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OLD COLONY DAYS

By

Lucile Blackburn Berry

A new dramatization of the Courtship of Miles Standish, faithfully reproducing the story in the language of the poem. A most excellent entertainment of the highest merit. For High School or Grammar Grades. Four principal characters (3 male, 1 female), with as many more as desired. Costumes and properties simple. Time 1½ hrs.

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Old Colony Days

By Lucile Blackburn Berry

A Dramatization of Longfellow's Poem

"The Courtship of Miles Standish"

Suggestions for Stage Settings and Costuming

This play can be given much more effectively where there is a regular stage curtain, but has been presented very creditably on an ordinary school platform without any stage equipment.

Decorate the walls with Colonial relics of all kinds—old weapons, Indian hatchets, bows and arrows, powder horns, skins of animals, etc., etc. Furnishings of rudest kind. Select the characters carefully, with special reference to fitness as regards appearance, temperament, voice, etc.

Characters

MILES STANDISH. Short, heavy-set man. Speaks in blunt, decisive tones. A man of deeds, not words.

JOHN ALDEN. A tall, slender fair-haired youth. A dreamer and fair-spoken.

PRISCILLA. A sweet-faced Puritan girl. Very attractive in form, face and manner.

THE ELDER. An old, white-haired man. Very grave of voice and manner.

THE INDIAN MESSENGER. Tall, black-haired. Very cunning and sly in all his movements.

OTHER MESSENGERS. Ordinary Puritans in dress and behavior.

WATTAWAMAT. A tall Indian chief.

PECKSUOT. Same in rank as Wattawamat.

HOBOMOK. An Indian interpreter. Friend of the white man.

Other Puritans and Indians take part in several scenes.

Costumes

MILES STANDISH. If obtainable, short-waisted, full-skirted coat such as seen in pictures of Colonial times; large white collar and cuffs, knee breeches, high boots, broad-rimmed hat with high crown. In later scenes, belt in which are stuck various weapons, or belt and sword should be worn. In these later scenes a khaki suit such as worn by sportsmen, or any rough-looking hunting jacket may be used.

JOHN ALDEN. Colonial suit of knee breeches and full-skirted coat, or, if that is not obtainable, ordinary sack coat worn open; ruffled shirt and wide white collar and cuffs; low shoes with large buckles or bows.

PRISCILLA. Typical Colonial gown of dark material, short-waisted and with full skirt; large white kerchief of sheer lawn folded and crossed over bosom; broad cuffs and apron of same material.

ELDER. Long black coat and wide black stock or ministerial vest.

INDIAN MESSENGER. Long khaki or leather trousers. If former, fringe of bright colored cloth may be sewed up outside seams. Shirt of same material. Hair long with band about forehead. Feathers stuck in band, long knife in belt.

WATTAWAMAT. Very showy Indian dress.

PECKSUOT. Similar dress, but of different color.

HOBOMOK. Rough dress of scout or woodsman.

Other Puritans and Indians may be dressed in a similar manner, but colors and styles varied slightly to give variety without being unfaithful to the costumes of that day.

Scene I

[*Setting:* Table at center on which are arranged some very large books. Miles Standish reading. Table at right over which are scattered writing materials. John Alden seated busily writing with quill pen. Weapons hanging on walls. Miles Standish rises deliberately and walks about as though inspecting weapons. Turns and gazes long at John Alden, then bursts into speech.]

MILES STANDISH:

Look at these arms, my friend, the warlike weapons
that hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or
inspection!

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in
Flanders; this breastplate,

Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a
 skirmish;
 Here in front you can see the very dint of the bullet
 Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.
 Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of
 Miles Standish
 Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the
 Flemish morasses.

