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Author: Amanda M. Douglas

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A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD PHILADELPHIA

By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS



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TO MR. AND MRS. HENRY HORTON LAWRENCE.

The early youth of an old town has a certain simplicity like the youth of human life. Its struggles, its romance, its unfolding come down through the earnest hands that have labored for its welfare and left imperishable monuments. To the legacies of remembrances you have had handed down to you, I add this little story of a long ago time, a posy culled from quaint gardens.

With sincere regard,

AMANDA M. DOUGLAS.

NEWARK, N.J., 1899.

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A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD PHILADELPHIA.

CHAPTER I.

[Pg 1]

HERE AND THERE.

She was swinging her gingham sunbonnet, faded beyond any recognition of its pristine coloring, her small hand keeping tight hold of the strings. At every revolution it went swifter and swifter until it seemed a grayish sort of wheel whirling in the late sunshine that sent long shadows among the trees. When she let it go it flew like a great bird, while she laughed sweet, merry childish notes that would have stirred almost any soul. A slim, lithe little maid with a great crop of yellow hair, cut short in the neck, and as we should say now, banged across the forehead. But it was a mass of frowzy curls that seemed full of sunshine.

With two or three quick leaps she captured it again and was just preparing for her next swirl.

"Primrose! Primrose! I think thee grows more disorderly every day. What caper is this? Look at these strings, they are like a twisted rope. And if thy bonnet had gone into the pond! For that matter it needs the washtub."

Primrose laughed again and then broke it in the middle with a funny little sound, and glanced at the tall woman beside her, who was smoothing out the strings with sundry pinches.

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"Certainly thou art a heedless girl! What thou wilt be——" She checked herself. "Come at once to the kitchen. Wash thy face and hands and comb out that nest of frowze. Let me see"—surveying her. "Thou must have a clean pinafore. And dust thy shoes."

Primrose followed Aunt Lois in a spell of wonderment. The scolding was not severe, but it was generally followed by some sort of punishment. A clean pinafore, too! To be set on a high stool and study a Psalm, or be relegated to bread and water, and, oh! she was suddenly hungry. Down in the orchard were delicious ripe apples lying all about the ground. Why had she not gone and taken her fill?

She scrubbed her face with her small hands until Aunt Lois said, "That is surely enough." Then she wet her hair and tugged at the tangles, but as for getting it straight that was out of the question. All this time Aunt Lois stood by silent, with her soft gray eyes fixed on the culprit, until Prim felt she must scream and run away.

The elder turned to a chest of drawers and took out an apron of homespun blue-and-white check, a straight, bag-like garment with plain armholes and a cord run in at the neck. A bit of tape was quite a luxury, as it had to be imported, while one could twist cords, fine or coarse, at home.

"Your Aunt Wetherill's housekeeper is in the next room. She has come hither to give notice. Next week will be the time to go in town."

"Oh, Aunt Lois! Aunt Lois!" Primrose buried her face in the elder's gown. A curious yearning passed over the placid countenance, followed by a stronger one of repression, and she unclasped the clinging hands.

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"It is a misfortune, as I have ever said, and there will be just shifting hither and yon, until thou art eighteen, a long way off. It makes thee neither fish nor fowl, for what is gained in one six months is upset in the next. But thy mother would have it so."

Primrose made no further protest, but swallowed over a great lump in her throat and winked hard. What she longed to do was to jump up and down and declare she would not go, in a tone that would reach the town itself. Even well-trained children had unregenerate impulses, but self-control was one of the early rules impressed upon childhood, the season and soil in which virtues were supposed to take root and flourish most abundantly.

There were two doors opening from this kitchen to a small hall, from thence to the ordinary living room, and a smaller one adjoining, used for a sort of parlor, as we should call it now, a kind of state room where the Friends often held meetings. It was very plain indeed. There were straight white curtains at the windows, without a bit of fringe or netting. Women used to make these adornments as a kind of fancy work, but the rigid rules of the Friends discountenanced all such employments, even if it was to improve odd moments. There was no carpet on the floor, which was scrubbed to spotlessness; chairs of oaken frame, bent, and polished by the busy housewife until they shone, with seats of broad splint or rushes painted yellow. A large set of drawers with several shelves on top stood between the windows, and a wooden settle was ranged along the wall. A table with a great Bible and two or three religious books, and a high mantel with two enormous pitchers that glittered in a brilliant color which was called British luster, with a brass snuffers and tray and candlesticks, were the only concession to the spirit of worldliness.

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Primrose entered with a lagging step behind her aunt. There sat Mistress Janice Kent in her riding habit of green cloth faced with red silk, and a habit shirt of the same color just showing at the neck where the lapels crossed. Her hat was wound around with a green veil, and her gauntlet gloves were of yellow buckskin brodered with black. In one hand she still held her riding whip. A somewhat airy but dignified-looking person with dark, rather sharp eyes, and dark hair; and a considerable amount of color, heightened now by the rapid exercise.

"Mercy of me! The child has grown mightily!" she exclaimed. "Indeed, there will not be a thing fit for her to wear! Madam Wetherill was considering that, and has sent for new measurements. With the last vessel in, has come lots of choice stuffs of every kind, and the maid has already fallen to work. How do you do, Mistress Primrose? Rose would better become such a blossoming maid without the Prim," and she laughed gayly, as if pleased with her conceit. "Come hither, child; do not be afraid. There, I'll lay my whip on the floor. It has a threatening look, I will admit, yet 'tis a harmless thing without the owner's hand. I am sent to measure thee, Mistress Rose, and to announce that next Wednesday the chaise will be sent out for you, with perhaps Madam Wetherill. Meanwhile we shall be making ready to transform you from a sober gray Friend to a gay young damsel. It is a pity you are not older. There will be great doings this winter."

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Lois Henry's face settled into sterner lines. It was a sweet and peaceful face, rendered so by some discipline and much freedom from care. For the Friends made small efforts to shine in society, and at this period there were few calls upon charity or even sympathy. James Henry was a prosperous farmer, and the style of living simple. Fair as to complexion, rather aquiline in features, with blue-gray eyes and nearly straight brows, her soft hair drawn back from her forehead and gathered under a plain cap with a frill a little full at the sides and scant across the top, a half square of white linen crossed over her bosom, a gray homespun gown reaching barely to the ankles, with blue homeknit stockings and stout low shoes with a black buckle on the top, Lois Henry was a fine sample of a Quaker gentlewoman.

"There are many things to life beside gayety," she said rather severely. "And such a child hath much that is useful to learn."

"Oh, we have a tutor in the house, Madam Wetherill's two cousins will spend the winter in town, Miss Betty Randolph from Virginia, and Martha Johns from some western county. There will be lessons on the spinet and in dancing."

Mistress Kent gave a little smile of malice and a jaunty toss to her head.

"The child needs nothing of that since she comes back to us and plainer living. She reads well and is not slow in figures. I shall see that she is instructed in all housewifely ways, but it is ill making headway when the tide runs down the stream."

Lois Henry really sighed then. She did hate to have her six months' labor and interest come to naught. She longed to snatch the child from these paths of temptation, for now, as she was growing older, they might be more alluring.

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"Come hither, little one, and let me measure you. My, but you have grown tall, and keep slim, so there will be less for stays to do. 'As the twig is bent,' you know," laughing and showing her even teeth, of which she was very proud. "And a fine figure is a great advantage. Your hands are not ill-kept, I see."

They were tanned, but dimpled, with tapering fingers and rosy nails, and the skin fine and soft.

"Hands are for use and not ornament. Thou art to do with thy might whatsoever comes in thy way."

"True, Friend Henry. But a clean room may abound in virtue as well as an untidy one. And a well-kept person surely is no sin. Put off your shoe, child. Ah, you have a slim foot, though no one

would think it, to see the shoe."

She had been taking measurements and putting figures on an ivory tablet that she slipped into a cloth pocket hanging at her side.

"I have the necessary requirements, I believe, and the maid can have a few things in order. We will send in on Wednesday. That is the date appointed, Friend Henry."

She picked up her whip with an airy grace, and stood tall and straight, her habit falling around her feet.

"Now I will bid you good-day, though it is almost evening. Do not look so sober, little Rose, but then we will soon have smiles displacing the Quaker gravity, which ill beseems young people. Friend Henry, why do your community consider smiling sinful when it is so pretty and comes from a merry heart? A man who went about to commit murder would scarcely smile, methinks."

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"The laughter of fools is as the crackling of thorns under a pot," was the somewhat severe answer.

"One need not break out into silly giggling," was the rather tart reply. "I abhor that myself. But a smile on a child's face is much to be preferred to a frown. 'And a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.'"

"Children,' saith the wise man, 'are to be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.'"

"Ah, well! luckily there are many rules and opinions in the world. Good-by, Rose-blossom. Next week we will welcome thee at Wetherill House."

Primrose followed her aunt to the door. There were Mistress Kent's horse and the black servant, who respectfully touched his hat and assisted his mistress to mount, then sprang on his own steed, and with a wave of the hand and a nodding of the veil she cantered away.

"Next week! Why, Aunt Lois, how near it is! I had forgotten," Primrose exclaimed breathlessly.

"It would be a most excellent thing if thou wert allowed to forget altogether. This continual changing works ill. Now go and stir the meal and feed those late chicks. Put in some of the cracked corn for the mother hen."

Primrose went at once, though she was eager to ask about the promised journey, but the habit of repression was strong upon her, and obedience to the letter was exacted from children at that period. It must have been a halcyon time for mothers when a child never ventured to ask why.

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Friend Henry went out to the kitchen again. It was a great room with a wide fireplace and a crane that accommodated two kettles. An iron baking pot stood in a bed of coals, with a plentiful supply on the cover. The black woman came and gave it a push partly around, with the tongs, so that the farthest side should have the benefit of the blaze.

There were even then many Friends who owned slaves, indeed most of the servants were of African descent. The feelings and beliefs of Philadelphia were more in consonance with the settlements farther south, than those to the north of them. But the Henrys held slavery in abhorrence, and hired their servants. Lois Henry kept but one woman, and she was quite superior to the average of her race; indeed, like her mistress, was of the persuasion of Friends.

The two women busied themselves about the supper. If Friends were plain in their household adornments and attire, they did not stint in food nor the trouble of preparing it.

Primrose fed the two late broods whose mothers had stolen their nests and brought off their families in great triumph. One had thirteen, the other eleven. Their mothers ran cheerfully to the coops and called their progeny. When the families were within, Primrose took up the slatted door and fastened it down with a stake and shut up the peeping things so busy with their supper.

As she was loitering on the way back, she saw her uncle and cousin Andrew talking eagerly. Did they know she was going away next week? She ran forward and Andrew turned to her with a smile, while his father talked on.

She clasped his hands in hers so warm and soft. His were brawny and hard, but he was a great fellow and he looked down with a kindly, protective air.

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"Oh, do you know Aunt Wetherill has sent over, and——"

"Yes," slowly, "we knew it was time. Madam Wetherill does not forget easily."

"Primrose!" called her aunt.

She hastened to the kitchen, rinsed out her dipper, and hung it up. Uncle Henry was washing his hands and Chloe was taking up the hot bread and dishing the stewed chicken. Oh, how delightfully appetizing the fragrance was! And she was so glad not to have forfeited her right to the supper.

"Come to the table," said Aunt Lois.

The four heads were bowed reverently. There was not much talking at meal time. Aunt Lois was ever afraid of idle words and vain babbling. Uncle James had a good, hearty appetite, as became

his size and strength, and generally occupied himself in ministering to it. Children in Quaker households—indeed, in nearly all others—had the wise old adage dinned into their ears that they were to be seen and not heard, and they also understood that they were to be seen as little as possible.

When the supper was ended Primrose went out to the kitchen and dried the teacups, of which Aunt Lois was quite choice, and the silver heirlooms—the teaspoons her grandmother had brought from old England.

Friend Dunscomb was coming up the path. That meant an evening in the best room with Uncle James and Aunt Lois. There were many agitating subjects to talk about in these days. Primrose walked out of the kitchen door and around the path, sending a long, dubious glance in the direction of her new home. [Pg 10]

Six months ago she had left it. How queer to be divided up in this way. She had felt lonely at Wetherill House, and missed her mother sadly. To be sure it was winter, and here on the farm it was glowing, golden summer. She had not known the dreariness of a long winter here. There were so many enchanting things, so much life and joy and beauty. In a vague way it thrilled her, even if she did not understand. There were rambles in the lanes, and the orchard where she could climb trees; there was luscious fruit in which she was never stinted. Rides behind Cousin Andrew on Jack, and going to market, as a rare treat, with Uncle James, learning to spin on the little wheel, stealing away to the old garret and reading some forgotten, time-stained books that she dared not ask about. Sometimes she had a misgiving of conscience, but no one ever inquired about them, or what she did up there.

Andrew came out and took a seat under the old apple tree. She ran down to him.

"Andrew, why must I go to Aunt Wetherill's every six months?" she asked.

He glanced at her in a slow, irresolute fashion.

"I must go again next week. It is like a ball being tossed back and forth. I—I didn't quite like it. I would rather stay here."

"I'm glad of that." He passed his arm around her and gave her a gentle hug.

"But why must I go?" impatiently.

"It was thy mother's will. Madam Wetherill was her dearest cousin, like a mother to her. Thou art too young to understand." [Pg 11]

"But my mother is dead this long while." There was a sound of perplexity in the youthful voice.

"Yes. It is hard to explain to thee, and a child should not be thinking of money. Thy father appointed mine guardian of thee. Then the Wardours, thy mother's people, left her some fortune, and as thy father was dead she made her will as she pleased."

"Is a will such a very bad thing, Cousin Andrew?" she inquired in a timid voice. She had heard much talk through the winter of governing and restraining the will until it had become a sort of personality to her, and connected solely with a state of grace, another vague territory.

He smiled. "This is not——" How could he explain it to her comprehension? He had only the plainest sort of education. For though it was true that many of the earliest Friends were versed in worldly knowledge, they had grown more restricted in their narrower lives in the new country. And on the farms there were not many advantages. Perhaps he could mend her confusion of mind in another fashion. "When one has some property or money and desires to give it to another, he or she states the wish in writing before witnesses. And the law makes this intention respected. This is too grave a matter for a child's understanding, but thy mother and Madam Wetherill planned this. When my father protested, this compromise, I think they call it, was decided upon."

Primrose was not much used to long words. Most of the Friends kept to brief, concise Saxon.

"A compromise? Is that why I am changed about so? What queer names things have! I like better living straight along. And I was much frightened last winter. But there were two little girls in the next place, and I should have been sorry enough to leave them, only they were going to England to be educated." [Pg 12]

Andrew remembered there was some talk of sending her to England, where she had a half-brother, but that was not on the mother's side.

"Cannot something be done with this wicked compromise? I should like to stay here. Andrew, I love you better than anyone in the wide world."

Andrew hugged her up close and gave a soft sigh. He could remember two little girls sleeping in the Friends' burying ground. One would have been seventeen now, and had stayed with them five years, dying the night her sister was born. He had believed it was little Lois come in a new baby body. And after three brief years she, too, had gone to the other country. His mother had been graver ever since; more self-contained, more spiritual, the Friends said.

This little girl, whom they had seen occasionally in her mother's life, had crept into his heart during her six months' stay and he hated to let her go. He was so fond of all young and helpless things. The lambs, the tiny chickens, and the calves appealed to him strongly as they looked out

of asking eyes, it seemed to him. He was beginning to chafe under the colorless, repressed life about him, and the little girl had been a great outlet for his affection, though much of it had been nursed in secret.

"I do not know what can be done, if anything," he said in answer to her question. "But I am truly sorry. I love thee dearly, Primrose. I wish thou wert my sister."

He bent over and kissed the soft, fragrant child lips. Oh, how sweet they were! Was such tenderness reprehensible? He was beginning to think of love and marriage as strong, heartsome youth will, but, strange to say, the young woman his father approved of was not at all to his liking. He was nearing man's estate, and though he labored with himself to repress what he knew would be considered lawless desires, they returned again and again. And how much he should long for the sweetness of this little girl.

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She put her arms up around his neck and her soft, caressing fingers seemed to play with his very heart strings. Oh, how dear she was! And her new life would be so different. Madam Wetherill rather flouted the Friends with what she called their drab religion.

"Primrose! Primrose!" called the curiously soft voice of Chloe, that had a different accent from the habitual evenness of the real Quaker tone. "Where is the child!"

"Here! here! I am coming." She gave Andrew one long, tender kiss and then walked rapidly to the kitchen porch.

"Thee should have been in bed with the chickens. Go at once. The moon is coming up and thou wilt need no light. Forget not thy prayers. Mistress Janice is an emissary of the evil one that thou must resist."

Primrose went up to her chamber under the eaves in a state of half terror and restrained rebellion.

CHAPTER II.

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BESSY WARDOUR.

It was a rather curious tangle, as Primrose Henry was to learn afterward. Philemon Henry was older than his brother James, and in trade in the city that William Penn had planned and founded in an orderly manner. And though it is the common belief that Philadelphia was born at right angles and on a level, at its early inception there was much diversity to it. Creeks swept it in many directions, and there were hills and submerged lands waiting for the common sense of man to fill up and hew down the romance. Even before Revolutionary times there was much business on the wharves of the Delaware, and many men owned trading ships and warehouses. And though England had made no end of bothersome and selfish restrictions as to trade, men had found ways to evade them; at some peril, it is true, but that added zest.

Philemon Henry was tolerably successful in his undertakings and adhered to the faith of William Penn, even if his own son afterward went astray. He married an Englishwoman of good descent, who had left her native land with a company of Friends for the sake of the larger liberty. The fine, stalwart Quaker had soon attracted her, and with him she spent three years of happy married life, when she died, leaving a baby boy of little more than a year old. A goodly housekeeper came to care for them, and the boy thrived finely. She would willingly have married Philemon, but as he evinced no inclination, she provided for her old age by marrying another well-to-do Friend. And then, as sometimes happens in a widower's household, there was an interregnum of trouble and disorder.

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He had business dealings with the Wardours and met a connection, an orphan, pretty young Bessy Wardour, who fell in love with the fine, strong, still handsome Quaker, whose attire was immaculate, and whose manners were courtly. And he surprised himself by a tenderness for the winsome, kittenish thing, who, for his sake, laid aside her fripperies and, to the amazement of her relatives, joined the Society of Friends. But if she had been tempting in her worldly gear, she was a hundred times more bewitching in her soft grays that were exquisite in quality, and her wide brim, low-crowned beaver tied under her dimpled chin with a bow that was distracting. The great blue eyes were of the melting, persuasive kind, her voice had a caressing cadence, and her smile was enough to conquer the most obdurate heart, and yet withal she had an air of masquerading and enjoyed it to the full. She was deeply in love with Philemon, and though he struggled against a passion he deemed almost ungodly, she being so young and pretty, she conquered in the end. He almost scandalized the Society when he stood up to be married. The young Quaker women envied her, the elders shook their heads doubtfully.

She was sunny and charming and did adore her great stalwart husband. She had so many tempting, beguiling ways, her kisses had such a delicious sweetness that he sometimes felt afraid. And yet, was she not his lawful wife, and had he not a right? Were not husbands enjoined to be tender to their wives? She charmed little Phil as well. She played with him, ran races, repeated verses, caressed him until sometimes the father was almost jealous of the tenderness showered upon the child. She had such a dainty taste and was always adding delicate touches to

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the plain Quaker habits that made them seem twice as pretty. Sometimes he tried to frown upon them.

"But God has made the world beautiful," she would protest. "And is it not for us, his children? If I go out in the lanes and woods and gather wild flowers that have cost no man any time or strength to be taken from money-getting and business, but have just grown in God's love, and put them here in a bowl and give Him thanks, what evil have I done? In heaven there will be no business, and we shall have to adore His works there, not the works of our own hands."

"Thou hast a subtle tongue, dear one, and what thou sayest seems to have an accent from a finer world. I am at times sore at loss——"

"Thou must believe in a kindly All-father and the eyes of thy inner soul will be opened."

Then she would kiss him tenderly and he would go away much puzzled.

Presently an incident happened that caused them both no little perplexity. The Nevitt estate had lost its direct heir, and that of Leah Nevitt was next in succession, after an old great-uncle, who sent for the boy to be brought up in English ways and usages. Sir Wyndham Nevitt was not a Friend, though several branches of the family were. And if Philemon Henry failed, the next heir was a dissolute fellow up in London, who would soon make ducks and drakes of the fine old estate.

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"It does seem a pity that it should be destroyed," said the young wife. "If only the boy were old enough to choose! But, you see, he is next in the succession, and it would come to him even if he were here. English laws are curious. I should hate to give up the boy. He is a sweet child and a great comfort to me when thou art away. But his welfare ought to be considered."

"And thou dost spoil him every hour in the day. I should have to send him away presently for some sterner training. And then"—she blushed scarlet at the hope—"there may be other sons and daughters."

Friend Henry took counsel of several respected and judicious men, and the weight of it lay with sending the child abroad. It would be a hard wrench, but if he was called upon to do it? Many that he knew had sent their children abroad for education, the advantages being limited at home. And it was true that the settlers below New York had a much warmer affection for the mother country than the Puritans of New England.

It ended by little Philemon Henry being sent abroad with many tears and much reluctance, and a safe convoy. The boy went quite readily, under the impression that he could come back frequently, and having no idea of the length of the journey, but being an adventurous little fellow.

Bessy Henry sorrowed deeply. "The house was as if one had been buried out of it," she said. Then her own baby was born.

Philemon Henry was disappointed that it should be a girl.

"Do not mind, husband," she said in her winsome way, "this shall be *my* child, for its head is full of yellow fuzz like mine, and its eyes are blue. Presently there will be a son with dark eyes, and no doubt a houseful of sons and daughters," laughing merrily. "And Phil, I think, will be better pleased about a sister. He might be jealous if we filled his place so soon."

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There was some wisdom in that, and quite a comfort to the father's heart.

The baby's name was the first real disagreement. She grew rapidly and was a bright, smiling little thing. Bessy loved her child extravagantly, jealously. But she would have none of the plain or biblical names her husband suggested. She laughed at them with her bright humor and made merry amusement over them, calling the child by endearing and fanciful appellations. To-day she was one kind of a flower, to-morrow another, and Rosebud a great deal of the time.

She was often at the house of Madam Wetherill. Indeed, she was generally spoken of as the gay little Quaker, but it was only her slim gracefulness and dainty ways that gained this description, for she was quite tall. She discarded her thees and thous here, though at that day all language was much more formal. Sometimes, when her husband was to be away all day, she would take the child and its nurse and spend the time with her relative.

It was after one of these occasions that she took off a little of the worldly frippery she had indulged in and put on her very plainest cap, but she could not disguise the arch, pretty face, and this evening it really seemed more beguiling than ever. Caresses of all kinds were frowned upon as being not only undignified, but savoring of the world and the flesh. Still, Philemon Henry would have sorely missed the greeting and parting kiss his wife gave him. She had a certain adroitness, too, and the tact to make no show of this before the brethren, or any of the sober-minded sisters. He sometimes wondered if it was not "stolen waters," it had such an extraordinary flavor of sweetness. Then he would resolve to forget it, but he never did.

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She kissed him tenderly this evening. His dinner was excellent, his day's work had been very profitable, and he was in high good humor.

"Husband," she began afterward, leaning her head on his shoulder, "I must make a confession to thee of my day's doings. Thou wilt be angry at first, but it is done now," smilingly.

"Hast thou been up to some mischief?" His tone had a sense of amusement in it.

"Very serious mischief. For a brief while I felt like going back to the faith of my childhood, but my love for thee will keep me in the straight and narrow faith. But to-day I have had my babe christened in Christ Church, and named Primrose."

"Bessy!" in a horror-stricken tone.

He strove to put her from him, but she clung the more tightly.

"Bessy! woman! To do such an unlawful thing!"

"It is not unlawful to give a Christian name."

"A vain, trifling, heathenish name!" he interrupted fiercely. "I will have none of it! I will——"

"God made a Primrose and many another beautiful thing in this world of His. He has even given me a prettiness that plain Quaker garb cannot wholly disguise. Suppose I scarred my face and deformed my body, would my praise be any more acceptable to Him? And people do not all think alike. They look at religion in divers ways, and so they who deal justly and are kind to the poor and outcast, and keep the Commandments are, I think, true Christians in any garb. And her name is writ in the Church books, her legal, lawful name that only the law can change. And see, husband, thou shalt call thy son whatever pleaseth thee. But the little daughter is mine own."

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"She is my child as well. And to go through all this mummery that we believe not in, that we have come to this new country to escape! It is wicked, sinful!"

"And some consider that discarding all forms and sacraments is sinful. I am sure God ordained many for the Jews, his chosen race!"

"Which they could not keep, which were of no importance to real salvation. Then Christ came and all was abrogated."

"Nay, He added to the Commandments the one tenderer rule—thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Woman, thou art full of excusing subtleties. Thou art no true Friend, methinks. Is there any real conviction under thy plain garb, or was it only put on for——"

"For love of thee," she interrupted with brave sweetness shining in her appealing eyes. "I was in Christ's household before I knew thee. I worshiped God and prayed to Him and gave thanks. He hath not made the world all alike, one tree differeth from another, and the lowly Primrose groweth where other flowers might not find sustenance, but God careth for them all, and gives to each its need and its exquisite coloring. So he will care for the child, never fear."

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"But I am very angry at thy disobedience."

"Nay, it was not that," and a glimmering light like a smile crossed her sweet face. "I did not ask and thou didst not deny."

"Sophistry again. Thou art still in the bonds of iniquity."

"And thou must forgive seventy times seven. Thou must do good to those that despitefully use thee. If thou art so much wiser and stronger than I, then set this example. I have done many things to please thee. And, husband, thou canst call the little one Prim. I am sure that is plain enough, but to me she will be Rose, the blended sweetness of three lives."

He broke away from her. She had softened many points in his character, he knew, and just now she was a temptress to him. He must assert his own supremacy and deliver himself from these dangerous charms. Just now it looked sinful to him that she had come over to the Friends' persuasion for love of him.

She had been a sweet, thoughtful wife, he could not deny that. But he had been weak to yield to so much happiness. And when the brethren heard of this outrage put upon their usages there would be hard times for her. Suddenly his whole soul protested against having her haled before the meeting. Oh, what had her spirit of willfulness led her into!

She went back to her baby, kissed it and caressed it, prepared it for the night, and sang it to sleep. Philemon Henry wrote long in his little office at home, where he kept sundry business matters he did not want his clerks gossiping about. There were only two discreet friends that he had taken into his confidence and his ventures. Just now there was a slight, uneasy feeling that if he were brought to the strictest account—and yet there was nothing really unlawful in his gains. There were many curious questions in the world, there were diverse people, many religions. And the Friends had sought out liberty of conscience. Was it liberty to compel another?

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Bessy and her child were sleeping sweetly when he glanced at them, and his heart did soften. But he would never call her by that name. He would give her another.

Bessy was up betimes and made some delicacy with her own hands for her husband's breakfast. She came around and kissed him on the forehead as was her morning custom, and though she was a little more grave than usual, she was serene and charming. But he must show her how displeased he was.

The christening had been very quiet. Madam Wetherill had been godmother, and the godfather was a distant relative who resided in New York. Good Parson Duché had been asked to keep the

matter private. And so, if the meeting came to know, Philemon Henry must be the accuser. It was his duty, of course, but he put it off month after month. The babe grew sweet and winsome, and there were many things beside family cares to distract men's minds: The friction between the mother country and grave questions coming to the fore; the following out of Mr. Penn's plans for the improvement of the city, the bridging of creeks and the filling up of streets, for there was much marsh land; the building of docks for the trade that was rapidly enlarging, and the public spirit that was beginning to animate the staid citizens.

Philemon Henry called his babe little one, child, and daughter, and the mother was too wise to flaunt the name in his face. She had great faith in the future. [Pg 23]

"For if you keep stirring your rising continually, you will have no good bread," she said. "Many things are best left alone, until the right time."

She dressed the child quaintly, and she grew sweeter every day. But they talked about the son they were to have, and other daughters. Little Phil wrote occasionally. He was studying in an English school, but he had spells of homesickness now and then, and his uncle said if he learned smartly he should take a voyage to America when he was older. Nevitt Grange was a great, beautiful place with a castle and a church and peasants working in the fields. And he was to go up to London to see the king.

One damp, drizzling November night Philemon Henry came home with so severe a cold that he could hardly speak. He had been on the dock all day, supervising the unloading of a vessel of choice goods. He could eat no supper. Bessy made him a brew of choice herbs and had him hold his feet in hot water while she covered him with a blanket and made a steam by pouring some medicaments on a hot brick. Then he was bundled up in bed, but all night long he was restless, muttering and tumbling about. He would get up in the morning, but before he was dressed he fell across the bed like a log, and Bessy in great fright summoned the doctor.

He had never been ill before, and for a few days no one dreamed of danger. Then his brother James was summoned, and his clerk from the warehouse, and there were grave consultations. Bessy's buoyant nature could not at first take in the seriousness of the case. Of course he would recover. He was so large and strong, and not an old man. [Pg 24]

Alas! In a brief fortnight Philemon Henry lay dead in the house, and Bessy was so stunned that she, too, seemed half bereft of life. She had loved him sincerely, and for months they had forgotten their unfortunate difference over the child's name. And when he was laid in the burying ground beside his first wife, there was a strange feeling that he no longer belonged to her, and she was all alone; that somehow the bond had snapped that united her with the Friends.

Philemon Henry had made a will in the lucid intervals of his fever. His brother was appointed guardian of the child and trustee of the property. To Bessy was left an income in no wise extravagant, so long as she remained a widow. The remainder was to be invested for the child, who was not to come into possession until she was twenty-one. She and her mother were to spend half of every year on the farm, and in case of the mother's death she was to be consigned to the sole guardianship of her uncle. There were a few outside bequests and remembrances to faithful clerks.

The other trustee was Philemon's business partner, who had lately returned from Holland. If Friend Henry had lived a few years longer he would have been a rich man, but in process of settlement his worldly wealth shrank greatly.

Uncle James proposed that the house should be sold, and she be free from the expense of maintaining it.

"Nay," she protested. "Surely thou hast not the heart to deprive me of the little joy remaining to my life. The place is dear to me, for I can see him in every room, and the garden he tended with so much care. Thou wilt kill me by insisting, and a murder will be on thy hands." [Pg 25]

She spent the winter and spring in the house. One day in every week she went to cousin Wetherill's.

The elder lady, a stickler for fashion, suggested that she should wear mourning.

"I like not dismal sables," declared Bessy. "And it is not the custom of Friends. I shall no doubt do many things I should be restricted from were my husband alive, but I will honor him in this."

She attended the Friends' meeting on Sunday afternoon, but the evening assemblies that had convened at the Henrys' once a fortnight were transferred to another house. And in summer, although she went to the Henry farm, she made visits in town and resumed some of her old friendships.

The next autumn there came an opportunity to sell the house and the business, and James Henry urged it.

"Then her home will be here with us," he said to his wife. "Philemon was anxious to have the child brought up under the godly counsel of Friends, and she will be less likely to stray. I think she is not a whole-hearted Friend, and her relatives are worldly people."

But when the place was sold she went at once to Madam Wetherill's. And she began to lay aside her Quaker plainness and frequented Christ Church; indeed, though she was not very gay as yet,

she was a great attraction at the house of her relative.

Before the summer ended an event occurred that gave her still greater freedom of action. This was a legacy from England left to the Wardour branch in the New World, and as there were but three heirs, her portion was a very fair one. There was some talk of Madam Wetherill taking her to England, but the cold weather came on, and there seemed so many things to settle. That winter she went over to the world's people altogether.

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"I think, Bessy, you should make a will," said Madam Wetherill as they were talking seriously one day. "It will not bring about death any sooner. I have had mine made this fifteen years, and am hale and hearty. But, if anything should happen, the child will be delivered over to the Henrys and brought up in the drab-colored mode of belief. It seems hard for little ones so full of life."

"She must have her free choice of religion. Having tried both," and Bessy gave a dainty smile, "I like my own Church the best. If she should grow up and fall in love with a Friend, she can do as she likes. There are not many as manly and handsome as was Philemon. Indeed I think they make their lives too sad-colored, too full of work. I should go wild if I lost my little one, but Lois Henry goes about as if nothing had happened. I found it a luxury to grieve for Philemon. There is wisdom in thy suggestion."

A lawyer was sent for and the matter laid before him. She could appoint another guardian now that she had money of her own to leave the child, and she could consign it part of the time to that guardian's care.

There was much consultation before the matter was settled. And though, when the time came, she moved some chests of goods out to the farm and made a pretense of settling, she and Madam Wetherill soon after went up to New York and were gone three full months.

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James Henry found himself circumvented in a good many ways by woman's wit. There was no dispute between them, and much as he objected to the ways of the world's people, he had no mind to defraud his small niece out of a considerable fortune that might reasonably come to her. Indeed he began to be a little afraid of Bessy Henry's willfulness. And she might marry and leave all of her money to a new set of children.

But fate ordered it otherwise. Bessy went for a visit to Trenton, and though she was rarely separated from her darling, this time she left her behind. She did not return as soon as she expected, on account of a feverish illness which would be over in a few days, her friends insisted, but instead developed into the scourge of smallpox, the treatment of which was not well understood at that time, and though she was healthy ordinarily, the bleeding so reduced her strength that she sank rapidly and in a week had followed her husband.

Madam Wetherill was cut to the very heart by the sad incident, for she loved Bessy as if she had been her own daughter, and she was tenderly attached to baby Primrose, who was too little to realize all she had lost.

When Friend Henry preferred his claim to his brother's child, he was met by some very decided opposition. In the first place the child had been christened in the church, and was, according to her mother's wishes, to be left in Madam Wetherill's charge for six months every year and be instructed in the tenets of her own church, and to remain perfectly free to make her choice when she was eighteen. If her mother's wishes could not be carried out, her fortune was to revert to Madam Wetherill, and she would inherit only what her father bequeathed her.

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"I cannot believe my brother was knowing to this nefarious scheme!" cried Friend Henry in a temper. "And I always thought Primrose a most ungodly name. It was his wish she should become a Friend."

"And if your son marries among the world's people and leaves the faith what will you do?" asked Madam Wetherill.

"I should disown him," was the hasty reply.

"Then Bessy had a right to disown her child if she left the faith. See how unreasonable you are, Friend Henry, and how little true love is in your mind. Now if you have any regard for the little child do not let us quite dismember her after the fashion of Solomon's judgment. You may have her next summer, and I in the winter. I warn you, if you do not agree, I shall fight to the end. I have no children of my own to deprive if I go on lawing, and my purse will surely hold out as long as yours."

That was true enough; longer, he knew. So, after a while, he assented ungraciously, and the matter was adjusted.

But it was not a happy omen that the child's name should cause one quarrel and the possession of her another. She herself was bright and joyous, with much of her mother's merry nature and her clear, frank, beguiling blue eyes.

IN A NEW WORLD.

A very homesick little girl was Primrose Henry when she went out to her uncle's farm. The nurse went with her, but Lois Henry preferred that she should not stay. The child was old enough to wait upon herself. She had a longing for it to fill the vacant place of her own little girls, but she knew that was carnal and sinful, and strove against it. Since God had deprived her of them it was not right to put aught else in their place. So it was a continual struggle between love and duty, and she was cold to the little stranger.

The name, too, was a stumbling block. They had to accept it, however, and called her Primrose with the soberest accent. Uncle James felt sore about being worsted in his suit, for he had desired supreme control of the child.

She soon found things to love. There was the big house dog Rover. Tiger, the watch dog, was kept chained in the daytime and let loose at night to ward off marauders. But he soon came to know her voice and wagged his tail joyously at her approach. She was quite afraid of the cows, but a pretty-faced one with no horns became a favorite, and she used to carry it tid-bits to eat. The cats, too, would come at her call, though they were not allowed in the house.

And there was Andrew. She was very shy of him at first, but he coaxed her to look at a bird's nest with its small, blue-speckled eggs. And there were the chickens that, as they grew larger, followed her about. Andrew found the first ripe early pear for her, and the delicious, sweet July apple; he took her when he went fishing on the creek, but she always felt sorry for the poor fish so cruelly caught, it seemed to her. He taught her to ride bareback behind him, and some boyish tricks that amused her wonderfully.

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Aunt Lois trained her in spelling, in sums in addition, sewing patchwork, and spinning on the small wheel. But there was not enough in the simple living to keep a child busy half the time, and she soon found ways of roaming about, generally guarded by Rover. Aunt Wetherill had said, "In six months you are coming back to us," so at first she was very glad she was not to stay always.

It is the province of happy and wholesome childhood to forget the things that are behind, or even a future in which there is dread. The life of childhood is in the present, and it finds many pleasures. So now Primrose had almost forgotten her joyous and sorrowful past, and really dreaded the next change. She hated to leave Andrew, the dogs and the chickens, the cows that she did not fear quite so much, the great orchard, the long reaches of meadows, and the woods where the birds sang so enchantingly. But Aunt Lois had not grown into her heart, and she stood greatly in awe of Uncle James, who had a way of speaking sharply to her.

But black Cato came with Madam Wetherill in the lumbering chaise, which was a great rarity at that period. Primrose was dressed in a white homespun linen frock. At this early stage of the country's industries they were doing a good deal of weaving at Germantown, though many people had small looms in their houses. Imported goods were high, and now that so much of the land was cleared and houses built, they had time for other things, and were ingenious in discoveries.

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Madam Wetherill was very grand in her satin petticoat and brocade gown, that fell away at the sides and made a train at the back. Her imported hat of Leghorn, very costly at that period but lasting half a lifetime, had a big bow of green satin on top, and the high front was filled in with quilled lace and pink bows. From its side depended a long white lace veil with a deep worked border of flowers. Her shoes had glittering buckles, and she wore a great brooch in her stomacher.

Primrose was dreadfully shy, she saw so few strangers. She scarcely raised her eyes to the rustling dame, and her heart beat with unwonted agitation.

Madam Wetherill wanted to laugh at the queer little figure, but she was better bred, and kept a lingering fondness for the child's mother. Besides, she was one of the possible heirs to her fortune, and some of the grandnieces and nephews were not altogether to her fancy. And though she was high-spirited and could both resent and argue fiercely, she had the Wardour suavity, and some early training abroad in the Court.

"Come hither, little one," and she held out her jeweled hand. "Friend Henry, I should have called to see my grandniece, but you remember we thought it best not so to do. You have had the uninterrupted six months, and I can see you have kept her well. What a clear complexion the child hath! A little sun-burned, perhaps. Her mother was a fine hearty woman, and it was a thousand pities she had not been inoculated and cared for carefully, instead of being attacked in that blind way no one suspected. She was a sweet thing and I loved her as a daughter of my own, though I would fain not have had her marry Philemon Henry. But la! love rules us all, at least us worldly people. I am thankful for thy good care of Primrose. And now, child, put on thy hood or cap or whatever 'tis, and come to thy new home, where we promise to treat thee well."

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"And return her to us," subjoined Lois Henry, almost afraid to let her go now that the time had come. "Get thy hat, child."

Chloe entered just then with a glass of home-made wine of excellent flavor and age, and some newly baked cake that was quite enough in its very appearance to make one long to taste it. And the napkin she spread on my lady's lap was fine and soft, if it had not been woven in English air and taken a sea voyage.

Primrose had glanced up at the lady when she began to address her, and one by one old memories returned. Friend Henry never spoke of her mother or Madam Wetherill, and in six months a good deal drops out of a child's mind, but she smiled a little as the stream of remembrance swept over her, and recalled her pretty mother's kisses and fondness and a beautiful house that had made this seem like a desert to her. And Madam Wetherill squeezed the small hand in a friendly manner, then began to eat her cake and praise it as well, though Friend Henry protested against that.

"Chloe, bring the child's hat," she said in so calm a tone it hardly seemed a command.

Then Madam took her by the hand and they walked out together and the black servant put her in the chaise. Madam Wetherill spread out her fine gown so that it almost covered the plain garments of the child.

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Lois Henry had merely uttered the briefest of good-byes, with no parting kiss. She had given her some counsel before. Yet when she shut the main door that opened into the sitting room, for the strictest of Friends would have no parlor, she sat down suddenly and put both hands to her face. It would be very hard to part thus every year, to know one's sincere efforts in training the child to a godly life would be uprooted by the vain show of the world, so attractive to youth, and the vision of the two little girls gone out never to return, swept over her with a pang. Why could she not give them wholly to the Lord, and be glad they were in His fold, safe from evil? And this little one—Madam Wetherill was quite at middle life—she herself was surely younger and might outlive the other. But at eighteen the child could choose, and she would be likely to choose the ways of the world, so seductive to youth.

They did not go in to the city house, which was being repaired and cleaned. Many people owned farms along the banks of the Schuylkill and in the outlying places, where choice fruits of all kinds were cultivated, melons and vegetables for winter use as well as summer luxury. For people had to provide for winter, and there was much pickling and preserving and candying of fruits, and storing commoner things so that they would keep well.

The houses were large, if rambling and rather plain, with porches wide enough to dance on on the beautiful moonlight nights. And there were sailing and rowing on the river, lovely indeed then with its shaded winding banks, mysterious nooks, and little creeks that meandered gently through sedgy grass and rested on the bosom of their mother, lost in her tenderness.

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Parties of young people often met for the afternoon and evening. There would be boating and dancing and much merrymaking. The people of this section were less strenuous than the New Englanders. They affiliated largely with their neighbors to the South. Indeed, many of the business men owned tobacco plantations in Maryland and Virginia. They kept in closer contact with the mother country as well. Madam Wetherill herself had crossed the ocean several times and brought home new fashions and court gowns and manners. The English novelists and poets were quite well read, and, though the higher education of women was not approved of, there were bright young girls who could turn an apt quotation, were quick at repartee, and confided to their bosom friend that they had looked over Sterne and Swift. They could indite a few verses on the marriage of a friend, or the death of some loved infant, but pretty, attractive manners and a few accomplishments went farther in the gentler sex than much learning.

The Friends who were in society were not so over strict as to their attire. Those who lived much alone on the farms, like Lois Henry, or led restricted lives in the town, pondered much on how little they could give to the world. But they took from it all they could in thriftiness and saving.

Young Mrs. Penn and Mrs. Logan and many another indulged in pretty gear, and grays that went near to lavender and peachy tints. There were pearl-colored brocades and satins, and dainty caps of sheerest material that allowed the well-dressed hair to show quite distinctly. There was also a certain gayety and sprightliness in entertaining, since there were no matinées or shows to visit. Both hostess and guest were expected to contribute of their best.

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Madam Wetherill had long been a well-to-do widow and conducted her large estate with ability, though she employed a sort of overseer or confidential clerk. She had inherited a good deal in her own right from the Wardours and sundry English relatives. Some of the Wetherills were of the Quaker persuasion, but her husband had wandered a little from the fold. She had been a Churchwoman, and still considered herself so, but she was of a very independent turn, and on her last visit to England had come home rather affronted with the light esteem in which many professed to hold the colonies.

"They talk as if we were a set of ignoramuses," she declared in high dudgeon. "We are worthy of nothing but the tillage of fields and whatever industries the will of the mother country directs. Are we, their own offspring, to be always considered children and servants, and have masters appointed over us without any say of our own? We can build ships. Why can we not trade with any port in the world? What if we have raised up no Master Chaucer nor Shakspeare nor Ben Jonson, nor wise Lord Bacon and divers storytellers—did England do this in her early years when she was hard bestead with the hordes from the Continent? We have had to make our way against Indian savages, and did we not conquer the French in our mother's behalf? And then to be set down as ignorant children, forsooth, and told what we must do and from what we must refrain. The colonies have outgrown swaddling-clothes!"

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But she was fond of gayety and pleasure as well, and having no children to place in the world and no really near kindred but first and second cousins she saw no need of being penurious, and lived

with a free hand. She was very fond of young people also, and it seemed a great pity she had not been mother of a family. Her city house was a great rendezvous, and her farmhouse was the stopping place of many a gay party, and often a crowd to supper with a good deal of impromptu dancing afterward.

The porch was full of young people now, with two or three men in military costume, so they drove around to the side entrance. Mistress Janice was busy ordering refreshments and making a new kind of frozen custard. A pleasant-faced, youngish woman came to receive them.

"Here is the little Quaker, Patty, in her homespun gown. I might as well have sent you, for Friend Henry made no time at all, but was as meek as a mild-mannered mother sheep. It is the law, of course, and they had no right to refuse, but I was a little afraid of a fuss, and that perhaps they had set up the child against such ungodly people."

"Oh, how she has grown!" cried Patty. "Child, have you forgotten me?"

"Oh, no!" said Primrose a little shyly. "And my own mother liked you so. You were my nurse——"

She slipped her hand within that of the woman.

"She was a sweet person, poor dear! It will always be a great loss to thee, little child. Oh, madam, the eyes are the same; blue as a bit of sky between mountains. But she is not as fair——"

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"Thou must bleach her up with sour cream and softening lotions that will not hurt the skin. There, child, go with Patty, who will get thee into something proper. But she is like her mother in this respect, common garb does not disfigure her."

Patty led her upstairs and through the hall into a sort of ell part where there were two rooms. The first had a great work table with drawers, and some patterns pinned up to the window casings that seemed like parts of ghosts. The floor was bare, but painted yellow. There was a high bureau full of drawers with a small oblong looking-glass on top, a set of shelves with a few books, and numerous odds and ends, a long bench with a chintz-covered pallet, and some chairs, beside a sort of washing stand in the corner. The adjoining room was smaller and had two cot beds covered with patchwork spreads.

"Yes, thou hast grown wonderfully," repeated Patty. "And who cut thy lovely hair so short? But it curls like thy mother's. I find myself talking Quaker to thee, though to be sure the best quality use it."

"I had so much hair and it was so warm that it hath been cut several times this summer."

"Oh, you charming little Friend!" Patty gave her a hug and half a dozen kisses. "I'll warrant thou hast forgotten the old times!"

"It comes back to me," and the blue eyes kindled with a soft light that would have been entrancing in a woman. "Aunt Lois checked me when I would have talked about them. And when I was here—it was in the other house, I remember—I was so sad and lonely without my dear mamma."

She gave a sigh and her bosom swelled.

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"Patty, I cannot understand clearly. What is death, and why does God want people when He has so many in heaven? And a little girl has but one mother."

"Law, child! I do not know myself. The catechism may explain it, but I was ever a dull scholar at reading and liked not study. Yes, thy face must be bleached up, and I will begin this very night. They were good to thee"—tentatively.

"I always felt afraid of Uncle James, though he never slapped me but once, when I ran after the little chickens. They were such balls of yellow down that I wanted to hug them. Afterward I asked Andrew what I might do. He was very good to me, and he wished I had been his little sister."

Patty laughed. "And did you wish it too?"

"I liked my own dear mother best. When I was out in the woods alone I talked to her. Do you think she could hear in the sky? Aunt Lois said it was wrong to wish her back again, or to wish for anything that God took away. And so I ceased to wish for anybody, but learned to put on my clothes and tie my strings and button, and do what Aunt Lois told me. I can wipe cups and saucers and make my bed and sweep my room and weed in the garden, and sew, and spin a little, but I cannot make very even thread yet. And to knit—I have knit a pair of stockings, Patty. Aunt Lois said those I brought were vanity."

"Stuff and nonsense! These Quakers would have the world go in hodden gray, and clumsy shoes and stockings. Let us see thine. Oh, ridiculous! We will give them to little Catty, the scrubwoman's child. Now I will put thee in something decent."

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She began to disrobe her and bathed her shoulders and arms in some fragrant water.

"Oh, how delightful! It smells like roses," and she pressed the cloth to her face.

"It is rose-water. What was in the garden at the Henrys'? Or is everything wicked that does not grow to eat?"

"The roses were saved to make something to put in cake. But the lavender was laid in the press and the drawers. It was very fragrant, but not like the roses."

She combed out the child's hair until it fell in rings about her head. Then she put on some fine, pretty garments and a slip of pink silk, cut over from a petticoat of Madam Wetherill's. Her stockings were fine, cut over as well, and her low shoes had little heels and buckles.

"Oh," she cried with sudden gayety that still had a pathos in it, "it brings back mamma and so many things! Were they packed away, Patty, like one's best clothes? It is as if I could pull them out of a trunk where they had been shut up in the dark. And there were so many pretty garments, and a picture of father that I used to wear sometimes about my neck with a ribbon."

"Yes, yes; madam has a boxful, saving for you, unless you turn Quaker. But we shall keep a sharp eye on you that you do not fall in love with any of the broadbrims. But your father was one of the handsomest of his sect, and a gentleman. It was whispered that his trade made him full lenient of many things, and your mother looked like a picture just stepped out of a frame. She had such an air that her dressing never made her plain. I am afraid you will not be as handsome. Oh, fie! what nonsense I am talking! I shall make thee as vain as a peacock!"

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Primrose laughed gayly. She felt happy and unafraid, as if she had been released from bondage. And yet everything seemed so strange she hardly dared stir. Why, this was the way she felt at Aunt Lois' the first week or two.

There was a rustle in the little hall, and the child turned.

"I declare, Patty, thou hast transformed our small Quaker, and improved her beyond belief. She is not so bad when all's said and done!"

"But all isn't done yet, madam. When she comes to be bleached, and her hair grown out, but la! it's just a cloud now, a little too rough for silk, but we will soon mend that, and such a soft color."

"Canst thou courtesy, child? Let me see?"

Primrose looked a little frightened and glanced from one to the other.

"This way." Patty held up a bit of the skirt of her gown, took a step forward with one foot, and made a graceful inclination. "Now try. Surely you knew before you fell into the hands of that strait sect who consider respectable manners a vanity. Try—now again. That does fairly well, my lady."

Primrose was so used to obeying that, although her face turned red, she went through the evolution in a rather shy but not ungraceful manner.

"Thou has done well with the frock, Patty, and it is becoming. My! but she looks another child. Now I am going to lead thee downstairs and thou must not be silly, nor frightened of folks. They knew thy dear mother."

Madame Wetherill took her by the hand and led her through another hall and down a wide staircase to the main hall that ran through the house. A great rug lay in the front square, and on one side was a mahogany settle with feather cushions in gay flowered chintz.

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Out on the porch was a girlish group laughing and jesting, sipping mead, and eating cake and confections. Little tables placed here and there held the refreshments. The sun was dropping down and the Schuylkill seemed a mass of molten crimson and gold commingled. The fresh wind blew up through the old-fashioned garden of sweet herbs and made the air about fragrant.

"This is my little grandniece, Primrose Henry," she exclaimed, presenting the child. "Some of you have seen her mother, no doubt, who died so sadly at Trenton of that miserable smallpox."

"Oh, and her father, too!" exclaimed Mrs. Pemberton, putting down her glass and coming forward.

Primrose had made her courtesy and now half buried her face in Madame Wetherill's voluminous brocade.

"A fine man indeed was Philemon Henry, with the air of good descent, and the manner of courts. And we always wondered if he would not have come over to us if his sweetheart had stood firm. Girls do not realize all their power. But it was a happy marriage, what there was of it. Alas! that it should have ended so soon! But I think the child favors her mother."

"And it will not do to say all the sweet things we know about her mother," laughed pretty Miss Chew. "Sweet diet is bad for infants and had better be saved for their years of appreciation. You see we may never reach discretion."

"Come hither, little maid," said a persuasive voice. "I have two at home not unlike thee, and shall be glad to bring them when Madam comes home to Arch Street. Primrose! What an odd name, savoring of English gardens."

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Some of the younger women pulled her hither and thither and kissed her, and one pinned a posy on her shoulder. Then Madam Wetherill led her down quite to the edge of the porch, where sat a rather thin, fretted-looking woman, gowned in the latest style, and a girl of ten, much more furbelowed than was the custom of attiring children.

"This is the child I was telling thee of, Bessy Wardour's little one that she had to leave with such regrets. This is a relative of thy mother's, Primrose, and this is Anabella. I hope you two children may be friends."

There was a certain curious suavity in Madam Wetherill's tone that was not quite like her everyday utterances.

"A Wardour—yes; was there not something about her marriage——"

"She became a Friend for love's sake," laughed Madam Wetherill. "Others stood ready to marry her, but she would have none of them—girls are willful."

The lady rose with a high dignity.

"It grows late," she said, "and if you will keep your promise, dear aunt, I should like to be sent home, since it is not well for children to be out in the evening dew. And I hope the little girls may indeed be friends."

"Yes, I will order the chaise."

Others had risen. Mrs. Pemberton and her daughter, and two or three more, had been bidden to supper. Some of the ladies had come on horseback, the ordinary mode of traveling. They clustered about Madam Wetherill and praised her cake and said how glad they would be to get her in the city again. Then they pinned up their pretty skirts and put on their safeguard petticoats and were mounted by Cato and went off, nodding. The chaise took in two other ladies.

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The little girls had simply eyed each other curiously, but neither made any advance, and parted formally.

Then Patty came and took Primrose upstairs and gave her a supper of bread and milk and a dish of cut peaches and cream. Afterward she undressed her and put her in one of the cots, bidding her go to sleep at once. She was needed elsewhere.

But Primrose felt desperately, disobediently wide awake. It had been such an afternoon of adventure after six months of the quietest routine that had made memory almost lethargic. The remembrances came trooping back—the long time it seemed to her when she had yearned and cried in secret for her mother, the two little girls that in some degree comforted her, and then the half terror and loneliness on the farm until she had come to love the dumb animals and her Cousin Andrew. This was all so different. A long, long while and then she must go back. What made people so unlike? What made goodness and badness? And what was God that she stood dreadfully in awe of, who could see her while she could not see Him?

Thus, swinging back and forth amid unanswerable questions, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

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OF MANY THINGS.

Madam Wetherill was much engrossed with visitors and overseeing the farm work, ordering what of the produce was to be sold, what of the flax and the wool sent away to be spun and woven, and the jars and boxes and barrels set aside to be taken into the town later on. Patty was busy sewing for the little girl and her mistress, and sometimes, when she was bothered, she was apt to be rather sharp. At others she proved entertaining.

Primrose learned to know her way about the great house and the garden and orchard. Now she must go with a bonnet to protect her from the sun and linen gloves to keep her hands white, or to get them that color. At night she was anointed with cosmetics, and her hair was brushed and scented, but needed no help from curling tongs or pins.

It was like a strange dream to her, and in the morning when she awoke she wondered first if she had not overslept and missed the call of Aunt Lois; then she would laugh, remembering. She was a very cheerful, tractable child, and Madam Wetherill was much drawn to her. Sometimes she went riding with her in the coach, which was a rather extravagant luxury in those days.

And then they came into town and it was stranger still to the little girl. But now she began to be busy.

There were some schools where boys and girls went together, but many of the best people had their daughters educated at home. It seemed quite desirable that they should learn French, as it was useful to have a language servants could not understand. They began with Latin, as that gave a better foundation for all else. Then there was enough of arithmetic to keep household accounts and to compute interest. Madam Wetherill had found her knowledge most useful, as she had a large estate to manage and had no such objections as many of the women of that period.

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There was the spinet and singing of songs, dancing and doing fine needlework. Anabella Morris was to come in for the accomplishments.

Her mother professed to hold the weightier knowledge in slight esteem.

"Anabella will no doubt have a husband to manage for her," her mother said with a high sort of indifference. "Women make but a poor fist at money affairs."

"Indeed, Niece Mary, I do not see but what I have managed my affairs as well as most men could have done them for me. And look at Hester Morris, left with a handsome patrimony by an easy husband, and now dependent on relatives. I am glad there is talk of her second marriage."

"Mere talk, it may be." With her nose in the air, Mary Morris was not a little jealous that her almost penniless sister-in-law should capture the prize she had been angling for.

"Let us hope it will be something more. I hear Miss Morris hath promised her a wedding gown, and I will add a brocade with a satin petticoat. Hester is a pleasant body, if not overpowered with wisdom."

Mrs. Mary Morris was not poor, though it needed much contriving to get along on her income. She was very fond of play, one of the vices of the time, and though she was often successful, at others she lost heavily. She was fond of being considered much richer than she really was, and kept her pinches to herself. One of her dreams had been the possibility of being asked to stay at Wetherill House for the winter, at least, but this had not happened. She was not as near a connection as Bessy Wardour had been, but she made the most of the relationship, and there were not a great many near heirs; so all might reasonably count on having something by and by.

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She had received a goodly supply of provisions from the farm, and the offer had been made for Anabella to share Primrose Henry's teachers with no extra charge.

