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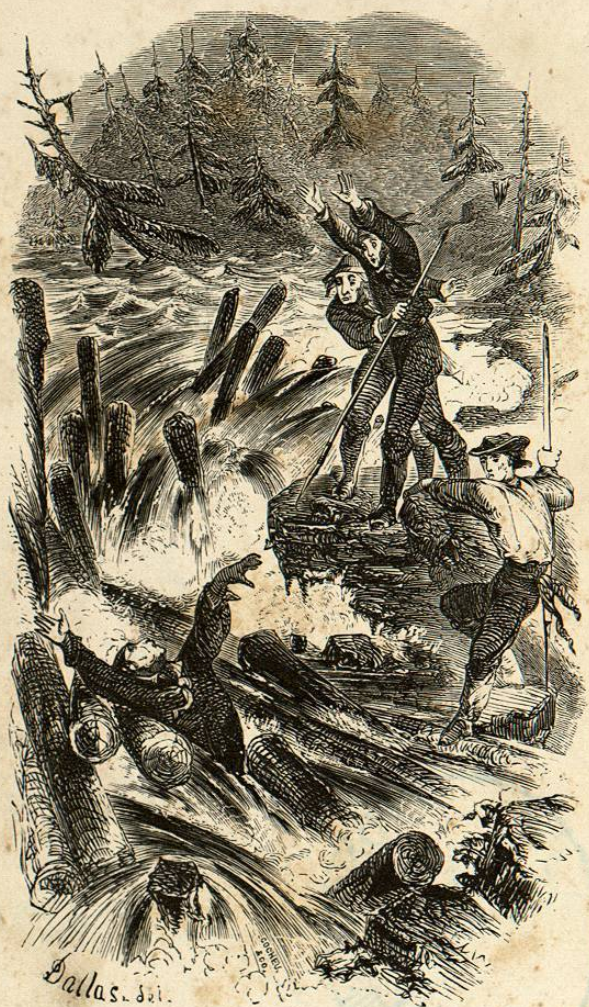


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NOW-A-DAYS!



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1854.

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To F. P. L.

~~~~~  
TO THE FRIEND WHO WITH ME HAS PLIED THE NEEDLE,  
AND GUIDED THE PEN,  
AND WITH WHOM I HAVE SPENT SO MANY HAPPY, BUSY HOURS,  
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED, BY  
THE AUTHOR.



Regalada a la Biblio  
teca del Colegio Civil de  
Monterey por la Srta D<sup>a</sup>  
Refugio P. de Inwal

Agosto 6 de 1871.

PREFACE.

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IN this little volume, the authoress has endeavored to give a few faithful pictures of life, now-a-days; and, in doing this, she has painted always from nature. Every scene, in which the story is laid, has been familiar to her own eyes; imagination has scarcely added finishing touches to the landscapes and portraits she has drawn.

Maine backwoods life she has, especially, aimed to make true to nature, as it is the first time that it has ever been admitted into romance-world. The manners and customs of this, hitherto, far-off and "unknown land," she has examined for herself. She has, herself, passed over the rough road which Esther travels with her loquacious guide; she has rested at the same roadside inns. She trusts that those, who are entirely ignorant of this kind of life, will be interested and amused in the pictures she gives them,



and that none will censure her for daring to offer a new thing to the novel-reading public.

In writing "Now-a-days," she has stepped a little aside from the path which story writers have, generally, trodden before. She has aimed at naturalness, rather than at anything marked and startling. The public taste is growing weary of murders, and wars, and rumors of wars, and she has preferred to leave these trite themes to some more fiery pen, and to paint, as faithfully as was in her power, real life, New-England life.

F. R. A.

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## N O W - A - D A Y S .

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A SUDDEN CLOUD.

"Has the bell rung yet?" asked Virginia Clifton, joining a group of her schoolmates, who stood busily talking and laughing in their favorite spot, the middle of the long hall, in the boarding-house connected with Mr. Marshall's celebrated school for young ladies.

"No," replied Maria Brooks, coming out of her room, with slate and book in hand; "I hope not, for I do want somebody to help me in this dreadful Trigonometry lesson!"

"Don't ask me! don't ask me!" said one after another, half laughing as she approached them.

"Here comes Esther Hastings; she'll help you," said Virginia.

"What is it?" asked Ettie, as she was familiarly called, slowly walking up the long hall.

"My Trigonometry, as usual," sighed poor Maria, "I cannot understand anything about these sines,