JOHN ALDEN [*ceasing to write and looking with
 affection at Standish*]:

Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed
 of the bullet;
 He in his mercy preserved you to be our shield and
 our weapon. [*Continues his writing.*]

MILES STANDISH:

See how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal
 hanging;
 That is because I have done it myself, and not left it
 to others.
 Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent
 adage;
 So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and
 your ink-horn.
 (*Smiling*) Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great
 invincible army,
 Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his
 matchlock,
 Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and
 pillage,
 And, like Caesar, I know the name of each of my
 soldiers. [*Alden laughs as he writes. Standish
 ceases walking about, viewing arms, and goes to
 window, out of which he gazes apparently lost in
 his own thoughts. After a time he speaks, his
 voice tender with pity and regret.*] Yonder there,
 on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose Standish;
 Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the
 wayside!

She was the first to die of all who came in the
 Mayflower!
 Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have
 sown there,
 Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of
 our people,
 Lest they should count them and see how many are
 perished! [*Goes back to table, selects a large
 volume, opens, and reads with great interest.
 Alden continues busily writing. After a short
 time, Miles Standish brings his hand palm down-
 wards on the open page and looking at Alden,
 who glances up in surprise, says with great force.*]

MILES STANDISH:

A wonderful man was this Caesar,
 You are a writer and I am a fighter, but here is a
 fellow
 Who could both write and fight and in both was equally
 skillful!

JOHN ALDEN:

Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen
 and his weapons.
 Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could
 dictate
 Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his
 memoirs. [*Continues his writing.*]

MILES STANDISH:

Truly, truly, a wonderful man was Caius Julius Caesar!
 Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,
 Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when
 he said it.
 Battles five hundred he fought and a thousand cities
 he conquered;
 He too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded;
 Finally, he was stabbed, by his friend, the orator Brutus!
 Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion
 in Flanders,
 When the rear guard of his army retreated, the front
 giving way too,

And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so
 closely together
 There was no room for their swords? Why, he seized
 a shield from a soldier.
 Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and
 commanded the captains,
 Calling on each one by name, to order forward the
 ensigns;
 Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their
 weapons;
 So he won the day, the battle of something or other.
 That's what I always say: If you wish a thing to be
 well done,
 You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others.
 [*Standish goes back to his reading and John
 Alden writes vigorously. After a time, Standish
 closes the ponderous book with a bang that causes
 Alden to look up in surprise. Then Standish
 speaks, rising as he does so.*]

MILES STANDISH:

When you have finished your work, I have something
 important to tell you,
 Be not, however, in haste; I can wait; I shall not be
 impatient!

JOHN ALDEN [*folding the last letter, and push-
 ing aside his papers*]:

Speak, for whenever you speak I am always ready to
 listen,
 Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles
 Standish.

MILES STANDISH [*embarrassed and speaking
 with some hesitation*]:

'Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the
 Scriptures—
 This I have said before, and again and again, I repeat
 it;
 Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary
and dreary;
Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of
friendship.
Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden
Priscilla.
She is alone in the world, her father and mother and
brother
Died in the winter together; I saw her going and
coming,
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of
the dying,
Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself
that if ever
There were angels on earth, as there are angels in
heaven,
Two have I seen and known; and the angel whose
name is Priscilla,
Holds in my desolate life the place which the other
abandoned.
Long have I cherished the thought, but never have
dared to reveal it,
Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the
most part.
Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of
Plymouth,
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but
of actions,
Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and the heart of
a soldier.
Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my
meaning;
I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases
You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant
language,
Such as you read in your books, of the pleadings and
wooings of lovers,
Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a
maiden.

JOHN ALDEN [*at the first mention of Priscilla's name, he has started up in surprise, but controlling himself he tries to mask his bewilderment, and speaks in a light way*] :

Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it;
 If you would have it well done—I am only repeating your maxim—
 You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!

MILES STANDISH [*somewhat annoyed, and speaking impatiently*] :

Truly the maxim is good, and I do not gainsay it;
 But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.
 Now as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases. I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to surrender,
 But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not.
 I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,
 But of a thundering "No!" point-blank from the mouth of a woman,
 That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it.
 So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,
 Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases. [*Here he goes over to John Alden, who has stood for the greater part of the time with eyes downcast, takes his hand and with much kindness in his voice, continues*] :
 Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts me.
 Surely you can not refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship!

