

JAMES OTIS

BENJAMIN OF OHIO: A
STORY OF THE
SETTLEMENT OF
MARIETTA

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of the Settlement of Marietta**

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James Otis

Benjamin of Ohio A Story of the Settlement of Marietta

FOREWORD

The author of this series of stories for children has endeavored simply to show why and how the descendants of the early colonists fought their way through the wilderness in search of new homes. The several narratives deal with the struggles of those adventurous people who forced their way westward, ever westward, whether in hope of gain or in answer to "the call of the wild," and who, in so doing, wrote their names with their blood across this country of ours from the Ohio to the Columbia.

To excite in the hearts of the young people of this land a desire to know more regarding the building up of this great nation, and at the same time to entertain in such a manner as may stimulate to noble deeds, is the real aim of these stories. In them there is nothing of romance, but only a careful, truthful record of the part played by children in the great battles with those forces, human as well as natural, which, for so long a time, held a vast portion of this broad land against the advance of home seekers.

With the knowledge of what has been done by our own people in our own land, surely there is no reason why one should resort to fiction in order to depict scenes of heroism, daring, and sublime disregard of suffering in nearly every form.

JAMES OTIS.

BENJAMIN'S STORY

It seems a very long while since I promised to tell you of what I did after coming into this Ohio country, and yet even now I cannot well begin the tale without telling something about the Ohio Company, which was formed, as you know, by General Rufus Putnam.

Twice I have begun the story, and twice I have stopped, understanding that you would not be able to make out why we did this or that, unless you first knew how it chanced that we came to make our homes here.

When you and I, while we were both in Massachusetts, talked about my journeying into this country, I may have spoken in such a way as to give you the idea that I believed it would be possible for me to do much toward the making of a new town.

In fact, I did really then believe that my services would be of great value to those men who expected to build a village here on the Muskingum River; but, although only two years have passed, I already understand that a boy of my age is not of much worth in such an enterprise, more particularly when men like Parson Cutler and General Putnam are at the head of affairs.

Do you remember how old I am? Well, there is here in this town of Marietta a fellow by the name of Jeremy Salter, who has become quite a friend of mine, and the other day he asked my age.

I told him that I was born in December of the year of the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, the election of General Washington to be commander in chief of the armies, and the battle of Bunker Hill, yet, if you will believe me, the dolt was not able to fix the date.

However, my age has nothing to do with our coming from Mattapoisett into Ohio, and now let me try to make it plain how it happened that we of Massachusetts could come so far away and take up land simply because of having bought shares in the Ohio Company.

THE OHIO COMPANY

This is the story as I have heard it from General Putnam himself. It seems that when our war for independence came to an end, the government did not have money enough with which to pay the soldiers for their services, or, as Parson Cutler says, the country was much the same as bankrupt; General Washington himself declared that a wagonload of Continental money would be hardly sufficient to purchase a wagonload of provisions.

Now of course these soldiers must have their wages, and some men in the Congress proposed that the government sell land in the western country in order to raise enough money.

While this matter was being talked about, Congress ordered that a survey be made of the western lands, and Rufus Putnam himself received an appointment as one of the surveyors; but, not being able to attend to the work personally, he induced an old comrade, by the name of Benjamin Tupper, to take his place.

When Master Tupper came back to the eastern colonies, after having been over the land, he told General Putnam what a great, grand country it was; and it is said that the two old comrades sat up all night talking over plans for buying land enough to form a colony, and that by daybreak they had decided to call a meeting of the citizens of Massachusetts and the near-by states, to be held at the Bunch of Grapes tavern in Boston, early in the month of March, 1786. This meeting was held, and a company was organized, to be known as the Ohio Associates.

The government had decided to use this land, as I have said, to pay off the soldiers, and this company, formed by General Putnam, employed Parson Manasseh Cutler and Master Winthrop Sargent to make a bargain with Congress. These two men offered to buy one million, five hundred thousand acres of land at one dollar an acre, paying down five hundred thousand dollars when the contract was signed, with the debts due the soldiers reckoned as so much ready money.

Those who had banded themselves together could not raise the remaining million dollars, and the result was that the government cut down the agreement so that our Ohio Company had at its disposal a little more than a million acres of land, instead of a million and a half.

