

NEW-ENGLAND WARS.

KING PHILIP.

BY JOSEPH R. CHANDLER, ESQ.

[Continued.]

Having dismissed the ambassador, Philip ordered an immediate retreat towards the fastnesses of Mount Hope, at which, the next day, they arrived. During the day following, David and Mahala, with the younger captives, were left under the guard of a single Indian, who had been wounded in a former skirmish, and was unable to go out with the others. It occurred to David that he or Mahala might escape from him—and if either of them should meet some of Captain Church's men, the whole of Philip's party might be surprised and cut off. This Mahala would by no means consent to, as she should not be so well able as he, to make her way out of the swamp, in which they were, or elude the search of other Indians, who might go in quest of him. After some deliberation, it was concluded that David should make the attempt. Accordingly, in a few hours, watching an opportunity when the head of their guard should be turned, David started from his post and passing by the Indian, he slipped through the door of the slender fortress. The guard gave a loud yell to call to him, and in vain, but perceiving that David was likely to get beyond his reach, he placed an arrow in his bow, and drew for the string firmly with a hand, that for twenty years had not once felt it, he was preparing to let the arrow have its course, which would have put a period to the flight of David, when Mahala struck the bow string with a small sword, that lay near, and the arrow fell harmless at his feet, and springing beyond his reach, she awaited the coming of the other Indians, who on learning the flight of their prisoner, prepared for an immediate chase.

David had the start of them by five minutes. He flew with the swiftness of a bird, and his pursuers followed with a rapidity that boded no good to his hopes. Meantime, Philip and his warriors returning, learned their prisoner's flight, and knowing the danger to which they should be exposed, if he finally escaped, they resolved to break up for the camp, and disperse in different parties. This was accordingly done, Philip taking Mahala and the children with him. My readers need be under no apprehension of any outrage upon Mahala, as among all the charges brought against the New England tribes, I do not remember of hearing that of lust urged by the whites; that being, as an Indian whom I once questioned on the subject, told me, a white man's trick, not proper for an Indian.

David pursued his course, with some advantage over his pursuers, as they were encumbered with heavy arms, and in less than an hour, he found himself in an open plain, and consequently but little exposed to the chase of his pursuers. He, in a short time, arrived breathless and faint at Captain Church's camp. The reader will readily conceive, that in that age, and under the then existing circumstances, no great exhibition of military pomp was made by Captain Church, as a leader of the Plymouth hosts, consisting at most of from 1 to 300 men, many of whom were, except in mere military grade, his equals; yet there existed, at that time, in the New England colonies, and its influence has been felt even in subsequent years, a dignity of fire and calling, which exhibited itself in the department of all offices, civil, ecclesiastical or military, which, while it inspired approach, effectually guaranteed against encroachments; it cherished confidence, but chilled familiarity; in short, it was what is usually denominated old fashioned manners, the loss of which as a general habit is so justly deplored, and which can now scarcely be found, except in a few of the old clergy or some ancient judge, in New England; yet if I were in Plymouth now, I could point out a living instance, even though perhaps the venerable Spooner is no more, of a judge with the feelings of a man; who while the widow and the fatherless look to him as protector and friend, can teach them also to respect him as the just and upright magistrate. Those who know the venerable Thomas, will understand the manners to which I refer, those who do not, will understand that in the Old Colony, the people have even been simple enough to believe that they were not deficient in respect to themselves, by paying all becoming deference to a man who had been thought worthy to be placed over them.

Under the influence of a profound respect for a man who was sacrificing his valuable time, and risking his life for his brethren, David made his approach toward Captain Church, not wholly unconscious of the importance which his knowledge of the Indians' retreat naturally gave him.

As he passed the various sentinels, or small groups of men on duty, a friendly nod of recognition, or a short inquiry distinguished his immediate acquaintance, and a look of doubt or solicitude, satisfied him that his recent captivity was wholly unknown in the little camp.

