A DANVIS PIONEER; A STORY OF ONE OF ETHAN ALLEN'S GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

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A Danvis pioneer; a story of one of Ethan Allen's Green mountain boys by Rowland E. Robinson

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ROWLAND E. ROBINSON

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BY

ROWLAND E. ROBINSON



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A DANVIS PIONEER

CHAPTER I

AT THE DEER'S HEAD

One evening, more than a century and a quarter ago, there was a motley company gathered in the bar-room of the Deer's Head Tavern, the house of entertainment for man and beast in one of the border towns of Connecticut. There were farmers of the neighborhood, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, and the hatter, already proverbially drunk; and there were young men, who dropped in to gather news of the wild, new lands to the northward from returning explorers and speculators.

Among these was an old hunter, a ranger of the old war, on his way to the rich trapping grounds that he had discovered and made note of during his military service. Oali-bung Coom He was a wiry little man, past middle age, baked in the sun, smoked by a thousand camp-fires, salted by the snows of many winters, until his hair and stubbly beard were as grizzled as a frosted hemlock, and his skin the color and toughness of jerked venison. His well ripened nose went frequently into a mug of flip, which he was drinking at the expense of his most interested listener, a tall, muscular young man, with keen gray eyes, a prominent, pointed nose, and a firm set mouth, all constantly turned upon the hunter to eatch every word that dropped from his lips.

There was another listener, who was giving very close, though not so noticeable attention, while as yet taking no part in the conversation, but who silently sipped his rum and water as he cast furtive sidelong glances of his sharp, black eyes upon the old ranger and his young friend. He was clad from head to foot in a worn suit of rusty black which, with a sanctimonious cast of countenance, gave him the appearance of a clergyman.

"Yes, sir," the hunter said, withdrawing

his nose from the mug after an exhaustive draught, and looking suggestively into the empty vessel, "if I was a young man, which I hain't, an' wanted tu farm it for a livin', which I don't, bein' tew old a dog tu l'arn new tricks, I'd jest go up there int' the wilderness,—'way up, ye understan', where there hain't nob'dy,—an' I'd make me a pitch nigh tu good trappin', an' I'd resk but what I'd git enough fur, in tew year, fall an' winter, tu pay for my land."

"Du you know any sech a place?" the young man asked.

"Lord bless ye, dozens on 'em, on the Great Otter, an' the Little Otter, an' on the Lewis Creek, acres an' acres, flat as this 'ere floor, an' where you hafter hunt half a day tu find tew stuns tu crack a but'nut."

"It's a turrible ways off, hain't it?"
the young man asked, his eyes wistfully following the trim figure of the landlord's
daughter, who now entered the room and traversed the length of it in quest of her father,
who was busy at the fireplace, heating the
loggerhead for the concection of two fresh