

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
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The Adventures of Ann Stories of Colonial Times

Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman

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STORIES OF COLONIAL TIMES

I

The Bound Girl

This Indenture Wittneseth, That I Margaret Burjust of Boston, in the County of Suffolk and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England. Have placed, and by these presents do place and bind out my only Daughter whose name is Ann Ginnins to be an Apprentice unto Samuel Wales and his wife of Braintree in the County afores^d, Blacksmith. To them and their Heirs and with them the s^d Samuel Wales, his wife and their Heirs, after the manner of an apprentice to dwell and Serve from the day of the date hereof for and during the full and Just Term of Sixteen years, three months and twenty-three day's next ensuing and fully to be Compleat, during all which term the s^d apprentice her s^d Master and Mistress faithfully Shall Serve, Their Secrets keep close, and Lawful and reasonable Command everywhere gladly do and perform.

Damage to her s^d Master and Mistress she shall not willingly do. Her s^d Master's goods she shall not waste, Embezel, purloin or lend unto Others nor suffer the same to be wasted or purloined. But to her power Shall discover the Same to her s^d Master. Taverns or Ailhouss she Shall not frequent, at any unlawful game She Shall not play, Matrimony she Shall not Contract with any persons during s^d Term. From her master's Service She Shall not at any time unlawfully absent herself. But in all things as a good honest and faithful Servant and apprentice Shall bear and behave herself, During the full term afores^d Commencing from the third day of November Anno Dom: One Thousand, Seven Hundred fifty and three. And the s^d Master for himself, wife, and Heir's, Doth Covenant Promise Grant and Agree unto and with the s^d apprentice and the s^d Margaret Burjust, in manner and form following. That is to say, That they will teach the s^d apprentice or Cause her to be taught in the Art of good housewifery, and also to read and write well. And will find and provide for and give unto s^d apprentice good and sufficient

Meat Drink washing and lodging both in Sickness and in health, and at the Expiration of S:^a term to Dismiss s:^a apprentice with two Good Suits of Apparel both of woollen and linnin for all parts of her body (viz) One for Lord-days and one for working days Suitable to her Quality. In Testimony whereof I Samuel Wales and Margaret Burjust Have Interchangably Sett their hands and Seals this Third day November Anno Dom: 1753, and in the twenty Seventh year of the Reign of our Soveraig'n Lord George the Second of great Britain the King.

Signed Sealed & Delivered.

In presence of

Sam Vaughan

Mary Vaughan

Margaret Burgis

her X mark."

This quaint document was carefully locked up, with some old deeds and other valuable papers, in his desk, by the "s:^a Samuel Wales," one hundred and thirty years ago. The desk was a rude, unpainted pine affair, and it reared itself on its four stilt-like legs in a corner of his kitchen, in his house in the South Precinct of Braintree. The sharp eyes of the little "s:^a apprentice" had noted it oftener and more enviously than any other article of furniture in the house. On the night of her arrival, after her journey of fourteen miles from Boston, over a rough bridle-road, on a jolting horse, clinging tremblingly to her new "Master," she peered through her little red fingers at the desk swallowing up those precious papers which Samuel Wales drew from his pocket with an important air. She was hardly five years old, but she was an acute child; and she watched her master draw forth the papers, show them to his wife, Polly, and lock them up in the desk, with the full understanding that they had something to do with her coming to this strange place; and, already, a shadowy purpose began to form itself in her mind.

She sat on a cunning little wooden stool, close to the fireplace, and kept her small chapped hands persistently over her face; she was scared, and grieved, and, withal, a trifle sulky. Mrs. Polly Wales cooked some Indian meal mush for supper in an iron pot swinging from its trammel over the blazing logs, and cast scrutinizing glances at the little stranger. She had welcomed her kindly, taken off her outer garments, and established her on the little stool in the warmest corner, but the child had given a very ungracious response. She

would not answer a word to Mrs. Wales' coaxing questions, but twitched herself away with all her small might, and kept her hands tightly over her eyes, only peering between her fingers when she thought no one was noticing.

She had behaved after the same fashion all the way from Boston, as Mr. Wales told his wife in a whisper. The two were a little dismayed, at the whole appearance of the small apprentice; to tell the truth, she was not in the least what they had expected. They had been revolving this scheme of taking "a bound girl" for some time in their minds; and, Samuel Wales' gossip in Boston, Sam Vaughan, had been requested to keep a lookout for a suitable person.

