

TALES OF NEW-ROCHELLE.

LEGENDS OF THE FRENCH HUGUENOT SETTLERS—INDIAN RAIDS AND REVOLUTIONARY FROGS.

There are touches of sunny France, the fountain head of romance, in the legends and traditions which cluster around New-Rochelle. The men and women who figure in them were not narrow minded English, or stolid, easygoing Dutch, but kind hearted, polite, liberal French. More than that, they were Huguenots, who loved their country well, but religion more than country, and when they could no longer practice the one they left the other. With many sighs and longing looks behind them, they sailed to the west in the year 1680, and fair winds brought them to a fairer land, which they called New-Rochelle, in remembrance of La Rochelle, the town which had sheltered the few faithful who escaped from the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day.

Sailing up the Sound, they came to Beaufort Point, which is the extreme eastern end of Davenport's Neck, the rocky shores of which project in one place so as to form a natural wharf. On this rock they landed, and their train of thanksgiving and praise sounded from shore to shore. They built low houses near the shore and marked out little farms, which they fenced neatly later on. They were free, and gave others freedom to worship as best pleased them.

They were not altogether happy, though, and they never overcame a dreary longing for their blithe and merry homeland. Tradition tells of one poor Frenchman who went every morning just after sunrise to the rock on which they had landed, and with his arms stretched forth in the direction in which he thought lay his beloved France, sang the verses of a Huguenot hymn of sorrow. Then he would return to his farm and take up his daily tasks with a cheerfulness which comes to those who suffer on account of their religion. He kept up his morning devotion until he died a very old man. Until a few years ago this landing place, almost as important as the famous New-England rock where landed the Pilgrim Fathers, was unmarked. Now there is a suitable monument and the place of landing is part of a public park.

In New-Rochelle one may still find several of the houses built in the early days, their peculiar French architecture standing out in vivid contrast with the modern houses which surround them. Several direct descendants of the original Huguenot pioneers are scattered about the town, and they have preserved with more or less detail the legends of their fathers. One of the oldest of these is a tragedy of the love of an Indian brave for a beautiful Huguenot maiden. It can best be retold perhaps as chronicled years ago by Thomas Towndrow, who served The Tribune for more than half a century.

Thirty years or more had passed since the landing of the refugees, and a beautiful village had been built about the neck. It was Sunday, and most of the villagers had departed before sunrise on their long tramp to Manhattan, where they attended the French church, L'Église du St. Esprit, which stood in what is to-day known as Pine-st. There were few people moving about, and a tall Indian standing silent and alone on the stone bridge at one edge of the settlement attracted no attention. He was Serringo, a friendly chief, and he had been seen in New-Rochelle before.

After a time the door of a house a little up the road opened, and a girl of eighteen stepped out. She came toward the Indian with her eyes cast down, like one endeavoring to collect her scattered thoughts for an emergency she was compelled to meet. She wore a gown of red cloth, with a long waist and open at the neck. Her complexion was pure olive, her hair as black as any one ever saw, and her eyes matched the color, even to the long dark lashes. The Indian was handsome, for an Indian, youthful and strong.

"It is good. You have come," said the man of the wilderness, advancing to meet her. "Yes, Serringo, I am come," said the maiden in French, "but to what purpose? Three times has the full moon mirrored itself in yon waters since I told thee that sorrow to us both would result from thy visits to the wigwams of the Christian."

"Marie, your words are true as the arrow of Wamago, that goes straight to the mark; but they are as sharp as the hatchet of the Mohegan when he rushes on the sleeping foe at midnight. Three moons have I thought upon your words, till my heart became parched and dry, and then the shade of my father came to my tent in the darkness, when the stars were hidden by thick clouds, and said: 'Serringo, seek the pale face once more.'"

Before replying, Marie looked at the Indian before her, and she sighed as she said: "I have a father, too, an old man, whose heart is bound up in his daughter. If you have obeyed your father, shall I not also obey mine?" "The Indian quickly caught at her words. "Does the daughter of the pale face obey only her father when she bids me seek a woman of my own tribe?"

"The rich, red blood mantled both her neck and forehead. "You dwell in the wilderness, Serringo," she said. "Your ways are not like our ways, and the God of my fathers has never authorized the rites which your religion prescribes. See you not the inequality of our state and why the union can never be?"

"You stand upon the ground, and see no further than yonder oak which looks down from the hill upon your father's roof, but the Great Spirit is higher than the sun, and he sees the hunting ground of the redskin as well as the little speck which the pale faces have taken for their own. He sees Serringo when he kneels upon the banks of the Hackettawane as plainly as the white man praying from his books. He reads the heart of Serringo and has seen his love for Marie, and says that it is good. He can read in the heart of the daughter of the pale face, too."

