



LOOK *to the* MOUNTAIN

LEGRAND CANNON, JR.

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Look to the Mountain



A MAP
SHOWING THE LOCATION OF CERTAIN
TOWNS, RIVERS, AND MOUNTAINS
IN THE
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SCALE: 1 INCH = 16 MILES

THE WHITE HILLS



THE
GRANTS

River

Orford

CORUWAY
MOUNTAIN

Fryeburg

Town of
Sandwich

Town of
Tamworth

WHIT'S
PLACE

Baker's
River

Casumy
Pond

Bearcamp
River

Gt. Ossipee
Pond

Squam
Brook

Winnipiseogee
Pond

N E W H A M P S H I R E

Number 4,

Pennacook

Merrimack
River

Kettleford

Portsmouth
8 Miles

Bennington
41 Miles



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CONTENTS



Part One

THE FIELDS 1769

page 1



Part Two

THE RIVER 1769-1770

page 193



Part Three

THE WOODS 1770-1777

page 383



Part Four

THE MOUNTAIN 1777

page 481

PART ONE

The Fields

1769

IT was a hot, dry-feeling day early in August in the year 1769. Kettleford, in New Hampshire Province, was haying. Throughout the whole township—on the west bank of Merrimack below Amoskeag Falls and twenty miles north of the Bay Province line—there was nothing but haying. Politics, fishing, linen and flax, woodcutting, potatoes, the reaping of rye, speculating in land, the Presbyterian church, those things were forgotten, or at least put aside.

There wasn't much doing in politics anyway. Young Governor Wentworth—old Uncle Benning's nephew and successor—had been two years in the chair, and was doing well at it. John was as honest as his uncle was not. Kettleford liked him—whenever they thought of him.

Three weeks ago, the Kettleford men had finished their fishing up at the falls, and they'd made a fair catch of it. They'd taken more fish—salmon and shad—than the Indians ever did back in the old days. Three hundred pounds for a man in a night would go a long way toward paying expenses of setting a weir and tying a net, finding the rum, and mending the spears, buying the salt, all the various things that a man had to reckon.

The making of linen wouldn't come until later, and the flax wasn't pressing. Winter rye wasn't ready—though soon it would be—and no one would think of cutting wood in the summer. Digging potatoes and pressing out cider belonged to the autumn; churchgoing to Sabbath and maybe to Lecture Day; everything in its season. Right now it was haying.

Kettleford fields were pleasant to mow in. That is, some of them were, and they were pleasanter now than they had been. Thirty years had got rid of the stumps, and even in the western part of the town, back from the river, oxen had hauled away some of the boulders. True, there were weeds now, but there weren't any seedlings—poplar, witch hazel, and ironwood bushes; they'd stopped coming in. So had the Indians. And there weren't many steep places: either a field had been interval land, or level enough to warrant its clearing.

The land, of course, varied. The northwestern corner of Kettleford township lay near to the base of the low, round Uncannunucs—twin, wooded hills that could be seen for some distance but that were not high enough to be called proper mountains. In the western part of the township, it was uneven and stony—more like New Boston, which was still farther west. The best land in Kettleford was along the bank of the river—fine, rolling meadows that lay in the sun, planted to rye and to Indian corn, flax in the low places,

hay, and so on. Here the houses were stout and the barns were tremendous. In the southern part of the town, there was a good deal of clay.

Generally speaking, the hills were left wooded—four out of five acres in the town as a whole. But it didn't seem so—in summer, at any rate, because then a man would spend most of his time in his fields. Ever since Monday, every man in the town, a good many women, the oxen, and the boys had been hard at it haying. Go north up the river; it would be the same way—in Goffstown, and Hooksett, Bow, Pennacook, Boscawen—or southward in Londonderry, Brenton's and Nottingham. In all of New Hampshire, everybody was haying—except maybe in Portsmouth. Portsmouth was different. No doubt in Portsmouth—forty miles east and north—there'd be merchants and gentlemen, King's officers, sailors, and a varied assortment of ladies, who, at this time in the morning, were not doing a thing. But Kettleford lived by the field and the river. And when the sun shone in August—the first week in August—Kettleford mowed hay. They let it make in the field, and they raked it, they cocked it, and hauled it—and no man was exempt from doing his part.

Young Nathaniel Thett, for example—he was the school-master—had been swinging a borrowed scythe since the sun was an hour high—and it now lacked but two hours to noon. The blister in the pocket of Thett's right thumb had broken, and there was a notable pain in his left shoulder muscle. But he was still swinging—not so smart as he had been, perhaps, but all the same keeping the heel of his scythe well down and avoiding such rocks as he could see.

