

STORIES OF THE PILGRIMS





STORIES OF THE PILGRIMS

BY

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with illustrations by Lucy Fitch Perkins



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PART I



FROM OLD HOMES TO NEW





This was a busy day at Scrooby Inn

AT SCROOBY INN

IN the little village of Scrooby in England, three hundred years ago, stood a beautiful old house.

It was the largest one in the village, and its moss-covered roof and great red chimneys rose high above the cottages about it.

The house stood close to the street, but behind it was a large garden where many bright flowers bloomed, and a row of tall trees cast their pleasant shade. On one side of the garden were three round ponds. For a hundred years these ponds had never failed to supply fish for the Friday dinner.

A great rosebush clung to the walls of the house. For years it had climbed and climbed, until now some of its clustering red blossoms peeped into one of the upper windows. The whole room was sweet with their fragrance. This old house had once been a fine palace, but now it was used as an inn where travelers might stay for the night.

In the stables beyond the garden were some horses belonging to the king. When his messengers carried his letters to the North Country, they always stopped here to change horses and rest for an hour.

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Only a few miles from Scrooby was a famous old forest. Every child in the village knew the story of Robin Hood and his merry men who had once lived in this forest. They often played "Robin Hood;" it was the game they liked best of all.

Once a party of the king's friends, who were going to the forest to hunt, had stayed all night at the inn. This was a time always remembered by the children of the family. They seemed never to tire of talking about the packs of hounds, the beautiful horses, and the riders in their gay hunting dress.

Then there was the dinner in the great dining hall, and best of all, the long evening when they all had sat about the fireplace, and listened to the stories the hunters told.

The landlord, William Brewster, had not been pleased to have his children hear so much of the gay life at the king's court, and they had been sent to bed much earlier than they wished. The next morning when they awoke, the gay hunting party had gone. Had they really been there at all? Was it not all a bright dream?

One June morning Jonathan Brewster brought into the garden the new boat he had just finished. He was going to sail it upon the fish pond. His little sisters stood near watching the tiny boat make its first trip across the pond. Fear held in her arms a small wooden doll, very ugly, but very dear to the little mother. Jonathan wanted the doll for a passenger, but Fear would not trust her baby to the boat until she was sure it would not tip over.

AT SCROOBY INN

The little ship had hardly touched the other side when a distant sound made the children spring to their feet and listen. Again they heard the long, clear sound of the bugle.



“Fear would not trust her baby to the boat”

“It is the king’s messenger! Run and tell Henry to get out a fresh horse!” cried Patience. But Jonathan was already far down the path, calling to the stable boy as he ran.

Patience drew the forgotten ship out of the water and ran into the house to tell her father.

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There was a high, stone wall about the house and garden, and, just outside the wall, a ditch filled with water. The bridge over the ditch might be drawn up so none could cross, but this was not often done.

When Master Brewster came out to unlock the great iron gate, Patience and little Fear were close at his side. They always felt afraid of the tall messenger who looked so stern and said so little, but they loved to hear the clatter of swift hoofs, and to see horse and rider dash through the gate into the yard.

They had not long to wait. Again the sound of the bugle was heard, very near this time. Another minute, and into the village street galloped the beautiful black horse bearing the king's messenger.

The stable boy ran to meet him at the gate and held the horse's head while the man sprang to the ground.

"I have a message for you, Master Brewster," he said. "Queen Anne, with her knights and ladies, journeys from her home in the North. They will rest for the night in your house."

Patience waited to hear no more, but flew into the house to tell her mother this wonderful news.

"Mother! Oh, mother!" she called. "Where is mother?"

From room to room she ran until she found her quiet, sweet-faced mother at her spinning wheel.

AT SCROOBY INN

“Oh, mother, the queen is coming here to stay all night! She has ever so many knights, and ladies, and servants with her. May I help get the best bedroom ready for the queen? The messenger has come, and he is telling father all about it.”

“What are you talking about? You are excited, Patience.”