JOHN ALDEN [*slowly and with deep feeling*] :
 The name of friendship is sacred;

What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you.

[*The conclusion to this scene should be made to bring out the strong friendship between these men. Let the hand-clasp, which is continued until the last word is spoken, the voices of the men and the direct look of each into the other's eyes bring out this central truth.*]

Scene II

[*Setting:* A room suggesting colonial times. Any furnishings that carry out this idea will add to the effectiveness of the scene, but the only things necessary are a spinning-wheel and two rude chairs. Priscilla seated at wheel spinning. After a moment John Alden enters. It would add to this scene if Priscilla could sing in the manner of the Pilgrims, a Psalm before the entrance of Alden. As she concludes, he enters. She rises and meets him with evident pleasure.]

PRISCILLA:

I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the passage;

For I was thinking of you, as I sat here singing and spinning. [*During this speech they are seated, Priscilla at her wheel. John is much embarrassed, turns his hat around, and wonders how he will deliver his message. Priscilla continues slowly and with much sadness in her voice.*]

I have been thinking all day,
 Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows of England;

They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;

Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and the linnet,

Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbors
 Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
 And, at the end of the street, the village church, with
 the ivy
 Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in
 the church-yard.
 Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my
 religion;
 Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in
 Old England.
 You will say it is wrong, but I can not help it; I almost
 Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and
 wretched.

JOHN ALDEN [*who has trusted himself to glance
 at Priscilla only occasionally while she
 spoke*]:

Indeed I do not condemn you;
 Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this
 terrible winter.
 Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger
 to lean on;
 So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of
 marriage
 Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish, the
 Captain of Plymouth.

PRISCILLA [*who during the first part of the
 speech has eagerly listened, expecting
 John Alden to offer himself, now gazes
 at him in amazement and after a moment
 bursts forth indignantly*]:

If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to
 wed me,
 Why does he not come himself and take the trouble
 to woo me?
 If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth
 the winning!

JOHN ALDEN [*stammering and confused but trying to defend his friend*]:

But the Captain—the Captain has no time for such things.

PRISCILLA [*her indignation rising*]:

Has no time for such things, as you call it before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it or make it after the wedding?

That is the way with you men; you don't understand us—you can not.

When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another,

Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected,

Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.

This is not right nor just; for surely a woman's affection Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for the asking.

When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.

Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved me,

Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last might have won me,

Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen.

JOHN ALDEN [*anxious to do his duty and defend his friend speaks earnestly*]:

But remember his courage and skill and all of his battles in Flanders,

How with the people of God he has chosen to suffer affliction,

How, in return for his zeal, they have made him the
Captain of Plymouth.

He is a gentleman born, can trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire,
England,

Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of
Thurston de Standish.

He is heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely
defrauded.

He still bears the family arms, and has for his crest,
a cock argent

Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
Though he is rough, he is kindly; you know how during
the winter.

He has attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as
woman's.

He is somewhat hasty and hot, I can not deny it, and
headstrong,

Stern as a soldier must be, but hearty, and placable
always. [*Rising.*]

He is not to be laughed at and scorned, because he is
little of stature;

For he is great of heart, magnanimous, courtly,
courageous;

Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of
Miles Standish.

PRISCILLA [*smiling archly at John who has
ended his speech with great warmth*]:

Why don't you speak for yourself, John?

[*John glances once at Priscilla comprehending
all and rushes from the room.*]

[*To prevent this scene from being stiff and unnatural
especially during the long speeches, it is necessary that
those taking the parts, realize fully the situation. As
John makes his last speech, Priscilla may spin vigorously
and occasionally show her disdain by tossing her head.
As he speaks of Miles Standish's temper she may look
at him and laugh outright.*]

Scene III

[*Setting:* Evening in home of Miles Standish. Same room as in Scene I. Miles Standish seated at the table reading his favorite volume of Caesar by candle light. Very nervous, rises, walks to window, comes back to his book, listens as if expecting some one. Alden enters hurriedly. Miles Standish looks up and speaks cheerily.]

