

The New Haven Storm Ship

Charles Skinner

North American

Advanced
2 min read

In 1647 the New Haven colonists, who even at that early day exhibited the enterprise that has been a distinguishing feature of the Yankee, sent a ship to Ireland to try to develop a commerce, their trading posts on the Delaware having been broken up by the Swedes. When their agent, Captain Lamberton, sailed—in January—the harbor was so beset with ice that a track had to be cut through the floes to open water, five miles distant. She had, moreover, to be dragged out stern foremost—an ill omen, the sailors thought—and as she swung before the wind a passing drift of fog concealed her, for a moment, from the gaze of those on shore, who, from this, foretold things of evil. Though large and new, the ship was so “walty”—inclined to roll—that the captain set off with misgiving, and as she moved away the crew heard this solemn and disheartening invocation from a clergyman on the wharf:—“Lord, if it be thy pleasure to bury these, our friends, in the bottom of the sea, take them; they are thine: save them.”

Winter passed; so did spring; still the ship came not; but one afternoon in June, just as a rain had passed, some children cried, “There’s a brave ship!” for, flying up the harbor, with all sail set and flaunting colors, was a vessel “the very mould of our ship,” the clergyman said.

Strange to tell, she was going flat against the wind; no sailors were on her deck; she did not toss with the fling of the waves; there was no ripple at her bow. As she came close to land a single figure appeared on the quarter,

pointing seaward with a cutlass; then suddenly her main-top fell, her masts toppled from their holdings, the dismantled hulk careened and went down. A cloud dropped from heaven and brooded for a time above the place where it had vanished, and when it lifted the surface of the sea was empty and still. The good folk of New Haven believed that the fate of the absent ship had been revealed, at last, for she never came back and Captain Lamberton was never heard from.

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com