"You are very generous to the child," she said in a complaining tone. "I thought Philemon Henry was in excellent circumstances."

"So he was."

"And is not her guardian, the other one, a well-to-do Quaker? Why must you be so regardful of her?"

"Yes, she will have a nice sum, doubtless. I want her brought up to fit her station, which the Henrys, being strict Friends, would not do. Her mother appointed me her guardian, you know. I do nothing beside my duty. But if you do not care——"

"Oh, 'tis a real charity to offer it for Anabella, and I am glad to accept. She is well trained, I suppose, so no harm can come of the association."

"Oh, no harm indeed," returned the elder dryly.

After the simplicity of life at the Henrys' there seemed such a confusion of servants that Primrose was almost frightened. Mistress Janice Kent kept them in order, and next to Madam Wetherill ruled the house. Patty was a seamstress, a little higher than the maid who made her mistress ready for all occasions, looked after her clothes, did up her laces, and crimped her ruffles. But Patty wrote her invitations and answered the ordinary notes; and she was appointed to look after and care for Primrose, who was too old for a nurse and not old enough for a maid.

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Patty was a woman of some education, while Mistress Kent had been to France and Holland, and could both write and speak French. Patty's advantages had been rather limited, but she was quick and shrewd and made the most of them, though the feeling between her and Janice Kent rather amused Madam Wetherill. Janice was always trying to "set her down in her proper place," but what that was exactly it would have been hard to tell. Janice would not have had time to look after the child, and this responsibility rather raised her. Then she had wonderful skill with caps and gowns, and could imitate any imported garment, for even then those who could sent abroad for garments made up in the latest style, though it was London and not Paris style.

Primrose kept her bed in Patty's room. There were plain little gowns for her daily wear, but white aprons instead of homespun gingham. She came to breakfast with Madam Wetherill when there were no guests, or only one or two intimates. For the people of the town had much of the Southern ways of hospitality, and when on their farms in summer often invited their less fortunate friends. It was not always lack of money, but many of the merchants in trade and commerce between the home ports had no time to spend upon country places, and were not averse to having their wives and daughters enjoy some of the more trying summer weeks in the cooler suburban places.

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So Primrose sat like a mouse unless someone spoke to her, and it was considered not best to take too much notice of children, as it made them forward. Then there were two hours devoted to studying, and sewing with Patty until dinner, which was often taken upstairs in the sewing room. Twice a week the tutor came for Latin and French, the former first; and then Anabella came for French, and after that the little girls could have a play or a walk, or a ride with Madam Wetherill. Then there was a dancing lesson twice a week, on alternate days, and a young woman came to teach the spinet, which was a rather unusual thing, as women were not considered to know anything except housekeeping well enough to teach it. But this was one of Madam Wetherill's whims. For the girl's family had been unfortunate, and the elder woman saw in this scheme a way to assist them without offering charity.

"Do you suppose the little girls I knew last winter will ever come back?" she asked of Patty one day.

"Oh, la, no!" was the reply. "Five years of school lies before them—not like Master Dove's school, where one goes every morning, but a great boarding house where they are housed and fed and study, and have only half of Saturday for a holiday. And they study from morning to night."

"It must be very hard," sighed Primrose. "And why do they learn so much?"

"To be sure, that's the puzzle! And they say women don't need to know. They can't be lawyers nor doctors nor ministers, nor officers in case of war, nor hold offices."

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"But they can be queens. There was Queen Elizabeth, and Queen Anne. I read about them in a book downstairs one day. And if women can be queens, why can't they be something else?"

Patty looked down, nonplused for a moment. "I suppose it was because the kings died, and all the sons were dead, if they ever had any. Well—I don't know why woman shouldn't be 'most anything; but she isn't, and that's all about it. There's more than one man wanted to marry the madam, but she's wise not to take a spendthrift—or one of the Friends, who would be obstinate and set in his ways. She's good enough at bargaining, and she has a great tobacco plantation at Annapolis, and is as smart as any man. And she can beat half of them at piquet and ombre and win their money, too."

"What is piquet?"

"Oh, Lord, child! I've always heard that little pitchers had big ears, and many a rill runs to the sea. Don't you carry things, now, nor ask questions. Little girls have no call to know such things. What were we talking about when I made that slip? Oh, about those girls. They'll be trained in fine manners. The English ladies go to court and see the King and the Queen and the princesses, and have gay doings."

"Have we any court?"

"Oh, dear, no! England governs us. But there's a good deal of talk—there, child, get some sewing—hemstitching or something—and don't talk so much."

She was silent quite a while. Then she said gravely: "I think I liked the other girls better than I do Anabella. Is she my real cousin? She said so yesterday. And once, just before I came here, Andrew said I had no cousin but him."

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"That's true enough. Andrew is a real cousin, your father's brother's son. And your mother had no brothers or sisters. But it's a fashion to say cousin. It sounds more respectful. Mistress Morris is a great one to scrape relationship with high-up folks."

Primrose suddenly wondered if anybody missed her at the farm. The little chickens must have grown into quite large ones, and all the other things she cared for so much. There was a sudden homesickness. She would like to see them. But—yes, she *would* rather be here. There were so many things to learn. She didn't see any sense in the Latin, and she was sure it didn't make the French any easier. But the spinet—

"Patty," she ventured timidly, "do you not think I ought to go at my notes? I didn't play them very well yesterday, and the mistress rapped me over the knuckles."

She spread her small hand out on her knee and inspected it.

"Yes. Dear me! you'll never get that kerchief done. But, then, run along. There's no one downstairs. They are all invited to Mistress Pean's to take tea, and pick everybody to pieces."

"But they have no feathers," said the little girl with a quaint smile, as she folded up her work and ran her needle through it. Then she put it in a large silken bag that hung on a nail, and remembered with a half-guilty conscience that there were some stockings to darn, and she almost expected to hear Patty ask about them and call her back.

Down over the wide steps she tripped. She was half minded to take a plunge amid the down cushions on the settle. She had sometimes turned somersaults in the grass when no one was by, being very careful not to let Aunt Lois surprise her. She felt like that now, but she walked along decorously. The great company room was always a marvel to her. It held so many wonderful things.

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There was, even then, a good deal of luxury for those who had the money to buy it. England did not care how much her colonists spent so that it passed through her hands. She brought treasures from the far East—there were only a very few ports allowed to the Americans.

And here were Oriental rugs on the polished floor; furniture carved and padded in brocade, tables with massive claw feet, and others in thin spindles that seemed hardly stout enough to hold up the top. There was a great carved chimney-piece with some tiles let in, and some curious iridescent bulbs not unlike the "bullseyes" over the wide hall door, but in different phases of light they gave out varied colors. There were queer, beautiful, and grotesque ornaments, some ugly Chinese gods that had been brought hither by sea captains, but if to convert the new continent, the scheme certainly would prove a failure. Primrose always looked at them with a shudder, and instinctively thought of the Friends' meeting with the soft gray gowns and shawls with fine fringes, or in summer just a plain white kerchief crossed over the bosom. Then there was a great blue-and-white Chinese pagoda, ornamented with numerous bells, every story growing smaller. It stood on a solid clawfoot table, and beside it, also in china, a mandarin with flowing sleeves and a

long pigtail in dark-blue.

There were curious chairs as well, and no end of square ottomans covered with brocade or tapestry, sadly faded now and some of the edges worn. Everywhere about were candlesticks and snuffers, for sometimes the room was brilliantly lighted.

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Adjoining this, with a wide doorway between, was a room not quite so long, but jutting out at the side. In a sort of alcove stood the spinet. There were also two corner buffets, as they were called. One of them had drawers at the bottom, and the shelves above held various heirlooms, and quaint old silver, with the punch bowl over two hundred years old, bearing the Crown mark.

The other contained a good many books, for the descendants of the cavaliers were not averse to something lighter than the "Book of Martyrs." An old brown leather-covered Shakspeare, and some of his compeers, and Bacon, Lord Verulam, reposing peacefully on the shelf underneath. Mr. Benjamin Franklin had given an impetus to knowledge and ventured upon the writing of books himself.

Primrose wandered among them now and then, not understanding, and having a greater fondness for the versifying part than the prose. But she did pore over "Rasselas," and an odd collection of adventures in Eastern lands, very like the "Arabian Nights."

But now she went straight at her spinet. She was thrilled through and through with the sound of the notes, and often before she was aware her little fingers would wander off in some melody, recalling how a bird sang or how a streamlet rippled over the stones. Then she would stop in affright and go carefully over her lesson.

Anabella really succeeded better than she did. There was no singing bird in her brain that tempted her to stray. But sometimes the music master was quite angry with her, and said she "might as well be a boy driving nails or facing stone."

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But now she went over and over and would not be seduced by "wonderful melodies." It was quite dark when Mistress Janice called her to supper in the tea room, with Patty. The two women had a great deal of sparring, it would seem. At the farm there was never any bickering. Once in a while Uncle James scolded some of the laborers. Yet it seemed curious to Primrose that they should talk so sharply to each other and the next minute join in gay laughter.

The very next day she had a visitor. Uncle James had been in once and had a long talk with Madam Wetherill. After he had given her a somewhat serious scrutiny and asked a few questions she was dismissed. But Aunt Wetherill was out now and Andrew Henry asked for her.

"Promise me you won't run off with him," exclaimed Patty. "I must finish this gown, as madam goes to Mrs. Chew's this afternoon, and all these furbelows have to be sewed on. Folks can't be content with a plain gown any more, but must have it laced and ruffled and bows stuck on it as if it was Fair time!"

"When is Fair time?" asked Primrose, as she was putting on a clean pinafore.

"How you take one up, child! There are fairs and fairs. They started in England, where all things do. For all we put on such mighty independent airs we do but follow like a flock of sheep. There, child, run and don't stand gaping! And mind that you don't attempt to run off with friend Broadbrim."

She was glad to be clasped in the strong arms and have the hearty kiss on her forehead.

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"It is like a different place without thee," he exclaimed. "I cannot make the days go fast enough until spring opens and thou come back with the birds. We are such quiet folk. And here all is gayety. Wilt thou ever be content again?"

"Is gayety so very wrong, Andrew? It seems quite delightful to me," she returned wistfully. "And when the ladies move about in their pretty gowns it is like great flocks of birds, or the meadows with lilies and daisies and red clover-heads. Why do they have all the bright colors?"

A hint of perplexity crossed her brow.

"Surely I cannot tell. And the woods have been robed in scarlet and yellow, and such tints of red brown that one could study them by the hour. And the corn has turned a russet yellow and looks like the tents of an army. Yes, there are divers colors in the world."

"And sometimes I have wished to be a butterfly. They were so beautiful, skimming along. God made them surely."

"Yes. But He put no soul in them. Perhaps that was to show His estimate of fine gear."

Primrose sighed.

"They would make heaven more beautiful. And the singing birds! Oh, surely, Cousin Andrew, they must be saved."

"Nay, child, such talk is not seemly. What should a thing without a soul do in heaven where all is praise and worship?"

"And the worship at Christ Church is very nice, with the singing of psalms and hymns and the people praying together. Why do we not sing, Andrew?"

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He hugged her closer. The soft "we" went to his heart. She had not identified herself with these people of forms and ceremonies then, nor quite accepted their "vain repetitions."

"Thou wilt understand better in the course of a few years. There is much mummery in all of these things. They who worship God truly do it in spirit and in truth. But tell me what else thou art doing on week-days?"

She told him of her studies. The Latin and French seemed quite useless to him, although he knew it was taught at the Friends' school, and many of the persuasion he knew did not disdain education. But his father was quite as rigorous as the Church Catechism about the duties pertaining to one's station in life, and as his son was to be a farmer and inherit broad acres, he cared for him to know nothing outside of his business.

But the bits of history, of men and women, interested him very much.

"I hear them talk sometimes," she said. "And some of them do not want a king. Why is he not content to govern England and let us alone?"

"I am not clear in my own mind about that," he answered thoughtfully. "So many of us came over here to escape the rigors of a hard rule and to worship God as we chose. And methinks we ought to have the right to live and do business as we choose. I should like to hear able men talk on both sides. I heard some things in the market place this morning that startled me strangely."

"They will not have the tea," she said tentatively. "It is queer, bitter stuff, so I do not wonder."

He laughed at that.

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"Yes, I heard we were like to be as famous as Boston."

"Patty knows about Boston," she said. "She was a little girl there. But she doesn't like it very much."

Mistress Kent came in with some cake and a home brew of beer, and asked politely after Mrs. Henry. Then Andrew rose to go.

"I cannot take thee just yet," he said, twining the little fingers about one of his. "But the time will soon pass. And I shall be likely to come in on market day once in a while, if I do not make bad bargains!" with a grave sort of smile. "Then I shall see thee, and take home a good account."

"Thou mayst indeed do that," said Mistress Janice, with high dignity. "She learns many things in this great house."

He stooped and kissed her, and she somehow felt sorry to say good-by.

"I suppose," exclaimed his father that evening, "that the child has been tutored out of her simple ways, and is aping the great lady with fine feathers and all that!"

"She is not much changed and plainly dressed, and seems not easily to forget her old life, asking about many things."

"My brother Philemon's intentions will be sorely thwarted. He was called upon to give up his son, but I am not sure I should have done it for worldly gain. It was going back to the bondage we were glad to escape. And he had counted on other sons to uphold the faith. But the mother was only half-hearted, and the child will always be in peril."

Andrew Henry wondered a little about this question of faith. He had heard strange talk in the market place to-day. The Puritans of Boston had persecuted and banished the Friends, and the Friends here could hardly tolerate the royalist proclivities of the Episcopalians. If war should come, would one have to choose between his country and his faith?

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CHAPTER V.

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A BOULEVERSEMENT.

It was a winter of much perturbation. Grave questions were being discussed—indeed, there had been overt acts of rebellion. And while the Friends counseled peace and preached largely non-resistance, those in trade found they were being sadly interfered with, and this led them to look more closely into the matter and frequent some of the meetings where discussions were not always of the moderate sort.

There had been a congress held at Smith's Tavern after Captain Ayres, with his ship *Polly*, had thought it wisdom to turn about upon reaching Gloucester Point and hearing that the town had resolved he should not land his cargo of tea. Boston and New York had destroyed it, and he thought it wiser not to risk a loss.

They went, afterward, to Carpenter's Hall, where the Reverend Mr. Duché made a prayer and read the collect for the day. The discussion was rather informal, if spirited, and the general disuse of English goods was enjoined.

A sentiment was given afterward:

"May the sword of the parent never be stained with the blood of his children."

There were a number of Friends present at the table. One, who had protested vigorously against the possibilities of war, said heartily:

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"This is not a toast, but a prayer. Come, let us join it."

Christmas was kept with much jollity on the part of many who had no fear of the Scarlet Lady before their eyes, and whose affiliations with Virginia and Maryland were of the tenderer sort. There was great merrymaking at Madam Wetherill's, visitors having been invited for a week's stay. And just at this time the widow Hester Morris married again, and Anabella assumed a great deal of consequence.

Wedding festivities lasted several days. Primrose, in a flowered silken gown, was permitted to go and have a taste of the bride cake, with strict injunctions to refuse the wine. There were several children, and they danced the minuet, to the great admiration of the grown people.

There were some other pleasures as well. The creeks were frozen over and there were fascinating slides,—long, slippery places like a sheet of glass,—and the triumph was to slide the whole length and keep one's head well up. You could spread your arms out like a windmill, only you might come in contact with some other arms, and the great thing was to preserve a correct and elegant balance. Sometimes there were parties of large girls, and then the little ones had to retire elsewhere lest they might get run over and have a bad fall.

One of the pretty ways was to gather up one's skirt by an adroit movement, and suddenly squat down and sail along like a ball. There was a great art in going down, for you could lurch over so easily, and you were almost sure to come down on your nose.

Primrose and Bella went out together after the former learned her way about a little. And though Anabella seemed a rather precise body and easily shocked over some things, she was quite fond of the boys, and often timed their play hour so as to meet the boys coming home from school, and have a laughing chat with them.

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Primrose had a scarlet coat edged with fur and a hood to match. She looked very charming in it, and even a stranger could see the glances of admiration bestowed upon her. She was very shy with strangers, though she did make friends with two or three girls.

"You must be very careful," declared the pretentious Bella. "I wouldn't take so much notice of that Hannah Lee. They are very common people. Her father is a blacksmith and her mother was a servant before she was married. And they are Quakers."

"So was my own father and my dear mother."

"But your mother wasn't really, you know, and she had all those English Wardour relations, and was well connected. But the Lees are very common people, and poor. You see such people hang to you when you are grown up. My mother says one cannot be too careful. Then I think Aunt Wetherill would not approve."

She did like the fresh, rosy, brown-eyed Hannah Lee, though her dress, from crown almost to toe, was drab, and somewhat faded at that. Her gray beaver hat was tied snugly under her chin, and her yarn stockings were gray. Her shoes had plain black buckles on them. But there were other little gray birds as well, and some Quaker damsels were in cloth and fur.

Primrose thought she would ask Aunt Wetherill. One morning she was up in the sewing room and Patty was downstairs pressing out a gown that was to be made over.

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"You look nice and rosy, little Primrose," said the lady. "A run out of doors is a good thing for you. I saw a flock of children sliding yesterday, and I thought I knew the scarlet hood. It is more sensible than a hat. Did you like the fun?"

"Oh, so much!" answered Primrose, her soft eyes shining like a summer sky. "And I can keep up a good long while. But, when I go down, I do often tip over."

"Thou wilt learn all these things. I am glad to have thee with the children, too. It is not good for little ones to live too much with grown people and get their ways."

"I know some of the girls," said Primrose. "I like Hannah Lee very much. She goes to Master Dove's school, but Bella said she was poor."

"Fie! fie! Children should put on no such airs! Bella hath altogether too many of them, and her mother is not an overwise woman! Let me hear no more about whether one is poor or rich."

Primrose was not at all hurt by the chiding tone. She was so glad that she might keep her friend with a clean conscience that she looked up and smiled.

"Thou art a wholesome little thing, and the training of the Friends has some good points. Let me see—I think thou canst have a white beaver this winter, and a cloak with swansdown. And I will give Bella one of blue, so she shall not ape thee. I do not like one to copy the other when one purse is long and the other short."

"Oh, a white beaver! That would be beautiful!" and the eager eyes were alight more with

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pleasure than vanity.

"She is like her mother," Madam Wetherill thought. Primrose was really happy not to give up Hannah Lee. They could find so many subjects of interchange—what the children were doing at Master Dove's school, and the plays they had. The snowballing, although as yet there had been only one snow, had been almost a battle between two parties of boys.

"But Master Dove said no one should dip the balls in water and then let them freeze, or he would get birched soundly. The soft ones are more fun, methinks; they often go to pieces in a shower. My brothers and I snowball after the night work is done. We can keep no servant, so we all have to help."

That was being poor, Primrose supposed. Yet Hannah seemed a great deal kinder and merrier than Bella, and never said sharp things, or was haughty to a playmate.

What Primrose had to tell seemed like wonderland to the little girl whose only story was "Pilgrim's Progress"—the great house, with rugs and silken curtains, the Chinese mandarin and the pagoda, the real pictures that had come from England, and a beautiful, full-length portrait of her own mother, the books in the library, and the gay companies, the silver and fine dishes, and all the servants.

Not that Primrose boasted. She was very free from such a fault. It was not hers, either, and she had no sense of possession. She spoke of her life at her uncle's as well, of the quiet at the farm, of the sewing and spinning.

"I shall learn to spin another year," said Hannah with interest. "I like the merry, buzzing sound. And when I am tall enough for the big wheel I shall enjoy running to and fro. I have an uncle at Germantown who weaves. Mother lets us visit him now and then, and I delight in that."

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Hannah had so many aunts and cousins that the little girl quite envied her.

Bella Morris had a great deal to say about her newly married aunt, who, after all, was no real relation, but her father's sister-in-law. She had married a Mr. Mathews, a well-to-do widower with two growing-up sons who were among the mischievous lads of the day, for even then signs were reversed and gates carried off and front stoops barricaded; even windows were broken in sport, the sport seeming to be chiefly in the adroitness with which one could parry suspicion. They had a house on Spruce Street, set in the midst of a considerable garden, while not a few respectable business men lived over their stores and offices. Polly Morris really grudged her sister-in-law the good fortune, for Hester had been left much worse off than she, but Hester had no incumbrances, and was younger.

In January another congress met, and there was a warm discussion about home manufactures. Underneath was a seething mass ready to bubble over at another turn of the screws. England had utterly refused to listen to the colonists or accede to their wishes. Franklin returned home heavy-hearted indeed, and though he counseled prudence and moderation, and could not believe there would be what he foresaw, if it came to an open issue, would prove a long and bitter struggle. But the gun was fired at Lexington, and the State of Massachusetts stood forth an undisguised rebel.

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One market day Andrew came in again. Primrose had wondered at his long absence. There had been many things to disturb the serenity of the peaceful farmhouse. A sister of Aunt Lois' who had cared for the mother during years of widowhood was taken down, and died after a short illness. The mother, old and feeble, and wandering in her mind, needed constant care. There were three children also, a lad of sixteen and two younger girls, one of whom was devoted to the poor old grandmother. There was nothing to do but to offer them a home, James Henry felt, for Lois would want to make her mother's declining years as comfortable as possible. They were not penniless, but the income was small, and the farm in debt, so it was judged best to sell it and invest the money for the children. Penn Morgan was a stout young fellow and would be of much assistance to Uncle James, while he was learning to do for himself. Rachel, at fourteen, was very womanly, and little Faith was ten.

All this had happened during March. James Henry paid little attention to outside matters. He was prosperous enough under the King's rule, he thought, and he was not a man to take up the larger questions.

"We can hardly have thy brother's child here this season," Lois Henry said to her husband one evening as she sat in her straight-backed chair, too tired even to knit when the cares of the day were over, and the poor, half-demented mother safely asleep.

He looked up in anger. "Not have her here?" he repeated vaguely.

"There is so much more care for me. Rachel is a great help and a comforting maiden. I never thought anyone could come so near to the place of the lost ones, the daughters I had hoped would care for my old age. Faith is gentle and tractable, but two children so nearly of an age, yet with such a different training, would lead to no end of argument and do each other no good. I dare say Madam Wetherill has used her best efforts to uproot our ways and methods."

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"That would be a small and unjust thing, remembering her father's faith."

There was something not quite a smile crossed Lois' face, so tired now that a few of the placid

lines had lost their sweetness.

"Yet it was what we did, James." Lois had a great sense of fair-dealing and truth-telling. So far she had had no bargains to make with the world, nor temptations to get the better of anyone. "We thought it our duty to instruct her in her father's faith and keep her from the frivolities that were a snare to her mother. I dare say Madam Wetherill looks at the reverse side for her duty. They go to Christ Church, Andrew said, and though christening signifieth nothing to us, she may impress the child with a sense of its importance. Then the Wetherill House has been very gay this winter. Friend Lane said there was gaming and festivities going on every night, and that it was a meeting place for disaffected minds."

"But Madam Wetherill is a fine royalist. Still there are many ungodly things and temptations there, and this is why I requested Andrew not to go there on market days. He was roused in a way I could not approve and talked of the books in the house. Indiscreet reading is surely a snare. I am not at all sure the ever-wise Franklin, while no doubt he hath much good sense and counseleth patience and peace, hath done a wise thing in advocating a public library where may be found all kinds of heresy. Yet it is true that James Logan was learned in foreign tongues and gave to the town his collection. It was better while they were kept in the family, but now they have been taken to Carpenter's Hall, and some other books added, I hear, and it is a sort of lounging place where the young may imbibe dangerous doctrines. I am glad Penn is such a sensible fellow, though Andrew hath been obedient, but he will soon be of age."

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"The child has been subject to little restraint then, if she is allowed to read everything. And it would be better for Faith not to have the companionship. Then I do not feel able to undertake the training out of these ideas, as I should feel it my duty to do."

James Henry gave a sigh. He could recall his brother's anxiety that the child should not stray from the faith of the Friends.

"I will go in next week myself and have an interview with Madam Wetherill and see the child. I shall be better able to decide what is my duty."

Then they lapsed into silent meditation. If the prayers, since they are only fervent desires, could have been uttered aloud, they would have been found quite at variance.

Providence, which is supposed to have a hand in these matters, was certainly on Lois Henry's side, though she never took comfort in the fact; indeed, accepted the accident with the sweet patience of her sect and never disturbed her mind studying why it should have been sent at this particular time. For James Henry had a fall from the upper floor of his barn and broke his hip, which meant a long siege in bed at the busiest season.

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Penn Morgan, a nice, strong fellow, was a great comfort. He had managed his mother's smaller farm and was not afraid of work.

There was yet considerable farm produce, and much demand for the nicer qualities. Andrew was instructed to call at Arch Street and request a visit from Madam Wetherill.

The news had not yet come of the great battle at Lexington, but all was stir and ferment and activity. For six weeks Andrew had not seen the town. Now on nearly every corner was a group in eager discussion. There had been Patrick Henry's incendiary speech, there was Mr. Adams from Massachusetts, and Benjamin Franklin, so lately returned from England, and many another one from whom the world was to hear before the struggle ended.

Madam Wetherill was out, but would surely be in at dinner time, and though society functions were sometimes as late as two, the ordinary dinner was in the middle of the day. He would have almost an hour to wait, but he had sold very rapidly this morning and made good bargains.

"It is thy cousin," said Mistress Kent. "I have no time to spare, and if thou art not needed at lessons——"

"Oh, let me go to him!" cried Primrose, her face alight with joyous eagerness. "It is so long since I have seen him. I can study this afternoon, as there are no more dancing lessons."

"Well, run along, child. Don't be too forward in thy behavior."

Patty had gone out with her mistress to do a little trading, since she was excellent authority and had many gossiping friends who were much interested in the latest fashions. And now, in the disturbed state of imports, it would not be so easy to have orders filled abroad.

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Primrose danced down the stairs and through the hall. "Oh, Andrew!" she cried, as she was clasped in the fond arms.

Then he held her off a bit. No, Faith could not compare with her. Yet Faith had blue eyes, a fair skin, and light hair, straight and rather stringy and cut short in her neck. But these eyes were like a glint of heaven on a most radiant day, these curving red lips were full of smiles and sweetness, and this lovely hair, this becoming and graceful attire——

"Oh, why do you sigh!" in a pretty, imperious fashion. "Are you not glad to see me? I thought you had forgotten me. It is such a long, long while."

"Did I sigh? I was surprised. Thou art like a sweet, blossomy rose with the morning dew upon it."

"Prim Rose." She drew her face down a little, drooped her eyes, and let her arms hang at her side in a demure fashion, and though Andrew's vocabulary had few descriptive adjectives in it, he felt she was distractingly pretty. He wanted to kiss her again and again, but refrained with Quaker self-restraint.

She laughed softly. "Madam Shippen was here one day with big Miss Peggy, who can laugh and be gay like any little girl, and who is so pretty—not like my dear mother in the frame, but—oh, I can't find a word, and I am learning so many new ones, too. But one would just like to kneel at her feet, and draw a long breath. And she took hold of my hands and we skipped about in the hall with the new step Master Bagett taught me. And Madam Shippen said I was 'most like a rose, and that if I became a Friend I should be called Prim alone, since the name would be suitable. And Madam Wetherill said I was divided, like my name. When will it be time to go to the farm?"

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"Would it be a great disappointment if thou didst not go?" he asked gravely.

"What has happened, cousin?"

Her sweet face took instant alarm. The smiles shaped themselves to a sudden unspoken sympathy.

"A great many things have happened." He would have liked to draw her down to his knee as he had seen Penn hold his sister Faith and comfort her for the loss of their mother. But Primrose did not need comforting. He kept his arm about her and drew her nearer to him.

"Yes, a great many things. Mother's sister, Aunt Rachel Morgan, died in March, and grandmother and the three children have come to live with us. Grandmother is old and has mostly lost her mind. Penn is a large fellow of his age, almost grown up, and is of great service. Rachel is fourteen and is wise in the management of grandmother, who cannot tell one from another and thinks my mother the elder Rachel who died. And then there is little Faith."

"Faith? What is she like? Would you rather have her than—than me? Do you love her most?"

A sudden jealousy flamed up in the child's heart. Since her mother had gone she had really loved no one until she had met Andrew. Perhaps it was largely due to the fact that he was the only sympathetic one in a lonely life.

Andrew laughed, stirred by a sweet joy.

"I would a dozen times rather have thee, but Faith is nice and obedient and my mother has grown fond of her. But there is something about thee, Primrose—canst thou remember how the chickens followed thee, and the birds and the squirrels never seemed afraid? Thou didst talk to the robins as if thou didst understand their song. And the beady-eyed squirrels—how they would stop and listen."

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"I made a robin's song on the spinet quite by myself, one afternoon. And the dainty Ph[oe]be bird, and the wren with her few small notes. Do you know, I think the wren a Quaker bird, only her gown is not quite gray enough. We went out to great-aunt's farm one day, and oh, the birds! Some had on such dazzling plumage and flew so swiftly. We went to the woods and found trailing arbutus, that is so sweet, and hepatica, and oh! many another thing. I can't recall half the names. There was a tall, grave gentleman who talked much about them and said they were families. Are the little birds the babies, and are there cousins and aunts and grandmothers all faded and shriveled up? And can they talk to each other with those little nods and swinging back and forth?"

"Thou art a strange child, Primrose," and he smiled. "What were we talking of? Oh, the coming of the children. And then father hath had a bad fall and has to be kept in bed for weeks. So we seem full of trouble."

"Oh, I am so sorry, Andrew!" Her head was up by his shoulder and she leaned over and kissed him, and then he held her in a very close embrace and felt in some mysterious way that she belonged to him, rather than to his father or to her grand aunt.

"And you will hardly want me," with a slow half question answering itself.

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"That is one of my errands. Father desires to see Madam Wetherill. He did not say—he wishes to follow out my uncle's will concerning you."

Then he looked her all over. Her eyes were cast down on the polished floor that had lately come in. Many people had them sanded; indeed, the large dining room here was freshly sanded every morning and drawn in waves and diamonds and figures of various sorts. The Friends used the sand, but condemned the figures as savoring of the world.

As Primrose stood there she was grace itself. Her head was full of loose curls that glistened of silver in the high lights and a touch of gold in the shade, deepening to a soft brown. Her skin was fine and clear, her brows and the long lashes were quite dark, the latter just tipped with gold that often gave the eyes a dazzling appearance. Her ear was like a bit of pinkish shell or a half crumpled rose leaf. And where her chin melted into her neck, and the neck sloped to the shoulder, there were exquisite lines. After the fashion of the day her bodice was cut square, and the sleeves had a puff at the shoulder and a pretty bow that had done duty in various places before. He did not understand that it was beauty that moved him so, for he had always been deeply sympathetic over the loss of her parents.

She was not studying the floor, or thinking whether she looked winsome or no, though Bella Morris would have done for an instructor on poses already, and was often saying, "Primrose, you must stand that way and turn your face so, and look as if you were listening to something," or "Bend your head a little."

"But I'm not listening, and I can't have my head bent over, it tires my neck," she would reply with a kind of gay decision. [Pg 72]

She was wondering whether she wanted to go out to the farm or not. Would she be allowed to take her books along, or must she go on with the spinning and sewing? And she did love her pretty gowns and the ribbons, and the silver buckles on her shoes, and several times she had worn the gold beads that her mother had left behind for her. And there was the spinet, with its mysterious music, the drives about, and she was learning to ride on a pillion; and Patty knew so many stories about everything, merry and sad and awesome, for her grandmother's sister had been thrust into prison at Salem for being a witch. And Patty also knew some fairy stories, chief among them a version of "Cinderella," and that fascinating "Little Red Riding Hood."

"I think I shall want thee always," he began, breaking the silence. "I have missed thee so much, and counted on thy coming back to us. But you might find it dull after all the pleasure and diversion. There would be Faith——"

"Should I like her?"

"That I cannot tell," and he smiled gravely.

She did not altogether like Bella, but she did not want to say so. It was queer, but she was learning that you could not like everybody to order. There was something about kind, gentle Aunt Lois that held one at a distance, and she was always afraid of her Uncle James.

"Do you like her very much?" with a lingering intonation.

"We are commanded to love everyone, chiefly those of the household of faith." [Pg 73]

"Cousin Andrew," very seriously, "I go to Christ Church now. I like the singing. And it says—in the Scriptures, I think—'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!'"

"One can praise in the heart."

"How should another know it? One might be thinking very naughty things in the heart, and keep silence."

"But the naughty and evil heart would not be likely to do good works."

Primrose was silent. The spiritual part of theology was quite beyond her.

Then there was a clang at the knocker and the small black boy in a bright turban went to answer.

CHAPTER VI.

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TO THE RESCUE.

Primrose was dismissed, though she saw her Cousin Andrew again at dinner. Madam Wetherill had quite settled the question. She was going out to her own country estate, and Primrose would have a change of air and much more liberty, and under the circumstances it was altogether better that she should not go to her uncle's, and Madam Wetherill considered the matter as settled, though she promised to come out the next day.

The dream of William Penn had been a fair, roomy city, with houses set in gardens of greenery. There were to be straight, long streets reaching out to the suburbs and the one to front the river was to have a great public thoroughfare along the bank. Red pines grew abundantly, and many another noble tree was left standing wherever it could be allowed, and new ones planted. Broad Street cut the city in two from north to south, High Street divided it in the opposite direction.

But even now "The greene country towne" was showing changes. To be sure the house in Letitia Court was still standing and the slate-roof house into which Mr. Penn moved later on. But market houses came in High Street, the green river banks were needed for commerce, and little hamlets were growing up on the outskirts. There were neighborly rows of houses that had wide porches where the heads of families received their neighbors, the men discussing the state of the country or their own business, the women comparing household perplexities, complaining of servants, who, when too refractory, were sent to the jail to be whipped, and the complaints or the praises of apprentices who boarded in their master's houses, or rather, were given their board and a moderate yearly stipend to purchase clothes, where they were not made at home. Young people strolled up and down under the great trees of elm and sycamore, or lingered under the drooping willows where sharp eyes could not follow them so closely, and many a demure maiden tried her hand on her father's favorite apprentice, meaning to aim higher later on unless he had some unusual success.

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Up to this time there had been a reign of quiet prosperity. The old Swedes had brought in their

own faith; the church, so small at first as to be almost unnoticed, was winning its way. And though Whitfield had preached the terrors of the law, religious life was more tolerant. Natural aspects were more conciliatory. The Friends were peace-loving and not easily roused from placid methods of money-getting. There was nothing of the Puritan environment or the strenuous conscience that keeps up fanatics and martyrs. Witchcraft could not prosper here, there being only one trial on record, and that easily dismissed. The mantle of charity and peace still hovered over the place, and prosperity had brought about easy habits. Perhaps, too, the luxuriant growth and abundance of everything assisted. Nature smiled, springs were early, autumns full of tender glory.

And though the city was not crowded, according to modern terms, there were many who migrated up the Schuylkill every summer, who owned handsome farms and wide-spreading country houses. Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy, Stenton and the Chew House at Germantown, were the scene of many a summer festivity where Friends and world's people mingled in social enjoyment; pretty Quakeresses practiced the fine art of pleasing and making the most of demure ways and eyes that could be so seductively downcast, phraseology that admitted of more intimacy when prefaced by the term "Friend," or lingered in dulcet tones over the "thee and thou."

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Madam Wetherill always made a summer flitting to her fine and profitable farm, and surrounded herself with guests. She was very fond of company and asked people of different minds, having a great liking for argument, though it was difficult to find just where she stood on many subjects, except the Church and her decided objection to many of the tenets of the Friends, though she counted several of her most intimate acquaintances among them. She had a certain graceful suavity and took no delight in offending anyone.

But she was moved to the heart by Lois Henry's misfortunes. The old mother sat under a great walnut tree on a high-backed bench, with some knitting in her hand, in which she merely run the needles in and out and wound the yarn around any fashion, while she babbled softly or asked a question and forgot it as soon as asked. Rather spare in figure and much wrinkled in face, she still had a placid look and smiled with a meaningless softness as anyone drew near.

For a moment Madam Wetherill thought of William Penn, whom her father had visited at Ruscombe in those last years of a useful life when dreams were his only reality, still gentle and serene, and fond of children. Faith was sitting at her knee and answering her aimless talk, and Rachel had her spinning wheel on the porch.

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Madam Wetherill alighted from her horse, and Rachel came out to her. She sometimes took her servant, but she was a fearless and capable rider.

"I will call my aunt," the young woman said with a courtesy of respect such as girls gave to elders.

"Tell her it is Madam Wetherill. Nay, I will sit here," as the girl invited her within; and she took the porch bench.

Lois Henry showed her added cares in the thinness of her face and certain drawn lines about the mouth, but it had not lost its grave sweetness.

"I hear you are full of trouble," began Madam Wetherill in her well-bred tones. What with education on the one side, and equable temperament on the other, perhaps too, the softness of the climate and the easier modes of life, voices and manners both had a refinement for which they are seldom given credit. The intercourse between England and the colonies had been more frequent and kindly, though the dawning love of liberty was quite as strong as in the Eastern settlements.

"Yes, there is heaviness and burthens laid upon me, but if we are glad to receive good at the hands of the Lord we must not murmur against evil. The spring is a bad time for the head of the house to be laid aside."

"And you have added family cares. I have come to see if you are willing to be relieved in some measure. Everyone counts at such a time, while in a family like ours, with the going and coming, one more never adds to the work."

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"I should be quite willing if we could be assured it was our duty to shift burthens in times of trouble. James is somewhat disquieted about the child. Will you come in and talk with him?"

The bed had been brought out to the best room, as it was so much larger than the sleeping chamber adjoining it. James Henry lay stretched upon a pallet, his ruddy face somewhat paler than its wont.

"I am pleased to see thee," he said gravely.

"And I am sorry for thy misfortune."

The use of the pronoun "thou" had its old English manner and was not confined to the Friends alone. The more rigid, who sought to despise all things that savored of worldliness, used their objective in season and out. And among the younger of the citified Friends, "you" was not infrequently heard.

"It is the Lord's will. We are not allowed our choice of times. Though I must say I have been prospered heretofore, and give thanks for it. I hear there are other troubles abroad and that

those pestilent Puritans, who were never able to live in peace for any length of time, have rebelled against the King. I am sorry it hath come to open blows. But they will soon have the punishment they deserve. We are enjoined to live at peace with all men."

"The news is extremely meager. There is a great ferment," Madam Wetherill replied suavely.

"And in town they are holding congresses! The Lord direct them in the right way. But we have many rebels among us, I think. This was to be a town of peace. William Penn conciliated his enemies and had no use for the sword."

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"True—true! We shall need much wisdom. But I must not weary thee talking of uncertainties. There is another matter that concerns us both, our little ward. As affairs stand I think she had better remain with me through the summer. She will be on a farm and have plenty of air and take up some of the arts of country life. She is in good health and is, I think, a very easily governed child."

"It is not following out her father's wishes. He hoped she would be of his faith. And the influence here might serve to counteract some follies. I would rather she came. But Lois is heavily weighted and two children of the same age——"

"Primrose would have many strange things for her little cousin's ears. Nay, they are hardly cousins." And Madam Wetherill smiled. A keen observer might have observed a touch of disdain.

"Except as to faith. She would be forbidden to talk over her worldly life. We discountenanced it before. It is a sad thing that a child should be so torn and distracted before she can hardly know good or evil. I do not think my brother meant this course should be followed."

"Yet he could not deprive the mother of her child. And he gave away his son for worldly advancement. It was merely that Mistress Henry and her child should live here half the year. The court decided she could transfer her rights to another guardian, and I was nearest of kin. And I shall have to seek heirs somewhere. But one summer cannot matter much, and it will be a relief to thy overtired wife."

James Henry started to raise himself on his elbow and then remembered that he was bandaged and strapped, and was but a helpless log. Two months, the doctor had said, even if all went well, before he could make any exertion. He glanced at his wife. He must be waited on hand and foot, and now the child had been filled with worldliness and would need strong governing. Andrew was overindulgent to her.

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"It hath caused me much thought. This time we might make it a year for good reasons. Mr. Northfield would no doubt consent. Then she would come in the fall and remain."

"Nay, I will not promise that. Her winters in town are important for education. It was for that partly that I preferred the winters. She hath no farm to go to afterward and will lead a town life."

"But so much worldly education does not befit a woman or improve her."

"Yet we must admit that the earlier Friends were men of sound education. They read Greek and Latin, and now at the Friends' school there are many high branches pursued. And it is becoming a question whether spelling correctly, and being able to write a letter and cast up accounts, will harm any woman. Widows often have a sorry time when they know nothing of affairs, and become the prey of designing people. I have had large matters to manage and should have had a troublesome time had I been ignorant."

James Henry sighed. He had wished before that this woman had not been quite so shrewd. And though he was a stanch Friend and would have suffered persecution for the cause, wealth had a curious charm for him, and he was not quite certain it would be right to deprive Primrose Henry of any chance. She had seemed easily influenced last year. If Faith could gain some ascendancy over her! But Faith was more likely to be swayed than to sway, he was afraid.

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"Then let the case stand this way," said Madam Wetherill. "After a month or so matters may be improved with you, and she can come then, being a month or two later in town."

"Yes, that may do," he answered reluctantly, but he did long for a whole year in which to influence his brother's child. For surely she was born in the faith. He would not have gone outside for a convert; the Friends were not given to the making of proselytes. Everyone must be convinced of his own conscience.

"Then we will agree upon this for the present. Thou hast my warmest sympathy, and I shall be glad to hear of thy improvement. I hope Friend Lois will not get quite worn out. Good-day to thee. If there is anything a friend can do, command me at once."

"My own patience is the greatest requisite," said the master of the house, while Lois raised her eyes with a certain grateful light.

She paused a moment for a word with Rachel, a nice, wholesome-looking girl with the freshness of youth, and who responded quietly but made no effort for conversation. Faith was still chatting with the grandmother. Madam Wetherill stepped on the block and mounted her horse as deftly as a young person might.

"The youth Andrew is not so straitlaced," she ruminated. "And he seemed much interested in the talk of war. If it comes to that, what will the Quakers do, I wonder? They can hardly go among

the Indians to escape the strife, and if home and country is worth anything they ought to take their share in defending it. As Mr. Adams says, it would come sooner or later. The colonists are of English blood and cannot stand so much oppression. It is queer they cannot think of us as their own children. And we of the more southern lands have felt tenderly toward the mother country, especially we of the church."

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Philadelphia believed herself on the eve of great changes, as well as Boston. Virginia had her heroes that felt quite as keenly the injustice of the mother country. Patrick Henry had fired many hearts with his patriotic eloquence. When Governor Dunmore had seized a quantity of gunpowder belonging to the colonies and had it shipped on board a man of war, Henry went at the head of a party of armed citizens and demanded restitution, which was made with much show of ill feeling. Not long after the exasperated people had driven the Governor from his house, shorn him of power, and compelled him to seek safety. In North Carolina there had been a declaration of independence read aloud to a convention at Charlotte. "An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts, is all that is left us," said Patrick Henry. And Joseph Hawley said, "We must fight."

The battle of Lexington was the match that started the blaze. The other colonies were ready. Philadelphia prepared herself for the struggle. At another meeting it was resolved, "That the United Colonies are of right or ought to be free and independent states, and that they are absolved from all duties to the British crown."

Jefferson wrote this declaration, submitting it to Franklin and John Adams, and many discussions followed before it was adopted. And the Continental Congress had been much encouraged by the enthusiasm of Virginia. Washington had said publicly, "I will raise a thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march with them, at their head, for the relief of Boston."

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Mrs. Washington had not been less patriotic, though her love of peaceful domestic affairs was well known. To a friend she had written, "Yes, I foresee serious consequences, dark days and darker nights, domestic happiness suspended, social enjoyments abandoned, property of every kind put in jeopardy by war, neighbors and friends at variance, and eternal separations possible."

There had come news of the seizure of fortresses at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Ammunition, stores, and fifty pieces of cannon had been taken. General Gage had announced his intentions of sending "those arch offenders Samuel Adams and John Hancock" to England to be hanged. The latter brave rebel had laughed the threat to scorn. But the Declaration was considered a bold step.

There was a gathering of friends at Madam Wetherill's that very evening, for it was known that she would soon be out on the farm, and since she had much at stake in trade and property, many were curious to see which side she would really espouse.

"The idea of a horde of common people running a government with no head but their own wills is preposterous!" cried the proud old Tory Ralph Jeffries, as he settled his wig with a shake of the head and pulled out his lace ruffles. "Are these canting Puritans going to rule us with their quarrels?"

"The whole country seems pretty well ablaze. It is like a Latimer and Ridley fire," was the retort.

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"We will put it out, sir! We will put it out! Where would be the dignity or security of any such government? A pack of braggarts over a little skirmish. King George is good enough for us."

"Then you may have to emigrate again presently," suggested portly John Logan. "The storm has been long gathering. Little by little we have seen our rights abridged, while we have been growing up to the full size of manhood. We have tried our wit and ability. To-day we could enter the lists of trade with foreign nations, but our ports have been closed. England dictates how much and how little we shall do. We are not a nation of slaves, but brethren with them over the seas. We are not to be kept in the swaddling clothes of infancy."

"It hath been a sorry hardship not to trade where we will when the country groweth steadily. It is a great and wonderful land and needeth only wise rulers to make it the garden of the world. But the taxes are grievous, and no one knows where this will end. I am a man of peace as thou all knowest, but when the iron is at white heat and has been struck one blow it is best to keep on."

"And you believe," returned Jeffries scornfully, "that a handful of men can conquer the flower of Britain? How many, think you, will come to the fore if there is a call to arms? A few of these noisy brawlers like Henry and Jefferson and Adams, and those pestilent Puritans who have been ever stirring up strife, and a few foolish men easily turned with every wind that blows. Good Lord, what an army to cope with trained men!"

"These same brawlers have done England some good service against the French. They have fighting blood, and when it is roused on the side of right will be a match for the redcoats at Champlain."

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Some of the women were gathered in the hall where there was tea and cakes, or mead if one liked better.

"But, if there is war, we shall not be able to get anything," said vain and pretty Madam Jeffries, who was a second wife, and strong of will as her husband seemed, twisted him around her finger. "And I have just sent abroad for finery."

"We must come to linsey-woolsey, though the weavers of Germantown make fine goods, and there is silk already made in our own town. Instead of so much gossiping and sitting with idle hands we must make our own laces. It is taught largely, I hear, at Boston, and my mother was an expert at it. Then there are fringes and loops—and, oh, I think we shall manage."

"But will there really be war?—Madam Wetherill, it will begin in the room there," laughing and nodding her head. "They will come to blows soon. And Hugh Mifflin, methinks, has forgotten his Quaker blood. How well he talks! And hear—he quotes from the Farmers' letters. I thought the Friends were resolved not to bear arms."

"Do they always turn the other cheek to the smiter?" asked someone, and a laugh followed.

In the upper hall Primrose stood by the end window, listening and wondering. Patty found her there, large-eyed.

"What will there be war about?" she asked. "And will they come here and take us all prisoners?"

"Nonsense, child! This is no talk for thee. Come to bed at once."

"Patty, did you hear my great-aunt say if I was to go out to the farm? What if they make Cousin Andrew fight? I should be so sorry." [Pg 86]

"Quakers do not fight."

"But brave men do. I have read about them. And I am sure Andrew is brave."

"Do not be sure of any man. Thou wilt get a sight of wisdom between this and twenty years. And I believe thou art not to go out to Cherry Hill. There is too much illness. And we are to move to our own farm."

"And will there be chickens and birds and squirrels, and little lambs playing about, and——"

"Do not string any more things together with an 'and,' like beads on a chain, but get to bed. Yes, they seem to be having a fine noisy time downstairs. I know on which side the madam will be."

"For the King?"

"Not strongly, I think," with an ironical laugh Primrose did not understand.

"And you, Patty?"

"The King would have poor luck if he depended on me to fight for him. There, good-night, and good sleep."

CHAPTER VII.

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AT SOME CROSSROADS.

There was much confusion in the old house, putting fine things and ornaments away and packing family heirlooms and silver. There was also much going to and fro, and after a few days Primrose, with her attendant, Patty, went out to the farm, then in all its beauty of greenness, though the fruit blooms were over. But there were countless roses and garden flowers of all the old-fashioned sorts, and sweet herbs and herbs for all kinds of medicinal brews. For though Dr. Shippen and Dr. Rush had begun to protest against "old women's doses," many still had faith in them and kept to feverfew and dittany and golden rod and various other simples, and made cough balsams and salves.

The house was large and plain, with uncarpeted floors that were mopped up in the morning for coolness and cleanliness, quite a Virginian fashion. The kitchen and dining room were sanded, the chairs were plain splint or rather coarse rush or willow. There were a wide wooden settle and some curious old chests used for seats, as well as hiding places for commoner things.

But it was the garden that attracted Primrose. She had never seen so many flowers nor such lovely ones, for in the woods there was not this variety. Life had been too busy, and wants too pressing, to indulge in much luxury where gardening was concerned. John Bartram had many remarkable trees and plants, but they were things of families and pedigrees, and his house was the resort of curious and scientific men. Although a Friend, he had a tender heart for beauty, as well as many other things. But in general the Friends cultivated simple and useful herbs. At the Henry farm there was no pretense of a flower garden.

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Primrose ran up and down the wide, smooth walk, made of dirt and small stones with much labor, where, through the summer at least, not a tuft of grass was permitted to grow. How lovely it was! The house stood on quite an elevation. One could see Mount Airy and Clieveden and other summer homes, and the Schuylkill winding placidly about, peeping through its embowered banks here and there.

But the quiet, romantic stream was to witness many a tragedy and many an act of heroism that no one dreamed of that summer. The real alarms of war scarcely penetrated it. Young people

went sailing and rowing and had picnics and teas along its banks, and the air was gay with jests and laughter.

The town was much divided in spirit and did not really pull together. There were rampant Tories, who declared boldly for the King; there were more faint-hearted ones who had much business at stake and cared only for making money, and many of the Friends who counseled peace at any price. But events marched on rapidly and in June Congress declared for a Continental Army, and the host of patriots at Cambridge called Colonel Washington from Philadelphia, where he had been in consultation with some of the important citizens, and made him commander in chief of the American forces.

The city had been prosperous and stretched out its borders in many directions. There were flourishing Friends' meeting houses, there was Christ Church and St. Peter's on the hill. For the hills had not been leveled, and there were many pretty altitudes crowned with brick residences that were considered fine at that time and certainly were roomy. The Swedes had their church and all the denominations were well represented, for at this period religious interest was strong. There were not many outside amusements. Plays were considered rather reprehensible.

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There were a few bridges over the creeks where boys waded, and girls were not always averse to the enjoyment on a summer afternoon. There were flocks of geese and ducks disporting themselves. And along the shore front docks had been built, there were business warehouses and shipping plying to and fro, for the trade with more southern ports was brisk. There were some noted taverns where one might see foreign sailors, and shops that displayed curious goods. There was damask Floreells silk, brocades and lustrings done up in fair boxes, as you found when you entered. There were gold and silver laces and gold buttons and brocades of every variety and cost.

The young damsels were sometimes allowed to go out with their elders and have a peep at the fine things and express their likings. Some of the storekeepers who had laid in abundant stocks chuckled to themselves at the thought that now, when all importations on private account must be stopped, they would stand a better chance.

In the early part of the century there had been an eloquent divine, a Mr. Evans, who had succeeded Mr. Clayton and who somehow had proved very attractive to the Friends. They had flocked to church to hear him, they had even taken off their broadbrims with a timid desire to conform to the ways of the world's people. This had gone on until it awakened a sense of alarm, and at the evening meeting where business might be considered, they had been forbidden to attend the services. So there had grown up a broader feeling, and numbers, while they did not quite like to break with their own communion, were more tolerant, read disapproved books, thought more of education, and began to look with different eyes on the great world, while others, almost horror-stricken at the latitude, drew their lines tighter.

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From Christ Church, as an offshoot, had sprung up St. Peter's. Governor Penn had his pew in the south gallery. Benjamin Franklin and many of the élite thronged the stone aisles with pattering footsteps, in laced coats, queues, and ruffles; the women with their big hats tied under the chin with an enormous bow, a fashion that sent the top up with a great flare where puffs of hair were piled one upon another, or little curls, and stiff brocades that rustled along, little heels that clicked, lace or lawn scarfs coquettishly arranged for summer use, and great fans carried by a ribbon on the arm. In winter there were silk pelisses edged with fur, or a fur or velvet coat. The great distinction was the young girls in much more simple material, with pretty demureness and sometimes longing looks cast at the attire of the young wives or older matrons, and a thought of the time when this glory should be theirs.

Now that one must be for or against, Madam Wetherill, though not aggressive in her opinions, plainly showed on which side her sympathies were ranged.

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Wiseacres shook their heads; even among those who came to drink tea in the summer house, made primarily by four large, over-arching trees and a latticework about, against which there was a bench all around, and a great table sufficiently rustic not to mind the summer showers.

There was no spinet to practice on. There were no tutors, but Primrose said a few lessons to Patty, sewed a little, and ran about, her hands and arms encased in long linen mitts that left the fingers free, and a widebrimmed straw hat tied well down, or a Quaker sun bonnet made of reeds and cambric. But there were so many visitors that she was often dressed up, and made much of by the young ladies.

Polly Morris complained that "Bella was in a very poor state and pining for country air. If her purse were long enough she would take her up to Martha Woolcot's, but boarding was high. The Matthews had gone over to the Jerseys. They had been very kind in giving her a fortnight's visit, but now the house would be shut up, and there was only her small cottage, that had been so built around by reason of business that one could hardly find a mouthful of fresh air."

"I did say I would not ask her here again in the summer. Bella is troublesome and forward amid company. But, poor thing! she has only part of her house, as below it is a shop and rented out, and her purse is a slim one at best," said good-hearted Madam Wetherill. "Patty, suppose you write for me, and ask her for a fortnight. She will stay a full month. The children may play about and amuse themselves. 'Tis not that I grudge what she eats and drinks, but I like not to have people take so much by right, and feel that your best is hardly good enough for them, and that you owe them something."

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"Yes, madam," replied Patty respectfully, though she set about it rather reluctantly. She was not over fond of Bella.

A week later they came with a chest of attire that did indeed presage a good long stay. Bella was glad enough to meet her compeer.

"For it has been utterly wretched since Aunt Matthews went away," she confessed to Primrose. "We went there so often. And Jonas, the younger boy, has so much drollness in him and tells about pranks at school. And one night he crept out of the window on a shed and slid down and went to a merrymaking at some tavern, where they had rare fun. He did not come in until nearly morning, and his head ached so he was ill the next day. Aunt Matthews made him a posset."

"And did he confess this wrong to her?" asked Primrose in grave solicitude.

"Confess! What a silly you are, Primrose! That would have spoiled all the fun."

"But it was not right."

"Well—his father would have been severe with him, and when one is sharp it is a pleasure to outwit him. The boys had carried off some gates shortly before, and they had changed the sign of the Jolly Fisherman to Friend Reed's coffin shop, and he never knew it the whole morning and wondered why people stared. Both boys were soundly caned for it, and after all it was only a bit of fun. So then they kept their own counsel. Jonas knows such pages of funny verses, and there are some in Latin."

"How did you come to know?"

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"Oh, he told me!" Bella bridled her head and half shut one eye that gave her an unpleasant look of cunning. "He swore me not to tell and said little girls were often better than big girls."

"And did you swear?" Primrose was horror-stricken.

"Well, I didn't say any wicked words. Some of the great ladies say, 'I swear,' and the men often do, but it doesn't really mean anything when you say it in French."

Primrose asked Patty about it.

"Swearing is swearing, whether you do it in French or Dutch. What put such nonsense in thy head? I think the French a wicked language anyhow, and I don't see why madam wants thee to jabber any such gibberish."

"It's very hard and I don't believe I ever shall," said the child with a sigh.

"The better grace for thee then."

Bella was quite wise and precocious and learning ways of fashion rapidly. She stood a little in awe of Madam Wetherill and could be very demure when she saw that it was the part of wisdom. Occasionally she made Primrose a tacit partner in some reprehensible matter in a way that the child could not protest against. And then Bella laughed at her love for birds and flowers and was always talking about finery and repeating the flattering things that were said to her. And she much preferred listening to the ladies and the gallants to gathering flowers or hearing the birds singing in the trees.

One day Andrew came. Everything was better at Cherry Hill, and her uncle thought now it was time for her to come.