RUFUS PUTNAM

You surely remember what General Putnam has done for his country, or, I should say, what he did, even before he came to Ohio. In 1757, when only nineteen years old, he enlisted as a common soldier in the Provincial army, – for there was then war between England and France, – and served faithfully four years, until the surrender of Montreal, when the army was disbanded. Then he went to his home in New Braintree and worked at the trade of millwright; but he soon discovered that his education was not sufficient to enable him to continue the business to the best advantage, therefore he devoted every moment of his spare time to the study of mathematics.

Seven or eight years afterward, when it was believed the British government would give to those soldiers who had served in the French war certain lands somewhere in the wild western country, Rufus Putnam was selected as one of a party to find out where it would be well for the people to settle.

No sooner had the battle of Lexington been fought than Rufus Putnam was among the first to enlist; and it shows that he gained a good military reputation, for he was made lieutenant colonel of the first regiment raised in Massachusetts.

COLONEL PUTNAM, THE ENGINEER

Because of his knowledge of mathematics he was chosen by the leaders of the American army to lay out the line of defenses round about Boston, and did more than a full share in forcing the British to evacuate that city, because of the skill with which he established the fortifications on Dorchester Heights.

Later he was sent to New York, where he took charge of the defenses on Long Island at Fort Lee, and King's Bridge; and during the year when our people made their formal declaration of independence, Rufus Putnam was appointed engineer, with the rank of colonel and pay at sixty dollars a month.

The next year Colonel Putnam went back to Massachusetts, where he raised and took command of a regiment which he afterward led in the battle of Stillwater and again at Saratoga, covering himself with glory, so I have heard Parson Cutler say.

After the surprise at Stony Point, Colonel Putnam was appointed to the command of a regiment in General Wayne's brigade, continuing to serve with credit to himself, and to the best interests of his country, until 1783, when Congress promoted him to the rank of brigadier general; he remained in the service of the people, filling one position or another, until this Ohio Company was formed, as I have told you.

Another matter which you should bear in mind while thinking of us so far away, is that when Parson Cutler made the trade with the government for land in the Ohio country, he induced the Congress to set aside two entire townships, of thirty-six square miles each, for the support of a university, and in each of the other townships one square mile to be used solely for the support of schools and churches. Therefore, even before any man had begun the building of a home here on the Muskingum River, schools and churches were provided for, which is more, I believe, than can be said regarding most new settlements.

THE FIRST EMIGRANTS

You remember all the talk and excitement in Massachusetts at this time, when so much was being told regarding the beauties of the Ohio country, and you know how eager I was to set out with that first party which left Danvers under the leadership of Major Haffield White on the first day of December, in the year 1787.

As you also know, these men were to halt somewhere on the Youghiogeny River to build boats, in order to continue the journey by water, and a second party, under the command of General Putnam himself, was to leave Hartford in Connecticut shortly afterward, to join those from Massachusetts.

This second company was really led by Colonel Ebenezer Sproat because General Putnam was forced to go to New York on some business of his own, and did not succeed in overtaking the people until they had come to Swatara Creek in Pennsylvania.

BUILDING A FLEET

Major Haffield White's party arrived at Sumrill's Ferry, after a long and tedious journey over the old Military Road, on the twenty-third day of January, in the year 1788, and immediately began building boats.

On the fourteenth of February, General Putnam's party, by which I mean those who set out from Hartford, joined those who were already at the ferry, and the two companies landed here on the bank of the Muskingum River the seventh day of April, in the year 1788.

All this is an old and familiar story; but it is well for me to remind you of it, so that you can the better understand how I, who had believed and hoped I was coming into a new country to do my full share in building up a town, found everything, as one might say, ready to hand.

Instead of cutting through the wilderness in order to build houses, we found the land so far cleared that we might get about the home making at once, and during the time the work was being carried on, the people lived in the fort, which General Putnam calls Campus Martius. It is situated near Fort Harmar, a fortification standing on the west bank of the Muskingum River near its mouth, and not far from this town of Marietta. It was built in 1785, and Colonel Josiah Harmar is now in command.

CAMPUS MARTIUS

What do I mean by Campus Martius, when I claim to be living in the town of Marietta? When General Putnam and his company arrived here, the first thing they did was to build a fort for the protection, not only of themselves, but of those who might come after; concerning this fort I will tell you later, but first you may be, and probably are, as curious as I was regarding the name.

I asked General Putnam, and he told me it was named after a certain lot of land in the city of Rome, which was used for popular assemblies and military exercises. However, the town itself is called Marietta, after Marie Antoinette of France, who was so brutally killed by her subjects during the Reign of Terror.