MILES STANDISH :

Long have you been on your errand,
 Not far off is the house, although the woods are
 between us ;
 But you have lingered so long, that while you were
 going and coming I have fought ten battles and
 sacked and demolished a city.
 Come, sit down, and in order, relate to me all that
 has happened.

JOHN ALDEN [*embarrassed but driven to speak
 the truth*] :

Friend, I have carried your message,
 Gave it with faith and with fervor,
 Told of your family, your name, your rare lineage,
 Told of your sacrifice here with God's people,
 Spoke of your battles and warfare and all the honor
 we do you,
 Sought to show you as I see you,
 A man any woman might glory to name as her husband.
 But it availed naught, she would not believe me,
 Said if you loved her you surely would woo her,
 Scorned my excuse "You were busy"
 And laughing at me, as I urgently pleaded your cause,
 Said, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

MILES STANDISH [*very angry at the last words,
 jumps up and stamping in rage, shouts*] :
 John Alden! you have betrayed me!

Me, Miles Standish! Have supplanted, defrauded,
betrayed me!

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart
of Wat Tyler;

Who shall prevent me from running my own through
the heart of a traitor?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to
friendship!

You, who have lived under my roof, whom I cherished
and loved as a brother;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup,
to whose keeping

I have entrusted my honor, my thoughts the most sacred
and secret,—

You too, Brutus! Ah, woe to the name of friendship
hereafter!

Brutus was Ceasar's friend, and you were mine, but
henceforward

Let there be nothing between us save war and implacable
hatred! [*As the Captain speaks in great rage he
strides up and down the room. John Alden sits
in deep misery.*]

MESSENGER [*enters and speaks in great excite-
ment*]:

Come, Captain Miles Standish, the men of the village
have sent me,

Rumors of war are afloat and hostile incursions of
Indians,

When danger is present, 'tis your voice that is needed in
counsel. [*Exit Messenger.*]

[*Miles Standish takes his sword from its place on
the wall, buckles it on and frowning fiercely leaves the
room. John Alden sits as one bewildered, then rises
and speaks sadly.*]

JOHN ALDEN:

It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temptation of
Satan!

Yes, it is plain to me now that the hand of the Lord is
leading.

Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will
 abandon, and
 Her whom I may not love and him whom my heart has
 offended.
 With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that
 glimmers
 Bright on the hand, that is dust in the chambers of silence
 and darkness—
 Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter.

[*Stands in sad meditation as curtain falls.*]

Scene IV

[*Setting:* A room rudely furnished with table at front of stage. On table is large Bible. When scene opens a group of middle aged men (any number), stand conversing in an earnest manner with the Elder. An Indian enters, glides across the stage, and lays a large rattlesnake skin filled with arrows upon the table. The men step forward and examine it, glancing with hatred at the Indian. The Elder, at length, places his hand on the Bible and speaks. As he speaks the men listen but seem doubtful as they glance from time to time at the Indian who has glided back to the door and awaits an answer. Scene must be given very deliberately to be effective.]

ELDER [*speaking very slowly*]:

I judge it wise and well that some at least were converted,
 Rather than any were slain, for that is but Christian
 behavior!

MILES STANDISH [*entering hurriedly and overhearing the Elder*] :

What! do you mean to make war with milk and the water of roses?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted

There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage
Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth
of a cannon!

ELDER [*surprised but firm*] :

Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles,
Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire
they spake with!

MILES STANDISH [*advancing to table, speaks decisively*] :

Leave this matter to me, for to me by right, it pertaineth.
War is a terrible trade; but in the cause that is righteous,
Sweet is the smell of powder; and thus I answer the
challenge!

[*As he speaks, he jerks the arrows from the skins, throws them upon the floor, then fills the skin with powder and bullets and walks over to the Indian. As he thrusts the skin into the hands of the savage, he exclaims.*]

Here, take it! This is your answer!

