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A story of the Pilgrims

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Transcriber's note:

Inconsistencies in hyphenation have been maintained. Archaic usage of words such as "salvage" for "savage" and "randevous" for "rendezvous" have been maintained. Several misprints and punctuation errors have been corrected. A list of corrections can be found at the end of the text.

STANDISH OF STANDISH

A Story of the Pilgrims

by

Jane G. Austin

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STANDISH OF STANDISH

A Story of the Pilgrims

by

JANE G. AUSTIN

Author of "A Nameless Nobleman," "The Desmond Hundred," "Mrs. Beauchamp Brown," "Nantucket Scraps," "Moon Folk," Etc., Etc.

[Illustration]

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Dedication.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR BROTHER,

JOHN A. GOODWIN,

WHO MORE THAN ANY MAN HAS CONSERVED FOR OUR DELIGHT THE STORY OF THOSE  
PILGRIM FATHERS "WITHOUT WHOSE LIVES OURS HAD NOT BEEN."

A PREFATORY NOTE.

The history of the Old Colony includes, among some very stern facts, a deal of sweet and tender romance, hitherto hardly known except to those who have learned it at their mother's knee.

But in these days many persons seem disposed to pause for a moment in the eager race after the golden fruits of the Pilgrims' husbandry, and to look curiously back at the spot where the seed was sown.

To such I offer this story of Myles Standish, The-Sword-of-the-White-Men, the hero, who not for gain, not from necessity, not even from religious zeal, but purely in the knightly fervor of his blood, forsook home, and heritage, and glory, and ambition, to company that helpless band of exiles, and to be the Great-Heart of their Pilgrimage to the City that they sought.

To such students I will promise that they shall not be misled as to facts, though these be strung upon a slender thread of romance; and I will beg them to ground themselves well upon the solid Pilgrim Rock, that they may the better understand the story of Lazarus LeBaron, son of A Nameless Nobleman, to be offered them in due time, unless Time shall be no more for the Author.

Boston, October, 1889. JANE G. AUSTIN.

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STANDISH OF STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

THE BATTLE OF THE TUBS.

It was Monday morning.

It was also the twenty-third day of November in the year of our Lord 1620; but this latter fact was either unknown or matter of profound indifference to the two-and-twenty women who stood ready to make the day memorable in the world's history, while the fact of Monday was to them one of paramount importance.

Do you ask why this was thus?

The answer is duplex: first, the two-and-twenty women were not aware of

their own importance, nor could guess that History would ever concern herself with the date of their present undertaking; and second, for a reason whose roots are prehistoric, for they spring from the unfathomable depths of the feminine soul wherein abides inherently the love of purity, of order, and of tradition. Yes, in two hundred and seventy years the face of Nature, of empires, and of peoples has changed almost beyond recognition in this our New World; but the grand law at whose practical establishment in the New World we now assist, abides to-day:--

Monday is Washing Day.

Does some caviler here suggest that although the human female soul is embodied in the children of Ham, Shem, and Japhet, the mighty law referred to is binding only upon that Anglo-British-Saxon-Norman division of Japhet's daughters domiciled in and emanating from the British Isles? Let us proudly reply that in considering the result of a process we consider the whole; and let us meekly add that to our mind the Anglo-British-Saxon-Norman woman, perfected under an American sky, is the woman of the world; and finally, let us point to the two-and-twenty heroines of that Monday as chief among American women, for they were the Pilgrim Mothers of the New World.

The Pilgrim Fathers were there also; and they, too, were exemplifying a law of nature, that is to say, a law of male nature in every clime and every age. They did not love Washing Day. They felt no joy in the possibility of its observance, they felt no need of its processes. And yet again more humano, they did not openly set themselves against it, they did not frankly express their unworthy content in their present estate, but they feebly suggested that as the observance had been some weeks omitted, with no sensible loss of comfort to themselves, it might well be farther postponed; that the facilities were by no means remarkable; that rain was very possible, and that they had to apply themselves without delay to unshipping the pinnacle from the hold of the Mayflower, and fitting her for the immediate service of exploration.

