

## MRS. MARY ROWLANDSON'S REMOVES.

BY HENRY S. NOURSE.

AMONG American books which have won a wide and lasting popular favor, very few, if any, surpass in this distinction the Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, first printed in 1682 at London and Boston. Of this simple, pathetic relation of personal adventure twenty-five editions and reprints have been catalogued, the last two bearing the date 1883. All of these subsequent to the second edition omit the original preface and many of the pious author's scriptural quotations, besides changing the title of the book, modernizing the writer's spelling, and modifying some of her quaint phraseology. Historians have treated the book with even less respect, ignoring or distorting its statements. Thus in the pages of Rev. Timothy Harrington, Joseph Willard, Isaac Goodwin, Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, and many others, King Philip is depicted as an active and potent leader in the bloody assaults upon Lancaster and other towns of Eastern Massachusetts during the months of February and March, 1675-6. The Rowlandson Narrative plainly contradicts them, for Robert Pepper, a prisoner captured by the Indians at Capt. Beers's fight the previous September, told Mrs. Rowlandson, soon after her arrival at Menameset, that he had been taken "almost as far as Albany to see King Philip," and had recently returned thence. The Lancaster captive first saw Philip about a month after the massacre in the Nashaway Valley, at Coasset, on the west bank of the Connecticut River, near the boundary line between Massachusetts and Vermont. Thus the Narrative confirms the

evidence given by the heroic Christian scout, Quanapohit, who testified before the colonial authorities on January 24, 1675-6 that Philip had gone to the Mohawk country, and was in winter quarters not many miles north of Albany. The Narrative nowhere yields testimony that Philip ever stood in the van of conflict with the white men.

Many absurd statements respecting Mrs. Rowlandson's wanderings while with her savage captors have been published by local historians, and continue to receive credence. Some of these justify the belief that the authors never read any one of the numerous editions of the Narrative. Rufus C. Torrey, on page 22 of his *History of the Town of Fitchburg, 1836*, says of Mrs. Rowlandson's journey:—

"From her account it appears that she spent the first night of her captivity on a small island in a river. This is supposed to be in Leominster. There is an island there answering very well to her description. The second night she passed upon a *high hill*; the third night in Narrhagansett, which is now Westminster; and on the eighth day of her captivity she arrived at a place, now in New Braintree."

He then assumes that the "high hill," the location of the second night's encampment, was Rollstone Hill in Fitchburg. Strange to tell, Mary Rowlandson says nothing about an island, and contradicts every assertion made by Mr. Torrey. A more recent historical writer of the same latitude has dared a step further, and alleges that the name Rollstone has been in the course of two centuries abbreviated from Rowlandson, and that it commemorates the night's encampment of the minister's wife and her guards upon it. A later adventurer in historic disquisition soberly records that "the murder of Mrs. Rowlandson's daughter, Grace, by the Indians, is said to have given her name to Mt. Grace in Warwick," thus showing himself entirely oblivious of the famous story wherein the bereaved mother tells of the lingering death of "her poor wounded child" Sarah, and how the infant's body was buried upon a hill near the Indian village of Wenimasset, on Ware River,

twenty miles south of Mt. Grace. A similar misstatement respecting Mt. Grace is to be found in the *New England Hand Book*.

The map of *Mary Rowlandson's Removes* herewith is an attempt to outline, as nearly as is now possible, the general trend of the Indian trails over which the captive journeyed to and from the valley of the Ashuelot, and to give approximately the sites of the various camps, a list of which, with *Mrs. Rowlandson's* itinerary, follows:

1. Thursday, February 10, 1675-6. George Hill in South Lancaster.

**THE FIRST REMOVE.**—Now away we must go with those Barbarous Creatures, with our bodies wounded and bleeding, and our hearts no less than our bodies. About a mile we went that night, up upon a hill within sight of the Town, where they intended to lodge. There was hard by a vacant house (deserted by the English before for fear of the Indians). . . .

A half-buried boulder of granite on the summit of this prominent hill is known as the *Rowlandson Rock*, and time-hallowed tradition says it marks the exact spot where the captive woman rested during the night succeeding the massacre at the *Rowlandson garrison*. The vacant house was presumably the first dwelling of *John Prescott*, the founder of *Lancaster*, which stood on the site of the *Symonds and King "trucking house,"* the first structure built by white men in the *Nashaway Valley*, about half way down the eastern slope of the hill.

2. Friday, February 11. On the Indian trail to *Quabaug*, now *Brookfield*, probably in the western part of *Princeton*.

**THE SECOND REMOVE.**—But now the next morning I must turn my back upon the Town, and travel with them into the vast and desolate Wilderness, I know not whither. . . . After this, it quickly began to snow, and when night came on, they stopt; and now down I must sit in the snow by a little fire, and a few boughs behind me, with my sick Child in my lap.