So, when word came that one had been found, Mr. Wales had started at once for the city. When he saw the child, he was dismayed. He had expected to see a girl of ten; this one was hardly five, and she had anything but the demure and decorous air which his Puritan mind esteemed becoming and appropriate in a little maiden. Her hair was black and curled tightly, instead of being brown and straight parted in the middle, and combed smoothly over her ears as his taste regulated; her eyes were black and flashing, instead of being blue, and downcast. The minute he saw the child, he felt a disapproval of her rise in his heart, and also something akin to terror. He dreaded to take this odd-looking child home to his wife Polly; he foresaw contention and mischief in their quiet household. But he felt as if his word was rather pledged to his gossip, and there was the mother, waiting and expectant. She was a red-cheeked English girl, who had been in Sam Vaughan's employ; she had recently married one Burjust, and he was unwilling to support the first husband's child, so this chance to bind her out and secure a good home for her had been eagerly caught at.

The small Ann seemed rather at Samuel Wales' mercy, and he had not the courage to disappoint his friend or her mother; so the necessary papers were made out, Sam Vaughan's and wife's signatures affixed, and Margaret Burjust's mark, and he set out on his homeward journey with the child.

The mother was coarse and illiterate, but she had some natural affection; she "took on" sadly when the little girl was about to leave her, and Ann clung to her frantically. It was a pitiful scene, and

Samuel Wales, who was a very tender-hearted man, was glad when it was over, and he jogging along the bridle-path.

But he had had other troubles to encounter. All at once, as he rode through Boston streets, with his little charge behind him, after leaving his friend's house, he felt a vicious little twitch at his hair, which he wore in a queue tied with a black ribbon after the fashion of the period. Twitch, twitch, twitch! The water came into Samuel Wales' eyes, and the blood to his cheeks, while the passers-by began to hoot and laugh. His horse became alarmed at the hubbub, and started up. For a few minutes the poor man could do nothing to free himself. It was wonderful what strength the little creature had; she clinched her tiny fingers in the braid, and pulled, and pulled. Then, all at once, her grasp slackened, and off flew her master's steeple-crowned hat into the dust, and the neat black ribbon on the end of the queue followed it. Samuel Wales reined up his horse with a jerk then, and turned round, and administered a sounding box on each of his apprentice's ears. Then he dismounted, amid shouts of laughter from the spectators, and got a man to hold the horse while he went back and picked up his hat and ribbon.

He had no further trouble. The boxes seemed to have subdued Ann effectually. But he pondered uneasily all the way home on the small vessel of wrath which was perched up behind him, and there was a tingling sensation at the roots of his queue. He wondered what Polly would say. The first glance at her face, when he lifted Ann off the horse at his own door, confirmed his fears. She expressed her mind, in a womanly way, by whispering in his ear at the first opportunity, "*She's as black as an Injun.*"

After Ann had eaten her supper, and had been tucked away between some tow sheets and homespun blankets in a trundle-bed, she heard the whole story, and lifted up her hands with horror. Then the good couple read a chapter, and prayed, solemnly vowing to do their duty by this child which they had taken under their roof, and imploring Divine assistance.

As time wore on, it became evident that they stood in sore need of it. They had never had any children of their own, and Ann Ginnins was the first child who had ever lived with them. But she seemed to have the freaks of a dozen or more in herself, and they bade fair to

have the experience of bringing up a whole troop with this one. They tried faithfully to do their duty by her, but they were not used to children, and she was a very hard child to manage. A whole legion of mischievous spirits seemed to dwell in her at times, and she became in a small and comparatively innocent way, the scandal of the staid Puritan neighborhood in which she lived. Yet, withal, she was so affectionate, and seemed to be actuated by so little real malice in any of her pranks, that people could not help having a sort of liking for the child, in spite of them.

She was quick to learn, and smart to work, too, when she chose. Sometimes she flew about with such alacrity that it seemed as if her little limbs were hung on wires, and no little girl in the neighborhood could do her daily tasks in the time she could, and they were no inconsiderable tasks, either.

Very soon after her arrival she was set to "winding quills," so many every day. Seated at Mrs. Polly's side, in her little homespun gown, winding quills through sunny forenoons—how she hated it! She liked feeding the hens and pigs better, and when she got promoted to driving the cows, a couple of years later, she was in her element. There were charming possibilities of nuts and checkerberries and sassafras and sweet flag all the way between the house and the pasture, and the chance to loiter, and have a romp.

