

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Peggy Owen at Yorktown, by Lucy Foster Madison

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Peggy Owen at Yorktown

Author: Lucy Foster Madison

Illustrator: H. J. Peck

Release date: July 15, 2011 [EBook #36744]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Roger Frank, Juliet Sutherland and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PEGGY OWEN AT YORKTOWN ***



"DID THEE PUT THY NAME ON IT?"

**PEGGY OWEN
AT YORKTOWN**

BY

Lucy Foster Madison

Author of

"Peggy Owen"
"Peggy Owen Patriot"
"Peggy Owen and Liberty"

Illustrated by H. J. Peck

The Penn Publishing Company
PHILADELPHIA MCMXVII



"Oh, who can gaze upon the relics here,
And not their sacred memories revere?
Who can behold the figures of our sires,
And not be touched with Freedom's hallowed fires?"

Introduction

The members of the Society of Friends, or "Quakers," residing in the American colonies, were sadly tried during the struggle by those colonies against King George. The Quaker principles forbade warfare, but the Quaker hearts were often as loyal to their country as any about them. Some of these found a way to reconcile principles with patriotism and, entering the American army, were known as "fighting Quakers." David Owen, Peggy's father, was one of these, and the first book of this series, "Peggy Owen," told of some dangers that his brave little daughter underwent to serve the cause she loved. In "Peggy Owen Patriot" is the story of a winter in New Jersey at Washington's camp, Peggy's capture, her unwilling stay in New York, and her final escape from her British captors in the Carolinas. Her pony, "Star," who appears again in this story, shared many of her dangers. "Peggy Owen and Liberty" completes the series.

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A LOYAL SUBJECT OF HIS MAJESTY, GEORGE THIRD, MAKES A SHIRT	11
II.	HARRIET MAKES A PRESENT	25
III.	A GLIMPSE OF CLIFFORD	38
IV.	A STRANGE PRESENTIMENT	52
V.	A DAY OF NOTE	60
VI.	A MESSAGE OF INDIGNATION	73
VII.	HARRIET TAKES MATTERS IN HAND	90
VIII.	HOSPITALITY BETRAYED	103
IX.	THE DICTATES OF HUMANITY	115
X.	FAREWELL TO HOME	127
XI.	ON THE ROAD	139
XII.	THE HOME OF WASHINGTON	149
XIII.	THE APPEARANCE OF THE ENEMY	164
XIV.	THE JOURNEY'S END	174
XV.	PEGGY IS TROUBLED	186
XVI.	THE TABLES TURNED	200
XVII.	AN UNWELCOME ENCOUNTER	211
XVIII.	UNDER THE LINDENS	220

XIX.	HARRIET AT LAST	234
XX.	VINDICATED	244
XXI.	A RASH RESOLVE	254
XXII.	FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY	266
XXIII.	A QUESTION OF COURAGE	280
XXIV.	AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER	289
XXV.	HER NEAREST RELATIVE	301
XXVI.	TIDE-WATER AGAIN	310
XXVII.	PEGGY RECEIVES A SHOCK	321
XXVIII.	VERIFIED SUSPICIONS	333
XXIX.	"I SHALL NOT SAY GOOD-BYE"	347
XXX.	WHAT THE NIGHT BROUGHT	362
XXXI.	THE DAWN OF THE MORNING	376
XXXII.	"LIGHTS OUT"	395

Illustrations

"Did Thee Put Thy Name On It?"	Frontispiece
"Thee Must be John Paul Jones"	70
"I Have Heard Nothing"	119
"Why Have You Come?"	183
"Benedict Arnold Forces His Presence Upon No One"	216
"Draw and Defend Yourself!"	298
She Stepped Into the Room	355

Peggy Owen at Yorktown

11

CHAPTER I—A LOYAL SUBJECT OF HIS MAJESTY, GEORGE THIRD, MAKES A SHIRT

"Alone by the Schuylkill a wanderer roved,
 And bright were its flowery banks to his eye,
 But far, very far were the friends that he loved,
 And he gazed on its flowery banks with a sigh."

—*Thomas Moore.*

It was a fine winter day. There had been a week of murky skies and dripping boughs; a week of rain, and mud, and slush; a week of such disagreeable weather that when the citizens of Philadelphia awoke, on this twenty-first day of February, 1781, to find the sun shining in a sky of almost cloudless blue and the air keen and invigorating, they rejoiced, and went about their daily tasks thrilled anew with the pleasure of living.

About ten o'clock on the morning of this sunlit winter day a young girl was slowly wending her way up Chestnut Street. At every few steps she was obliged to pause to lift into place a huge bundle she was carrying—a bundle so large that she could just reach her arms about it, and clasp her hands together in the comfortable depths of a great muff. A ripple of laughter rose to her lips as, in spite of her efforts, the bundle at length slipped through her arms and fell with a soft thud upon the frozen ground.