Thett was working for Lawrence Murphy, the tailor, against a blue surtout that Murphy would fashion him in the fall. It was a deal of comfort to Thett to know that this winter he'd have a coat.

Down in a remote corner of the Governor lot, Mr. Gavin Gowan, the minister, was somberly cutting a little hay for himself. Mr. Gowan's contract with Kettleford provided for hay, but Mr. Gowan had learned that a cow can't eat contracts. A good hand to mow, Mr. Gowan was, too. He was still on his third gill of rum, and he'd cut close on to three cocks since breakfast.

Even old David Gillmor was haying, but he couldn't mow or pitch this year; he was pulling a loafer rake. He was about the lamest this summer that he'd ever been. Twelve years ago, David had made the mistake of wearing his waistcoat as he'd come out of Fort William and Henry in the surrender. It was a lovely garment made out of loon-necks—and the first Indian who saw it had sought to hamstring David so as to get it. But David was short in the legs, and the blow had landed too high. Fleeing into the brush, David had not only kept his waistcoat but had carried along the tomahawk also, stuck in his backside. Lately, the wound had been full of pain, even in weather like this. But David still managed to hitch himself along somehow, and in the course of a day he'd rake his share of hay.

In the big handsome meadow that lay close to the river on Widow Karr's place, there were five men—all haying, all single men, two of them widowers. Nobody knew, yet, just how it was going to come out.

William Cauldwell, the cordwainer, had Ensign Lord working with him. Cauldwell had made Ensign a pair of pumps back in February. Tonight they'd be square. Lord was finding the rum for the haying, as against the sole leather Cauldwell had found for the pumps. It had been pretty poor leather, so Ensign had thought, and Cauldwell was now thinking the same of the rum.

Down back of Porter's place, Zebulon Porter was pitching to his wife, who was up on top making the load. She

could make a load right, too—starting at the outside and then working in—and not lose hardly a wisp, except what was snatched off by a branch, maybe, between there and the barn. If she'd been strong enough to pitch off when they got to the barn, it would have been better yet. It was hard for Zeb to pitch off a load he hadn't made because he didn't know in what order each fork had been laid. They were doing all right, though; they'd hauled two jags already and would get in a third before dinner.

Joe Felipe hadn't had a fire in his forge since Saturday night, but he'd be done with his haying some time this forenoon. Joe had hayed Sunday. He was a Portygee, and they knew he was Popish. But still he'd been allowed to remain when he first came to town, and now they were used to him. About a year and a half ago Joe had showed up at Butler's tavern one morning in January ater traveling all night on the crust. It was just after Captain Karr died and the town was without any smith. Joe said that he was a worker in iron—which he had been at one time. He bid in the smithy when they held the vendue, and paid for it in gold. He had then moved the smithy, setting it up near the center of town, just down the road from the new meetinghouse, and not too far from the tavern. He turned out to be a fair smith when sober and a good one when drunk. But he wasn't as good as old Karr had been, and nobody made out to Joe that he was. He was a squat, bull of a man, dark-complected—as anyone might be, but as not many in Kettleford were—and he wore his black hair tied with a scarlet hair ribbon. He had little small ears that set tight to his head and made his neck look all the bigger. And he wore a knife like a sailor.

The reason the town didn't take to him better, Joe laid to Whit Livingston. It was Whit who kept the talk going about what a smith Karr had been—a far better smith than

this Portygee Joe ever had been or would be. If it hadn't been for that kind of talk, Joe had an idea, they might forget his dark complexion even in winter and about his being Popish, as well. Joe couldn't see that these things were important. He hadn't a drop of black blood in his veins, and if his being born Popish wasn't important to him, Joe couldn't see why it should be to anyone else. He hated Whit Livingston.

This young Whit Livingston was the best hand to mow that there was in Kettleford. Aside from that, he was a joke. When Whit had been twelve years old—right on his birthday—his father, Tom Livingston, had treated the boy at the tavern—and Whit hadn't been able to drink it. Rum was new to Whit then, because old Tom had never seen fit to spare the boy any. It had stuck in Whit's throat. It was a comical thing for the men standing round, but it was all the more funny because old Tom himself was such a great drinking man. The joke was on Tom, and all of them laughed at it. Tom hadn't taken it kindly. He figured the boy was making game of him, too. So Tom stood his son up in the middle of the room and yanked the shirt off the boy's back. Then Tom laid it on him with the picce of rope that until then had held up the boy's pants. After a time, some of the men—although they hadn't yet finished laughing—had made Tom give over. The boy was still on his feet, to be sure, but Captain's daughter was there—Captain Eliphalet Butler, kept the tavern—and though she was only a little thing then, ten years old or so, maybe, still her being there didn't make it seem right.