Full minutes passed before the girl answered his pleading. Then she sighed, which should have told the Indian that his hope of winning her love was not entirely in vain, and said: "Whatever may be the truth, Serringo, circumstances are against us. Every morning my parents look toward the dark and boundless sea which separates them from their loved home. Their feet are upon these rocks, but their hearts are in the vineyards of France. Me only—my daughter—can they look upon with pleasure. I am all that is left to them of their former estate, and were I to wed contrary to their wishes the sun would darken before their aged eyes."

"The arrows of Serringo are sharp," replied the Indian quickly. "He can protect the Indian from the kite, and bring down the eagle on the wing. When your father is afar off in the spirit land, who will shield you from the north wind and wrap you in furs when the winter snow is deep in the valleys?" "They had been talking so intently that they did not notice the sudden approach of the mid-summer thunderstorm which now burst over them. Serringo seized her hand and led her quickly to the shelter of an arched rock on the brow of a neighboring hill, covered with tall chestnut trees. The thunder and lightning continued to flash and roar, and the rain fell in sheets. The very rock above them shook as the thunder split the trembling heavens.

"Serringo, is there not danger here?" cried the maiden, as the Indian wrapped her in his loose robes and pressed her to his side. "It is the will of the Great Spirit," he replied calmly. "He will do what is right." At that moment a neighboring oak was struck by lightning, and with a scream of fright, she darted out of the shelter and ran toward a body of men who were returning to the village. Among them she had noticed her father. Serringo, who had not observed the approach of the whites, supposing that Marie had fled in terror, followed quickly to afford her his protection. The whites came around the corner of a clump of underbrush just as the Indian reclaimed the maiden's side.

The Frenchman had heard her scream and had seen her flight from the Indian. They thought he was pursuing her, and two swords were instantly aimed at his head. The maiden darted

between the swords and her lover and received the points in her own bosom. Serringo cried out in agony, and embraced the bleeding form. She gave but one shudder, turning her eyes on the Indian in one long, longing glance and then closed them forever. They buried her on a knoll a little to the west of the original boundary of the village, and Serringo went back to the woods. Never again did he enter the village, but he was seen several times in the deep of night standing with folded arms near the place where Marie was buried.

No trace of the mound could be found to-day, but old residents tell the story much as it has been given here. They say that Serringo's spirit, faithful after all these years, comes at night to the spot where the mound used to be and stands in ghostly silence until the first sign of dawn causes him to fade away.

One of the refugees who came from France shortly after the original settlement was made was a good man named Dubois. He was forced to go back into the wilderness to the south before he found a farm which suited him, and there he lived with his wife and their beautiful daughter, Helene. One day when he had gone into the village, the Indians came and carried off the two women. It was a roving band, and they hurried their captives through the forest for ten or twelve miles. Then they camped and prepared to torture the women.

"We learned how to die in France," said the mother to her daughter as the Indians were tying them to two young trees which stood close together. "Had we stayed there we would have died for the faith, now we can die in it."

"I remember, mother," said Helene, "and I am not afraid." The Indians gathered dry wood which they piled about the feet of their victims, who kept their eyes on each other and showed no fear. Then one of the braves seized a brand from the fire and prepared to light the human torches. "Let us sing, mother," said the girl, and she started a familiar verse from one of Marot's hymns.

There was no faltering in either voice; that was for the Indian approaching with the brand. He stopped suddenly with the first clear note, when the song went on he dropped the brand and squatted down to listen. The other Indians gathered round to hear the death song of these white squaws. It moved them, not to pity, for the Indian never pities, but it moved them. Presently one of them cut the ropes which bound the women to the trees, and showed them a pile of furs on which they could spend the night.

Dubois had not been idle. Finding his home deserted on his return, he alarmed the village, and a well armed band started on the trail. Their dogs had little trouble following the scent, and got far in advance. So far in fact, that when they came upon the Indian camp their loud barks aroused the warriors, and set them to flight before the whites were near enough to seek revenge. When the Frenchmen heard how the old songs had saved the women from a terrible death, they circled around the pair and sang the familiar verses over again. Every hat was doffed and scarcely an eye was dry.

Davenport's Neck is associated with more than one Revolutionary story, but none of them are more interesting than the strange duel which was fought in two chapters by troopers attached in some irregular way to different Continental regiments. They hated each other before the war began, and several happenings in winter quarters had made matters worse. One-handed "Shube" Merritt had sworn to kill "Puck" Smith at the first opportunity, and Smith used even longer oaths in telling what he would do to the one-armed fighter. They met at a sort of inn kept by one Ferris, which stood on the neck near the shore, and Merritt's party succeeded in disarming Smith before he had a chance to shoot his enemy.

Smith stood against the wall of the house, his eyes blazing defiance and his lips hurling curses at the heads of his captors. "Now I will kill you," said Merritt as he walked up and placed a loaded pistol against his breast. "Don't murder the man that way, 'Shube,'" cried one of the men. "Give him a chance. Let him run for it and we'll all take a crack at him. It'll be more fun."