[*All watch intently the Indian as he leaves the room, except the Elder who stands with head bowed. Hold scene for a time.*]

Scene V

[*Setting:* This scene takes place just after John Alden has witnessed the departure of the

vessel for England. He is supposed to be standing gazing after the ship. Arrange street scene if possible.]

JOHN ALDEN :

Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether
 above me,
 Seemed like a hand that was pointing and beckoning
 over the ocean.
 But there is another hand that it not so spectral and
 ghost-like,
 Holding me, drawing me back and clasping mine for
 protection.
 Float, O hand of cloud and vanish away in the ether!
 Roll thyself up like a fist to threaten and daunt me;
 I heed not
 Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil!
 Here I remain.

[*Enter Priscilla, unnoticed by Alden.*]

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so
 wholesome,
 As is the air she breathes and the soil that is pressed
 by her footsteps.
 Here for her sake will I stay and like an invisible
 presence
 Hover around her forever, protecting, supporting her
 weakness;
 Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock
 at the landing,
 So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at
 the leaving.

PRISCILLA [*coming forward*] :

Are you so much offended you will not speak to me,
 John?
 Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were
 pleading
 Warmly, the cause of another, my heart, impulsive
 and wayward,
 Pledged your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of
 decorum,

What I ought not to have said, but now I can never
 unsay it;
 For there are moments in life, when the heart is so
 full of emotion,
 That if by chance it be shaken or into its depths like
 a pebble
 Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,
 Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered
 together,
 Yesterday I was shocked when I heard you speak of
 Miles Standish,
 Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into
 virtues,
 Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting
 in Flanders,
 As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a
 woman,
 Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting
 your hero—
 Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse—
 You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friend-
 ship between us,
 Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken!

JOHN ALDEN [*very soberly*]:

I was not angry with you, with myself alone was I
 angry,
 Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my
 keeping.

PRISCILLA [*with spirit*]:

No! No, you were angry with me for speaking so
 frankly and freely—
 It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the fate of a
 woman
 Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that
 is speechless,
 Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its
 silence.
 But let us be what we are, and speak what we think,
 and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions
of friendship.
It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare
it
I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with
you always.
So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to
hear you
Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the
Captain, Miles Standish.
For I must tell you the truth: much more to me is
your friendship
Than all the love he could give, were he twice the
hero you think him. [*Priscilla frankly extends
her hand, and John Alden grasps it speaking with
emotion.*]

JOHN ALDEN:

Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who offer you
friendship
Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and
dearest. [*Hold this scene for a moment.*]

CURTAIN.

Scene VI

[*Setting:* Stage should be arranged to represent a wood. Miles Standish sitting on log in deep thought. Indian interpreter, Hobomok, gathering brush for camp fire. Others of Miles Standish's band engaged in cleaning weapons, etc.]

MILES STANDISH [*speaking slowly to himself*]:
I alone am to blame, for mine was the folly.
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray
in the harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing
of maidens?

'Twas but a dream—let it pass—let it vanish like so many
others!

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is
worthless;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away,
and henceforward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of
dangers.

*[Come in suddenly from all sides a number of
Indians who look upon the white men with curiosity
and some contempt. Hobomok moves to the rear of
Miles Standish where he stands during the entire
scene.]*

WATTAWAMAT *[advancing with haughty stride,
faces M. Standish]*:

Now Wattawamat can see by the fiery eyes of the
Captain

Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of the brave
Wattawamat

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman
But on a mountain at night from an oak-tree riven by
lightning

Forth he sprang at a bound with all his weapons about
him

Shouting, "Who is there here to fight with the brave
Wattawamat? *[Draws out long knife, whets it
on left hand, holds it up.]*

See, the woman's face on the handle?

I have another at home with the face of a man on the
handle

By and by they shall marry and there will be plenty
of children.