To these arguments the women meekly responded that in the nature of things they were better fitted to judge of the emergency than their lords, whose attention must be absorbed in matters of so much higher import; that they did not require the help of any man whose work upon the pinnacle would be at all important, and that the sandy beach, the pool of fresh water, and the clumps of stunted shrubs fairly spread upon the shore in front of them were all the facilities they required. As for the weather, as Dame Hopkins piously remarked:--

"If Monday's weather be not fit for washing, there is no promise in Holy Writ of anything better in the rest of the week."

"Oh, if thou r't bent on washing, the shrewdest storm that ever swept the Zuyder Zee will never stop thee; so get thy rags together as soon as may be," growled her husband, a grizzled, hard-visaged veteran some twenty years older than this his second wife of whom he was very fond.

"Nay, then," interposed another voice, as a shrewd, kindly looking man, albeit with a certain whimsical cast to his thin features, approached the pair; "Mistress Hopkins will do no washing to-day; no, nor even go on shore to gather chill and weariness for my little friend Oceanus."

"'Will not,' shall not? Marry and who is to hinder, if you please, good Master Fuller?" asked the young woman in a somewhat shrewish voice.

"I, Samuel Fuller, Licentiate of Cambridge, late practitioner of Bartlemy's Hospital, London, and your medical adviser, madam," replied the doctor with a dry smile and mocking bow. "Recall, if you please, that Oceanus is not yet a fortnight old, and that both mother and child are still my responsibility. Would you ruin my reputation, madam, not to mention risking your own life and the boy's?"

"Have a care, Doctor, or some fine day you'll trip in your own quips, and break your neck," replied Mistress Hopkins half sullenly, while her husband cried,--

"He's right there, Bess. Thou 'rt in no case for such rough sport as this is like to prove, and thou 'lt stay aboard whoever goes ashore."

"Yes, stay thou aboard and mind thy babe, and I'll take thy clothes along with my own, so thou 'lt let Constance come to help me," suggested the somewhat coarse voice of a woman standing by.

"Thank you kindly, goodwife Billington," replied Elizabeth Hopkins coldly. "But Alice Rigdale hath already promised to do what is needed, and Constance must stay with me to mind Damaris and Oceanus."

"Oh, if goodwife Rigdale has taken it in hand, I will step back," replied Mistress Billington sharply; and as she descended the companion-way, Hopkins muttered in his wife's ear,--

"Now thou showest some sense, wench. The least thou hast to do with the Billington brood the better I'll be pleased."

"That's worth working for, surely," retorted his wife, tossing her head pettishly.

"I tell you there's no boat to be spared, and no man to row it, and I'll have naught to say to it," exclaimed a surly voice from the companion-way, and Captain Thomas Jones, master of the Mayflower, but not of the Pilgrims, appeared on deck.

Captain Jones was not an amiable man, his training as buccaneer and slaver having possibly blunted his finer feelings, and his consciousness of present treachery probably increasing the irritability often succeeding to a murdered conscience.

Such as he was, however, this man was the Inventor of Plymouth Rock, since by his collusion with the Dutch who wished to keep the profits of their Manhattan Colony to themselves, the Mayflower had found it impossible to make her way southward around Cape Cod, and after nearly going to wreck upon the shoals off Malabar, or Tucker's Terror had been driven within the embrace of the curving arm thrown out by the New World to welcome and shelter the homeless children of the Old. There she lay now, the weather-beaten, clumsy, strained, and groaning old bark whose name is glorious in the annals of our country while Time shall endure, and whose merest splinter would to-day be enshrined in gold; there she lay swinging gently to the send of the great Atlantic whose waves broke

sonorously upon the beach outside, and came racing around the point a flood of shattered and harmless monsters, moaning and hissing, to find their prey escaped and safely landlocked.

"There's no boat, I say, and there's an end on 't," repeated Master Jones truculently as he stepped on deck, and two men who had been earnestly conversing at the stern of the brig turned round and came toward him. They were John Carver, already governor of the colony, and William Bradford, his lieutenant and successor. The governor was the first to speak, and the somewhat measured accents of his voice, with its inflections at once kindly and haughty, told of gentle breeding, of a calm and dignified temper, and of an aptness at command.

"And why no boat, Master Jones?" asked he quietly. "Methought by the terms of our agreement you were to aid us in every way in making our settlement."

"And I'm not going back of my word, am I, master?" demanded Jones peevishly. "A pack of wenches going ashore with tubs and kettles and bales and such gear is not a settlement, is it?"

