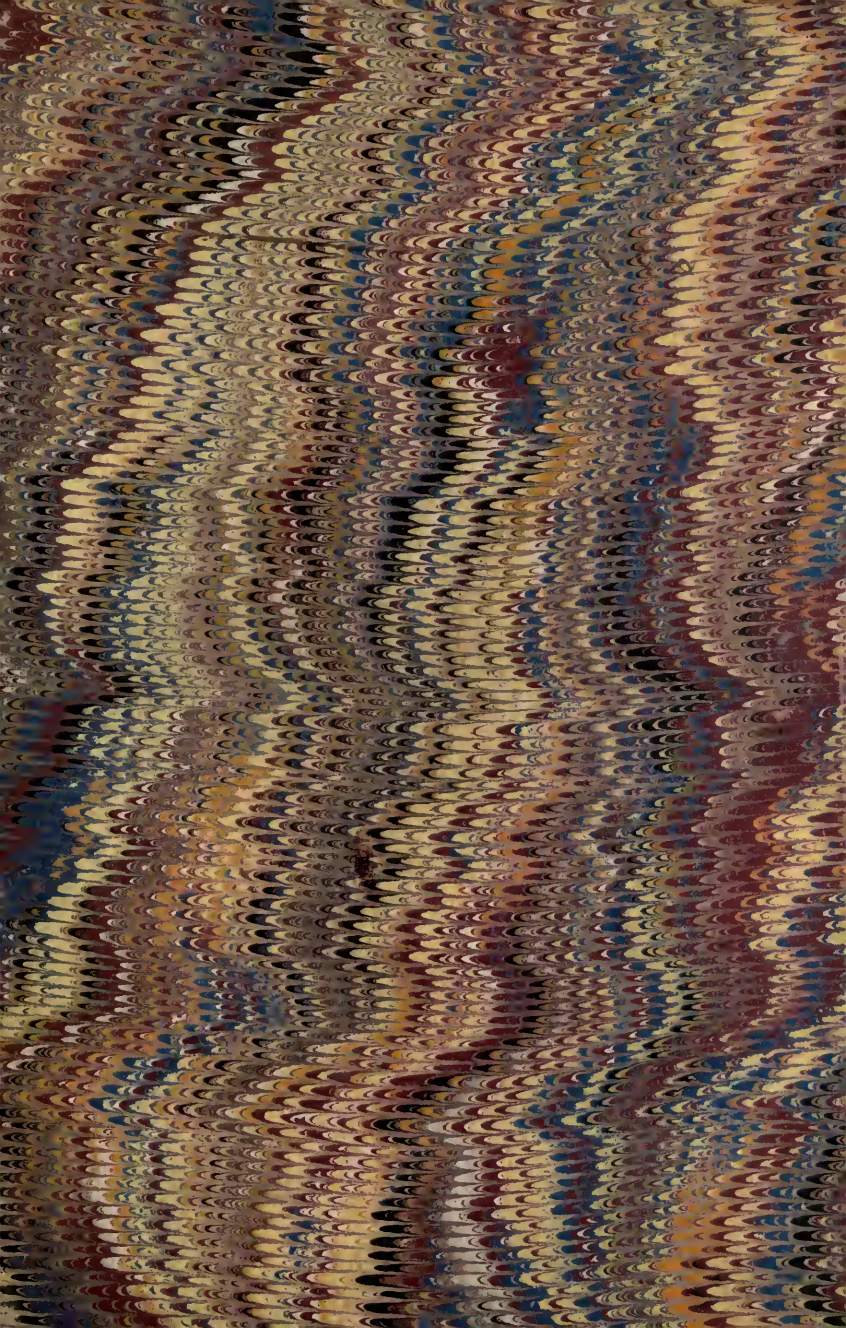
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THE

WEPT OF WISH-TON-WISH.

A Tale.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER.

INV
1898.

• But she is dead to him, to all
Her lute hangs silent on the wall,
And on the stairs, and at the door,
Her fairy step is heard no more."—*Rogers.*



COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

NEW EDITION.

NEW YORK:
STRINGER AND TOWNSEND.

1856

WEPT OF THE WISH-TON-WISH.