PECKSUOT *[steps forward, pats long knife which
he partly draws from sheath and then
thrusts back. Manner very insulting]*:

By and by it shall see; it shall eat; ah, ah! but shall
speak not.

This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent
to destroy us

He is a little man; let him go to work with the women.

[Miles Standish leaps forward snatches Pecksuot's knife and plunges it into the Indian's heart. Indians on all sides take aim with bow and arrow. Miles Standish's men grasp muskets—Curtain.]

[Curtain rises after a few minutes, reveals Indians lying prone on field. Hobomok looking down at the slain Pecksuot, speaks to Miles Standish, who is surveying the results.]

HOBOMOK:

Pecksuot bragged very loud of his courage, his strength,
and his stature,—

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man;
but I see now—

Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before
you.

CURTAIN.

Scene VII

[Setting: Same as in II. Priscilla sitting at wheel spinning. John Alden opposite watching her nimble fingers. Both seated facing the door by which the messenger enters. After a time John speaks.]

JOHN ALDEN:

Truly, Priscilla, whenever I see you spinning and spin-
ning,

Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of
others,

Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a
moment

You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful
 Spinner
 She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of
 Southampton,
 Who, as she rode on her palfry o'er valley and meadow
 and mountain,
 Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to
 her saddle.
 She was so thrifty and good that her name passed into
 a proverb.
 So shall it be with your own when the spinning wheel
 shall no longer
 Hum in the house of the farmer and fill its chambers
 with music.
 Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it was in
 their childhood
 Praising the good old times and the days of Priscilla,
 the Spinner.

[Priscilla during this speech is embarrassed, makes the treadle fly faster and faster until the thread breaks in her fingers. Now she rises, gets a skein of wool from the table and standing before John Alden speaks laughingly.]

Come, you must not be idle; if I am a pattern for
 housewives,
 Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of
 husbands—
 Hold this skein on your hands while I wind it ready
 for knitting.
 Then who knows but hereafter when fashions have
 changed and the manners,
 Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times
 of John Alden! *[Places skein on his outstretched
 hands, and gracefully winds the yarn as he sits
 with hands extended in an awkward manner.
 Give time to this scene.]*

MESSENGER *[enters excitedly]* :

Miles Standish is dead! An Indian has brought us the
 tidings

He was slain by a poisoned arrow; shot down in the
front of the battle,
He was beguiled into an ambush and cut off with the
whole of his forces
All the town will be burned and all the people be
murdered. [*Exit Messenger.*]

[*As the messenger almost breathless gives his message, the ball falls from Priscilla's hands and she stands with eyes fixed in horror upon the speaker. John Alden, with one thought that Priscilla is now his, rises and clasps her to his heart while he speaks with deep feeling.*]

JOHN ALDEN :

Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them
asunder.

Scene VIII

[*Setting:* Curtain rises on the wedding of John Alden and Priscilla. Guests are grouped so as to leave a view of the open door in which stands Miles Standish just returned from the wars. He is unseen by any of the guests. The Elder's hand is upraised as he invokes a blessing upon the pair. All heads are bowed. Hold this scene. As heads are raised M. Standish strides into the room. John Alden sees him and starts back as from an apparition. Priscilla hides her face. Guests cry out in surprise or horror: "Miles Standish!" "The Captain!"]

MILES STANDISH [*advancing extending hand to Alden*]:

Forgive me! I have been angry and hurt,—too long
have I cherished the feeling;

I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is ended.

Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh Standish,

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for error.

Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of John Alden.

JOHN ALDEN :

Let all be forgotten between us,

All save the dear old friendship, and that shall grow older and dearer!

MILES STANDISH [*turning and bowing in a stately manner to Priscilla*] :

I wish you joy of your wedding, my fair Mistress Alden! I was a foolish old man. I should have remembered the adage,

If you would be well served, you must serve yourself; and moreover,

No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas.

[*Curtain falls on final group. Captain smiling at Priscilla, who turns with happy glance to John. Guests grouped about these central figures all joyous in the wedding and the return of their great captain.*]

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