She rarely showed any unwillingness to go for the cows; but once, when there was a quilting at her mistress's house, she demurred. It was right in the midst of the festivities; they were just preparing for supper, in fact. Ann knew all about the good things in the pantry, she was wild with delight at the unwonted stir, and anxious not to lose a minute of it. She thought some one else might go for the cows that night. She cried and sulked, but there was no help for it. Go she had to. So she tucked up her gown—it was her best Sunday one—took her stick, and trudged along. When she came to the pasture, there were her master's cows waiting at the bars. So were Neighbor Belcher's cows also, in the adjoining pasture. Ann had her hand on the topmost of her own bars, when she happened to glance over at Neighbor Belcher's, and a thought struck her. She burst into a peal of laughter, and took a step towards the other bars. Then she went back to her own. Finally, she let down the Belcher bars, and the

Belcher cows crowded out, to the great astonishment of the Wales cows, who stared over their high rails and mooded uneasily.

Ann drove the Belcher cows home and ushered them into Samuel Wales' barnyard with speed. Then she went demurely into the house. The table looked beautiful. Ann was beginning to quake inwardly, though she still was hugging herself, so to speak, in secret enjoyment of her own mischief. She had one hope—that supper would be eaten before her master milked. But the hope was vain. When she saw Mr. Wales come in, glance her way, and then call his wife out, she knew at once what had happened, and begun to tremble—she knew perfectly what Mr. Wales was saying out there. It was this: “That little limb has driven home all Neighbor Belcher's cows instead of ours; what's going to be done with her?”

She knew what the answer would be, too. Mrs. Polly was a peremptory woman.

Back Ann had to go with the Belcher cows, fasten them safely in their pasture again, and drive her master's home. She was hustled off to bed, then, without any of that beautiful supper. But she had just crept into her bed in the small unfinished room up stairs where she slept, and was lying there sobbing, when she heard a slow, fumbling step on the stairs. Then the door opened, and Mrs. Deacon Thomas Wales, Samuel Wales' mother, came in. She was a good old lady, and had always taken a great fancy to her son's bound girl; and Ann, on her part, minded her better than any one else. She hid her face in the tow sheet, when she saw grandma. The old lady had on a long black silk apron. She held something concealed under it, when she came in. Presently she displayed it.

“There—child,” said she, “here's a piece of sweet cake and a couple of simballs, that I managed to save out for you. Jest set right up and eat 'em, and don't ever be so dretful naughty again, or I don't know what will become of you.”

This reproof, tempered with sweetness, had a salutary effect on Ann. She sat up, and ate her sweet cake and simballs, and sobbed out her contrition to grandma, and there was a marked improvement in her conduct for some days.

Mrs. Polly was a born driver. She worked hard herself, and she expected everybody about her to. The tasks which Ann had set her did not seem as much out of proportion, then, as they would now. Still, her mistress, even then, allowed her less time for play than was usual, though it was all done in good faith, and not from any intentional severity. As time went on, she grew really quite fond of the child, and she was honestly desirous of doing her whole duty by her. If she had had a daughter of her own, it is doubtful if her treatment of her would have been much different.

Still, Ann was too young to understand all this, and, sometimes, though she was strong and healthy, and not naturally averse to work, she would rebel, when her mistress set her stints so long, and kept her at work when other children were playing.

Once in a while she would confide in grandma, when Mrs. Polly sent her over there on an errand and she had felt unusually aggrieved because she had had to wind quills, or hetchel, instead of going berrying, or some like pleasant amusement.

"Poor little cosset," grandma would say, pityingly. Then she would give her a simball, and tell her she must "be a good girl, and not mind if she couldn't play jest like the others, for she'd got to airm her own livin', when she grew up, and she must learn to work."

Ann would go away comforted, but grandma would be privately indignant. She was, as is apt to be the case, rather critical with her sons' wives, and she thought "Sam'l's kept that poor little gal too stiddy at work," and wished and wished she could shelter her under her own grandmotherly wing, and feed her with simballs to her heart's content. She was too wise to say anything to influence the child against her mistress, however. She was always cautious about that, even while pitying her. Once in a while she would speak her mind to her son, but *he* was easy enough—Ann would not have found him a hard task-master.

Still, Ann did not have to work hard enough to hurt her. The worst consequences were that such a rigid rein on such a frisky little colt perhaps had more to do with her "cutting up," as her mistress phrased it, than she dreamed of. Moreover the thought of the indentures, securely locked up in Mr. Wales' tall wooden desk, was forever in Ann's mind. Half by dint of questioning various people, half

by her own natural logic she had settled it within herself, that at any time the possession of these papers would set her free, and she could go back to her own mother, whom she dimly remembered as being loud-voiced, but merry, and very indulgent. However, Ann never meditated in earnest, taking the indentures; indeed, the desk was always locked—it held other documents more valuable than hers—and Samuel Wales carried the key in his waistcoat-pocket.

