PATTERNS ON THE WALL

By Elizabeth Yates
things are not easy for Jared Austin, but with hard work and indomitable perseverance, he turns his life into something beautiful, just like the walls that he stencils. This historical fiction novel features fascinating character development, an engaging and unpredictable plot, and wonderful insights into life in New England during the early 1800s, including the “frozen year” of 1816. Elizabeth Yates has woven in moving messages of kindness, gratitude to God, faith, appreciation of nature, hard work, love of learning, self-improvement, optimism, humility, long-suffering, and patience.

"The best books are ones that not only entertain, but also teach you and inspire you. This book does just those things! You won’t view your trials or your enemies the same after reading PATTERNS ON THE WALL!" — Jenny Phillips

www.jennyphillips.com
PATTERNS ON THE WALL

By Elizabeth Yates

First published in 1943
This unabridged version has updated grammar and spelling.
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Cover illustration by Dan Burr
If faith produce no works, I see
That faith is not a living tree,
Thus faith and works together grow;
No separate life they e’er can know:
They’re soul and body, hand and heart:
What God hath joined, let no man part.

– HANNAH MORE
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CHAPTER 2

Jared, riding off beside Mr. Toppan on that April morning of 1810, knew little of what was before him. He had held the bridle of Mr. Toppan’s mare and noticed how carefully the big man threw his leg over the saddle with its bag of brushes and paints; then he had flung his thin leg over the Gray One’s back and settled himself into the saddle that still creaked from newness. Mr. Toppan had doffed his wide-brimmed hat, and Jared had waved to Eben and Nancy standing on the doorstone, to Thankful and Mary clinging to Nancy’s skirts, and to the babe in her arms. Then they turned their horses’ heads toward the road and started off.

In a last glance, Jared saw the twisted shapes of the apple trees before the house; over the hill he saw the thin spiral of smoke from the Thaxters’ chimney. These things were home, and his heart felt a pang of longing at leaving them; but he had learned early to steel himself against bodily pain, and that of the heart was little different. So he turned his eyes to the road ahead and to the uneven line of the mountains that rose up against the sky.

Always the mountains had bound his world, the distant blue ones to the north, the pyramid-shaped one that reared itself high in lonely splendor to the west, and the tapering line to the east that rose from near their own land. He had thought, when he was a little boy, that the mountains rimmed the world and beyond them there was nothing else. One day, Mother Thaxter told him that his own mother had come from beyond the mountains, and because the thought of his mother was connected with all lost loveliness, he had decided then that only rare and beautiful things dwelt on the far side of those blue ranges. When he grew older, he realized that during the cold days of January and February his father always looked toward the nearby mountains to see if the storm was coming their way; and then, when the snow came surging through the air,
driven over forest and field by the stinging east wind, he felt that all
the evil in the world—since cruel weather signified much of it—was
stored behind those pine-girt ramparts. Later, when he had had a
few months of school, he learned that only the rest of the world lay
beyond the mountains, some of it evil, some of it good.

Mr. Toppan and Jared rode through the pass over the mountains.
Standing still for a moment on the crest to rest their horses, Jared
saw the road behind them reaching back into the known world, and
then turned back to the road ahead. The wind whistled through the
gap, and Jared shivered.

“Are you afeared, boy?” Mr. Toppan asked kindly. “Are you
wanting to turn back?”

Jared felt the pull of the road they had traveled over and all the
known things it led back to—Mother Thaxter’s warm kitchen and
Jennet in her blue dress, Nancy’s kindness trying to make up for
Eben’s anger, the little girls and baby; then the long years of planting
and harvesting, wintering and planting again; and a boy growing to
be a farmer like his father, looking out to the mountains and always
wondering what lay beyond them.

“No, Mr. Toppan, I’m not fearful, just full of wondering. I like the
looks of the road ahead.”

“So be it then.” Mr. Toppan pressed his mare forward, and the
Gray One drew into her stride obediently. “But mark you, boy, since
you have chosen one road, follow it with your whole heart. From
this time forth we speak no more of the farms on the back side of
the mountains. The Lord did not give me a good pair of eyes for
nothing, and with but one of them I could see well enough what
your life has been, and what it can be. You’ve a gift in your fingers
which the power in you will glorify, but lay yourself open for the
work and think of the past only when that quietness comes which
can smooth the sharp edges of memory.”