His guide exchanged words with the last sentinel, and left David to make his

bow to the captain. The door of a deserted cottage opened, and exhibited Church in the act of reading his book of orders, it was a massy volume, strongly bound, and exhibited evident symptoms that its owner, like a true soldier, had well examined his instructions. Church closed the Bible on his entrance, and rose to receive with cordiality his visitor, with whose family he had an intimate acquaintance.

"The full form of the Puritan leader lost none of its beauty from being covered with what, in these days would be considered a Quaker garb, if we except the semblance of the epaulette upon his shoulder, and a well secured sword at his thigh. A hat lay upon the table, which in those days was an *militaire*, but which, in these extremely refined times, would be considered a very little better than a 'cook and pinch.' The dignity of Church was in his looks, his form, and manners, and a stranger who had seen him mingling with his men in the common dress and common labours of a camp, would have instantly recognised him as the chief.

"David, the first salutation passed, related in a few words, the destruction of the garrison, the murder of a part of its inhabitants, and the captivity of the remainder; he also stated what little he knew of Joscelyne's unsuccessful mission, and then recounted his own escape, without neglecting to press upon his auditors' mind, the imminent danger in which he had left Mahala. "Has Philip then returned," said Church, in a tone that did not seem to require any answer, "my friend, the news is painful; but the Lord has undoubtedly suffered the heathen to afflict us for our own transgressions." "I however, think I discover that his providence is about working our deliverance, and then we shall soon, by its gracious aid, drive out these godless heathens from the land; meantime, it is necessary that you refresh yourself. "Sergeant Washburn," said the Captain as he hastily opened the door—Washburn was at once in his presence. "Let the men be called instantly on parade, and despatch a man with my respects to the officers and chaplain, and request their immediate attendance."

The council was soon formed, and a prayer was made by that pious and goodly personage Adoniram Washburn. My limits prevent the insertion of this piece of allegorical eloquence, but it was such as the strong mind of a highly educated Puritan would pour forth, when he felt the enemies of the Lord had prospered, and that the faithful failed from among children of war."

"The council, or rather board war, concluded that it would be best to divide the company into small parties, and to send them into the neighboring swamp, in which David had left Philip, with orders to kill every Indian that they should meet; this order was communicated to the men without, who were immediately told off in sections of ten, and despatched in search of the common enemy. David solicited to be permitted to share in the expedition. This, however, Captain Church refused, alleging as a reason that his fatigue would not permit him to keep up with the party, and that he might thus hinder rather than promote the object of their expedition.

"The men were accordingly dismissed, leaving only a small guard for the house. During the night, David obtained permission of Captain Church, to take with him a friendly Indian, and go a little way into the forest, promising to be back by the following noon. Having furnished themselves with a small quantity of provisions, with powder and ball, and two muskets, David and his Indian companion, Ninigret, set out in search of the common enemy. About four o'clock in the morning, our two champions reached the edge of the swamp, from which David had made his escape, and bent their course, as nearly as they could judge, to the wigwam, in which Mahala had been left. Having arrived at a considerable plain, in the body of the wood, or swamp, upon which the moon spread her mantle of light, discovering only a few elevated rocks, and the thick undergrowth of sweet fern, whose leaves glistened as they trembled in the moonlight, from the weight of the morning dew, and scattered a delicious and invigorating fragrance. David observed that they could not be far from Philip's den.

"Hush ye, man," said Ninigret, "Philip is not the Indian to rest in his wigwam when a prisoner has escaped; every rock around you may conceal a Paukanoket; and—whist, what do I see beyond that horizon?"—David cocked his gun. "Nay, it's but a deer, and the first I have seen for these two seasons; 'tis strange how scarce the game is since you English came, and yet you cannot kill it—I sometimes think Philip is right, and that the white men have no right to our forests."

David looked with suspicion at his comrade. "But you do not, Ninigret, consider the advantage which you all may possess by submitting to us, and sharing the benefit which civil life offers, and above all, the inestimable blessings of the Christian religion."