Perhaps it would be better if I begin this story by telling you how we got here, for the journey was not only long, but tiresome, and made at the cost of much labor. But yet it seems best to set down all within my knowledge concerning those men who first came out, meaning the party which left Danvers in Massachusetts, and that which started from Hartford in Connecticut.

All that I know about Major White's company during the march is that they came over what is called the old Military Road, across Pennsylvania, until they arrived at the Youghioghenny River, which they crossed, and then went into winter quarters at Sumrill's Ferry.

There they set about building a flatboat, which they called the *Mayflower*, making her forty-six feet long and twelve feet wide, with a roof deck and a sharp bow, to be propelled by either sails or oars; they built also a smaller flatboat and several canoes.

THE ARRIVAL OF GENERAL PUTNAM

It was while they were building this fleet that General Putnam's party joined them, and on the first day of April the new *Mayflower*, together with the smaller craft, began the voyage down the Ohio, arriving opposite Fort Harmar on the seventh day of April. There were forty-eight men on board the vessels: four surveyors with twenty-two others to attend them, six boat builders, four carpenters, one blacksmith, and eleven so-called common hands.

I myself have heard General Putnam say that when his company arrived at Swatara Creek it was frozen over, but not sufficiently hard to bear the weight of the wagon, and they spent one entire day cutting a passage through the ice. Then, later, he says so great was the quantity of snow as to block up the roads, and when they got as far as Cooper's, at the foot of the Tuscarora mountains, they found old snow twelve inches deep. Nothing save pack horses had passed over it, therefore it was necessary to build sleds and harness the animals one before the other, with the men marching in front to break out the roads, and thus they continued until arriving at the Youghiogheny, as I have already said.

As you know, our town of Marietta is on the Muskingum River at its mouth where it empties into the Ohio, and I am sending you such a drawing as I have been able to make, so that you may know just where we are located.

THE WORK OF THE FIRST EMIGRANTS

Most likely General Putnam decided upon this particular place in which to build a town because Fort Harmar, erected here in the year 1785, would afford a very timely place of refuge in case the Indians made an attack upon our people before they were in condition to defend themselves.

Fort Harmar is on the lower bank of the river, while our town of Marietta is on the opposite side, or what might be called the upper point of land between the Muskingum and the Ohio.

Allen, who is a son of Captain Jonathan Devoll, and came with the first party from Danvers, told me that as soon as our people landed they set about making huts of boards which had been brought with them from Sumrill's Ferry, and at the same time put up a canvas tent for the use of General Putnam, wherein he could transact the business of the new colony, and in such shelters they lived until the fort had been completed.

The surveyors immediately began laying out the town lots and the farms for those people who had bought shares in the company, and many laws or regulations were made by General Putnam and his friends, which were nailed to the trunk of a large tree on the river bank where all might see them.

The place was then, and is now, as beautiful a spot as one could well imagine. There are fish in the rivers in abundance, and game of every kind to be found in greatest plenty. Just fancy herds of buffaloes and deer roaming through the forest and over the plains, while wild turkeys are found in such numbers as would do your heart good, especially after a good plump one has been cooked on a spit in front of a roaring fire.

There was very little hunting done for sport, however, so Allen Devoll told me. Those people who went out in search of game did so only that they might provide themselves and their companions with food; for the work on every hand was abundant.

CLEARING THE LAND

Enormous trees in the forest were to be girdled and thus killed that they might the more easily be hewn down, and the soil had to be prepared for planting. That these newcomers were not idle may be understood when I tell you that, during the first spring they were here, one hundred and thirty acres of corn were planted.

Of course there were no cleared fields, such as one might see about Mattapoissett. The seed was put in among stumps, where only the underbrush had been cleared away; therefore a plow could not be run to make a straight furrow.

The greater portion of the work was done with hoes and spades; and already I have had disagreeable experience in that kind of labor, which causes one's back to ache woefully and blisters the hands even of those who are accustomed to such toil.

And now after all this, which is what you might call the beginning of my story, I will tell you of our leaving home, and of that long, wearisome journey across the mountains, when we forded creeks and, if you please, might be said to have walked from one side of the state of Pennsylvania to the other.

I have sometimes regretted that I was not with the company led by Major White, or under the leadership of Colonel Sproat, so that I could say that I was one of the first to step foot in this Ohio country with the idea of making a home; but those voyagers were only men who could perform such work as boat building or surveying, and boys were neither wanted nor allowed.

HOW OUR COMPANY WAS FORMED

First you should know that Captain Jonathan Devoll was a member of the company that came here under the leadership of Major White, setting out from Danvers. He had left his family behind in Providence, and because of that fact perhaps, I was given an opportunity to come.