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"Why, is your father getting about so soon?" asked Madam Wetherill in surprise.

"Oh, no, indeed! He mends but slowly. Still he wishes to do his duty, and I think he broods over it more than is good for him. So my mother proposed to him that the little maid should be sent for, and he was eager at once. And he wished me to say if it was not too inconvenient to thee I would bring her back. I have a pillion."

"Nay, the child knows so little about riding. I meant to have her instructed this summer. And there would be some garments to take. I cannot get them ready so soon. And I am afraid she will bother thy people sadly. Thou hadst better return and explain this. I will drive over in a few days and bring her. Meanwhile thou art warm and tired. Rest and refresh thyself a little. I think the children are roaming in the woods, but, like the chickens, they are sure to come home to supper."

Andrew Henry washed his face and hands at the rustic out-of-doors toilette, and little Casper, the black boy, brought him a thick linen towel, with velvet-like softness and smelling of lavender. Then he must have some home-brewed beer to refresh himself, and a plate of Janice Kent's wafers, that were spicy and not over sweet and went excellently well with the beer.

"Dost thou go often to the city?" Madam Wetherill asked. She was thinking how finely this young Quaker was filling out in the shoulders, how well set and soft his brown eyes were, and his cherry lips had fine curves with resolution, yet a certain winning tenderness.

"I go in on market days, twice a week. These are stirring times. There are arguments on every corner of the street, and men almost come to blows."

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"The blows may be needed later on. Thou art a peace man, I dare say."

"That is the belief in which I have been brought up," he answered respectfully.

"And I was brought up to honor the King. But if a king listens to evil rather than good counselors—kings were cut off in old times for not dealing justly. I am sure Mr. Pitt hath given excellent advice, but it has not been followed."

"I know so little about it," Andrew returned. "I went once to John Bartram's for some rare cuttings my father desired, and met there the great Franklin, who counseled peace and leniency in England. And they all think now that nothing can stop the war."

"It hath begun already. We must decide which side we shall be on, even if we do not fight. But come down here where smiling peace sits gossiping with fair plenty. I wonder if next summer will give us such a scene?"

She made a gracious little movement, and she took his arm as they began to descend the sloping path. She was a very fascinating woman and now she had resolved to do her best to win over those who stood in uncertainty if she could not move the uncompromising Friend.

It was a pretty scene. After the slope was a level of beautiful sward, with a circle of magnificent trees. Then another varying decline that ended at the river's edge, where rocked two or three gayly painted boats. There were two young fellows in the attire of the gallant of the day lolling on the grass, and a young man in Quaker garb of the finest sort, sporting silver buckles at his knee and on his low shoes.

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The ladies were some of the beauties of Philadelphia, to be famous long afterward. There was the pretty Miss Shippen and Becky Franks, noted for her wit and vivacity; Miss Wharton and Miss Mifflin and the gay Mrs. Penn.

"I have brought thee a new recruit, Friend Norris," she began smilingly, "since thou art of the same faith and texture. Thy father knew Philemon Henry well, and this is his nephew. Ladies, let me present Friend Henry, since the Quakers will have no handle to their names. Perhaps many of you know Cherry Hill, from whence some of our finest fruit is brought."

The ladies courtesied. Mrs. Penn stepped nearer.

"Yes, I knew thy uncle somewhat and had met his lovely wife, who lives again in the little fairy she left behind. It must have broken her heart to go."

Young Norris came around. Andrew Henry had blushed furiously under the scrutiny of so many lovely eyes, and then, recovering, stood his ground manfully. The scene affected him something as if he had been drinking wine, and yet the impression was delightful.

"He has come to take our little moppet away. She belongs part of the time to her uncle."

"Oh, Madam Wetherill," exclaimed Miss Franks, "put her best gown on Miss Bella and send her by mistake. Wait until dusk and no one will ever know."

"Not even in the morning?" asked Andrew with a touch of merriment, while the others laughed.

"Nay, the best gown is not needed if you want to pass off someone in her stead," said Norris. "That would be suspected at once. Plan again."

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"Oh, I forgot! Little Miss Bella hath so much pretty attire. I do suppose she would be astray in a Quaker frock. Well, what can we do? Mr. Henry, we shall outwit thee, never fear."

"Madam Wetherill hath refused me already," he answered. "But she was merciful."

"And I brought him hither for consolation. An old woman's refusal cannot be so heart-breaking as that of a young lass."

"But we have had no chance to refuse," said saucy Miss Mifflin, raising her coquettish eyes.

"Cherry hill is a large estate, but somewhat out of the way. I have ridden by it," said Norris. "We of the town get spoiled by neighbors. It must be dreary in the winter."

"The evenings are lonesome. In summer, what with being up at sunrise and busy all day, the nights are welcome, but in winter the city hath a deeper interest. Although I have so far been content."

"We are in a curious heat now. Our staid town never saw such a ferment. Every day we wait for news from some of the provinces, north or south. I suppose thou wilt take little heed to it. Yet we number many of the Friends on our side."

"I have not paid much attention to what has gone before, I must admit, but one day I heard some speeches at Carpenter's."

"Nay, you are not to talk war to Friend Henry. He will take us for a party of savages. Is there no more inviting topic?"

They found one that was full of light, harmless jest, and an hour passed so quickly that Andrew Henry was startled.

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He rode home alone without seeing Primrose, who could not be found in the nearby haunts. And for the first time strange visions, strange longings filled his mind, as if he had suddenly come to

manhood and outgrown the bands that had made his way so strait.

Was it some suggestion of the tempter? All the strong virile blood rushed through his veins, and he only made a feeble fight to subdue it. He did not really want to put it aside.

It was much later than usual when he reached home. In fact the sun had gone down, Julius with the great market wagon had been home hours before.

"Son, what delayed thee so? And the child—where is she?" asked his mother.

He explained that she had gone off with her companion and that he had waited; that Madam Wetherill would bring her up in a day or two. Rachel sat on the doorstep knitting, and some supper was spread in the living room. But he went in to his father first, and, after a few words about Primrose, gave an account of his day's doings, except a little loitering to hear the talk. And he took from his pocket the leathern pouch tied tightly with a string, pouring the money on the bed and counting it over for his father. Then he brought out a curious box much ornamented with copper, now black by age except at the sides where it had been handled, and, unlocking it, put in the money, giving the key back to his father.

"You think Friend Wetherill is quite honest about the child?" he asked feverishly.

"She is not one to place a light value on her own word. The child could hardly have been gotten ready in that brief while." [Pg 99]

"There was nothing to get," rather fretfully. "We do not want the vain clothing of the world. The child will be ruined by vanity."

"She keeps very sweet, methinks."

"How canst thou judge? Thy mother hath more wisdom and may tell another story. There, get to supper. It is weary lying here, but the Lord's ways are not as ours."

Andrew ate a little supper in the plain, bare room. On the green where the ladies had sat was a strong cherry table, containing some plates and glasses and a great stone pitcher curiously molded. How the trees had waved overhead and sifted golden gleams and shadows through! There had been a bit of peerless blue sky, the sweetness of the grass, the soft lap of the river that one could hear only when the talk stopped. How beautiful it all was! That was God's world. And the long ride home, the woods in solemn grandeur, the bits of river now and then. He was stirred mysteriously. He was a new man.

Rachel still sat on the doorstep. Sometimes he came out, and, though they said little, there was a pleasure in the nearness.

Penn Morgan returned from the great barn, where he and the hired man had left things comfortable for the night. Anything was safe enough. No need to lock or bolt in this Arcadian simplicity, except to keep cattle from straying.

Penn told over his day's work and the morrow's plans and went to bed. Rachel had not been knitting for some time, but she folded up her work and passed in without a word. Friends of the stricter sort were as careful of vain and idle words as the most rigid Puritan. [Pg 100]

He missed something sorely to-night. It was the little girl who had kissed him.

Two days later Madam Wetherill brought her over in the neatest attire, with no furbelows or laces. Primrose had demurred somewhat. "Nay," said Madam Wetherill with a consoling sound in her voice, "they would not like it, and it is only for a few months. All the articles will be here on thy return or in the city," smiling. "It will not be long and thou must be a brave, good girl, and happy, too. Sometime thou wilt choose. A hundred things may happen."

She ran down the path and said good-by to the nodding flowers. She was sorry to part with Bella and Patty, and Casper and the great dog, and the mother cat with the two kittens, and she was loath to leave the gay chatter and the visions of the radiant young women who petted her now and then. She was not afraid of Mistress Kent, though her tongue was still sharp, and she kept her riding whip handy to give Casper and Joe, the black boys, who were very full of frolic, a cut now and then.

The ride in the clumsy chaise was a silent one. Madam Wetherill was surprised to find how the little one had crept into her heart. And she was growing ever so much prettier, more like her mother. It was the care, no doubt. They would let her get tanned and try to subdue the curl in her lovely silken hair. The lady smiled oddly to herself, thinking a mightier power than Quaker rule had put it there. But it would be bad for the child, this continual changing. However, it could not be helped now. One consolation was that she was much too young to give anything but a child's love to her cousin. And he would be married to some thrifty woman before she was grown up. [Pg 101]

It was Rachel who came to take the budget done up in a stout hempen cloth, and lifted out the little girl, then holding the horse while Madam descended, and fastening it to the hitching post. The old lady sat under the same tree, but the little girl was weeding in the garden and stood up to look, covered with her widebrimmed hat.

"They have been wondering," said Rachel. "Uncle is not so well. The fever hath been troublesome. Wilt thou come in? And this is the little cousin? Thou and Faith will make nice companions."

Friend Lois came to the door and received her guest with grave courtesy, saying to Primrose, "We have been looking for thee, child," as they walked in.

There was a pitcher of mead standing in a stone jar of cold spring water and both travelers were thirsty. Friend Lois had the name of making it in a most excellent fashion.

"I am afraid Primrose will be a care to thee this summer," Madam Wetherill said with kindly solicitude. "And thy husband is not so well, the young girl tells me."

"My niece, Rachel Morgan. And though the loss of my sister was great and unexpected, her health being robust, and it hath added much to my cares, Rachel is to me as a daughter and a great comfort."

The young girl made a courtesy and stood undecided.

"Does not the broken limb mend?"

"It is doing well. But he hath thought of his duty concerning the child overmuch. I assured him he might let it go for this summer, but he was not minded to." [Pg 102]

"It would have been quite as well."

"He did not think so. And since it was on his mind I sent." She gave a soft sigh. "Wilt thou come in and see him? He would rather."

Madam Wetherill walked into the room and greeted the invalid. There was a flush on his cheek and a brightness in the eye that betokened feverish disarrangement. He began to explain in a quick, excited tone.

"Of course it is thy time. We shall not dispute about the law's decision, though Mr. Chew did think it would not be so good for the child, seeing that our lines are cast in such different places. I hope all will go well with you and she will not add to your cares. I will send over to hear now and then."

"Where is she?" in a half-suspicious manner.

"Primrose!" the lady called.

The child came in reluctantly.

"Yes, yes. James Henry has never shirked a duty. And one is entitled to make a fair fight for the soul that belongs to the faith. It was her father's wish."

"I hope thou wilt mend rapidly. The warm weather is trying." There was no use of argument as to faiths.

He nodded languidly.

"And now I will return. I have a long ride before me, and guests at home. Farewell."

No one made any effort to detain her. There was little persuasion among the Friends, who despised what they considered the insincere usages of society. [Pg 103]

Primrose caught at Madam Wetherill's gown. Her eyes were lustrous with tears that now brimmed over, and her slight figure all a-tremble.

"Oh, take me back with you; take me back!" she cried with sudden passion. "I cannot like it here, I cannot!"

"Child, it is only for a little while. Remember. Be brave. One's word must always be kept."

"Oh, I cannot!" The small body was in a quiver of anguish, pitiful to see.

Bessy Wardour had loved, too, and then gone away to the man of her choice, if not the life of her choice. But she was much moved by the passionate entreaty, and stooped to kiss her, then put her away, saying, "It must be, my child. But thou wilt come back to us."

CHAPTER VIII.

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A LITTLE REBEL.

As the carriage-wheels rolled away Primrose burst into a violent paroxysm of weeping. Rachel came forward and took her hand, but it was jerked away rudely.

"Primrose, this is most unseemly," said Lois Henry, looking at her in surprise. "If thou art indulged in such tempers at Madam Wetherill's, it is high time thou went where there is some decent discipline. I am ashamed of thee. And yet it is more the fault of those who have been set over thee."

Primrose Henry straightened up and seemed an inch or two taller for the ebullition of anger. She looked directly at her aunt and the blue eyes flashed a sort of steely gleam. The mouth took on

determined curves.

"There is nothing to put me in tempers at home. I like it. I like everybody. And it is the being torn away—"

"But wert thou not torn away from this house last year?"

Primrose was silent a moment. "I hate this being tossed to and fro! And I have learned to love them all at Aunt Wetherill's. I go to Christ Church. I shall never, never be a Quaker. And I am a— a rebel! If I were a man I would go and help them fight against the King."

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Lois Henry looked horrified.

"Child, thou art silly and ignorant, and wicked, too. What dost thou know about the King? We do not believe in kings, but we obey those set over us until it comes to a matter of conscience. We leave all these turbulent discussions alone and strive to be at peace with all men. Thou canst not be saucy nor show thy hot temper here."

"Then send me home. Do send me home," said the child with spirited eagerness.

"This is thy home for six months. Rachel, take the bundle up to the little chamber next to that of Faith and put away the things in the cupboard—and take the child with you. Primrose, thou wilt remain there until thou art in a better frame of mind. I am ashamed of thee."

Primrose did not mind where she went. She knew her way up the winding stairs put in a corner off the living room. The house had a double pitch to the roof, the first giving some flat headway to the chambers, the second a steep slant, though there were many houses with nearly flat roofs. This was of rough, gray stone, and the windows small. There was but one, and a somewhat worn chair beside it, the splints sorely needing replacement. A kind of closet built up against the wall, and a cot bed with a blue and gray blanket were all the furnishing.

The child glanced at it in dismay, not remembering that she had been happy here only such a little while ago. But it seemed ages now, just as she had almost forgotten what had passed before. There had been no one to talk over the past with her, and she had missed her tender mother sorely. Children were not considered of much importance then except as regarded their physical welfare and a certain amount of training to make them obedient to their elders. That serious, awesome spiritual life that shadowed so much of childhood under Puritan auspices was not a feature of the more southern colonies. They were supposed to imbibe religious impressions from example. Early in the history of the town there had been some excellent Quaker schools, that of Friend Keith, who sowed some good seed even if he did afterward become a scorn to the profane and contentious, because he started to found a sect of "Christian Quakers," and finally found a home in England and the Anglican Church. But the school flourished without him, and to the Friends belongs the credit of the early free schools. The subtle analysis of later times found no inquiring minds except among a few of the higher scholars. It was not considered food for babes.

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Rachel untied the bundle that had been bound up with a stout cord.

"Thou canst put them in the closet in an orderly manner. Then, if thou hast returned to thy right mind, come downstairs."

Primrose looked out of the window without stirring. The great walnut trees were waving their arms and making golden figures on the grass that ran about everywhere. Patty had told her stories of "little people" who lived in the north of England and Scotland, but they only came out in the moonlight. Ah, these were birds or squirrels—oh! there was a squirrel up in the tree, with his great bushy tail thrown over his back. And Primrose laughed with tears still shining on her lashes. Over at a distance was a hen with a brood of chickens, clucking her way along. And there were two pretty calves in an inclosure.

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But then there was everything at Aunt Wetherill's, and such rows and rows of flowers. Patty brought them into the rooms in bowls, and the young ladies wore them. What was that? Oh, the little old lady under the tree was walking away—

"Faith," said the clear, calm voice, "leave off thy gardening. Grandmother is growing restless."

Primrose watched with strange interest. Presently a girl of about her own size walked quietly out to the old lady and took her by the arm, turning her around, and led her back to the house. After that—nothing. She was almost frightened at the stillness and began to cry again as a sense of loneliness oppressed her. Oh, she must go back! There was something in her throat that choked her. Then a tall figure came across the field in his shirt-sleeves, and with a great swinging stride.

Suddenly her heart bounded within her body. Like a bird she flew down the stairs, almost running over Chloe, out of the door, skimming along the grassy way, and never taking breath until two strong arms lifted her from the ground and kissed her, not once, but dozens of times.

"Child, when did you come?"

"Oh, such a long time ago! It must be years, I think. And I hate it, the old house and everything! I cannot stay. Andrew, take me back. If you do not I shall run away. I want Patty and Aunt Wetherill, and little Joe, who is always doing such funny things, and Mistress Kent whips him, but he does them over when she is not there, only she comes suddenly—and the pretty ladies who

laugh and talk. It is so dreary here."

She raised her lovely eyes that were to conquer many a heart later on, and the lips quivered in entreaty like an opening rose in the breeze. [Pg 108]

"Nay—I am here," he said. "And I love you. I want you."

She looked as if she was studying. A little crease came between her eyes, but it seemed to him it made her prettier than before.

"But why must I come? Why must I stay?"

How could he make her understand?

"And there are some other girls—Faith and the big one. I do not like her."

"But you will. I like her very much."

"Then you shall not like me." She struggled to free herself.

"Thou art a briery little Rose," and he smiled into her eyes and kissed her. "I shall hold thee here until thou dost repent and want to stay with me. Faith is not as sweet as thou and Rachel is too old for caresses. Then I am not sure they are proper."

"When I get as old as Rachel—how old is that? shalt thou cease to care whether I come or not?"

"I shall never cease to care. If I could change places with Madam Wetherill I would never let thee go. But what folly am I talking! It is the law that thou shalt do so."

"Who makes the law? Put me down, Andrew; I feel as if part of my body would be drawn from the other part. Oh," laughing in a rippling, merry fashion, "if such a thing *did* happen! If there could be two of me! Rose should be the part with the pink cheeks and the red, red lips, and the bright eyes, and the other, Prim, might stay here."

"Thou naughty little midget! I am glad there cannot be two, if that is thy division. I will take part of the time instead. Little Primrose, it is a sad thing to part with those we love, even for a brief while. The place was not the same when thou went away. And surely, then, thou wert sorry to go." [Pg 109]

Primrose was silent so long that he glanced into her eyes. There was such a difference in eyes the young Quaker had learned. The pretty, laughing women on the green at Wetherill farm had said so much with theirs when they had not uttered a word. Rachel's were a dullish-blue, sometimes a kind of lead color, Faith's light, with curious greenish shadows in them. But these were like a bit out of the most beautiful sky.

"It seemed quite terrible to me then," she made answer slowly. "Are people very queer, Andrew? For then I was afraid of Mistress Kent and Aunt Wetherill and everybody, and I wanted to stay here. And now it is so merry and pleasant in Arch Street, and there is the spinet that I sing to, and the lessons I learn, and some books with verses in and tales of strange places and people, and going out to the shops with Patty and watching the boys snowballing, and learning to slide."

"But thou art not in Arch Street, and there is a farm here. Come, let us find the early sweet apples. I think there are some ripe ones, and thou art so fond of them."

They walked along together. "Still, I do not understand why a thing should be so dear and pleasant and then change and look—look hateful to you!"

There was a pang in the great fellow's tender heart.

"Nay, not hateful!" he said pleadingly.

"But I did not want to stay. Aunt Lois looked stern and spoke crossly. And I am not a Quaker any more. I told her so. And I am a—a rebel! I will have no English King." [Pg 110]

Her tone accented it all with capitals.

"Thou art a rebel, sure enough." Yet he smiled tenderly on her. Whatever she was was sweet.

"And I said I would fight against the King."

"Heaven send there may not be much fighting! Even now it is hoped the colonists will give way a little and the King yield them some liberties, and we shall be at peace again."

"But we will have a king of our very own," she said willfully, forgetting her protest of a moment ago. "The old one in England shall not rule over us. And why do not the people who like him go back to that country?"

"They cannot very well. They have their land and their business here."

"Then they should try to agree."

"Dost thou try to agree when things are not to thy liking?"

She glanced up with a beseeching, irresistible softness in her eyes, and then hung her dainty head.

"But you have the other girl Faith. And Aunt Lois thinks what I learn is wrong. And—and—"

They paused under the wide-spreading tree. What a fine orchard it was! Andrew pulled down a branch and felt of several apples, then found one with a soft side.

"There is a good half to that. I will cut it with my knife and the chickens may find the rest. There are plenty more."

"Oh, how delicious! I had almost forgotten the apples. Things ought to be sewn up in one's mind and never drop out. We have had none save some green ones to be gathered for sauce and pies." [Pg 111]

"And there will be many other things. The peaches hang full. And there are pears, but the cherries are all gone save the bitter wild ones. Then thou canst find the squirrels again, and there is a pretty, shy little colt in the west field, with a white star in his forehead."

"Madam Wetherill has three little colts," she returned rather triumphantly. "And calves, and oh! such a lot of pretty, little pinky-white pigs."

He cut another apple and fed it to her.

"We shall have walks and thou shalt ride on a pillion. And I have found some books up in the old garret that have verses in them. Oh, wilt thou not try to be content?"

She felt it was naughty, yet she cast about her for other protestations.

"But I am not a Quaker. I say the Lord's Prayer aloud when I go to bed, over and over again."

"I like it myself," he returned reverently. "But one needs to desire—various matters."

There had been serious questions among the Friends; some insisting all forms were hampering, and that spiritual life was a law unto itself and could be moved only by divine guidance, as even the Apostles were ordered to take no heed as to what they should say. Yet, amid the many shades of opinion, there had not been much dissension. Of late years not a few had been scandalized by the defection of the Penns and several others from the ways of their fathers, and drawn the cords a little tighter, making the dress plainer and marking a difference between them and the world's people. [Pg 112]

"Thou couldst take me to the farm some day when I have learned to ride on a pillion—just for a visit."

How coaxing the tone was! How bewitchingly the eyes smiled up into his!

"Thou wilt stay and be content?" he said persuasively.

"I will think. Content? That is a great thing."

"Yes. And now let us return."

"If there were no one but thou I should be quite happy," she said innocently.

So they walked on. Rachel was standing down at the end of the path with the horn in her hand.

"It is nigh supper time," she said, "and thy father wishes to see thee. To-morrow is market day. Primrose, didst thou put away thy things neatly?"

"I will do it now."

The child ran upstairs.

"A self-willed little thing," commented Rachel, "and she has much temper."

"But a great deal of sweetness withal. And she hath been much petted. She will feel strange for a few days. Be kindly affectioned toward her."

Rachel made no reply. She went to the kitchen where Chloe had her master's supper prepared, a very simple one to-night on account of the fever, and carried it in. Then she blew a long blast on the horn, which she had forgotten in her surprise at seeing Primrose clinging to Andrew's hand.

When Primrose reached the little room her old feelings returned. She frowned on the parcel lying on the floor, as if it were an alien thing that she would like to hide away. There were several shelves in the closet and some hooks at one end. Oh, here were some frocks she had worn last summer, homespun goods! A pair of clumsy shoes, larger than those she had on, and she gave them a little kick. [Pg 113]

Grandmother was in the living room, sitting by the window. Very pale and frail she looked.

"Faith," she said. "Faith," in a tremulous voice.

"I am not Faith. My name is Primrose Henry," and the child came nearer with a vague curiosity.

"No, thou art not a true Henry with that trifling name. The Henrys were sober, discreet people, fearing the Lord and serving Him. What didst thou say?" lapsing in memory and looking up with frightened eyes. "Thou art a strange girl and I want Faith."

She began to cry with a soft, sad whine.

"Grandmother, yes; Faith will be here in a minute. This is Andrew's cousin, his dead uncle's child, Philemon Henry."

"And she said her name was—a posy of some sort; I forget. They used to take posies to meetings, sweet marjoram and rosemary. And there was fennel. It was a long while ago. Why did Philemon Henry die?"

Primrose looked at her curiously.

"That was my own father," she said with a feeling that these people had no right of real ownership in him, except Andrew.

Aunt Lois came out, and taking her mother's hand, said, "Come and have some supper." Then, turning to Primrose, "I hope thou art in a better humor, child. It does not speak well for town training that thou shouldst fly in such a passion with thy elders."

"Who was in a passion?" repeated grandmother with a parrot-like intonation. "Not one of the Lord's people I hope?"

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"Silence, mother!"

Lois Henry spoke in a low tone but with a certain decision. She was like a child and had to be governed in that manner. They were all taking their places at the table, Lois at the head and Rachel next to grandmother on the other side, then Faith and Primrose. Opposite the workmen were ranged, Andrew with one on either hand. The colored help had a table in the kitchen. This was the only distinction the Henrys made.

Lois Henry accepted the burthen of a half demented mother with a quiet resignation. In her serene faith she never inquired why a capable and devoted Christian woman should have her mind darkened and be made comparatively helpless while physical strength remained, though it was a matter of some perplexity why her sister should have been taken and her mother left.

The master's seat at the foot of the table was vacant. Lois would have it so. It seemed as if they were only waiting for him.

Primrose had turned scarlet at her aunt's rebuke and Faith's scrutiny. After the silent blessing the supper was eaten quietly, Chloe coming in now and then to bring some dish or take away an empty one. And when they rose Faith led her grandmother out under the tree where she spent her half hour before bedtime, unless it rained. Rachel went in to Uncle Henry, and Lois took a careful supervision of the kitchen department, that did miss her steady oversight, though Rachel was very womanly.

Primrose sauntered out and sat down on the doorstep, feeling very strange and lonely, and resenting a little the knowledge of having been crowded out. Penn Morgan gave her a sharp look as he went out with the milking pail. There was still considerable work to do before bedtime.

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When Rachel was released she took grandmother to bed. The window had been made secure with some slats nailed across, for she had been known to roam about in the night. Her room opened into that of Rachel's instead of the little hall, and the girl closed the door and put a small wedge above the latch so that it could not be opened.

James Henry had asked in a vague, feverish way if they had allowed Primrose to go back with her aunt.

"Why, no," answered Lois. "Wilt thou see her?"

"No, no! I cannot be disturbed. It is but right that she should come. Thou wilt no doubt find her head full of vagaries and worldliness. What can one do when the enemy sows tares? I cannot resign myself to letting them grow together."

"Yet so the Lord has bidden."

"Nay, we are to do our duty in the Lord's vineyard as well as in the fields. I uproot noxious weeds, or I should have fields overrun. And now that haying has begun I must lie here like a log and not even look out to see what is going on," and he groaned.

"But Andrew is almost like thyself, and Penn this two year hath managed for his mother. We must submit to the Lord's will. Think if I had lost thee, James, and men have been killed by a less mishap!"

James Henry sighed, unresigned.

Faith came out timidly to the doorstep, and looked askance at Primrose. She was not robust and ruddy like Penn and Rachel, and yet she did not look delicate, and though fair by nature was a little tanned by sun and wind. Not that the Friends were indifferent to the grace of complexions, but children were often careless. But even among the strictest there was a vague appreciation of beauty, as if it were a delusion and a snare. And the Quaker child glanced at the shining hair, the clear, pearly skin, the large lustrous eyes, the dainty hand, and the frock that, though plain, had a certain air like Lord's Day attire, and was not faded as an every-day garb would be. Then she glanced at hers, where a tuck had been pulled out to lengthen it, and left a band of much deeper blue, and the new half sleeves shamed the old tops. Her heart was filled with sudden envy.

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"Thou art not to live here always," she began. "It is only for a brief while. And I am to stay years, until I am married. Mother's bedding and linen hath been put in two parcels, one for Rachel, who will be married first, as she is the eldest, and the other will be mine."

Primrose stared. Bella talked of marriage, but it seemed a great mystery to Primrose. There was no one she liked but Cousin Andrew, but she liked liberty better, she thought. Why should one want to get married? The pretty young girls who came out to the farm had no husbands. Patty had none and she was talking forever about the trouble they were, and Mistress Janice and Madam Wetherill—

"But if he should be ill in bed and thou had to sit by him like Aunt Lois—"

"Uncle is not ill. He hath a broken leg, and that will mend," was the almost rebuking reply.

"I like the town better. I did not want to come nor to stay, and I am glad I am not to live here always," Primrose said spiritedly. "I like my Cousin Andrew—"

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"How comes it that he is *thy* cousin? My mother was own sister to Aunt Lois, and so *we* are cousins. Had thy mother any sisters?"

Primrose had not thought much about relationships. Now she was puzzled.

"Our names are alike," after some consideration. "And I was here the first, a long while ago—last summer."

"But I have been here many times. And now I am to live here. Besides thou—thou art hardly a Friend any more—I heard Chloe tell Rachel. Thou art with the vain and frivolous world's people, and Andrew cannot like thee."

That was too much. The dark eyes turned black with indignation and the cheeks were scarlet.

"He does like me! Thou art a bad, wicked girl and tellest falsehoods!"

Primrose sprang up and the belligerents faced each other. Then Andrew came up the path, and she flew out with such force that the milk scattered on the ground, and he had to steady himself.

"Primrose—"

"She said thou didst not like me, and that I am no relation. What didst thou say down in the orchard? And if no one likes me why can I not go back to Aunt Wetherill?"

The usually gay voice was full of anger, just as he had heard it before. Truly the child had a temper, for all her sweetness.

"Children—wait until I carry in the milk, and then I will come out and hear thee."

Chloe took the pail and Penn followed with his.

Andrew came out, and looked at the girls with grave amusement. Primrose was the most spirited. Really, was he being caught with the world's snare, beauty?

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"She said you—you did not like me." Primrose's lip quivered in an appealing fashion, and her bosom swelled with renewed indignation.

"I did not say that," interposed Faith. "Not *just* that. It was about vain and frivolous world's people, and Chloe said she was not a Quaker any more, and I—how canst thou like her, Cousin Andrew?"

"Children, there must be no quarreling. There are many families where there are friends and members of various beliefs. And if we cannot love one another, how shall we love God?"

Faith made a sudden dart to Andrew and caught his hand.

"Thou art not her cousin, truly," she exclaimed with triumph.

"As much as I am thine. Our mothers were sisters. Primrose's father and mine were brothers. That is why our names are alike. And if you are good I shall like you both, but I cannot like naughty children."

"You see!" Primrose said in high disdain to her crestfallen compeer. "I was right. If Uncle James had not been my uncle I should not have had to come here. And I should not care for Andrew."

There was something superb in the defiance visible in every feature and the proud poise of the shoulders. A woman grown could hardly have done better. Andrew Henry was curiously amused, and not a little puzzled as to how he should restore peace between them. Faith's face had settled into sullen lines.

"I shall love best whichever one is best and readiest in obedience and kindness," he said slowly.

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"I do not care." Primrose turned away with the air of a small queen. "I shall go back to town and you may have Faith and—and everybody." But the voice which began so resolutely in her renunciation broke and ended with a sob.

"Oh, my dear child!" Andrew's arm was about her and his lips pressed tenderly to her forehead, and the relenting lines gave him an exquisite thrill of pleasure he did not understand.

"What is all this discussion and high voices about?" demanded Lois Henry. "I will not have the night disturbed by brawls. Both children shall be whipped soundly and sent to bed."

"Nay, mother, listen." Andrew straightened himself up but still kept his arm protectingly about Primrose, glad that the falling twilight did not betray the scarlet heat in his face. "It came from a misunderstanding. Faith did not know we were cousins by the father's side, as she and I are on the mother's. It is hard for little ones to get all the lines of relationship, and this being Faith's true home it seemed as if her right must be best. But now they are at peace and will be pleasant enough on the morrow. They did nothing worthy of punishment."

Faith was glad enough of the chance to escape, for she had already smarted from the rod in the resolute hands of her aunt. She came toward her now and said humbly:

"I did not understand, truly. I will be wiser and never again think it untrue. And now—shall I go up to bed?"

Lois Henry was not satisfied, but she did not want to have open words with her son before the children.

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"Both go to bed at once," she said sharply. "Rachel?"

"I am here," said the elder girl quietly.

"Take Primrose upstairs and see that she is fixed for the night, though, hereafter, she will wait upon herself. I like not to have children brought up helpless."

"Go, my little dear," Andrew whispered caressingly. "To-morrow—"

Primrose was awed by Aunt Lois and followed with no further word or sign.

Rachel found her nightdress and half envied the daintiness.

"What were thy words with Faith about," she inquired in a somewhat peremptory tone.

"Thou art Faith's sister, ask her," was the resentful reply. She must tell the truth if she spoke at all, and she did not want to run another risk of being blamed. Andrew believed in her, that was the comfort she held to her throbbing heart.

"Thou art a froward child and hast been overindulged. But, I warn thee, Aunt Lois will train naughty girls sharply."

Rachel stood in a sort of expectant attitude and Primrose leaned against the window.

"Get to bed," the elder said quickly.

"Go! go!" Primrose stamped her rosy bare foot on the floor. "I want you away. I cannot say my prayer with you here."

"Thou needst prayer certainly. Among other things pray for a better temper."

Rachel went slowly, and shut the door. Primrose threw herself on the bed and gave way to a paroxysm of sobs and tears. Once she thought she would creep downstairs and fly to the woods—anywhere to be out of reach of them all. Oh, how could she endure it! Patty scolded sometimes, and Madam Wetherill reproved and had on an occasion or two sent her out of the room, but to be threatened with a whipping was too terrible!

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CHAPTER IX.

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FATE TO THE FORE.

They were early astir at the farm. Rachel in going downstairs called Primrose and Faith. The latter rubbed her sleepy eyes—it was always so hard to get up, but there were many things to do. Grandmother was the only one allowed to sleep in quiet, and sometimes she would lie as late as nine o'clock, to the great relief of everyone.

"Come, thou sluggard!" and the child's shoulder was roughly shaken. "This is twice I have called thee, and what will happen a third time I cannot undertake to say."

"Patty!" Primrose opened her eyes and then gave a little shriek of affright. "Oh, where am I?"

She had cried herself to sleep and forgotten all about her prayer.

"I am not Patty, and thou wilt find no servant here to wait upon thee. We are not fine Arch Street people. Come, if thou dost want any breakfast."

Slowly memory returned to Primrose. She leaned out of the little window. Oh, what joyous sound was that! She smiled as the birds caroled in the trees and followed them with her soft, sweet voice that could not reach the high notes. Then she began to dress, eager to be out of the small room that would have seemed a prison to her if she had known anything about a prison. But the wonderful melody filled her soul and lifted her up to the very blue heavens. So she loitered sadly

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about her dressing, and when she came down the table had been cleared away.

Chloe had received instructions to give her a bite out in the kitchen presently, but with a sense of injustice, growing stronger every moment, she almost flew from the house. Rachel was working butter in the milk room and Faith weeding in the garden. Aunt Lois had had a very disturbed night and was suffering with a severe headache. Her husband's fever had abated toward morning, and now he had fallen into a quiet sleep.

Primrose made her way to the old orchard. Ah, how enchantingly the birds sang! Then there was a long, melodious whistle that she tried to imitate and failed, and laughed gleefully at her non-success. Where was the old tree blown almost over by wind and storm that she used to run up, and fancy herself a squirrel? Ah, here it was! bent over so much more that its branches touched the ground. She walked up the trunk, holding out both arms to keep her balance, and then sitting down where three branches crossed and made a seat. The apples were hard and sour, she remembered, regular winter apples. She rocked to and fro, singing with the birds and watching the white boats go sailing across the sky. She laughed in her lightness of heart, though there was no malice in it. She did not even give the household a thought.

And then she was suddenly hungry. She sighed a little. Were there any more ripe, sweet apples, she wondered! Oh, how long would she have to stay at Uncle Henry's? It was early July now, six months. What a long, long while as she counted them up! And there would be winter when she could not run out of doors, and no lessons, no books to pore over, no music, no great parlor full of strange things that she never tired of inspecting, no pretty ladies in silk and satin gowns, chattering and laughing.

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What with the soft wind and the swaying motion she began to feel sleepy again. She crawled down and looked for the tree they had found yesterday. Alas! its branches were too high for her conquest. She threw herself down on the grass and leaned against the trunk, and in five minutes was soundly asleep.

Rachel had gone about her duties in a quiet, rather resentful manner. Once Chloe had asked about the child.

"I have called her twice," was the brief answer.

Then she heard grandmother stirring and went up to dress her and gave her some breakfast. She would not even look in the small chamber where she supposed Primrose was lazily sleeping. Afterward she called in Faith, who washed her hands and changed her frock, as the dew and dirt had made it unsightly.

"If thou wouldst only be careful and tuck it up around thy knees," said Rachel in a fretted tone. "There is no sense in getting so dragged, and it makes overmuch washing."

"Shall I take the towels out to hem?" asked Faith.

"Yes. Thee should get them done this morning. Aunt Lois spoke of thy dilatoriness."

Faith longed to ask about the newcomer. It was sinful indulgence for her to be lying abed. And why was she not sent to weed in the garden or put at other unpleasant work?

Rachel heard the rap on the tin cup that answered the purpose of a bell to summon one. Aunt Lois was still in her short bedgown and nightcap.

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"Thou must wait upon thy uncle this morning," she began feebly. "I have tried, but I cannot get about. There is a dizziness in my head every time I stir, and strange pains go shooting about me. It is an ill time to be laid by with the summer work pressing, and two people needing constant care."

She looked very feeble, and there was an unwholesome red spot upon each cheek. Her usually calm and steady voice was tremulous.

"But I feel better. The fever is gone," said Uncle James. "There will be only two weeks more and then I can begin to get about. When there is no head matters go loosely enough."

"But I am sure Andrew is capable. He hath been trained under thine own eye. And Penn is steady and trusty."

"But a dozen young things cannot supply the master's place," he returned testily. "And one almost feels as if the evil one hath gotten in his handiwork as he did on Job."

Lois sighed. Rachel washed her uncle's face and hands and brought him some breakfast.

"Shall I not bring thee some, too?"

"Nay, the thought goes against me. I will have some boneset tea steeped. And presently I will get out to the kitchen. Perhaps I shall mend by stirring about."

Grandmother sat under the tree or wandered about, babbling of old times and asking questions that she forgot the next moment. There was a ham boiling in the great kettle over the kitchen fire, and a big basket of vegetables for the dinner. There were two neighboring men working, who were to have their midday meal.

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James Henry would have enjoyed Job's disputatious friends. There were several knotty points in

doctrine that he had gone over while lying here, and he longed to argue them with someone. The days were very long and tedious to him, for he had never been ill a whole week in his life.

Lois crept out to the living room, then to the great shady doorstep. How fine and fresh and reviving the waft of summer air, with its breath of new-mown hay, was to her fevered brow.

"Where is the child?" she asked.

"I called her twice. What with packing the butter and various duties she hath quite gone out of my mind. Surely she sleeps like the young man in the Apostles' time."

"Go summon her again. She must be broken of such an evil habit."

Rachel primed herself for some well-deserved severity. There was no one in the room. She searched the closet, the other rooms, then the "tuck place" as it was called, and went through Chloe's room, over the kitchen.

"She is not anywhere to be seen. Chloe, hast thou observed her stealing out?"

"Nay," and the colored servitor shook her head.

"Strange where she can be."

"The child was tractable and well trained through the past summer, but she hath grown lawless and saucy. When she comes I shall give her a good switching, if I am able. I will not have these mischievous pranks," said Aunt Lois feebly.

"She deserves it," rejoined Rachel with unwonted zest. She longed to see the child conquered.

Still Primrose did not appear. Lois Henry took her herb tea, and after a severe fit of nausea felt somewhat relieved, but very weak and shaky. She was just thinking of retiring when Andrew came across the field. But he was alone. [Pg 127]

"Hast thou seen aught of that willful child?" she inquired.

"Primrose? No." He looked from one to the other. "What hast thou been doing with her?"

Rachel sullenly recapitulated the morning's experience.

"And she had no breakfast? Where can she have gone? Surely she hath not thought to find her way to Wetherill farm! We should not have insisted upon her coming at this time. Mother, you look very ill," and the kindly face was full of solicitude.

"I am, my son. And it was not my will to have her, but your father's mind was set upon it."

"And then she is so different," began Rachel. "What if we had allowed Faith in such tantrums!"

"She needs a sharp hand to cure her evil temper."

"Mother," said Andrew with a sense of the injustice, and a rising tenderness in his heart for Primrose, "we must consider. She is not to have our lives, nor to be brought up in our way. She hath her own fortune, and her mother was a lady——"

"There are no ladies, but all are women in the sight of God. And as for such foolish, sinful lives as the townfolk lead, playing cards and dancing, and all manner of frivolous conversation, it were a mercy to snatch one from the burning. She was a nice little child last year. I must reduce her to obedience again, and some sense of a useful, godly life."

"To have thy training upset by the next hand! It is neither wise nor wholesome for the child, and she will come to have ill will towards us. I can remember how bright and cheerful and easily pleased her mother was——" [Pg 128]

"She was never grounded in the faith. She had a worldly and carnal love for Philemon Henry, and it was but lip service. If he had lived——" Lois Henry had interrupted with an energetic protest in her voice, but now she leaned her head on the door post and looked as if she might collapse utterly.

"Mother, thou art too ill to be sitting up. Let me help thee to bed, and then I must go look for the child."

He lifted her in his strong young arms and, carrying her through, laid her on the bed beside her husband.

"I am very ill," she moaned, and indeed she looked so. All her strength seemed to have gone out of her.

"I heard high words about the child. Hath she proved refractory? Madam Wetherill and the houseful of servants have no doubt spoiled her. It is God's mercy that there may be seasons of bringing her back to reasonable life."

"Do not trouble about the little girl. To-day I think the doctor will be here to examine thy leg, and I am sure my mother needs him. I am afraid it is a grave matter."

"My poor wife! And I am a helpless burden on thee! I am afraid I have demanded too much."

"The Lord will care for us," she made answer brokenly.

After giving some charges to Rachel, Andrew walked down the path that led to the road. Was Primrose afraid of punishment, and had Rachel said more to her than she was willing to own? This was no place for her, Andrew said to himself manfully. And if his mother was to be ill—

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He changed his steps and went to the barn. Would Rover remember the little girl of last summer? He raised the clumsy wooden latch.

"Come, Rover," he said cheerily. "Come, we must go and find Primrose. I wonder if thou hast forgotten her?"

Rover sprang out and made a wide, frolicsome detour. Then he came back to his master and listened attentively, looked puzzled, and started off again down the road, but returned with a sort of dissatisfaction in his big brown eyes.

"The orchard, perhaps. We might look there first. She was such a venturesome, climbing little thing last year."

Rover ran about snuffling, and started off at a rapid rate, giving a series of short, exultant barks as he bounded to his master.

"Good Rover!" patting the shaggy creature, who sprang up to his shoulder in joy.

Primrose was still asleep. The winds had kissed with fragrant touches, the birds had sung to her, the bees had crooned, and the early summer insects ventured upon faint chirps, as if they hardly knew whether they might be allowed to mar the radiant summer day. How divinely beautiful it was!

Her head had fallen on her shoulder and the old tree rose gray and protecting. The long fringe of lashes swept her cheek, her hair was tumbled about in shining rings, her dewy lips slightly apart, almost as if she smiled.

She had been worn out with her crying last night, but now was rested and fresh. The dog's bark roused her, and she opened her eyes.

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"Oh, Andrew! Where have I been? Why——"

"Little runaway!" but his tone was tender, his eyes soft and shining.

"Oh, Andrew!" she exclaimed again. Then she clasped her arms about his body with a kind of vehemence and buried her face for a moment. "Take me back, won't you? I can't stay here. I can't! I don't like anyone. Even Aunt Lois is cross and Rachel hates me."

"Oh, no, no! But thou shalt go back. This is no real home for thee."

"Oh, come, too!" she cried eagerly. "There is a great farm, and Madam Wetherill will be glad to have thee."

"Nay, my father is ill and I could not leave him. And there is so much work to do. But I will see thee now and then to freshen thy memory."

"I should not be likely to forget thee."

"Didst thou have any breakfast?"

"No, I didn't. I was very sleepy when Rachel called. I think I must have run straight to the land of Nod again," laughingly. "And when I came down the table was cleared. There was someone in the kitchen, but I was afraid. I do not know why it is," and her plaintive voice touched him, "only now I am afraid of everybody—oh, no! not afraid of you, for I like you so much. And then I wanted to run away, but I did not know how to go. I climbed the crooked apple tree and swung to and fro until I was sleepy and afraid I might fall out. Then I came down here. Oh, can I go back? Truly, truly?"

"Truly." Yet he said it with a pang. How sweet and dainty she was! He would not have used the words, they were strange to him, but they sent a thrill through his body, as music sometimes does.

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"Come, dinner will be ready."

"Will anyone scold me?" fearfully.

"No one shall scold thee."

They walked together to the house. Rachel was just blowing the horn. Faith looked curiously at her and rather exulted in the punishment she would get.

Andrew went straight to the sick room.

"I am afraid thy mother is ill beyond the power of herb teas," said James Henry. "What a godsend that we should have Rachel! And oh, Heaven grant that it may not be as it was before! the strong and helpful one taken, and the helpless left."

Lois Henry was deeply flushed now and lay with her eyes half open, muttering to herself.

"Mother?" he said, but she did not notice him.

He went out to dinner in a thoughtful mood, but he had no appetite. Primrose was hungry enough, but looked up smilingly now and then. Dr. Reed came in earlier than his wont and accepted the invitation to dine, asking questions occasionally as to how Friend Lois had been last week, and if she had shown any tendency to be flurried.

"She hath not been quite herself, now that I come to recall it," answered Rachel, "and complaining of being tired and not sleeping well. Oh, I hope——" She was about to add, "it will not be with her as it was with my poor mother," but tears stopped her.

It was a fever sure enough. It would be better to have her in a separate chamber, and if some old nurse would come in. "There was Mistress Fanshaw, only come home last week."

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"I will go for her," responded Andrew.

"I shall be in on the second day," the doctor announced, as he mounted his horse and settled his saddlebags.

"A sad thing for all of us." Rachel wiped her eyes with the end of her stout linen apron.

"I shall take Primrose back to Wetherill farm."

"Oh, that will indeed be a relief. She and Faith, I foresee, would not get along together, and I could not manage such a froward child."

Andrew made no reply. There was a little more work devolving upon him, and he deputed the rest of the day's management to Penn.

He had fortified himself with many arguments as to why Primrose should return to her great aunt, but to his surprise, his father assented at once. He was much worried about his wife, who had never been ill before.

Primrose was glad with a great delight. She sat under the tree with Faith and roused the child's envy with accounts of her life in town, and the time for pleasure.

"But dost thou not sew or knit?"

"Nay, except lacework and hemstitching, but I shall as I grow older. There is Patty to sew, and as for stockings, I do not know how they come, for no one knits them, and they are fine and nice, with gay clocks in them, and oftentimes silken. I like the pretty things. But all Friends are not so plain. Some come to us with silken petticoats and such gay, pretty aprons, just like a garden bed."

Faith sighed. And now she wished Primrose might say, there was such witchery in her words.

Madam Wetherill was much surprised to have Primrose return so soon, but not sorry, she frankly admitted. She was greatly concerned about Friend Henry and hoped the fever would not be over troublesome.

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"Good-by, little one," Andrew said, holding her hand. "I hope thou wilt be very happy; and I shall come to hear how it fares with thee."

Did she pull the stalwart figure down with her small hands? He bent over and kissed her and then blushed like a girl.

"Fie, Primrose! Thou art a little coquette, and learning thy lesson young!"

"But I like him very much," she replied with brave seriousness. "Only—it's pleasanter to live with thee," and she hid her face in Madam Wetherill's gown.

CHAPTER X.

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TO TURN AND FIGHT.

James Henry mended slowly, and Lois' fever lasted a month before she could leave her bed, and then she could only totter about. Rachel had proved herself a daughter of the house, efficient, thoughtful, and capable, and although a few weak protests had been made, it was an undeniable relief not to have Primrose to consider.

The town had been stirred to the utmost by conflicting views and parties. Washington had gone to Boston to take command of the troops, and now sent for his family from their quiet retreat at Mount Vernon.

Most of the people had shut up their country houses and come into town, and now that it was announced that Mrs. Washington would make a brief stop on her way to Cambridge, there was a curious feeling pervading the community in spite of a very pardonable interest. What if the war should be a failure?

"But we have committed ourselves too deeply to draw back now," said some of the loyal women. "Let us pay her all courtesy."

The rebel party resolved to give a ball in her honor at New Tavern. Mrs. Hancock was also in the city, and some fine preparations were made. There was a heated discussion. Some of the more sedate people, who never took part in gayeties, represented that this would be a most inopportune time for such a revel when the country was in the throes of a mighty struggle.

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Christopher Marshall, who was a Quaker by birth, but had espoused the side of the colonies warmly, went to John Hancock, who was then President of the Congress, and requested him to lay the matter seriously before Mrs. Washington and beg her to decline the invitation, "while her brave husband was exposed in the field of battle." She assented most cheerfully, and was in no wise offended.

There was a bevy of women discussing this at Madam Wetherill's; the young ones loud in their disappointment, as gayeties had not been very frequent so far.

"And I like Colonel Harrison's spunk in chiding Mr. Samuel Adams," said someone. "He agreed there would be no impropriety in it, but rather an honor. And we should all have seen Lady Washington."

"*Lady* forsooth! I did not know the widow Custis had put on such airs with her second marriage. Presently we shall hear of Mount Vernon palace if Dunmore does not make short work of it. And some of the rebels sneer at good English titles, or think it heroic to drop them."

Mrs. Ferguson was well known for her Tory proclivities. She ran her cards over as she held her hand up, and the excellence of it pleased her.

"But I am desperately disappointed," declared Kitty Ross. "And if we are to go in sackcloth all winter I shall die of the megrims. There is my new petticoat of brocaded satin, and my blue gown worked with white and silver roses down the sides, and across the bosom, with such realness you would declare they were fresh picked. And lace in the sleeves that my great-grandmother wore at the French Court. And surely there would be many gallants ready to dance. I am just dying for some merriment."

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"Not much will you see until this folly is over."

"It does not seem to end rapidly. I hear the men at Boston are very stanch and in earnest since the murder of their brethren."

"Murder indeed! Truly we have grown very fine and sensitive. They had no more than they deserved. And Massachusetts hath ever been one of the most turbulent provinces."

"And Virginia a firebrand! As for us, we have the Congress, and I hear they are talking of putting some sort of declaration in shape. And it is said General Washington hath a very soldierly and honorable mind. He will do nothing for pay, it seems, and only agreed that his expenses should be met. At this rate he will not beggar the country."

"And you will see how General Howe will make mincemeat of his stragglings army. Madam Washington will hardly be recompensed for her journey, methinks," said Mrs. Ferguson.

"Yet it would be good to have a sight of her," cried Sally Stuart. "And it is said she dances elegantly, as do all Virginians. Like Kitty, I am out of conceit with the wisdom of these fearsome men who want to suit everybody and end by suiting none. And it seems there hath been a division of opinion about calling. Who hath gone?" and Sally glanced at Mrs. Ferguson with a merry sort of malice in her laughing eyes.

"Not I, indeed, you may be certain, but I will not be backward on her return, I assure you."

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"I have been," announced Madam Wetherill quietly. "I thought it but a duty, having met Colonel Hancock and wishing to be presented to his wife."

"Oh, tell us!" cried half a dozen voices. "What is she like—very grand? For he is fine and commanding."

"We shall never finish our game with so much talk about everybody," declared one of the Tory ladies in vexation.

"She is not commanding." Madam Wetherill laid down her card as she smiled, and trumped her adversary. "But she hath a certain dignity and intelligence that makes up for inches, and a face that is winning and expressive, with fine, dark eyes and fair skin showing just a natural blossom on her cheek. And her manners are most agreeable. I am sorry we could not have given her some sort of welcome. Well, moppet?" as Primrose entered shyly with a written message to her great aunt, "make your best courtesy, child, and tell the ladies how you liked Madam Washington."

Primrose obeyed with a pretty flush on her cheek, and an irresistibly shy manner.

"I liked her very much. And she said she once had a little girl of her own, and then her eyes looked almost as if they had tears in them, they were so soft and sweet. Her face was beautiful."

"Well, well, we all feel disposed to envy thee," said Sally. "Some of us should have the courtesy to go to-morrow."

Mrs. Ferguson rapped on the table. "If no one means to pay attention to the game we may as well give up and devote ourselves to laudation," she said shortly.

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Madam Wetherill looked at the note and said, "Yes," and Primrose, courtesying, stole out softly. But afterwards the game was ended with a good deal of curtness on Mrs. Ferguson's part, who had lost; for, while people were strenuous enough on some points, no one disdained to play for money.

The girls stopped for a cup of chocolate that Mistress Janice sent in, and renewed the talk of their disappointment, bewailing the prospect of a dull enough season.

But there were much excitement and high and bitter discussions to mark the winter. The breach between the war party and the peace party of Quakers widened greatly, and the outcome was the Free Quakers, or Fighting Quakers, as they came to be called. The departure of the British from Boston was hailed as a sign of hope. Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" was widely read, and disputed the palm with Dickinson's "Farmer's Letters" that had been so popular. Adams and James Allen, who disagreed with Paine, issued pamphlets, and many writers aired their opinions under various assumed names.

Andrew Henry came in regularly to market. His father had not regained his full strength, and his leg was rather untrustworthy in slippery weather. Now and then he paused at some tavern, as they were considered respectable meeting places, to hear the discussions, for he was much perturbed in these days. He was made a welcome guest at Madam Wetherill's also, and met from time to time some notable person, and became much interested in Mr. Benjamin Franklin.

Very little had been said about Primrose at home. Rachel was growing into daughterhood, and though Lois Henry would have denied the slightest suggestion of matchmaking, she saw with no disfavor that Rachel was much drawn toward Andrew.

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When spring opened grandmother failed rapidly and took to her bed a great part of the time, so that it was necessary to bring her downstairs for convenience' sake. It would be rather troublesome to have a discordant element, and the Henrys felt that Primrose was more firmly established in her willful ways, no doubt, and they did not care for a continual struggle like that which had begun and ended so disastrously the preceding summer.

The spirit of revolt had gained ground in all the Colonies; still it had been hard work to persuade them to act together. But, in May, Congress passed resolutions leading to the better equipment of the Colonies for the struggle. At dinners—the only sources of amusement now—the King's health was no longer drunk, but "The free and independent States of America" were toasted with acclaim. With the old Assembly the political power of the Friends waned, and Philadelphia was taking upon herself a great and serious change. If Bunker Hill had electrified the country, the Declaration of Independence, read to the few people who gathered to hear it at the State House, was to be the imperishable crown of the city, although it was not signed until August.

The King's arms were taken down and burned, the church bells rang, and the young people caught the enthusiasm from a few bonfires on the square and lighted them elsewhere, little thinking they were kindling a flame in men's souls that was to be handed down to posterity for ages. A very small beginning then, but among the hearers was Andrew Henry, who wondered mightily at the boldness of such a step, though the glory of it thrilled every pulse, and he was amazed at the fighting blood within him.

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At the yearly meeting he and his father had attended, the Friends had counseled against open rebellion and shown each other the futility of such a step. All acts of violence and bloodshed were deprecated, and Lexington and Concord pronounced a useless sacrifice, and displeasing to God. But in the little knots that had gathered afterward there had been more than one low, dissentient voice concerning a man's duty, and the impossibility of a government so far away knowing what was best for the Colonies.

He was to meet Madam Wetherill, who had come in to her city home on some business.

"I am glad thy father agrees about Primrose," she began in her cordial tone, that invariably charmed the young Quaker. "Her attire, too, had an appropriate aspect in his eyes, as it gave her a fine dignity. He was secretly pleased that she was not of his persuasion. The changes are hard on the child even if all other matters were in accord. I think she will never be of her father's faith, but she is sweet and attractive and good at heart. I am afraid we sometimes lay too much stress on outward appearances. Is thy mother well this summer?"

"She is not as strong as she was, and we should not know how to manage without my cousin Rachel. Poor grandmother is nearing the close of her earthly pilgrimage. She may go at any time. Dr. Reed hath given us notice, and death is a sad and awesome matter even for little ones. So mother said she would rather have no added cares, though she would not shirk any duty."

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"Set her heart quite at rest. Tell her for me that the duties of God's sending are first. I have been consulting the other trustees, and they think the child is as well with me."

"I think, now, better," returned Andrew gravely. "She is fitted for a wider life and knowledge than my father thinks necessary. And we have two girls now to comfort my mother, and they are of the same faith. But I find there is a wide line of opinion even among Friends. And the coming struggle will make it greater still. The town hath done a daring thing to-day. Will the great and wise men sign the document?"