“The child is right,” said her father, who had just come into the room. The queen is on her way to her new home in England you know, and the party will spend the night here.”

“There is little time to prepare for royal guests, but we will make them welcome,” said Mistress Brewster, quietly.

A ROYAL GUEST

THIS was a busy day at Scrooby Inn. Before the sun had set, the great house with its fifty rooms had been made ready to receive the party. The long table in the dining hall was spread with the finest linen. In the kitchen the three big brick ovens were filled with browning bread, cakes, and other dainties. Fowls were being roasted, before the open fire.

Many times that afternoon the children ran to an upper window to look for the royal guests. The sun sank lower and lower, but still they did not come.

“Perhaps they have lost their way,” said Fear.

“They will have a guide, so they cannot lose their way,” replied Jonathan, “but perhaps they have been met by robbers.”

In those days travelers were often overtaken by bands of rough men who robbed them of money and horses. So Jonathan’s words filled their hearts with dismay. There were three very sober little faces in the window.

But before the sun was quite gone, the thrilling note of a bugle was heard and those faces

A ROYAL GUEST

brightened in a moment. Out of a little grove far down the road, appeared a company of horsemen. Nearer and nearer they came until the first rider, proudly bearing the red and gold banner of his queen, was in plain view.

Upon the shining spears and plumed helmets of the knights who rode behind him, fell the last rays of the setting sun, making them glisten like gold.

Within the square formed by the horsemen was a splendid coach, heavily carved and richly gilded. Upon the driver's seat rode two coachmen, dressed in gay liveries of red and gray. Two footmen sat upon the high seat behind. The coach was drawn by six fine black horses, which arched their beautiful necks and daintily lifted their slender feet as they sped toward the village.

The party was soon so near that the sound of the horses' feet could be heard, and, sometimes, the clear ring of their silver bridles.

The news of the royal visit had spread through the town, and at every gate was a group of villagers eager to greet the queen and her party. As they rode through the street the air rang with cries of, "Long live the queen!"

The great gates of Scrooby Inn were thrown open, and a maid was sent to bring the children into the garden, where William Brewster and his entire household had gathered to receive the queen.

There was a moment of breathless waiting, then over the bridge and into the yard swept the

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dazzling company of knights, and the splendid coach.

The footmen sprang to the ground and opened the doors. Again rang the cry, "Long live the queen!"

Jonathan waved and shouted with the rest, but little Patience was silent. As she glanced from one to another of the four ladies who stepped from the coach, a look of disappointment clouded her face. She was looking for a lady with many strings of jewels about her bare throat, and a sparkling crown upon her head.

Patience had seen pictures of many queens; all had worn crowns and jewels. Surely there was no queen in this party. "Jonathan, where is the queen? I do not see her," she whispered, tears of disappointment filling her eyes.

"Hush!" answered Jonathan, softly. "That is she in the blue velvet gown and the hat with the long white plumes. You did not think she would wear a crown when traveling, did you?"

Perhaps the lady may have heard something for she looked down at the children and smiled. As Patience looked into the kind, beautiful face, her disappointment melted away and she forgave the queen for not wearing her jewels.

Jonathan and Patience and Fear saw very little of the queen and her company that night, for Mistress Brewster believed that children should be neither seen nor heard when there were strangers

A ROYAL GUEST



“She looked down at the children and smiled”

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at the inn.

It seemed very hard to go to bed at the usual time when there were knights and a real queen in the house. They were sure they could not go to sleep; but when Mistress Brewster went to their beds half an hour later, all three were in a dreamland of kings and queens, knights and ladies, castles and deep forests.

Patience wakened very early the next morning. She dressed quickly and went down to the garden to gather fresh flowers for the breakfast table. Yet, early as she was, some one was there before her. A lady was bending over a bush of beautiful roses; when she turned, Patience saw it was the queen.

The child bowed in the quaint, pretty way her mother had taught her. She was wondering whether she ought to go back into the house, when the lady smiled and said:

“I am admiring your roses. How fresh and pretty they are with the dew still on them!”