“Yes, Mr. Toppan.” Jared found it easier to say that word now
they were going down the other side of the mountains.
“For five years you’ll be my apprentice,” Mr. Toppan went on, “and five years from the 12th day of April, 1810, you can mount this same road and return to your people. You’ll be your own master then, and no man can lift a hand to you save to pay you well for your services. Five years is long enough for any man to serve another when he has the gift I think you have.”

They rode on in silence. The sun climbed high in the sky, its warmth lavish on the earth. Warblers sang in the trees edging the road, and a brook recently loosed from winter’s lock of ice and snow raced over boulders in its course to the valley. Often a deer sprang across the path before them, and more than once the underbrush moved heavily where a bear, padding along and sniffing the ground, had stepped aside to let them pass.

“A journeyman painter’s life is not an easy one, Jared,” Mr. Toppan was saying. “We’re here one week and there another. Sometimes we get no pay but our board, and sometimes we get no thanks. But it’s a good life, too.”

“It must be a fine thing to use those big brushes that you have in your saddlebag,” Jared commented.

“You shall see soon enough, for we’ve a room to do at a tavern ahead of us on the road. If the Gray One can do her thirty miles as well as my mare, we’ll be there by nightfall and at work in the morning.”

“But, Mr. Toppan, I’ve never used a brush.” Jared, stumbling for words in his joy, found only an apology.

“I can teach you, boy, and learning comes best by doing.”

They had been traveling three hours or more, sometimes in silence, sometimes in talk, when Mr. Toppan reined in his horse by a ford. There was a clearing and some fallen logs to sit on, new greening grass for the horses to graze, and the brook for them all to drink from.

“We won’t be the first travelers to stop here for our luncheon,” Mr. Toppan commented as he slipped the bridle from his horse.
Then he stretched his booted legs out on the ground with his back against a beech, whose smooth bark was a bulletin board of initials carved intricately and laboriously while other horses had been grazing and other travelers resting.

The brown mare stepped into the brook and sunk her velvety nose deep into the water until the clear sand of the bed was stirred at the intake of her nostrils. Jared, still keeping his hand on the Gray One’s reins, let her water beside the mare, then he led her over to the grassy spot.

“She’s a young thing still, Mr. Toppan, and I’ll not let her loose this first day,” Jared explained. “’Twould do me no good if she took a fancy into her head to go back over the mountains to her own pasture.”

Mr. Toppan smiled. “That’s right, Jared, keep a good eye on your horse, for a horse is a journeyman’s partner in business.” He took from his pocket a package of bread and cheese, which Nancy Austin had given him that morning.

Jared secured the Gray One to a log and went upstream, above where the horses had been drinking, to get fresh water in a flat bottle Mr. Toppan carried in his pack. Returning, he sat on the fallen log near Mr. Toppan. Breaking bread together and drinking cold forest-drawn water out of the same bottle, with two horses cropping grass nearby, and birds singing in the sweet warm April air, made Jared feel that the windows of heaven had opened to him.

“Has the brown mare been your partner long, Mr. Toppan?” he asked.

“This is the twentieth year we’ve gone seeking work together,” he answered, “and she’s done more for me than my brushes have.” Mr. Toppan looked at Jared. “Bless you, boy, but you haven’t lived as much as half that time, yet how the world has changed! When I first took to the road, I was willing enough to do any job that came my way—a piece of carpentering here or painting there, with my board for my wage. In those days there wasn’t time or inclination for aught
but needed things.”

“Was the traveling hard then?”

Mr. Toppan nodded. “The roads through the forests were mere trails, and sometimes you had to hold your eyes close to the slashes on the trees to keep from straying. Many of the farms were just clearing with the stumps still standing in the fields, and there were more log cabins than houses. A man like me carried a gun as well as a pack then.”

“Did you meet with the Indians often?”

“No,” Mr. Toppan said, shaking his head, “bears and wolverines were the most troublesome, but I stayed in many a cabin that had tales to tell of the Indians—of homes burned to the ground and women folk and children carried off to be sold to the French in Canada. But that’s all a story of the past, and so is the war which gave us the liberty we’ve yet to show we can use well.” He sighed. “It’s so far behind us that it looks as if we might have to fight another war, on the sea this time.”

“What is it all for, Mr. Toppan?”

“I’m not the best to explain, boy, but when you win one battle, you often have to prove you knew what you were fighting for and win the next. I’ve been in the north country all winter and have heard little enough news. Tonight at the tavern we’ll fill our ears right enough.”

Jared’s tongue was trembling with questions he longed to ask, but Mr. Toppan had closed his eyes and folded his hands over his broad chest. Jared reined the Gray One near him and stroked her soft nose.