"I think all but a few. They are not certain of Mr. Dickinson, although he hath been writing so boldly. But Mr. Richard Penn advises that they all hang together, lest they may have to hang separately!" and she smiled.

Andrew Henry drew a long breath.

"But it hardly seems possible they can win. England can put such armies in the field."

"Yet I think we have shown that patriotism can make good soldiers. There will be much suffering and Heaven only can foresee the end. Still it is a glorious thing, and we shall strive hard for freedom."

"Thou art a patriot surely. The little girl must inherit some of thy blood, for she boldly declared herself a rebel."

"She is an odd, spirited child, with a good deal of her mother's charming manner. I have grown very fond of her, though I thought myself too old to take up new loves. Thou must come down to the farm sometime and see her."

"That I will gladly," was the quick reply.

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"And thou must study this matter thou hast heard to-day. It is a great thing to make a country, and a trust above all others to keep it intact. And, though thy people are averse to fighting, I see some of them have ranged themselves already on the side of liberty and the colonies."

"I have a great interest——" Then he paused and flushed. "But it grows late, and I must bid thee farewell. Give my respects to the little girl and say I do not forget her."

Every effort was now made to strengthen the defenses, and a bounty was issued for volunteers. Gun-boats were ordered for the river front and the manufacture of gunpowder was hurried along. There was much watchfulness over those suspected of Toryism, or caught carrying away stores. Occasionally one saw a cart packed with Tories, seated backward and being driven along to the tune of the Rogue's March, and jeered by the populace.

Late in the autumn they buried Lois Henry's mother. James Henry gave up more of the severe work and going about to the young men. Penn Morgan was large and strong, and grown very fond of his uncle in an admiring fashion. Andrew puzzled him oftentimes.

Pinches were beginning to be felt and a great part of the commerce languished. Salt, one of the importations, became very scarce. Stores and shops were dull enough, and men hung about the streets with nothing to do.

In November came the news of Howe's successful march and the taking of Fort Washington. Then he swept onward, dismaying the towns, and when he reached Trenton he issued a proclamation that won over many who still hoped in their hearts that by some miracle the colonists would win.

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But Philadelphia celebrated the anniversary of her heroic Declaration of Independence with much firing of guns all day and a great civic banquet in the evening. The streets wore quite a holiday aspect. Many people came in from the farms and residences at a distance, and flags, made after the pattern that Betsy Ross had designed for the army when General Washington went to Boston, were shown in some houses.

There was also a smashing of Quaker windows, and much hooting at the peace men, who were bidden to come out of the shelter of their broadbrims.

A new oath of allegiance had been exacted from the citizens of the whole State that created great consternation among the Friends. Many now openly espoused the cause of freedom, being convinced it was a duty, and their expulsion from the ranks followed. Even among the women there were enthusiastic souls who gave aid and comfort in the years of trial that were to follow.

James Henry had ranged himself strongly on the peace side. Indeed the household were a unit with the exception of Andrew, who held his temper bravely when the talk was of the condemnatory order.

There had been no open rupture on the little girl's account. In a way James Henry resigned some of his powers, though he kept the trusteeship, and was sharp to see to the accounting of money matters. Madam Wetherill and Primrose made journeys to the Quaker farmhouse, and the Henrys were cordially invited to the city to test the Wetherill hospitality.

Primrose had listened to Andrew's persuasion, and in the summer gone for several days. How queer it all seemed to her! The plain, homely rooms, the absence of the many little courtesies to which she had become accustomed, the routine of work that left no leisure for reading or enjoyment. For already in the city there was a great deal of intelligence.

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She had grown tall, but was very slim and full of grace in every movement. Her hair still held its sunny tint, and even if combed as straight as possible, soon fell into waves and curling tendrils, and her complexion was radiant in pearl and rose.

Rachel was quite a young woman, with a thin, muslin Quaker cap over her brown hair, and not the slightest attempt at ornament; a great worker and very thrifty in her methods. In her opinion idleness was a sin. Faith had grown tall, but was not as robust.

Primrose was like a sudden sunbeam in the old house. Her merry laugh rippled everywhere. As of old, every animal on the place made friends with her. And though Uncle James looked stern and sour at times, she would not heed his frowns.

Not only Andrew, but Penn, acknowledged her witching sway. She could ride finely now on horseback or with a pillion, and the cunning little beauty persuaded one or the other to take her out on numerous excursions.

"One could envy thee heartily," declared Faith. "For when Rachel and I desire any recreation or to go of some errand, there are a thousand excuses. What coaxing art hast thou? And how dost thou come by so much prettiness? Was it on thy mother's side?"

"Am I so pretty?" She laughed in a gay, amused fashion. "Sometimes Patty says I shall grow old and yellow and wrinkled, but though Aunt Wetherill's hair is snowy-white, and there are tiny marks and creases in her skin, she is not yellow nor cross, and looks like the most beautiful of queens in her brocades and satins."

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"But what is a queen if there are no thrones here in America?"

"Oh, how dull thou art! It is because we call anyone a queen who is a beautiful and dignified woman, and can receive with graciousness, and hold a little court about her."

"But the fine clothes are vain and wicked. And—and plaiting of the hair, and the much pleasuring—and the giddy talk—"

The small Quakeress paused with a sort of longing and envy that she could think of no more sins.

"But my hair is not plaited. I think the good God curled it just as he makes the pretty vine creep up and twine about. And He makes a gay, beautiful world, where birds go flying and dazzle the air with their bright colors. Dost thou know the firebird, with his coat of red, and the yellow finches and the bluebirds? The little brown wren greets them in her pert way, and I dare say takes pleasure in them. And how many flowers you find in the woods and the meadows."

"I never go for flowers. It is a sinful waste of time, and we have no use for them, since they do but litter everything. And thou wilt some day be called to account for these idle, frivolous moments."

"I do not know. I think God means us to be happy. And I cannot help being gay and pleased with all the things He has made. It is very naughty and unkind to despise them."

Faith knew in her heart there were many things she would be glad to have, and that she hated to sit in the house and spin and sew, when Primrose was roaming around with Penn and Andrew, and riding on the hay cart amid the fragrant dried grass.

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"Andrew, wilt thou always be a Quaker?" Primrose asked one evening when she found him sitting under the tree where poor old grandmother had spent so many of her days.

"Always? Why, I suppose so. Children generally follow in the footsteps of their fathers."

"Is that because you are a man?"

"I like *thou* better," smiling and putting his arm about her.

"But I am only half a Quaker. Do you think my father truly meant me to be? There is a fine picture of him at Mr. Northfield's that is said to be worth a great deal of money, and was made in England by a great man, and is sometime to go over again. Did you know I had a brother, Andrew?"

"Yes."

"It seems very unreal. A letter came one day from him, and he asked if there were any other children alive. A brother! How strange it sounds! Why, it would be like Penn and Faith."

"I hope he may never want thee," with a little hug that made her head droop on his shoulder.

"Oh, no; and if he does, he must come here. I should be afraid of the great ocean that it takes days and days to cross. And I might be drowned," plaintively.

"Then thou shalt never cross it."

"Thou wilt not let him take me away? Though I think Aunt Wetherill would not consent."

"Nay, I would fight for thee."

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"Then thou must fight for the country. It is *my* country."

"If any need comes in thy behalf I will fight," he returned solemnly.

"And thou wilt put on some fine soldier clothes. The men all look so handsome in their blue coats and buff breeches, and the hats turned up in a three-cornered way."

She only saw the glory in it. He hoped she might never know the other side.

"What art thou studying about so gravely?" when Primrose lapsed into silence and let her small white hand lie in his brown one.

"I was thinking. Penn is here, and does your father need two sons? Aunt Wetherill said, one day, that you were wasted on the farm, and that some of the generals ought to have you for your cool clear head, and your strength, and oh! I do not remember what else. And if you would come into town——"

"If thou were older, Primrose, thou couldst tempt a man to his undoing. But thou art a sweet, simple child. And when my country needs me she will not ask about my faith. Already there is more than one Quaker soldier in her ranks."

"Primrose!" Rachel had been sitting on the old stone step until there seemed a curious fire kindled all through her body at the sight of the golden head on the broad shoulder. "Primrose, come in. The dew is falling."

"There is no dew here under the tree," returned Andrew.

"It is high bedtime. Faith is going. Come!"—peremptorily.

There were times when Primrose was fond of teasing Rachel, but she rose now. When she had gone a step or two she turned around for a kiss. [Pg 148]

"I am ashamed of thee!" Rachel said sharply. "Thou art a bold child to hang around after men. Didst thou kiss him? That was shameful."

"It was not shameful. I will ask him——"

Rachel caught her arm. "Aunt Lois will be shocked! No nice little girl does such a thing! Faith would be whipped for it. Go straight along."

She blocked the way, and Primrose, in her sweet hopefulness, thought of to-morrow.

Aunt Lois had overheard the talk. When Rachel had mixed the bread, for Chloe had a sore finger, the elder said gravely:

"Thy uncle goes over to Chew House to morrow, and I think Primrose had better return home. She is too forward and light to have with Faith. I like not city manners and freedoms. Her mother was not to my fancy. Men are weak sometimes, but I hope ere long, Rachel, my son's fancy will be fixed where it will afford me great satisfaction."

Rachel colored with a secret joy. She could have clasped the mother to her heart for the admission, but she would not spoil the commendation by any lack of discretion.

While Primrose was waiting for Uncle James in the morning she ran out to the barn.

"Andrew, I am going. It hath been very pleasant, and I hoped thou would have taken me. Andrew"—with a strange, new hesitation—"is it—is it wrong to kiss thee?"

She looked up out of such clear honest eyes in all their sweet guilelessness that he took the fair face between his hands and kissed it again. [Pg 149]

"Nay, there could never be a wrong thought in thy sweet young heart. And thou art my cousin."

She wondered, as she was retracing her steps, if he kissed Faith and Rachel, since they were cousins.

CHAPTER XI.

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A RIFT OF SUSPICION.

Lois Henry had no especial fear of any serious matter with such a mere child as Primrose, as she was far too young. But she had been trained in a repressed, decorous fashion, and many of the Friends were as rigorous as the Puritans. Young men were better off without caresses, even from mother or sister. And she was compelled to acknowledge within herself that Primrose had a large share of what she set down as carnal beauty, the loveliness of physical coloring and symmetry. Neither of the Morgan girls would ever be temptingly pretty, and she gave thanks for it. Rachel would make a thrifty and admirable housewife. She could not wish her son a better mate. Andrew would be needed on the farm, which would be his eventually, and she would have no difficulty in living with such a daughter-in-law.

But she resolved that the old arrangement, whereby Philemon Henry's daughter was to spend the summers with them, should remain no longer in force. She did not ask that her husband should view the matter at once through her eyes; she knew a quiet, steady influence would better gain her point than an outspoken opposition.

James Henry was rather surprised when she proposed that he should take Primrose home, as they had begun to call Madam Wetherill's.

"There is no great haste," he replied.

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"But thou art going at least half-way there, and it was to be merely a visit. Thou must see, James,

that all her ways and habits are very different, and our good seed would be sown on sandy ground. When the child comes to be a year or so older we may have more influence, and presently, I think, Madam Wetherill may tire of her. She distracts Faith with her idle habits and light talk, and just now we are very busy with the drying of fruit and preserving, the spinning, and the bleaching of white cloth, as well as the dyeing of the other. It takes too much of my time to look after her. And, since my illness, I have not felt equal to the care of doing my duty to her."

"Certainly; as thou wilt, wife. I foresee that we shall gain no great influence over her, since every season our work must be undone. And I will discuss the matter with Friend Chew. If he considers that some part of the duty may be abrogated, we will not push our claim at present."

Friend Chew thought there was nothing really binding in the agreement. Philemon had requested that his wife and daughter should spend a part of the year with his brother, but here had been the mother's fortune and the appointment of a new guardian. And since Madam Wetherill had a fortune and so few relatives, perhaps it would be as well to allow her some leeway.

The good lady was surprised at the speedy return. She ordered some refreshments for James Henry and begged that the horses might have a rest. Then they talked of farming matters and the state of the country, hoping hostilities might be confined where they had their first outbreak, mostly to the Eastern Colonies and New York.

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"Thou dost know that I am bitterly opposed to war," he said. "It is unchristian, inhuman, and we cannot think to conquer the British armies, therefore it is folly. I was sorry enough to see the town William Penn reared on peaceful foundations with the service of God, turn traitor and range herself on the side of the King's enemies. Many a Friend, I hear, had his windows destroyed in that ungodly rejoicing a short time ago, and men of peace have been persecuted and ridiculed. We know little of it on our far-away farm, but Friend Chew hath kept account of both sides. And the rebel lines seem to have fallen in hard places."

"We must give thanks that it hath come no nearer." She would not argue nor offend him, for the sake of Primrose.

"There is another matter," he began, after a few moments of silence, occupied in sipping his ale and munching some particularly nice wafer biscuits that Janice Kent had made quite famous around the country side, and though she willingly gave the recipe, no one could imitate them exactly. "It is about the child. It hath been a matter of conscience with me whether I ought to expose her to the temptations of the world, but since I cannot by law keep her altogether——" And he hesitated a moment.

"We have not quarreled about her since the judges made the decision, though thou knowest I would like to have her altogether," and Madam Wetherill smiled amicably, sipping her ale to keep him company. "It seems folly, like the man's two wives who plucked at his hair, the first to take out the white ones and the other the black."

"There was the illness last summer, and I think my wife hath not been so strong since, and we have two girls—"

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"And since good fortune brought them to thee and I have none, I shall beseech thee to waive thy claim, and let me keep the child. I know our ways are different, but if presently she should choose thy faith,—and we have many of thy persuasion dropping in,—and desire to return to thee, I will be quite as generous and kindly as thou hast been, and not oppose her."

"That is as fair as one can expect," the man said with a sigh. "I would my brother had lived and managed the matter. Friend Chew thinks there will be hard times before us all, especially those who have laid up treasure in perishable money."

"But, whatever comes, I shall care for her to my last penny."

"And if thou shouldst die, as we are but mortal, the best of us, wilt thou transfer her back to us?"

"Her guardians will do that. I promise no will of mine shall be left to oppose it."

"And that she shall visit us now and then."

"I agree to that."

"We are busy now—thou knowest the many things that press in the summer—and two children of an age are troublesome unless brought up together. So we thought it best to return her just now."

"And I am glad to have her. There is so much help here that a child's trouble is scarcely noted."

But on his way home James Henry wondered if he had not given in too easily to the worldly and pleasing way of Madam Wetherill.

She smiled a little to herself as she called Primrose from the summer house to say good-by, and to receive some sage advice.

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"Thou naughty little moppet," she said when the stout Quaker had ridden away, as she caught the little girl's hand in hers and gave her a swing, "what didst thou do that thou wert sent home in disgrace?"

"Was it disgrace?" The color deepened on the rose-leaf cheek. "Aunt Lois found no fault, only to call me an idle girl. Faith is busy from morning to night and cannot even take a walk nor haunt the woods for flowers. Rachel is very stern and hath sharp eyes——"

Should she confess last night's misdemeanor? But what right had Rachel to condemn it? Cousin Andrew had kissed her in this house. Oh, was so sweet a thing as a kiss wrong?

"Truly thou must be set about some task. I think I will have thee taught to work flowers in thy new silk petticoat, for we shall have no more fine things from England in a long while. And that would be vanity in the eyes of thy Uncle James."

"I should not like to work every moment."

"Thou art a spoiled and lazy little girl. Does Faith read and spell and repeat Latin verses, and write a fair hand?"

Primrose laughed. "She reads in the Bible slowly. And the Latin Uncle James thinks wicked. I have half a mind to think so myself, it is so bothersome. And the French——"

"Thou mayst marry a great man some time and go to the French Court. Perhaps thou wouldst rather spin and churn, and make cheese and soap. But when there are so many glad to live by doing these things it seems kindness to pay them money for it. And so thy Aunt Lois did not really take thee to task?"

"She did not set me about anything. And Rachel would not let me go to feed the chickens, nor gather up eggs, which is such fun." [Pg 155]

"And what didst thou do?"

"Nothing but sit under the tree as the old grandmother used. It was very tiresome. And a walk in the orchard. Then I found a cornfield where Penn was plowing, and I waited to see him come out of the rows and get lost in them again."

"And did you like this Master Penn?"

"He was very pleasant. He showed me a nest with tiny birds in it that were naked and ugly, but they grow beautiful presently. And he picked a great dock leaf of berries, so that I should not get my hands scratched, and we sat down on a stone to eat them. But I like my own cousin Andrew better. Penn is not my cousin—Rachel said so."

Madam Wetherill nodded with piquant amusement. Perhaps there had been a little jealousy.

"Well, I am glad to get thee back. I am afraid I spoil thee; Mistress Kent insists that I do. But there will be time enough to learn to work. And if this dreadful war should sweep away all our fortunes, we shall have to buckle to, and, maybe, plant our own corn and husk it, and dig our potatoes as our fore-mothers helped to when they lived in the cave houses by the river's edge, before they built the real ones."

"Caves by the river's edge? Did the river never overflow them? And is that where the Penny Pot stands——"

"Who told thee about that?"

"I walked there once with Patty. She knows a great many things about the town. And she said I ought to learn them as I was born here, lest the British come and destroy them." [Pg 156]

Madam Wetherill smiled at the sweet, earnest face.

"They did not destroy New York, but I should be sorry to see them here. And I will tell thee: in that cave was born the first child to the colonists. He was named John Key, and good Master Penn presented him with a lot of ground. But I think he should have been called William Penn Key, to perpetuate the incident and the great founder. There are many queer old landmarks fading away."

"And where were you born?" asked Primrose, deeply interested.

"Not here at all, but in England. And I grew up and was married there. Then my husband put a good deal of money in the new colony and came over, not meaning to stay. But I had some relatives here, and no near ones at home, being an only child. The Wardours did not run to large families. My husband was much older than I, and when his health began to fail, instructed me in many things about the estate. So, when I lost him, I was interested to go on and see what a woman could do. There was a cousin who was a sea captain and had been to strange places, the Indies it was called then, and the curious ports on the Mediterranean, and brought home many queer things."

"Oh, that is the portrait hanging in the big room at Arch Street, and is Captain Wardour?" exclaimed Primrose. "And where did he go at last?"

"To a very far country, across the great sky. He was lost at sea."

Madam Wetherill sighed a little. How long ago it seemed, and yet, strange contradiction, it might have been not more than a month since Captain Wardour bade her good-by with the promise that it should be his last voyage and then he would come home for good and they would marry. This [Pg 157]

love and waiting had bound her to the New World. She had made many friends and prospered, and there had been a sweet, merry young girl growing up under her eye, which had been a rather indulgent one, and who had fallen in love with Philemon Henry, and perhaps coquetted a little until she had the Quaker heart in her net he did not care to break if she could come over to his faith. It had disappointed Madam Wetherill at first, but having had business dealings with him, she had learned to respect his integrity.

But as if there seemed a cruel fate following her loves, just as it was settled for Bessy to come back with her little Primrose, death claimed her. And Madam Wetherill had tried to keep a fair indifference toward the child since she could not have her altogether, but the little one had somehow crept into her heart. And now that there were two girls at James Henry's farm, the wife's own nieces, she could see they would the more readily relinquish her. The sending back of the child seemed to indicate that, though she had only gone for a visit.

"Art thou sad about Captain Wardour?" And the little maid looked up with lustrous and sympathetic eyes, wondering at the long silence. "And do you think he could find my mother and my father? It must be a beautiful world, that heaven, if it is so much finer and better than this, and flowers bloom all the time and the trees never get stripped by the cruel autumn winds and the birds go on singing. I shall love to listen to them. But, aunt, what will people do who are like Rachel and think listening idle and sinful, and that flowers are fripperies that spoil the hay and prevent the grass from growing in that space?"

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"I am not sure myself." Madam Wetherill laughed at the quaint conceit.

There were many gay Friends in town whose consciences were not so exigent, who believed in education and leisure and certainly wore fine clothes, if one can trust the old diaries of the time. But the other branch, the people who thought society worldly and carnal, reduced life to the plainest of needs, except where eating was concerned. There they could not rail at their brethren.

"Do not bother thy small brain about this," the elder went on after a pause. "It is better to learn kindness to one's neighbor, and truth-telling that is not made a cloak for malicious temper. I am glad to have thee back, little one, and they will not be likely to need thee at the farm, nor perhaps care so much about thy faith."

The whole household rejoiced. They had grown very fond of Primrose. Often now in the late afternoon Madam Wetherill would mount her horse with the pillion securely fastened at the back, and Primrose quite as secure, and with a black attendant go cantering over the country roads, rough as they were, to Belmont Mansion with its long avenue of great branching hemlocks; or to Mount Pleasant, embedded in trees, that was to be famous many a long year for the tragedy that befell its young wife; and Fairhill, with English graveled walks and curious exotics brought from foreign lands where Debby Norris planted the willow wand given her by Franklin, from which sprang a numerous progeny before that unknown in the New World.

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They would stop and take a cup of tea on the tables set under a tree. Or there would be ale or mead, or a kind of fragrant posset, with cloves and raisins and coriander seed, with enough brandy to flavor it, and a peculiar kind of little cakes to be eaten with it. Discussions ran high at times, and there was card-playing, or, if water was near, the young people went out rowing with songs and laughter. A lovely summer, and no one dreamed, amid the half fears, that from the town to Valley Forge was always to be historic ground.

"Madam Wetherill has grown wonderfully fond of that child," said Miss Logan. "And what eyes she hath! They begin to look at you in a shy way, as if begging your pardon for looking at all; then they go on like a sunrise until you are quite amazed, when the lids droop down like a network and veil the sweetness. And a skin like a rose leaf. It is said her mother had many charms."

"And her father looked courtly enough for a cavalier. There is a portrait of him that Mr. Northfield hath stored away, that is to be sent to England to the son by a former wife. Though I believe the great hall the boy was to inherit hath a new heir, the old lord having married a young wife, 'tis said. The lad sent word that he would come over, but nothing hath been heard, and now there are such troublous times upon the ocean."

"Nay, England is mistress of the seas. And a new recruit of troops is being sent over. Some think Virginia will be the point of attack."

There was but little news except that by private hands. No telegram could warn of an approaching foe. In July Washington, leaving a body of troops on the Hudson, pushed forward to Philadelphia, where he met, for the first time, the young Marquis Lafayette, who had been so fired with admiration at an account of the daring and intrepidity of the Americans in confronting a foe like England, and declaring for freedom, that he crossed the ocean to offer his services to the Continental Congress.

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The British fleet under Sir William Howe did not ascend the Delaware, as was anticipated, but landed at the Chesapeake Bay and were met by Washington on their march up, and after a day's hard fighting, at Chad's Ford, Washington was compelled to retreat with many killed and wounded, among the latter the brave young Frenchman. And then the city had its first bitter taste of war, and all was consternation. Many packed up their valuables and fled, others shut up their country houses and came into town. General Howe crossed the Schuylkill, intending to winter at Germantown, but, after the battle there, in which he was victorious, resolved to place his army in winter quarters at Philadelphia.

Promise was given that all neutrals should be respected in property and person. The advent of the English was regarded with conflicting emotions. There were stately Tories, who held out a hand of welcome; there was a large and influential body of Friends who had resolutely kept to business, having, perhaps, little faith in the ultimate triumph of the colonists.

And now the aspect of the town was changed, in a night, it seemed. Officers were sent to the wealthier households, and General Howe finally established himself in the house of Richard Penn. Barracks were hastily thrown up for the soldiers who could not find refuge elsewhere.

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Madam Wetherill was summoned to her parlor one morning, though, thus far, she had not been molested.

"There are two redcoats, full of gold lace and frippery," said Janice Kent severely. "In God's mercy they have let us alone, but such fortune cannot last forever. Still they are more mannerly than those who invaded Mrs. Wray's, for one of them, a very good-looking officer, asked to see you with an air of seeking a favor. But we have hardly chambers enough to accommodate even a company, so heaven send they do not billet a whole regiment upon us!"

Madam Wetherill gave a little frown.

"No, we cannot hope to be let entirely alone. Let me see thy work, child," to Primrose. "Yes, do this part of the rose; it requires less shading, and keep at it industriously."

Then she went down the broad staircase in stately dignity. The wide door space made her visible to the young man, who had been examining the Chinese pagoda standing on a table in the corner.

"I must beg your pardon for coming unceremoniously upon you," he began in a well-trained voice that showed his breeding. "I reached the city only yesterday after a variety of adventures, and as it would have taken a long epistle to explain my history, I resolved to come in person. There was a connection of yours who married a Mr. Philemon Henry. I bethink me that the Quakers disapprove of any title beyond mere names," and he smiled.

"Yes," the lady answered gravely, eying the young man with a peculiar impression of having seen him before. "I knew Friend Henry very well."

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"And you have quite forgotten me? I hoped there would be some resemblance. I have been in this house as a little lad with my stepmother——"

"It is not—oh, yes! it must be Philemon Henry's son!"

"That was my father, truly. I had thought some day to come over, when I heard there was a little girl still living, my half-sister. And I remember I was very much in love with my pretty, winsome stepmother. I took it rather hard that I should be sent to England. And, as events turned out, I might have been as well off here in the city of my birth."

"Pray be seated," rejoined Madam Wetherill. "This is singular indeed."

"Allow me to present to you my friend, Lieutenant Vane, who is in General Howe's army, where I expect soon to have a position myself. I hope, madam, you are not too bitter against us?"

"There will be time to discuss that later on," she answered in a guarded tone. "Yet I am almost surprised to find thee in arms against thy father's country."

"I suppose he would have been a peace man. I have memories of a tall, rather austere person, yet of great kindness, but it was the pretty, playful stepmother that made the most vivid impression. And now tell me of the little girl. Where is she?"

"In this house. In my care partly. She has two trustees, or guardians, besides. One is your father's brother, James Henry, who lives not far from Germantown. But I forget—you know nothing of our localities."

"An uncle! Really that had slipped my mind. And has he any family?"

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"One son of his own. A youth and two girls, orphans, whose mother was his wife's sister, have a home there. They are Friends of the quite strict order."

"I must find them. My remembrance of him had faded, but I think I do recall his coming in to dinner at my father's. So my little sister is here? I have said the name over many times. Primrose. Is she as pleasing as the name? If she favors her mother she must be pretty enough."

"She is very well looking," was the quiet answer.

"And somewhat of an heiress."

"No one can tell about property in such times as these. I am sorry thou shouldst have been disappointed in this respect."

The young fellow shrugged his shoulders and smiled with a kind of gay indifference.

"A young woman when Sir Wyndham was up at London captured him. He had gone many a time and had his yearly carouse with no danger, but she made him fast before he could fairly escape. She pays him much outward devotion. There was a great family of girls and they were glad to get homes, having little fortune, but being well connected. Then her child, being a boy, knocked me

out altogether; the estate and title going in the male line. Still, he was generous to me. And being of a somewhat adventurous disposition I thought to enlist in the King's Guard, but there being a call for men to subdue the rebelling colonies, I decided to come hither."

"Thy philosophic acceptance speaks well for thee. Few young men could take a disappointment so calmly."

"I raved a little at first," laughingly. "But I was given a journey on the Continent, and there are chances still. It is said old men's children are seldom robust, while I can frolic for a week and remain sound as a nut."

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Now that she saw more of him he did resemble his father somewhat, though not so tall and of a more slender build.

"Well," he said presently, veiling his impatience, "am I to see the little girl?"

"Julius," to the hall boy, who was shooting up into a tall lad, "go upstairs and ask Mistress Primrose to come down to me."

The child entered shyly, Julius having announced "two Britisher redcoats" with bated breath and wide-open eyes. She walked swiftly to Madam Wetherill's side.

"This is little Mistress Henry. Primrose, thou hast inquired about thy brother. This is he. Hast thou taken thy father's name?"

"I have added Nevitt to it. In a certain way I am still an appanage of Nevitt Grange—next of kin and in the succession. My sweet little maiden, I am your half-brother from England, and I knew and loved your mother."

He crossed over to Primrose and would have taken her hand, but she clung closer to Madam Wetherill, looking at him with half-frightened eyes.

"Nay, do not be so doubtful, my pretty child. If I have convinced your protectress, and I think General Howe has sufficient credentials to vouch for me, you may safely acknowledge me. At least, shake hands. I will prove the kindest of brothers if you do but give me a chance."

She glanced questioningly at her aunt and then ventured one small hand, while her cheeks flushed in a delicate pink.

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He bent over and carried the hand to his lips.

"We must be friends, little Primrose, for now we shall see a good deal of each other, I hope. Will you not give me one smile? As I remember your mother, she was most generous of her sweetness."

"The child is strange of course. And she hath not heard much about you."

"Is it truly my brother?" She glanced up at Madam Wetherill as if not convinced.

"I have no doubt. I think I had an impression at once," smiling. "And when she is better acquainted——"

"But I do not like General Howe to take possession of our city. Patty says the streets are full of redcoats and I cannot go out."

She stiffened herself with great dignity, and now she looked squarely at him out of beautiful eyes.

"Who may Patty be? And you will see that General Howe has a right to be here. He will soon settle the rebels if he keeps on as he has begun."

"I am a rebel. And your general shall not conquer me. He is cruel and wicked!"

"Primrose!" said her aunt, though much amused.

"You have found a foe already," laughed Gilbert Vane. "One you cannot fight, but must persuade."

"But my Cousin Andrew has promised to fight for me. He is larger than you, and I like him very much."

She looked so spirited and daring that he wanted to clasp her in his arms and conquer her with kisses. He would soon oust this Cousin Andrew in her affections.

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"Little girls must not be so fierce," reproved Madam Wetherill. "We have talked on all sides and the child hears it. Then some of my old servants are strong patriots, rebels I suppose they will be called. Your friend is right—a little patience is best for conviction."

"At least you will let me try to win your regard?" and he glanced steadily at his little sister, but she kept silent.

"It is best that girls should not be too forward, or too easily won. We shall hope to see thee often. Thou wilt meet people of many beliefs here; some ardent Tories, some as ardent rebels, perhaps. I place no restrictions on the beliefs of my friends. Now, Primrose, run away to thy work. I have still a few matters I wish to talk about."

"Surely you will wish me a farewell in a kindly fashion?" exclaimed her brother.

Primrose had walked across the room with great dignity. At the door she paused to bestow a smile and courtesy on her aunt, then a very dignified one on each of the gentlemen, holding up one side of her skirt daintily.

CHAPTER XII.

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TRUE TO HER COLORS.

The American forces had not gone on triumphantly. The two battles, fierce as they had been, had not decided anything. After the battle at Germantown Howe broke up his encampment there and proceeded to Philadelphia, resolved to make that his winter quarters. To be secure against starvation it was necessary to reduce Fort Mercer and Fort Mifflin, since supplies were to be brought into the city that way.

Washington prepared to go into winter quarters at Whitemarsh, but later moved to Valley Forge, that he might the better afford protection to the stores at Reading, and the Congress that had fled to York. The defeats had cast a gloom over the Continentals, but they were not utterly disheartened. In spite of his wound the Marquis de Lafayette carried himself hopefully, and helped inspire the waning courage of the men.

The news of the glorious victory at Saratoga was sedulously kept from them for some time. There were quarters to construct, wounded to tend, and winter at hand.

Philadelphia was crowded. Hospitals were full, prisons overflowing. The English settled themselves for the winter, many in the belief that the spring would see the crushing out of the rebellion.

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In this serene hope they began to cast about for amusements. They found not a few of the Tory young women charming and affable. They resolved upon weekly balls at the city tavern. There were club dinners and gay suppers at the Indian Queen, and Ferry tavern, that often degenerated into orgies. For the ruder sort there were cockpits, where the betting ran high, and no end of dice and card-playing. There was among many of the lower classes an insolent revolt against an established order of things that had not brought them prosperity, and tradesmen had felt the pinch of hard times severely. The influx of British gold was hailed with delight, and some timorous souls that had longed for the larger liberty, yet feared the Colonies could never win independence, went over to the other side with sudden fervor.

Those of royalist proclivities opened their houses to the gayeties that swept over the town like sudden intoxication. There were private balls and dinners and tea-drinking, with no end of scarlet-coated young officers, and card-playing was rampant. The shabby little theater on South Street was no longer relegated to opprobrium, but put in some repair and made a place of fashionable entertainment; the versatile Englishmen turning their hands and their wits to almost anything in that line, from scene-painting to acting in comedy, farce, or tragedy.

It was soon noised about that Madam Wetherill's grand niece and protégé had a brother among the English officers. Many people could recall the fine old Quaker Philemon Henry, and his pretty second wife Bessy Wardour.

"Surely you are in luck, Madam Wetherill," said bright, inconsequent Sally Stuart. "Will you not be generous enough to give us a peep at this handsome captain? My mother remembers his father well. And what does the child say to this fine surprise?"

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"She is not as enthusiastic as one might suppose."

"Ah! I remember; she is quite a little rebel, and her patriotism becomes her well, since she is but a child, but she will mend of that."

"Thou shalt see the young man, with pleasure. I shall choose some of the young people who have a hankering for scarlet."

"Well, they are going to give us a gay winter, and, Heaven knows, we have been dull as ditch water. The theater has been refitted. And there is talk of racing again and no end of diversion."

So Madam Wetherill gave a dancing party and asked the favorite young women of the day, since Captain Nevitt had proposed to bring some brother officers. Miss Franks and Miss Kitty Ross and Betty Randolph were to be among the belles of the evening, and many were pleading for invitations.

"I hardly know how to manage," the Mistress said with a sigh to Janice Kent. "Many have had soldiers quartered upon them with hardly a moment's notice. Mrs. Norris was relieved, it is true, and Lord Cornwallis proved himself a gentleman. Elizabeth Drinker protested since her husband was from home, but it was not regarded. And we have been favored, whether from the influence of this young Nevitt or not, I cannot decide. I like not to be so identified with the Tory party, but I cannot be ungracious to my little girl's half-brother and the child Bessy Henry loved. I think he must favor his mother's people; he has not much of the old Henry blood in him."

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"I am not sure it is so bad a thing, madam, for we shall be less suspected of kindness to the poor fellows who need it so much. And we may hear news to their benefit occasionally."

"Ah, if a turn could be brought about for our brave men! I hear that Mrs. Washington is to join her husband and share his hardships. It will put courage into many a loyal fellow that misfortunes have well-nigh disheartened."

So the great apartment was cleared of some of its ornaments that there might be more room for dancing, in that and the spacious hall.

Primrose had been curiously distant and wary. It had amused her brother very much, and he teased her about being a little rebel and said he should take her to England to cure her of such folly and that she should be presented at Court. For certainly the Continentals could not hold out when all the principal cities were taken and trade stopped.

He was proud of her beauty, and his flattery might have turned the head of almost any child.

"I shall insist upon taking her back to England with me," he announced to his friend. "And this fine old lady, Madam Wetherill, can be induced to go along, I think, when she realizes the hopelessness of the cause, for she is, by birth, an Englishwoman. And Primrose, it is true, will be quite an heiress. What a pretty name her mother gave her, and it seems that in it she outwitted my father. He was one of the strait sort as I remember him, and my pretty stepmother planned many a bit of indulgence for me, and hid some childish pranks from his eyes that would have brought severe punishment."

"You have good reason, then, to care for her and love the child. It seems to me a curious thing that your father should let you go abroad—his only son." [Pg 171]

"But, if he had lived, he might have had half a dozen sons. He was a hale, hearty man, much too fine looking for a Friend. You must go with me to see the portrait of him, which, with some other keepsakes, belongs to me."

"And these cousins they talk about?"

"Yes, I must pay my respects to them. The days go so rapidly that one does not get through half one's plans. I had no idea there was so much interest in this old town of William Penn's. The winter will be a merry one."

"It seems not much like war," returned Gilbert Vane thoughtfully.

The party at Madam Wetherill's was a most brilliant affair. It seemed as if every conclave except the Continentals were represented. There were staid Friends in the rich attire of the better class; some in drab, others in coat and breeches of brown velveteen and silk stockings, and the younger men with various touches of worldly gauds. There were other citizens in the picturesque attire of the day, with embroidered satin waistcoats, powdered hair, and side rolls beside the queue, lace ruffles and gold lace and gold buttons.

And the belles were not to be outdone by the beaux. There were gowns of almost every degree of elegance, in brocades and glistening satins, wrought with roses or silver thread, turned back over beautiful petticoats. Gowns of Venice silk and velvet, with elbow sleeves and ruffles of rich lace, and square corsages filled in with stiffened lace called a modesty fence, through which the younger girls ran a narrow ribbon that was tied in a cluster of bows. [Pg 172]

The hair was worn high on the head, with puffs and rolls held in place with great gilt or silver pins, and an aigrette nodding saucily from the top. The elder women had large caps of fine and costly material. Few were brave enough to go without, lest they might be accused of aping youthfulness. There were fans of white, gray, and lavender silk, bordered with peacocks' eyes, and their fair owners needed no Japanese training to flirt with them.

There had been numerous discussions about Primrose. Her brother longed to see her attired quite as a young lady.

"Nay, they grow up fast enough," protested Madam Wetherill. "And there will be a host of town beauties to whom you must pay court, who would be jealous of such a chit and think her forward."

"But she dances so beautifully. I can never be grateful enough that you have had her so well instructed, and brought up a churchwoman. And really she must dance. Lieutenant Vane is almost as much smitten with her as I am."

"The more need for me to be careful, then."

"Nay, I shall guard her well, for I want to take her to England fancy-free, so that she may have her pick among titles. She is fast outgrowing childhood. And there is nothing so sweet as an opening bud."

"Mine shall not be pulled open before the time. Remember she has guardians, and thou art not one. Her Quaker uncle may have a word. He hath only lent her to me."

"We will settle that with other questions," the young man replied laughingly.

That very morning he had brought her in a pair of pretty bracelets that had delighted her [Pg 173]

mightily. He clasped them on her slender wrists.

"Now you are my prisoner," he said. "I will not let you go until I have a sweet kiss from your rosy lips."

She turned her cheek to him gravely.

"Nay, that will not do. Truly thou art stingy of kisses. And I am thy own brother!"

"I am not thy prisoner!" turning her eyes full upon him with a spirit of resistance.

"Yes, indeed. I will get a requisition from General Howe that you shall be delivered over to my keeping."

"But I will not go. Americans are born free."

"Yes, I have heard that they so declared. And equal, which is very amusing, seeing there are slaves and work people of all sorts, with no more manners than a plowboy at home. And elegant women like your Madam Wetherill and that charming Miss Franks and the handsome Shippens. Still, I adore thy spirit."

"Thou mayst take back thy gifts. I shall never go to London with thee."

"Oh, Primrose! What does possess thee to be so cruel! I am half a Friend for thy sake, and our soldiers laugh at my thee and thou. What else shall I do to win thee?"

"Thou shalt fight on the side of my country instead of against it. I cannot love a traitor."

"Nay, I am no traitor. There was no question of this war when I was sent to England. There are many Friends siding with us and longing for peace and prosperity. It is these in arms against us who have forgotten their fealty to their King. They are the ones to be called traitors."

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"Nay, there is no king here. And many of them came hither to be free and away from the King's rule, and they have the right to choose."

"What a saucy little rebel! And yet thou art so daintily sweet! Love me just a little bit because thy mother did. Many a time she kissed me. And hast thou no word of praise for the bracelets?"

"They are pretty, but I will not be a prisoner for their sake," and her eyes sparkled with resolution and a spice of mischief.

"Thou shalt be quite free if thou wilt wear them for my sake and give me a tender thought. Come, can I not be liked a little? I have heard thee declare an ardent love for the woman Patty. Am I of less account than a serving woman?"

There was something persuasive and plaintive in his tone.

"Patty makes my clothes and helps me with lessons when they are difficult, and she knows how to cure earache and pains, and lets me go with her to do errands, and tucks me up at night. And she has promised to keep watch that no British soldier shall surprise us."

"It is a long list of virtues truly, but I will see the house is not molested, and I might help with lessons. As for the earache—I do not think such pretty ears can ever ache."

There were some quivering lines about her mouth, and now both laughed.

"And I will dance with thee to-night. Some day I will come and sing songs with thee. And all I ask is one poor little kiss in return for my gift."

"I would not give away a poor little kiss," she answered with well-feigned indignation.

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"No. Forgive me. It shall be the sweetest thing in the whole wide world. Primrose, I am glad I can never be a lover to sue to thee. Thou wilt wring many a heart. And now I must go. It is a pleasure to me to bring thee pretty gauds, whether thou carest for me or not."

"I do care for thee," she said softly, a delicious color stealing over her face.

"Then one kiss."

She stood up on tiptoe and her soft, rosy lips met his.

"Heaven bless thee, little Primrose. Thou art very dear to me. Go show thy gift to Madam Wetherill. I asked her permission beforehand."

She ran to Madam Wetherill's room, holding up both arms. "See!" she cried.

"Yes. It is a new fashion, and I said when thou wert old enough for rings and gewgaws there is all thy mother's. But he coaxed so to give thee something. I hope thou thanked him prettily."

She hung her head, while a warm color came into her face, and raised her eyes hesitatingly.

"I would not be pleased at first because he said I was a prisoner, and that Americans were traitors."

"He loves to tease thee, Primrose. Yet he has a deep and fervent affection for thee."

Primrose hid her face on the ample shoulder. "I kissed him," she murmured softly. "Was it very wrong? For he coaxed so about it."

"Why, no, child. Thine own brother? But it is not proper to kiss outside of one's family, and now thou art growing a large girl and may see many gallants. So be wise and careful."

Patty did her hair high on her head, but Madam Wetherill bade her take it down again and tie it with a ribbon. And her white muslin dress was short and scant, just coming to her ankles and showing the instep of her pretty clocked stockings. There were lace frills to her puffed sleeves, and a lace tucker, with a pretty bow on one shoulder. But it seemed as if she looked more beautiful than ever before.

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Everybody made much of her. It appeared to be an easy road to Captain Nevitt's heart. Even the handsome Major André, who had come because Nevitt had talked so much about his little sister and Madam Wetherill, and also because he was likely to meet some of the attractive young women of the town, and "Primrose was like a little fairy for beauty, and that her smiles were bewitching."

A very great time it was indeed. There were ombre and quadrille tables, piquet and guinea points for the elders, while the black fiddlers in the end of the hall inspired the feet of the younger portion. With the dancing there were jest and laughter and compliments enough to give a novice vertigo. Primrose was daintily shy and clung close to her brother, of which he was very proud, as she had never shown him quite such favor before.

Anabella Morris was setting up for a young lady, being nearly two years older than Primrose. Mrs. Morris had taken a certain Captain Decker in her house to lodge, who seemed very devoted to her daughter. She had not succeeded in capturing a husband yet, but it seemed quite possible with all this influx of masculines. The glowing and attractive description of "Fairemount" given before, as a place "where no woman need go without a husband," had not held good of late years.

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The supper was in keeping with all the rest. There were solids in the way of cold meats served up in various fashions, there were wines of all kinds, and lighter refreshments of cake, floating islands, jellies, whipped sillabubs, curds and cream, and all the delicacies in vogue. There were healths drunk, toasts and witty replies, and, after a complimentary mention of the hostess, someone asked whether that pestilent old Quaker Samuel Wetherill was any relative, expressing ironical regret that he was not present.

Madam Wetherill rose tall and stately, with the most courteous self-possession.

"My husband and Mr. Samuel Wetherill's grandfather came from different towns in old England, but there may have been some of the same blood in their veins. And I think if my husband had espoused a cause he believed right, and gave of his means and influence courageously, fought, and should, perhaps, die for it, I should honor him as a brave man. For there will many brave men die on both sides."

There was a moment's silence, then hearty applause without a dissentient sound.

And when, toward morning, the servants were carrying away dishes and putting out lights, Madam Wetherill came and jingled three guineas in her hands, close to Janice Kent.

"I was thinking of our poor fellows and the sick and wounded to-night, and resolved that when they return to the city they shall have a greater welcome than this. And that rampant old Tory Ralph Jeffries, whom I should not have asked but for his daughter's sake, insisted upon playing when he was half duddled. He is shrewd enough when sober, but to-night I won his guineas. And now I tell thee, Janice, what I will do. These new people are ready enough with their play and have plenty of money. Whatever I win I shall lay aside for our poor fellows."

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"That is a fine scheme," and Janice Kent laughed.

"We must get out to the farm some day and see if we cannot send provisions before these British troops lay hands on it. For it will take a great deal to feed eighteen thousand men, and I doubt if they suffer at any time from honest scruples."

"It was a grand time. There are many handsome young men among them. But I think that Major André bears off the palm. There is music in his laugh, and his handsome face is enough to turn a girl's head. They are to act a play, I believe. Miss Becky Franks was talking of it to the Shippens."

Madam Wetherill sighed a little.

Already the quiet streets of the town had taken on a new aspect. There were fiddling and singing in many of the decorous old taverns. Men were shouting Tory broadsides of ridiculous verse; selling places for the races, when Tarleton was to ride, as that was sure to draw crowds, or hawking tickets for plays. Women were careful about going in the streets unattended, and cavaliers became general.

A few days later Captain Nevitt came in to escort the ladies out to Cherry Farm, as, somehow, many duties and engagements had intervened since his arrival until, as he admitted, he was quite ashamed of the lack of respect due his uncle. It was a bright, clear winter day, with a sky of wonderful blue, against which the distant trees stood out distinctly, the hemlocks looking almost black against it. The soldiers' barracks stretched out, giving a strange appearance to the once peaceful city. Groups of men were lounging idly about, and confusion seemed to predominate.

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But they soon left the city behind them, and rode along the Schuylkill, where the wintry landscape, leafless trees, and denuded cornfields met their glance, dreary now, but to be ruinous by and by.

Primrose had a pony of her own and rode beside her aunt, with her brother as her guard, while Lieutenant Vane was her aunt's escort. Primrose wore a blue cloth coat and skirt, trimmed with fur, and her white beaver hat was tied under her chin. Many women used a thin, silken sort of mask to protect their complexion from wind and dust, but Madam Wetherill had discarded it and did not always insist upon Primrose wearing one.

Many of the beautiful houses destroyed later on were standing now. A few had been taken as outposts for the army, others looked lonely enough closed for the season, as it had not been considered prudent to leave even the farmer in charge, after the battle of Germantown.

"Primrose does credit to someone's training," Captain Nevitt remarked. "Is it a long ride?"

"We are used to this fashion of getting about and hardly think of fatigue. It would be a poor weakling who could not stand a few miles. The roads are rough for the chaise."

How pretty she looked in her white and blue. She smiled at him. They had been quite good friends since the night of the dance, though there had been no opportunity of teasing each other.

But she was not thinking of his regard nor his pleasure just now. She seemed to have changed mysteriously, to have grown out of careless childhood, and taken a great deal of thought about the country. When she remembered that General Howe had come with his army to subdue it and that her brother was in the soldiery she shrank from him. How could she love him? He had pleaded for her sweet mother's sake, and that touched her inmost soul.

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She had listened with frightened eyes and a breathless throbbing of the heart to the account of the battle of Germantown, and her fears for her beloved country often outran her hopes when she had a quiet time to think. The servants had been forbidden to tell her the more awesome part of it, only she knew General Washington had been beaten and forced to retreat, and the British hailed it as a great victory.

The young lieutenant and the stately dame found many things to talk about, as well-bred people often do, skirting over the thin places, for by this time he understood that madam's heart was not on the English side. But he was confident when it was all over that she would accept defeat gracefully.

The ascent from the city was gradual. In the distance they noted the small gray stone houses, looking frosty in the wintry air, with here and there a larger one, like the Chew House, to be famous long afterward in history. Then they turned aside and lost sight of it. Captain Nevitt thought he would like to have been in the fray, but he did not say so.

"Thou art very quiet, little one. I have heard people offer a penny for one's thoughts, a big English penny," smilingly.

"Mine do not go as cheap as that," answered the maiden.

"A crown, then?"

"I do not think I will sell them."

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"Thou art not very much in love with the cousins?" he said presently.

She colored quickly and turned her face to him, quite unaware of betrayal until he laughed.

"Ah, I have thy thoughts without the penny! Is it the tall Quaker cousin madam talks about, or the other—William Penn?"

"His name is simply Penn, Penn Morgan. And he is not an own cousin. Surely it is not strange if I did think about them."

"Do not be offended. I shall like them if they have thy affection."

"Thou hast small mind of thy own if thou takest a girl's whims for thy pattern," she answered with a show of disdain. "Whether I like them or not is my own affair. And Patty declares I change about with every puff of wind."

"Nay, I shall not believe that until I follow the changes, or they are made in my behalf."

"Oh, you know why I am cross to you! I cannot like a redcoat! But because my own mamma loved you—"

"Primrose, thou art quite too peppery in temper with thy brother," interrupted Madam Wetherill gently. "The Henrys will think I have indulged thee ruinously."

She looked up laughingly. The soft yellow hair was blown about her like a cloud, and the great bow under her chin gave her a coquettish air. What a changeable little sprite she was!

They were coming in sight of the great barns and outhouses for the cattle, and nestled down among them was the house, looking really smaller. A line of blue smoke from the chimney was floating over to the west, betokening a storm wind not far off. Someone was coming from the

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barn, a stoutish man who walked with a cane, and paused to wonder at the party.

"That is your uncle, your father's brother," said Madam Wetherill.

CHAPTER XIII.

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UNDER THE ROSE.

Madam Wetherill made her brief explanation to show why she had ventured to bring two dashing redcoats, in their military trappings, to the home of the plain Quaker. James Henry looked at his nephew with many lines of doubt in his face and evident disapprobation.

"I have planned for the last two years to come over," said the winsome voice with the sound of glad, merry youth in it that jarred on the sedateness of his listener. "I was waiting for a promotion, and then had permission from the King to join General Howe. So I found him in possession of my native city, and in short order I discovered my little sister."

"We are men of peace," returned his uncle gravely. "William Penn founded his colony on the cornerstones of peace and equity, and all we ask is to live undisturbed and away from carnal pleasures and the wanton fripperies of the world. And it pains me to see Philemon Henry's son come among us in the habiliments of war. Still I suppose thou must do thy duty to thy Master, the King, since thou hast strayed from thy father's faith. There is no discipline now for children, and they follow evil counsel as they will."

"It was my father's will rather than mine. I remember, big boy that I was, crying many a night on shipboard for my stepmother's affection and kisses."

"It was an error of judgment, and he hath no doubt bewailed his mistake if it is given us to sorrow in the next world. But come in. And though thou art of the world, worldly, there is much in kindred blood. Come in and take welcome among us."

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The keeping room was cheerful with a great fire of logs in the wide stone chimney-place. There was a spicy fragrance of pine knots and hemlock. In one corner Rachel Morgan sat at her spinning wheel, with a woman's cap upon her head, and a bit of thin white muslin crossed inside her frock at the neck; a full-fledged Quaker girl, with certain lines of severity hardly meet for so young a face. Mother Lois sat beside the fire knitting. She had never been quite so strong since her fever, and Faith had a basket of woolen pieces out of which she was patching some shapely blocks for a bed comfort.

She sprang up with a face full of joy. The summers were not so bad, but she dreaded the long, dreary winters when she had to stay indoors and sew and spin, with none of her own years to speak with.

"Oh, Primrose! And is it really thy brother? What a pretty habit thou hast with all the fur, and the hat makes a picture of thee! There is one upstairs of a great-grandmother, and thou lookest like it, but it belongs to Andrew and not to our side, and," lowering her voice, "Uncle Henry thinks it vain. Andrew wanted it in his room, but uncle would not listen. Oh, I am so glad to see thee. I am so lonely," piteously.

The little Quaker girl in her sudden delight had forgotten her superior virtue. Her eyes fairly danced as they devoured Primrose. All the others seemed talking and explaining, so she had dared to step over the traces in the din.

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"We have some odd old portraits in Arch Street. If thou couldst visit me, Faith!"

"Faith," said her uncle, "go and call Andrew. I left him threshing in the farther barn."

Faith rose with sober gravity, running her needle through the patch, and walked placidly through the room, though she had telegraphed to Primrose with her eye. And just as she opened the door Primrose gathered up her skirts and, saying, "I will go, too," flashed along before anyone could frame a remonstrance.

"I wish thou wert here—nay, not that, for thou would be kept straitly, and there would be no pleasure. Rachel has grown severe, and works so much at her outfitting, for she means to be married sometime."

"Who will she marry?" There seemed no one besides Andrew, and the child's heart made a sudden fierce protest.

"Oh, I do not know. William Frost hath walked home with her when the meetings were at Friend Lester's. All girls marry, I think, and I shall be glad enough when my time comes. If it were not for Andrew I hardly know what would become of me. He is so good. He reads curious books and tells them to me. And sometimes there are verses that I want to sing, they are so sweet—but such things are wrong. Andrew! Nay, hide here, Primrose," pushing her in a corner. "Andrew, guess what has happened, and who hath come! An elegant soldier in scarlet and gold, and—and—someone thou lovest. I was mad one day when I said I hated her——"

"Not Primrose!" in a surprised but gladsome tone.

There was a swift rush and Primrose was in his arms. He did not kiss her, but held her so tightly that she could feel his strong heart beat. [Pg 186]

"Truly, Faith, thou didst not hate me?" she said when released, turning to the girl.

The maiden's face was scarlet.

"She does not hate thee now, dear," said Andrew softly.

"It was most wicked and hateful! Thou hadst so many joys and pretty things and lessons, and a beautiful face, and then Andrew said thou didst have the sweetest big heart in all the world and could love me and would be glad to share thy joys with me. Is it so, Primrose?"

Primrose clasped her in her arms and kissed her many times.

"I wish thou could come. There are so many things, and it makes no one poorer by sharing them."

"And then I learned to love thee. We talk of thee until at night, when I shut my eyes and draw the coverlid about me, I can see thee like a star coming out in the blue. And Andrew thinks sometime he may take me in on market day, when the spring opens, for I would like to see the great city. And thou might come to meet us. I think Aunt Lois and Rachel would be angry if I went to Madam Wetherill's. But I am forgetting. Thou hast a soldier cousin, Andrew."

"He is my brother," explained Primrose with curious dignity. "And—I do not like him to be a King's soldier."

Andrew gave a long whistle of amazement, and studied Primrose so keenly that she flushed.

"Thy brother? Of course, then, being Uncle Philemon's son he is my cousin. Is he not Lord somebody?" [Pg 187]

"He is Captain Nevitt. And at times I love him, but he teases and threatens to take me to England, and—and he is to fight our soldiers. It does not seem right, then, to love him at all. Andrew," looking up out of the softly radiant eyes, "I wish thou wert in his stead."

Andrew Henry was satisfied then. For an instant his soul had been wrung with jealousy. But his look of tender regard answered hers and both understood.

"And I must go see this British cousin. Faith, hand me that brush, even if it does get used at times on Dobbin's sleek coat."

He brushed the dust of the grain out of his clothes and gave his hair a stir with his fingers.

"And Primrose hath a pony!" cried Faith. "It is pretty, with great, soft eyes! Next summer I shall learn to ride."

She caught the hand of her visitor and pressed it with pervading rapture. Primrose wondered how she could have grown so different.

"Thou hast stayed finely!" said Rachel reprovingly. "It is ever the way when two do an errand. And Madam Wetherill will take dinner with us, it is so near noon. The horses must be put out, and Penn and Jonas are down in the wood lot. Go to the kitchen and help Chloe."

There were tears in Faith's eyes, but she dared not even loiter, for Rachel's hand was not light when it came with a box on the ear. There were so few visitors at the house that this was a great treat, and Faith hated to be shut out.

Philemon Nevitt surveyed his cousin with some curiosity and decided that the plain young Quaker farmer was no great rival after all in his young sister's favor. For he was not likely to fight for his country, the great test Primrose seemed to require. But when Andrew went out to care for the horses the two young men asked permission to leave the ladies and take a look around. [Pg 188]

"The country surprises me," declared Captain Nevitt. "We have heard much talk about the wilderness and the forests, and the few towns such as Penn's Colony, which is a much greater city than one could imagine. And there is the town the Dutch started, New York, and the Puritan Boston, beside many lesser places that must show wonderful capacity for settling the New World. There are industries, too, that have amazed me. 'Tis a great pity a people doing so well should rebel against all law and order, and be willing to have their country destroyed rather than yield while they have something to save."

"We shall not agree upon this matter," Andrew Henry replied with quiet dignity. "And since we are of blood kin, we will not dispute. There are other subjects of talk."