"Nay, but a means thereto if haply they find the place convenient," replied Carver pleasantly. "At any rate, we will send them, since it has been promised, and the same boat will serve to transport them with their gear that is already fitted to help us ashore with the pinnace."

"And our own men will do all that is required in lading and rowing the boat," added Bradford in his mild, persuasive voice. Jones, overborne by a calm authority against which he could not bluster, turned on his heel muttering some surly assent. Carver slightly smiled as he watched the square and clumsy form expressing in every line of its back the futile rage of an overborne coward, and, turning toward the companion way, he called,--

"Howland, John Howland, a word with thee!"

"Ay, sir," replied a blithe young voice; and presently a handsome head of pure Saxon type, as indeed were both Bradford's and Carver's, appeared above the hatchway, and a strong young fellow swinging himself upon deck approached the governor, saying apologetically,--

"I was helping to get out the pinnace, and there is a mort of dust and dirt about her."

"I'll give thee a pleasanter task, John," replied Carver, smiling affectionately upon his young retainer. "Thou and John Alden and Gilbert Winslow shall take charge of the women who fain would go ashore to wash their clothes. They will use the boat already lying alongside, and thou hadst better advise with Mistress Brewster for the rest. I leave it all with you twain."

"I will do my best, sir," replied Howland with a smile that showed his short, strong teeth and made his blue eyes twinkle pleasantly; then returning to the hatchway he called down,--

"Ho, Alden! You're wanted, man, and so is Gilbert Winslow."

"He's not here, then," responded a heavier voice, as a splendid young giant swung himself up on deck and ran his fingers through a shock of curling chestnut hair; a glorious youth, six feet and over in his hose of hodden gray, with the shoulders and sinews of an athlete, and the calm, strong face of an Egyptian god.

"What is it, John?" asked he, fixing his dark eyes upon Howland with the affectionate gladness one reads in the eyes of a dog called to his master's side, but of which few human natures are capable.

"Why, Jack, thou and I and Gilbert Winslow are appointed squires of dames to some of the women who would fain go ashore to wash clothes, and we are to pack them into yonder boat, row them ashore, and then purvey wood, water, and such like for them."

"I'd liefer haul out the pinnace," replied Alden with a grimace. "But your will is mine."

"Nay, the governor's will is thine and mine, and it is he set us this task. Where is Winslow?"

"In the cabin belike, chatting with Mary Chilton. It's the work he best loves," replied Alden grimly. "But I'll find him."

"And some of the boys, Jack," suggested Howland, as the younger man turned away. "Bart Allerton and Love Brewster, Giles Hopkins and Crakstone and Cooke, any of the lads that you fall foul of, except the Billingtons,--of them I'll have none."

"And why not the Billingtons, worshipful Master Howland, lackey of the governor, and page-boy to his wife," demanded the voice that had interrupted Mistress Hopkins, and turning toward it, Howland confronted a short, square woman, not without a certain vulgar comeliness of her own, although now her buxom complexion was florid with anger and her black eyes snapping angrily, while the arms akimbo, the swaying figure, and raised voice betrayed Helena Billington for precisely what she was, a common scold and shrew. Howland was a brave man; he had already showed both strength and prowess when, washed overboard in a "seel" of the ship, and carried fathoms deep in mid-ocean, he caught the topsail-halyards swept over with him and clung to them until he was rescued in spite of the raging wind and waves that repeatedly dragged him under; nor in the face of savage foe, or savage beast, or peril by land or sea, was John Howland ever known less than the foremost; but now in face of this angry woman he found naught to say, and blushing and stammering and half laughing fairly turned and ran away, springing up the stairs to the elevated deck cabins, in one of which Elder Brewster and his family had their lodging.

Mistress Brewster, a pale, sweet-faced woman, already at fifty-four dressing and behaving as the venerable mother in Israel, came forward to meet him, and smiling indulgently asked,--

"Now what hast thou done to goodwife Billington, thou naughty lad? I hear thy name in her complaint, and indeed all the company can hear it, if they will."

"I did but say I would none of her boys in my party, dear Mistress

Brewster, and I hope you'll say so too," replied Howland, uncovering his yellow head. "They are the greatest marplots and scapegraces"--

"Nay, nay, John! Say no evil, or thou 'lt make me think thou hast 'scaped grace thyself," suggested the elder's wife with her gentle smile. "And prithee, what is thy party? Are my boys bidden, or must they e'en bide with the Billingtons?"

