The Tory: A Sketch.

There is an old graveyard in the quietest corner of a quiet New England village. The path leading to it from the main road is overgrown with weeds and briers, and the gate which once gave entrance is now rotted on its hinges. The stones are of fine black slate, covered by staring death's-heads and harsh, angular letters, which it is hard to decipher. The tool of the graver has indeed long been dulled, for the dates which most of the head-stones bear are before the opening of the present century. Soft, gray lichens cling closely to every roughened point of the stones, mutely pledging themselves to share forever the destiny of their home. There is one large slab to which they seem to have become attached with a peculiar friendship. Upon it, their various hues of black, brown, and purple commingle in subdued, yet beautiful shades.

The stone attracts the eye of the idle passer by its unusual state of preservation, no less than by its intrinsic beauty. Despite the coating of lichens and moss, the inscription may be easily read. George Weymouth, the record tells us, died in 1782, in the 79th year of his age. There is little about the simple statement to excite sympathy or even interest.

About 1730, George Weymouth came to the small town of Exton, and at once went to work to establish a home for himself. Of his past history but little was known by the townspeople. He was young, vigorous, and finely bronzed by exposure to sun and wind. His frank, open face and genial manners soon won him a host of friends among the young people of the village. The old wives, however, wrinkled their brows maliciously whenever his name was mentioned, and some were heard to declare, croakingly, that no possible good could come from a man who was wont to stroll in the woods on a Sabbath afternoon. For it must be confessed that George Weymouth, though a young man of strict morality, and one accustomed to attend regularly the three-hour morning sermon, was yet a true lover of nature. Every chance that offered for a ramble after birds and flowers, was taken advantage of by the enthusiastic youth. At first there was much stir in the staid old Puritan town over this barefaced desecration of the Lord's Day. Weymouth was publicly warned by the village parson to cease his scandalous actions; but Weymouth was a man who did what he saw fit, and steadily persisted in his woodland walks. The good men of the church were almost struck dumb at this bold defiance of authority, but manfully resolved to bring the offender to trial.

It leaked out, however, in the course of the discussion over the wisdom of such a step, that Weymouth had led a seafaring life for several years before coming to Exton. This atoning fact, which accounted somewhat for his roving disposition, together with the influence brought to bear by the younger men, led to a reconsideration, and it was decided to let Weymouth walk in peace. Some still shook their heads over the folly of allowing such wickedness to go unpunished, and gloomily predicted that no good would come out of doing this evil.

But the hostile criticism was greatly weakened by the lapse of time. Men forgot Weymouth the Sabbath-breaker, and thought only of Weymouth the neighbor and friend. The young man (for at this time he was barely thirty) took the attentions of his friends and the assaults of his enemies all somewhat indifferently, and showed a self-reliance and independence that fairly took away the breath of the village gossips.

In the summer that followed this first spring, Weymouth was easily foremost in the sports of the young men, and came to be regarded by them as a sort of demigod. As for the young women, what doubt could there be about their feelings toward a young man, tall, handsome, and athletic, who bore off the honors of the wrestling-bouts and leaping-matches, and about whom, withal, there was a shade of mystery, with just a tinge of possible depravity? The Puritan maidens were not so different from other maidens, after all.

There was one in particular whose heart beat