12

"It's lucky for thee, Peggy," she cried addressing herself merrily, "that 'tis not yesterday, else thee would have a washing on thy hands. Oh, if Sally could only see me! She said that I'd not reach home with it. Now, Mr. Bundle, is thee carrying me, or I thee? Just lie there for a moment, and then we'll see who is worsted in this fray."

Removing her winter mask the better to inhale the bracing air, she disclosed a face flushed rosily from her exertions and dark eyes brimming with laughter just now at the plight in which she found herself. She stood for a moment breathing deeply then, readjusting the mask under the

13 folds of her calash, managed with some difficulty to get the bundle once more within the circle of her arms, and again started forward. It was slow progress, but presently she found herself without further mishap in front of a large dwelling on the corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets, standing in the midst of extensive grounds just across from the State House.

With a sigh of relief the girl deposited the bundle on the bottom step of the stoop, and then, running lightly up the steps, sounded the great brass knocker. The door was opened almost instantly by a woman whose sweet face and gentle manner as well as her garb bespoke the Quakeress.

"I saw thee coming, but could not get to the door before thy knock sounded, Peggy," she said. "And did thee have a good time? Harriet hath missed thee, and in truth it hath seemed long since yesterday. And what is in that bundle, child? 'Tis monstrous large for thee to carry."

14 "'Tis linen, mother," answered the maiden bringing the bundle into the hall. "It came last night to Mrs. Evans for her to make into shirts for the soldiers, but word came from the hospital this morning that both she and Sally were needed there, so I told her that, as we had our apportionment all made up, we would gladly do hers. And such a time to get here as I had. So thee missed me? 'Tis worth going away for the night to hear thee say that. How is Harriet?"

"Wherriting over thy absence. Indeed, she seems scarce able to bear thee from her sight. I persuaded her to work upon the shirt, thinking to beguile her into something like calm. She should go out to-day if 'tis not too cold."

15 "'Twould do her good," declared Peggy. "It is fine out. Such a relief from the rain and mud of the past week. And oh, mother! what does thee think? Mistress Reed hath twenty-two hundred shirts already that the ladies have made, and she hath received a letter from His Excellency, General Washington, concerning them. She wished that all that were not needed for the Pennsylvania line should be given to our near neighbor, New Jersey, but left it with him to do as he thought best. She told Mrs. Evans that she wished to see thee and others of the committee soon. There is to be a notice as to time. Thee does not mind this extra work, does thee, mother?"

"Nay, Peggy. 'Twas right to bring it. 'Tis little that we who are at home can do for those in the field, and Mrs. Evans and Sally give too much time as it is to the hospital to undertake anything more. But let us go in to Harriet. She will be glad that thou art here."

"Have you come at last, Peggy?" cried a slender girl starting up from a settle which was drawn before a roaring fire as mother and daughter entered the living-room. "And did I hear you say something about more cloth for shirts? Peggy Owen, you have done nothing else since we came from the South two months ago but make shirts. I doubt not that every soldier of the rebel army hath either a shirt of your making, or a pair of socks of your knitting."

16 "That could hardly be, Harriet," laughed Peggy. "I have made but twelve shirts, and just the same number of socks. As we have a few more in the army than that thee sees that it could not be. And how does thee feel?"

"Oh, I don't know," spoke Harriet plaintively. She was very pale as though she had been ill, which was the fact, but her disorder had reached that stage of convalescence in which it was more mental than physical. "I don't know, Peggy. I don't believe that I'll ever be well again."

"How thee talks," chided Peggy. "Did thee finish the shirt mother gave thee to make? Methought that would woo thee from thy megrims."

"Yes; it is finished," answered the other with a sigh of weariness. "I have just put the last stitch in it, and I'll do no more. Heigh-ho! to think of Harriet Owen, daughter of William Owen, a colonel of the Welsh Fusileers, and a most loyal subject of His Majesty, making a shirt for one of the rebels. What would father think of it, I wonder?"

17 "I think that he would rather have thee so engaged than to have thee give up to thy fancies, Harriet," answered Peggy as her cousin drew the garment from among the pillows of the settle, and held it up to view. "Did thee put thy name on it? Mistress Reed wishes every woman and girl who makes one to embroider her name on it."

"'Tis athwart the shoulders," said Harriet, handing the shirt to Peggy, a little sparkle coming into her eyes. Wonderful eyes they were: gray in color, surrounded by lashes of intense black, and dazzling in their brilliancy. "Well, Peggy?"

"Oh, Harriet," gasped the Quaker maiden, a look of vexation flashing across her face. "What will Mistress Reed say?"

For across the shoulders of the garment was embroidered in red letters: "Harriet Owen—A loyal subject of the king."

"What will she say?" repeated Peggy in dismay.

"Well, I am a loyal subject of the king, am I not? Doth being in Philadelphia instead of London or New York make me otherwise? Doth even making a rebel shirt change me?"