"But my uncle is strong for peace," in a tone of surprise.

"Yes. I, too, am for peace, unless manliness and honor goes not with it. And when one has seen wrongs and usurpations creep in gradually, and privileges taken away—but," checking himself, "I was not to discuss such points. We are plain people but we may have some stock, and browsing for it, that will interest thee."

The cattle were certainly fine and well fed. There were stacks of hay and piles of Indian corn, great pits of vegetables, and potatoes enough to feed an army, it seemed. Everything was so well [Pg 189]

kept, and there was a great sheepfold with shelter for the flock in storm.

"And, now, which way retreated the rebels after their defeat?" asked Captain Nevitt.

"They went on up the Schuylkill, on the other side, to Whitmarsh first, and then to Valley Forge."

"A blacksmithy town?"

"There was once an old forge there. It is not a town."

"There seems many comfortable country houses about, as if there might be gentry."

"Some of them now are filled with the wounded and the ill. They were worth seeing in the summer."

Then they discussed horses and found the young Quaker no mean authority. The horn blew to summon them within, where a bountiful feast was spread, to which they all did ample justice and talked of family affairs. Captain Nevitt had another view of his father from his brother's comprehension of him, and though it was much narrower, not less complimentary than that of Madam Wetherill. Certainly there was nothing to regret on the Henry side. He was beginning to feel proud of these clean, wholesome people of strong character.

When they had risen Madam Wetherill said they must leave presently. The sky was getting to be rather lowering, with a grayish cloud in the south that betokened snow, Friend Henry said.

"I will go out with thee, Andrew, and see about the horses," said the lady.

"Nay," interposed Captain Nevitt smilingly. "It is hardly a lady's business——"

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"I have some privacy with Andrew," she returned. "I have had some useful hints from him, young as he is, and you must know if women are not equipped for soldiering, they make excellent farmers at times. But you may all come, though if I extract any grand secret from Andrew as to how to double the value of a crop next year, I shall not bruit it abroad, I promise you."

Faith looked up wistfully.

"Child," she said, "thou and Primrose go take a little run in the keen air. Thou art not very rosy for a farmer's maid, and Primrose hath been housed overmuch of late, our streets are so full of roysterers."

"Faith hath some work——"

"Nay," interposed Madam Wetherill, "ten minutes' run will make her all the brisker for work. Run along, children; and have a little visit with each other."

There was something in Madam Wetherill not easily gainsaid. Rachel saved up her displeasure for a scolding presently.

Andrew attended the lady to the stalls where the horses had been led.

"Thou hast not been in to market of late?"

"There had been so much disorder, and I believe a permit is needed. Then there have been people about, buying up produce of all kinds."

"Dost thou know anything of the other army?" Her voice was very low.

"Somewhat," in a hesitating tone.

"They are likely to need many things. Howe's purpose to attack them was frustrated by a timely warning. There may be other warnings as well, for the army contains many braggarts. And their winter of dissipation, of gambling and betting and carousing, will not fit them for a spring campaign. I heard it said that Philadelphia was capturing them by allurements, and it may be a poor victory for General Howe. I have a faith—I cannot tell thee of any tangible groundwork, but I feel assured we shall win."

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"It is dark enough now."

"But there was the splendid capture of Burgoyne, and our army made much richer by stores sorely needed. Canst thou get things to Valley Forge?"

"I know of someone who can," and he studied her eyes.

"Even if it is gold—British gold? It will not stick to anyone's fingers?"

"I will warrant that," and the delight encouraged her.

"I have a small fund that will come in from time to time. Here is a little bag. It is not much, but it will help. And if I could get needful things to them, clothes and blankets? If thou wilt sell provisions to me for them—thy father keeps a sharp lookout?"

"He hath a shrewd mind and far sight. And I would not render him liable to trouble. I think I could manage that way. Oh, madam, I ought to be with those brave fellows whom nothing disheartens. The general's wife hath left her pleasant, peaceful home to share his hardships. It is

my country."

"Wait a little and be patient. It is a pity this fine cousin is on the wrong side. It would amuse thee to hear Primrose dispute with him. Now I trust thee to get this gold thither."

"Thank thee a hundred times for them. There are many loyal hearts in town, as I well know."

"And many disloyal ones. It angers me. Come in some time. Primrose will be overjoyed to see thee. She is growing tall fast, too fast for my pleasure. I would fain keep her a little girl."

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"I am jealous of my cousin," declared Captain Nevitt coming out to them with the air of a spoiled boy. "When wilt thou give me a confidence?"

"All the way home," she answered readily. "And I have so many good points I think I shall bet on the next race. How many of you will ride?"

"Why do we not have some hunts?" he asked eagerly. "If there is no fighting there must be diversion."

They mounted the ladies and rode up to the door of the cottage to say good-by.

"I shall dream of thee to-night," Faith whispered to Primrose.

The wind blew up colder and sharper. They were glad to get home. There was a slight fall of snow and everything was frozen up hard enough to last all winter.

The streets seemed merrier than ever. All the creeks were frozen solid, it seemed, and the Schuylkill was a sparkling white band, winding about. Skating had broken out into fashion, and the prettiest belles of the day were out with trains of military men at their beck. The river banks would be lined with spectators, who envied, criticised, and carped. Women were muffled up in furs and carried huge muffs, their wide hats tied down under their chins with great bows, some wearing the silken mask, in much the fashion of a veil, to protect their skins from frosty touches. The skaters, in skirts that betrayed trim and slender ankles, spun along like a whirl of the wind, or with hands crossed with a partner, went through graceful rocking evolutions, almost like a waltz.

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The scarlet uniforms of the officers made a brilliant pageant. It was indeed a winter long to be remembered, and recalled with keen relish when the British, with lovers and friends, had flown.

Captain Nevitt had insisted upon taking his sister out, as Primrose was a very fair skater, and, under his tuition, improved wonderfully. She looked so pretty in her skating dress with her soft, yellow hair flying in the wind, and her lovely face half hidden in her hat, to be revealed like a vision at the various turns.

Nevitt had been taken on General Howe's staff for the present. Foiled in his endeavor to call out Washington by any maneuver, and feeling that another battle was quite impossible and useless in the extreme cold, which was more bitter than for years, he too, gave himself over to diversion, and looked leniently on the frivolities of his officers and the ruder dissipations of his men.

The most fascinating game on the ice was skating after a ball. A man called the hurlie propelled half a dozen balls along with a long, sharp-pointed stick, between two given points, often far enough apart to make a trial of speed and endurance. The fortunate one was he or she who caught a ball before it reached the goal, and then the merriest shout would ring out on the air.

A tall, fine-looking young fellow in civilian attire had captured two of the balls one afternoon and was flying at his most vigorous speed for another. Primrose had paused for a moment while her brother stopped to chaff a companion. The ball rolled swiftly along, and from some slight inequality in the ice deflected. The arm was outstretched to catch it, and she could not quite remember afterward whether she had stooped, but he came against her with sufficient force to knock her over. He caught the ball and held it up in triumph, with a joyous hurrah, and then turned to see what the oath and the exclamation meant.

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"Good Heavens! you have killed her, you brute!" Captain Nevitt cried angrily.

"I was under such headway and I had no thought the ball would go in that direction. Let us see at once. Is she unconscious? Dr. Shippen is here. I passed him not ten seconds ago. I will find him."

Nevitt took Primrose in his arms, limp and white as a lily. There was a little circle about them, but the others went on with their gayety. A fall was no such uncommon thing.

Dr. Shippen had been out for a little exercise, and withal had some curiosity to see the mad carnival that had broken out in the staid city.

"Ah, it is Madam Wetherill's little girl!" looking sharply at Nevitt.

"I thought I had seen the child somewhere," said the young man who had caused the accident. "Can we not take her home at once?"

"I am her brother," was Nevitt's stiff reply. "You have done enough mischief with your awkwardness. I hope your silly victory repays you. Let me pass, with no further parley on your part."

"What do you think, Dr. Shippen?"

"It is a faint, of course. Whether she is more severely injured I cannot tell. Let us take her home, for she will be chilled through, and I have an errand in Second Street."

The doctor sat down on a stump to unbuckle his skates. Nevitt had taken his off a few moments before, but Primrose had begged that they might skate all the way down. [Pg 195]

"Can I do nothing to assist?" asked the other.

"Go on with your prize-winning," said the captain haughtily. "You may run over someone else if you have good luck."

"You British think you own the town and can order us about like slaves!" was the fiery reply.

"Tut! tut! Wharton! Don't get into a fight. You are hotheaded."

"I will not be insulted by any interloper, even if he wears a red coat." Wharton's face was flushed with anger, and his eyes sparkled with passion.

"Where will a note reach you?" Captain Nevitt was in a flame of anger as well.

"Come along at once! Allin Wharton, go over yonder and cool your temper talking to the pretty women. And if you are the child's brother, get along as fast as you can with her, and let us see what it amounts to. A fall like that is enough to knock the breath out of anyone."

Wharton did not attempt to follow them. They hurried on, Nevitt's anger giving him strength. He pressed his face against the cold, white one.

"Who was that boor?" he cried passionately. "If my sister is injured I shall half murder him!"

"If you are her brother then you are Philemon Henry's son, and he was a man of peace. I have had a great desire to see you, since your father was a good friend of mine. I heard you had come over, I must say on bad business. Here, this turn cuts off some distance, though we have been squared according to plummet and line; and then down here. Let me take the child. Is there no sign of returning animation?" [Pg 196]

They reached the Wetherill house, and its mistress caught sight of them from the window.

"Oh, Dr. Shippen!" she cried in alarm.

"The child has had a fall. Take off her hat and coat. Now let me see!"

He laid her on the settle in the hall and began chafing her hands, and ordering some restoratives.

"Are you sure there are no bones broken?"

"Not quite. It really was not that kind of a fall. There, she is coming around. Now, Madam Wetherill, here is a pepper-pot of a young soldier that you must cool down with some soothing potions, and I will find the other firebrand. We won't have them shooting each other unless in up and down warfare."

"I think you will bear witness that I was insulted," declared Nevitt.

"And gave an insult. It is about even. No fighting, therefore. Dueling for trifles is cold-blooded murder. I ask it for your father's sake. My little dear, wake up from your nap."

"What is it?" Primrose said in a faint voice. "I feel queer." Then she lapsed into insensibility again.

"Take her upstairs if you will, please. And, doctor, what mystery is there about this mishap? How did it occur? Patty, come hither."

The child opened her eyes again and half smiled.

"She will do now, I think; her pulse is stronger. Here is a small injury; nothing worse than a sprain, I think. She was run down on the ice. Our town goes crazy over a trifle now. The wrist is bruised and sprained. Patty, if you are the owner of so useful a name, undress the child, but I think she hath no broken bones." [Pg 197]

The men retired to the adjoining room while Patty alternately scolded and petted her young charge.

"I hope you will reconsider your threat," said the doctor. "There are too many good uses for life to throw it away foolishly. If you are a King's man your life belongs to him, and is not to be wasted in a fit of temper."

Philemon Nevitt flushed with a sense of shame. He had been hotheaded, unreasonable.

There was no serious injury, they found. The bruised wrist was to be bound up with the old-fashioned remedy of wormwood and hot vinegar. And to-morrow Primrose would be all right again.

"Do you know this Allin Wharton?" Nevitt asked of Madam Wetherill.

"I know his family well, only young people have such a way of growing up that one loses track of them. He cannot be more than twenty. And words between you ought not to lead to any serious matter. You should have kept better watch of Primrose in such a crowd."

"I think I ought," he admitted frankly. "And I was hasty." He recalled the fact that he had given the insult, and that the other had the right to seek satisfaction. In London duels were common enough.

But by great good fortune young Wharton called on Madam Wetherill the next morning to inquire about the mishap to Primrose and found her none the worse except a bandaged wrist.

"Is it really true that this fire-eating young captain is—what shall I say? A relative, since this pretty flower is your niece, is she not? And Polly was so taken with him, but for his red coat, that when I began to talk of him I found I had fallen into a hornets' nest. And now, Madam Wetherill, what shall I do? Some hot and hasty words passed between us. Can I safely show the white feather? For no doubt your captain is a fine shot, and, truth to tell, I have some other plans for my life. Since he is even half-brother to Miss Primrose I should not want to shoot him."

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Primrose looked up with languid sweetness. She felt rather sore and inert from the shock.

"Why, were you going to shoot him?" she asked.

"We had some words. You know I ran over you. It was very rude and careless. And it might have been much worse, and then I should really have been guilty."

"But you caught the ball! I saw it as I went down. I should not have been so intent and moved a little. But I had not taken off my skates. Brother Phil wanted me to, but I was quite determined to have my own way. And so I went over more easily. It would be very cruel and wicked to shoot each other on account of me."

"And silly, too," said Madam Wetherill sharply. "I shall take the case in my own hands, and arrange matters," laughingly. "I think Captain Nevitt was unmindful for a moment. And there is no great harm done but a sprained wrist."

"And if you had shot Phil——"

"Well, what would you have done?"

"I should never, never want to see you or to think of you again!"

"And if he had shot me?"

"Then, I think, I should send him away and never see him again."

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Allin Wharton wondered how it would be in the future if they should meet on the field of battle. For he had just wrung a reluctant consent from his father that he should respond to his country's call, whose need would never be more urgent than now.

"I wonder if you are on the side of the King? It would seem so natural with a brother in the ranks," and he recalled the entertainment in his honor at Madam Wetherill's hands. Polly, his sister, had thought the captain charming.

"I am a rebel," she said proudly. "And I shall never be content until he comes over to the side of the country, to the buff and blue instead of the red."

"Surely, surely; you are a brave, patriotic girl. Wish me success in case I want to join the rebel army," with a half-embarrassed smile. It was not wisdom to confess all one's plans.

She put out her right hand. It was the other that had been hurt. "I wish thee success. That means victory and a safe return," she replied with sweet solemnity.

CHAPTER XIV.

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FOR NATIVE LAND AND LOYALTY.

They all made so light of the occurrence that a note of apology from Mr. Wharton settled the matter. Captain Nevitt felt in his cooler moments that he had been a little to blame, also hasty and unreasonable. And when, a few evenings after, he met pretty and vivacious Polly Wharton and danced with her, he was very glad the matter had gone no farther.

Primrose was soon well again, but Madam Wetherill would not consent to her going out on the river among the gay crowd, though she felt it a great deprivation. There were two or three quiet spots on the creeks where children could go without harm, and Patty used to take her when Phil was engaged, though Lieutenant Vane was always inquiring if he could not accompany them. He seemed younger and more boyish than the captain, and proved quite delightful to the groups of children, though he admitted laughingly that he found a great many rebels among them.

And so the days went on, one and another indignant over the "rollicking winter" as Mr. Allen termed it, and others storming at General Howe for the wanton destruction everywhere visible. Groves of trees were cut down for firewood, gardens despoiled, and some of the houses taken possession of by the troops were cut and hacked with insulting boasts, and really ruined. Others, Continentals confessedly, railed at Washington for his inaction and supineness.

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Howe had planned one surprise and possible capture of the troops, but heroic Lydia Darragh, having overheard the plot, walked to Washington's camp while it was at Whitemarsh, and forewarned them. Finding the rebels prepared with a warm welcome the British retraced their steps. There were small skirmishes outside the lines, and once the impetuous Lafayette advanced, hoping to surprise the enemy, but nothing came of this. Baron Steuben was training the Continentals, as many of them were raw recruits, but, used to hunting as they were, most of the young men had a quick eye and correct aim.

But stories crept in concerning their hardships and sufferings. Every avenue was closely watched that no supplies should be sent directly from the city, but more than once keen wit evaded them. There were passes for the farmers to come in on market days, and many were glad even to supply their enemies for British gold. James Henry thought this no sin, and was given a pass for his son and nephew. Penn had imbibed many of his uncle's beliefs, and took home rather rose-colored accounts of the prosperity of the city. He kept, too, a watchful eye over Andrew, who was more than half suspected of being quite as willing to deal with the rebels, and Madam Wetherill's was considered a rather tempting and unsafe place for sober-going Friends.

But one day he came alone, and made his way to Arch Street, leaving his empty wagon at a nearby tavern that he knew he could trust.

"It is thy cousin," whispered Madam Wetherill, who had some callers. "Take him upstairs in Patty's sewing room."

Primrose ran out with delight in her eyes, but she had grown wise, and, instead of a cry of joy, placed her finger archly on her lips and motioned him through the hall. [Pg 202]

"I saw a glimpse of a red coat," he said in a low tone. "I have no desire to run into a hornets' nest. Oh, Primrose, thou hast grown taller since the day thou wert at the farm. Thou wilt soon be a young lady. And the sweetness of childhood will be ended."

"Is girlhood sharp, then, and—and sour?"

Her eyes danced with a merry, mischievous light.

"Nay, sweeter than ever; but it's sweetness is more sacred. And presently comes the time of lovers."

"I shall not have any lovers. They say pert things and talk about pretty faces, or else are silly like Anabella's lover, and forever kissing one's hand. And what think you Lieutenant Vane did when we were going to ride a few days since? There was pretty Mistress Wharton here, and my brother is much taken with her, though she is such a rebel. But I was not allowed to mount the stepping stone, and his hand was placed under my foot. So I pressed down hard, wishing I could squeeze the British blood out of him. They do nothing but run about and have pleasure. But if I were a hundred years old I would have none of them for lovers. I want no one but my brother and my cousin, and sometimes I think thou art dearer, because thou would fight for thy country. And I am ashamed when I think it is his country as well."

"What preachment is the little maid making, Andrew?" said the older voice as the ample figure entered the doorway. "I sometimes think I shall have to keep her shut up in one room, people talk to her so much and spoil her."

"Nay, she is not spoiled," protested Andrew. [Pg 203]

"She is a wise little thing, and saucy, too, and often amuses the company by bits of patriotism that are shrewd and wholesome. I think people in this mad revel are forgetting they are Americans and have a country to fight for. And, now, what is the news? There is much dissatisfaction, I hear, with General Washington. It cannot be that they will give up the rallying point, the wisest man of them all, and break up into factions."

"They will not give him up, madam. It is a bitter winter, and the stores at York are sadly depleted. They are watched on every hand. While the town is dancing to British music, and giving aid and comfort to the enemy, our men are living in rude huts that hardly shelter them from the storms and are glad for crusts. But the men will stand by him to the last. It is only idle talk about superseding him. And the men worship Madam Washington and Madam Knox. If you could see them! They minister to the sick, they patch the worn-out clothes and blankets. There is so much need of these things, stockings, and shoes."

"My heart aches for them. I have been gathering a store——" She paused and eyed Primrose.

"You need not be afraid," cried Primrose eagerly. "Is it not *my* country? And, Cousin Andrew, I have saved some money that my brother gave me to buy frippery and sweetmeats with. And I am knitting socks."

"Thou art a brave girl, and quite able to keep thy own counsel. I have known that aforetime," and he smiled. "Indeed, madam, we could trust her to the uttermost."

"There is quite a store of some things——"

"I will tell thee—there is a false bottom to the wagon that I can raise up after the load is sold. That is my secret. And I can trust him at the Pewter Platter. I have carried more than one lot." [Pg 204]

"There is a bagful," pulling it out of the cupboard.

"It will look like a sack of potatoes."

They all laughed.

"There is a blanket in my room. Come thither. Then thou hast little fear? It is a great relief to hear this."

"Madam, such courage must be rewarded. I should want to be with them, but that I think I can be of more service here. When the spring opens——"

He paused and looked from one to the other.

"Wilt thou go, then?" Primrose slipped her hand in his, and though her voice was just above a whisper it was an inspiration to him.

"I shall go, then. Penn can fill my place at home. The country's need will never be greater."

There was another half fear that the loyal soul barely breathed to itself. He must be away before it came to anything beyond the half fear.

The beautiful eyes were grave, and the face had a new solemnity. Her faith inspired him.

"We have not much time to lose," he said. "You see, I must go up the rough Perkiomen road to meet the friend in waiting. We have safe points," and he smiled gravely.

Madam Wetherill pulled out the stout sack and held the top open.

"That will be a godsend. Madam, many a poor fellow's heart will be glad and his toes warm. Heaven reward thee!"

"Heaven has rewarded me in many things. If I could see the end more clearly!"

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Primrose brought her little purse with its gilt clasps, and poured out her money. Madam Wetherill added her store to it.

"Art thou sure there is no risk?" she said.

"I shall be careful. One learns much shrewdness."

He shouldered the bag.

"Let me out the side way like any other servant," he said, as he bade them farewell.

"And now, little Primrose," cautioned her Aunt, "thou must keep guard over thy tongue as if with a steel chain, for thy cousin's sake."

"It will never be a traitor tongue," returned the maiden proudly.

Patty had been down in the kitchen helping with some ironing, and now she came up with an armful of stiff skirts. For many women on state occasions wore a big hoop, and others swelled out with starched petticoats.

"I have to go among the stores to find some things that have grown scarce as hen's teeth. And thou hast not been out these two days, Primrose. Thy gallants have deserted thee. What sayest thou to a little run in the brisk air. We shall not go in public places, madam, and she will be safe by my side."

"As she likes. There are plenty of pretty girls in town, perhaps better worth being looked at. And it is early yet."

Primrose enjoyed these small shopping expeditions. There were some very nice places kept by Friends who had been famous in merchandise a few years before, but stocks had sadly diminished and prices gone up. Patty's Yankee blood came to the fore in such times as these, and she had become rather a dread to clerks and shopmen. This part of it amused Primrose very much, as Patty was sure to make a good bargain.

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"There seems nothing at all to buy now," she cried in disdain, finding some difficulty in getting what she wanted.

"There will be less yet unless the war ends presently," was the reply of the shopkeeper.

"Then we must turn our old gowns, though in truth there seems no lack of fine attire if one looks at the gay maidens on the street. They seem turned into butterflies. And it must take a mint of money for their wings."

The clerk smiled.

"Let us go round by the creek," pleaded Primrose. "The skaters are so merry."

"If thou wilt not coax to stay more than a moment."

The child promised.

As they were turning a corner a young man eyed them sharply. Primrose did not see him, and Patty hurried on, for he was a stranger.

But he took some long strides and caught up to them.

"It is Mistress Primrose Henry——"

The little girl turned.

"Oh, Patty, it is Miss Polly Wharton's brother," she said, holding out her hand.

"Who runs over thee again," said Patty sharply, for she had heard the story.

"Nay, but it is quite a godsend, as I have been to thy aunt's to say good-by. In an hour's time I shall be on my way to Valley Forge to cast in my lot with the brave fellows there, and I wanted to take thy godspeed with me. I have great faith in it."

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"Oh!" Primrose gave a little cry.

"I want thee to be both sorrowful and joyful. Glad that thou hast a patriot friend, and sorry that there should be war. I could not wait any longer and wrung my father's consent from him, though he thinks we are right. And I believe we shall have a great and grand country some day that soldiers will be proud of defending. I go this very night with a party of young men who have planned to elude observation. And so—good-by."

"I wish thee—a safe return."

"Thanks. Keep me in mind when thou prayest for soldiers and victory."

Then he was gone like a flash.

"I have no heart for the skaters now," Primrose said with a sigh. "Let us go home."

The Whartons kept the news very quiet, for it would have made them a marked family to have it bruited abroad just now. But Polly was less gay, and Primrose watched her wonderingly.

And now the long cold winter was drawing to a close. In March came gleams of warmth, welcome sunny days that softened the ice and spoiled skating, and the great Delaware sent floating cakes down to the sea. Buds began to swell and grass to spring up, and there was a great deal of drilling among the troops, and sickness as well.

England began to think that Howe might have captured Washington, cooped up in a desolate wild as they considered it from their imperfect news. The capture of Burgoyne had been an unexpected blow and led to eloquent arguments in Parliament. Mr. Pitt's great speech had reached America, and thrilled every patriotic heart. Leaning on his crutches he had denounced the purchase of German hirelings and brutal savages.

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"If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms, never! never! never!" he had exclaimed.

Then King Louis of France acceded to the treaty of alliance and informed the American commissioners "that it was decided to acknowledge the independence of the United States."

Howe was to be recalled and succeeded by Sir Henry Clinton. Even this news inspired the camp at Valley Forge, where the word from France had not yet been received.

At the Henry farm there had been an undercurrent of dissatisfaction. Lois Henry had set her heart on Rachel Morgan as a daughter-in-law, and her husband was nothing loath, since she was a good housekeeper and strong in the faith. It was feared that Andrew was wavering. He never spoke at the meetings, and absented himself from home now and then with no explanations. It was well known that his sympathies were with the army at Valley Forge, and it was surmised in some way that he had a hand in sending supplies. Several of the young men about had joined the army.

"Andrew," his father began one morning when they were sorting seeds of various kinds for planting, "Andrew, I have somewhat to say to thee. Thou art of age, and a good marriage is the best ballast for the journey of life. I am elderly and shall never entirely recover from my accident, but the farm is large, and some day it will all be thine. A wife that we should agree with would pleasure us both fervently. It is true thou wilt be able to marry well in a worldly point of view, but we do not care so much for that. Thy mother and I have decided it would gratify us greatly in the Lord, if thou shouldst see thy way clear to take thy cousin Rachel."

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"Rachel!" He had more than half suspected this and dreaded it. There was also a feeling that Rachel cared for him. He could not imagine himself in love with her. Love was something more than a cool, friendly regard, meals properly cooked, and a house well kept; thriftiness and laying farm to farm.

"Well, does it take thee so by surprise? Moreover, we both know she has a deep regard for thee."

"I have not thought of it in that way. I am in no haste to marry," the young man replied hesitatingly, casting about for a more forcible rejoinder.

"A good wife is a good thing, and thou mayst look far and wide and not find thy cousin's equal. She is well grounded in the faith, and I have observed with sorrow thy tendency to stray from the old landmarks, but youth hath such seasons until the carnal will is subdued. Then it will need to make no change in our living. Thy mother and I can grow old in this, the home of our youth, and

see our children, and our children's children, mayhap, growing up, well trained in the faith."

"I will consider it," Andrew said gravely.

"Lay my counsel to heart for thy mother's sake."

Andrew Henry went on with his work, but he knew a crisis had come in his life. Like many another Friend trained in the ways of peace he had a horror of the cruelties of war, of which he had heard and seen much since the battle of Germantown, and shrank from the thought of taking any human life. On the other hand was the brave and boundless aspiration for liberty and a country of one's own, that had thrilled him when he heard the Declaration of Independence read. And now that France had held out a helping hand, and the English Parliament was divided, the aspect looked more hopeful to him. But for his parents he would go at once and cast in his lot with the heroes at Valley Forge, to whom patriotism was as brave a religion as that of Roger Williams.

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And Rachel! No, he could not marry her. All his soul rose up in revolt. Not but what such marriages often occurred among Friends and were reasonably happy. Very few sons or daughters went contrary to the advice of their parents in such matters. And he knew to refuse would be giving up his home.

If Rachel was soft-tongued and attractive like his mother, for Lois Henry was still fair of face, visions of the pretty, graceful maidens in town danced before his eyes. He had seen them on the streets chatting merrily, on the ice flying swiftly like so many gay birds. He had listened to Primrose playing on her spinet and singing pretty old love songs that she did not understand aught of but the rare melody. And he enjoyed Madam Wetherill's house—he had borrowed a few books from the old case, and, plain as he was, he had been charmed by some volumes of verse.

Surely this Master Quarles must have been a man of deep feeling and godliness. And there was one Ben Jonson, and a Master Suckling, though he was not quite sure about his dainty conceits. Queer old books in stained leather covers and print hard to read. Volumes of one John Milton who, he learned, had stood out bravely for liberty.

Madam Wetherill had come upon him one morning browsing deeply in the case of books. "Take anything that pleaseth thee," she said kindly. "They are old things in the Wardour family that came to my father, and he knew many of the scholars of his day. They had not such a fear of learning then. And he knew this Mr. Pope and Addison and many another. And even our master Franklin, with all his many businesses, found time to write verses for his wife, it seems, and with James Logan, has been much in earnest that the town should have some sort of library."

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He had carried home a thin, old book and kept it closely in his waistcoat pocket that no one should surprise it, and read it by odd spells. And a volume of John Milton's tracts stirred him mightily.

All these things he would have to give up if he was Rachel Morgan's husband. He felt that he had grown out of the narrow bounds and could never get back into them.

James Henry went into the house. His wife sat alone, knitting.

"I have spoken to Andrew," he said, "and he will take time to consider. But he did not say aught against Rachel, and he certainly hath no other fancy. I am thankful my brother's daughter is a mere child, since he shows such fondness for her, and thou wert wise, wife, in not having her here. She would have been an unmanageable firebrand, since we could not control her wholly. And I have good hopes for Rachel. We will not delay when the matter is settled, but have them man and wife speedily. Marriage is a cure for many wayward notions."

Rachel had come downstairs in her list boots, that she was fond of wearing indoors, and could make herself. The door was ajar and she had heard all her uncle said. Her heart beat exultantly, and she crept back again softly, with a flush on her face and a pleased light in her eye. For she was very much in love with Andrew, though she did not call her preference by that name. She would give him decorous opportunities to speak.

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But he went away and left her sitting alone by the fireside, and poured over John Milton in his cold room. And if she went out to the barn at meal time he made some excuse for not walking back with her.

"Dost thou know," she asked of Penn one day, "where Andrew goes in these curious absences? His father is troubled, but he will not say a word."

"He went, one day, across the river to Swede's Ford. It was about some wood," he said. "And he hath a friend on the Lancaster road. Now that I think, I am afraid there is mischief in it. He hath a soft spot for the rebels at Valley Forge. But he always brings home money for what he hath sold."

"Uncle James hath spoken to him about marrying."

"Marrying! Whom, pray?"

Rachel flushed swarthyly.

"If thy eyes were keen thou couldst have seen what they both desire. I shall marry him ere long. It will be a good thing for all of us, and no change of home."

Penn simply stared his amazement.

"He is an obstinate fellow in many things. Well—if thou canst manage him," doubtfully. "He hath no plans for marriage at present, I know that."

"He will heed his father, I think. And, Penn, it will be to thy interest to help me. Thou canst put in a word here and there."

Penn Morgan soon learned some things that astonished him. His cousin was giving aid to the rebels. Yet it was odd that these starving men could pay in gold and silver when the Congress had issued so much paper money. [Pg 213]

Penn half suggested the marriage one day when they were working together.

Andrew glanced at him with resolute eyes.

"It is a fancy of my father's," he answered, "but I have no mind toward it, as I shall tell him presently."

"Is anything displeasing to thee about Rachel?" was the rather nettled response.

"Rachel is a good girl and my parents are fond of her. But I have other plans for my life," was the quiet reply.

Rachel was vexed at his coldness and studious avoidance of her. She boldly walked by his side on Sunday to meeting, but, coming home, there was always someone to talk with, until they passed the cross-roads, and then he would take Faith by the hand.

Penn Morgan was never quite sure that he had meant to betray his cousin, but, finding that several others were trafficking with the rebels, fancied he might mention their names as men on whom a sharp eye might be kept. Andrew went unsuspectingly into town one day, eager to learn something about the British army, and if it were true they were preparing for an active campaign. As he stood in Market Square with his load nearly disposed of a whisper caught his ear.

"The tall Quaker. He will go to the Pewter Platter. Jonas Evans has been suspected for some time. When he has loaded up afresh and is about starting will be the time to seize him."

Andrew Henry did not move a muscle while two men scrutinized him closely. Afterward one of them approached with a half-insolent air. [Pg 214]

"Is trade fair to-day, Friend Broadbrim? The winter seems quite broken up. And round about country places they are plowing, no doubt. If thou hast made a good bargain thou mightst stand treat. We have drained the King's men pretty dry."

"Nay, I am busy just now with some bills to collect, but if thou wilt meet me an hour hence at the Pewter Platter, thou shalt have thy fill of meat and drink. And since my start was early this morning I shall bring a hearty appetite myself."

"Thou art a good fellow, truly," nodding with a slight leer.

"And since thou hast to wait, here is a shilling for ale. There are pot houses near by," returned Andrew.

He watched the man enter one. Then he summoned one of the idle boys about.

"Keep my horses for five minutes," he said, "and thou shalt be well paid." Then he dashed among the crowd, and could not have been told from a dozen other men in drab coats and wide hats.

CHAPTER XV.

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PARTING.

Madam Wetherill sat deep in her account books. Primrose was studying arithmetic, and the tough rules were not at all to her taste.

Janice Kent paused at the door. "Madam," she said, "Friend Henry is here on urgent business. And he begs that he may come up to you."

Primrose's pretty face was in a glow, and she sprang from her seat.

"It may not concern thee, moppet. Go to Patty. Thou canst not be in everything."

The child rose reluctantly, but obeyed.

"I am in trouble," Andrew began briefly. "We have been informed about—how much I know not. I thought it best to come and warn thee. Still I do not see how thou can be brought in, and thy shrewd wit will, I think, save thee. But I must get out of the town some way. I may be accused of spying about, and I am not over anxious for a hempen necklace, nor lodgings in Walnut Street. So I have little time to spare."

With that he related his morning's adventure and how he had left his team.

"Canst thou send a blind message to the Pewter Platter at once? Jonas Evans will understand."

"Yes. Patty will be best. We can trust her, and she will hardly be noted. And thou?"

"I must get out of the town in some sort of disguise. There is much behind this that I do not know." [Pg 216]

Patty was dispatched on her errand. "Sit still, child, with thy book, and presently thou shalt know what is meet," said she.

Andrew Henry went briefly over his inner life for the last two months, his desire to enlist in the Continental army, his shrinking from the pain it would be to his parents.

"But now, madam, it would bring greater trouble on them for me to go home. The British would likely arrest me."

"Yes, I see. And thou hast resolved to be a soldier lad? Not from the teasing of little Primrose, I hope."

"No, madam, though I shall be her soldier as well. But those brave men at Valley Forge have been before my eyes night and day. I should have done this a little later, anyhow. My father and mother are in good hands."

"Heaven keep thee! But better a hundred times perish on the field of battle than be thrust into that vile den, the Walnut Street Jail, where that fiend in human shape, Cunningham, works his cruel will on helpless men. Not a day but dead bodies are carried out, some of them bruised and beaten and vermin-covered. Faugh! The thought sickens me! Yes, thou must escape. Primrose, child, come in."

She ran eagerly to Andrew, who greeted her with a smile. Then Patty returned breathless.

"It is all right. They will find nothing from cellar to the top layer of the chimney. But Master Evans says get out of the town as fast as you can."

Madam Wetherill was considering. "A disguise," she said. "A suit of Captain Nevitt's is here, but thou couldst hardly squeeze into it. At thirty thou wilt be the counterpart of thy uncle Philemon. Thou wilt go to Valley Forge?" [Pg 217]

"Yes. After I have struck into the old Perkiomen road no one will look for me. It is getting through the city. And the time is brief. I would not for worlds raise any suspicion for thee."

"Patty, exercise thy quick wit. If we could dress him up as a young man of fashion—or make him into Ralph Jeffries, who is more barrel-shaped. But there, the pass!"

"I have it," cried Patty with a merry laugh. "Order up gray Bess, and dress him to personate thee. He can put on a mask and drop his shoulders. Thy plaided camlet cape will do well. And put Moppet on a pillion behind. Someone else must go. Ah, Madam Kent! who will enjoy it mightily and sit up like a brigadier. Then, when he is out of harm's way, she can bring Primrose home."

"But the mare—how shall I get her back?"

"Thou mayst need her; if not, present her to Madam Washington. Patty, thy brain has served us as well as in the matter of making gowns. Come, we must make ready."

Janice Kent was summoned, and ready enough for the adventure; and the horses were ordered up. Then came a great deal of amusement in attiring Andrew.

"Since it is quite muddy put my linen safeguard petticoat on him, Patty, the better to conceal his long legs, for it will be somewhat awkward riding woman-fashion, but my saddle is broad. Now my bedgown of paduasoy. Alack! how short the sleeves are! Here are the long cuffs. That will do. Now the camlet cape and my black beaver hat. A mercy it is, Andrew, that thou hast no beard. Patty, tie the bow. Upon my word, thou art so good-looking, with the coquettish bow under thy chin, that I am half afraid some saucy redcoat may stop thee. Janice, guard him well. And you must wear my silken mask. April wind is bad for complexions and might freckle thee." [Pg 218]

Primrose had been dancing about, not comprehending the gravity of the case.

"Oh, Aunt Wetherill, how queer it all is! He is like and unlike thee."

"And if thou shouldst meet a friend, be careful and remember that 'tis thy aunt. And now, Janice, make thyself ready. Meanwhile I will go into retirement under Patty's wing."

Patty went down to see that all was ready. Old Cato stood with the horses. Luckily sharper-eyed Julius had gone to market.

Janice helped her mistress, who was rather awkward, it was true. The skirts were adjusted, the mask dropped over the face, and then Primrose was put in her seat.

"Not a word out of thee for thy very life," said Patty. "Look as demure as if on the road to church."

Mistress Janice sprang into her saddle. As they were going out of the courtyard, she exclaimed:

"Let us take Fairemount, Madam Wetherill, and find some wild flowers. The spring is late, to be sure, but they must be in bloom."

"There will be no danger, I think," said Patty softly, as she re-entered the room.

"I will have my netting and sit here by the child's bed. What a queer caper, and so quickly managed! But it is what I thought would come presently. Not the suspicion, but Andrew Henry's going over to the rebels. He is more like his uncle than Phil Nevitt. Ah, if it could be true that the British would decamp before they have quite ruined our city we should all give thanks."

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There was an imperious knock presently that made the great door rattle. The small black factotum, in his Barbadoes suit and red turban, opened the top door and glanced at the caller.

"Madam Wetherill——"

"Madam and Missy and Mistress Janice have gone out ridin' som'er."

"Out riding, hey! with mud a foot deep! Tell your mistress that I came to have my revenge for her beating me last night at piquet. The young people made such a rumpus with their talk I lost my head," and Ralph Jeffries looked vexed.

The youngster nodded and grinned. Later on came Polly Wharton and Miss Stuart, to meet with the same reply.

At the corner of the street they encountered Captain Nevitt and Vane, and an elderly officer.

"It is a fine day save for the mud!" exclaimed Sally. "Fine overhead, but few are going that way."

"We did not set out for that," returned Vane, smiling.

"And if you have set out for Madam Wetherill's it will be quite as useless. She and the young one have gone off larking, for wild flowers, I believe. Mistress Kent went with them for dragon."

Then the men looked at each other.

"How long have they been gone, I wonder."

"Oh, since about high noon!"

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Patty had looked up from her sewing at the second knock.

"Thy ride will get noised about and throw suspicion off guard, which will be so much the better," she exclaimed.

They waited impatiently for the return of the guard, laughing over another call or two. It was almost dusk when Janice and Primrose returned.

"Friend Henry escaped safely, though, madam, if thou shouldst be taxed with rudeness in not bowing at the proper time, pray apologize. We met some old friends, but he was somewhat stiff. And the saddle is left with one Master Winter at Fairemount. I ripped it that he might have the job of sewing and earn a few pence. Friend Henry was glad enough to doff petticoats and jump on astride; 'tis about the only thing I envy in a man. And then I put on thy skirt, and we slunk into town quietly. Quite an adventure, truly! If one could only hear the end of it!"

James Henry heard the next day that there was a warrant out for his son, who was suspected of carrying messages and other matters to the rebel headquarters at Valley Forge. He had left his horses and the wagon in the market place, and disappeared. No one remembered letting him out on his pass. It might be that he was still hiding in the town.

"There has been too much of this carrying back and forth," declared the sergeant. "It is time there was a sterner hand at the helm, and not so much pleasuring."

There were reasons why Captain Nevitt said nothing to his little sister about the matter, and she was strictly forbidden to suggest it. The Wetherill household had not seen Andrew, as he had watched his opportunity to slip in unaware; consequently, nothing was gained by questioning them.

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"They would certainly have known if he had come in our absence," said Madam Wetherill with an air of interest. "Of course we must be sorry to have him in danger, but we will not lay the matter before Primrose."

There were stirring events on both sides. On the 7th of May the news reached the Continental army of the recognition of France. The warmer weather and the replenishment of food and clothing had inspired the men. Many new enlistments from the country around had come in. On this morning they were assembled for prayers and thanksgiving. General Steuben had drilled them until they presented a really soldierly appearance. But their enthusiasm broke bounds when the salutes were fired.

"Long live the King of France!" ran through the army with a shout. Another salute was fired. "Long live the friendly European powers." And the third, "The American States," was received with the wildest joy. They all forgot the suffering of the long, dreary winter.

After a discourse by one of the chaplains, there was a collation. When the General and Mrs. Washington retired the soldiers lined the way with the cry of "Long live General Washington!"

"Long live Lady Washington!" a title that seemed to follow her, and that had been given her before by Colonel Hancock.

It was supposed the campaign would open almost at once. But General Howe's army had been demoralized more by dissipation than the Continentals by hardships, and weakened by numerous desertions. The officers had been in one round of gayety, and the city recalled their charms long afterward. They had made the theater a reputable place of amusement, and the higher-class balls had been well patronized by the Tory ladies. [Pg 222]

But the farewell to General Howe was to excel all other gayeties, and to be an event long remembered, including a regatta, a tournament, and a dance. Decorated barges left Knight's Wharf in the afternoon, full of handsomely attired guests, who were carried to Old Fort, and escorted by troops to the beautiful and spacious lawn of Walnut Grove. The English fleet lay at anchor, flying their colors, and the transport ships were crowded with spectators.

The tournament, with its two sets of knights ready to do battle for their favorite ladies, sounds like a chapter out of the Middle Ages. New York had abounded in gayeties, but this eclipsed anything yet attempted. The apartment had been decorated by the British officers, foremost among them young André, little dreaming then what fate had in store for him, and how his life would end.

After the tournament, with its stilted magnificence, came a dance, a display of fireworks, a supper with twenty-four slaves in Oriental costumes, with silver collars and gilt armlets. The walls were hung with mirrors, and thousands of wax tapers reflected the brilliance of silken gowns and jewels, of scarlet and gold uniforms, of fair women and brave men that made the Mischianza a glittering page of history.

It was true that many beside the Tory ladies graced the occasion. There had been an undeniable friendliness between both Americans and British, and many a heart won and lost, as it was said six hundred or more deserters from Clinton's army found their way back to Philadelphia and made worthy citizens, some of them indeed entering the American army. [Pg 223]

Captain Nevitt had importuned Madam Wetherill to attend, for he was resolved Primrose should see the pageant. Polly Wharton had, as she admitted, nine minds out of the ten to go, as Thomas Wharton, the owner of Walnut Grove, was her uncle. But her brother was in the American army, and her heart really went with her country.

"As if a little dancing could matter!" said Phil Nevitt. "Nay, Miss Polly, I doubt not but that some day I shall see you at the court of our King, and perhaps dance with you in a palace. And I want Primrose to go, but Madam Wetherill will not, though Major André himself sent the invitation. He is such a charming, generous fellow that he can do more with his winning air than many with their swords. But Primrose I must take. She is such a pretty, saucy, captivating rebel that it is charming to tease her. And, if you will go, her aunt will give in, I know."

"I'm not sure," Primrose declared with dainty hesitation, "whether I want to go or not. I am certain, Phil, I shall be a worse rebel than ever, afterward."

"Nay, Primrose, when you see the gallant gentlemen who have come over to help the King restore peace and order, and punish some of the ringleaders, you will be convinced of the great mistake the Americans have made. And then we shall be friends again."

"I wish you were all going back to England with General Howe!"

"And you give me up so easily—your own brother?" with a pathetic upbraiding in his tone.

"Only a half-brother! And the Tory half I can't like. The other, the Henry half——" [Pg 224]

"Well——" studying her mischievous, dancing eyes.

"I like that—a little," demurely.

"I shall be patient, sweet darling. I have come to love you dearly—your mother's half, and your father's half."

She glanced up with her warm, frank heart shining in her eyes, and he kissed her fondly.

"When thou lovest me well I shall know it by one sign: thou wilt kiss me of thy own accord."

She had to steel her heart hard when he adopted the old phraseology, and smiled in that beseeching manner.

"We shall not be converted, little Primrose," said Polly Wharton. "I shall think of Allin at Valley Forge, and thou of thy splendid Quaker cousin that so adroitly escaped the snare set for him. And we shall twist the festivities about. When they drink to the King and the redcoat army, we shall say to ourselves, 'Washington and the buff and blue.' And when we dance, for there will be your brother and young Vane and Captain Fordham, so we are sure of three partners, and as we whirl around we shall say to ourselves 'Hurrah for the flag of the thirteen colonies!'"

"It looks quite patriotic that way," answered Primrose archly.

It ended by their going. Mrs. Stuart and Sally, who were hardly Whig or Tory, promised to keep watch of them. And though Miss Auchmuty had been crowned Queen of Beauty at the

tournament, and there were the fair Shippen women and the Chews, men paused to look at the sweet, golden-haired child who was so simply gowned that her dress did not detract from her beauty. And long afterward, when she was an old lady, she could recount the famous scene that ended, as one might say, the British possession of Philadelphia. For even as they danced amid the gleaming lights and fragrant flowers, a premonition of what was to come, although unexpected, and a bloodless victory, occurred. The redoubts were sharply attacked by a daring body of rebels, but so well protected that surprise was not possible.

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Sir Henry Clinton arrived and the accomplished André was made his adjutant general. Then came the news that a French fleet would sail up the Delaware. Sir Henry prepared to leave at once, and the city was shaken with both joy and alarm. At midnight, on the 18th of June, the British stole away silently, to the great surprise of the inhabitants, who knew Washington was preparing to descend upon them and feared a bloody battle, for now the Continentals were well equipped, well drilled, and strong in numbers.

Primrose sat poring over a book of verse. For a wonder there was no one in to play cards. Madam Wetherill had been a little indisposed for several days.

"Do go to bed, child," she said rather sharply. "Thou wilt turn into a book next."

"I hope it will have a new, bright cover and not this musty, old one."

"I dare say, Miss Vanity."

"Good-night," and she made her pretty courtesy. Then she stood still at the quick knock. Barely was the door opened when Captain Nevitt rushed in and caught her to his heart.

"Little Primrose, darling Primrose, for I have learned to love thee dearly, I have come to say good-by. We are ordered to New York and leave at once. When I shall see thee again I cannot tell, but I may send, and will write thee letters and letters. Hast thou one kiss that I may take with me, holding all the sweetness of generous accord?"

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"Oh, do not go! do not go! I have teased thee often! I have tried not to love thee, but, after all ——" And she was sobbing in his arms.

"It is a soldier's duty, dear. Wish me well, and I will take it as a guerdon."

"Oh, I cannot wish thee well to fight against my country. My heart is torn in two."

Her cry pierced his inmost soul. With all his love and persuasion she had kept her loyalty. Gifts and pleasures had not won her. There was a great gulf still between them.

"But for love's sake."

"If your men win I shall have no country. If they lose——"

"And if I should be lost——"

"Oh, Heaven bring thee back to me again!"

There were Captain Fordham and the lieutenant thanking Madam Wetherill for her charming hospitality. But Philemon Henry Nevitt could only wring her hand, as his eyes were full of tears and his voice drowned in the grief of parting. Then the big door clanged on the night air, and there was a little sobbing heap at the foot of the broad stairway.

"Come, dear," said Madam Wetherill, much moved. "Thou shalt sleep in my bed and I will comfort thee."

It was true enough that the Continentals, marching down, found an empty city. General Charles Lee had held back some information and acted in an unpatriotic manner when his commander had reposed unlimited trust in him. And a few days later his indecision was made manifest at the battle of Monmouth, when he was courtmartialled and disgraced.

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But another tall soldier came in buff and blue, and so amazed Primrose that she hardly knew him. With him was Allin Wharton, who had much to say about Andrew's work through the winter, and that no gift had ever been more timely than Madam Wetherill's great bag of stockings that was still talked about; and Lady Washington had esteemed it as one of the most providential happenings.

"I have much to tell thee, sometime," Andrew said. "There is only a moment now, for we are after the runaways." And then he gave her a long, fond kiss.

Madam Wetherill glanced at them. Would it be the old story over again?

The battle of Monmouth was hard fought, but a victory for neither side, since Sir Henry saved his stores at the sacrifice of many lives, and escaped. Washington came back to the city for a brief stay and new plans.

Lovely old Philadelphia, that had been William Penn's dream, was no more. British occupation had overthrown its quaint charm. Gardens had been destroyed, houses ruined, streets were a mass of filth and rubbish, the country roads were full of lawless gangs who plundered inoffensive people.

"Oh, how sweet is the quiet of these parts, freed from the anxious and troublesome solicitations, hurries, and perplexities of woeful Europe," Penn had exclaimed, on his return from his first visit back to England. But the quiet had disappeared; even the old Quaker homes, that had held out alike from blaming foe and encouraging friend, were full of apprehension.

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Washington at once placed General Arnold in command. His marriage with Mistress Margaret Shippen, and his beautiful home at Mount Pleasant, where elegance and extravagance reigned, had rendered him an object of disapprobation with the sober-thoughted and solid part of the community. Joseph Ross, the president of the executive council, brought many charges against him, which though angrily repelled at the time were proved sadly true later on.

There were some trials of Tories, and two men were hanged for high treason, both Quakers, one of whom had enlisted in Howe's army, and the other was accused of numerous crimes. Many had to choose between exile, or contempt that was ostracism at home. Dr. Duché had in the darkest period written a letter to General Washington beseeching him to submit to any proffer of peace that England might hold out, having lost his ardent patriotism, and he went to his old home to meet with charges of disloyalty there.

But people began to take heart a little, to clear up their wasted gardens and fields and repair their houses. Some of the pleasure haunts were opened again, and women ventured on their afternoon walks on the streets, well protected, to be sure. There was, too, a certain amount of gayety, tea-drinking and cards, and excursions up the river were well patronized.

Andrew Henry, now sergeant, was detailed for a while among the troops to remain in Philadelphia. Now that he had embarked in the war he preferred a more active life, and it was too near his old home to be satisfactory. But as soon as possible he reported to Madam Wetherill.

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"I can never thank thee sufficiently for thy assistance and quick wit," he said to her. "Through it I escaped without harm, but I found afterward they had more proof than I could have safely met. And when I arrived at camp I dispatched a messenger to my father, telling him of my changed mind and plans for the future."

"And he was angry enough!" interposed Madam Wetherill.

"It was worse than that. Mere anger is, perhaps, outlived. He had some other plans," and the young Quaker flushed. "He gave me a fortnight to return, and, if not, would put Penn in my place and I need expect nothing more."

"See what thy talk hath led to, Primrose! For I was afraid thy patriotic rebellion was contagious."

Andrew smiled down on the child. "She hath been a wise little one, and I am not sorry to be her soldier. With women like you, madam, to bring up girls, and Lady Washington to care for disheartened soldiers, there will be still greater victories, and there can be but one end."

Primrose looked up with an enchanting smile. "I am proud of thee," she made answer with an exultant ring in her voice. "And there is Polly Wharton's brother who ran over me on the ice, and—my own brother that I pray may come around."

"I feel very much as if I had been on both sides of the fence," remarked Madam Wetherill. "Still I could not have helped so much if I had been outspoken on the rebel side. I heard many a little thing that could be passed on, and found how a few supplies could be forwarded without suspicion. But, Andrew, wilt thou never regret this step?"

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"I considered well for many weeks. There were some other conditions I could not wisely accept. And Penn will be a good son to my father. Otherwise I could hardly have left him. But 'tis done now, and though I shall long many times to see my dear mother's face, I shall fight none the less bravely for our land. I hope to follow our intrepid Washington, and may soon be transferred."

"And leave the city?" cried Primrose in dismay.

"I do not quite like our new general. I am afraid the coming winter will be like the last, and I, for one, would have no heart for pleasure until we have won our independence."

Andrew promised to come in again when he was off duty, and Primrose reluctantly let him go. Yet she watched him with glistening eyes, and could hardly decide how much was glory and how much tears.

CHAPTER XVI.

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LOVE AND TRUE LOVE.

"A very plain stiff Quaker downstairs, Primrose, who demands to see thee alone. There is a sharp air about her. I think she must be one of those the madam spoke of who are importuning about repairs and want rents for nothing."

"To see me?" asked Primrose in surprise. "I have nothing to do with the houses."

"She would not allow her business was with anyone else. She does not look like one of the

begging women with whom the city is overrun."

Primrose walked slowly down the wide staircase full of curiosity. Polly Wharton asked for her sometimes, and Anabella Morris.

The visitor had on the close hat with the big round crown that but few of the younger women wore, and rarely in black. Her gown was straight and plain, the long sleeves coming down over her ungloved hands, and a square of gray twilled silk crossed over her bosom. She did not stir until Primrose was well into the room and then she turned.

"Oh, Rachel!" was the surprised exclamation.

Rachel Morgan stared at the vision before her. An unwonted envy stirred her. It seemed as if Faith grew plainer every day, and this girl took all the beauty!

"How are they all at the farm?" Primrose inquired with pretty graciousness. "Is Uncle James quite well and strong?" [Pg 232]

"How could one be well with such a great sorrow?" the visitor asked sternly, fixing her eyes on Primrose, who shrank from the hard gaze, and felt her heart beat in strange protest.

"But—Andrew is well—is here——"

"We heard a part of the army had been retained, and a neighbor hath seen Andrew Henry in the attire of the sons of cruelty and worldliness, and that bitter spirit toward the law that Mr. Penn besought his brethren not to use. But no one seems to heed duty or obedience any more."

Primrose stood gazing as if the voice held her in a half-frightened thrall.

"He hath been here, in this house?"

"Yes, yesterday," with some hesitation.

"And he will come again?"

"Oh, yes!" There was a confident ring in her voice that angered the other.

"The world and its sins hath grown greatly upon him. I will venture to say he feels more at home amid these gauds and giddy flowered damasks and soft cushions and numerous things the elect would term idols of the carnal sort," glancing around. "And the vain women who frequent houses like these. I see thou art tricked out with much worldly vanity, and thy father was one of the straitest Friends. How canst thou do it?"

Primrose opened her eyes wide at this tirade and shook back the curly, glistening hair that she did not yet wear high on her head, for Madam Wetherill hated to have her leave the cloisters of girlhood. And her frock was white muslin, lengthened down a little and the piece covered with an artful ruffle. There was a silver buckle at her belt, and on each shoulder a knot of blue ribbon. [Pg 233]

She hardly knew what to say, but presently she ventured—"Truly, Cousin Rachel, I do not feel vain. I seldom think of my gowns."

"I am in no mood to discuss attire," as if Primrose had begun it. "I come to thee on an urgent errand. Thou knowest, perhaps, that Andrew hath angered his father beyond everything. Instead of heeding the admonition to come out from the world and have no part in its wickedness, he hath all winter been a go-between, encouraging rebellion by carrying supplies to the camp at Valley Forge——"

"It was noble and kindly to take a great danger upon himself, to feed sick and starving men, and to clothe their poor bodies. It surely made one's heart bleed to hear of their sufferings. Nay, thou shalt not say hard and bitter things against him!" cried Primrose spiritedly.

"The truth is wholesome, if it hath a bitter tang. We surmised that he found encouragement in this house, and had beforetime listened to thy childish and unreasoning folly. And he made himself a criminal in the eyes of the law. His father's house was searched, and a man of Belial abode with us to see if he would not come back. And the two fine animals and the market wagon were carried off. If they had found him it would have gone hard with him."

"But they did not," Primrose said triumphantly.

"Thou didst see him then?"

"Yes. And we knew—we saw him safely on the old Perkiomen road. Then someone came the next day to inquire about him, so we know he had eluded them. And now they have marched in and Philadelphia is free!" [Pg 234]

"There were anxious days and nights about him until the word came that he had joined the camp of rebels under Washington."

"But long ago he said if the country needed him he would go. And there was Penn to take his place."

"Penn will be a good son to my uncle. But, after all, it is Andrew's place. He is needed. His mother's heart is sore for him, and I can see that Uncle James is not at rest. So I have put my pride in my pocket as a sinful thing, and come to thee. Perhaps thou mayest have some influence

over him. Wilt thou try to persuade him?"

Primrose looked down on the floor as she laced her slim hands together.

"I will tell thee the whole story. He was to marry me. Aunt Lois wished it and said I was a daughter after her own heart. I should have cared for them as if I had been an own child. Uncle James had spoken to him and he had promised to consider. At the meeting it had been talked of as most proper and suitable. I had not much money, for our small farm hath to be divided among three. But Uncle James thought a good wife better than wealth."