“This bush is my very own,” said Patience, as she gathered some blossoms for the lady. “I call these the Bradford roses because William Bradford gave the bush to me.”

“And who is William Bradford?”

“Oh, he is a young friend of father’s. He does not live in Scrooby, but he comes here to church every Sunday, and so do Master Chilton and his family and ever so many others. We have a large chapel in our house right over the dining room.

A ROYAL GUEST

Nearly every one in Scrooby comes here to church, and some people come as far as twenty miles.”



“She gathered some blossoms for the lady”

“I noticed a beautiful church as we rode through the village yesterday,” the lady said. “I should think you would all go there.”

“That is King James’s church,” answered Patience. “If we go there we have to worship just as he wishes us to. Father thinks the king’s way is not right. Almost every one about here says the king’s way is not right, so we do not go to his church.”

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“King James would not like to hear that,” said the queen, gently, “and it would not be safe for you to talk to every stranger so freely.”

Poor little Patience! What had she said! Suddenly she remembered that she had been telling a very great secret. Her face turned as red as the roses and her eyes filled with tears.

“Never mind, little one,” said the queen, kindly. “Your secret is safe with me. Let us forget all about it.”

Then she talked to the child about the flowers, and Patience took her to see the lilies which grew in one of the ponds in the garden.

An hour later three children stood at the gate of Scrooby Inn, watching a gilded coach and a company of horsemen disappear down the road.

Soon the coach was gone and the last glistening spear was lost to sight. Although she never saw her again, Patience always remembered the beautiful queen who shared their secret.

MEETING IN SECRET

FOR a time all went well, but after a few months King James was told that the people of Scrooby were not going to Scrooby church. Everybody knew they were men and women who worshiped God, so they must have meetings somewhere.

One Sabbath morning two strangers came to Scrooby. As they walked through the street they noticed a number of people going into William Brewster's house.

"I believe they are going there to worship," said one of the men.

"I think so, too, but we will wait until we are sure," answered the other.

Far down the road they saw a carriage coming, so they stepped behind a wall. The carriage came slowly on and turned in at Brewster's gate. In it were John Robinson and his family. The men knew this man was a pastor from the way he was dressed, and so knew that they had found the place where the people were at worship.

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A little later they went into the house and up the stairs. There in the chapel they found John Robinson preaching to his people.

The strangers handed him a message from the king and left the room.

After Master Robinson had finished speaking, he read the message. Even the little children felt that this letter meant trouble for those who had come there to worship God.

“My friends,” said their pastor, “King James has ordered us to go to his church and worship according to the laws of England, or not worship at all. He says if we do not obey him we shall be punished.”

What could the good men and women do? They did not believe as the king did, and thought it was not right for them to go to his church. They would not do what they believed to be wrong.

For several minutes all were silent. Then William Bradford spoke.

“This house will be watched every Sabbath,” he said. “This large, pleasant room has been our church home for a long time, but it will not be safe to meet here any more.”

After talking for a while about the best thing to be done, the pastor prayed that God would help and protect them, and all went sadly home.

After some time King James heard that the people were not yet going to the village church, and again he sent his men to Scrooby.

MEETING IN SECRET

“Watch William Brewster’s house and take every man who goes there on Sunday,” he said.

The next Sunday two soldiers watched that house. They watched the front door and the back door, but not a person did they see. Had the people obeyed the king and gone to the old church? No, indeed! The soldiers were watching the wrong house. If they had been at the other end of the village they might have seen where the people went to worship that morning.

The next Sunday the worshipers met at Doctor Fuller’s and the week after that at Master Allerton’s. Each Sabbath they met in a different house, and each Sabbath the soldiers tried to find them. At last they met only at night, when it was harder for the soldiers to see where they went.

William Brewster was an elder in John Robinson’s church. The pastor did not live in Scrooby, and sometimes he was not able to go to meeting. Then Elder Brewster led the service.