"I do not believe," said Ninigret, "that your white man's life is good for Indians; nor would I have adopted it, had

not the too free use of rum, made a quarrel between my tribe and me. As for your religion, Father Elliot said, it brought peace on earth and good will to men; those were the very words he taught me—and yet, has the white man's sword been sheathed since his arrival? and when I read about the moving of landmarks, which we Indians never dared do, Father Elliot said, that it meant that we must not new notch the pines, nor change the brook, so that more corn may grow in our field than in our neighbor's. But where are the fields of corn in Plymouth which the Indians planted?—where their fishing grounds and oyster beds?—but hush, is there not a light streaming thro' the chinks of those rocks?—David watched attentively, and confessed at last, that he believed there was fire there. In a low whisper, Ninigret communicated to David, his belief that some of the chief Sachems were lodged there, perhaps Philip himself; and expressed a wish, that one or both might approach near enough to ascertain the character of those who had fled to the rocks."

"On approaching the place, they soon ascertained, by the chinking noise within, that the Indians were there, and that some of them were engaged in grinding or pounding parched corn between stones. Under favour of this noise, David and Ninigret approached the very side of the rock, which covered a very large cave with an entrance upon the opposite side; as the pounding ceased, they stopped, and renewed their advance with the industry of the domestic millers within. By this means they were soon enabled to hear the conversation which was held between them.

"What of the day?" said a strong voice.

Ninigret applied his mouth close to the ear of David, and whispered, "his he, Philip."

"What of the day?" asked Philip again, what says our Pawwaw?"

"I have sought the inspiration," said the Priest, "a Pawwaw, in sleep but it has not come—I have stretched myself upon the fern in the moonlight but I was alone—I have asked of the Great Spirit, but no answer has come—I have burnt the torches by the spring this night, but no face was in it—I saw, indeed, on the mist a form like Maswout, but his face was blanched like the white man's—I asked him for the words of the war song, and the breeze from the English fields scattered him in air."

"Sachem of the Paukanokets, thy hand has been mighty in war, and thy hatchet red with thy enemies' blood—then hast been mighty, but the mightier have come—we were the eagle that sheltered among the pines and nestled upon the crags of the sea; but the white heron hath stolen his prey, and the king of birds must find his game beyond the mountains."

"Thou wast once, Philip, glorious as the moon now sinks beneath the hills of the west, and a broader and a stronger light is springing from the waters."

As the priest was speaking, David could see his shadow projected beyond the mouth of the cave, trembling upon the bushes and fern, as the speaker was in violent agitation.

"I know well," said Philip, "that it is dark—the smoke of my wigwams shall be seen no more. But why should I complain—lonely and solitary, I have no wife to serve me at my council fires—I have no son to lead forth my warriors, and avenge my death—my own hand that once was strong upon the foe, is like yonder English gun's."

David started—surely Mahala was there.

"Let our fires be extinguished, lest the English trace us; and prepare to start, for there is no safety here. Church and his men will be upon us, as soon as the English fugitive shall report our return."

David and his companion slipped from the rock, and retired behind a thick clump of bushes, about fifty yards distant from the cave, and awaited the appearance of Philip, determined at all hazards to kill him and take their chance with the rest.

As the sun approached the horizon a thick mist or fog rose from the humid soil, and covered the plain to the thickness of nearly six feet. The spies could only see the top of the rock from which they had descended. "Is your gun well primed?" said David—"yes," replied Ninigret, and I took the precaution to try it certainly before I started—but hist!" The Indian pointed towards the top of the rock, above which was just discernable the head of an enemy. If it should prove to be Philip, each was solicitous of the honor of destroying the great and cunning foe. At length the person raised himself and appeared to be looking round to see whether he was watched; they could distinctly hear him say to some one below, "The dew is disturbed—the English are about us." David and Ninigret agreed that when he again showed himself, they should both fire at once, at a signal to be given by the latter—the figure again appeared, and as he turned towards them, exhibited the strongly marked features of Philip—both took a deliberate aim. "Fire at the word three," said Ninigret. The Sachem raised

his whole body above the rock—mark now," said the Indian—"one—two—three"—both drew with certain aim, and the King of Mount Hope reeled a lifeless corpse at the feet of his followers.