"The party is your party, dear dame, for the governor sent me to ask your commands upon it, and if Love and Wrestling will give us such aid as their years allow, I shall be most grateful."

And then in simple phrase Howland repeated the governor's instructions, and requested those of the dame, who at once convened an informal council of matrons, and so well advised them that in a scant hour the clumsy boat, rolling and bumping against the side of the brig, was laden with bales of clothing, tubs whose hoops John Alden, a cooper by trade, was hurriedly overlooking, and sundry great brass and copper kettles, household necessities of that epoch, and descending as relics to us who look upon them with respectful wonder as memorial brasses of the "giants of those days."

A flock of women, all demurely and plainly dressed, although the most of them were under thirty years of age, stood waiting at the head of the ladder until the cargo was stored, and Howland, sending his assistants back on deck, planted himself upon the gunwale of the boat, and holding out his hand to a stout, solid-looking woman with a young girl beside her said,--

"Mistress Tilley, you had best come first, for you will be apt at helping the others, as I hand them down. And thou, too, Elizabeth, if thou wilt."

"And Constance Hopkins and Remember Allerton," pleaded the girl, lifting a sweet, saucy face to the young man; "we never are separated, for we're all of an age, all going on sixteen you know."

"Hush, Bess, thou 'rt malapert," chided her mother, descending heavily into the boat, while a mutinous young voice above called out,--

"Nay, I'm not going. Stepmother won't spare me."

"Now Constance Hopkins, thou naughty hussy, wilt thou grumble at tarrying with me to care for thine own dear sister and brother? Fie on thee, girl!"

"They're not my own," grumbled Constance in Remember Allerton's ear. "Giles is my own brother and he is to go, and Damaris and Oceanus are but half sister and brother, and she's but my stepmother."

"Hush, now, or she'll hear and thou 'lt come by a whipping," whispered Remember hastily, as Dame Hopkins turned from Mistress Winslow who had spoken to her, and came toward the girls. "I'll stay aboard with thee, Constance, and help thee with the babies."

"Thou 'rt a dear good wench and I love thee," replied Constance in the same tone, and, as the stepmother placed the muffled baby in her arms,

she took him without comment, and went below followed by Elizabeth Tilley.

Two trips of the capacious boat sufficed to carry women, clothes, utensils, and assistants across the three quarters of a mile of shallow water lying between the brig and the shore, and the boys who went in the first boat were at once set to work to gather dry stuff from the thickets of scrub oak and pine sparsely clothing the beach, and to build several fires along the margin of a large pool or perhaps pond of fresh water divided from the harbor by a narrow beach of firm white sand. Beach and pond have long since been devoured by the hungry sea, but stumps of good-sized trees are still dug from the dreary sands environing Provincetown, to show what once has been.

The second boat-load arrived, and by help of Alden's stalwart arm, Howland's cool decision and prompt action, and Winslow's quick eye and ready aid to any woman needing assistance, the apparatus was soon adjusted, and a dozen pairs of strong white arms were plunged in the suds, or throwing the clothes into the great caldrons bubbling over the fires which the boys gayly replenished.

Not all the women of the Mayflower were thus engaged, however, for several were delicate in health, and several others had servants who took this ungentle labor upon themselves; but those who did not labor with their hands felt no superiority, and those who did had no shame in so doing; and although the manners of the day inculcated a certain deference of manner and speech from the lower rank to the higher, and from youth to age, the very fact that every one of these persons had abandoned home and friends and comfort that they might secure liberty, induced a sense of self respect and respect for others, which is the very root and basis of a true republic. Thus Katharine Carver, wife of the governor, daughter of Bishop White, and sister of Robinson, the pastor of the community left behind in Leyden, although she sent her maid Lois, and her man-servant Roger Wilder, to do the required work, came ashore with the rest, and by a touch here and a word there, and her interest and sympathy, took her part in the labor of the whole, and delicate woman and well-born lady though she was, made each of those hard-working sisters feel that it was only her weakness, and not her station, that prevented her doing all that they did. "Eleven o' the clock," said John Alden, as the Mayflower's cracked bell told six hoarse strokes. "They said they'd bring our dinner ashore for us," and he looked wistfully toward the ship.

"Who said?" asked Howland; "for I've more faith in some say-sos than in some others."