One very dark winter night they again met at Elder Brewster’s house. The last persons to come were Master Chilton and his little daughter. Mary’s face was pale, and her hands trembled as she tried to untie her hood.

“What is the matter, Mary?” asked Mistress Brewster, helping her to take off her wraps. “Are you so cold?”

“I have had such a fright!” said the child. “There are two soldiers at your gate, Mistress

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Brewster. Father and I did not see them until we were almost at the bridge. We did not look toward the house but walked right by, as though we were not coming here. When we were sure they were not following us, we went around and came in by the stable gate.”



“ ‘What is the matter, Mary?’ asked
Mistress Brewster”

Elder Brewster looked out of the window. Yes, there were two men walking up and down in front of the house.

“Brewster’s house is dark and still. There is no one there,” said one. “They are obeying the king very well.”

MEETING IN SECRET

“No doubt they are all asleep, as we ought to be. I am stiff with cold,” answered the other, as they walked away. They would have been much surprised if they had seen the little group on their knees in the dark chapel upstairs.

When the meeting was over they did not all go home at once. The soldiers would notice so many people together and know they had been to some place to worship.

Still King James did not believe the people were obeying him. He thought if these soldiers could not find where the meetings were held, he would send some who could.

FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE

UP in the loft of a large barn, John Robinson was teaching his people. He held his Bible in his hand, but he could not see to read it, for only the pale moon lighted the loft. They knew many chapters of the Bible, however, and repeated one softly.

Suddenly they heard voices outside. "I saw two men go into this barn," said one soldier.

"And I saw a woman and two children," said another. "I believe they are meeting for worship. Let us find out. Come, men."

Up in the loft the people heard and trembled. The men tried to hide the women and children in safe places, then turned to face the soldiers.

Up the old stairs they came. "We have found you at last," they cried. "Come with us."

So the men were taken away to prison and their families returned to their lonely homes. After a few weeks the prisoners were set free; but still they would not attend the king's church.

Many times they were put in prison, and some of their homes were burned. They were very, very unhappy.

FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE

One day the men of the little church met to talk about their troubles and plan some way to help matters.

“It will never be safe to worship God in our own way here. Even now three of our friends are in prison, and the rest of us may be there by night,” said one.

“I fear we must leave England,” said their pastor, “yet I do not know where we could go to be free. We should be in just as great danger in many other countries.”

“You know I spent several years in Holland, when I was a young man,” said Elder Brewster. “There every one is free to worship as he likes, and so many people come from France, England, and Spain. The Dutch are glad to have honest people from any land make homes in their country.”

Then he told them about the fine free schools in Holland, where they could send their children; and about the fishing fleets, the beautiful cities, and the great silk and woolen mills where they could all find work.

Holland was not very far from England, so it would not cost as much to go there as to some other places. After thinking about it for some time, it was decided that all who could would go to Holland in the autumn.

All summer they quietly planned how to leave England. They dared not speak of it openly for fear the king's men might hear and put them in prison

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again, for King James was not willing they should find homes in another country.

When autumn came, the crops had been gathered and sold. The men had sold their horses and cattle, their homes and nearly all of their furniture. Their clothing and a few other things were packed in boxes, and at last they were ready to start on their journey.

It made them very sad to leave England. They loved their country. They loved their green fields and pleasant village and the homes where they had once been so happy.

“We are Pilgrims now,” they said, “and we will wander on until we find a home where we can be free and happy.”

PILGRIMS

THE next night the stars looked down upon a strange sight. On the shore of the sea near a large city, a group of Pilgrims waited for the ship which was to carry them to Holland.

It grew very late. One by one the lights of the city went out, and all was dark and still. Even the little waves seemed to speak in whispers as they crept up to the shore.

On a wooden box sat a mother with her baby asleep in her arms. Two tired little children, with the warm sand for a bed and a blanket for a pillow, slept beside her. Some of the older children were too excited to sleep. They amused themselves by throwing pebbles into the water or playing in the sand.