The old trail from Lancaster to Quabaug ran a little south of Wachusett to the Indian villages along the Menameset, now called Ware, River, whence it branched to the north and south towards the tribal headquarters of the Connecticut-river Indians and the Quabaugs. A less used path left this trail near Lancaster, and led north of the mountain to Nichewaug and Squakeag.

3. Saturday, February 12, to Sunday, February 27. Wenimesset *alias* Menameset, a swamp stronghold of the Quabaugs on what is now known as the Ware River, in the extreme northern angle of New Braintree.

THE THIRD REMOVE.—The morning being come, they prepared to go on their way: One of the Indians got up upon a horse, and they set me up behind him with my poor sick babe in my lap. . . This day in the afternoon, about an hour by Sun, we came to the place where they intended, *viz.*, an Indian Town called Wenimesset, norward of Quabaug.

4. Monday, February 28, to March 3. Probably in Petersham, about half way between Ware and Miller's Rivers.

THE FOURTH REMOVE.—We travelled about half a day, or a little more, and came to a desolate place in the Wilderness, where there were no Wigwams or Inhabitants before; we came about the middle of the afternoon to this place. . . At this place we continued about four dayes.

5. Friday, March 3, to March 5. In Orange, on Miller's River, near the Athol line.

THE FIFTH REMOVE.—Upon a Friday, a little after noon, we came to this River [Bacquag]. . . A certain number of us got over the River that night, but it was the night after the Sabbath before all the company was got over.

This remove Mrs. Rowlandson describes as made in frenzied haste by the entire mob of Indians—an assemblage of all the eastern tribes, probably about 2000 men, women and children—and was caused by news of the arrival at Quabaug, on March 2, of Major Thomas Savage

with a troop of mounted men and three infantry companies from the Bay, where he was joined by a Connecticut force of similar strength. Major Savage promptly began pursuit, but was delayed by Indian wiles, and reached the crossing at Miller's River on March 6, only to find that the enemy were safe from pursuit, having with great difficulty got over the swollen stream on rafts.

6. Monday, March 6. At the Great Swamp in Northfield, beside which ran the Indian trail between Nichewaug and Squakeag.

THE SIXTH REMOVE.—On Monday they set their Wigwams on fire, and went away. . . We came that day to a great Swamp by the side of which we took up our lodging that night.

7. Tuesday, March 7. At Squakeag, now in Northfield, near Beers' Plain.

THE SEVENTH REMOVE.—After a restless and hungry night there, we had a wearisome time of it the next day. The Swamp by which we lay, was as it were a deep Dungeon, and an exceeding steep hill before it. . . That day, a little after noon, we came to Squaukeag, where the Indians quickly spread themselves over the deserted English Fields, gleaning what they could find.

8. Wednesday, March 8. At Coasset on the Connecticut River in South Vernon, Vermont.

THE EIGHTH REMOVE.—On the morrow morning we must go over the River, i. e. Connecticut, to meet with King Philip, . . but as my foot was upon the cannoo to step in there was a sudden outcry among them and I must step back; and instead of going over the River, I must go four or five miles up the River farther Northward. . . We travelled on until night, and in the morning we must go over the River to Philip's Crew. . . Then I went to see King Philip.

9. March —. In the Ashuelot Valley.

THE NINTH REMOVE.—But instead of going either to Albany or homeward, we must go five miles up the River and then go over it. Here we abode awhile.

10. March —. In the Ashuelot Valley.

THE TENTH REMOVE.—That day a small part of the Company removed about three quarters of a mile, intending further the next day.

11. March — to April. Probably in Chesterfield, New Hampshire.

THE ELEVENTH REMOVE.—The next day in the morning they took their Travel, intending a day's journey up the River; I took my load at my back, and quickly we came to wade over the river, and passed over tiresome and wearisome hills.

12. Sunday, April 9? In the same locality.

THE TWELFTH REMOVE.—It was upon a Sabbath-day morning that they prepared for their Travel [towards the Bay.] . . . When we had gone a little way, on a sudden my mistress [Weetamoo, Squaw Sachem of Pocasset,] gives out she would go no farther but turn back again. . . . We were at this place and time about two miles from Connecticut River.

13. April —. Probably in south part of Hinsdale.

THE THIRTEENTH REMOVE.—Instead of going toward the Bay (which was what I desired), I must go with them five or six miles down the River into a mighty Thicket of Brush, where we abode almost a fortnight.