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

***** BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the tenth day of Octo
L. S. ber, in the fifty-fourth year of the independence of the United
* States of America, A. D. 1829, CAREY, LEA & CAREY, of the
said district, have deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right
whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

“The Wept of Wish-Ton-Wish: A Tale. By the author of the *Pioneers
Prairie, &c. &c.*

‘But she is dead to him, to all;
Her lute hangs silent on the wall,
And on the stairs, and at the door,
Her fairy step is heard no more.’—ROGERS.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned” And also to the Act entitled, “An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled ‘An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,’ and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching, historical and other Prints.”

D CALDWELL, *Clerk of the
Eastern District of Pennsylvania*

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THE REV. J. R. O.

OF

***** PENNSYLVANIA

THE kind and disinterested manner in which you have furnished the materials of the following tale, merits a public acknowledgment. As your reluctance to appear before the world, however, imposes a restraint, you must receive such evidence of gratitude, as your own prohibition will allow.

Notwithstanding there are so many striking and deeply interesting events in the early history of those from whom you derive your being, yet are there hundreds of other families in this country, whose traditions, though less accurately and minutely preserved than the little narrative you have submitted to my inspection, would supply the materials of many moving tales. You have every reason to exult in your descent, for, surely, if any man may claim to be a citizen and a proprietor in the Union, it is one. that. like

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yourself, can point to a line of ancestors whose origin is lost in the obscurity of time. You are truly an American. In your eyes, we of a brief century or two, must appear as little more than denizens quite recently admitted to the privilege of a residence. That you may continue to enjoy peace and happiness, in that land where your fathers so long flourished, is the sincere wish of your obliged friend,

THE AUTHOR.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading or bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a long, multi-line dedication or preface.]

PREFACE.

AT this distant period, when Indian traditions are listened to with the interest that we lend to the events of a dark age, it is not easy to convey a vivid image of the dangers and privations that our ancestors encountered, in preparing the land we enjoy for its present state of security and abundance. It is the humble object of the tale that will be found in the succeeding pages, to perpetuate the recollection of some of the practices and events peculiar to the early days of our history.

The general character of the warfare pursued by the natives is too well known to require any preliminary observations; but it may be advisable to direct the attention of the reader, for a few moments, to those leading circumstances in the history of the times, that may have some connexion with the principal business of the legend.

The territory which now composes the three states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode-Island, is said, by the best-informed of our annalists, to have been formerly occupied by four great nations of Indians, who were, as usual, subdivided into numberless dependent tribes. Of these people, the Massachusetts possessed a large portion of the land which now composes the state of that name; the Wampanoags dwelt in what was once the Colony of Plymouth, and in the northern districts of the Providence Plantations; the Narragansetts held the well-known islands of the beautiful bay which receives its name from their nation, and the more southern counties of the Plantations; while the Pequots, or, as it is ordinarily written and pronounced, the Pequods.

were masters of a broad region that lay along the western boundaries of the three other districts.

There is great obscurity thrown around the polity of the Indians, who usually occupied the country lying near the sea.

The Europeans, accustomed to despotic governments, very naturally supposed that the chiefs, found in possession of power, were monarchs to whom authority had been transmitted in virtue of their birth-rights. They consequently gave them the name of kings.

How far this opinion of the governments of the aborigines was true remains a question, though there is certainly reason to think it less erroneous in respect to the tribes of the Atlantic states, than to those who have since been found further west, where, it is sufficiently known, that institutions exist which approach much nearer to republics than to monarchies. It may, however, have readily happened that the son, profiting by the advantages of his situation, often succeeded to the authority of the father, by the aid of influence, when the established regulations of the tribe acknowledged no hereditary claim. Let the principle of the descent of power be what it would, it is certain the experience of our ancestors proves, that, in very many instances, the child was seen to occupy the station formerly filled by the father; and, that in most of those situations of emergency, in which a people so violent were often placed, the authority he exercised was as summary as it was general. The appellation of *Uncás* came, like those of the *Cæsars* and *Pharoahs*, to be a sort of synonyme for chief with the *Mohegans*, a tribe of the *Pequods*, among whom several warriors of this name were known to govern in due succession. The renowned *Metacom*, or, as he is better known to the whites, *King Philip*, was certainly the son of *Massassoit*, the *Sachem* of the

Wampanoags that the emigrants found in authority when they landed on the rock of Plymouth. Miantonimoh, the daring but hapless rival of that Uncas who ruled the whole of the Pequod nation, was succeeded in authority, among the Narragansetts, by his not less heroic and enterprising son, Conanchet; and, even at a much later day, we find instances of this transmission of power, which furnish strong reasons for believing that the order of succession was in the direct line of blood.