Others of the company sat on boxes or on the sand, talking in low tones. They did not speak about the homes and friends they were leaving; that would make them too sad. They talked of the better times they would have in the new home.

One by one the children fell asleep, some on the warm sand, others pillowed in their mothers' arms.

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As the night wore on the men paced anxiously up and down the shore. They peered out over the black water hoping to see the dark form of the vessel which was to take them to Holland.



*“On a wooden box sat a mother with her baby
asleep in her arms”*

At any time the soldiers might be upon them. Every minute they waited on the shore added to their peril.

Watchmen were placed at points along the shore to warn the Pilgrims of any approaching danger.

A terrible dread was sinking into their hearts. What if the ship should not come at all? What if the soldiers should suddenly swoop down upon them? But these thoughts they would not speak aloud.

PILGRIMS

They tried to cheer each other with encouraging words.

From a distant clock tower the bells chimed three. The Pilgrims drew closer together and spoke in hushed voices.

“Are you quite sure this is the place where the captain of the ship promised to meet us?” asked William Bradford.

“This is the very spot, just where this little brook flows into the sea,” answered Elder Brewster.

“It will soon be dawn,” said John Robinson. “I fear daylight will find us still waiting here for the ship.”

“That must not be,” replied Elder Brewster, “for the soldiers would soon be upon us. If the ship does not come within an hour we must seek the homes of our friends. Hark! What is that? I thought I heard the splash of oars.”

In silence they listened, straining their ears to catch the sound. Again they heard it, and their hearts leaped with hope and thankfulness.

A moment later a boat rowed by two men was seen approaching the shore. Quickly and quietly the boat was loaded and rowed back to the ship, which lay out in the deep water. Then it returned for another load, and another, until all the people and their goods had been carried to the ship.

“Now, Captain, let us set sail at once, and by daylight we shall be safe out of the king’s reach,” said Elder Brewster.

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“Oh, do not be too sure of that,” said a stern voice by his side. In a moment the Pilgrims found themselves surrounded by soldiers.

“What does this mean, Captain?” cried Elder Brewster. But the captain was nowhere to be seen. He was ashamed of his wicked deed, and dared not face the men whom he had betrayed into the hands of the soldiers.

It was of no use to resist the king’s men, so when the first gray light of morning came, the Pilgrims again stood on the shore.

Last night the stars had twinkled merrily when they saw the Pilgrims about to escape King James. Now they saw them with their burdens on their backs, and their children in their arms, going toward the great, black prison. The little stars still twinkled faintly but seemed to say, “Be brave! The One who made us and made you is stronger than King James.” Then one by one they closed their eyes, as if unwilling to see the prison doors close upon women and babies.

In a few days the doors of the prison opened again, and the women with their children passed out. I think they were not so very glad to be free, for their husbands were still in prison and they had no homes to which they might go. Some had friends there in the city who gladly welcomed them. Others returned to Scrooby, where they lived with friends and neighbors. It was several months before all the men were allowed to return to their families.

PILGRIMS

Because he had hired the ship and made most of the plans for leaving England, Elder Brewster was the last to leave the prison. He soon found Mistress Brewster and the children in the old house which had always been their home. Another man kept the inn now, but he and his wife were kind-hearted people and had gladly opened their house to these homeless ones.

“Jonathan seems two years older than he did last fall,” said his father that night, after the children had gone to bed.

“Yes, Jonathan is quite a man for his thirteen years. He helps care for the horses and does many errands for the innkeeper. The girls, too, help about the house, that they may not be a burden to these kind people.”

“To-morrow we will look for a little home of our own, where we can be comfortable until spring,” said Elder Brewster.

“And what shall we do in the spring?” asked Mistress Brewster.

“Go to Holland!” answered her husband.

AWAY TO HOLLAND

WHEN spring came, the Pilgrims again planned to leave England. Elder Brewster knew a Hollander who had a ship of his own. So he arranged with this Dutch captain to carry the Pilgrims to Holland.

