

## A CRADLE SONG.

And swing! Stish and swing! Through  
the yellow grain  
Slightly moves the cradle to a low refrain.  
While the swaying blades of wheat tremble  
to his sweep  
Till he has them carefully in a row to sleep,  
And he feels a mystic rhyme  
Makes his cradle swing in time  
To the rocking of the baby by the door.  
Stish and swing! Stish and swing! So the  
cheeks grow red,  
Bowls are filled with porridge, and ovens  
piled with bread,  
Bossy claims the middlings, and colts eat  
the bran,  
Chicky gets the screenings, and birds all be  
can.  
So the cradle's harvest rhyme  
Keeps the reaper's str. ke in time  
With the cradle that is rocking by the  
door.  
Thus the golden harvest falls to yield the  
precious wheat.  
Life is golden, too, alas! but only love is  
sweet.  
Labor for the residue is the royal crown to  
wear.  
And Love that gave the harvest will give  
each heart its share.  
While the reaper sings in time,  
Like a loving, tender rhyme,  
To the rocking of the cradle by the door  
Stish and swing! Stish and swing! Ah, the  
good old sound,  
Harvest note of gladness all the world  
around!  
Hear the cradles glancing on the hills steep;  
Hear the little reaper whose baby lies asleep—  
Gentle, universal rhyme  
Of the reaper keeping time  
With the rocking of the cradle by the  
door.  
—[Charles H. Crandall, in the Century.

## THE BRASS KETTLE.

"Leave off spinning, Mercy, and reel  
what you've got on the spindle for me.  
There'll be enough, I guess, to finish this  
web, and I'll put it in without scouring.  
Then run over to Wilson's and borrow  
Sarah's brass kettle. We'll have some  
hulled corn to-morrow, now the leach is  
up."  
It was late on a May afternoon in  
Maine, then an outlying part of Massa-  
chusetts, more than a hundred and thirty-  
five or forty years ago. A pioneer's  
wife sat at her loom, plying the shuttle  
rapidly, while with sturdy blows of her  
foot on the treadle, she beat the wool  
yarn into the web.  
Her daughter Mercy, a pretty, blue-  
eyed girl of seventeen, who had been  
making the spinning-wheel hum merrily  
for the last two hours, laid down the  
wheel-finger with a willing "Yes, ma-  
ther," and plied the less noisy reel,  
counting off the threads in a low tone.  
"Six knots, mother," she said.  
"It will make enough," replied Mrs.  
Cary, her voice half drowned by the loud  
clatter of the high, brown old loom in  
which she sat. "Wind it on the quills."  
The girl did so, but lingered a bit as  
she set the quill box in the loom.  
"Can't I take that piece of cherry rib-  
bon, mother?" she asked, a little con-  
fusedly.  
"Yes, yes, child," said the mother,  
somewhat impatiently. "It was not the  
first time Mercy had asked for the ribbon;  
and with pleasure in her fresh face,  
the girl withdrew quietly to the other room  
of the log-house, where for some secret  
reason she now attempted a few details  
of self-adornment, before she set off on  
her errand to the Wilsons."  
A ruddy boy in homespun, eight years  
old, perhaps, ran in barefoot as Mercy  
withdrew.  
"Marm!" said he, with a mysterious  
half smile of his head, "I believe there's  
an old Indian out by the log pile. Tige's  
all brusted up, and keeps looking out  
that way."  
"There, there, Josh, stop that talk!"  
cried his mother, sharply. "What did  
your father tell you this morning? He  
bade ye not to say 'Indian' again for a  
month. There's none anywhere about  
now. 'Twas nothing more than a bear  
that Tige smelt."  
"I'll bet it isn't a bear," muttered little  
Josh to himself, as he went out, rebuffed.  
Tige always barks for a bear; but he  
never barks, nor growls out loud, if it's  
an Indian. Old Ned Hancy taught him  
that when he was a pup.  
Tige, a large white and brindled dog,  
with a broad head, pink nose and strong,  
bony legs, was standing in the dooryard.  
The hair along his shoulders and back  
showed a tendency to rise, and from  
moment to moment he turned his glaring  
eyes slowly in the direction of the woods  
to the southwest of the stumpy clearing.  
Mercy meantime started on her errand  
for the kettle. Her mother peered out  
from the loom frame.  
"There, Mercy, you vain girl!" she  
cried, laughing a little; for Mercy had  
arranged the cherry ribbon in a bow at  
her throat, and displayed a little antique  
pin of gold, a gift of her grandmother.  
She blushed at her mother's good-  
humored rallery.  
"Don't stay," Mrs. Cary added. "It'll  
soon be night now. And Mercy!" she  
called again, stopping the loom a moment.  
"Take Tige with you. Josh may go,  
too, if he wants to."  
An interesting legend from the early  
folk-lore of the colony has descended to  
us of Mercy Cary's trip for the brass  
kettle. From Casco—now Portland—the  
settlers had by this time begun to  
push forth into the wilderness, in the  
direction of Yarmouth, Brunswick, New  
Gloucester and the Saco Valley.  
It was the period of the French war,  
with its many Indian outbreaks, which so  
greatly distressed the people. Incited  
by the infamous "scalp bounties" and  
"captive bounties" offered in Canada,  
the savages not only made attacks in  
force upon the garrison houses, but  
singly, or in little parties, lay in wait on  
the borders of the forest, to cut off the  
settlers who were at work in their clear-  
ings, or going to and fro on their long  
trips to mill or to procure supplies.  
Many were thus foully murdered, or  
captured and hurried away through the  
woods to be sold to the French in Canada.  
Young English captives were then in  
much request among the wealthy French  
families at Montreal, Three Rivers, Sorel  
and Quebec, as servants, particularly