The early annals of our history are not wanting in touching and noble examples of savage heroism. Virginia has its legend of the powerful Powhatan and his magnanimous daughter, the ill-requited Pocahontas; and the chronicles of New-England are filled with the bold designs and daring enterprises of Miantonimoh, of Metacom, and of Conanchet. All the last-named warriors proved themselves worthy of better fates, dying in a cause and in a manner, that, had it been their fortunes to have lived in a more advanced state of society, would have enrolled their names among the worthies of the age.

The first serious war, to which the settlers of New-England were exposed, was the struggle with the Pequods. This people was subdued after a fierce conflict; and from being enemies, all, who were not either slain or sent into distant slavery, were glad to become the auxiliaries of their conquerors. This contest occurred within less than twenty years after the Puritans had sought refuge in America.

There is reason to believe that Metacom foresaw the fate of his own people, in the humbled fortunes of the Pequods. Though his father had been the earliest and constant friend of the whites, it is probable that the Puritans owed some portion of this amity to a dire

necessity. We are told that a terrible malady had raged among the Wampanoags but a short time before the arrival of the emigrants, and that their numbers had been fearfully reduced by its ravages. Some authors have hinted at the probability of this disease having been the yellow fever, whose visitations are known to be at uncertain, and, apparently, at very distant intervals. Whatever might have been the cause of this destruction of his people, Massassoit is believed to have been induced, by the consequences, to cultivate the alliance of a nation, who could protect him against the attacks of his ancient and less afflicted foes. But the son appears to have viewed the increasing influence of the whites with eyes more jealous than those of the father. He passed the morning of his life in maturing his great plan for the destruction of the strange race, and his later years were spent in abortive attempts to put this bold design in execution. His restless activity in plotting the confederation against the English, his fierce and ruthless manner of waging the war, his defeat, and his death, are too well known to require repetition.

There is also a wild and romantic interest thrown about the obscure history of a Frenchman of that period. This man is said to have been an officer of rank in the service of his king, and to have belonged to the privileged class which then monopolized all the dignities and emoluments of the kingdom of France. The traditions, and even the written annals of the first century of our possession of America, connect the Baron de la Castine with the Jesuits, who were thought to entertain views of converting the savages to Christianity, not unmingled with the desire of establishing a more temporal dominion over their minds. It is, however, difficult to say whether taste, or religion, or policy, or

necessity, induced this nobleman to quit the saloons of Paris for the wilds of the Penobscot. It is merely known that he passed the greater part of his life on that river, in a rude fortress that was then called a palace; that he had many wives, a numerous progeny, and that he possessed a great influence over most of the tribes that dwelt in his vicinity. He is also believed to have been the instrument of furnishing the savages, who were hostile to the English, with ammunition, and with weapons of a more deadly character than those used in their earlier wars. In whatever degree he may have participated in the plan to exterminate the Puritans, death prevented him from assisting in the final effort of Metacom.

The Narragansetts are often mentioned in these pages. A few years before the period at which the tale commences, Miantonimoh had waged a ruthless war against Uncas, the Pequod or Mohegan chief. Fortune favored the latter, who, probably assisted by his civilized allies, not only overthrew the bands of the other, but succeeded in capturing the person of his enemy. The chief of the Narragansetts lost his life, through the agency of the whites, on the place that is now known by the appellation of "the Sachem's plain."

It remains only to throw a little light on the leading incidents of the war of King Philip. The first blow was struck in June, 1675, rather more than half a century after the English first landed in New-England, and just a century before blood was drawn in the contest which separated the colonies from the mother country. The scene was a settlement near the celebrated Mount Hope, in Rhode-Island, where Metacom and his father had both long held their councils. From this point, bloodshed and massacre extended along the whole frontier of New-England. Bodies of horse and foot were

enrolled to meet the foe, and towns were burnt, and lives were taken by both parties, with little, and often with no respect for age, condition, or sex.