She went to a dame's school, three months every year. Samuel Wales carted half a cord of wood to pay for her schooling, and she learned to write and read in the *New England Primer*. Next to her, on the split log bench, sat a little girl named Hannah French. The two became fast friends. Hannah was an only child, pretty and delicate, and very much petted by her parents. No long hard tasks were set those soft little fingers, even in those old days when children worked as well as their elders. Ann admired and loved Hannah, because she had what she, herself, had not; and Hannah loved and pitied Ann because she had not what she had. It was a sweet little friendship, and would not have been, if Ann had not been free from envy and Hannah humble and pitying.

When Ann told her what a long stint she had to do before school, Hannah would shed sympathizing tears.

Ann, after a solemn promise of secrecy, told her about the indentures one day. Hannah listened with round, serious eyes; her brown hair was combed smoothly down over her ears. She was a veritable little Puritan damsel herself.

"If I could only get the papers, I wouldn't have to mind her, and work so hard," said Ann.

Hannah's eyes grew rounder. "Why, it would be sinful to take them!" said she.

Ann's cheeks blazed under her wondering gaze, and she said no more.

When she was about eleven years old, one icy January day, Hannah wanted her to go out and play on the ice after school. They had no skates, but it was rare fun to slide. Ann went home and asked Mrs. Polly's permission with a beating heart; she promised to do a double stint next day, if she would let her go. But her mistress was

inexorable—work before play, she said, always; and Ann must not forget that she was to be brought up to work; it was different with her from what it was with Hannah French. Even this she meant kindly enough, but Ann saw Hannah go away, and sat down to her spinning with more fierce defiance in her heart than had ever been there before. She had been unusually good, too, lately. She always was, during the three months' schooling, with sober, gentle little Hannah French.

She had been spinning sulkily a while, and it was almost dark, when a messenger came for her master and mistress to go to Deacon Thomas Wales, who had been suddenly taken very ill.

Ann would have felt sorry if she had not been so angry. Deacon Wales was almost as much of a favorite of hers as his wife. As it was, the principal thing she thought of, after Mr. Wales and his wife had gone, was that *the key was in the desk*. However it had happened, there it was. She hesitated a moment. She was all alone in the kitchen, and her heart was in a tumult of anger, but she had learned her lessons from the Bible and the *New England Primer* and she was afraid of the *sin*. But, at last, she opened the desk, found the indentures, and hid them in the little pocket which she wore tied about her waist, under her petticoat.

Then she threw her blanket over her head, and got her poppet out of the chest. The poppet was a little doll manufactured from a corn-cob, dressed in an indigo-colored gown. Grandma had made it for her, and it was her chief treasure. She clasped it tight to her bosom and ran across lots to Hannah French's.

Hannah saw her coming, and met her at the door.

"I've brought you my poppet," whispered Ann, all breathless, "and you must keep her always, and not let her work too hard. I'm going away!"

Hannah's eyes looked like two solemn moons. "Where are you going, Ann?"

"I'm going to Boston to find my own mother." She said nothing about the indentures to Hannah—somehow she could not.

Hannah could not say much, she was so astonished, but as soon as Ann had gone, scudding across the fields, she went in with the poppet and told her mother.

Deacon Thomas Wales was very sick. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel remained at his house all night, but Ann was not left alone, for Mr. Wales had an apprentice who slept in the house.

Ann did not sleep any that night. She got up very early, before any one was stirring, and dressed herself in her Sunday clothes. Then she tied up her working clothes in a bundle, crept softly down stairs, and out doors.

It was bright moonlight and quite cold. She ran along as fast as she could on the Boston road. Deacon Thomas Wales' house was on the way. The windows were lit up. She thought of grandma and poor grandpa, with a sob in her heart, but she sped along. Past the schoolhouse, and meeting-house, too, she had to go, with big qualms of grief and remorse. But she kept on. She was a fast traveller.

She had reached the North Precinct of Braintree by daylight. So far, she had not encountered a single person. Now, she heard horse's hoofs behind her. She began to run faster, but it was of no use. Soon Captain Abraham French loomed up on his big gray horse, a few paces from her. He was Hannah's father, but he was a tithing-man, and looked quite stern, and Ann had always stood in great fear of him.

She ran on as fast as her little heels could fly, with a thumping heart. But it was not long before she felt herself seized by a strong arm and swung up behind Captain French on the gray horse. She was in a panic of terror, and would have cried and begged for mercy if she had not been in so much awe of her captor. She thought with awful apprehension of these stolen indentures in her little pocket. What if he should find that out!