young women from sixteen to twenty-  
four years old. Scores of girls were  
dragged away into captivity, only a few  
of whom were ever so fortunate as to  
meet their relatives again.  
The settlers built block-houses as  
places of refuge here and there; and  
scouts were sent out to give warning of  
Indian parties. But often their most  
vigilance failed to detect the presence  
of the lurking Redskins.  
Three miles from the block-houses at  
Chepideck lived the Cary and Wilson  
families. Their clearings were on the  
opposite banks of a large brook, the out-  
let of a considerable lake. The rich  
intervale land along the stream offered  
good farm sites; and with hard-working  
thrift, both these neighbors had already  
cleared and burned off tracts of from  
forty to fifty acres.  
Nathan Wilson and his wife had four  
boys, named Reuben, Joseph, Hiram  
and George. Reuben was already nearly  
twenty, and an expert woodsman.  
Silas Cary was less favored. His  
boys, as he was wont jokingly to remark  
to his neighbor, "were all girls save  
one—little Josh."  
But his girls, of whom Mercy was the  
eldest, were almost or quite as good as  
boys for all the lighter labors of the new  
farm, and helped their father at his  
planting and harvesting.  
The distance from Cary's house across  
to Wilson's was not much more than a  
quarter of a mile. A well-beaten path  
led through the stumpy clearing and  
down the bank to the brook, over which  
there was a rude log bridge. Beyond  
the brook were clumps of bushes and a  
few maple trees; and still farther on the  
way led through an open clearing again  
to Mr. Wilson's house.  
Mercy, with Tige and little Josh, had  
been gone on her errand perhaps three-  
quarters of an hour. The sun had set;  
and meantime Silas Cary, with the three  
younger girls, came in from the field  
where they had been planting corn and  
potatoes.  
"Where are Mercy and Josh?" asked  
Silas, taking down the cedar buckets  
from their pegs, preparatory to milking  
the two cows.  
"I've sent them to Wilson's for the  
brass kettle," replied Mrs. Cary. "It's  
time they were back."  
"They are coming!" cried Patience,  
as a faint outcry was borne to their ears.  
"I hear Josh shouting 'Tag!' to the  
Wilson boys."  
The lad was indeed shouting, but not  
to the Wilson boys. As he and Mercy  
crossed the bridge on their way home  
with the kettle, the dog suddenly growled  
and drew back. Mercy hurried across,  
and little Josh followed; but as soon as  
they had reached the other end of the  
bridge two hideously painted savages  
leaped out from the alders there, and  
seizing them by the wrists, dragged them  
away along the hollow of the brook.  
Tige dashed at one of the savages and  
had pulled him down; but the  
Redskin beat him off with his tomahawk.  
Mercy screamed, and the lad cried out  
and kicked his captor, but was beaten so  
cruelly that he dared not resist further.  
Mr. Cary, now out in the yard with his  
buckets, heard Mercy's piercing scream.  
He rushed into the house, seized his gun,  
and dashed down the path to the log  
bridge, past the bushes. He met Tige  
running toward the house. The dog's  
head was bleeding from a cut; his hair  
stood up like bristles; and his eyes glowed  
like live coals.  
"It's Indians! It's Indians!" muttered  
Cary, stopping short. "Tige's after  
help!"  
Presently he heard a quick step up the  
path on the other side, and saw young  
Reuben Wilson coming hastily down to  
the bridge. Mercy's scream had reached  
his ear, too, where he had been at work  
mossing fence-posts with a postaxe,  
beside the path, about fifty rods distant.  
Not ten minutes before, he said, Mercy  