All around them was the forest, with tall trees breaking into new foliage, silent depths which never man had trod, which knew no sound save the stealthy feet of Indians and the quick flight of wild things. But it was that forest that man was pushing back, making clearings in it, raising homes, and after the work had gone well, seeking to bring beauty into those homes, taking his patterns from
JUST
DAVID

Eleanor H. Porter

THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY
David was raised in an isolated mountain cabin by a devoted father who taught David to love beauty, nature, and music. When David's father becomes seriously ill, he decides to take David to relatives that the boy has never met. But partway into the journey, his father dies. David does not know the names of his relatives or even the name of his father, which his father had a reason for not telling him. This story is not just about what happens to David, but also what happens to all those who enter his life after this tragic event.

“This is literature at its very best: beautifully written, completely wholesome, delightfully engaging, and intensely inspiring.” —Jenny Phillips
First published in 1916

This unabridged version has updated grammar and spelling.

Cover Illustration by Dan Burr

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CHAPTER 1
The Mountain Home

Far up on the mountainside, the little shack stood alone in the clearing. It was roughly yet warmly built. Behind it jagged cliffs broke the north wind, and towered gray-white in the sunshine. Before it a tiny expanse of green sloped gently away to a point where the mountain dropped in another sharp descent, wooded with scrubby firs and pines. At the left a footpath led into the cool depths of the forest. But at the right, the mountain fell away again and disclosed to view the picture David loved the best of all: the far-reaching valley; the silver pool of the lake with its ribbon of a river flung far out; and above it the grays and greens and purples of the mountains that climbed one upon another’s shoulders until the topmost thrust their heads into the wide dome of the sky itself.

There was no road, apparently, leading away from the cabin. There was only the footpath that disappeared into the forest. Neither, anywhere, was there a house in sight nearer than the white specks far down in the valley by the river.

Within the shack a wide fireplace dominated one side of the main room. It was June now, and the ashes lay cold on the hearth; but from the tiny lean-to in the rear came the smell and the sputter of bacon sizzling over a blaze. The furnishings of the room were simple, yet in a way, out of the common. There were two bunks, a few rude but comfortable chairs, a table, two music-racks, two violins with their cases, and everywhere books and scattered sheets of music. Nowhere was there cushion, curtain, or knickknack that told of a woman’s taste or touch. On the other hand, neither was there anywhere gun, pelt, or antlered head that spoke of a man’s strength and skill. For decoration there was a beautiful copy of the Sistine Madonna, several photographs signed with names well known out in the great world beyond the mountains, and a festoon
The music stopped abruptly. David looked up with the slightly dazed air of one who has been summoned as from another world. “Did you speak to me, sir?” he asked.

“I did—twice. I asked if you never did anything but play that fiddle.”

“You mean at home?” David’s face expressed mild wonder without a trace of anger or resentment. “Why, yes, of course. I couldn’t play ALL the time, you know. I had to eat and sleep and study my books; and every day we went to walk—like tramps, as you call them,” he elucidated, his face brightening with obvious delight at being able, for once, to explain matters in terms that he felt sure would be understood.

“Tramps, indeed!” muttered Simeon Holly, under his breath. Then, sharply: “Did you never perform any useful labor, boy? Were your days always spent in this ungodly idleness?”

Again David frowned in mild wonder. “Oh, I wasn’t idle, sir. Father said I must never be that. He said every instrument was needed in the great Orchestra of Life, and that I was one, you know, even if I was only a little boy. And he said if I kept still and didn’t do my part, the harmony wouldn’t be complete, and—”

“Yes, yes, but never mind that now, boy,” interrupted Simeon Holly, with harsh impatience. “I mean, did he never set you to work—real work?”

“Work?” David meditated again. Then suddenly his face cleared. “Oh, yes, sir. He said I had a beautiful work to do, and that it was waiting for me out in the world. That’s why we came down from the mountain, you know, to find it. Is that what you mean?”

“Well, no,” retorted the man, “I can’t say that it was. I was referring to work—real work about the house. Did you never do any of that?”

David gave a relieved laugh. “Oh, you mean getting the meals and tidying up the house,” he replied. “Oh, yes, I did that with
this place in which he found himself; neither was his Silver Lake
anywhere with its far, far-reaching sky above. More deplorable yet,
owhere was there the dear father he loved so well. But the sun
still set in rose and gold, and the sky, though small, still carried the
snowy sails of its cloud boats; while as to his father—his father had
told him not to grieve, and David was trying very hard to obey.