Primrose stared in blank amazement. Had not Andrew said there was a condition he could not fulfill? Was it this?

"I should have made him a good wife and roused him out of that dreaminess he allowed to hang about him. And because it was to be so, I plead with Uncle James until he relented. He hath promised me to take him back——"

"But he will not leave the army until they have driven the English across the seas again. And if thou couldst see him so straight and tall and proud, holding up his head as he never did before! And all his heart is in it." [Pg 235]

"But the Lord made him a son and not a soldier. It is against our belief. We have come out from the world, and are not to fight its sinful battles. He hath a higher duty. Thou hast a smooth and persuasive tongue, and if thou wouldst use it to restore peace between a sad father and wayward son, and assure him he hath only to come back and fulfill his promise and all will be peace—if thou carest to do a good work, this will be one."

Rachel Morgan rose, and looked so steadily, so sternly at Primrose Henry that she felt a shrinking all over her.

"Thou wilt do this," she said. "It seems as if thou hadst cared a little for Aunt Lois and thy dead father's brother, and if thou hast any love thou wilt try to restore peace."

"I will tell him what thou sayest," in a weak tone as if she was hardly persuaded.

Rachel caught her hand, which was soft as a rose leaf, and wrung it in hers until she could have cried with pain.

"Nay, not in that cold way. Thou hast the eyes and the tongue to move whomever thou wilt, and he set strange store by thee. Men often yield to a honeyed voice. Coax him, convince him it is his duty. Otherwise their sorrow and, perhaps, their death may be on his hands, and neither wilt thou be altogether free. That was my errand and the Lord gave me strength to come, though women do not generally plead for their lovers." [Pg 236]

"I will try," Primrose said, much moved.

But she sat by herself after Rachel had left her, thinking the matter over with a curious protest that she did not understand. Why should she shrink from his marrying Rachel? She had seen many lovers through the winter, and Anabella had poured into her ears a great deal of foolish-sounding flattery, and delight on her part, that had caused Primrose much wonder. And now her gay captain had followed the fortunes of Sir Henry Clinton, and she was in despair, though he had promised to return.

But she asked Madam Wetherill what she ought to do. The lady gave an odd little smile.

"You must tell him, since you have consented. But it will not change his intentions. His enlisting was no sudden notion, if he was forced into it by circumstances. I wonder at Mistress Rachel making this appeal."

"Do you think he ought to marry her?" Primrose asked timidly.

"That is a question for him to answer, my child."

But Madam Wetherill knew if he had been in love with Rachel he would have made some overtures himself.

Primrose studied the subject within her heart and was quite grave over it. For two days they did not see him and on the third a messenger came with a note.

The permission to join Washington had arrived suddenly and they were to march at once. It was the present plan of the Commander in Chief to invest New York and pen up the British there. "I would rather fight than see the gayety of the last winter repeated," Andrew wrote. "And I am much afraid our officers have not learned wisdom by the experience of their enemies. For surely so much pleasure will demoralize them. And though I am sorry not to see thee, partings are sad at the best, and I have a strong belief that I shall return well and sound. Dear Primrose, if so be thou could get word to my mother without too great an effort, tell her I keep her in my heart day and night. She will know it was not possible for me to accede to my father's request, pleasant as it might have been for others. I send him a son's respect, whether he considers me in the light of a son or no, and am sorry that at the last I should have brought trouble and suspicion upon them. It is my present hope that Penn will be a good son to them. I wish little Faith could have some of thy joy, for I am afraid it is a dreary life for the child. Heaven be watchful of thee, little Primrose." [Pg 237]

It was true that several companies were not needed for the city's protection, and were dispatched in the hasty mood that not infrequently ruled General Arnold.

And now new defenses were erected for the city, and there was a general clearing up. The barricade around the old Treaty Elm was taken down, the squares were freed from rubbish and the grass restored, the houses repaired and new ones planned. True, landlords groaned about unpaid rents, and money-lenders almost wept over the sums the British had despoiled them of. The country estates were in a sad plight, many of them, but others had escaped.

Madam Wetherill thanked Heaven that it was no worse with her. Mount Pleasant was a scene of great gayety during the summer, and the Arnolds and the Shippens held grand court, almost like royalty. She had much to do minding her estate and looking out for some of her southern interests, and took less heed to gay parties. [Pg 238]

Twice a year the trustees met to consider the estate of Mistress Primrose Henry. Just before this Madam Wetherill took her charge over to the old Quaker farm, that was so peaceful and thrifty one would hardly dream there had been war in the land. Primrose had sent a message to Rachel Morgan to explain why she had not undertaken her trust.

Aunt Lois was rather feeble, but Rachel seemed to carry the house on her shoulders, and was noticeably sharp with the men and Chloe, who was growing old as well as her mistress. Certainly she looked after all things in a thrifty fashion that had already brought a crease between her eyes, young as she was.

Faith was thin and fearful-looking, as if she expected some chiding in nearly everything, and it rarely missed coming. For Rachel had been sorely disappointed in her marriage plans, and liked to make others suffer for her unhappiness.

Primrose was like a butterfly in the plain old house, and seemed to make a swift dazzle. Aunt Lois warmed curiously toward her, feeling as if the sun was shining after a spell of lowering weather.

She rose from her chair and laid aside her knitting.

"Thee used to love the chickens so much," she said gently. "We have some pretty ones. While thy aunt talks business let us get out and see them. I sit in doors so much thinking, and though I try not to question the will of Providence, life does not seem quite as it used. It may be that I am getting old. Poor mother used to sit under the tree yonder, but when it comes my time, Faith will be too womanly and too busy to look after me, and perhaps married." [Pg 239]

They walked down the well-trodden path. There were chicken mothers in little coops, and yellow, downy balls, others with tiny wings and patches of feathers here and there.

"Thou didst see Andrew before he went away?"

The mother's eyes had a soft, wistful, far-off look.

"Yes. And a lovely letter that I have read again and again. Oh, why did I not bring it—but indeed I did not know"—pausing in a tone that indicated what might be meant.

"A mother is a mother always. A father may feel hard when his plans are traversed. Tell me about my son; for I cannot shut my heart upon him."

"He makes a handsome soldier and a good one. He will have a large heart and a wise head."

"But a soldier! And to kill his fellow-creatures. We are to live in peace."

"But I was to say when I could, that he kept thee in his heart day and night, and that he would never forget thee. Dear Aunt Lois, he is brave and good and tender of soul, and I know God loves him for his work to the poor and needy last winter."

"I have wondered many times how he escaped. We only knew that he was safe."

"Someone betrayed him. He had taken great care. Wilt thou hear how he left the town?"

"Dost thou know?" raising her soft eyes.

Primrose told gleefully how they had disguised him and seen him safe on the road where he was not likely to meet the soldiery.

"And thou didst do this for him, dear child!"

She took the soft hands in hers, that were soft again now that she did little coarse labor. [Pg 240]

"It was not much to do, surely. And it was rare fun when the guards passed us."

"I owe much to thee and Madam Wetherill. And did he speak of any return?"

"Nay, his is a soldier's life."

"I sometimes think it is not wisdom to plan children's lives. Perhaps if we had let him be," and she gave a gentle sigh. "But we had hopes he would fancy Rachel, and she somehow had set her heart upon it. He seemed not inclined to marry, and so we should have waited until the spirit guided him. Child, I thank thee for thy care and interest in him. We should have been glad if thou couldst have kept thy father's faith and been content to stay here, but I can see thou didst need a

larger life. Perhaps we narrow ours too much. It may not always be the Lord's will as we think. I have strange ideas as I sit and knit or sew. And I remember that good Mr. Penn and his wife took much pleasure of a kind we hardly approve of now. It is hard to tell which is right."

"Dear Aunt Lois, whatever leads people to be sweet and joyful and thankful and kind to all who suffer cannot be far wrong. And were there no good men before the time of Mr. Fox and Mr. Penn?"

"Thou wert always finding prettiness of speech and ways that have a charm in them. And if thou shouldst send word to Andrew at any time, tell him his mother's heart is tender towards him and that no one can fill his place. Thou hast given me much joy. But I can see thou art not fitted for the grave life here, and if our ancestors crossed the sea that they might have liberty of belief, why should we not grant it to others?"

James Henry no longer insisted upon what he called his rights in his brother's child. She was too gay and worldly for his taste, which, where women were concerned, could have been comprised in the old advice "To avoid Papishers and learn to knit." And when he looked on the industry and thrift of Rachel his heart hardened toward his son for his blindness.

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For Primrose went steadily now to Christ Church, but England would not send over a bishop while people were so contumacious, and so some rites were held in abeyance.

But she was very happy and growing tall rapidly, and Friend Henry turned her over altogether to Madam Wetherill, who after all was not forgotten by the fashionables, even if they did run after the Arnolds.

And in the autumn there were some changes, although the Continentals had not swept their enemies across the sea. Society Hill put on a brisk aspect, and gardens opened again where they sold beer and cakes, and young people chatted merrily, while older people gossiped. There were shops trying to turn out much-needed goods that gave the town an aspect of industry. Indeed employment was provided for the poor classes in putting streets in order. All manner of homespun cloth was made. Even Mrs. Washington had ordered that her spinning wheels at Mount Vernon should fly as briskly as if she were there, and sixteen were kept going all the time.

Franklin and John Adams were in France cementing the alliance that was so slow in doing its promised work. At home, political leaders were quarreling fiercely among themselves. Joseph Reed and Arnold were at swords' points. A charge of dishonesty and malpractice in office was preferred against Arnold before the Continental Congress, but, though convicted, he was sentenced to a reprimand only. He had been a brave soldier, and Washington, with a heart full of anxiety for other undertakings, unfortunately dealt leniently with him, but it made no appeal to better feelings or conduct, for he began almost at once his treasonable practices with the British, that were to bring about a lasting shame.

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There were other troubles as well. The Quakers could not and would not serve in the army nor pay taxes for its support. Franklin had known how to gain by diplomacy what they would not openly concede, but they were unpopular with those in power, and the mob openly rejoiced when goods were levied upon. Indeed many of the poorer and plainer brethren had little sympathy when such articles as "a looking glass in wide gilt and mahogany frame, with ornamental corners" and "handsome walnut chairs deeply carven and with silken cushions" and "mahogany tea table with carved legs and crow feet" were sold for a quarter of their value. It shows that many of the Friends were not stinted in their household appointments, and must indeed have had sturdy consciences to part with their cherished belongings rather than pay away a little money in what was considered an unjust cause.

New York was full of gayety and dissipation under the British, as Philadelphia had been. And Primrose was sent for by her brother, who was now Colonel Nevitt and in a pleasant position.

"There is much to see and enjoy," he wrote. "And there are fine manners and customs that will fit you for London when we go. For it is most certain, by the looks of things, that the rebellion will soon be brought to an end. The winter in Philadelphia was a great mistake, though pleasant enough to me. And you must be now a pretty young woman that I should be proud to have. If Madam Wetherill feels that she is not young enough for gayety, I have some friends here who will be glad to take charge of a fair young girl, and I shall be most happy with my charming sister. There are parties coming almost every week, and I can find safe escort. Do not disappoint me."

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"What wilt thou do?" asked Madam Wetherill. "Thou art no longer a little girl, Primrose, though it grieves me to say it. Patty scolds about lengthening thy gowns all the time, and Anabella is sure I will keep thee an old maid. Though between two stools she is like to come to the floor for aught I see. Her British lover never so much as wrote her a line, and young Matthews, that she made quite certain of, hath married Kitty Strong. She need not worry about thee, since thou hast nearly two years' grace behind her. But her mother was so foolishly hasty to have her married."

"But I want to stay a little girl," cried Primrose eagerly. "I hate a big hoop and a monstrous topknot that pulls my hair, and a bunch of feathers that makes one look like an Indian sachem."

She made such a pretty pouting mouth, like a rose half-blown, that madam laughed.

"And then one can run around with Patty and tease the boys who sell pink calamus buds, and buy 'Peppery pot, smoking hot.'" She was such a good mimic it sounded exactly like the venders.

"I am afraid I have spoiled thee. But it is thy brother whom we must consider. He may have some rights."

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"What rights, indeed, to a rebel maiden who would hate the sight of so many red coats together?"

"Still thou dost love him a little. Surely he is thy nearest kin."

"I can never think whether I love him dearly or only a little. When I pull a daisy out it says only a little. And when I blew a puffy dandelion out to tell me where my true love dwelt, it went south instead of north."

"But the great city. I was there once, years ago. It hath many queer things and reminders of the old Dutch people who settled it. And it has a beautiful river and an island south of it, and a short way out to the ocean."

"As if we did not have our fine and noble Delaware that runs on and up past the Jerseys to the State of New York. And there is our Schuylkill with its peaceful shores and green and flowery banks, now that the British are away, and our beautiful Wissahickon. Nay, I want nothing beyond my own home town, and no one but you and the friends that come here. I will write to Phil and tell him that neither his tongue nor his pen can charm me. And he never says 'thou' latterly."

"But the young people here leave it off, I notice. And thou must not write saucily."

Primrose laughed and tossed her golden head.

She wrote to her brother and put in some rhymes, a fashion quite affected then, for many of the young ladies wrote sentimental and would-be satiric verses. Hannah Griffiths, who was cousin to Deborah Logan, had satirized the famous Mischianza, and there were songs for various occasions such as birthdays and weddings.

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Primrose wrote also to Andrew Henry. It was difficult to get letters from the Federal soldiers unless some messenger came direct, but she guessed how much pleasure the bit of news would be to him. She rode out to the farm occasionally and took a message from Aunt Lois to Andrew. Uncle James was growing quite deaf and irritable in temper, but Aunt Lois softened perceptibly and was always glad to see Primrose.

Rachel had a new vexation that did not improve her temper. Chloe grumbled at the sharpness, but she was too old to think of another home. Faith was now a tall, thin girl, looking careworn and sallow.

"I must walk a little with thee even if I should get beaten for it afterward," she said in one of the visits, as she intercepted Primrose and Patty at the group of great sycamores that shut off the view of the road. "For I feel sometimes as if the strings of my heart would burst when there is no one to talk to but old Chloe, and Rachel watches us as a cat does a mouse."

"She would not beat thee, surely." Primrose's face was one indignant flame.

"She did when I was smaller, until one day Aunt Lois interfered. Now she slaps, and her hand is hard as a board; or she boxes my ears until bells ring in them. I know not what made her so cross at first, except that she tried to be sweet and pleasant to Andrew, and when he was gone all was different. Now Penn walks home from meeting with Clarissa Lane and finds excuses for going over there. But Rachel says he is needed here on the farm since uncle cannot work as he used, and that he shall neither go away to marry, nor bring a wife home here. They had a bitter quarrel one day. I was gathering sassafras and birch buds for her and they did not know I was there. And Rachel said if he married Clarissa, she would persuade uncle not to leave him any part of the farm. Ought not the farm belong to Andrew?"

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Primrose shook her head doubtfully.

"If I were a man I would run away and fight too. I would find Andrew and march and fight beside him. Oh, Primrose, thou canst never know how good and sweet he was to me and what wise counsel he gave. And now I am so wretched!"

"Poor girl, poor Faith!" Primrose cried, deeply moved. "If you could come into town——"

"I can go nowhere, she says, until I am of age; if I did, that the constable could bring me back, or I could be put in jail. And that if I do not please her I shall have none of Uncle James' money."

"It is not honest to count on the money, and James Henry may live many years!" exclaimed Patty sharply.

"If I had it I should give it back to Andrew. I feel as if we had crowded him out of his home. No one speaks of him but Aunt Lois and old Chloe, and Rachel frowns at her. Oh, if I dared come to thee, I would be a servant, or anything! Oh, Primrose, God hast set thee in a blessed garden! Bend over and kiss me. And come again. It is like a bit of heaven to see thee."

Then Faith vanished, and the tears ran down the pink cheeks of the child.

"Oh, what can we do?" she sobbed.

"Nothing, dear," returned Patty, much moved, and feeling that some comfort was needed, even if it was only the sound of a human voice. "Friend Rachel hath grown hard through disappointment. Grace does not always wrap itself in a plain garb, and a red rose is sweet and pretty in its

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redness. There is much selfishness in the world under all colors, methinks, and when it is gray; it grows grayer by the wearing."

CHAPTER XVII.

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MID WAR'S ALARMS.

Madam Wetherill sighed over the affair and was sorry to hear of the failing health of James Henry. But nothing could be done to ease up Faith's hard lines. She understood much more than she could explain to the innocent Primrose; more indeed than she cared to have her know at present about the emotions the human soul. For she had the sweet unconsciousness of a flower that had yet to open, and she did not want it rudely forced.

Rachel's desire and disappointment must have soured her greatly, she thought. In spite of her training in resignation, human nature seemed as strong in her as in any woman of the world who maneuvered for a lover. Yet Madam Wetherill was truly glad Andrew had escaped the snare.

And now the country was in great disquiet again. Arnold's treason and its sad outcome in the death of the handsome and accomplished Major André fell like a thunderbolt on the town where he had been the leader of the gay life under Howe. Many women wept over his sad end. Washington had been doubtful of Arnold's integrity for some time, but thought giving him the command at West Point would surely attach him to his country's fortunes. Washington being called to a conference with the French officers at Hartford, Arnold chose this opportunity to surrender West Point and its dependencies, after some show of resistance, into the hands of the British for a certain sum of money.

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But Arnold had roused suspicions in the heart of more than one brave soldier; among them Andrew Henry, who had been promoted to a lieutenancy for brave conduct and foresight.

Clinton was to sail up the river. André went up the Hudson in the sloop of war *Vulture*, which anchored off Teller's Point. Fearing they knew not what, the Continentals dragged an old six-pound cannon to the end of Teller's Point. That galled the *Vulture* and drove her from her anchorage, so that she drifted down the river. André, therefore, was compelled to make his way by land. Being arrested at Haverstraw, the commander unwisely allowed him to send a letter to Arnold, who at once fled down the river in a barge and met the *Vulture*, leaving behind his wife, the beautiful Philadelphian, Margaret Shippen, and their infant son, and thus the chief traitor escaped.

England had spent a vast amount of treasure and thousands of lives in battles, hardships, and disease, and had not conquered the revolutionists. She had now involved herself in war with both France and Spain. Holland, too, was secretly negotiating a treaty with the United Colonies.

While the town was in consternation over these events, late in November Mrs. Washington, then on her way to join her husband, stopped a brief while with President Reed of the Congress. Again the soldiers were in great distress, needing everything and winter coming on. The ladies had formed a society for work, and were making clothing and gathering what funds they could.

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"Mrs. Washington is to come," said Polly Wharton, dropping in at Arch Street, full of eagerness. "The Marquis de Lafayette has given five hundred dollars in his wife's name, and the Countess de Luzerne gives one hundred. When we count it up in our depreciated money it sounds much greater," and Polly laughed with a gay nod. "Mrs. Washington has begged to contribute also. It is said the commander in chief was almost heart-broken about that handsome young André, and would have saved him if he could. And Margaret Shippen comes home next to a deserted wife, at all events deserted in her most trying hour. Of course, Primrose, you will join us. You can do something more useful than embroider roses on a petticoat, or needlework a stomacher."

"Indeed I can. Patty has seen to it that I shall know something besides strumming on the spinet and reading French verse. But the French are our very good friends."

"And I am crazy to see Mrs. Washington. There is devotion for you!"

"If thou wert a commander's wife thou wouldst be doing the same thing, Polly. 'For,' she said in the beginning, 'George is right; he is always right. And though I foresee dark days and many discouragements, my heart will always be with him and the country.' If we had more such patriots instead of pleasure-loving women!" And Madam Wetherill sighed, though her face was in a glow of enthusiasm.

"But there are many brave women who give up husbands and sons. And though my mother consented about Allin, it wrung her heart sorely. We have not heard in so long. That is the hardest. But we seem to get word easily of the gay doings in New York. And so thou wilt not go, Primrose?"

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"Indeed, I will not. What pleasure would it be to me to dance and be gay with my country's enemies? I shall make shirts and knit socks."

"Yes, Primrose is old enough, but she somehow clings to childhood," said Madam. "We have

spoiled her with much indulgence."

"Indeed, I am not spoiled. And if the British should take away all we had, dear aunt, I would work for thee. I do know many things."

"Dear heart!" and Madam Wetherill kissed her.

There was much interest to see Mrs. Washington, though some of the ladies had met her on a previous visit. Madam Wetherill had been among those brave enough to ally herself with the cause by calling then, and Mrs. Washington gracefully remembered it.

"And this is the little girl, grown to womanhood almost," she said, as Primrose courtesied to her. "You are not a Friend, I see by your attire; but the name suggested someone——"

"But my father was, madam, and well known in the town. And I have a brave Quaker cousin who joined the army at Valley Forge, Andrew Henry."

"Yes, I think that is the name. Did he not bring some supplies while we were in so much want, and come near to getting in trouble? You must be proud of him indeed, for he was among those who suspected Arnold's treachery, and were so on the alert that they set some of his plans at naught, for which we can never be thankful enough. Henry, that is the name! A tall fine young fellow with a martial bearing, one of the fighting Quakers, and Philadelphia hath done nobly in raising such men. The General never forgets good service, and he is marked for promotion."

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Primrose courtesied again, her eyes shining with lustrousness that was near to tears.

"I should almost have danced up and down and clapped my hands, or else fallen at her feet and kissed her pretty hands if she had said that about Allin," declared Polly afterward. "Oh, it was soul-stirring, and the belles stood envying you, but some of them have blown hot and blown cold, and were ready to dance with Whig and Tory alike. And I wanted to say that you were too patriotic to go up to New York and be merry with your brother. Then I bethought me he was on the wrong side. Such a splendid fellow, too, Primrose; skating like the wind, and such a dancer, and with so many endearing ways. Child, how can you resist him?"

"I cannot be a turncoat for the dearest love."

"Andrew Henry should have been your brother. He looks more like that grand old portrait of your father than his own son does," declared Polly, and some inexplicable feeling sent the scarlet waves to the fair face of Primrose.

Busy enough the women were, and on many of the shirts was the name of the maker. Primrose begged that Patty's name might be put on their dozen, and Janice Kent consented hers should be used.

"For Primrose is such an odd, fanciful name, and it seems as if it belonged just to my own self and my dear mother," the child said, and Madam Wetherill respected the delicacy.

Mrs. Bache, Franklin's daughter, wrote to Washington that there were twenty-five hundred shirts, the result of nimble and patriotic fingers; and, she added, "we wish them to be worn with as much pleasure as they were made."

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Philemon Nevitt was indeed angry at his sister's refusal, but as he was in no sense her guardian, he could not compel her. Some weeks elapsed before he wrote again. It was a hard, cold winter, and if full of discouragements for the Continentals was not especially inspiring for the British.

There had been something of a revolt among the Philadelphia troops at Morristown, who thought, having served their three years' enlistment, they should be allowed to return to their homes. Sir Henry Clinton, mistaking the spirit of the trouble, at once offered to take them under the protection of the British government, clothe and feed them and require no service of them, unless it was voluntarily proffered.

"See, comrades," exclaimed one of the leaders; "we have been taken for traitors! Let us show General Clinton that the American Army can furnish but one Arnold, and that America has no truer patriots than we. But if we fight, we should not be compelled to starve on the field, nor have our wives and children starving at home."

This protest aroused Congress. Taxes were imposed and submitted to cheerfully, and Robert Morris, an ardent patriot, with Thomas Mifflin, labored to bring about a better state of finances, and the Bank of Pennsylvania was due to the ability and munificence of the former.

And though, as Thomas Reed admitted, "the bulk of the people were weary of war," and the different parties in the city were almost at swords' points, they had all joined in fierce denunciation of Arnold's treason. His handsome estate was confiscated, not so much for its value, as it was deeply in debt, but as an example of the detestation in which the citizens held his crime. His wife pleaded to stay in her father's house with her young son, but the executive council decided that she must leave the State at once.

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The mob made a two-faced effigy, which was dragged in a cart through the streets, a band of rough music playing the Rogue's March. Afterward it was hanged and burned, and no Tory voice was raised in his behalf, though universal sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate young André.

Philemon Henry was intensely bitter about it. "But you have not all the traitors," he wrote. "My heart has been rent by the defection of some of our bravest men, and most trusted; and one who has seemed almost a brother to me, as we played together in boyhood, and have kept step in many things. I had cherished a curious hope that he might disarm thy girlish bitterness, Primrose, and that sometime his true worth would be apparent to you. And from the first, though he never confessed any further than that he envied me my pretty little sister, I knew he was more than common interested. These things are best left to work themselves out, and you were both young, so I held my peace. Six months ago Sir Gilbert Vane, the uncle, died, and, as title and estates were entailed, Vane Priory came to him. At first he was minded to return, and I wish now that I had bundled him off. Then he had queer, dispirited fits about the cause we were serving. I regret we have not been more in earnest and not so much given to pleasure. The city has been very gay, but I think many of the women whose feet twinkled merrily in the dance talked treason with rosy lips in the pauses.

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"I was angry when I read your letter and tossed it over to him, wishing that I had been your guardian and had some right to order your life. He held it a long while, then he rose and began to pace the floor.

"I tell you, Phil,' he said with strange earnestness, 'we are on the wrong side. Nothing can ever conquer these people while the love of their own country outweighs everything else. If the women feel this way, and cannot be tempted, no wonder the men are steadfast and go in rags and half starve and take any hardship. We forget that they are our own kin, of our own brave English blood, and would we tolerate an invader? Would we not fight to the last man? It would be nobler to go home and let them rule themselves, for we can never conquer them.'

"You talk treason,' I said angrily. 'You had better be careful.'

"They are talking the same thing in the House of Parliament. I have been paying more attention to these things of late, and I feel that in the end we shall be worsted. Better make brothers of them now while we can. If this were my country, my birthplace——'

"Hold!' I cried in a passion. 'I am an Englishman. That is the country of my mother's birth, and my father had good English blood in his veins. My Uncle Henry thinks the rebels all in the wrong, and I know well my father would never have sided with them. My sister would have been brought up to love the King.'

"He made no answer, but went out presently. Then for some days he was moody and kept himself quite busy, and I thought was planning to return to England to look after his estates. Our colonel thought so, too. And then five others beside him suddenly disappeared. Shortly after we learned they had gone South to enter the army under General Greene. I only hope they will fall into Tarleton's hands, and he will make short work of them. But my heart is sore for the loss of my boyhood's friend, and the shame of his turning traitor. I hear that Benedict Arnold has joined the King's forces, and of a surety he and they would be well matched in any fight.

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"I have a presentiment I shall never see my pretty darling again. Primrose, I love thee more than thou canst imagine. I would that I had thee and that we two were going to England out of this terrible strife. Farewell.

"Thine own dear brother,

"Phil."

Primrose ran weeping to her aunt and gave her the long epistle. Madam Wetherill tried to comfort her, and presently she dried her tears a little.

"We can hardly call him a traitor,—Gilbert Vane, I mean,—for he has not really betrayed his country, but changed his mind. And I think it very brave of him when he might go to England and live in luxury," said Primrose in a broken voice.

"Thou art quick to see the heroic side. Of course, if he should be taken prisoner, he would be put to death without mercy."

"But he does not sell his country!" with emphasis. "Oh, poor, dear Phil! My heart aches for him. And yet, if the British soldiers begin to see the doubtfulness of a final conquest, I think there must be hope. But what can I say to Philemon? I seem destined to be always divided in opposite directions."

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"That is very true," and Madam Wetherill smiled rather sadly. For it seemed hard indeed that brother and sister should have such opposing interests. Many a girl would have been won at once by the proffer of pleasure.

But Primrose did not have very long to consider. Another note came from New York. Tired of inaction, Philemon Nevitt had asked that some more stirring duty should be allotted to him, and he was transferred to another body of troops, who were watching the Americans and harassing them in the vicinity of Morristown. It was said deserters from the British army had transferred their allegiance, and Colonel Nevitt determined to put a stop to this, and capture some of them to make an example the soldiers would dread in future.

"When he writes like this I hate him!" and Primrose stamped her dainty foot upon the floor, while her eyes flashed with curious steely gleams that seemed to have black points. "It does not seem

as if the same blood could run in our veins, but then he hath none of my own dear mother's sweetness. If he were related to her my heart would break. And I think he must have some of the characteristics of uncle James, who keeps his hard heart against Cousin Andrew. Was my father of that stamp, dear madam?"

"He had a much broader life. He was brought into contact with various people, and possessed a certain suavity that one finds in many of the old families here in town. Good Mr. Penn did not insist that men should be all of one mind."

"'Twould be a queer world indeed," and Primrose half smiled, for her moods were like an April day.

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"Then thy mother was a wise, winsome woman," said Madam Wetherill in fond remembrance.

"That is what wins me to Phil," returned the girl. "When he talked of her and all her pretty ways, and the dainty verses and tales she told him, and how she shielded him from his father's displeasure when he would have been whipped, then he seems like a vision of her come back. But, now that he is going to fight against my country——" and the rosy lips curled in scorn. "He might have remained a fine, pleasure-loving soldier, doing no real harm, fit to dance with pretty women or march in a fine parade."

She discussed this with Polly Wharton, who was now her dearest friend, although she was two years older.

"Art thou not unduly bitter, Primrose?" Polly always chided in grave Quaker phraseology, but, like many of the younger generation, fell into worldly pronouns in seasons of haste or merriment. "We should be ashamed of him if he saw his duty and weakly shirked it. I am sorry such a fine fellow, with good American blood in his veins, should be a Tory. In truth I cannot see at present how the quarrel can be mended, and I am desperately sorry."

Polly's cheeks were pink as a rose.

"It never will be mended now. Times are hard with us, to be sure, and there is much discouragement, but the French army and a great navy have reached Newport, and Aunt Wetherill was reading of a French loan. That wise Mr. Adams is in Paris with our dear Mr. Franklin——"

"Who plays chess with French beauties and writes them skits and bagatelles, and, no doubt dances the grave minuet with them. And then we blame our young lads for having a little pleasure! But 'tis darkest just before dawn, and maybe we have come to the darkest times."

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"And I am certain the dawn will come. God will not let such a good cause and so great an effort in behalf of human liberty go by default."

So they worked on and hoped. There was great interest in the Southern campaign now.

And then Polly came one morning, full of tears and trouble. There had been sad news from the highlands of the Hudson. A troop of British had made their way almost to one of the camps, expecting to surprise and capture the Federal soldiers. There had been a sharp skirmish, spirited and fateful enough to be called a battle. The Federals had won in the end and taken a number of prisoners, while many British soldiers were among the killed and wounded.

"Andrew Henry sent the word to my father, who means to apply for passes and go at once," and there Polly broke down.

"But that is not the worst of it. Something has happened to Allin! Oh, Polly!" and the soft arms were about Polly's neck, while she was kissing the tear-wet cheek, her own eyes overflowing.

"Yes, it is Allin!" sobbed the girl. "They thought when they first brought him in that he was dead. But it seems now he is badly wounded and may live. They wanted to take his leg off, but Lieutenant Henry would not let them. Oh, poor Allin! And he begged that father would come or send, for the regiment may go on to Virginia."

"Oh, if he could be brought home!"

"It comes so near now." Polly wiped her eyes. "But oh, Primrose! I had nigh forgotten. Forgive me that I put my own sorrow first. Colonel—I believe he is that now—Colonel Nevitt led the men and was wounded also, and is captured."

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Primrose stood up very straight, and contradictory emotions struggled in her fair face. Her rosy lips faded and quivered, and she swallowed over a great lump in her throat.

"It seems strange," said Polly, "that the cousins should have been pitted against each other. And, though I am desperately sorry about Colonel Nevitt, I am proud of Andrew Henry. Oh, dear Primrose!"

"I am always torn in two. I wonder if there was ever such a girl!" and the slow tears beaded the bronze lashes of Primrose Henry's eyes.

"Think of poor Peggy Shippen being banished from her family and forced to follow a traitor! For, after all, it was the fortune of war, and Colonel Nevitt was doing his duty as he saw it in all good faith."

"Thou art so generous, Polly. He should have been some connection to thee; oh! what am I saying? Surely thou wouldst not want a redcoat Britisher tacked to thy family! I hope he is not sorely wounded, but just enough to keep him from fighting against my country until we have won our independence."

"Thou dost make cunning wishes, Primrose," and in spite of her sorrow, Polly Wharton smiled.

Madam Wetherill came home from her marketing, which was no light undertaking with all the trouble about paper money, and gold and silver so scarce. She still rode her horse well, and time dealt very leniently with her.

"I heard some strange news in the market place," she began, and then she caught sight of Polly. "Oh, dear child! is it true that some of the flower of our town have perished? It was a great surprise, to capture some deserters, it was said, and went hard with our brave men."

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"Nay, Lieutenant Henry won in the end, and our loss was nothing compared to the enemy. But poor Allin——"

"He is not dead," added Primrose, when Polly's voice failed. "And, madam, Cousin Andrew hath taken our heroic Colonel Nevitt a prisoner in his first battle. I know not whether to rejoice or cry."

"Primrose, thou art a naughty girl!"

"If it had been the other way, I should have had no difficulty. Yes, I am a hard-hearted little wretch and do not deserve any brother! But Andrew will see that he is not treated as the poor fellows were in the Walnut Street Jail; and if he should lose an arm or a leg I will devote my life to him. Oh!" with a sudden burst of tenderness, "I hope it is nothing serious. The mortification will be hard enough."

There were numbers of the wounded sent as soon as possible to the larger cities where they could be cared for. Rough journeying it was, with none of the modern appliances of travel, and many a poor fellow died on the way.

For various reasons Madam Wetherill had not gone out to the farm as usual. The news was troublesome from Virginia and Maryland, where Arnold was destroying stores and laying waste plantations. The seat of war seemed to be changing in this direction, and some of the most famous battles were to be fought here. Cornwallis was fortifying, and everybody dreaded the news.

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Pleasure in town had slipped back to a more decorous aspect. There were simple tea-drinkings and parties of young people going out on the river in the early evening singing pretty songs. Or there were afternoon rambles to the charming green nook called Bethsheba's Bath and Bower, where wild flowers bloomed in profusion, and the copses were fragrant with sweet herbs, growing wild; or the newly cut hay in the fields still about. Sometimes they took along a luncheon and some sewing. There were still windmills to grind the grain, and Windmill Island had been repaired and was busy again.

Primrose seemed just beginning life. Hitherto she had been a child, and now she was finding friends of her own age, with whom it was a pleasure to chat and to compare needlework and various knowledges.

She sympathized tenderly with Polly Wharton in her sorrow, and began to go frequently to the house. Next in age to Polly were two boys, and then a lovely little girl.

Another incident had made the summer quite notable to Primrose. This was the marriage of Anabella Morris, which took place in Christ Church. Anabella's husband was a widower with two quite large children, but of considerable means. Madam Wetherill was very generous with her outfit, though she began to feel the pinch of straitened means. So much property was paying very poorly and some not rented at all.

Primrose was one of the maids, and consented to have her hair done high on her head and wear a train, and to be powdered, though Madam Wetherill disapproved of it for young people who had pretty natural complexions. Some young women wore a tiny bit of a black patch near their smiling lips, or a dimple, as if to call attention to it.

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"And, if it grew there, they would move heaven and earth to have it taken off," said that lady with a little scorn.

The bride's train was held up by a page dressed in blue and silver, and then followed the pretty maids, and the relatives. It was quite a brave show, and a proud day for Anabella, who had been dreaming of it since she was a dozen years old.

Madam Wetherill gave her a wedding dinner, which now would be called a breakfast, so much have things changed, and then a coach took the newly married pair to their own home. Though Anabella would rather not have had another woman's children to manage, she was truly glad that all her anxieties in husband-hunting were over.

Then Mr. Wharton came home with his son, who was still in a quite uncertain state, and it had been a question whether his shattered leg could be saved. But Dr. Benjamin Rush took it in hand and said it would be a shame indeed if such a fine young fellow would have to stump around all

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHOM SHALL SHE PITY?

September came in with all the glory of ripening fruit and the late rich-colored flowers, with here and there a yellow leaf on the sycamores, a brown one on the hickories, and a scarlet one on the maples. There were stirring events, too. A French vessel had arrived with stores and four hundred thousand crowns in specie, besides an accession of enthusiastic men to the army. General Washington had determined to attempt the capture of New York, but hearing there were large re-enforcements on the way to Sir Henry Clinton, allowed the British to believe this was his plan and turned his army southward.

A gala time indeed it was for the Quaker city. For the Continentals were no longer ragged, but proudly marched in the glory of new shoes and unpatched breeches and newly burnished accouterments. The French regiment of DeSoissonnais, in rose-color and white, with rose-colored plumes, was especially handsome and quite distanced our own army trappings, that had never been fine. General Washington, Count Rochambeau, and M. de Luzerne, the French minister, with Chief Justice McKean reviewed the troops. The sober citizens were stirred to unwonted enthusiasm. Houses were decorated, windows filled with pretty girls waved handkerchiefs, and the mob shouted itself hoarse with joy; going at night to the residence of the French minister and shouting lustily amid the cheering for the King, Louis XVI.

The hall boy ushered in a fine martial-looking man in officer's dress at Madam Wetherill's. A number of guests were in the parlor, and he hesitated a moment before he said: "Summon Miss Primrose Henry."

"Grand sojer man in buff and blue," he whispered. "'Spect it General Washington hisself."

Primrose flashed out. For a moment she stood amazed. It was not her brother.

"Primrose, hast thou forgotten me?"

"Oh!" with a glad cry of joy. "Oh, Andrew," and she was clasped in the strong arms and greeted with a kiss.

"Yes," joyfully. "All the march I have counted on this moment. I could not wait until to-morrow. Primrose, how are they—my dear mother?"

"She is quite well, but Uncle Henry fails and has grown very deaf. And I think Rachel and Penn do not agree well, and are not happy. But things go on the same."

"And is there—any longing for me?"

Oh, how cruel it was to feel that only the poor mother cared. For Primrose was not old enough nor suspicious enough to imagine the hundred little ways Rachel found to blame Andrew and widen the breach between him and his father.

"Thy mother is always asking for thee. I learn thy infrequent letters by heart, and repeat them to her as I get opportunity."

"Thank thee a thousand times."

"And my brother?"

"Hast thou not heard?"

"Not since the return of Allin Wharton. He is still ill and no one sees him, but Polly tells me now and then. Only he is not allowed to excite himself by talking, and it is such little dribbles that I cannot glean much. And you met face to face?"

"We were both doing our duty like brave men, I trust. I'm not sure but in the *mêlée* that Allin saved my life, and then——"

"Thou couldst have taken his! Oh, Andrew, thank God it was not so," and her voice was tremulous with the joy of thanksgiving.

"A soldier fired and wounded his right shoulder." Andrew did not say that it was only a hair's-breadth escape of his own life. "Neither knew he should meet the other."

"And what hath happened since?"

"He was paroled and exchanged. Since then I have heard nothing. And now I must go. First to see Allin, and then our Commander. The bulk of the troops are still to follow in the steps of these noble Frenchmen. And to-morrow night I must start south on an important mission. In the morning I shall see thee again. My respects to Madam Wetherill."

Her arms were about his neck. How tall she had grown! He remembered when she had first come

to Cherry farm he had carried her about in his arms.

"Dear—" He unclasped the clinging hands softly. And then he turned the door knob and was gone.

She ran to her room, a pretty chamber next to Madam Wetherill's, now, and burying her face in the pillow, cried for ever so many causes, it seemed to her. Sorrow that her brother should not have cared enough to write, grief that they two should have met in strife, thanksgiving that neither should be guilty of the awful weight of the other's blood, joy that she should have seen Andrew, and pain and grief that he could not go home as a brave and well-loved son.

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It was quite late when Madam Wetherill came up, when the last guest had gone.

"I thought it was thy cousin, and I knew thou would not feel like further gayety, though all the town seems wild, as if we had gained a victory. These French soldiers in their fine attire have turned everyone's head. After all, methinks gay clothes have their uses and help to preserve the spirits. And Andrew—Major Henry, do we call him?"

Primrose smiled then. "He is my own dear cousin and never forgets me. And he wished his respects to thee, and will come to-morrow morning. And Colonel Nevitt has been paroled and is in New York."

"Go to bed now. It is full midnight. The rest will keep," and she patted the soft cheek, warm with flushes of satisfaction.

Major Henry came the next morning. Madam Wetherill was struck with the likeness he bore his uncle, and certainly he made a grand-looking soldier. Then he had to tell all about the affray, but Primrose came to know afterward that he made light of his part in it, and but for his suspicions and presence of mind there would have been great slaughter.

"I can hardly venture to predict, but it does seem to me that we are nearing the end of the brunt of the fighting. It will be no secret in a few days, but I can trust thee, I know. The French fleet may be in the Chesapeake even now, and though Cornwallis hath fortified Yorktown and Gloucester, we shall have the British between two fires, and all aid cut off, even escape. I think we shall capture them, and if so, it will be a blow they cannot recover from. War is cruel enough. I do not wonder Christian people oppose it. But slavery of the free spirit is worse still, and if one must strike, let it be in earnest. But we have gone against fearful odds."

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"Heaven knows how thankful we shall be to see it ended. And yet there are nations that have fought longer still," subjoined Madam Wetherill thoughtfully.

"And I hope, when we are through with the enemy, we shall not quarrel among ourselves as to the making of a great country and nation. It is not given to many men to have breadth and wisdom and foresight."

"And there have been disputes enough here. I sometimes wonder if men have any good sense."

"Thou hast not a wonderfully high opinion of them," and Andrew smiled.

"A party of women could be but little worse, and sometimes I think would do better."

They talked about young Wharton, and Andrew instanced many brave acts on his part.

"If thou hadst seen them patient in hunger and cold, with poor frost-bitten feet, and hardly a place to shelter them from the storm, thou wouldst not rail at them."

"It is the stay-at-home soldiers who fight battles over the council board and always win, and know just what every general and every private could do, that provoke me! I wish sometimes they could be put in the forefront of the battle."

"They would learn wisdom, doubtless. An enemy on paper is easily managed."

Then Andrew had to go. And though he longed to press a kiss on the sweet rosy lips that were fond enough last night, Primrose seemed quite a tall young woman, and a child no longer; so, although the leave-taking was very sincere, it had a delicate formality in it.

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They had hardly time to consider anything, for the next day brought a tax on their sympathies. Primrose remembered a long ago winter when Miss Betty Randolph had come from Virginia to get some city accomplishments, and flashed in and out of the great house and gone to parties, and had been the envy of Anabella Morris. She had married shortly after and had two babies. And now her father's farm had been despoiled and he rendered homeless, her husband had been killed in battle, and they had made their way northward, hoping to find a friend in Madam Wetherill.

Nor were they mistaken. There were the two elderly people, Betty and her babies, and a younger sister. The only son was in General Greene's army.

"There is plenty of room at the farm," said Madam Wetherill. "I am not as young as I used to be and it gets a greater care year by year, and I think I grow fonder of the city. It would be well to have someone there all the time, and Cousin Randolph understands farming."

"And this is the shy little yellow-haired Primrose, grown up into a pretty girl," Betty said in surprise. "I remember you were full of those quaint Quaker 'thees and thous.' But certainly you

are a Quaker no longer, with that becoming attire? Oh, child, be glad you have not sipped sorrow's bitter cup."

There was so much on hand getting them settled that Primrose could not go to Uncle Henry's with her blessed news at once. It was always pain as well as pleasure. Sometimes she could hardly find a free moment with Aunt Lois, so jealously did Rachel watch them. And though Primrose had planned talks with Uncle James they invariably came to nought, for she could never surprise him alone, and he was so hard of hearing she knew there would be listeners.

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Faith was upstairs spinning on the big wheel, and her window overlooked the stretch of woods that shut out the road altogether. Aunt Lois sat knitting, Rachel was making some stout homespun shirts for winter wear, and Uncle James was lying on the bed asleep.

"Thou hast something else in thy face," began Aunt Lois presently, when Primrose had recounted the misfortunes of the Randolphs and the shelter that had opened before them. "Hast thou heard from——"

"I have seen him!" Primrose clasped both hands and the knitting fell to the floor.

"Seen him! Oh, child! Hath he been here?"

Her voice quavered and her eyes filled with tears.

Rachel picked up the knitting with a frown. The needle had slipped out half-way.

"Thou mightst have shown a little more care, Primrose," beginning to pick up the stitches.

"Tell me, tell me! Is he here now?"

"He came with the French soldiers. Oh, how fine and gallant they were! He could only stay one night, for the Commander had some special business for him at the seat of war. All the troops are going on, and it is hoped that, when the Continentals win, this will lead to peace."

"When they win," said Rachel with doubtful scorn. "It seems as if they cared for nothing but going on and on like quarrelsome children, and no good comes of it. No good can come of such an evil as war. And if you sell anything, here is all this wretched, worthless money! I had rather have good British gold."

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"So Arnold thought." Primrose's mirth-loving eyes danced with a sense of retaliation. "There has been some French gold quite as good, since it has clothed our troops and given them many comforts. And, Aunt Lois, he is well and splendid, the picture of my own father, Aunt Wetherill thinks. He sent so much love, and if the war should end he will come home for good. He is not fond of battle, but you may know how good a soldier he has proved, since he has gone from private to major."

Aunt Lois looked up with tender, longing eyes. "Then I shall see him," she said. "He will not stay away?"

"Oh, surely, surely! If there had been time he would have come now. And oh, Aunt Lois, up there on the Hudson we almost lost him. There was a sudden surprise, and, but for young Allin Wharton, it might have gone hard indeed with him."

She could not confess that it was a kindred hand raised against him, though her quick flush betrayed some deep feeling.

"Heaven be thanked! And the young man?"

"He was wounded then and again later on, but has been brought home and is mending. And surely God was watching over Andrew, for he had no hurt whatever. And I feel sure now he will come back safe to us."

Rachel Morgan's face worked with some deep passion, and grew darker under the sunburn. The young girl's delight angered her. Perhaps, too, the beauty and grace, the cloth habit fitting her slim, elegant figure, the beaver hat that looked so jaunty and had in it some long cock's plumes, quite a new fashion. Then there was the trim foot with its fine shoe and steel buckle, all gauds of worldliness to be sure, but they would attract a man's eye.

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Rachel had not been beautiful in her childhood, but the tender grace that softens so many faces had not been allowed its perfect work on hers. She looked older now than her years and there were hard lines that some day would be avarice, uncharity, and other evil traits. Then this girl was an idle butterfly, frisking from one folly to another in a wicked and worldly fashion, even despising the plain faith her father had intended she should follow.

"Oh," exclaimed Aunt Lois, after a blissful communing with her soul in very thankfulness, "thou puttest new life into me. I can feel it run through like the breeze in the grass. Sometimes I think with the wise man that few and evil have been my days, and I would not have them unduly prolonged, but to see my son again, my dear son!"

The smile was so sweet that Primrose, leaning over, kissed into it and then both smiled again, while there were tender tears in the eyes of both.

"And now I must go," Primrose said presently, "but I will try to come sooner again. It is such fine weather that the orchards are full of fruit and the wild grapes and the balsams fill the air with

fragrance. Oh, Aunt Lois, God must have made such a beautiful world for us to enjoy. He cannot mean to have us frown on this, and wait until we get to heaven, for then the smiles and joy will not come so readily."

"It is flippant for thee to talk of heaven this way. We do not go dancing into it. We must fashion our lives on more godly things," said Rachel rebukingly.

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Primrose made no reply, but drew on her glove.

"Then I shall not see Faith," she said rather disappointedly as she rose.

"Where is Faith?" Aunt Lois looked up.

"She idled so much yesterday that she did not finish her stent, and she has a larger share this afternoon."

Rachel followed the girl out. The horses stood in the shade and Jerry had been lounging on the grass, but he sprang up and doffed his hat to his young mistress.

"I have something to say to thee." Rachel took her arm and turned her away from the house and Jerry as well. "Dost thou truly think Andrew will return?"

"He will return." There was an exultant ring of hope and youth in the sweet voice that smote the listener.

"And then," very deliberately, as if her words meant to cut something, they were so sharp and cold, "then you will marry him."

"Marry him? I?"

There was indignation in every line of the face and Rachel noted it with secret joy, though her countenance remained unmoved.

"Yes," persistently. "Thou hast always been fondling about him and kissing him, and such foolishness wins a man when plain common sense gets flouted."

"I have never thought of such a thing," and her face was full of surprise, though the lovely color kept coming and going, and her eyes flashed a little. "I do not want any lovers, and as for husbands, nothing would tempt me to change with Mistress Anabella. And there is poor Betty Randolph, full of sorrow. No, I mean to be like Madam Wetherill, who can always do as she pleases."

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"Silly child! I should be sorry indeed for the man who took thee. But Madam Wetherill was married once."

"And her husband died. No, I cannot bear death and sorrow," and she gave a quick shiver.

"Thou hast made trouble enough for Andrew. First it was getting away and mooning over books and strange things, instead of useful ones. Then it was passing food and clothing out to Valley Forge, and running his neck in a noose. Then it was going to war, for which his father disowned him."

"Nay, not that altogether." She looked steadily at Rachel, whose eyes fell a little.

"Yes, if he had not gone he would not have been disowned. It was through thy preachment. Thou hast cost him trouble everywhere. And now, if he should return, thou canst make or mar again."

"I shall not mar," proudly.

"It stands this way. Thy mother was one of the smiling, tempting, deceitful women, who can twist a man about her finger. She spoiled thy father's life and would have won him from the faith—"

Primrose's slim form trembled with indignation and Rachel cowered beneath the flashing eye.

"That is a falsehood, Mistress Rachel, and God will surely mark thee for it! There is an old journal of my father's that, beside business dates and comments, has bits of sweetness about her, and how he thanks God for her, and that she is the sunshine of his life, and if he were to lose her, all would be darkness. Madam Wetherill is to give it to me when I am quite grown."

"I but repeat what I have heard Uncle James say. And if thou wert to marry Andrew he would forbid him the house as much as he did when Andrew became a soldier. He does not approve of thee nor thy tribe."

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The hot blood stained the girl's cheeks. Yes, she had long mistrusted that her uncle did not like her, and that he fancied in some way Madam Wetherill had gotten the better of him.

"I am not going to marry Andrew—nor anyone. I love him very much, but I know it is not in that way. And my own life is growing exceeding sweet, day by day. It is like a garden full of wonderful flowers that no one can guess until they bloom."

"Then thou wilt not hinder him again? His father's heart hath grown tender toward him, and I can persuade if I have this surety to go upon."

"And then—dost thou hope to marry him?"

"I hope for nothing, Miss Impertinence. I only want that Andrew shall be restored."

A willful mood came over Primrose. What if she did not promise?

"There is little dependence on thee, I see. I was a fool to think it. Girls like thee play with men's hearts."

Rachel turned away with a bitter curl of the lip, and held her head up determinedly.

"Oh, Rachel, if that will help, I promise. If thou wilt do thy best to soften Uncle James. I care not so much that he shall regard me with favor. I have many to love me."

Rachel turned back a step, caught the round arm and held it up.

"Promise," she cried, almost fiercely.

"I promise," Primrose said solemnly.

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"That is in the sight of God. Thou wilt be a very wicked girl to break it."

"I shall not break it. Oh, Rachel, do thy best to restore peace. For to Andrew it would be great joy."

Then she went over to Jerry, who helped her into the saddle. The girls curiously enough had not said good-by to each other. Rachel had gone into the house.

"I did it for the best," she was thinking to herself. "There should be peace between them, for Uncle James acts strangely sometimes. And then if Andrew hath any gratitude—perhaps soft measures may conquer. His mother wishes for the marriage as well."

Primrose seemed in no haste and the ride was long. She was annoyed that Rachel should talk of her marrying. And her brother, she remembered, had confessed a half-formed plan of wedding her to Gilbert Vane. Why could not everybody let her alone? Madam Wetherill never spoke of it, and she was glad.

Where was Gilbert Vane? And oh, where was her poor brother? The soft wind cooled her cheeks and the longing brought tears to her eyes.

"How late thou hast stayed," said Madam Wetherill with tender chiding. "I hope nothing was amiss?"

"Oh, no, dear madam. The air was so fine that I loitered. And the dark seems to fall suddenly when it does come."

"Thou must change thy habit and come to supper. Put on a jacket and petticoat, and afterward one of thy best gowns, for there is to be some young company. Pamela Trumbull sent word 'That she would come with a host of cousins, and thou must have in thy best singing teeth.' The maid is always full of merry conceits. And over our teacups thou shalt tell me about the Henrys."

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Primrose repeated all but her last interview with Rachel. Delicacy forbade that. And then Patty helped her into a furbelowed gown of china silk that had been made from Madam Wetherill's long-ago treasures and had a curious fragrance about it.

The young people came, a merry company, and first they had a game of forfeits and some guessing puzzles. Then Pamela, who had quite bewitched her cousin with tales of Primrose's singing, insisted that she should go to the spinet. She found a song.

"Oh, not that foolish one," cried Primrose, blushing scarlet.

"It is so dainty and no one sings it as you do. And in the print store on Second Street there was a laughable picture of such a pretty, doleful Cupid shut out of doors in the cold, that I said to Harry, 'Mistress Primrose Henry sings the most cunning plaint I know, and you shall hear it.'"

Mr. Henry Beall joined his persuasion and they found the music. Primrose had a lovely voice and sang with a deliciously simple manner.

"As little Cupid play-ed,
The sweet blooming flowers among,
A bee that lay concealed
Under the leaf his finger stung.
Tears down his pretty cheeks did stream
From smart of such a cruel wound,
And crying, through the grove he ran,
Until he his mammy found.

"Mammy, I'm sorely wounded,
A bee has stung me on the plain,
My anguish is unbounded,
Assist me or I die with pain.'
She smil-ed then, replying,
Said, 'O my son, how can it be?
That by a bee you're dying,—
What must she feel who's stung by thee?'"

There was a burst of eager applause.

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"It was a quaint old song when I was young," said Madam Wetherill. "Then there are some pretty ones of Will Shakespeare's."

"This is what I like," began Primrose.

"Tell me not, sweet, I am unkinde."

She sang it with deep and true feeling, Lovelace's immortal song. And she moved them all by her rendering of the last two lines in her proud young voice—

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more."

Then Mistress Kent would have them come out for curds and cream and floating islands, and they planned a chestnutting after the first frost came. They were merry and happy, even if the world was full of sorrow.

Yet it seemed so mysterious to Primrose that the songs should be so much about love, and that stories were written and wars made and kingdoms lost for its sake. What was it? No, she did not want to know, either. And just now she felt infinitely sorry for Rachel. Come what might, Andrew would not marry her. How she could tell she did not know, but she felt the certainty.

"Do not sit there by the window, Primrose, or thou wilt get moon-struck and silly. And young girls should get beauty sleep. Come to bed at once," said Madam Wetherill.

But after all she admitted to herself that Primrose was not urgently in need of beauty sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

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THE MIDNIGHT TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

Old Philadelphia had fallen into her midnight nap. Since Howe's time there had been a more decorous rule, and the taverns closed early. There were no roystering soldiers flinging their money about and singing songs in King George's honor, or ribald squibs about the rebels, and braggart rhymes as to what they would do with them by and by. Everything, this October night, was soft and silent. Even party people had gone home long ago, and heard the watchman sing out, "Twelve o'clock and all is well!" Only the stars were keeping watch, and the winds made now and then a rustle.

Someone rode into the town tired and exhausted, but joyful, and with joyful news. The German watchman, who caught it first, went on his rounds with, "Past two o'clock and Lord Cornwallis is taken."

He came down Arch Street. Madam Wetherill had been rather wakeful. What was it? She threw up the window and the sonorous voice sang out again, "Past two o'clock and Lord Cornwallis is taken!"

"Oh, what is it, madam?" cried Patty, coming in in her nightgown and cap.

"It is enough to make one faint with joy! Patty, wake Joe at once and send him down the street. It can't be true!"

"But what is it?" in alarm.

"If I was not dreaming it is that Lord Cornwallis is taken. But I am afraid. Patty, it is a great victory for our side. Run quick!"

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Joe, rolled up in his warm blanket, had to be thumped soundly before he would wake.

"Put on your clothes this instant," and Patty stood over him, giving him a cuff on one ear, then on the other to balance him. "Run down the street, and if you don't find Lord Cornwallis taken don't pretend to show your face here again in this good rebel household. For now we dare sail under true colors!"