Having neither father nor mother, and being dependent upon those who were willing to provide me with work whereby I might gain a livelihood, there was no one to push forward my claim to become one of the emigrants, save only Mistress Devoll herself, who needed some one to aid her in caring for the children during the journey, for she is not a very strong woman.

Master John Rouse had bought a share in the company and was making ready to start with his family, when he received word that he should bring with him all Captain Devoll's family. Then there was Captain Haskell in our town of Mattapoissett, an old sailor who owned a large covered wagon and two horses.

Master Rouse had only one team of horses; therefore he proposed to Captain Haskell that they join forces, and surely it was a good trade for Master Rouse, since he had a large family to take with him, while the old captain was alone in the world.

Because of the labor involved in driving four horses during so long a time as would be required for the journey, it was decided that young Ben Cushing should be hired as driver, and thus the party was made up, until Mistress Devoll so kindly interfered in my behalf, claiming that she had a right to take with her at least one more lad.

MAKING READY FOR THE JOURNEY

I wish I could describe to you the excitement under which we all labored while making ready for the long journey!

Do you remember the Rouse family? First there is Michael, twenty-two years old; then Bathsheba, who is nineteen or thereabouts; and Elizabeth, two years younger. Cynthia is two years younger than Elizabeth; Ruth is only eleven years old; Stephen, six, and the twins, Robert and Barker, only four.

Now if Mistress Devoll had not needed my services, I should have found ample opportunity of earning my way across to the Ohio country by taking care of the Rouse children.

The most important matter was the preparing of the wagon, where the women would sleep during such nights as we failed to find lodgings in taverns or farmhouses, and it was with infinite care that Master Rouse and Captain Haskell almost rebuilt this cart, which was what I believe is generally called a Conestoga wagon, although why it should be given such a name I do not understand, unless it may have been made in some town by the name of Conestoga.

With so many in the company, you can fancy that it was a difficult matter to decide just what should be taken and what left behind, for it was of the utmost importance that the baggage be reduced to the smallest possible amount, and in order that it might be packed with the greatest economy, boxes were made to fit exactly into the bottom of the wagon, so that no space would be left unoccupied. On top of these were stowed the beds and bedding, while cooking utensils hung around on the inside, where we might get at them handily at mealtime, for, as it proved, very many days we were forced to do our cooking by the roadside, with such fireplaces as could be built up with rocks which we lads gathered.

Two trunks were placed at one end of the wagon, where they served as a barrier to prevent the twins from falling out when they played on the bedding, and upon the axles were hung buckets and such tools as might be needed during the journey, thus giving the outfit a decidedly comical, but perhaps homelike, appearance.

We took with us only a small amount of grain for the horses, trusting to buy all that might be needed until we had journeyed as far as Carlisle in Pennsylvania. After that there would be less chance of coming upon farms where such things could be purchased, and then the animals would be forced to subsist only on grass.

CONCERNING MYSELF

My part of the outfit consisted of the clothes I wore, for I am ashamed to say that I did not own a second coat which would have been presentable in any company. Therefore I did not allow myself to be troubled when the women complained long and bitterly because they had so little with which to work or make themselves comfortable, and for the only time in my life it did seem as if my poverty was really a blessing.

I lived in a perfect fever of excitement during the three weeks we were making ready for the voyage, and on the evening before the eventful day I was so wrought up in my mind that to sleep was an impossibility. From the time I laid myself down on my bed in Master Rouse's stable, until the sun rose, I did not close my eyes in slumber; then I acted as if I had never seen a horse or harness before, for when Ben Cushing called on me to aid him in putting the animals to the pole, my hands trembled so that I could not fasten a buckle, let alone arrange the straps to his liking.

Ben is a careful driver and one who ever looks after the welfare of his beasts. To him a strap too long or too short, a buckle out of place or liable to break, is almost the same as a sin.

I need not have allowed myself to be worked up to such an extent, however, for the first part of our journey was nothing more nor less than pleasure. Half a dozen young girls, on horseback, set off with us, expecting to ride as far as the Long Plain, which is six miles out from Mattapoissett, and the entire population, as it appeared to me, had turned out to see us get under way with that long Conestoga wagon covered with canvas, on the sides of which had been painted, "To the Ohio Country."

SETTING OUT

What a cheering and shaking of hands, and what a showering of good wishes upon us took place in that Mattapoisett street!