David started out each day with his violin for company, unless he
elected to stay indoors with his books. Sometimes it was toward the
village that he turned his steps; sometimes it was toward the hills in
back of the town. Whichever way it was, there was always sure to
be something waiting at the end for him and his violin to discover,
even if it was nothing more than a big white rose in bloom or a
squirrel sitting by the roadside.

Very soon, however, David discovered that there was something
to be found in his wanderings besides squirrels and roses—and that
was people. In spite of the strangeness of these people, they were
wonderfully interesting, David thought. And after that, he turned
his steps more and more frequently toward the village when four
o’clock released him from the day’s work.

At first David did not talk much to these people. He shrank
sensitively from their bold stares and unpleasantly audible
comments. He watched them with round eyes of wonder and
interest, however, when he did not think they were watching him.
And in time, he came to know a lot about them and about the
strange ways in which they passed their time.

There was the greenhouse man. It would be pleasant to spend
one’s day growing plants and flowers—but not under that hot,
stifling glass roof, decided David. Besides, he would not want always
to pick and send away the very prettiest ones to the city every
morning, as the greenhouse man did.

There was the doctor who rode all day long behind the gray
mare, making sick folks well. David liked him, and mentally vowed
that he himself would be a doctor sometime. Still, there was the
stage-driver—David was not sure but he would prefer to follow this
INTO THE UNKNOWN
by Matthew A. Henson, Jacob Bull, and Bernadine Bailey
They had all gone on before, and I was standing and pushing at the upstanders of my sledge, when the block of ice I was using as a support slipped from underneath my feet, and before I knew it, the sledge was out of my grasp, and I was floundering in the water. I did the best I could. I tore my hood from off my head and struggled frantically. My hands were gloved, and I could not take hold of the ice.

The adventures of three Arctic explorers—Fridtjof Nansen, Robert Edwin Peary, and Matthew A. Henson—are told in this compilation of biographical and autobiographical stories. These fascinating and inspiring accounts are packed with excitement and educational value. Why will the explorers die if they eat the snow when they are thirsty? Why was it sometimes necessary to blow up the ice to save their lives? What explorer lost all of his toes except for one due to frostbite?
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CHAPTER 1
Fridtjof Nansen

By Jacob B. Bull
Translated by the Rev. Mordaunt R. Barnard

Section I

In Aker, Norway, there is an old manor house surrounded by a large courtyard. The house is built in the old-fashioned style. The garden, with its green and white painted fence, is filled with fruit trees, both old and young, whose pink and snow-white blossoms myriads of bumblebees delight to visit in springtime, while in autumn their boughs are so laden with fruit that they are bent down under a weight they can scarcely support.

Close by the garden, runs the Frogner River. Here and there in its course, are deep pools, while in other places it runs swiftly
would every now and then forget to eat his food or would devour anything and everything that came in his way.

The craving to follow out his own thoughts and his own way thus displayed itself in his early childhood, and he had not attained a great age before his longing to achieve exploits and to test his powers of endurance became apparent.

It began with a pair of skis made by himself for use on the Frogner hills, developed in the hazardous leaps on the Huseby slopes, and culminated in his becoming one of Norway’s cleverest and most enduring runners on ski. It began with fishing for troutlets in the river, and ended with catching seals in the Arctic seas. It began with shooting sparrows with cannons, and ended with shooting the polar bear and walrus with tiny Krag-Jörgensen conical bullets. It began with splashing about in the cold pools of the Frogner river, and ended in having to swim for dear life amid the ice floes of the frozen ocean. Persevering and precise, enduring and yet defiant, step by step he progressed.

Nothing was ever skipped over—everything was thoroughly learned and put into practice. Thus the boy produced the man!

Meanness was a thing unknown to Fridtjof Nansen, nor did he ever cherish rancorous feelings in his breast. A quarrel he was ever ready to make up, and this done it was at once and for all forgotten.

The following instance of his schooldays shows what his disposition was.

Fridtjof was in the second class of the primary school. One day a new boy, named Karl, was admitted. Fridtjof was the strongest boy in the class, but the newcomer was also a stoutly built lad. It happened that they fell out on some occasion or other. Karl was doing something the other did not approve of, whereupon Fridtjof called out, “You’ve no right to do that.”

“ Haven’t I?” was the reply, and a battle at once ensued. Blood began to flow freely, when the principal appeared on the scene.
Taking the two combatants, he locked them up in the classroom. “Sit there, you naughty boys! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves,” he said, as he left them.