14. April —. On the homeward march through Northfield.

THE FOURTEENTH REMOVE.—Now we must pack up and be gone from this Thicket, bending our course toward the Bay towns. . . . When night came on we sate down; it rained, but they quickly got up a Bark Wigwam where I lay dry that night.

This move was probably about April 20. When the news of Canonchet's capture by the English on April 2 reached the Connecticut River Indians they deserted Philip, and even threatened to kill him. The Nipnets and Nashaways left for Wachusett about April 10, and Quanopin and Philip accompanied them; but their squaws remained awhile in the neighborhood of the Pocumtuck villages.

15. April —. At Miller's River in Orange.

THE FIFTEENTH REMOVE.—We went on our Travel. . . We came to Baquag River again that day, near which we abode a few dayes.

16. April —. One mile south of Miller's River, probably in Athol.

THE SIXTEENTH REMOVE.—We began this Remove with wading over Baquag River . . . yet it pleased them to go but one mile that night, and there we staid two dayes.

17. April —. Probably at Nichewaug.

THE SEVENTEENTH REMOVE.—At night we came to an Indian Town.

18. April —. At an Indian settlement, probably on Ware River near Menameset, perhaps at that on Barre Plains.

THE EIGHTEENTH REMOVE.—Then we came to another Indian Town where we stayed all night.

19. April —. On the west side of Wachusett in Princeton.

THE NINETEENTH REMOVE.—After many weary steps we came to Wachuset.

20. Friday, April 28, to May 2. Between the mountain and lake near Redemption Rock in Princeton.

THE TWENTIETH REMOVE.—We went about three or four miles, and there they built a great Wigwam, big enough to hold an hundred Indians. . . On Tuesday morning they call their General Court (as they call it) to consult whether I should go home or no. And they all as one man did consent to it that I should go home, except Philip, who would not come among them. . . So I took my leave of them. . . About the Sun going down, Mr. Hoar, and myself, and the two Indians [Tom and Peter], came to Lancaster, and a solemn sight it was to me. There I had lived many comfortable years amongst my Relations and Neighbours; and now not one Christian to be seen, nor one house left standing: We went on to a Farm house that was yet standing, where we lay all night, though nothing but straw to ly on. The Lord preserved us in safety that night, and raised us up again in the morn-

ing, and carried us along that before noon we came to Concord. . . . Being recruited with food and raiment, we went to Boston that day, where I met with my dear husband. . . .

The passages quoted from the Narrative follow the text of the second edition, 1682. Mrs. Rowlandson's explicit statement that not a house was left in Lancaster, and that she "went on" to find a sheltering roof for the night, did not prevent the historians Willard and Marvin from asserting that the meeting-house was not destroyed in 1676. The farm-house in which she lodged the night of May 2 was probably upon Wataquadock hill in Bolton, perhaps Ensign John Moore's, the exact location of which is not known with certainty. All of the inhabitants of Lancaster who had cattle enough left to serve in the transportation of their chattels fled at once after the massacre of February 10 to the Bay towns. The remainder, about twenty families, were gathered into two palisaded garrisons with a guard of eighteen soldiers to protect them from the small bands of Indians that were prowling in the neighborhood. These with their household goods were removed by a company of forty mounted men, sent from Concord by Major Simon Willard for that purpose, on March 26. Mrs. Rowlandson's statement proves that the garrisons and other buildings then standing were destroyed either by the soldiers or savages. The families were scattered far and wide, doubtless each going where relatives could give them shelter. By recorded births and deaths among them, *etc.*, we know that between 1676 and the resettlement of Lancaster in 1681 the Prescotts, Ruggs and Hudsons, and perhaps the Sawyers, were in Concord; the Wilders, Willards, Houghtons, Waters and Ropers in Charlestown; the Farrars at Woburn; the Whitcombs probably at Scituate; the Lewises, Bemans, Rogers, Sumners and Athertons at Dorchester. The Rowlandsons, after eleven weeks' sojourn with Rev. Thomas Shepard of Charlestown,



were furnished with a dwelling in Boston by the South Church, whence Mrs. Rowlandson made another "remove" in the spring of 1677 to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where her husband was installed, not as colleague of the Rev. Gershom Bulkeley, although all the historians, including even the careful John Langdon Sibley, have so alleged, but as settled pastor in place of Mr. Bulkeley, who had asked and obtained dismission, and removed to Glastonbury, where he practiced as a physician. Mr. Rowlandson died in Wethersfield, November 24, 1678, but the date and place of Mrs. Mary (White) Rowlandson's final remove from all earthly trials is nowhere found recorded.

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