But others had heard. In early morning before the day was awake there was such a stir that the old town scarcely knew itself. One cried to another. There were a thousand doubts and fears until the messenger was found, quite gone with fatigue, on a bench at a tavern, with a great crowd around him.

"Yes," he said, "on the nineteenth, four days ago. They were between the devil and the deep sea. They tried to escape on the York River, but a storm set in and they were driven back. And there was the French squadron to swallow them up, and the French and American troops posted about in a big half circle! 'Twas a splendid sight as one would wish to see! And there was nothing but surrender, or they would all have been cut to pieces. And such a sight when my lord sent General O'Hara with his sword and the message, not having courage to come himself. Then we were

hustled off with the news. There's the posts of Yorktown and Gloucester and seven thousand or so soldiers, and stores and arms and colors and seamen and ships. By the Lord Harry! we're set up for life! And now let me eat and drink in peace. By night there'll be someone else to tell his story."

Surely never had there been such an early rising. Neighbors and friends wrung each other's hands in great joy and talked in broken sentences, though there were some Tories who said the thing was simply impossible, and rested in serene satisfaction.

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Primrose had roused, and was so wild with joy that there could be no thought of a second nap. And after breakfast she was crazy to go over to Walnut Street to Polly Wharton's.

The servant sent her into the small anteroom, for she wasn't quite sure Mistress Polly was in. And there, in a long easy-chair Dr. Rush had planned and a skilled carpenter made, that could be lowered into a bed at will, reclined a pale young fellow with a mop of chestnut hair, and temples that were full of blue veins, as well as the long, thin hands.

"Oh—it is Mistress Primrose Henry—but I was hardly sure! You are so tall, and you were such a little girl. Oh, do you remember when I ran over you on the Schuylkill and quarreled with your brother and wanted to fight a duel? I can just see how you looked as you lay there in his arms, pale as death, with your pretty yellow hair floating about. Well, I had a monstrous bad hour, I assure you. And you were such a gay, saucy little rebel, and so full of enthusiasm! By George! I believe you sent us all to war. And now this glorious news, and Andrew Henry in the midst of it all! It makes a fellow mad, and red-hot all over longing to be there! Was there ever anything so splendid! But, I beg your pardon! Will you not be seated? Polly went out with father, but will soon be back."

The servant brought the same message. Mrs. Wharton would be down as soon as the children were off to school.

"Tell her not to hurry," said the audacious young man. "It is such a treat to have company all to myself. And to-day is my first coming downstairs. Father has been so afraid all along lest I should do something that would undo all the good doctor's work. Between him and Andrew they have saved my leg, and I shan't be lame. I'll come and dance at your birthday party. It is in the spring, isn't it, and that is why you were named Primrose?"

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"I don't know for certain," and the girl smiled; "my mother was fond of flowers."

"And it's the prettiest name under the sun." He wanted to say that it belonged to the prettiest girl under the sun, but he did not quite dare. For he thought this blessed October morning she was the loveliest vision he had ever beheld.

"Oh, won't you take off your hat and that big cape, for Polly *will* be in soon, and I have such a heap of things to tell you. Polly said she would ask you to come around as soon as I was allowed downstairs, and Dr. Rush said I must wait until I could walk well. Wasn't it grand to see Andrew in his new uniform? We've all gone in rags and patches, and—well, when we're old fellows, we shall all be proud enough that we fought for the country. I want to live to be a full hundred, if the world stands so long. When have you heard from your brother?"

The young girl's face was scarlet. "Not since—since he went to New York."

"Wasn't it queer we should all have had a hand in the fight, and Andrew never got scratched?"

"And you saved them both! Andrew told me! Oh, I can't give you thanks enough! My brother is very dear to me if he is on the wrong side, and I have been angry with him."

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He always remembered with a mysterious sort of gladness that she did not say Andrew was dear to her. Of course he was, but he would rather not have it set in words.

"Yes—that we should meet just that way! He and I had quarreled, and he and Andrew were cousins, whose duty it was to disable each other, at least, though the encounter was so sudden that at the first moment I think they did not know each other. I gave a push to Andrew and that deflected his aim, for somehow I did not want him to kill Nevitt. And before he could recover, though the next shot was aimed at me, someone had struck your brother in the shoulder, and he fell. It was all done in a moment, but there are so many near escapes. He was pretty badly hurt, but Andrew managed that he should have the best of care. And they gained nothing by their daring and we made a lot of prisoners. Before it was over I was wounded, and that has put an end to my fun. But I am glad Andrew was in at this great victory."

Primrose's eyes were shining with a kind of radiant joy. And yet, down deep in her heart, there was a pang for her brother. Sometimes she was vexed that he had not cared enough to write.

"But it seems—incredible!"

"It is a sort of miracle of foresight. The man at the head of it all is wise and far-sighted and not easily discouraged. And Lady Washington, as the men call her, is not afraid to follow the camp and speak a word of cheer to the soldiers. We have been through many a hard time, some of the others much more than I. But, if I could have chosen, I'd rather been on the march and in the fight than lying here."

Primrose could not doubt it. A faint color had warmed up the face and it looked less thin, and the

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eyes were full of enthusiasm. Something in their glance made hers droop and an unexpected glow steal up in her face.

"Andrew said he was your soldier, that you were so full of loyalty and duty it inspired him. And don't you remember that you talked to me as well? I don't see why I shouldn't be your soldier."

"Why—yes. You are." Then she blushed ever so much more deeply.

"And how brave you were that day when you assisted him to escape! Oh, you can't think how delightful it was to talk of you when we were cold and hungry and so far away from home! And all the shrewdness of Madam Wetherill! How she won British gold and sent it or its equivalent out to Valley Forge! Next summer we ought to make a picnic out there, and climb up Mount Pleasant and go down Mount Misery with jest and laughter."

There was a whirl and a gentle stamping of some light feet on the bearskin rug in the hall.

"Oh, Primrose! It is the most glorious morning the world ever saw! And 'tis a delight to see you here. It is Allin's first day downstairs, and he thinks he has been defrauded, selfish fellow! He insists I shall tell him everywhere I go and everybody I see, and, when I get it all related minutely, he sighs like a wheezy bellows and thinks I have all the fun. And just now I want to dance and shout, don't you, Primrose? Such news stirs one from finger tips to toes."

"Get up and dance, then. I'll whistle a gay Irish jig, such as the men used in Howe's time at the King of Prussia Inn, while their betters were footing it to good British music. Think of the solemn drumbeat there will be at Yorktown! No gay Mischianza there! What a march it will be to the haughty prisoners!"

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They all laughed at the idea of dancing, and then they talked until Primrose said she must go home, but Polly would send a messenger to say that she meant to keep her to dinner, and then they would take a nice walk along Chestnut Street, and go to Market Street and see the new, homespun goods Mr. Whitesides had in his store.

"For they say the weaver cunningly put in flocks of silk from old silken rags and has made a beautiful, glistening surface that catches the light in various colors. A man in Germantown, 'tis said. We shall be so wise presently that we shall not hanker after England's goods."

What a merry time they had! And then Primrose must sing some songs. Allin thought he had never heard anything so beautiful as the one of Lovelace's. And he was so sorry to have them go that he looked at Primrose with wistful eyes.

"When I am quite strong I am coming around to Madam Wetherill's for half a day."

She blushed and nodded. He was very tired and turned over in his chair, and in his half sleepiness could still see Primrose Henry.

The news was true enough. And though the Earl of Cornwallis received back his sword, the twenty-eight battle flags were delivered to the Americans, with all the other trophies.

Congress assembled and Secretary Thompson read the cheering news. Bells were rung, and it was such a gala day as the city had never seen. Impromptu processions thronged the streets, salutes were fired, and far into the night rockets were sent up. The little old house in Arch Street where Betsy Ross lived, who had made the first flag with the thirteen stars, that could wave proudly over the other twenty-eight captured ones, had her house illuminated by enthusiastic citizens.

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Hundreds of Tories accepted the offer of pardon. Clinton reached the Chesapeake too late for any assistance and returned disheartened and dismayed, for it was felt that this was indeed a signal victory, and the renown of English arms at an end.

The troops were not disbanded for more than a year afterward, but many of the soldiers and officers were furloughed, and it was announced that Washington would be in Philadelphia shortly, so every preparation was made to receive the great commander.

Primrose had a tardy note from her brother that brought tears to her eyes and much contrition of spirit.

His wound had been troublesome, but never very serious. Then a fever had set in. For weeks he could not decide what to do. Being a paroled prisoner, he had no right to take up arms. He was beginning to be very much discouraged as to the outcome of the war. Whether to go back to England or not was the question he studied without arriving at any decision.

There had been a second heir born to his great-uncle, so there was little likelihood of his succeeding to the estate. Whether they were of the true Nevitt blood, considering the low ebb of morals and the many temptations of court life for a gay young wife, he sometimes doubted, but he had to accept the fact. His uncle had given him a handsome income at first, but he could see now that it was paid at longer intervals and with much pleading of hard times. Indeed, from these very complaints of exorbitant taxes, he gleaned that the war was becoming more unpopular at home.

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And now had come this crushing defeat. What should he do? A return to England did not look inviting. The dearest tie on earth was in Philadelphia. And that was his home, his father's home. Sometimes he half desired to go there and begin a new life.

"I long for you greatly, little Primrose," he wrote. "I seem like a boat with no rudder, that is adrift on an ocean. Do you think good Madam Wetherill, who has been so much to you, would let you ask a guest for a few days? A Henry who has dared to lift his hand against the country of his birth, and regrets it now in his better understanding of events? For, if England had listened to her wisest counselors, the war had never been. I am ill and discouraged, and have a weak longing for a little love from my dear rebel sister, a rebel no longer, but a victor. Will she be generous? And then I will decide upon what I must do, for I cannot waste any more of life."

"Oh, dear aunt, read it, for I could not without crying. Dear Phil! What shall I do?" and she raised her tear-wet face.

"Why, ask him here, of course," smilingly. "I am not an ogre, and, being victors, we can afford to be generous. It will be a new amusement for thee, and keep thee from getting dull!"

"Dull?" Then she threw her arms about the elder's neck and kissed her many times.

"Child, thou wilt make me almost as silly as thyself. In my day a maiden stood with downcast eyes and made her simple courtesy for favors, and thou comest like a whirlwind. Sure, there is not a drop of Quaker blood in thy veins, thou art so fond of kissing. Thou art Bessy Wardour all over." [Pg 288]

"See, madam—dost thou like me better this way?"

She stood before her in great timidity with clasped hands and eyes down to the ground. And she was so irresistible that Madam Wetherill caught her in her arms.

"I am quite as bad as thou," she declared. "We are a couple of silly children together. If thou should ever marry——"

"But I shall not marry. I shall be gay and frisky all my first years; then I shall take to some solid employment, perhaps write a volume of letters or chatty journal and say sharp things about my neighbors, wear a high cap and spectacles, and keep a cat who will scratch every guest. There, is it not a delightful picture?"

"Go and write thy letters, saucy girl. All the men will fear thy tongue, that is hung so it swings both ways."

"Like the bells on the old woman's fingers and toes, 'It makes music wherever I go.' Is not that a pretty compliment? Polly Wharton's brother gave it to me. Ah, if my brother had been like that!"

"Do not say hard or naughty things to him, moppet. What is past is past."

Primrose Henry's brother was greatly moved by some traces of tears he found in the epistle, and he was so hungering for the comforts of a little affection that he started at once.

She was much troubled now about her cousin's return. For Friend Henry had fallen into a strange way and the doctor said he would never be any better. The fall had numbed his spine and gradually affected his limbs. He gave up going out, and could hardly hobble about the two rooms. Some days he lay in bed all the time, and scarcely spoke, sleeping and seeming dazed. Lois watched over him and waited on him with the utmost devotion. [Pg 289]

"Is that the voice of the child Primrose?" he asked sharply one morning as she was cheerfully bidding Chloe and Rachel good-day.

"Yes. Wouldst thou like to see her?"

He nodded. But when Primrose came in he stared and shook his head.

"That is Bessy Wardour. I want the child Primrose," he mumbled slowly.

"I am Primrose, uncle. Mamma hath been dead this long time. But I have grown to a big girl, as children do."

He seemed to consider. "And thou dost know Andrew. Where is my son, and why does he stay so? I want him at home."

"He is coming soon; any day, perhaps."

"Tell him to hasten. There is something—I seem to forget, but Mr. Chew will know. It must be cast into the fire. It is a tare among the wheat. Go quick and tell him. My son Andrew! My only and well-beloved son!"

Then he shut his eyes and drowsed off.

"He hath not talked so much in days. Oh, will Andrew ever come? What is it thou must do?"

"He has started by this time. There are to be some officers in Philadelphia, and General Washington is to come to consult with Congress. They have had a sad bereavement in Madam Washington's only son, who was ill but a short time and leaves a young family. And I will not let Andrew lose a moment." [Pg 290]

"Thank you, dear child," clasping her hands.

Faith was coming up from the barn with a basket of eggs.

"Oh, dear Primrose!" she cried, "I know Uncle James is dying. They will not let me see him alone,

and there is a great thing on my conscience. Oh, if Andrew were only here!"

"He will be here shortly. Oh, Faith, not really dying!" in alarm.

"Yes, yes! Grandmother was something that way. To be sure it is little comfort living. But I want to tell thee—Rachel has softened strangely, and sometimes has a frightened, far-away look in her eyes and she listens so when her uncle frets. Oh, if I were but twenty-one, and could get away from it all! It is as if I might see a ghost."

"He wants to see Andrew. Something is to be cast into the fire. I wish I knew."

"It was so quiet and no one was afraid when grandmother died. But this is awesome. Oh, Primrose, I hate to have thee go."

"Faith! Faith!" called the elder sister.

Primrose went her way in a strange state of mind. Was there anything she could do? She would ask Aunt Wetherill.

"Something is on his mind, surely. But whether one ought to take the responsibility to see Mr. Chew, I cannot decide."

How long the hours appeared! Twice the next day she sent fleet-footed Joe down to see if any soldiers had come in. And Madam Wetherill called at the Attorney General's office to find that he was in deep consultation with the Congress.

Just at the edge of the next evening there was a voice at the great hall door that sent a thrill to her very soul. She sped out. [Pg 291]

"Oh, Primrose—dear child——"

But she did not fly to his arms. Some deep inward consciousness restrained her and the words of Rachel, that just now rang in her ears.

How tall and sweet and strange withal she was. He stood for a moment electrified. She was a child no longer.

Then she found her tongue, though there was a distraught expression in her face as if she could cry.

"Oh, Andrew, it is a great relief to greet thee, but there is not a moment to lose. Thy poor father is dying and longs to see thee. And there is sorrel Jack in the stable, fresh and fleet as the wind. Madam Wetherill has gone out to a tea-drinking, but she said thou wert to take him at once, and we were so afraid thou would not come in time. Joe"—to the black hall boy—"see that Jack is made ready. Meanwhile, wilt thou have a glass of wine, or ale, or even a cup of tea?"

"Nothing, dear child. When did thou see them last?" His voice sounded hollow to himself.

"Three days ago."

"And my mother?"

"She is well. She grows sweeter and more angel-like every day."

Then they stood and looked at each other. How fine and brave he was, and he held his head with such spirit.

"Oh," she could not resist this, "was it not glorious there at Yorktown?"

"It was worth half a man's life! It gave us a country. And there hath a friend of thine come up with me, a brave young fellow—one Gilbert Vane." [Pg 292]

"Oh!" was all she answered.

Then the horse came, giving a joyful whinny as he felt the fresh air, and Andrew Henry went out into the night as if a beautiful vision were guiding him. Was it Primrose in all that strange, sweet glory?

He had ridden fast and far many a time. Up by the river here, under this stretch of woods, then a great level of meadows, here and there a tiny light gleaming in a house, hills, a valley, then more woods, and he drew a long breath.

Someone came to meet him. He took his mother in his arms and kissed her, but neither spoke, for the rapture was beyond words.

There was a candle burning on each end of the high mantelshelf. There was Friend Browne, bent and white-haired, who looked sourly at the soldier trappings and gave him a nerveless hand. There was Friend Preston. On the cot lay the tall, wasted frame of James Henry, as if already prepared for sepulture, so straight and still and composed. His mother took her seat at the foot of the bed. Andrew knelt down and prayed.

It was in the gray of the dawning when James Henry stirred and opened his eyes wide. They seemed at first fixed on vacancy, then they moved slowly around.

"Andrew, my son, my only son," and he stretched out his hands. "Tell Primrose—tell her to burn

the ungodly thing. I am glad thou hast come. Now I shall get strong and well. I was waiting for thee."

Andrew Henry held his father's hand. It was very cool, and the pulse was gone. That was the end of life, of what might have been love. [Pg 293]

Rachel met her cousin in the morning with a strange gleam of fear in her eyes. He was very gentle. After breakfast he had to go into town and report, and get leave of absence, and inform some of the friends, Madam Wetherill among the rest.

He had seen much of men and the world in the last few years, and learned many things, among others that a life of repression was not religion. And he knew now it was the love of God, and not the estimate of one's fellowmen, that did the great work of the world and smoothed the way of the dying. From henceforth he should live a true man's life. But his mother would be his first care always.

Some days afterward Mr. Chew sent for him and gave him the will.

"I did not make it," he explained. "I refused to write out one that I considered unjust, and later on he brought this to me for safe keeping. I sincerely hope it is not the same. Take it home and read it, and then come to me."

It was made shortly after Andrew had joined the army, and the reasons were given straightforwardly why he left his son Andrew Henry the sum of only one hundred dollars. In consideration of the sonlike conduct and attention to the farm, and respect shown to himself, and Lois, his wife, the two great barns and one hundred acres of land, meadow and orchard, west of the barns, to Penn Morgan, the son of his wife's sister. To Rachel Morgan, for similar care and respect, the dwelling house and one barn and one hundred acres, and this to be chargeable with Lois Henry's home and support. Another hundred and twenty acres to Faith Morgan, and the stock equally divided among the three. The moneys out at interest to be his wife's share. [Pg 294]

Lois Henry went to her son.

"I am sorry," she said. "He repented of something, and I think he meant to have the will destroyed. He was very stern after thou didst leave, and sometimes hard to Penn, who had much patience. I think his mind was not quite right, and occasionally it drowsed away strangely."

"He was glad to see me. That was like a blessing. And we came to look at matters in such different lights. He was home here with the few people who could not see or know the events going on in the great world. I do not think Mr. William Penn ever expected that we should narrow our lives so much and take no interest in things outside of our own affairs. And when one has been with General Washington and seen his broad, clear mind, and such men as General Knox, and Greene and Lee and Marion, and our own Robert Morris, the world grows a larger and grander place. I shall be content with that last manifestation, and I have thee and thy love. Sometime later on we will have a home together," and the soldier son kissed his mother tenderly.

Penn stopped him as he was walking by the barns and looking at the crops.

"Andrew," he began huskily, "of a truth I knew nothing about the will. I had no plan of stepping into thy place. I had meant, when I came of age, to take my little money and buy a plot of ground. But thy father made me welcome, and when thou wert gone stood sorely in need of me."

"Yes, yes, thou hadst been faithful to him and it was only just to be rewarded. I have no hard feelings toward thee, Penn, and I acquit thee of any unjust motive." [Pg 295]

Penn Morgan winced a little and let his eyes drop down on the path, for an expression in the clear, frank ones bent upon him stung him a little. How much had the suggestion he had given had to do with his cousin's almost capture and enlistment? He knew his uncle would grudge the service done to the rebels, and he considered it his duty to stop it. He fancied he took this way so as not to make hard feelings between Andrew and his father. He did not exactly wish it undone, but there was a sense of discomfort about it.

"There were many hard times for me thou knowest nothing about," said Penn, with an accent of justification. "He grew very unreasonable and sharp—Aunt Lois thinks his mind was impaired longer than we knew. I worked like a slave and held my peace. It is owing to me that the farm is in so good a condition to-day, while many about us have been suffered to go to waste. I have set out new fruit. I have cared for everything as if it had been mine, not knowing whether I should get any reward in the end. And though Rachel hath grown rather dispirited at times and crossed my wishes, she had much to bear also. I should have some amends besides mere farm wages."

"I find no fault. It must please thee to know thou didst fill a son's place to him. And a life like this is satisfactory to thee." The tone was calm.

"I could not endure soldiering and vain and worldly trappings," casting his eye over his cousin's attire. "And I care not for the world's foolish praise. A short time ago it was Howe and the King, now it is Washington, and Heaven only knows what is to come. I have this two years been spoken to Clarissa Lane and shall take my own little money and build a house for her, and live plainly in God's sight." [Pg 296]

"I wish thee much happiness. And never think I shall grudge thee anything."

"And I suppose thou wilt become a great military man! Thou wert hardly meant for a Quaker."

"I shall serve my country while she needs me," was the grave reply.

As for Rachel, she had no mind to give up all for lost. Even now she could depend upon Primrose to keep her promise. She had the old house that was dear to Andrew, and she had his mother in her care. When the war was really ended and the soldiers disbanded, he must settle somewhere, and so she took new courage. If she did not marry him there were others who would consider her a prize. But she knew she should never love any man as she could love Andrew Henry.

There were times when she hated herself for it. And now that he had come, gracious, tender, and with that air of strength and authority that always wins a woman, fine-looking withal, and clinging to some Quaker ways and speech, her heart went out to him again in a burst of fondness.

CHAPTER XX.

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WHEN THE WORLD WENT WELL.

About the country farms, with their narrow ways, opinion was divided. Andrew had shocked the Friends by wearing his uniform to his father's burial, but he felt he was the son of his country, as well, and had her dignity to uphold. Penn Morgan was very much respected and certainly had done his duty to his dead uncle.

But at Arch Street indignation ran high, and the Whartons were also very outspoken. Primrose was lovelier than ever in her vehemence, and Polly declared it was the greatest shame she had ever known. Even Mr. Chew said it was an unjust will, and he thought something might be done in the end with Primrose Henry's testimony.

"But for my sake thou wilt not give it. Family quarrels are sore and disgraceful things, and it is true Penn was a good son to him. My mother is well provided for, and I shall find something to do when peace is declared, for it is said when Lord North heard of the surrender, he beat his breast and paced the floor, crying out: 'Oh, God, it is all over, it is all over, and we have lost the colonies!' So that means the end of the war."

"And will you not stay a soldier? You are so brave and handsome, Andrew."

She meant it from her full heart, and the admiration shone in her eyes. But she was thinking that Rachel would never marry a soldier.

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"Nay, little one," smiling with manly tenderness. "I have no love for soldiering without a cause. When all is gained you will see even our great commander come back to private life. I think to-day he would rather be at Mount Vernon with his wife and the little Custis children than all the show and trappings of high military honors. And there should never be any love or lust of conquest except for the larger liberty."

Madam Wetherill comforted him with great kindness.

"I think thou wilt lose nothing in the end," she said gravely. For though she was somewhat set against cousins marrying, and Andrew seemed too grave a man for butterfly Primrose, she remembered Bessy Wardour had been very happy.

Allin Wharton could walk out with a cane, and found his way often down to Arch Street. He was sitting there one morning, making Primrose sing no end of dainty songs for him, when a chaise drove up to the door.

"Now there is a caller and I will sing no more for you," she exclaimed with laughing grace. "Some day these things will be worn threadbare with words falling out and leaving holes."

"And you can sing la, la, as you do sometimes when you pretend to forget, and so patch it up."

"Then my voice will get hoarse like a crow. Ah, someone asks for Miss Henry. How queer! I hardly know my own name."

She ran out heedlessly. Allin was no longer pale, and gaining flesh, but this man was ghostly, and for a moment she stared.

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"Oh, Phil! Phil!" she cried, and went to his arms with a great throb of sisterly love.

"Oh, Primrose! Surely you have grown beautiful by the hour. And such a tall girl—why, a very woman!"

"But how have you come? We have been waiting and waiting for word. Oh, sit down, for you look as if you would faint."

He took the big splint armchair in the hall, and she stood by him caressing his hand, while tears glittered on her lashes.

"I reached the town yesterday. I had not the courage to come, and was very tired with my journey, so I went to Mrs. Grayson's, on Second Street. I knew her during Howe's winter; some of

our officers were there."

"'Our.' Oh, Phil! now that all is over I want to hear you say 'my country.' For it is your birthplace. There must be no mine or thine."

"I am a poor wretch without a country, Primrose," he said falteringly.

"Nay, nay! You must have a share in your father's country. I shall not let you go back to England."

"I have thought the best place to go would be one's grave. Everything has failed. Friends are dead or strayed away. The cause is lost. For I know now no armies can make a stand against such men as these patriots. And if I had never gone across the sea, I suppose I should be one of them. But it is ill coming in at the eleventh hour, when you have lost all and must beg charity."

"But we have abundant charity and love."

"You are on the winning side."

Her beautiful, tender eyes smiled on him, and the tremulous lips tried not to follow, but she was proud of it, her country's side. [Pg 300]

"Oh, forgive me!" she cried in a burst of pity.

"Nay, Primrose, I am not so much of a coward but that I can stand being beaten and endure the stigma of a lost cause—an unjust cause, we shall have to admit sooner or later. But I seem to have been shilly-shallying, a sort of gold-lace soldier, and the only time I was ever roused—oh, Primrose! believe that I did not know who I should attack until it was too late."

"And, Phil, you will take it all back now. Come hither in the parlor. There is one soldier who will shake hands heartily without malice, and my Cousin Andrew is often dropping in—*your* cousin," in a sweet, unsteady voice, that was half a laugh and half a cry. "And we shall all be friends. Allin!"

He thought the name had never sounded so sweet and he would have gone up to the cannon's mouth if she had summoned him that way. She had caught it from Polly saying it so much.

But he hesitated a little, too. Besides the morning of the skirmish there had been the other encounter of hard words.

She took a hand of each and clasped them together, though she felt the resistance to the very finger ends. She smiled at one and at the other, and the sweetness of the rosy lips and dimpled chin was enough to conquer the most bitter enemies.

"Now you are to be friends, honest and true. This is what women will have to do: gather up the ends and tie them together, and make cunning chains that you cannot escape. Oh, there comes Madam Wetherill. See, dear aunt, I have reconciled Tory and Rebel!" and she laughed bewitchingly. [Pg 301]

Allin said he must go, but he did wish Philemon Nevitt had not come quite so soon. How queer it was to meet thus, but then, could any man resist Primrose Henry?

Afterward they had a long talk. It seemed true now that Philemon Nevitt stood very much alone in the world, and certainly whatever dreams he had entertained of greatness were at an end. They had not been so very ambitious, to be sure, but he was young yet and could begin a new life.

But first of all he was to get sound and in good spirits, and Madam Wetherill quite insisted that he should spend the winter in Philadelphia and really study the country he knew so little about.

Dinner-time came, and she would have him stay. Every moment he thought Primrose more bewitching. For when one decided she was all froth and gayety, the serious side would come out and a tenderness that suggested her mother. It was not all frivolity, and he found she was wonderfully well-read for a girl of that day.

Philemon Nevitt was more than surprised when his cousin made his appearance. There was something in the hearty clasp and full, rich voice that went to his lonely heart. Once he recalled that he had met the quiet Quaker in his farm attire in this very house, and the bareness of his uncle's home, at his call, had rather displeased his fashionable and luxurious tastes.

They could not help thinking of the time when they had met in what might have been deadly affray if Providence had not overruled. And now Andrew Henry was many steps up the ladder of success; and he was down to the very bottom. He felt almost envious. [Pg 302]

"But Andrew does not mean to be a soldier for life," Primrose declared afterward.

"What, not with this splendid prospect? And that martial air seems born with him. Why, it would be sinful to throw so much away when it is in his very grasp. I cannot believe it!"

"There is good Quaker blood in his veins as well," said Madam Wetherill with a smile. "And the fighting Quakers have been the noblest of all soldiers because they went from the highest sense of patriotism, not for any glory. And you will find them going back to the peaceful walks of life with as much zest as ever."

"Yet you are not a Quaker, though you use so much of the speech. And I miss the pretty

quaintness in Primrose. How dainty it was!"

Primrose ran away and in five minutes came back in a soft, gray silken gown, narrow and quite short in the skirt, a kerchief of sheer mull muslin crossed on her bosom, and all her hair gathered under a plain cap. Madam Wetherill was hardly through explaining that she had always been a Church of England woman, and one thing she had admired in Mr. Penn more than all his other wisdom, was his insistence that everyone should be free to worship as he chose.

"Oh, Primrose!" he cried in delight. "What queer gift do you possess of metamorphosis? For one would declare you had never known aught outside of a gray gown. And each change brings out new loveliness. Madam Wetherill, how do you keep such a sprite in order?"

"She lets me do as I like, and I love to do as she likes," was the quick reply, as she laid her pretty hand on the elder woman's shoulder, and smiled into her eyes.

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"She is a spoiled child," returned madam fondly. "But since I have spoiled her myself, I must e'en put up with it."

"But Mrs. Wharton spoils me too, and thinks the best of the house must be brought out for me. And even Aunt Lois has grown strangely indulgent."

"I believe I should soon get well in this atmosphere. And of course, Primrose," with a certain amused meaning, "you will never rest until I am of your way of thinking and have forsworn the king. Must I become a Quaker as well?"

"Nay, that is as thou pleasest," she said with a kind of gay sententiousness.

All of life was not quite over for him, Philemon Nevitt decided when he went back to Mrs. Grayson's house. It had been quite a famous house when the Declaration of Independence was pending, and held Washington, and Hancock, and many another rebel worthy. Then it had been a great place again in the Howe winter. Madam Wetherill had generously invited him to make her house his home, but he had a delicacy about such a step.

Early in December hostilities at the south ceased and the British evacuated Charleston. Preparations were made for a discussion of the preliminaries of peace. John Adams, John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, Jefferson, and Laurens were, after some discussion, named commissioners and empowered to act. General and Mrs. Washington came up to Philadelphia.

There was not a little wrangling in the old State House, for it was not possible that everyone should agree. And if the men bickered the women had arguments as well. Some were for having an American King and degrees of royalty that would keep out commoners, but these were mostly Tory women.

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There was not a little longing for gayety and gladness after the long and weary strife, the deaths, the wounded soldiers, and all the privations. The elder people might solace themselves with card-playing, but the younger ones wanted a different kind of diversion.

The old Southwark Theater was opened under the attractive title of "Academy of Polite Science." Here a grand ovation was given to General Washington, "Eugenie," a play of Beaumarchais, being acted, with a fine patriotic prologue. The young women were refurbishing up their neglected French, or studying it anew, and the French minister was paid all the honors of the town. The affection and gratitude shown the French allies were one of the features of the winter.

Philemon Henry was proud enough of his pretty sister, and the still fine-looking grand dame Mrs. Wetherill. Then there was piquant Polly Wharton with her smiles and ready tongue, and even Andrew Henry was recreant enough to grace the occasion, which seemed to restore an atmosphere of amity and friendly alliance.

There was more than one who recalled the gay young André and his personations during the liveliest winter Philadelphia had ever known.

Dancing classes were started again, and the assemblies reopened. Many of the belles of that older period were married; not a few of them, like Miss Becky Franks, had married English officers, and were now departing for England since there was no more glory to be gained at war, and these heroes were somewhat at a discount.

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There were many young patriots and not a few Southerners who had come up with the army, for Philadelphia, though she had been buffeted and traduced, had proved the focus of the country, since Congress had been held here most of the time; here the mighty Declaration had been born and read, when the substance was treason, and here the flag had been made; here indeed the first glad announcement of the great victory had been shouted out in the silent night. So the old town roused herself to a new brightness. Grave as General Washington could be when seriousness was requisite, he had the pleasant Virginian side to his nature, and was not averse to entertainments.

Gilbert Vane had returned with the soldiers, and ere long he knew his friend was in the city; for Major Henry said the brother of Primrose was almost a daily visitor at Madam Wetherill's.

"And still a stout Tory, I suppose, regarding me as a renegade?" Vane ventured with a half smile.

"He has changed a great deal. Primrose, I think, lops off a bit of self-conceit and belief in the divine right of kings, at every interview. And he is her shadow."

"Then I should have no chance of seeing her," the young man said disappointedly.

"Nay. I think Cousin Phil nobler than to hold a grudge when so many grudges have been swept away. I find him companionable in many respects. He was in quite ill-health when he first came, but improves daily."

"He was like an elder brother to me always, and it was a sore pang to offend him. But I came to see matters in a new light. And I wonder how it was his sweet little sister did not convert him? She was always so courageous and charming, a most fascinating little rebel in her childhood. I should have adored such a sister. Indeed, if I had possessed one at home I should never have crossed the ocean."

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Andrew repeated part of this conversation to Primrose. He had been impressed with the young man's patriotism.

"Oh, you know, in a certain way, he was *my* soldier," she said with her sunniest smile. "And now I must see him. How will we plan it? For Phil is a little proud and a good deal obstinate. Polly would know how to bring it about, she has such a keen wit. And Allin would like him, I know. Polly shall give you an invitation for him at her next dance. And you must come, even if you do not dance."

Andrew gave an odd, half-assenting look. It was as Rachel had said long ago; in most things she wound him around her finger.

But at the first opportunity she put the subject cunningly to Philemon.

"What became of that old friend of yours, who changed your colors for mine, and went to fight my battles?" she asked gayly, one day, when they had stopped reading a thin old book of poems by one George Herbert.

"My friend? Oh, do you mean young Vane? I have often wondered. He went to Virginia—I think I told you. It was a great piece of folly, when there was a home for him in England."

"But if his heart was with us!" she remarked prettily with her soft winsomeness. "Art thou very angry with him?" and her beautiful eyes wore an appealing glance.

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"Primrose, when you want to subdue the enemy utterly, use 'thee' and 'thou.' No man's heart could stand against such witchery. Thou wilt be a sad coquette later on."

She laughed then at his attempt. There was always a little dimple in her chin, and when she laughed one deepened in her cheek.

"Surely I am spoiled with flattery. I should be vainer than a peacock. But that is not answering my question. I wonder how much thou hast of the Henry malice."

"Was I angry? Why, the defection seemed traitorous then. I counted loyalty only on the King's side. But I have learned that a man can change when he is serving a bad side and still be honest. He was a fine fellow, but I think he was tired of idleness and frivolity, and he fell in with some women who were of your way of believing, and their glowing talk fascinated him. One of them I know had a brother in the southern army."

"Then it was not *I* who converted him." She gave a pretty pout, in mock disappointment.

"I think you started it. Though New York had many rebels."

"And perhaps he will come back and marry one of them."

"He may be at that now. Nay," seriously, "more likely he is in some unknown grave. And he was very dear to me," with a manly sigh.

"Then you could forgive him?" softly.

"In his grave, yes. Alive, the question would be whether, being the victor, he would not crow over me. Oh, little Primrose, war is a very bitter thing after all. To think I came near to killing Cousin Andrew, and yet he holds no malice. What a big heart he has! I do not believe in Henry malice."

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"And *you* will hold no malice?"

"It is hardly likely I shall see him."

She turned around and pretended to be busy with the curtain so that he might not see the glad light shining in her eyes. But he was thinking of the old days when they were lads together and talked of what they would do when they were lords of Vane Priory and Nevitt Grange.

And when they met they simply looked into each other's eyes and clasped hands; the new disquiet being forgotten and the old affection leaping to its place. Just a moment. They were forming a little dance, and Lieutenant Vane was to lead with Miss Polly Wharton, while Primrose had Allin for a partner.

"You little mischief," and Phil gave Primrose a soft pinch afterward, "how did you dare? What if we had both been foes to the teeth?"

"Ah, I knew better. Andrew said he was longing to be friends, but would not dare make the first advances. And if you had refused to speak with him at this house you would not be gentlemanly."

"I should like to kiss you before everybody."

"It is not good manners."

"You will have a rival."

"I shall not like that. Whatever you do, no one shall be loved better than I."

"Not even a wife, if I should get one? Oh, you jealous little Primrose!"

"Let me see—if I should choose her——" And she glanced up archly.

"Then you would have me here forever. She would be a maiden of this quaint old town."

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"Then I shall choose her," triumphantly.

"Primrose, come and sing," said half a dozen voices.

And though Gilbert Vane listened entranced to the singing, he also had an ear for his friend. It was so good to be at peace with him, and they promised to meet the next day.

Madam Wetherill was glad to see the young lieutenant again. Her house seemed to be headquarters, as before, and nothing interested her more than to hear the story of the southern campaign from such an enthusiastic talker as Vane, for Andrew was rather reticent about his own share in these grand doings.

It was not a cold winter, and the spring opened early. Philadelphia seemed to rise from her depression and there were signs of business once more, although the finances of the nation were in a most troubled state. Shops were opening, stores put on their best and bravest attire, and suddenly there was a tremor in the very air, a flutter and song of birds, and a hazy, grayish-blue look about the trees that were swelling with buds, soon to turn into crimson maple blooms, and tender birch tassels and all beautiful greenery, such as moves the very soul, and informs it with new life.

In March the cessation of hostilities was agreed upon, and plans looking toward peace.

"Now, little rebel!" exclaimed Philemon Henry, "you must lay down your arms. Surely you should meet us half-way?"

"What arms?" archly, smiling out of mischievous eyes.

"A sharp and saucy tongue. Sometimes you are hardly just to Vane, and in your eyes he should be a patriot."

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"He is. But surely I do not talk half as bad as Mrs. Ferguson and Miss Jeffries. One would think, listening to them, that the Americans had no sense, and could not govern the country they fought for. Why do not people like these go back to England?"

"Shall I go?" in a voice of sad indecision.

"If you talked like that I should bid you a joyous send off! What a pity Miss Jeffries had not married one of Howe's officers; then she would have to go when they are all sent out of the country. And poor old Mr. Jeffries hath quite lost his head. Aunt hates to play with him any more, for he loses incessantly."

"But do not the soldiers need something out of the fund?"

They both laughed at that.

"No doubt we could still find some with well-worn shoes. But the need not being urgent, she hates to impoverish the old man who hath lost so much. For it seems he made some heavy bets upon Lord Cornwallis reducing the southern Colonies and entering Philadelphia in triumph. And even now he is sure the King will never consent to the separation."

"Which shows how much the King loved the Colonies."

"A queer love, that would deprive them of any kind of freedom. No, my kind of love is broad and generous, and not thinking how much profit one can squeeze out," and her lovely eyes were deep with intense feeling.

"When wilt thou give me a little of this measure?"

"Oh, Phil, am I very naughty and cross?" and her sweet voice would have disarmed anyone. "But I think sometimes you are only half converted. You talk of returning to England, and it grieves me."

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"But if I stay here I must find some business. I am not very lucky at cards. I have resigned my position, and now that poor old Sir Wyndham is dead and the income shrunk sadly, I can count on no more from that quarter. There is only the interest on what my dear father invested for me, and that may pay but poorly. They will hardly want to make a rebel officer of me, since if peace comes they will disband many of the regiments. To beg I am ashamed. I hardly know how to work. If I went home and re-enlisted—England always hath some wars on hand."

"They are a naughty, quarrelsome nation, and then they wonder how we come to have so much spunk and bravery! No, thou shalt not go back. Business here will stir up. Then men talk to Madam Wetherill about it. And I think thou hast wit enough to learn. Thou shalt get settled here,

and—and marry some pretty rebel wife——"

"And quarrel with her?" mirthfully.

"Nay, she shall be better tempered than I. Everybody hath spoiled me, and I am a shrew. No man will ever want to marry me, and I am glad of that."

CHAPTER XXI.

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AN APRIL GIRL.

"On Thursday next I shall have a birthday," said Primrose Henry. "And I shall be seventeen. Yet I never can catch up with Polly, who is nineteen."

"Well—some day thou wilt be nineteen. And what shall we do for thee? Wilt thou have a party?"

"I am tired of parties, and it is growing warm to dance. I believe in a fortnight or so the army is to leave. Andrew is going with the commander at first, but, if he is not needed, will come back. He makes such a handsome soldier."

"Thou art a vain little moppet, always thinking whether people look fine or not."

"But Andrew is handsome of himself. I wish Phil came up to six feet and past. I think the Nevitts could not have been overstocked with beauty."

"How thou dost flout the poor lad! I wonder that he loves thee at all!"

"But I love him," with charming serenity.

"And show it queerly."

Primrose gave her light, rippling laugh.

"I think"—after a pause, twirling her sewing around by the thread—"I think we will all take a walk about the dear old town. Then we will come home and have tea, and rest ourselves."

"But why not ride? I am too old and too stout to be trotting about, and Patty is hardly——"

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"Patty will flirt with my fine cousin. Oh, I have caught her at it. You would be amazed to know the secrets they have with each other, and the low-toned talk that goes on. I have to be severe, and to be severe on one's birthday would be hard indeed."

Madam Wetherill laughed.

"Betty Mason was complaining of being so mewed up all winter. And now her baby is old enough to leave, and she might come down and see the changes planned for the town, and the other changes since the winter she had her gay fling. What a little girl I was! And she being a widow can watch us, but Phil has such sharp eyes that he might be a veritable dragon. He will not let me buy a bit of candied calamus unless the boy is under ten, he is so afraid I shall be looked at. And there will be Polly's brother to watch her. But Betty will have two attendants, which is hardly fair, and she thinks Gilbert Vane quite a hero."

"And Andrew Henry?"

"Oh, she is soft-hearted about him because he has lost his fortune. And Gilbert Vane is like to lose his in the general settling up. So she can administer the same kind of consolation to both."

"Thou hast a shrewd way of allotting matters. Poor Betty! It will be nice to ask her since you both have brothers to watch over you. And you will not stray very far? Then what delicacies will you have for supper?"

"Oh, we shall be hungry as wolves. I must see what Mistress Kent can give us. She thinks soldiers have grown hollow by much tramping and cannot be filled up."

Madam Wetherill smiled indulgently.

They all promised to come. Julius went out on Wednesday and brought in Betty, who was delighted with the outing.

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But when Primrose opened her eyes at six in the morning there was a gentle patter everywhere, and dashes on the window pane. But, oh! how sweet all the air was, and the clouds were having a carnival in the sky, chasing each other about in the vain endeavor to cover up the bits of laughing blue.

"Patty," in a most doleful voice, "it rains!"

"To be sure, child," cheerfully. "What would you have on an April day? And if it rains before seven 'twill clear before eleven. There will be no dust for your walk."

"You are a great comforter, Patty. Are you sure it will stop by noon?"

"Oh, la, yes! April days can never keep a whole mind."

"That must be the reason I am so changeable."

"I dare say. But I was born in November, and I like to change my mind. 'Twould be a queer world if people were like candles, all run in one mold."

"But there are fat candles and thin candles."

"And they are always round. Folks have corners. They're queer-like and pleasant by spells, and you can't see everything about them at a glance. We must have candles, but I have a hankering for folks as well."

Primrose laughed and ran to Betty, who was not as philosophical, and was afraid that the day was spoiled.

"The wind is west," said Madam Wetherill.

Sure enough, by nine it was a radiant day. The two girls chattered, for Betty was only three-and-twenty, and the news from Virginia had put new heart in her.

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"You must talk to Lieutenant Vane as much as you can. You see, he was there so much longer than Andrew, and knew more about everything. And he is such a splendid American! But he may have to give up Vane Priory, which Phil says was beautiful. Or, rather, it will be confiscated. General Howe sent over word when he joined our army. It is hard to be called a traitor and a deserter when you are doing a noble deed. But he doesn't seem very disheartened over it."

"It is very brave of him."

Primrose brought out her pretty frocks and her buckles and some of her mother's trinkets she was allowed to wear, and Betty told over various Virginian gayeties, and the sun went on shining. So, quite early Polly and Allin came. Allin had decided to study law, for his ambition had been roused by the appointment of really learned men to discuss the points of coming peace. And there would always be legal troubles to settle, property boundaries to define, wills to make, and Allin admitted he had seen quite enough of war, though, if the country needed him, he should go again. But Gilbert Vane was a truly enthusiastic soldier.

When Andrew came he announced that the company was to be ready to start next week. General Washington would have his quarters for some time up the Hudson, so as to be ready for a descent on New York if England should start the war afresh on any pretext.

Certainly the afternoon was beautiful. People were beginning with gardens, and climbing roses were showing green stems. And the tall box alleys were full of new sprouts, betraying a great contrast to the deep green that had withstood the frosts of many winters.

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There was a ferry over Dock Creek; indeed, there were but few bridges, but being ferried over was more to their taste. Then they walked up Society Hill, where some fine, substantial houses were being put up. There were the city squares, and, far over, a great ragged waste, with tree stumps everywhere.

"That is what you did in Howe's winter—cut down all the beautiful woods—Governor's woods," Primrose said resentfully. "There are traces of you everywhere. It will take years and years for us to forget it or remedy it."

"But do you not suppose the soldiers around Valley Forge cut down the woods as well? You would not have them freeze. And the poor men here wanted a little warmth," said Phil.

"There was plenty of waste land where you could have gone," in her severest tone.

"I thought myself there were many acts of vandalism," commented Vane. "But I believe it is the rule of warfare to damage your enemy all you can. Think of the magnificent cities the old Greeks and Romans destroyed utterly."

"They were half savages, idolaters, believing in all sorts of gods. And you pretended to be Christians!"

"You were so sweet a moment ago, Primrose," said her brother.

"Unalloyed sweetness is cloying. You need salt and spice as well. And I always feel afraid I shall forgive you too easily when I look at those poor stumps and pass the jail."

"You can remember all one's sins easily," Phil retorted rather gloomily.

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"And one's virtues, too, behind one's back. Never fear her loyalty, Mr. Nevitt." Phil had insisted everyone should drop his military cognomen. "You should have heard her solicitude when no word came from you, and was there not some joy in her face when you appeared that could not have put itself into words?" cried Allin Wharton eagerly, for he always resented the least suspicion of a non-perfection in Primrose.

"Now I will cross thee off my books," blushing and trying to look stern. "Allin Wharton! To betray a friend in that manner!"

"To recount her virtues," and Betty Mason laughed over to the pretty child. "She has a right to be

like an April day."

"And I found this pretty conceit in some reading," interposed Vane. "We should have tried our pens in your behalf, Mistress Primrose, but I knew nothing of this birthday except just as we met, so I can only offer second-hand, but then 'tis by a famous fellow:

"May never was the month of love,
For May is full of flowers,—
But rather April wet by kind,
For love is full of showers."

"Am I such a crying girl?" Primrose's face was a study in its struggle not to smile.

"And here is another." Andrew Henry half turned:

"When April nods, with lightsome smiles
And Violets all a-flower;
Her willful mood may turn to tears
Full twice within an hour."

"Then I am very fickle—and bad tempered, and—and——" There was deep despair in the voice.

"And Primrose, an April girl who can have whatever mood she chooses," said Wharton. "I wish I had known one was to bring posies of thought and I would have looked up one. How I envy those people who can write acrostics or sudden verses, and all I know seem to have gone from me." [Pg 318]

Primrose made a mocking courtesy. "Thank you. We can all go and gather violets. I know a stretch of woods the British left standing, where the grass is full of them. And a bit of stream that runs into the Schuylkill. Oh, and a clean, well-behaved mead-house where one can get delightful cheesecake. Now that we have reached the summit, look about the town. A square, ugly little town, is it not?"

"It is not ugly," Polly protested resentfully.

The rivers on either side, the angle with docks jutting out, and creeping up along the Delaware, Windmill Island and the Forts; the two long, straight streets crossing at right angles, and even then rows of red-brick cottages, but finer ones as well, with gardens, some seeming set in a veritable park; and Master Shippen's pretty herd of deer had been brought back. There were Christ Church and St. Peter's with their steeples, there were more modest ones, and the Friends' meeting house that had held many a worthy.

"It is well worth seeing," said Betty Mason. "Some of the places about make me think of my own State and the broad, hospitable dwellings."

"Oh, but you should see Stenton and Clieveden! and the Chew House at Germantown is already historical. There is to be a history writ of the town, I believe, and all it has gone through!" exclaimed Polly.

Then they begin to come down in a kind of winding fashion. Women are out making gardens and tying up vines, some of them in the quaint, short gown and petticoat, relegated mostly to servants. Then Friends, in cap and kerchief; children in the fashion of their parents, with an odd made-over appearance. [Pg 319]

"It will be a grand city if it stretches out according to Mr. Penn's ideas. And oh, Betty! you must see the old house in Letitia Street, with its dormer windows and odd little front door with its overhanging roof. And the house on Second Street that is more pretentious, with its slated roof. If the talk is true about peace there are great plans for the advancement of the town. They are going to cut down some of the hills and drain the meadows that the British flooded," and Primrose glanced sidewise at her brother's face with a half-teasing delight. "So, if the dreams of the big men who govern the city come true, there will presently be no old Philadelphia. I hear them talking of it with Aunt Wetherill."

They wander on, now and then changing places and partners, having a little merry badinage. Polly keeps coming to the rescue where Philemon Nevitt is concerned.

There are other gay parties out rambling; some with hands full of wild flowers, laughing and chatting, occasionally bestowing a nod on the Whartons and Primrose, and staring perhaps unduly at the tall fine soldier with his martial air and uniform, hardly suspecting the Quaker heart underneath.

"Now that we have come so near I bethink me of an errand for Mistress Janice Kent," exclaimed Primrose. "And you will like to see the row of small, cheerful houses where some poor women come, some poor married folks when life has gone hard with them. See here is Walnut Street. Let us turn in. It is an old, old place that somebody left some money to build." [Pg 320]

"Old John Martin," said Andrew. "Yes, I have been here. It is a snug, pretty place, not an alms-house."

"My old lady is not in this long, plain house, but around in Fourth Street, in her own little cottage. See how quaint they are?"

A narrow passage like a green lane ran through the center. Small, one-storied cottages, with a doorway and a white-curtained window; a steep roof with a window in the end to light the garret. There was a garden with each. There were fruit trees ready to burst into bloom, so sheltered were they. There were grape arbors, where old men were smoking and old ladies knitting.

One old lady had half a dozen little children in her room, teaching a school. One was preparing dried herbs in small cardboard boxes. There were sweet flavors as of someone distilling; there was a scent of molasses candy being made, or a cake baked, even new, warm biscuit.

Everybody seemed happy and well employed.

"It is something like the Church Charities at home," said Vane, "only much more tidy and beautiful."

"It is where I shall come some day," announced Primrose with a plaintive accent, as if she were at the end of life.

"You!" Polly glanced at her with surprised eyes, hardly knowing whether to laugh or not.

"As if you would ever have need!" declared Betty Mason.

"But they are not very poor, you see. They have to be worthy people and nice people, who have been unfortunate. And when I am old I shall beg one of the little houses to live in. I think I shall make sweet flavors and raise herbs." [Pg 321]

She looked so utterly grave and in earnest that both Wharton and Lieutenant Vane stared as if transfixed.

"What nonsense!" exclaimed her brother. "As if there would not always be someone——"

"But I shall live to be very old, I know. Aunt Wetherill tells of one of the Wardour women who lived to be a hundred and two years old, ever so long ago, in England. And it is hardly probable, Phil, that you can live to be one hundred and ten or more, and, if you did, you would most likely be helpless," in an extremely assured tone.

"Well, you would not be poor," he subjoined quickly, indignantly.

"How do you know? Some of the people here have been in comfortable circumstances. And, two days ago, when Mr. Northfield was over he was talking about some of papa's property that had nearly gone to ruin—been destroyed, I think, and would take a good deal to repair it. And—eighty or ninety years is a long time to live. There may be another war—people are so quarrelsome—and everything will go then! Betty's house was burned, and her father's fine plantation laid waste. And Betty is not very much older than I, and all these misfortunes have happened to her."

The whole four men are resolved in their secret hearts that no sorrow or want will ever come to her, even if she should outlive them all.

They reached Mrs. Preston's cottage and Primrose delivered her message. Then they lingered about, and Betty concluded it would be no great hardship to come here when one was done with other pleasures and things, and had little to live upon. [Pg 322]

"It is a delightful spot," said Vane, "and I never dreamed of it before. That it should have been here all through that winter——"

"But you were dancing and acting plays!"

"Don't call up any more of my bad, mistaken deeds! Have I not convinced you that I repented of them, and am doing my best to make amends?"

The fire in Vane's eyes awed Primrose, conquered her curiously, and a treacherous softening of the lines about her sweet mouth almost made a smile.

"And now what next?" commented Polly. "Do you know how we are loitering? Has the place charmed us? I never thought it so fascinating before."

It was to charm many a one, later on, like a little oasis in the great walls of brick that were to grow about it, of traffic and noise and disputations that were never to enter here, and to have a romance, whether rightly or wrongly, that was to call many a one thither at the thought of Evangeline. And so a poet puts an imperishable sign on a place, or a historian a golden seal.

"We were to go somewhere else. And see where the sun is dropping to. It always slides so fast on that round part of the sky."

"Yes, the most beautiful little place, and to get our violets. Betty, when they are all gone we will have long days hunting up queer corners and things. And somewhere—out at Dunk's Ferry—there is a strange sort of body who tells fortunes occasionally—when she is in *just* the humor. And that makes it the more exciting, because you can never quite know. We will take Patty; we can find all the strange corners." [Pg 323]

"Why couldn't we all go? To have one's fortune told—not that I believe in it," and Vane laughed.

"Then you have no business to have it told. And Miss Jeffries runs over the cards and tells ever so many things, and they *are* really true. You will meet her again some evening."

Gilbert Vane blushed. The fortune he wanted to hear was not one with which he would like a whole roomful entertained.

"It is this way."

Primrose walked on ahead with Andrew Henry.

"There is a suspicious-looking cloud, bigger than a man's hand."

"Oh, then let us hurry! Nonsense, Phil, why do you alarm a body? See how the sun shines. It is going past. Now—down at the end of this lane——"

Just then some great drops fell. Primrose ran like a sprite and turned a triumphant face to the others when she was under shelter.

It was indeed a fairy nook with a strip of woods back of it. A little thread of a stream ran by on one side. In summer, when the trees were in full leaf, it would be a bower of greenery. A low, story-and-a-half house, with a porch running all across the front, roofed over with weather-worn shingles. The hall doors, back and front, stand wide open, and there is a long vista reaching down to the clump of woods made up of a much-patched-up trellis with several kinds of vines growing over it to furnish a delightful shade in summer. Some benches in the shining glory of new green paint stand along the edge. There was a small table with three people about it, and the stout, easy-going hostess, who pronounced them "lucky," as there comes a three-minutes' fierce downpour of rain while the sun is still shining, then stops, and everything is beaded with iridescent gems. The very sky seems laughing, and the round sun fairly winks with an amused joviality.

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In the small front yard the grass is green and thickly sown with tulips that have two sheath-like leaves of bluish-green enfolding the bud. "It will be a sight presently," exclaimed Polly, "but so will most of the gardens. Why, we might be Hollanders, such a hold has this tulip mania taken of us!"

By craning their necks a little they can look out on the Delaware and see the ambitious little creek rushing into it. The glint of the sun upon the changing water is magnificent.

"What a beautiful spot! Why, Polly, have we ever been here before?" asked Allin.

"No, I think not. There are some places very like it on the Schuylkill. But I do not remember this."

Then the hostess comes to inquire what she can serve them with. There is fresh birch beer, there is a sassafras metheglin made with honey, there is mead, and she looks doubtfully at the two soldiers as if her simple list might not come up to their desires.

"And cheesecake?" ventured Primrose.

"Oh, yes! and wafers and gingerbread, and real Dutch doughnuts."

Primrose glanced around, elated. Her birthday treat was to be a success.

So they sat and refreshed themselves and jested, with Primrose in her sunniest mood, while the sun dropped lower and lower and burnished the river.

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"I wonder if there are many violets in the woods."

"Oh, yes, indeed!" answered the woman. "It's rather early for many people to come and I am out of the way until they begin to sail up and down the river; that's when it is warmer, though to-day has been fine enough."

"Suppose we go and gather the violets," suggested Philemon.

"Of course we expect you to go, don't we, Polly? But then we are going also."

"Won't it be wet?"

"Not with that little sprinkle!" cried Primrose disdainfully.

There were dozens of pretty spring things in the woods, but violets were enough. Large bluish-purple ones, down to almost every gradation. Then Betty thought of an old-time verse and Lieutenant Vane of another.

"But it should be primroses," he said. "If we were at home in English haunts we should find them. I don't know why I say at home, for I doubt if it is ever my home again."

"I am a more hopeful exile than you," commented Betty Mason. "My country will be restored to me, and I shall never forget that you helped."

What large, soft, dark eyes she had, and a voice with a peculiar lingering cadence; but it did not go to one's heart like that of Primrose.