On his return to the classroom a short time afterward, he found the two lads sitting with their arms around each others’ necks, reading out of the same book. Henceforth they were bosom friends.

As a boy, Nansen possessed singular powers of endurance and hardiness and could put up with cold, hunger, thirst, or pain to a far greater degree than other boys of his age. But with all this he had a warm heart, sympathizing in the troubles of others, and evincing sincere interest in their welfare—traits of character of childhood’s days that became so strongly developed in Nansen the leader. Side by side with his yearning to achieve exploits there grew up within his breast, under the strict surveillance of his father, the desire of performing good, solid work.

Here may be mentioned another instance, well worthy of notice.

Fridtjof and his brother went one day to the fair. There were jugglers, cake stalls, gingerbread, sweets, and toys, in abundance. In fine, Christiania Fair, coming as it does on the first Tuesday in February, was every child’s paradise, with all its varied attractions. Peasants from the country driving around in their quaint costumes, the townspeople loafing and enjoying themselves, all looking pleased as they made their purchases at the stalls in the marketplace, added to the “fun of the fair.”

Fridtjof and his brother Alexander went well furnished with money; for their parents had given them a dime each, while aunt and grandmamma gave them each a quarter apiece. Off the lads started, their faces beaming with joy. On returning home, however, instead of bringing with them sweets and toys, it was seen that they had spent their money in buying tools. Their father was not a little moved at seeing this, and the result was that more money was forthcoming for the lads. But it all went the same way and was spent in the purchase of tools, with the exception of a nickel that was invested in rye cakes.
and they had to encamp in order to avoid being frozen to death; while at times, again, the going would become so heavy in the fine drifting snow that they had to drag their sleighs one by one, three or four men at a time to each sleigh, an operation involving such tremendous exertion that Kristiansen, a man of few words, on one such occasion said to Nansen, “What fools people must be to let themselves in for work like this!”

To give some idea of the intense cold they had to encounter it may be stated that, at the highest altitude they reached—9,272 feet above the sea—the temperature fell to below -49° Fahrenheit, and this, too, in the tent at night, the thermometer being under Nansen’s pillow. And all this toil and labor, be it remembered, went on from August 1st to the end of September, with sleighs weighing on an average about two hundred and twenty pounds each, in drifting snow dust, worse than even the sandstorms of Sahara.

In order to lighten their labor, Nansen resolved to use sails on the sleighs—a proceeding which Balto highly disapproved of.

Sails, however, were forthcoming, notwithstanding Balto’s objections; and they sat and stitched them with frozen fingers in the midst of the snow. But it was astonishing what a help they proved to be; and so they proceeded on their way, after slightly altering their course in the direction of Godthaab.

Thus, then, we see these solitary beings, looking like dark spots moving on an infinite expanse of snow, wending their way ever onward, Nansen and Sverdrup side by side, ski-staff and ice-axe in hand, in front, earnestly gazing ahead as they dragged the heavy sleigh, while close behind followed Dietrichson and Kristiansen, Balto and Ravna bringing up the rear, each dragging a smaller sleigh. So it went on for weeks; and though it tried their strength and put their powers of endurance to a most severe test, yet, if ever the thought of “giving it up” arose in their minds, it was at once scouted by all the party, the two Lapps excepted. One day Balto complained loudly to Nansen. “When you asked us,” he said, “in Christiania, what weight we could drag, we told you we could
and a rare “Old Scout” he was. He kept up the going for three days and then came back to the land to start again with new loads of supplies.

The party that stayed at Crane City until March 1, consisted of Commander Peary, MacMillan, Goodsell, Marvin, myself, and fourteen Eskimos, whom you don’t know, and ninety-eight dogs, that you may have heard about.

The dogs were double-fed and we put a good meal inside ourselves before turning in on the night of February 28, 1909. The next morning was to be our launching, and we went to sleep full of the thought of what was before us. From now on it was keep on going, and keep on—and we kept on; sometimes in the face of storms of wind and snow that it is impossible for you to imagine.

Day does not break in the Arctic regions, it just comes on quietly the same as down here, but I must say that at daybreak on March 1, 1909, we were all excitement and attention. A furious wind was blowing, which we took as a good omen; for, on all of Commander Peary’s travelings, a good big, heavy, storm of blinding snow has been his stirrup cup, and here he had his last. Systematically, we had completed our preparations on the two days previous, so that, by 6 a.m. of the 1st of March, we were ready and standing at the upstanders of our sledges, awaiting the command “Forward! March!”