Both started towards the cave to save the white prisoners from the anger of the surviving Indians, charging their guns as they went. David primed his piece, and on pouring the powder into the muzzle of the gun, found to his inexpressible mortification that he had only burnt his priming, the ball and powder being yet in the gun.

"The screams of those who were in the cave, compelled the two to hasten their movements, so that Ninigret was not able to charge with ball. David, fearing every thing for Mahala, flew with the speed of lightning, and arrived in front of the cave just as an old Indian, the priest, had seized a hatchet, and was aiming a blow at the head of Mahala. There was no time to rush between them, David levelled his gun and sent a ball through the heart of the pawwaw, and blessed God, as the cave echoed with the report of his piece, that he had not shared in the honor of Philip's death.

Ninigret was immediately at his side, and when the smoke had subsided, they discovered the body of Philip on the spot where it had fallen. The old priest lay upon Mahala, and a few children belonging to the Tiocum settlement, were sitting in mute horror in a corner of the cave. David dragged the priest to one side, and carried Mahala into the air, where she soon revived.

"They learned that, immediately on the death of Philip, two Indians had escaped in the mist; the priest being old and unable to run, had attempted to revenge the death of his chief by killing Mahala, in which he was prevented by the timely arrival of David.

"In order to satisfy their friends, our two successful warriors determined to carry the body of Philip to the camp, a task of no inconsiderable difficulty, considering the weight of the man and the difficulty of the way.

"Having cut down two stout poles with the Indian's hatchet, and lashed the body of the chief to them, by the aid of his belts, they rested the ends of the poles upon their shoulders, and took up the line of march, the children with Ninigret carrying his gun, and Mahala at the elbow of David with his musket upon her shoulder.

"I am thinking," said the Indian, after they had got beyond the woods, "that I never heard a better fire than we made—why there really seemed but one report."

David reached his head a little one side to see whether his fellow porter was in earnest in the compliment, or whether he had not some suspicions that only one gun had been discharged. "Why you know, Ninny, (as he was near the camp he did not think it necessary to call him brother Ninigret,) why you know we fired by word, like captain Church's men?"

"Yes," said the Indian, in his drawling tones, "and then who would have thought that you could have charged so soon again David,—why you were at the cave long before me, and I had scarcely time to get my powder and wad down. I'll be hanged, if I don't think my old musket will have to bear the blame of Philip's death, and I don't believe she will shoot well afterwards."

"If you really think so, Ninigret," said David, "you can even take mine, and I will settle the bargain by giving you both powder-horns."

Ninigret consented, and though more than hundred years had passed, I remembered that I once had just cause to regret the exchange; for the old musket, being preserved in our family, one thanks giving day, attracted my observation, and seemed to offer itself as a suitable means of exploding a few ounces of powder which I had by some favour obtained. As I was puffing a coal of fire, and applying it to the priming, the whole charge found a ready evacuation *par derriere*, and sadly sugared the holiday clothes of myself and little companions.

Having exchanged guns, the procession moved slowly towards the camp, at which they arrived about 11 o'clock A. M.

"On inquiring for captain Church, David was informed that he was in council with the officers of a new company which had just arrived from Plymouth."

"What news from Philip?" said captain Church, with a smile at the early return of David.

"May the enemies of Plymouth be like him," said the youth bowing—all started as if to inquire further. "The body of King Philip lays at the door."

"As they moved in a body towards the place, David caught the sounds of a voice which seemed exerting itself to articulate some inquiry—he turned, 'twas the aged Joscelyne—David rushed into his arms.

"And—and—Mahala—surely, when my country is safe, I may inquire—am I childless?"

"She is alive, and with us."