"You mind your own business," growled "Shube." "I'll tend to him." Others protested against the murder and finally agreed on a compromise. "I'll give you three chances. If the pistol misses me three times I'll let 'Shube' go."

The men laughed, and told "Shube" he was too generous. By no possible chance could a pistol be expected to miss fire three times. Smith said his prayers, and then he stepped up and pulled the trigger again. A second time the charge failed to explode. Smith began to take hope. A third attempt was no more successful, and Merritt threw down the gun in disgust. His companions made him keep his promise.

A week later at the same place "Shube" was overpowered by a crowd of Smith's friends. "Don't kill me like a dog," he cried, as he was pushed up against the wall where Smith had stood a few days before. "I gave you a chance, give me one."

"What sort of chance do you want?" asked Smith. "Give me a pistol and let us fight it out square."

"I'll give you the same chance you gave me," was the reply. "If the pistol misses three times, you go free." With the weapon pressed against his enemy's breast Smith fired and the one-armed man fell mortally wounded. They carried him into the tavern, where he lingered for an hour.

"Pull out the ball and throw it in the fire," he begged, and when they asked him why he wished that, he added, "when it melts my life will pass away. Pull it out, won't you? It hurts so!" The Huguenots suffered greatly from the Hessians during the war, and were compelled to quarter a large number of them for part of one winter. One of the old French families has preserved a story about one of their grandmothers who was the victim of Hessian wretchedness. A big, clumsy German had been quartered upon her, and she tried to get him to work for her. He only laughed when she demanded that he chop wood or go without his supper, and her heart was too big to carry out her threat when he refused.

"You must carry a tub of water from the spring," she said one morning, "or your clothes go unwashed." "Me carry water?" said the Hessian, swelling out his chest and beating it with his big fist. "I'm a soldier—fight, not work."

The old French woman refused to do the washing, and the Hessian ceased trying to persuade her. "How would you like to have the devil for your water carrier?" he asked, finally. "If I had you, 'twould be devil enough," she said, shaking her broom at him.

"I can make the devil carry water for you," he continued, overlooking the personal thrust in her reply. "Bring me a sieve and I'll have your tub filled in no time."

There was just enough curiosity about her to let him try, and she brought out her best sieve and placed the tub in front of the door. He muttered a few mysterious words, and the devil appeared from around the corner of the house. "Bring water from the spring and fill the tub," commanded the Hessian.

The devil made two or three trips, but by the time he reached the tub the sieve was always empty. At last he grew very angry, and threw the sieve on the ground and jumped on it. Then he kicked all the staves out of the tub, which made the Hessian laugh and the old French woman cry bitterly, for tubs and sieves were expensive, and money was scarce.

The young men of New-Rochelle did not take the same interest in the Revolution as did their brothers in the other parts of the country. The majority of them stayed at home, and when there was trouble in the neighborhood they took to the woods and stayed there. This was due, perhaps, to the good time which they were having about the quiet old taverns of the French town. There was one in North-st., which was in particular favor with the wildest youths, and while the rest of the country was fighting and struggling against the British, they gathered under its roof in numbers, dancing and playing cards the night long.

One evening when the pleasure was at its height a troop of British light horse swooped upon the tavern and surrounded the roisterers. Only a few escaped to the woods. The rest were taken down the road and searched for valuables. The result was not pleasing to the troopers, and they began to strip their victims. Then they tied them to the tails of their horses and gave them a most unpleasant half hour. Thinking of their gentle sport, the British lined up their victims and made them kneel in the road.

"They are going to shoot us!" cried one youth, who had taken more than was good for him. "I do not know how to die," and he fainted from fright. Another swore by everything he held holy that he was from that moment a loyal and faithful subject of King George. He even offered to enlist and don a red coat. The soldiers laughed at his offer. They did not intend to hold an execution, however, but rather a sacrilegious prayer meeting. The leader of the troopers, a non-commissioned officer, took charge, and ordered the kneeling Americans to repeat the prayer after him. With their heads bowed and their hands clasped in prayer, the redcoats rode away, and the youths returned to the tavern.