Already, difficulties had commenced. Ooblooyah and Slocum (Eskimo name, Inighito, but, on account of his dilatory habits, known as Slocum) were incapacitated; Ooblooyah with a swelled knee, and Slocum with a frozen heel. The cold gets you in most any place, up there.

I and my three boys were ordered to take the lead. We did so at about half past six o’clock in the morning. Forward! March! And we were off.
ROBERT E. PEARY IN HIS NORTH POLE FURS

THE FOUR NORTH POLE ESKIMOS
THE STORY OF

JOHN

GREENLEAF

WHITTIER

BY FRANCIS E. COOKE
John Greenleaf Whittier worked tirelessly on his father’s farm, making sure he finished the day’s work before allowing himself to pen the lines of poetry that filled his mind. Eventually, though a difficult choice, John Greenleaf Whittier risked his budding career as a successful poet, editor, and politician—and his life—to join the unpopular anti-slavery movement. As difficult as the decision was, Whittier knew that "the right must win and that duty must be done at all costs." He dedicated the majority of his life to fighting slavery, and as a result, he lived in poverty most of his life and struggled to care for those he loved. Little did he know the poetry and legacy he left behind would touch the lives of thousands of people for decades after his death.

"This book, with its vivid description and engaging writing style, transported me back to New England in the 1800s. There, I followed the story of a simple farm boy who grew into a courageous and noble man. This book is 'good and beautiful' literature at its best and is not to be missed!" — Jenny Phillips
John Greenleaf Whittier, the poet-philanthropist of America, was one of the heroes in stirring times, and his history, so full of incident, should interest young people: this story of his life has been written, however, chiefly with the aim of recording for them the beauty of his character. It has been truly said “The noblest workers of the world bequeath us nothing so great as the image of themselves.”

The materials for this little volume have been drawn from various American sources. I am especially indebted to The Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier by Samuel T. Pickard.

The few poems and stray verses chosen from among the poet’s writings have been introduced on account of their connection with events in his history.

F.E.C.

November, 1899
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CHAPTER 1

THE FARM-BOY OF HAVERHILL

In the year 1638 a Quaker, named Thomas Whittier, sailed from Southampton, and crossed the ocean to America to make a new home in a strange land. Twenty miles or so from the Atlantic coast he built the log hut which was to be his dwelling, surrounded by the woods and meadows through which the beautiful river Merrimack flows. By and by a little country town, called Haverhill, grew up near the pioneer Quaker’s home, and Thomas Whittier helped the new settlers with advice and was held by them in great esteem. One trouble, however, he never shared with them: this was their terror of the Indians, whose ancestors had camped in the neighboring wild forest lands for centuries past, and who, therefore, looked upon the country as their own rightful possession.

No wonder it was, then, that the plumed and painted savages came to explore the settlements of the white men, and with none but peaceful intentions. But when they were driven away by fire and sword, they made reprisals in the winter nights by burning lonely dwellings and tomahawking the inhabitants.

So the people of Haverhill built themselves strong places of refuge, where timid persons might shelter in case of an attack upon the town; and the feeling of enmity between white settlers and Indians grew apace.

Thomas Whittier neither barred his doors nor shuttered his windows. His trust in the savages, and his kind acts toward them gained their goodwill in return. They were always friendly with the peace-loving Quaker; and when he built himself, in course of time,
a larger dwelling at a little distance from the log hut, where he had no neighbors at hand, it mattered not to him and his family if they caught sight of swarthy faces peeping in through the latticed kitchen window after nightfall, and knew that the wild men from the hills were at hand.

Generation after generation passed away, and the farmhouse descended from father to son, till early in this century a farmer, named John Whittier, who was a Quaker like his English ancestor, owned the place. It was a low brown wooden building, with two windows on each side of the narrow front door and three windows in the story above. This door opened into a small square entry with a steep staircase leading from it and a room on either hand. At one corner of the house a porch led straight into the kitchen at the back of the dwelling, which was the family living place. Such a room! It was thirty feet long, and had a huge fireplace at one end, round which a company of people could gather on a winter night, and children could hide away snugly in the shadowy chimney corners, and fall asleep or listen to the tales their elders told by the blazing fire-light.