"The old man, overpowered by the excess of his feelings, sunk back upon the seat.

"The officers soon returned, accompa-

nied by Ninigret, satisfied their work was finished. As they were announcing the rich reward, David's eye caught the form of Mahala, entering—he trembled for the consequence of the interview—the sprung into the arms of her father, who, as he folded her to his heaving bosom, raised his streaming eyes to heaven and faintly uttered, "Now, Lord, lettest thou me depart in peace."

"The feelings of Joscelyne having a little subsided, Ninigret related to the officers the history of their morning's expedition, in which he took care to place the action of David, in rescuing Mahala, in its fullest light. The eyes of Joscelyne gleamed with the fire of youth—which was quenched, however, with the tearful parental pride, when he learned from one of the children present, that Mahala had saved the life of David when he was escaping from the Indian encampment.

"The reward offered by the Governor and Council of Plymouth," said Church, "will be sufficient to place both champions in a fair way of decent competence."

"For the matter of that," said Ninigret, "the old Indian can live without much wampum, nor will his age be greatly sweetened by remembering that it is supported by the price of a brother red man's head. I'll even make my baskets and brooms,—let the white women buy them. I throw little Davy, there, will have more need of money than I; it may help him to a wife; but for me, I cannot marry. What squaw will have a red man that has killed his Sachem; and no English woman can wed an Indian. Only, if I have done you service, do not, when poor Ninney is drunk with your rum, do not lock him up in your wooden jail—or thrust his feet into your hateful stocks—for that which you yourselves taught him to do."

"Captain Church having heard the Indian, rose and declared the money offered as a reward for Philip's head, should be divided equally between David and Ninigret, who had both an equal share in his death.

"David felt a gush of joy as he learned that the liberality of the Colony would now give him a right claim the hand of Mahala, with a knowledge that he should not make her condition worse by joining her fate with his. But his happiness was soon chilled by the recollection that he really did not have a share in King Philip's death."

"He therefore stated to the officers the circumstance, exactly as it stood, and added, that although he felt himself deprived of the share of reward, he was more than repaid in the knowledge that his charge of powder and ball was providentially reserved to preserve the life of Mahala. All were struck with the candour of David, and turned towards the Indian—Why, I thought," said he, "that two bullets would make more than one wound, though I would say nothing to the prejudice of David."

"A movement of Joscelyne attracted the attention of the company.—A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," said the venerable father, as he placed the hand of the blushing Mahala in that of the trembling David—and lovelier far than silver or gold. Take her, my son, she is thine—and may God make her all to thee, that the sainted Rachel was to her father, saving her early death." David looked with a filial reverence, which spoke all of gratitude that his tongue could not utter.

"The eyes of Ninigret glistened with joy as he rose to say, that if David would share the reward, he would live with him as a friend. Things were easily settled to the satisfaction of all parties.—David and Mahala, after receiving the thanks of the council of Plymouth, were duly published and married.

"In a short time, the fear of the Indians having subsided, David built a small house in Kingston, nearly a mile north of the old garrison, which, I believe, is yet to be seen as thou goest down by the way of Jones' River."

"Here Ninigret spent his days and some of his nights; a greater part of the latter, however, were occupied in catching eels in the neighboring stream, or chasing animals over the hills—not did any one presume to meddle with poor Indian, though he should have been twice a week as drunk as a Lord.

"If any one should ask what became of Philip, I can only say, that it is probable that he was buried near Church's camp; but, before that rite took place, a swaggering fellow borrowed the corporal's sword, and cut off the dead Sachem's head.—And this courageous hero's descendants have lately deposited this sword (which it would seem he never returned) in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society, as a memorial of their ancestor, who so heroically decapitated a dead Indian.

"Joscelyne lived among his brethren, revered and beloved, 'till he was gathered unto his fathers like a shock of corn fully ripe."

"Mahala lived to be the mother of many children.—David was respected by all around him—his descendants have not been remarkable for any very particular virtues, if we except short memories and long stories."