"Well, if I remember, 't was Mistress Molines who told me," replied Alden carefully careless.

"Oh, ay," assented Howland, his blue eyes twinkling. "But I thought she was ill, poor woman."

"Nay, I meant Mistress Priscilla Molines," retorted the giant, blushing. "She said somewhat to me of an onion soup which she flavors marvelously well."

"Ah, yes, onion soup," retorted Howland gravely. "Methought it must be

some such moving theme you discussed yester even as you sat on the cable. I noted even at that distance the tears in your eyes."

"And if there were tears in mine eyes it is no matter of mocking, for Mistress Priscilla was telling me that her mother is sick as she fears unto death, and"--

"John Howland, the boat is coming off with the rest of our company and noon-meat for us all. Wilt thou and John Alden receive and help them ashore, while Gilbert helps us to make ready here?"

"Surely we will, Mistress Carver," replied Howland heartily, for his relationship toward the governor and his beautiful wife was rather that of a younger brother than of a retainer; and although the smallness of his fortune had induced him to accept the patronage of the older and wealthier man, it was much as a lad of noble lineage was content a few years before this to become first the page and then the squire of a belted knight.

The boat, unable to reach the shore on account of the flatness of the beach, stuck fast about a bow-shot from dry land, and the men and boys at once tumbled over the edge and prepared to carry not only the luggage, but the female passengers ashore. Alden seeing this prospect, tore off his boots and stockings, and plunging into the chill water hastened to the stern of the boat where a slender, vivacious girl, brown, dark-eyed, and with cheeks glowing with the dusky richness of a peach, stood balancing herself like a bird and giving orders to a young man already in the water.

"Now have a care, Robert Cartier, of that kettle. If thou spillst the soup"--

"The onion soup, Mistress Priscilla?" asked Alden approaching unperceived. Priscilla cast a look at him from the corners of her long eyes, and replied carelessly,--

"Yes, Master Alden, an onion soup. Is that a favorite dish with your worship?"

"Why, thou knowest,"--began the young man with an air of bewilderment, but Priscilla interrupted him.

"Since thou art here with thy broad shoulders, John Alden, thou wilt do well to make them of use. There is Mistress Allerton struggling with a hamper beyond her strength, and there are bales of clothes that must not be wet. Load thyself, good mule, and plod shoreward."

"To be sure I will and gladly, fair mistress," replied Alden patiently. "But first let me take thee ashore dry-shod, and then I will bring all the rest."

"Beshrew thee for a modest youth," retorted Priscilla, the peach color of her cheeks deepening to pomegranate; "when I go ashore I will convey myself, or my brother will carry me; and thou, since thou art so picksome, may set thyself to work, and ask naught of me."

"But why art thou so tart when I meant naught," began Alden,

bewildered; but again the girl cut him short with a stinging little laugh.

"Thou never meanest aught, poor John; but I have no time to waste with thee. Here, Robert, these come next, and take Mistress Allerton's hamper as well."

"Nay, that is for me," growled Alden, seizing the basket from the hands of the astonished servant who relinquished it with a stare and a muttered exclamation in French; for William Molines, called Mullins by the Pilgrims, his wife, son, daughter, and servant were all of the French Huguenots, who fleeing from their native land planted a colony upon the river Waal in Holland, and were at this time known as Walloons. Learning enough of Dutch to carry on the business of daily life, and of English to communicate with their co-religionists of the Pilgrim church in Leyden, they retained French as the dear home language of their birth, and the young people, like Priscilla and her brother Joseph, used the three languages with equal facility.

A little offended and a good deal puzzled by the change in Priscilla's manner since their last interview, Alden devoted himself to unloading the boat without again addressing her, until he saw her confide herself to the arms of her brother to be taken ashore; then seizing an armful of parcels, he strode along close behind the slender stripling whose thews and sinews were obviously unequal to his courage, and who floundered painfully over the uneven sands. At last he stumbled, recovered himself, plunged wildly forward, and fell flat upon his face, while his sister, suddenly seized and held aloft in two strong arms, did not so much as wet the hem of her garment, until with a few swift strides her rescuer set her on dry land and turned to help the boy who came floundering after them with a rueful and angry countenance.

"'T was all thy fault, Priscilla," began he. "Twisting and squirming to see who was coming after us."