In front of the house lay a terrace and a sloping garden, separated from the steep, hilly road by a thick fence of trees and a brook that rushed merrily down its rocky channel. Across the high road stood a granary, a forge, and the barn where the cattle were housed in the winter. On the other side of the garden lay the farm and fields; while at its foot rose a steep hill called “Job’s Hill,” clothed with oak trees, from the summit of which a fine view was to be seen of the neighboring woods, of Lake Kenoza gleaming in the distance like a jewel, and of the river Merrimack winding through the meadows on its way to the sea. From that hill top could be heard in stormy weather the roar of the great billows breaking on the beach many miles away.

So much for the Quaker homestead and its surroundings; now
for its inhabitants. Farmer Whittier, who was known as “Friend Whittier” in the neighborhood, was an honest, worthy man whom everyone could trust. He did each day’s work diligently, and seldom looked beyond it, having few thoughts or wishes that his home and daily life did not satisfy. Eight miles away at Amesbury stood a Quaker meetinghouse. Thither the farmer and his wife used to drive each Sunday in an old-fashioned chaise, drawn by a steady old horse, to join in silent worship with the few “Friends” who gathered there. Sometimes “ministering Friends” used to stay at night at Friend Whittier’s farmhouse, and always found a hospitable welcome; but the visitors who were most often to be found there were poor travelers—tramps and wandering peddlers carrying with them packs of small wares to sell. Some of them were uncouth and ignorant people; some were sturdy knaves who demanded food rudely and did not wait to be invited to take a comfortable seat by the fireside; but the ready kindness of Abigail Whittier, the farmer’s wife, and her sister Mercy flowed out to them all, and they carried with them lasting memories of the tender-hearted Quakeresses as they went on their way.

John Greenleaf Whittier, the hero of this story, was the elder son of “Friend Whittier,” and was born on December 17, 1807. Three other children completed the family—Mary, who was a year or two older than Greenleaf, and Matthew and Elizabeth, both younger than he. It was a happy country life that the little lad led in his early childhood, playing barefooted in the summer by the brookside, and making friends with the living creatures in the woods and the animals on his father’s farm.

But children soon grow out of babyhood in a busy family, and working days began very early for the little Whittiers. The girls helped their mother to spin and keep the house in order; the boys had plenty to do on the farm and in the fields, where the ground was rough and stony, and had to be cleared of the old trunks of the
forest trees.

During the winter, when the snow lay thickly on the ground, there was no work to be done out of doors for weeks together. Then, in the long evenings, the mother, sitting at her spinning wheel, used to tell the children stories of her own young days, and repeat to them tales she heard from her parents of the adventures which befell the early settlers when the wild Indians with their bows and tomahawks used to come down upon the log huts and farms where the white men lived, whom they looked upon as their enemies. As they listened to her words, the young ones would creep nearer and nearer to the great open fireplace, and look round timidly when the wind shook the farmhouse and rattled the latticed windows.

There was great excitement in the household, sometimes, at the end of a long, heavy snowstorm, when sledges, drawn by many pairs of oxen, came slowly down the long hillside, forcing their way through the snowdrifts to clear the road from farm to farm. The loud voices of the drivers could be heard in the clear air from far away; and Friend Whittier and his boys used to hurry to the barn and bring out their oxen, ready to be harnessed to the team, while the girls prepared and carried out brimming cups of cider for the men to drink as they waited at the gate.

At times, too, when the storm had been roaring all night round the house, the children woke in the morning to find everything deep in snow; the white drifts lying against the window panes; the garden wall and the wood pile buried under one dazzling white cover. Then the farmer used to call out, “Boys! A path!” and Greenleaf and Matthew, drawing on their thick mittens as fast as they could over their hands, and pulling their caps over their ears, ran out of doors to set to work to tunnel a path through the snow from the house to the barn. They shouted merrily as they neared the end of their journey, and woke up the imprisoned animals that used to look with large wondering eyes at the invaders.
The district of Haverhill was at its best in Spring and Summer, when the meadows were full of flowers. Surely there never were anywhere else such hepaticas and anemones as were to be found beside the brook, half hidden by drooping ferns and grasses. In the woods the oaks and maples were the homes of squirrels and birds that never learned to fear the footsteps of the boys and girls, who would not for the world have done them any harm. Farmer Whittier and his family had no need to go beyond their own farm boundaries for the means of living. Their sheep and the flax grown on the fields provided material for their homespun clothes; they grew their own wheat and the river was stocked with fish.

It was part of Greenleaf’s work each day to milk the cows and carry the milk pails to his mother, who was famous in the neighborhood for the butter and cheese she made. The boys gave pet names to their favorite oxen. One was called “Buck” and another “Old Butter.” If ever a holiday was given to the boys on a sultry summer afternoon, they used to drive the cattle up Job’s Hill and lie under the trees resting against the patient creatures as they lay chewing the cud in the shade.