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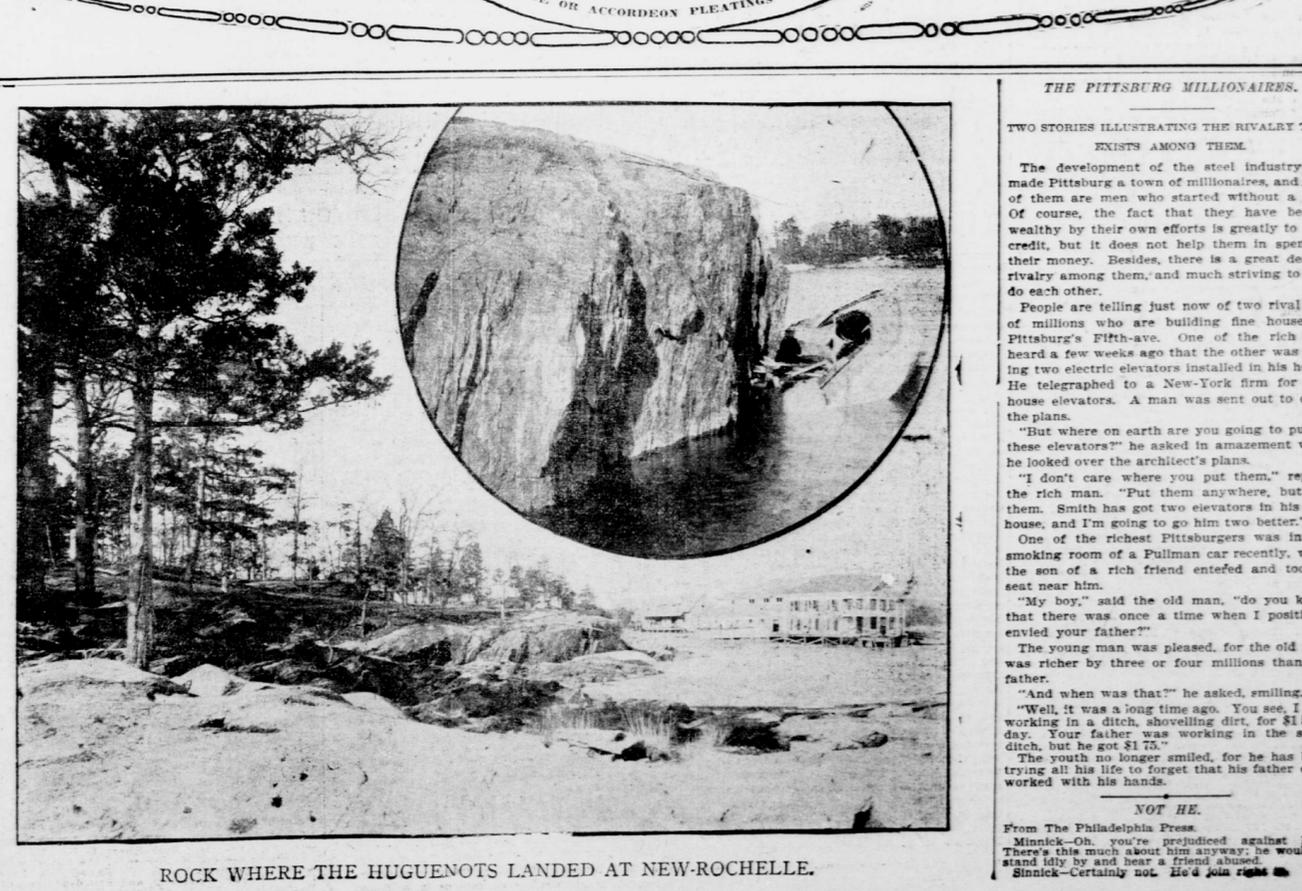
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THE PITTSBURG MILLIONAIRES. TWO STORIES ILLUSTRATING THE RIVALRY THAT EXISTS AMONG THEM. The development of the steel industry has made Pittsburg a town of millionaires, and most of them are men who started without a cent. Of course, the fact that they have become wealthy by their own efforts is greatly to their credit, but it does not help them in spending their money. Besides, there is a great deal of rivalry among them, and much striving to outdo each other. People are telling just now of two rival men of millions who are building fine houses in Pittsburg's Fifth-ave. One of the rich men heard a few weeks ago that the other was having two electric elevators installed in his house. He telegraphed to a New-York firm for four house elevators. A man was sent out to draw the plans. "But where on earth are you going to put all these elevators?" he asked in amazement when he looked over the architect's plans. "I don't care where you put them," replied the rich man. "Put them anywhere, but put them. Smith has got two elevators in his new house, and I'm going to go him two better." One of the richest Pittsburgers was in the smoking room of a Pullman car recently, when the son of a rich friend entered and took a seat near him. "My boy," said the old man, "do you know that there was once a time when I positively envied your father?" The young man was pleased, for the old man was richer by three or four millions than his father. "And when was that?" he asked, smiling. "Well, it was a long time ago. You see, I was working in a ditch, shovelling dirt, for \$1.50 a day. Your father was working in the same ditch, but he got \$1.75." The youth no longer smiled, for he has been trying all his life to forget that his father once worked with his hands. NOT HE. From The Philadelphia Press. Minick—Oh, you're prejudiced against him. There's much about him any way; he wouldn't stand idly by and let a friend be abused. Sinick—Certainly not. He'd join right in.