"Nay, 't was the fault of some great monster who came trampling on our heels, and making the water wash round my feet. Some whale or griffin belike, though he has hid himself again," and the girl affected to shade her eyes and scan the sparkling waters, while Alden strode moodily away. Priscilla glanced after his retreating figure, and spoke again to her brother in a voice whose cooing softness poor John had never heard.

"Thou poor dripping lad! And such a cough as thou hast already! Come with me sweetheart, and I'll set thee between two fires, and put my duffle cloak about thee, and heat some soup scalding hot. I would I had a sup of strong waters for thee--ah yes, I see!"

And hurriedly leading her brother to a sheltered nook between two great fires, she cast her cloak over his shoulders, and then sprang up the sand-hill with the graceful strength of an antelope to the spot where Doctor Fuller stood talking with a man whose appearance demands a word of description. Short and square built, the figure bespoke strength and long training in athletic exercises, while the haughty set of the head, the well-shaped hands and feet, and the clear cut of the features told of gentle blood and the habit of predominance. The bare head was covered with thick chestnut hair, worn at the temples by pressure of a steel cap, and well matched in color by eyes whose strong, stern glances

carried defeat to the hearts of his savage foes even before his quick blows fell. The mouth, firmly closed beneath its drooping moustache, was like the eyes, stern and terrible in anger, but like them it was capable of a winning sweetness and charm only known to those he loved, those he pitied, and to the life-long friends whose loving description has come down to us; for this was Myles Standish, the soldier and hero of the Pilgrims; their dauntless defender in battle, their gentle nurse in illness, their councilor and envoy and shining example in peace; the right arm of the colony, its modest commander, and its intelligent servant.

As Priscilla approached, the two men ceased their conversation and turned toward her, neither of them unconscious of the beauty, grace, and vigor which clothed her as a garment, yet each restrained by inborn chivalry and respect from expressing his opinion.

"Oh, Doctor, or you, Captain Standish, have either of you a flask of strong waters about you? My poor Joseph has fallen in the water, and it is so cold, and he has already a cough."

"Yes, we saw him fall. He was overloaded for such a stripling," said the doctor, with his dry smile, while Standish, hastily pulling a flask from his pocket, said,--

"Here is some well-approved Hollands gin, Mistress Priscilla; and I would advise a good draught as soon as may be, and have it heated if it may be."

"Here, hand it me. I will go and give my friend Joseph a rating for undertaking tasks beyond his strength, though belike the fault was none of his!" And the doctor seizing the flask strode down the hill, while Priscilla lingered to ask,--

"How doth Mistress Standish find herself to-day? I heard she was but poorly."

"Ay, poorly enough," replied the Captain with a shadow chasing the smile from his eyes. "She is hardly strong enough for these shrewd winds and rough adventures. I had done better to leave her in England until we are established somewhere."

"There's more than one in our company, I fear me, that has adventured beyond their strength," replied Priscilla sadly, as she remembered her mother's hectic flush and wasting strength and her brother's cough.

"A forlorn hope, perhaps, set to garrison this by-corner of the world, but not forgotten by the Commander-in-chief, remember that, maid Priscilla," said the captain kindly and cheerily. "There in the Low Countries our worst trouble was that the home government never backed us as they should, and more than once we felt we were forgot and neglected; but in the warfare we have to wage here in the wilderness we can never fear that."

"Yet soldiers may die at their post here as well as there," said Priscilla, turning to go down the hill.

"So long as the work is done it matters little what becomes of the

soldier," replied Myles briefly, and the two rejoined the group around the fires.

Before nightfall the clothes, dried and sweet with the sunshine and pure air, were carefully folded into the tubs and kettles, the dinner was neatly cleared away, and the whole company in several trips of the boats conveyed on board, while the carpenters and their volunteer aids remained to work while daylight lasted upon the pinnace, the Pilgrims' own craft, intended for exploration along the shore, and for fishing when they should have made a settlement.

But Joseph Molines had not shaken off his chill by means of the captain's Hollands gin, nor did his mother or Rose Standish find themselves better in the evening than they had been in the morning, and as the darkness of the November night closed around the lonely bark, gaunt shadowy forms, Disease and Famine and Death, seemed shaping themselves among the clouds and brooding menacingly over the Forlorn Hope, as its soldiers slept or watched beneath.