had stopped to chat with him, as she  
passed. He had only the post-axe in  
his hands.  
"Reuben!" hailed Cary, in tones which  
shook from a father's anguish. "The  
Indians have got Mercy and Josh."  
Reuben turned without a word and ran  
back to his father's house to give the  
alarm and get his gun. Hearing the tid-  
ings, Nathan Wilson at once despatched  
Hiram to the block-house, to summon  
assistance. Joseph he bade guard the  
house, and sent George to Cary's place.  
Then, seizing his own gun and ammunition,  
he followed Reuben.  
They overtook Cary half a mile up the  
brook, and came out on the shore of the  
lake, a mile farther to the northward, just  
as the last gleam of the fading twilight  
shone on the water. Faintly as it  
gleamed, it was still sufficient to disclose  
the light imprint of a canoe's bottom on  
the soft sand. Near by were several  
moccasin tracks. Tige had led the way  
directly to the place.  
"That's bad," murmured the elder  
Wilson, with a sharp glance along the  
darkening shores. "There are two.  
We shan't come up with them to-night."  
The savages had gained a start suffi-  
cient to have already doubled a point on  
the shore, six or eight hundred yards dis-  
tant. The settlers had no boat on the  
lake. The pioneer knew that the Indi-  
ans could paddle their canoes faster than  
the whites could follow them through the  
woods by night, around the shores.  
The contour of the lake, too, was such  
that the whites must take a wide circuit,  
and cross two tangled swamps.  
It was probable that the Indians would  
make directly for the head of the lake,  
six or seven miles distant; yet there was  
no certainty of this. They might veer  
away to the right or the left shore.  
After a hasty consultation it was de-  
cided that the elder Wilson should return  
and get a pack of provisions, and lead  
the party which might come from the  
block-house; while Cary and Reuben,  
with Tige, should skirt the lake in the  
hope of discovering where the Indians  
landed. The night bade fair to be very  
dark.  
At about ten o'clock in the evening  
eight men arrived at Wilson's place with  
their guns, from the garrison house; but  
by this time clouds had gathered, and  
they deemed it unwise to enter the forest  
until daybreak. Cary and Reuben,  
meantime, had pushed on around the lake  
and reached the mouth of a small brook  
near the head of it, by the time the  
clouds obscured the stars.  
Not only did they find moccasin tracks  
in the sand here, but other smaller tracks,  
which Cary had no doubt were those of  
his children. The trail led along the

bank of the small brook. But Cary  
thought it imprudent to go on before  
Wilson and the expected party came up.  
Reuben took Tige and went on alone.  
The dog followed the trail readily, and  
the young pioneer kept pace with him,  
breaking a twig now and then to guide  
the party when they should follow him.  
At last he came to the foot of a gorge,  
or ravine, from which the brook issued.  
Here Tige sniffed about, and soon en-  
tered a little thicket of firs. There Reu-  
ben found a bark canoe, evidently hid-  
den by the Indians.  
Why they had left it there Reuben  
did not at first understand. He did not  
touch it, but continued up the ravine,  
and after a mile or two gained the sum-  
mit of a long, rocky ridge, covered with  
a growth of hemlock-trees.  
Northward the ridge fell off abruptly  
in a line of crags. Tige followed the  
trail downward over the ledges; but  
Reuben halted for a moment to look off  
across the expanse of forest beyond.  
The sun was now just rising.  
A mile away he could see a sheet of  
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