One day Old Butter, from his standpoint on Job’s Hill, saw Greenleaf coming up with the well-known bag of salt, which he had been to the farm to fetch for the cattle. Down came the ox with flying leaps to meet his young master, and as the boy bent down to strew the salt, Old Butter was upon him in his headlong course. Making a great effort, the ox leaped up and just saved Greenleaf’s life, lighting with a mighty blow upon the ground beyond him, happily unhurt. Kind treatment made the creatures on the Whittier’s farm half human; and the young Whittiers by making friends of the dumb animals gained a pleasure in their early days which any country boy might possess if he liked.

Half a mile from the homestead stood the little schoolhouse to which Greenleaf trotted by the side of his elder sister, for the first
time, when a wee laddie. It was only in the winter when there was little work to be done on the farm that the children as they grew older could be spared. They used to trudge through the deep snow and learn to read and write at the notched and battered desks, finding it a strange experience to have the companionship of other boys and girls.

Looking back after fifty years had passed on these early school days, the poet Whittier wrote the following verses for a children's magazine called Our Young Folks.

**IN SCHOOL DAYS**

Still sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning;
Around it still the sumacs grew,
And blackberry vines are running.

* * *

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favor singled;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.
Pushing with restless feet the snow,
To right and left he lingered,
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes, he felt
Her soft hand’s light caressing;
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

“I’m sorry that I spelt the word—
I hate to go above you;
Because, the brown eyes lower fell—
Because you see I love you!”

Still memory to a gray-haired man,
That sweet child face is showing;
Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

He lives to learn in life’s hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her—because they love him.

It was a very quiet, uneventful life that this boy led, who was to be famous in the coming years. He rarely went beyond the district of Haverhill. But he was perfectly happy whenever in summertime he could lie beneath the trees on Job’s Hill, thinking his own thoughts and dreaming the sunny hours away in visions that were by and by to clothe themselves in beautiful words. Only his mother suspected this. She watched her boy with silent sympathy. Perhaps as she read the Bible to her children on Sunday evenings, and saw
Booker T. Washington's story begins in a Virginia slave hut and ends with worldwide recognition and a life of incredible accomplishments. In this fascinating autobiography, Booker T. Washington tells his own story with skillful, engaging writing. Not only does the book give insights into a remarkable man, but it also shares profound messages about persistence, education, hard work, humility, strength, service, and sacrifice.

This very worthy autobiography should be on the reading list of every teenager and adult. Booker T. Washington rose from difficult circumstances, and through hard work and perseverance he accomplished more during his lifetime than many people accomplish in three lifetimes.
This volume is dedicated to my Wife
Margaret James Washington
And to my Brother John H. Washington
Whose patience, fidelity,
and hard work have gone far to make the
work at Tuskegee successful.
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CHAPTER 1
A Slave Among Slaves

I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate, I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post office called Hale’s Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the colored people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother’s side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been unsuccessful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family records—that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I knew
even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the nearby plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at the time.

The cabin was not only our living place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings, there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the “cat-hole,”—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The “cat-hole” was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin, I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats.

There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the center of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my memory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out, I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and skillets. While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer
with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fireplace in the summer was equally trying.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began and at night after the day's work was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night, and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them. How or where she got it I do not know. I presume, however, it was procured from our owner's farm. Some people may call this theft. If such a thing were to happen now, I should condemn it as theft myself. But taking place at the time it did, and for the reason that it did, no one could ever make me believe that my mother was guilty of thieving. She was simply a victim of the system of slavery. I cannot remember having slept in a bed until after our family was declared free by the Emancipation Proclamation. Three children—John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself—had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor.

I was asked not long ago to tell something about the sports and pastimes that I engaged in during my youth. Until that question was asked, it had never occurred to me that there was no period of my life that was devoted to play. From the time that I can remember anything, almost every day of my life had been occupied in some kind of labor; though I think I would now be a more useful man if I had had time for sports. During the period that I spent in slavery, I was not large enough to be of much service; still, I was occupied most of the time in cleaning the yards, carrying water to the men in the fields, or going to the mill, to which I used to take the corn, once a week, to be ground. The mill was about three miles from the plantation. This work I always dreaded. The heavy bag of corn would be thrown across the back of the horse, and the corn divided about evenly on each side; but in some way,