They now went to a lonely place on the shore, far from any town where they thought they would be safer. All day they waited for the ship, fearing every minute to be taken by the king's men.

At last, late in the afternoon, a sail appeared. When the ship had come as close to the shore as it could, it anchored and waited for the people to row out to it. The Pilgrims had a large boat of their own in which they had brought their goods down the river to the sea.

It was agreed that most of the men should go first and load the heavy boxes upon the ship, then to come back for those left on shore. The boat had started toward the shore for its second load when the ship's captain saw something which filled his heart with terror. A long black line was curving down the hill. He raised his glass to his eyes. "Soldiers and horsemen! Look, men!" he cried.

AWAY TO HOLLAND

One glance told them that the soldiers were marching straight toward the place where the Pilgrims were waiting.

“Quick! Lower another boat!” cried William Bradford. “We can row to the shore and get the others before the soldiers reach them.”

But already the sailors were lifting the anchor. The wind filled the sails and the ship began to move.

“Let us off,” cried the men. “If you are afraid to wait for the others, at least let us go back to our families.”

“The soldiers will capture my ship,” answered the captain. “My ship is all I have in the world. They shall not have it.”

“They do not want your ship, and they could not reach it if they did. They only want us. Let us go!”

But the frightened man would not listen to them. He had heard of many captains who had lost their ships through helping people escape from England, and he would not stop a moment. The ship sailed out into the sea, and the darkness soon hid the shore from the sight of those on deck.

That night a great storm arose. The little ship was tossed about like a chip upon the waves. Not a star was to be seen in the black sky to guide the pilot. No friendly lighthouse sent out its rays to show them where to go.

For more than a week the ship was driven before the wind, they knew not where. When the

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storm was over, the sailors found they had been going away from Holland instead of toward it. They were hundreds of miles out of their course.

“If we have a good wind and fair weather we shall reach port in a few days,” said the captain, when the ship had been turned and headed for Holland.

But they did not have a good wind and fair weather. That very night a heavy fog settled down upon the sea. They could not see ten feet from the ship. Two days later another storm came up, much worse than the first one.

Surely the little vessel could not brave this storm. One of the masts was gone, and the water poured in through a hole in the side of the boat. Worst of all, the food and fresh water were almost gone. None on board expected ever to see land again.

The captain thought God was punishing him for his cowardly act in leaving the helpless women to the soldiers. The sailors all joined the Pilgrims in their prayers for help and pardon.

At last the clouds broke, and bits of blue sky peeped forth. Soon the wind went down, and the waves, too, slowly grew quiet. With the sun to guide them by day, and the stars by night, the ship finally reached the city of Amsterdam in Holland.

But what had become of the Pilgrims who had been left on the shore?

AWAY TO HOLLAND

When the soldiers came up they found only a group of very miserable women, frightened children, and two or three men. They saw the ship sailing out to sea and knew they were too late to take those they most wanted.

What should they do? It seemed a shame to imprison women and children who had done no one any harm. But they had their orders, and there was nothing to do but obey.

So the Pilgrims were placed in their boat and rowed to the city. It was a long tiresome ride, and before they reached the landing the night had grown quite dark, and most of the children were fast asleep.

When the lights of the city were seen, one big soldier thought of his wife and babies there, safe at home. Then he looked at his prisoners, a few tearful women and some tired, sleeping children. He did not feel very brave. Risking his life in battle were more pleasant than this.

The other soldiers seemed to feel much as he did, for when the shore was reached, they gently helped their prisoners from the boat. Then each took a sleeping child in his arms and soon all disappeared down the dark street.

The Pilgrims were not kept in prison long this time. A few days later they returned to the homes of their friends. The judges were tired of them. The king, too, was tired of the trouble.

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“Since their husbands have gone, let the women go to them. I am tired of hearing about it,” said King James.

But few of them had money to go then, and it was many months before the men in Holland could earn money enough to send for their families.