If we could have had Parson Cutler with us to give what you might call an official sanction to the start, as was done when Major White's party set off from Danvers, then I would have been more content. Surely, however, there was no need for me to make complaint, because never before had I witnessed such a scene of excitement as when Ben Cushing gathered up the reins, and the townspeople stood around the heavy wagon until Mistress Rouse cried out in alarm lest some of them be run over. The twins, insisting on going the first mile or more afoot, ran here and there until it seemed to me at times that they were under the very feet of the horses during three minutes of every four.

It was really a relief, when we had drawn out of the town so far that the more excited ones could no longer call out to say once more "good-by" or "God bless you." I ought not to have been so impatient, for many a long day was to pass before I again saw faces on which I could read expressions of good will and friendliness toward me.

This first portion of our journey was quite like a merrymaking. The young women rode either side the wagon; the Rouse girls walked, or sat beside their mother in the big cart, as pleased them best, and the twins, soon tiring of striving to entangle themselves with the horses' legs, were ready to come in under the shelter of the canvas.

We drove only six miles, and indeed this was quite a journey for the first day, because the animals were not accustomed to traveling together and gave Ben Cushing no little trouble. Besides, our departure had been delayed so long, owing to the townspeople, that it was nearly noon before we had left Mattapoisett behind us, and the day was nearly done when we had come to the Long Plain, and there stopped at the home of Mistress Devoll's cousin.

MISTRESS DEVOLL'S OUTFIT

We had but one wagon for all our party from the time we left Mattapoisett until coming to Providence. Mistress Devoll and Mistress Rouse are sisters and were much together at Mattapoisett after Captain Devoll set off for the Ohio country. It was while the captain's wife was in our village that she made me the offer to pay my passage to the Muskingum River by looking after her belongings.

Mistress Devoll expected to join Master Rouse's company at her home in Providence, where she was to have ready a wagon in which would be all her household goods that could be transported over the mountains. She was to have a team of four horses, and her brother, Isaac Barker, was to act as driver, while I played the part of helper.

Therefore on leaving Mattapoisett I ran ahead or behind Master Rouse's wagon, or clambered up by the side of Ben Cushing when the seat next to him was not occupied, for he was a good friend of mine and could be counted on to give me a hint now and then, if I overstepped my bounds.

The stay at the Long Plain overnight was what you might call a friendly visit for all the members of the company save Ben Cushing and me; but we two were not lonely, for we laid ourselves down to sleep in the wagon, after having had a bountiful meal at the home of Mistress Devoll's cousin, and it is safe to say that during the first night after starting for the Ohio country we slept more comfortably, if not more soundly, than on any other during the journey.

We were up at break of day, however, for the horses were to be groomed and fed, and Master Rouse had decided that we must travel as far as Providence before nightfall.

The young women who had come out from Mattapoisett with us, went back some time late in the evening after Cushing and I were asleep, and when breakfast had been eaten we set off once more, just as the sun was rising. It seemed as if this was really the beginning of the journey, for we were alone, plodding over the dusty road which, to look into the future, seemed as if it would have no end.

AT PROVIDENCE

An hour after sunset we halted in front of Mistress Devoll's house. The horses were unhitched and taken to a stable, where Ben and I were speedily joined by Isaac Barker, whom we had seen more than once in Mattapoissett, and we three, while caring for the animals, discussed at great length the undertaking which lay all before us.

A rare hand at making sport was Isaac Barker, and many a time after leaving Providence it did seem to me that but for his quips and jokes we might have given up in despair at trying to gain this country, for the way was hard over the best of the roads we found, and there were many moments, after we got into Pennsylvania, when all the members of the company were forced to lay hold of ropes tied to the tops of the carts to prevent them from oversetting. Then it was that Isaac's nonsense really served to hearten us.

You can well fancy that when we were once among the mountains the way was exceedingly hard to travel, and again and again I have laid my shoulder against the hind end of one of the wagons, straining every muscle to help the horses on, while every other man and boy was doing the same, and doing it to the utmost of his power.

We lost no time in leaving Providence next morning. Mistress Devoll's wagon was packed and ready, and after eating a breakfast which had been prepared by some of the neighbors, we set off, I walking with the men either ahead or behind the teams, for there was not sufficient room in both wagons for all our company to ride. There are five of the Devoll children: Sally, twelve years old; Henry, two years younger; Charles, aged eight; Barker, five; and Francis, a baby not much more than a year old.