Whit never did learn to drink rum. And it was a year or two after that before he'd go to the tavern when he was sent on an errand. He didn't seem to like to go about amongst people at all. He thought they were still laughing

about what they remembered—and as often as not, probably, he was correct.

Old Captain Karr, though, had taken a liking to Whit. Whit would go over and hang round the smithy—more particularly times when there weren't any other boys there—and sometimes the captain would give him a task to do.

When Whit was sixteen and ready for it, Karr had told Whit that he was going to make him a scythe blade. He told Whit that he'd make him as pretty a blade as a man could wish for. And Captain Karr made it; he kept his word. Whit cut him twenty-one cords of rock maple for it, and Karr claimed that he'd hit the blade a lick with his hammer for every blow Whit had struck with the ax. It might be he had. She was a beauty. Whit didn't know how he was going to wait for the summer to come.

That blade was the last thing Karr ever made before he died.

By the end of that summer, a few men were saying already that young Whit Livingston, now, was the best hand to mow that there was in the town. And then they'd say that, if Tom Livingston's boy could mow that good, it *must* be the blade! Why, alongside of Karr, this dog of a Portygee couldn't hammer out a blade to cut mullen.

It was in that way that Whit kept the talk going. He didn't know that he did; he didn't hear it—but Joe Felipe heard it. Karr being gone, Whit stayed around home mostly, or he might go gunning somewhere off by himself. Karr had left him the gun in his will. The following winter, Whit ran a trap line. When he had need to go to the tavern to do any trading or to buy gear or the like, he'd go there in the morning. But he did go to the tavern, and lately he'd been there more often. He was nineteen now, tall, with a quiet face and slow-spoken. He went to the tavern because of Butler's daughter, Melissa.

For a long time Whit had been more afraid that he'd meet up with that girl on the road than he was that he'd meet up with the devil. If a man laughed at him, that was one thing. But she'd seen it, too—she'd seen him stripped and beaten because he couldn't drink rum—and Whit knew she was laughing. She might not show it—whenever he thought she was looking at him, he'd never been able to look back—but there was no reason why she shouldn't be laughing. Then somehow or other—this was the strange thing—the temptation to see her got to be like the temptation to bite on a sore tooth. Whit bit on it often. It wasn't pain that he felt, but still it was a feeling that had some pain in it.

This morning, Whit was mowing in the sparse and dry grass that his father's fields always ran to. Besides Whit, there were three men: old Tom and Whit's half brother, who was younger than Whit was, and Whit's uncle, Rob Murdough. Rob had brought with him a pair of young oxen, yoked into a rick he had managed to borrow, and between Whit and the oxen they were getting in hay. In return for the oxen, old Tom had agreed to lend Whit to his uncle for four days next week—two days for each ox. Old Tom, as usual, had got the worst of the bargain.

Even in grass like this, thin and hard and the whole field sprinkled with rocks, Whit could mow clean and he could mow fast. He might not look to be fast, but that was because he mowed easy and gentle and the speed didn't show. He used a straight snath made out of white ash that had just the least little mite of a whip to it, and a piece of black oilstone for a rifle. The stone had been given him by a White Hills man he'd met trapping. The man said there was a lot of it in a place west of Great Ossipy Pond. It was a stone to put a nice edge on a blade—not wired, but sweet. Whit was having a pretty good time.

Old Tom stopped midway of a swath, wiped the sweat out of his eyes, dropped his scythe to the ground, and walked back to the keg. Other men used a jug mostly for haying, but not old Tom Livingston. When he hayed, he hayed right. There was a ten-gallon keg, all complete with a spigot, set under a beech tree and a gourd lying beside it.

Tom was tired—and looked it. He was a stringy kind of man, and when he was tired, he drooped. He looked like his farm.

Down on one knee, he picked up the gourd, held it under the spigot, and then turned the handle. Nothing happened. He tipped the keg forward slowly . . . and it seemed to take him a long time before he'd tipped it all the way forward—and the truth had come out. That was all that came out.

Tom stared at the keg for a while, and then he sat back and wondered if he was going to cry—but he found he'd been sweating so much that he was more sober than he'd thought he was. He tried to think what to do. They were clean out of rum at the house, and Rob wouldn't lend. Neither would anyone else. He guessed he'd have to send Whit to the tavern. If he sent Whit, Whit would come back.