Captain French whipped up his horse, however, and hastened along without saying a word. His silence, if anything, caused more dread in Ann than words would have. But his mind was occupied. Deacon Thomas Wales was dead; he was one of his most beloved and honored friends, and it was a great shock to him. Hannah had

told him about Ann's premeditated escape, and he had set out on her track, as soon as he had found that she was really gone, that morning. But the news, which he had heard on his way, had driven all thoughts of reprimand which he might have entertained, out of his head. He only cared to get the child safely back.

So, not a word spoke Captain French, but rode on in grim and sorrowful silence, with Ann clinging to him, till he reached her master's door. Then he set her down with a stern and solemn injunction never to transgress again, and rode away.

Ann went into the kitchen with a quaking heart. It was empty and still. Its very emptiness and stillness seemed to reproach her. There stood the desk—she ran across to it, pulled the indentures from her pocket, put them in their old place, and shut the lid down. There they staid till the full and just time of her servitude had expired. She never disturbed them again.

On account of the grief and confusion incident on Deacon Wales' death, she escaped with very little censure. She never made an attempt to run away again. Indeed she had no wish to, for after Deacon Wales' death, grandma was lonely and wanted her, and she lived, most of the time, with her. And, whether she was in reality, treated any more kindly or not, she was certainly happier.

II

Deacon Thomas Wales' Will

In the Name of God Amen! the Thirteenth Day of September One Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty & eight, I, Thomas Wales of Braintree, in the County of Suffolk & Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Gent—being in good health of Body and of Sound Disproving mind and Memory, Thanks be given to God—Calling to mind my mortality, Do therefore in my health make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament. And First I Recommend my Soul into the hand of God who gave it—Hoping through grace to obtain Salvation thro' the merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ my only Lord and Dear Redeemer, and my body to be Decently inter^d, at the Discretion of my Executer, believing at the General Resurrection to receive the Same again by the mighty Power of God—And such worldly estate as God in his goodness hath graciously given me after Debts, funeral Expenses &c, are Paid I give & Dispose of the Same as Followeth—

Imprimis—I Give to my beloved Wife Sarah a good Sute of mourning apparel Such as she may Choose—also if she acquit my estate of Dower and third-therin (as we have agreed) Then that my Executer return all of Household movables she bought at our marriage & since that are remaining, also to Pay to her or Her Heirs That Note of Forty Pound I gave to her, when she acquitted my estate and I hers. Before Division to be made as herin exprest, also the Southwest fire-Room in my House, a right in my Cellar, Halfe the Garden, also the Privilege of water at the well & yard room and to bake in the oven what she hath need of to improve her Life-time by her.

After this, followed a division of his property amongst his children, five sons, and two daughters. The "Homeplace" was given to his sons Ephraim and Atherton. Ephraim had a good house of his own, so he took his share of the property in land, and Atherton went to live in the old homestead. His quarters had been poor enough; he

had not been so successful as his brothers, and had been unable to live as well. It had been a great cross to his wife, Dorcas, who was very high spirited. She had compared, bitterly, the poverty of her household arrangements, with the abundant comfort of her sisters-in-law.

Now, she seized eagerly at the opportunity of improving her style of living. The old Wales house was quite a pretentious edifice for those times. All the drawback to her delight was, that Grandma should have the southwest fire-room. She wanted to set up her high-posted bedstead, with its enormous feather-bed in that, and have it for her fore-room. Properly, it was the fore room, being right across the entry from the family sitting room. There was a tall chest of drawers that would fit in so nicely between the windows, too. Take it altogether, she was chagrined at having to give up the southwest room; but there was no help for it—there it was in Deacon Wales' will.

Mrs. Dorcas was the youngest of all the sons' wives, as her husband was the latest born. She was quite a girl to some of them. Grandma had never more than half approved of her. Dorcas was high-strung and flighty, she said. She had her doubts about living happily with her. But Atherton was anxious for this division of the property, and he was her youngest darling, so she gave in. She felt lonely, and out of her element, when everything was arranged, she established in the southwest fire-room, and Atherton's family keeping house in the others, though things started pleasantly and peaceably enough.

It occurred to her that her son Samuel might have her own "help," a stout woman, who had worked in her kitchen for many years, and she take in exchange his little bound girl, Ann Ginnins. She had always taken a great fancy to the child. There was a large closet out of the southwest room, where she could sleep, and she could be made very useful, taking steps, and running "arrants" for her.

Mr. Samuel and his wife hesitated a little, when this plan was proposed. In spite of the trouble she gave them, they were attached to Ann, and did not like to part with her, and Mrs. Polly was just getting her "larnt" her own ways, as she put it. Privately, she feared