Isaac Barker cracked jokes as he swung the whip over the backs of the horses; the Rouse girls sang until they were hoarse; the smaller children screamed with delight because we were finally on our way to the wilderness; and everything went on as if we were still simply bent upon pleasure during this third day of the journey.

ON THE ROAD TO BLOOMING GROVE

Now it is not in my mind to set down an account of every day's journey while we were in what you might call civilized country, for we simply drove the horses as far as we could each day, with due care to a resting place at night, passing through Farmington, Litchfield, and Ballsbridge, to the Hudson River.

Of course it was necessary to cross the water, and to do this, Master Rouse and Captain Haskell hired two large boats into which we could stow the wagons as well as the horses. By the aid of both sails and oars the clumsy craft were navigated from Fishkill to Newburgh, where we took to the road again, traveling ten miles to a village called Blooming Grove. There we stopped at a tavern kept by a man named Goldsmith.

There is no particular reason why I should have remembered that man's name so long, had it not been that seeing me rubbing the legs of Mistress Devoll's horses, on that evening, he took me kindly by the ear and said that I was a likely looking lad such as he stood in need of to help him about the tavern, proposing, if I would remain with him, to give me my board and clothes during the first year, allowing me to attend school meanwhile, at the same time promising that when such term of service had expired he would make another bargain, which should include a certain sum of money as wages.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Perhaps it might have been better for me had I accepted the good man's offer, and yet there was in my mind such a desire to go out into that Ohio country where even the poorest lad, if he was willing to work to the best of his ability, could make a home for himself, that I could not bring myself to think of remaining at the tavern doing chores for this farmer or that, and getting no farther ahead in the world.

All of which I told him, and when I had come to an end of my talk, he replied that he could not blame me for holding to the choice I had made, and said he hoped it might be possible for me to do all that was in my mind. At the same time he assured me that if I found this part of the country different from what I had fancied, and was ready to come back into civilization, where I might have the comforts of home, I should present myself to him.

Although I have not advanced so far in the world as I had hoped might have been possible, I have not fallen in the race of life. I am no worse off than when I landed here at Marietta, and have laid up for myself some few dollars, in addition to the knowledge that I am of service in the settlement; therefore I cannot regret the choice I made at Blooming Grove.

After leaving that village we journeyed over good roads through the towns of Chester and Warwick, finally crossing the state line into New Jersey, and coming to the town of Newton.

We had neither adventure nor mishap during this portion of our travels, for the roads were good, the horses inclined to move at a reasonably rapid pace, and those who would have walked from choice found themselves speedily distanced. More than once were Master Rouse, Captain Haskell, and I so far behind the wagons that the drivers believed it necessary to halt in order that we might join the company.

From Newton we went past Sussex Court House, or the Log Jail as it is called, through the towns of Hope and Oxford, to the village of Easton, which is situated at the forks of the Delaware River.

ON THE WATER ONCE MORE

Here we were forced to take to the water once more, in order that we might cross over into the state of Pennsylvania, and because there was but one flatboat to be hired at this place, no little time was spent in making the passage.

It was near nightfall when we were safely landed on the Pennsylvania shore, and then came the question as to where we might spend the night.

The ferryman had told Captain Haskell that five miles down the road was a farm owned by an old German who was disposed to care for travelers who were well-behaved and willing to pay a certain small sum for the service he rendered. We therefore hastened our pace, moving as rapidly as possible, until, half an hour after the sun had set, we came to a farm, the buildings of which would have delighted the eyes of any man who had a care for such things.

Surely no one could have been more hospitable than were the old German and his wife, to say nothing of the four sons and three daughters, all of whom made us welcome and insisted that we come into their kitchen to eat supper with them, rather than make any attempt at providing our own meals, as we had been doing nearly all the time since leaving Mattapoissett.

FEASTING ON HONEY

How Ben Cushing and I did eat that night! The owner of the farm had given especial attention to the raising of bees and had a large store of honey on hand. The farmer's wife and daughters baked such cakes of buckwheat as I never before tasted, and these, plentifully covered with the golden honey, made up a meal which still lingers in my memory.

We passed the night there, all the company except Ben Cushing, Isaac Barker, and me, sleeping on the floor of the kitchen and living room, where beds had been spread for their comfort.

Captain Haskell showed how a sailor could take advantage of every inch of space, for when the women claimed that there was not room in which to make up beds for all and dispose of their clothing properly during the hours of the night, the captain turned down the chairs so that the backs of them would serve as heads for the beds, thus making pillows, and pointed out that the spaces underneath could be filled with the clothing where it might be found readily in the morning.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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