It was four miles to Butler's, and while Whit was gone, they could all spell themselves.

The other boy came over for a drink, and Tom let him find out for himself what had happened. The boy cursed for a while and then Tom said, "Go get Whit." The boy stood there and bawled for Whit. Whit finished his swath, and then he came over.

"This here's dry," said Tom, touching the keg with his foot. "You go to Butler's and fetch some."

Whit knew about how much they'd work while he was gone.

"You ain't got to take the keg with you." His father's voice rose. "Get a yoke from the house and a couple of jugs. And get a move onto you! I'm too dry to wait long."

Whit was trying to figure if there wasn't some other way out of it. They hadn't any more than got started, and now Rob and the oxen would be going to waste all the time he was gone.

His father roared at him: "It ain't going t' kill you to go fetch some rum, is it?"

"No, I don't know as it is."

"Then fetch it!—and don't stand there like a sick shad thinkin' about it. Just because you're a unnatural freak ain't no sign that the rest of us want t' hay dry."

Whit hung his scythe on the highest branch he could reach.

"Leave that thing where I c'n git at it," his father said. "I got a gap in mine."

"Then you'll have t' grind it."

"You do as I tell you!"

Whit turned slowly round to him. He spoke straight into his father's face: "You touch that scythe, and I'll cut your throat with it." Then he bent down to pick up the keg.

Old Tom didn't say a word, and no more did the other two.

Whit took the loose bung out of the bunghole and put it into his shirt. Then he swung the keg up to his shoulder and started off across the field—not toward the house, toward the tavern.

His uncle called after him, speaking as gently as he could: "What about the yoke, Whit?"

"I ain't only bringin' one keg."

Rob leaned on a tree. "He'll have quite a lug," he remarked, "'fore he gets back."

Old Tom said, "God," and lay down.

The other boy went down to the house to fetch up some cider.

2

CAPTAIN ELIPHALET BUTLER, taverner, storekeeper and Captain of the Train Band, had been putting in a bad morning. A dozen times he'd stepped out into the yard to look at the weather, and each time he'd shaken his bald little head because the weather was fine. Captain's small meadow was ready to cut—and he could get no man to work in it.

Captain had to have hay. He didn't own any oxen, but he did have three cows, and now and again he'd furnish hay to a teamster or to a traveler on horseback. There weren't many travelers. Captain Butler's small tavern was mainly a local affair: rum and provisions, gunpowder, nails. . . . Bed and board were available but were not often called for. Merrimack River was no longer the highway that it had been for Indians. The men using it now as a route north and south were trappers and hunters, and only occasionally settlers. Connecticut River carried the settlers. As for east and west traffic, there wasn't much anyway. There was a road to Portsmouth from Kettleford, and it ran past the tavern and on down to the river. But it brought little custom to Captain. A week on that road would shorten the life of a pair of oxen a year. In between towns it was full of brush and down trees, mudholes and boulders, and big hollow stumps. Any traveler who'd come over that road deserved to put up at an inn that was better than Captain's. There was an inn to the east of him the other side of the river, and there was one a few miles to

the west in New Boston. That left Captain Butler to make what money he could out of Kettleford people—a course to which he applied himself with more greed than hard work.

Coming in from the yard now, he leaned on his counter, his chin in his hands, and wondered what he could do. The thing that graveled him most was that he was the town's biggest creditor—and yet he couldn't collect. If he were to try to force payment in labor from a man who could vote, they'd vote in somebody else to keep tavern. Same way with the men who were in the Train Band: they elected him Captain. Training Day, he had his headquarters here at the tavern, and even after deducting for enough treats to assure his election, he still made more money on Training Day than he did any other day in the year. He couldn't risk losing that.

In resentful despair, he mixed himself a small brandy and water, and stood musing in front of the open shutters at one end of the room. From there, looking past a corner of the stable and the springhouse beyond, he could see away down in the distance one end of his meadow—with the breeze shifting the colors on the grass and the whole thing a fine picture of summer. But Captain saw nothing of beauty—only possible waste.

Something moved on the far side of the meadow—and the quick little eyes at the window made out a man come forth from the woods—a man carrying a load on his shoulder. Swiftly the figure came along the edge of the field—not running, not walking. Captain knew every gait in town: that was Whit Livingston . . . bringing a ten-gallon keg to be filled.

Captain's daughter came out of the springhouse to set one of her milk pans out in the sun. And she looked toward the meadow—and her hands flew to her hair. Then she