The sun was speeding downward. It was a long walk home. Andrew Henry headed the procession with his cousin, and Vane followed with Betty, so it was Polly who had the two attendants, and Allin was rather out of humor.

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Janice Kent had a birthday supper for them, but with the treat at Larch Alley, and, perhaps, some fatigue, they were not ravenous. Primrose sang for them and was bewilderingly sweet—Andrew

thought, just as the day had been, full of caprices but ending in tender beauty. And then they drank her health and wished her many happy returns, bidding her a very fervent good-night.

There had been a good deal of enthusiasm about General Washington, and many very warm friends had sympathized deeply with Mrs. Washington in her sorrow. Plans of a new campaign had also been discussed. The city was sorry to relinquish its noble guests. Society had taken on an aspect of dignified courtesy; contending parties had ceased to rail at each other, and there was a greater air of punctilious refinement, that was to settle into a grace less formal than that of the old-time Quaker breeding, but more elegant and harmonious. A new ambition woke in the heart of the citizens to beautify, adorn, and improve. There was a stir in educational circles, and the library that had languished so long was making its voice heard. Peace was about to have her victory.

Andrew Henry was closeted a long while one morning with Madam Wetherill.

"I shall go to Newburgh with the General," he said, "but if there is to be no more war I shall resign my commission. That sounds almost like a martial declaration in favor of war, but it is not so. I was not meant for a soldier except in necessity. There are those whom the life really inspires, and who would be only too glad to fill my place. I could not step out with such a clear conscience if I were a private. And since you have been good enough, madam, to ask me about plans, I must confess that I have not gone very far in any. There are, no doubt, farms around that I could hire and make profitable, but my mother no longer has the strength and energy to be at the head of such a place. I have thought something might open here in the city that would enable me to make a home for her and myself; that is my ambition now. I do not feel that I ought to leave her to the care of my Cousin Rachel while she has a son of her own. True, her home is left to her there, but she is not compelled to stay in it."

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"And Rachel may marry."

"I think she will. She is a smart and capable woman, but it is hard doing all things and managing alone; though now she and Penn have made up over a little coldness. He will till Faith's land for the present. The greatest profit, the cherries, and one good orchard belongs to Rachel, so she is well to do. However, I want my dear mother with me, and by mid-summer I may return."

"I have been thinking somewhat about thee. There will be great changes in the town. Trade already is stirring up, and commerce will begin again when the restrictions are removed. But it is in the very heart of things where we may look for the greatest changes. There have been many years of doubt and hesitation, but now there is a great expanding of enterprise. James Logan and Mr. Chew were discussing it not many mornings since. The city must almost be made over, as one may say. I own a great deal of waste property, and plantations in Maryland. There is also considerable belonging to Primrose."

"But there is her brother, madam. The more I see of Philemon Henry the better I like him. He hath had a hard year, a year of great disappointment and mortification, and he comes out of it with more bravery than I supposed possible for one whose opinions have been so strongly the other way. Why not give him a helping hand?"

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"You are very honorable, Friend Henry, and I respect you for it. Then," laughingly, "do you think you two could ever come to an agreement and be friendly as brothers if your interests were identical?"

"I could answer for myself," he said with respectful gravity.

"For many years the old house of Henry & Co. had an excellent standing. Mr. Northfield was much the elder and it seemed as if he might go years the first, but he did not. Now he wishes to be relieved of all the affairs of our dear Primrose. And I have thought, with some assistance and a good deal of energy on the part of two young people if they should agree, there might be a new house of Henry & Co., with its reputation half made to begin with. I know Philemon will agree. He hath already proposed to take a position under Mr. Morris, and seems only anxious now to earn a living in some respectable way. But I wanted to consult thee first."

"I thank thee a thousand times, dear madam. Am I losing Quaker simplicity?" and he smiled gravely. "I am afraid I have acquired a good many worldly ways."

"A little worldliness will not hurt thee. In sooth my plan would call for a large share of it, but I want the old-fashioned trustiness and integrity. When times change men and women, too, must change with them. I should like to see thee a solid and respected citizen of the town—of the new town that is to be."

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"Thou dost honor me greatly. And I must confess to thee, since seeing larger men and larger issues, a higher ambition has stirred within me. If it had so fallen out that I had gone back to the farm, I could not have been content with the old plodding round. And when it was taken from me it seemed in some degree the work of Providence that I should have been pushed out of the old nest and made to think on new lines."

"Then wilt thou carry my idea with thee and consider it well? There need be no haste. Thy return will do."

Much moved, he pressed her hand warmly. Then he carried it to his lips with the grace of a courtier.

CHAPTER XXII.

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POLLY AND PHIL.

The city seemed quite dull when the Commander-in-Chief and his staff had departed for Newburgh. The feeling of peace grew stronger every day. The country mansions along the Schuylkill began to take on new life, and the town to bestir itself. True, finances were in the worst possible shape from the over issue of paper money, and in many instances people went back to simple barter.

The Randolphs were very much at home on the farm. Betty's two babies were cunning little midgets, the elder a boy, the younger a girl. Primrose fell very much in love with them. Here was something she need not be afraid of loving with all her might.

"Only I wish I had not been seventeen," she cried pettishly. "I can't see how Polly gets along with so many admirers. I do not want any. There is something in their eyes when they look at you that sends a shiver over me."

"Has Polly so many?" asked madam, rather amused.

"Why, yes. Just a few evenings ago young Mr. Norris came in and then Mr. Ridgway. I thought they quite glowered at each other. And what one said the other sniffed about as if it was hardly worth saying. And Mr. Ridgway thought cards stupid, and Phil grew quite cross and said we would come home. It is very pleasant when there is no one there, we four can agree so well."

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"At card-playing?" in a rather diverted manner.

"Not always, not often indeed. We sing and talk and say over verses. There are so many in that old ballad book. But lovers seem always to break one's heart and to love the wrong one. I shall never have a lover. I shall never marry," and her sweet voice has a delightful severity.

Madam Wetherill really laughs then.

"Oh, I am in earnest. You shall see. For when I called on Anabella yesterday she flung her arms around my neck and cried out—'Oh, Primrose, never, never marry! I wish I could undo my marriage. Men are so selfish and care so little for one after they get them. And they all say the same thing as lovers. Captain Decker was going to die if he could not have me, and he marched off, never writing a word afterward. And so said Mr. Parker, and now he thinks of nothing but his dinner and his pipe afterward, and his nap, and having his clothes all laid out in the morning and brushed, and does not want to go out anywhere, nor have company at home. And the two hateful children brawl all the time, and their father scolds because I cannot keep them in order. 'Tis a wretched life and I hate it!' What think you of that, dear madam?"

"It was not a wise marriage, but I am sorry Anabella is so unhappy. There is plenty of time yet for thee to have lovers, so do not trouble thy golden head."

"Phil has grown so good to take me out everywhere. And we are all going up to the farm some day to get Betty, and then on up the Schuylkill. There are so many beautiful places, and now that May has brought everything out in bloom, all the roads and by-ways are like pictures. And Betty wants to see Valley Forge; so, for that matter, do I. But Phil is worrying about some work Mr. Morris promised him."

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"Yes. There are some other things to see to. Mr. Northfield wants to instruct him about the estate, for he is very poorly."

"It seems a shame for me to have so much and Phil nothing," she said tentatively.

"Perhaps there will not be so very much when things come to be settled. Do not be disturbed about Phil. A true man would scorn to take from a woman."

There were many delightful rides in the country about, many historical places on both sides of the river, queer interests at Germantown, where people had gone back to their old employments, and were spinning and weaving and making furniture and carving. There were no lack of reminders of the great battle in some ruins that had never been rebuilt, and men still working cheerfully who had lost an arm or a leg. There was the brave old Chew house that had proved indestructible.

And there was another old house, quite dilapidated now and in charge of an old couple, who, for any trifle people chose to give, would exhibit a curious arrangement of cogs and wheels and mysterious wires that a great many years before a man, named Redhefer, claimed possessed the secret of perpetual motion. It always went day and night, as the neighbors could testify. Men of curious or scientific leanings paid to see the wonderful machine. And one day the secret was found out. There was a curious crank in the loft connected by wires in the wall, and a kind of clock arrangement, that kept it going. This part of the loft being roughly boarded up, and the loft itself kept for mere rubbish, no one suspected it.

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There were School Lane, and the Schuylkill falls, really beautiful then, and the lovely Wissahickon, famous for its abundant supply of fish, and places one could ramble about forever.

Betty Mason was a charming companion. Philemon often had them all, for Allin was busy with his studies and some plans he nursed in secret, now that Andrew Henry and Vane were both away.

Penn Morgan and Clarissa Lane stood up in meeting one evening and plighted their marriage vows. Rather unwillingly Rachel offered them accommodation in her house, but Penn had fixed up a room in the barn that would do very well until two rooms in the new house were finished, and Clarissa was very happy, and was also very respectful to Aunt Lois. But the great interest had gone out of the old house, and she did not feel at home any more. However, she rested serenely in Andrew's promise that before very long he would have a home to take her to.

Rachel had hoped and despaired alternately. She had a strong, stubborn will under her plain exterior and quiet manner. And she hated not to succeed in anything she undertook. It seemed to her one of the most natural and most reasonable things in the world that Andrew should marry her when his parents strongly desired it. In her estimation it was an absolute sin for him to go against the opinion of the brethren and become a soldier. Yet she was willing to forgive it all and help lead him back in the right way.

It was but justice that Penn should be rewarded for his care and patience. She had not expected so much, but Aunt Lois, left to her charge, would surely have some influence over him, and now that peace was likely to be declared he would return, and his old home might be dear to him. So she would not give up hope, but she did give up her foolish jealousy of Primrose. She had the girl's solemn promise, but what comforted her more than all was the rumor of young Wharton being quite devoted to the girl.

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What a summer it was to Primrose! They were out at the farm, but matters were much more quiet. The young women who had been so gay and entertaining were mostly married, and Madam Wetherill was very much engrossed with business matters. She found Philemon Henry very clear-headed. And as he came to know more about the Colonies, and the causes that led to the rebellion, he found there was more injustice on the side of England, but that even there they had not all been of one mind.

So he was being gradually Americanized, though he and Primrose still had disputes. But Polly had such a fascinating fashion of sometimes turning an argument against Primrose, or picking a weak place in hers until one could not help seeing it. And then Primrose would fly into a pretty ruffle of temper with both of them, and presently suffer herself to be coaxed around.

"I suppose I am like April," she said ruefully one morning, when she and Polly had had a disagreement. They were staying at the farm, and the day before they had all been up to Valley Forge, and climbed up the hill and down again. In the early morning both of the young men had gone down to the city.

"Do you think it really can influence anyone?" she inquires with charming gravity. "Then I should suppose a person born in July, under scorching suns, would be fiery-tempered."

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"Do you know of anyone born in July?"

"Why, yes," laughing in a dainty fashion. "Betty for one, and she is sweet and good-humored; and there is Cousin Andrew."

"Then the sign does not hold good."

"I don't know where I could have gotten all my temper from. Mamma was lovely, Phil says, and Aunt Wetherill gives her credit for all the virtues."

"I do not think it is real temper. It is love of tormenting—poor Phil."

"And, Polly, you always take his part."

"Yes." Polly's face turned scarlet to the very tips of her ears. Even her fingers showed pink against the white ruffle she was hemming.

"Oh, you don't mean—Polly, I never thought of *that!*" in great surprise.

"You may think of it now," in a soft, quivering tone. "Though it is almost—nothing."

Primrose threw herself down beside Polly and clasped her knees.

"And he never so much as suggested it to me. He might have——" in a plaintively aggrieved tone.

"Don't be angry. It was just a word, this morning. But I think we both knew. And I loved him long ago, when he was a King's man, and you flouted him so and delighted in being untender, when he loved you so."

"And you would have—do you mean to marry him? and would you have married a—a——"

"No, I shouldn't have married anyone who was fighting against my country. But you really did not do him any justice." Now that Polly was started she rushed along like a torrent in a storm. "He was brought up to think England right, and he knew nothing about the Colonies or the temper and the courage of the people. If you were taken to Russia when you were very little, and everybody was charming to you, you might think what they did was right and nice, and we know they are awfully barbarous! And I thought it real fine and manly in him to prefer the hardships of war to the pleasures in New York. And he never raised his hand but once, and wasn't it queer

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that he and Allin and Andrew should have been in the *mêlée*, and now be such good friends? But when he saw that it was Andrew, he was quite horrified. And I think it is very manly of him just to renounce the King for good and all, while there are ever so many Tories right around us sighing again for his rule, and making all sorts of evil predictions. The broadest and finest man I know is Andrew Henry."

"And why did you not fall in love with him?" asked Primrose in great amaze.

"Because, silly child, my heart went out to the other when you tormented him so and gave him such little credit, and could not see the earnest side to him. I should hate a man that could be lightly won over. I like him to look on both sides."

"Was I very cruel?" Primrose was appalled by the charges. "But truly, Polly, when he first came and the British were so lordly, thinking they owned the whole earth, I could not bear to have him claim me and talk of taking me to England and have me go to court and all that;" and Primrose shook her shining curly head defiantly, while her oval cheeks bloomed.

"Surely, Primrose, thou didst not have a Quaker temper either," rejoined Polly laughingly. "I doubt if thou wouldst turn the other cheek even for a kiss, much less a blow."

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"The man would get the blow back in short order."

The beautiful blue eyes turned almost black with indignation at the thought, and sent out rays that might have blinded an unfortunate culprit.

The girls looked at each other as fiercely as two hearts brimming over with love, and eyes in an April shower could look, and then they fell on each other's neck and cried in honest girl-fashion for just nothing at all, as girls did a hundred or so years ago.

"And you are quite sure you will never quarrel with me?" besought Primrose. "It must be lovely to have a sister, though Rachel and Faith were not happy. Poor Faith! She hath grown strangely loving, and I know not what she would do if it were not for Aunt Lois."

"Thou art the dearest and sweetest little thing in all the world, and though I may sometimes scold thee for thy naughtiness, I shall always love thee. And now I must sew, for my mother declares I never do anything out here at the farm. And Betty is so industrious, making clothes for the babies."

Then they were still a moment or two while the sunshine rippled all about, for they were sitting out under a tree, and the wind made a pretty dance in the tall grass, and seemed to whisper among the boughs, and push the heads of the shrubs toward each other as if they might be kissing. Overhead the birds sang with wild bursts of melody or went dazzling through the air, cleaving the sunshine with swift wings.

"Perhaps I ought not have told you so soon," said Polly with a sigh. "It was just a word, the sweetest word a man can say, but then I had half guessed it before, and I knew he was waiting to have something to offer me. Mr. Norris does not seem very ready in finding him a place, and old Mr. Northfield takes so much of his time and has to tell him what a fine business man your father was, and how he did this and that, and people entrusted him with their estates and money to buy and sell, and no one ever lost a penny by him. So I suppose we will not be really promised until something is settled, and thou must keep my secret, little Primrose. For I know now that my father would look askance at it. Strange that people years ago could marry without thinking of money, but they are not willing their children shall. And there are men like the great Mr. Franklin, who sometimes hardly knew where to turn for bread, and come up to very luxurious living. But I am young, and Phil is not very old."

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"It all seems very strange and sweet," and Primrose threw herself down on the grass and leaned her arms on Polly's knee, while the wind tossed her pretty shining hair about. There was always so much short around the edge of her forehead, and such dainty, mischievous little curls on her white neck when she did it up high on her head. And whatever she did made a picture, she was so full of grace. When Gilbert Stuart painted her as a lovely matron with her baby beside her knee, he said: "What a pity there is no picture of you in your girlhood." He would have been justly proud if he could have painted her in all that grace and loveliness.

"And how can one tell?" she went on dreamily when Polly made no answer. "There are so many things in different ones to like, and you cannot put them all in one man. I love Andrew dearly. He was so good and tender when I first went out to his father's farm, and I was so frightened of Uncle James, and Aunt Lois was so grave and particular. But then Andrew will never dance—fancy the tall soldier! though the great generals do. And he is not over fond of pleasure."

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She threw up her pretty head, while a stray sunbeam through the trees danced over it in golden ripples, and her eyes laughed as well as her rosy, dimpled mouth.

There was a sudden start through Polly's nerves, but the gay, light, merry voice went on:

"And he will always be a Quaker, though he went to Christ Church with madam and me. But—don't you know, you can tell with some people, Polly, that things do not quite suit. And he is too grave to frolic, and oh, I do love dancing and frolicking and saucy speeches. A grave life would never suit me. And there is Mr. Hunter with his pink-and-white skin and his ruffles and his velvet clothes, and his clocked silk stockings and shoe buckles that he has polished with a peculiar kind

of powder that comes over from France—he told me so," laughing with dainty mirth and mischief. "When he comes to spend the evening I feel as if I should like to tear his finery to pieces as the old strutting cock sometimes gets torn when the others can no longer endure his overbearing ways. And there is Mr. Rittenhouse, who does nothing but talk of the Junta and the learned men of the Philadelphia Society, and the grand new hall they mean to build, and chemistry, as if one was so anxious to know what was in one's body and one's food and the air one breathed. Why, it would make life a burthen. To be sure, Betty says Mr. Franklin's stove is a most excellent thing, ever so much better than a fireplace, and that she will take one to Virginia with her. She had better take Mr. Rittenhouse as well!" and Primrose sent a host of delighted ripples on the sunny air. "Oh, there is Tot!"

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Tot was Betty Mason's three-year-old baby boy, and the next instant Primrose had forgotten her admirers and was tumbling in the grass with him.

There were two she had not mentioned: Allin Wharton and Gilbert Vane. But Polly said to her brother shortly after—growing very wise, as young women in love are apt to:

"Be careful not to go too fast, Allin, or you will stumble over a decided no. Primrose has no more idea of love than a two-year-old baby who answers everybody that smiles at him."

"But they haunt Madam Wetherill's in droves," flung out the over anxious young man.

"With the droves one has nothing to fear," counsels the wise young woman. "It is when there are only one or two, and much sitting around in corners and behind curtains and whispering that plots are hatched. And Primrose is fond of having ever so many enjoy her good time and mirthfulness. And, Allin, there is a great deal for you to do before lovemaking begins."

"I'm not so much worse off than Phil Henry."

"But Phil Henry is not dreaming of marrying," returned Allin's sister with dignified composure.

Meanwhile affairs dragged slowly on, but it was evident there were many things to discuss before a treaty of peace would be signed. There were various apprehensions of coming internal trouble. The public treasury was empty, officers and soldiers were clamoring for pay. There were endless discussions as to whether a republican form of government would be best and strongest. Of these Philadelphia had her full share, but there was a strong undercurrent. Had not the famous Declaration of Independence been born here and the State House bell pealed out the first tocsin of freedom? And here Congress had met year after year.

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Many of the soldiers had been discharged for wounds and ill health, and on their own earnest appeal. Some officers resigned; among them Andrew Henry, much to the regret of several of the generals.

"If the country needs me again I am hers to command," he said with much earnestness. "But I feel that I am needed at home and there are others who will be glad to fill my place. There are many brave privates who would be made happy by the reward of promotion."

"He is a brave man," said Mrs. Washington, "which is sometimes better than being a brave soldier. If the country had hundreds of such citizens her prosperity would be assured. I am sorry to part with many of them, but we shall all be glad of peaceful times and our own homes."

And so in the early autumn Andrew Henry came home and went back to his Quaker costume.

"Really," declared Mr. Logan, "one might think the elder Philemon Henry had come back to life. The nephew is more like him than the son, though the son is a fine intelligent man and will make an excellent citizen. Then he is a great favorite with Madam Wetherill, who has much in her hands."

CHAPTER XXIII.

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PRIMROSE.

With all the disquiet it had been an unusually gay summer for Philadelphia, even after the General and Mrs. Washington had bidden it adieu. For in June there had been a great fête given by the French minister in honor of the birth of the Dauphin, the heir to the throne of France. M. de Luzerne's residence was brilliantly illuminated, and a great open-air pavilion, with arches and colonnades, bowers, and halls with nymphs and statues, even Mars leaning on his shield, and Hebe holding Jove's cup. It was seldom indeed that the old Carpenter mansion had seen such a sight.

There were elegant women and brave men, though the Mischianza crowd had been widely scattered. The girls had danced, and chatted in French as far as they knew how, and enjoyed themselves to the full, and the elders had sat down to an almost royal banquet. Polly and Primrose had been among the belles.

Then there had been a grand Fourth of July celebration. A civic banquet, with Morris, Dickinson, Mifflin, and many another. Bells were rung and cannons fired, the Schuylkill was gay with

pleasure parties and fluttering flags and picnic dinners along its winding and pleasant banks. And then in August they had most loyally kept the French King's birthday with banquets and balls. And though financial ruin was largely talked of, a writer of the times declares "No other city was so rich, so extravagant, and so fashionable."

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And yet withal there was a serious and sensible element. There had before the war been many years of unexampled prosperity; and though there might be a whirl, people soon came back to reasonable living.

Truth to tell, Philemon Henry was becoming quite captivated with the city of his birth and his later adoption. And as he began to understand Madam Wetherill's views for his own future as well as that of his cousin, he was amazed at her generosity. "Nay, it is not simple generosity," she declared with great vigor. "There is no reason why you two should not make a place for yourselves in the new city, such as your father held in the old. Perhaps wider, for your father would have nothing to do with government, and a man ought to take some interest in the civic prosperity of his city as well as money-getting. Mr. Wetherill, whether wisely or not, put much money in property, and it has been a dead weight mostly. But now the time has come to improve it, and with peace there will be many changes and much work to do. I have grown too old, and a woman cannot well attend to it. Younger blood and strength must take it up. Then—if we make some mistakes, there is no one to suffer, though I did not expect to give even two well-trained colts their heads altogether."

He smiled, but there was a soft mistiness in his eyes.

"I can never thank you," he said unsteadily.

"I must trust someone, you see. Mr. Northfield is too old, Mr. Morris has his hands full; indeed, I can think of no one better. I have some of the Wardour willfulness, and take my own way about things. I do not often make mistakes. This is no sudden notion of mine."

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"There is one thing, madam, I must explain before we go farther. I am—I have"—he paused and flushed in embarrassment—"there is an understanding between myself and Miss Polly Wharton, not an engagement, for as yet I have had no certainty to offer. But we care very much for each other."

Madam Wetherill gave a quick nod or two and there was a smile in her bright eyes.

"Polly will make a good wife. Thou couldst hardly have chosen better. I would speak to Mr. Wharton and have the matter settled now. If he had not been of a consenting mind, thou wouldst hardly have found a welcome entrance for so long in his home."

"Madam—I never dreamed of being so happy."

"Oh, no doubt thou wilt be much happier on thy wedding day," and she laughed with a bright sparkle of amusement. "I am fond of young people, though they do many foolish things."

"But my sister?" he said suddenly. "We have forgotten about her. All these years of thy kind care —"

"Well—what of her? I loved her mother. I never had a child of my own, though a hen rarely runs after another hen's chicks. The little moppet stole into my heart, and by just raising her eyes inveigled me into fighting for her. Miss Primrose Henry has all the fortune it is good for a girl to have, and she is a gay butterfly to go dancing about for the next few years. Indeed, I believe she has quite made up her mind to stay single, to have many admirers, but no husband. It may not be a good plan, but there have been some famous old maids,—Queen Elizabeth, for instance,—while poor Marie Stuart began with husbands early and lost her head. We can dismiss Miss Primrose to her pleasures."

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Then they talked long and earnestly. Andrew Henry was coming home, and the matter would be settled.

And settled it was speedily. Andrew, having been consulted before, was not so much taken by surprise, but his gratitude was none the less fervent. And one Sunday morning Polly walked very proudly up the aisle in Christ Church, with her brother on one side, and her lover on the other, right behind her parents, and when they were seated in Mr. Wharton's pew, Polly was in the middle with her lover beside her, and he found the places in her prayer book and made responses with her and sang joyfully in the hymns. Coming out she took his arm, and blushed a good deal as people smiled at her. It was a fashion then, and everybody knew it was a sign of engagement.

"The young Englishman is very good-looking," said Miss Morris, "but I shall set my cap for the Quaker cousin. What a pity he gives up war and discards soldier clothes, for there is scarcely such a fine-appearing general!"

The young Quaker, mature and manly for his years, took hold of business as if it had been his birthright. Perhaps it had come to him with the resemblance to his uncle. And when Philemon Nevitt decided to take back his father's name, Polly and Primrose rejoiced wildly.

Primrose threw her arms around his neck and gave him many of the kisses she had used to be so chary about.

"Now you are my own dear brother!" she exclaimed, and the satisfaction rang through her voice

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like a bell. "No king can ever claim you again."

"Unless *we* have a king."

"But we are not going to have a king. We are all born free and equal."

"Julius and Joe and the old Pepper Pot woman, and the Calamus boys?" with a mischievous smile.

"The slaves are all going to be free. We cannot do everything in a moment. And the equality——" Primrose was rather nonplused.

"Yes, the equality," with a triumphant lifting of the brows.

"I think the equality means this: that everyone shall have a right to try for the best places, and no one shall push him down. To try for education and happiness, and if he is full up to the brim and content, even if he has not as much as the other, isn't there a certain equalization?"

"Primrose, I fear thou wilt be a sophist before thy hundred years are ended," said her brother with a soft pinch of her rosy cheek.

The Randolphs had considered the feasibility of returning south, but Madam Wetherill begged them not to try homelessness with winter coming on. And at Cherry Farm there was one supremely happy woman, Lois Henry.

"Madam Wetherill is more than good to thee," she said to her son with a thankfulness that trembled in her voice. "How one can be mistaken in souls under gay garbs. Indeed it is as the child used to say, 'God made all beautiful things, and nothing is to be called common or unclean, or high and lofty and wasteful.' I am more glad than I can say that thou hast returned to the fashion of the Friends again, but thou art a man to look well in nice attire, and truly one serveth God with the heart and not with the clothes, except that neatness should be observed. The Lord hath given Madam Wetherill a large heart, and she holds no rancor."

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"She is one in a thousand," was the fervent reply.

And then Andrew described one of several cottages on Chestnut Street that belonged to the estate of Miss Primrose Henry, and was to rent. There was a small court in front, a grassy space at the side with a cherry tree and a pear tree, and a garden at the back for vegetables.

"For I must have thee in the city near by," he said, "so I can come in to dinner at noon, and spend most of my evenings with thee. Mr. Franklin's old paper, the *Gazette*, is to be brought out again, and we shall know what is going on. And we will find a meeting house near by, and take great comfort with each other after our seasons of sorrow and separation."

"My son, my dear son! I bless the Lord for thee every day. He hath given me the oil of joy for mourning."

Andrew had greeted Rachel with great cordiality. He was grateful that she had cared so kindly for his mother, though Faith had been the more tender. Penn was settled in part of his new house and very content. Indeed his love for Clarissa was something of a thorn in Rachel's side, but she paid small attention to it outwardly. When Andrew laid his plan before her, however, her very heart sank within her.

"She is to have her living here. I am sure, Andrew, as God is my witness, that I have been like a daughter to her. She hath said so herself. My own mother is dead, let her remain in the place. And thou—thou wilt marry sometime——"

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"A long while yet. I am her son and want her, and she is ready and pleased to come. It is but right and natural. As for the living, make no account of that. When we want a holiday it may be pleasant to come out to the farm."

That was a straw and she caught quickly at it. But in any event she saw that she could not help nor hinder.

Primrose took Polly with her to see what should be put in the cottage.

"There are many new things to make work handy, and comforts. Andrew must have a settle here in the living room and it shall be my pleasure to make cushions for it. And oh, Polly, he has learned to smoke while he was soldiering! Of course Aunt Lois will want some of the old things, and she has chests of bed and table linen. But we can buy some plates and cups. Aunt Lois had some pretty Delft ware that I used to dry on nice soft towels when I was a little girl. We will hunt the city over to find Delft."

They were delightfully engrossed with shopping. The stores were displaying tempting aspects again and merchants were considering foreign trade. But it was quite ridiculous, though no one saw it in just that light then, that one should take with them a thousand or so dollars to do a morning's buying. But when a frying pan cost sixty dollars and three cups and saucers one hundred and fifty, and a table two hundred, money soon went. There was plenty of it, to be sure. Congress ordered new issues when it fell short.

People still watched out for Quaker sales: that is, Quakers who refused to pay certain taxes had their belongings seized and sold, and women were as ready for bargains then as now.

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Faith took counsel of the trustees who had been appointed for her, and found that she could get

away from her sister's home. So she begged Aunt Lois to take her, as they would need some help. Andrew opposed this at first, fearing it would lead to trouble, and Rachel was very angry. But on second thought she decided it would be wiser. For by this means she would still have some hold over them all. On condition that Faith would come home every fortnight for a little visit she consented, and though Faith, trained long in repression, said but little, her heart beat with great joy. Rachel had kept a Swedish woman nearly all summer for out-of-door work, and now engaged her for the winter. By spring, certainly, she would know what lay before her.

William Frost, who had once been in the habit of walking home with her, was married. A well-to-do farmer living up the Wissahickon had called a number of times, but he had four children, and Rachel had no mind to give up her home for hard work and little thanks. She was still young, and with her good marriage portion would not go begging. But the choice of her heart, the best love of her heart all her life, would be Andrew Henry, and she felt the child and the girl, Primrose, had always stood in her way. If she would only marry!

But Primrose was having a lovely winter. True, there were times when Allin Wharton grew a little too tender, and she would tease him in her willful fashion, or be very cool to him, or sometimes treat him in an indifferent and sisterly fashion, so difficult to surmount. There were so many others, though Primrose adroitly evaded steady admirers. When they grew too urgent she fled out to the farm and Betty.

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There was great fun, too, in planning for wedding gear. Polly's sister, Margaret, was grown up now, and Polly was to be married in the late spring, and go out to the farm all summer, as the Randolphs had fully decided to return to Virginia in April. Mr. Randolph would go a month or two earlier to see about a home to shelter them. For although the treaty of peace had not been signed it was an accepted fact, and everybody settled to it.

Old Philadelphia woke up to the fact that she must make herself nearly all over. Low places were drained, bridges built, new docks constructed, and rows of houses went up. The wildernesses about, that had grown to brushwood, were cleared away. Hills were to be lowered, and there was a famous one in Arch Street.

"Nay, I should not know the place without it," declared Madam Wetherill. "It will answer for my time, and after that do as you like."

But she was to go out of Arch Street years before her death, though she did not live to be one hundred and two.

The taverns made themselves more decorous and respectable, the coffee houses were really attractive, the theater ventured to offer quite a variety of plays, and the assemblies began in a very select fashion. There was also a more general desire for intelligence, and the days of "avoiding Papisers and learning to knit" as the whole duty of women were at an end.

There were grace and ease and refinement and wit, and a peaceable sort of air since Congress had gone to Princeton.

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Midwinter brought out-of-door amusements, though the season seemed short, for spring came early, and in March parties were out hunting for trailing arbutus and hardy spring flowers, exchanging tulip bulbs and dividing rose bushes, as well as putting out trees and fine shrubbery that was to make the city a garden for many a long year.

Primrose danced and was merry, and skated with Allin Wharton when Polly and Phil could go, but she was very wary of confining herself to one. She dropped in and cheered Aunt Lois and fascinated Faith with her bright talk and her bright gowns and the great bow under her chin, for even if it was gray it seemed the softest and most bewildering color that ever was worn. Then she rode out and spent two or three days frolicking with Betty's babies, and came home more utterly fascinating than before.

"Oh, Primrose!" said Madam Wetherill, "I cannot think what to do with thee. Thou wilt presently be the talk of the town."

"Oh, I think I will go to Virginia with Betty and bury myself in a great southern forest where no one can find me. And I will take along pounds of silk and knit some long Quaker stockings for Andrew, with beautiful clocks in them. Hast thou not remarked, dear aunt, that he betrays a tendency toward worldliness?"

"Thou art too naughty, Primrose."

It was fortunate for women's purses that one did not need so many gowns as at the present day, even if they did take out with them marvelous sums. But thinking men were beginning to see the evil of the old Continental money and trying to devise something better, with that able financier, Robert Morris, at their head.

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The wedding finery was bought, and the looms at Germantown supplied webs of cloth to be made up in table napery and bedding. There were old laces handed down, and some brocade petticoats, and two trained gowns that had come from England long before. Primrose and Margaret Wharton were bridesmaids, and, oddly enough, Captain Vane, for he had arrived at that dignity, came from Newburgh on a furlough and stood with Margaret, so the foes and the friends were all together. It was a very fine wedding, and at three in the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Philemon Nevitt Henry were put in a coach, a great luxury then, and went off in splendid state, with a supply of

old slippers thrown after them for good luck.

Captain Vane had lost his estate, that was a foregone conclusion. The next of kin had acted and proved the estates forfeited.

"And now I am a true buff-and-blue American," he said proudly to Madam Wetherill. "I shall remain a military man, for the spirit and stir of the life inspire me, and there seems nothing else for me to do. Phil, I think, was only a half-hearted soldier, and business suits him much better. After all, one can see that he is at home among his kinsfolk. Perhaps there was a little of the old Quaker leaven in him that England could not quite work out. He has a charming wife, and a friend such as few men find;" bowing low and kissing the lady's hand.

A party of guests went out to the farm to have a gay time with the young couple. It was Primrose's birthday, but it never rained a drop. And it would have been hard to tell which was the heroine of the occasion, Primrose or Polly. And, oh, the verses that were made! some halting and some having altogether too many feet. There were dancing and jollity and every room was crowded. They had coaxed Betty to stay and she was very charming; quite too young, everybody said, to be a widow with two babies.

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Philemon Henry held his pretty sister to his heart and gave her eighteen kisses for her birthday.

"Dear, thou hast so many gifts on all occasions," he said, "that a brother's best love is all I can bestow upon thee now. When I am a rich man it may be otherwise. Polly and thee will always be the dearest of sisters, and I hope to be a faithful son to Madam Wetherill."

Primrose wiped some tears from her lovely eyes.

"That is the best any man can be," she made answer.

It was a very gay fortnight, and Allin Wharton was so angry and so wretched that he scarce knew how to live. Captain Vane was handsome and fascinating, and a hero from having lost his estates, and there were a full hundred reasons why he should be attractive to a woman. He believed Andrew Henry was no sort of rival beside him. Of course Primrose would—what a fool he had been to take Polly's advice and wait!

But Primrose had been very wise and very careful for such a pretty, pleasure-loving girl. There had been something in Gilbert Vane's eyes that told the story, and she understood now what it was: the sweetest and noblest story a man can tell a woman, but a woman may not always be ready to hear it, and now some curious knowledge had come to Primrose—she would never be ready to hear this.

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She had threaded her way skillfully through every turning, she had jested and parried until she was amazed at her own resources. The last morning Madam Wetherill was suddenly called down to the office about the transfer of some property, and she had not been gone ten minutes when Captain Vane was announced.

He was very disappointed not to see madam—of course. Primrose was shy and looked like a bird about to fly somewhere, but so utterly bewitching that his whole heart went out to her.

"Oh, you sweetest, dearest Primrose!" he cried, and caught her hand in such a clasp that she could not pull it away. "I love you, love you! and yet I have no business to say it, a soldier of fortune, who has nothing now but his sword, and his patriotism for the country of his adoption—all his fortune yet to make. But it will not hurt you, dear, to know that a man loves you with his whole soul and hopes for—nothing."

But his wistful eyes told another story.

"Oh, why did you say it?" she cried, full of regret.

"Because I could not help it. Oh, I know it is useless, and yet I would give half a lifetime—nay, all of it—for a year or two of such bliss as Phil is having, to hold you in my arms, to call you my wife, my dear wife," and his tone thrilled her with exquisite pain, but something akin to pleasure as well. "Primrose, you are the sweetest flower of the world, but it could never be—never; tell me so, darling. Much as it pains you, say 'no.' For if you do not I shall always dream. And I am a soldier and can meet my fate."

He dropped her hand and stood before her straight, strong, and proud; entreaty written in every line of his face. She covered hers with her hands to shut out the sight and tried vainly to find her voice.

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"Nay, dear," he took the hands down tenderly and saw tears and blushes, but not the look he wanted. "That was cruel, unmanly. If it were 'yes' there would be no tears, and so I am answered. It is not your fault. You have a grander, nobler lover than I. But it has been sweet to love you. From almost the first I have loved you, when you were a little girl and I longed to have you for my sister. It will not hurt you, as the years go on, to know you won a soldier for your country and a lifelong patriot. And I know Andrew Henry will not grudge me one kiss. God give thee all happiness. Good-by."

He pressed his lips to her forehead and turned.

"God bless thee," she said, and he bowed reverently as he went out of the room.

She stood quite still, never heeding the tears that dropped on the front of her gown. Andrew Henry! Her dear, dear cousin, who was like a brother. Did he love her that way? Did she love him? And if she did there was her solemn promise to Rachel.

She ran upstairs and had a good cry.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Patty. "You are fuller of whims than an egg is of meat, for the egg has a breathing space if the chick wants it. Not an hour ago you were laughing like a mocking bird. You had better have a pitcher of sweet balm for your nerves. You have dissipated too much, but thank Heaven there are no more weddings near by."

Primrose dried her eyes and laughed again presently. It was noon when Madam Wetherill returned. Attorney Chew had been in with some new plans that were quite wonderful.

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"And Captain Vane to say good-by. What friends he and Phil are! But he is a soldier born, if ever there was one. And he looked so fine and spirited. He said he had been here."

"For a few minutes, yes. And now, dear madam, when you are rested, can we have a better afternoon to ride out to the Pembertons'? I have promised some books to Julia, and that new sleeve pattern, and to-morrow Polly comes in."

"Well, child—yes, after my nap. 'Tis a lovely day, and every day is so busy. Yes, we will go."

She hath escaped that danger, Madam Wetherill thought. And in her heart she honored the brave soldier; how brave, she was never quite to know.

Was there ever a summer without diversions? There was a new interest in plants and flowers. Parties went out to John Bartram's, the quaint old house with its wide doorway and the great vines that had climbed over it for years, until they had grown thick as a man's wrist, almost hiding the names cut in the stone long ago, of John and Elizabeth Bartram. The old garden of flowers and the ferns were worth some study. And there were rambles in the lanes, going after wild strawberries, and even the venturesome ones went on the sly to Dunk's Ferry and had their fortune told by Old Alice. There were many little shrieks and giggles, and joyous or protesting confidences afterward.

And now Primrose thought, as she had years before, that she was quite torn in two. Did she love Andrew Henry with an absorbing love, such as Polly had for her brother? Another face and another voice haunted her. She dreamed of Allin Wharton. This night they were sailing up the lovely Schuylkill and pausing under the overhanging trees to hear the birds who were saying, "Sweet, sweet, I love you," and then Allin would look up at her.

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Then they were at the farm. Betty and the babies were gone now, and she missed them sorely. But Allin came out with Phil, and Phil walked off with Polly. Would they never get talked out? Then Allin would draw her out in some fragrant nook and look at her with upbraiding eyes. Or, it was vivacious Peggy who would drag her in to tea, and then some girl would come and she and Allin be left alone again.

Then, by day and in real life, she was cross and tormenting to him. Desperately sorry afterward, for now she had no ambition to be bad-tempered. Everything had come out to her satisfaction. Phil was the dearest of brothers, and prospering, and Madam Wetherill was elated with her successful firm. The prestige of the elder Henry dropped its mantle over them. And as for Polly, there could not be a wiser, sweeter wife. Then Aunt Lois was so tranquilly happy, and Faith growing brighter, yes, prettier, and buying grays with a peachy or lavender tint instead of that snuffy yellow, or dismally cold stone color, and coaxing Andrew, sometimes, to go to Christ Church to hear the singing or the tender prayers where the people could all say "Amen."

Oh, what was the matter that she was not happy and satisfied!

Allin was studying hard and well, and growing more manly every day. And at last he made up his mind there should be no more shilly-shallying. For when Primrose was tender and sweet he knew she loved him. She was—yes, a little bit jealous when he wandered too far in a half angry, half desperate moment.

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So one evening he came upon her all alone. Miss Jeffries had begged madam so to come in to a little card party, for now her father was quite lame and could not get out much, and rather deaf, and altogether disheartened about England conquering America. Therefore it was a charity to visit him.

"And lose *my* money now," she said with a good-natured laugh.

Now Primrose could not shelter herself behind Polly nor Phil. She was sweet and startled, and a dozen things that made her lovelier than ever, with a betraying color coming and going in her charming face. And the lover took sudden heart. How many times he had planned the scene. There was a lover in an old novel that won an obdurate lady, and he had rehearsed the arguments numberless times, they were so fine and convincing. Oh, how did they begin?

He reached over suddenly and took her in his arms and kissed the fragrant lips again and again.

"Primrose," just above his breath, "you know I love you. You must have seen it ages ago, that morning you came,—do you remember,—when I had been wounded, and how we talked and talked, and you sung. I couldn't bear to have you go. You were the sweetest and dearest and most

lovely thing in the whole wide world. Polly had talked so much about you. And ever since that you have been a part of my very life. I've been jealous, and angry when you smiled on others, and you do it so much, Primrose; and when that handsome young Vane was here I remembered how you loved soldiers and was—well I could have waylaid him and done anything to him, but that wouldn't have won you. I've waited so long. And now, Primrose, you must give me a little hope. Just say you will love me sometime. Oh, no! I can't wait, either. Primrose, my darling, the sweetness and glory of my life, love me now, now."

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The words came out like a torrent and carried her along. The kisses had gone down to her very soul. The clasp of his hands thrilled her.

"Primrose, my sweetest darling——"

It seemed as if she was under a spell. She tried to free herself, but she had no strength. Other men had said silly things, but this was like a swift rush of music, and she was sure no one had ever uttered Primrose in such an exquisitely delicious tone before.

"Oh, Allin!" in a half sigh.

All the answer was kisses.

"Allin, Allin! Oh, let me—yes, let me free. I must tell you——"

"You must tell me nothing, save that you love me. I will listen to nothing else. Primrose, sweetest, dearest——"

"Oh, hush, Allin, let me think——"

If she did not mean to love him he would know it by some sure sign. The hesitation, the half yielding tells its own story.

And the very foolishness of love went to her heart. The vehemence, the ownership in its fearlessness, the persuasive certainty. Of course she had known it all along, she had feared now on the side of distance, now that he might speak too soon, then wondered if he would ever speak at all, while she was all the while putting him off, strange contradiction.

"Say that you love me. Just say it once and I will live on it for weeks."

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"Oh, Allin, you would grow thin!" She gave a little half-hysterical laugh. And then something stole over her, an impression vague, inexplicable, that she did not quite belong to herself. Was there someone who had a better right than Allin? Before she gave herself irrevocably to this delightful young lover, she must be sure, quite sure.

"What is it, Primrose?" for he had noted the change, the almost paleness that drowned out the beautiful, radiant flush that was happiness, satisfaction.

"Oh, Primrose, surely you did not, do not love Captain Vane?"

There was a struggle in her soul, in her pulses, an unseen power that grasped her and for a moment almost rendered her breathless.

"No, I did not—love him—but he——"

"Oh, I know. It is hard winning what everyone wants," he answered moodily. "But tell me one good reason why you cannot love me."

As if there was no good reason she was silent.

"I really couldn't stand the uncertainty. I couldn't study. Oh, what would it all be worth—life, fame, fortune, or anything if I did not have you!"

"Do you love me as much as that. Would it make a great difference?"

"It would ruin all my life. It is in your hands. Oh, my darling!" For it was so delightful to be necessary.

It was not foolish to the ears of eighteen when the heart of eighteen had sometimes longed for the words. Good, sound sense is much amiss in lovemaking.

"And you do love me—a little?"

If he could make her admit that he would coax a great deal more.

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"I—I can't tell in a moment."

"But you know you do? Will you deny utterly that you do?"

She could evade with pretty turnings and windings, but this, so simple, so to the point.

"Oh, wait," she cried. "I must think. Allin it is a lifelong thing. I want to be sure——"

"And then you will smile on someone else, and walk with someone else and dance and all that, and I shall be utterly miserable and never sure until you do promise."

She put her hand over his, her soft dimpled hand that thrilled and comforted him, and said in a beseeching tone, as if it was his to grant or not:

"Give me a month, Allin. I will not smile on anyone, since you think it so dangerous," with a touch of her old witchery.

"A month! As if you could not tell in a moment whether you loved or hated!"

"But I don't hate. I like you ever so much. I want to think it over. One must consider——"

"A week then. And after that we can be engaged for ever so long. It shall all be as you like then."

It proved very difficult to settle the point. He was so urgent, she so hesitating. The big old English clock in the hall struck ten, and gentlemen expected to keep good hours.

"Do not come in a whole week. No, do not kiss me again," and she held her dainty head up haughtily. "It was all very wrong. I should not have allowed such a thing until I was quite sure. Allin, perhaps I am a coquette."

"You may be anything if you are only mine."

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"And then of course I should be steady and devoted, and—like Polly."

That was a maddening picture to hold out. But she would be a hundred times sweeter than Polly, than anyone's sister could possibly be, he thought as he went his way.

Was there a ghost in the room? Primrose shivered as she looked at her bed with the white curtains and her dressing table that all the girls were trimming up now with ruffling and bows. She was so glad to hear the chaise stop and to have the warm, ample presence in the room, to hear the cheerful voice.

"Poor old Mr. Jeffries fails fast," said madam. "It would be a sin to win his money now. And I grew so dull and sleepy that I wished myself home twenty times. Suppose one had an old husband like that? And years ago, about fifteen, I think, Mr. Ralph Jeffries asked for my hand."

She laughed softly and began to take out her pins and stick them carefully in the cushion. Pins were very precious then.

There were two rainy days, an autumnal storm. Then Sunday. Allin Wharton looked at Primrose across the church and spoke coming out. There were laces to mend and gowns to consider and poor to visit. And all the time Primrose Henry was thinking if—if a man who was nobleness and goodness and tenderness itself, loved her, and would never love anyone else, what ought she to do?

Thursday noon Phil came in to dinner. Polly was not very well and he was going out at three. Wouldn't Primrose come with him?

Primrose colored and looked oddly embarrassed, and said, in a confused sort of way, there was something she must do this afternoon, but to-morrow she would come out and spend two or three days with Polly. She sent her best and dearest love.

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Yes, she must know once for all. If duty was demanded of her—if she loved Andrew less, or more, when it came to that. What was this romance and mystery, and incomprehensible thrill! She *did* experience it for Allin, and alone by herself her face flushed and every pulse trembled. His foolish words were so sweet. His kisses—ah, *had* she any right to offer the cup of joy and delight to another when someone had drained the first sweetness?

But if Andrew loved her with the best and holiest love. Could she follow in her mother's steps? But her mother had singled Philemon Henry out of a world of lovers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

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THE OLD AND THE NEW.

Primrose Henry put on her camlet cloak and took several skeins of yarn to one of the old ladies in the almshouses, to knit some stockings for some other poor. Afterward she sauntered round with a guilty feeling. She often ran in to see Phil and Andrew, and the one clerk always stared at the radiant vision. She hesitated on the broad sill, then she opened the door. There was a sort of counting room first, and that was vacant now. Andrew was in the apartment beyond.

There was her promise to Rachel. Oh, what must she do!

"Philemon has gone," and Andrew glanced up with tender gravity as he espied Primrose.

"Yes. I saw him. How is Aunt Lois, and Faith?"

"Very well." There was a different smile, now, a sense of amusement, and a peculiar light in the eyes like relief.

"What is it?" Her heart-beat almost strangled her.

"Rachel was in this morning. And you cannot guess—she is to be married presently."

"Married! And she cared so much for you," cried Primrose in consternation.

Andrew colored and moved his head with a slow negative.

"No, it could not have been. Andrew—I wonder what kind of a wife you would like?" turning her eyes away.

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He could have reached out his hand and answered her with a clasp. But there was another who loved her very much, who was young and gay and full of ardent hopes. That would be better for the child.

"I shall not marry for years to come." His voice was very tranquil. "There is my mother, and now we are so much to each other."

"And *she* ought to be a Friend. You would like a Friend best, Andrew? And no flighty young thing."

Was *she* thinking of anything? Oh, she was too young and sweet. It would be putting a butterfly in a cage.

"That would be better, certainly. When two people elect to spend their lives together, it is best that they should have similar tastes and desires."

"But a sweet and pretty one, Andrew. One like Miss Whiting, who is intelligent and noble and reads a great many things and has a lovely garden of flowers. I want you to be very, very happy, Andrew."

"Thank you, little one. Let me wish the same for you. A gallant young lover with ambition, who can take his place in society and who will enjoy with you the youthful pleasures that are so much to you, and then grow older with you and come to ripe middle life and serene old age. I think I could put my finger on someone——"

Primrose's sweet face was scarlet, and her eyes suddenly fluttered down with tremulous lids.

"Thou hast been a dear little sister," going back to the Quaker speech. "Thy happiness will be much to me; thy pain, if any happened to thee, would be my pain. Thy prosperity will always be my prayer, for I think thou wert born for sunniness and clear sailing and joy, with someone bright and young like thyself."

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"A little sister," she repeated softly. If it was that and only that, her conscience would be clear.

"Yes. Didst thou ever doubt it?"

He raised his serene brown eyes and smiled. He was not one to carry all his soul in his eyes.

"Nay, and I never shall." She pressed her lips to his forehead, which was as fair as any girl's. How long it had been since he kissed her! He might trust himself again on her wedding day.

"And now tell me about Rachel. We have queer talk of loves and such."

"He is a young man, a neighbor, the eldest of several sons. And Rachel hath a nice dower. I hope all will go well."

She was infinitely sorry for Rachel at that moment.

"You will come soon and see us. I send love to Aunt Lois," and Primrose turned.

"Fare thee well. Blessings attend thee, little one."

He sat there a long while, thinking how her mother had given up many worldly things for the man she loved. Primrose would do it, too, he said stoutly to himself, if she had loved. It was best this way. The sunshine did not rise up from the brown earth, but shone down out of the radiant blue sky.

Primrose Henry went home with a light heart. And that evening Allin Wharton had his answer.

Madam Wetherill shook her head, but said smilingly, "If you take the young woman you must take the old one, too. I will never give up Primrose."

The girl's soft arms were around her neck and the sweet young voice, with a rapture of emotion, cried, "Oh, madam, am I indeed so dear to you?"

The world goes on and the stories of life are repeated, but to each one comes that supreme taste of personal joy and rapture that is alone for itself; that is new, no matter how many times it may have been lived over.

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There was a long, delightful engagement of the young people, who waited for Allin to take his degree, and his father felt justly proud of his standing. There was all the reckless happiness of

two young people in that wonderful joyousness of youth when one apes sorrows for the sake of being comforted, indulges in dainty disagreements so that they can repent with fascinating sweetness, and are inconsequent, unreasonable, entrancing, and delightful, and gayety of any kind seems good, so that it goes hand and hand with love. Primrose danced and laughed through her April years, and then came May with bloom and more steadiness, and then peerless, magnificent June.

"I am but a sad trifler, after all," she would say to Madam Wetherill. "Shall I ever be like my dear mother or have any of the sober Henry blood in me?"

"Nay," was the answer. "We never find fault with the rose because it does not bear an ear of corn or a stalk of grain. And yet so great a thing as an oak tree is content to bear a small acorn."

And while they were being married and rejoicing in Phil's sturdy little boy and dainty, golden-haired baby girl called Primrose, old Philadelphia was making rapid strides. Indeed, in Washington's language, the United Colonies had now "the opportunity to become a respectable nation," and it came back to the city where it had first uttered its lusty young cry and protest. In May of 1787, in the old State House, assembled the delegates who were to frame a Constitution that would stand the wear and tear of time. Their four months' work has come down to us written in letters of imperishable glory, that were not to be too large for the Thirteen Colonies, and large enough for any multiple the nation might come to use in the course of its existence.

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For the tardy treaty of peace had been signed, and though there were much discussion and various opinions, such as children of one family often have, it was all settled. And the next Fourth of July had a grand procession, for the times, and a ship of state was dragged proudly through the streets on a float, with some pretty boys for midshipmen; the great judges in their official robes, soldiers, and civilians, and, side by side, walked Andrew Henry and Philemon Henry, brothers indeed in all the wide and varied interests that go to make up brotherhood and not a little human love. The bells of Christ Church, that had once been taken down and hidden from vandal hands, were rehung, and rung at intervals all day long, while flags floated and bonfires blazed at night, and a grand supper was eaten by the dignitaries at Bush Hill.

While other and larger matters were being discussed, a President nominated, elected, and inaugurated, Philadelphia, like a prudent householder, was attending to her own affairs. When Washington passed through the city on his way to New York to receive the grandest compliment of the nation, she again paid him all honor in his reception.

The beautiful city with its greenery and quiet, of which William Penn had dreamed, and in many of whose footsteps the renowned Franklin had followed, had gone through curious changes, and was putting on new aspects with every year. But "Fairemount," with its homes that were to be handed down in story a hundred years later; Stenton, with its grand aspects; Lansdowne, with its woods and waters; the Logan House, the Shippens', and old Mount Pleasant, and so on stretching up the banks of the Schuylkill were to be left beautiful and tranquil and free from the thought of business invasion. For Old Philadelphia is like a dream, and there will always linger about it the youthful tenderness of William Penn's plan and his life story.

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And then, to the chagrin of New York, came the transference of the Capital to Philadelphia. She had perked up and brightened up, stretched out her wharves, filled up her low places, cleared her streets of rubbish, and built rows of houses, had her library and her university, and it seemed as if she had been getting ready for this accession within her borders, the "Republican Court," as it was to be called.

A plain enough house, on High Street, it was, with a few fine old trees about, where many famous decisions were shaped by wisdom that seems wonderful to us now. When Congress was in session there were many gayeties, dinners, private balls, suppers, and dances for the young people, and then, to its ruler, the retirement of Mount Vernon.

With it all a sort of serene steadiness and refinement that never allowed pleasures to degenerate into a maddening whirl. A thrift and prudence, too, that had become a solid, underlying strand in the character of the city.

The bell still rang out on market mornings and mistresses were not above visiting the long, clean spaces, though there was much fault-finding about the dearness of things, and Mrs. Adams complained of the loneliness of Bush Hill, though she was afterward to be comforted by being the first lady of the land at Washington, the final Capital.

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Primrose Wharton was a pretty young wife and the mother of a golden-haired little girl when she next saw "Lady Washington," as she was often called. She had settled into a gracious, but still piquant, matron, and she and Allin enjoyed the theater and still dearly loved a dance. Madam Wetherill was yet a handsome and stately dame, and "foolish over the little one," she said.

There were many memories of the dismal winter of Valley Forge renewed when Mrs. Washington met some of the brave soldiers. And among them all there was no finer nor more attractive figure than that of Andrew Henry, now arrived at its full manliness. The Quaker costume became him as no other would, though the Continental attire was distinctive and well calculated to show off a man. Fair and fresh and strong, yet with well-bred gentleness and a cultivated mind, he was often singled out at the receptions, and more than one admiring girl would have gladly enacted Bessy Wardour's romance.

Was there any story in the eyes that gave a glimpse of the great heart back of them? tender, sweet, brave eyes? Sometimes Primrose Wharton thought so, and all her pulses stood still in awesome silence. She was very happy. She and Allin had had an April fling and had settled into May bloom, but—could anything have been different—better? Not for her, but for him. A little sister! Is she that?

He was very happy, now, in a larger house, with a study and book shelves, his mother a tender and tranquil woman, Faith a contented housekeeper with a servant, and hardly knowing which to adore the most, Polly Henry's merry madcap household, or Primrose Wharton's sunny-haired daughter.

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The only thing Philemon Henry would undo are those years that he was hardly answerable for.

"Of course it was not your fault," Polly declares in her impetuous, fond, and justifying way. "I think it really braver, for it requires more courage to own that a man has been wrong, than to go along in a straight path already made for him. And I fell in love with you as a redcoat, I really did, and fought with myself in the nights when I was alone. For, of course, I couldn't have told Prim; she would have crossed me quite out of her books. And I wouldn't have dared hint such a thing to anybody. Now, truly, was I not a silly girl?"

A fond kiss is her answer.

If the war made enemies it also made brothers, informed with larger wisdom.

A hundred and more years ago! Yet there are storied places that will never die out and the old bell of freedom has clanged many a peal, and the State House had many a Pilgrim. Truly there are numberless worthies in the great beyond, who have left behind imperishable memories even in a city that has grown anew more than once, and added beauty to beauty.

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