In no struggle with the native owners of the soil was the growing power of the whites placed in so great jeopardy, as in this celebrated contest with King Philip. The venerable historian of Connecticut estimates the loss of lives at nearly one-tenth of the whole number of the fighting men, and the destruction of houses and other edifices to have been in an equal proportion. One family in every eleven, throughout all New-England, was burnt out. As the colonists nearest the sea were exempt from the danger, an idea may be formed, from this calculation, of the risk and sufferings of those who dwelt in more exposed situations. The Indians did not escape without retaliation. The principal nations, already mentioned, were so much reduced as never afterwards to offer any serious resistance to the whites, who have since converted the whole of their ancient hunting-grounds into the abodes of civilized man. Metacom, Miantonimoh, and Conanchet, with their warriors, have become the heroes of song and legend, while the descendants of those who laid waste their dominions, and destroyed their race, are yielding a tardy tribute to the high daring and savage grandeur of their characters.

THE WEPT
OF
WISH-TON-WISH.

CHAPTER I.

“I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE incidents of this tale must be sought in a remote period of the annals of America. A colony of self-devoted and pious refugees from religious persecution had landed on the rock of Plymouth, less than half a century before the time at which the narrative commences; and they, and their descendants, had already transformed many a broad waste of wilderness into smiling fields and cheerful villages. The labors of the emigrants had been chiefly limited to the country on the coast, which, by its proximity to the waters that rolled between them and Europe, afforded the semblance of a connexion with the land of their forefathers and the distant abodes of civilization. But enterprise, and a desire to search for still more fertile domains, together with the temptation offered by the vast and unknown regions that lay along their western and northern borders, had induced many bold adventurers to penetrate more deeply into the forests. The precise spot, to which we desire to transport the imagination of the reader, was one of these establishments of what may, not inaptly, be called the forlorn-hope, in the march of civilization through the country.

So little was then known of the great outlines of the American continent, that, when the Lords

Say and Seal, and Brooke, connected with a few associates, obtained a grant of the territory which now composes the state of Connecticut, the King of England affixed his name to a patent, which constituted them proprietors of a country that should extend from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the South Sea. Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of ever subduing, or of even occupying a territory like this, emigrants from the mother colony of Massachusetts were found ready to commence the Herculean labor, within fifteen years from the day when they had first put foot upon the well-known rock itself. The fort of Say-Brooke, the towns of Windsor, Hartford, and New-Haven, soon sprang into existence, and, from that period to this, the little community, which then had birth, has been steadily, calmly, and prosperously advancing in its career, a model of order and reason, and the hive from which swarms of industrious, hardy and enlightened yeomen have since spread themselves over a surface so vast, as to create an impression that they still aspire to the possession of the immense regions included in their original grant.

Among the religionists, whom disgust of persecution had early driven into the voluntary exile of the colonies, was more than an usual proportion of men of character and education. The reckless and the gay, younger sons, soldiers unemployed, and students from the inns of court, early sought advancement and adventure in the more southern provinces, where slaves offered impunity from labor, and where war, with a bolder and more stirring policy, oftener gave rise to scenes of excitement, and, of course, to the exercise of the faculties best suited to their habits and dispositions. The more grave, and the religiously-disposed, found refuge in the colonies of New-England. Thither a multitude of private gentlemen transferred their fortunes and

their families, imparting a character of intelligence and a moral elevation to the country, which it has nobly sustained to the present hour.

The nature of the civil wars in England had enlisted many men of deep and sincere piety in the profession of arms. Some of them had retired to the colonies before the troubles of the mother country reached their crisis, and others continued to arrive, throughout the whole period of their existence, until the restoration; when crowds of those who had been disaffected to the house of Stuart sought the security of these distant possessions.

A stern, fanatical soldier, of the name of Heathcote, had been among the first of his class, to throw aside the sword for the implements of industry peculiar to the advancement of a newly-established country. How far the influence of a young wife may have affected his decision it is not germane to our present object to consider, though the records, from which the matter we are about to relate is gleaned, give reason to suspect that he thought his domestic harmony would not be less secure in the wilds of the new world, than among the companions with whom his earlier associations would naturally have brought him in communion.

Like himself, his consort was born of one of those families, which, taking their rise in the franklins of the times of the Edwards and Henrys, had become possessors of hereditary landed estates, that, by their gradually-increasing value, had elevated them to the station of small country gentlemen. In most other nations of Europe, they would have been rated in the class of the *petite noblesse*. But the domestic happiness of Capt. Heathcote was doomed to receive a fatal blow, from a quarter where circumstances had given him but little reason to apprehend danger. The very day he landed in the long-wished-

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