"N-no," answered Peggy. "I do not wish thee to change, Harriet; only it doth not seem quite, quite— In truth, as thee is just among us to get well it doth not—" She paused hardly knowing how to continue.

18 "'Tis naught to trouble over, my daughter," spoke her mother serenely. "'Twill wear just as long and keep some soldier just as warm as though it were not there. I doubt not that it will cause some amusement in camp, and what is't but a girlish piece of mischief, after all? I am pleased to

see a spark of thy former spirit, Harriet. Thee is growing better."

"Thank you, madam my cousin. And I will make no more, if it please you. I find the stitching wearisome, and the object not much to my liking."

"Then it were better for thee to make no more," declared the lady. "Though 'tis not well to lie on the settle and do naught but read. I think with Peggy that to go out will do thee good. Therefore, after dinner thou must go with her to take the shirts that are finished to Mistress Reed. Then a walk to the river, or to Peggy's Run, where there is sure to be skating if the ice is strong enough, will do nicely for to-day. There are some fine skaters among us, and 'twill amuse thee to see them."

"I care more for assemblies and small dances than I do for sports," declared Harriet. "Still, if you think best, I will go, madam my cousin. I get lonesome here. I am so far from my people, and from my country. New York was gayer when I was there. Do you not think so, Peggy? And yet 'tis not nearly so large as this city." 19

"Thee has not been strong enough for much gayety," reminded the lady gently. "As soon as the spring comes we will see about more diversion. There will be the rides, and many jaunts which the weather hath not permitted heretofore. But for to-day the walk must do. So be ready to go with Peggy as soon as the dinner is over."

"And may I read until then?" queried the girl wistfully. "The book is very enticing. I but laid it aside to finish the shirt."

"Yes; and Peggy may join thee, if she wishes," said Mrs. Owen rising. "I like not for her to read idle tales, nor much verse when there is so much to be done, but the poem that thou art reading now is a noble one. I would like her to become familiar with it. I read it when a girl."

"What is it, Harriet?" questioned Peggy as her mother left the room. 20

"'Tis 'Paradise Lost,' by Mr. John Milton," answered her cousin, taking the book from a near-by table, and turning the leaves of the volume idly. "'Tis considered à la mode in London to be so familiar with it as to be able to quote passages from it on occasion. So long as I must stay in the colonies 'tis as well to prepare for my return."

"But thee cannot go back until the war is over," Peggy reminded her. "Thee would not wish to go without thy father, would thee?"

"Of course not. But the war is sure to be over soon now. Three of the Southern colonies are already restored to the Crown, and after Lord Cornwallis subjugates Virginia 'twill be an easy matter to move northward toward your main army. And where will your Mr. Washington be then—with Sir Henry Clinton attacking him from the front and Lord Cornwallis from the rear? Oh, it will soon be over!"

"That is what thy people have said from the beginning," remarked Peggy quietly. "And yet, in Fourth month, 'twill be six years since the battle of Lexington in Massachusetts was fought, and we are not conquered yet." 21

"But 'tis different now, Peggy. Your resources are drained. Even Cousin David, fervent patriot though he is, murmurs at the weakness of your central government. Part of your own soldiers mutinied last month. One of your best generals hath come over to us, and you have won but two victories in nearly three years—Paulus Hook and Stony Point. Oh, 'tis vastly different now. We shall see the end soon."

"Thee has forgotten King's Mountain, which was a decided victory," spoke Peggy. "And," she added stoutly, "though I know that what thee says is largely true, Harriet, and that it doth indeed look dark for us, I feel sure that we will win eventually. Whenever it hath been the darkest some great event hath happened to raise our spirits so that we could go on. I just know that 'twill be the same now. Something will occur to give us hope."

"It may be," observed Harriet carelessly, "though I see not how it can."

Peggy made no answer. She had spoken more hopefully than she felt. In common with other patriots she was appalled at the dark outlook with which 1781, the sixth year of the war, had opened. It was in truth a very dark hour. The American Revolution was in sore straits. It was dragging and grounding on the shoals of broken finances and a helpless government. The country had not yet recovered from the depression caused by Arnold's treason. True, the plot had failed, but there was nothing inspiring in a baffled treason, and there had been no fighting and no victories to help the people and the army to bear the season of waiting which lay before them. General Washington lay helpless with his army along the Hudson River, unable to strike a blow for the lack of men and supplies. The Revolution seemed to be going down in mere inaction through the utter helplessness of what passed for a central government. 22

As all this passed through Peggy's mind she leaned back in her chair, and gazed sadly into the fire, a hopeless feeling creeping into her heart in spite of herself.

"If after all we should fail," she half whispered and then sat up quickly as though she had been guilty of disloyalty. "This will never do, Peggy," she murmured chidingly. "Fail, with General Washington at the head of things? What an idea! Harriet," turning to her cousin, "haven't we forgotten the poem?" 23

"Yes," answered Harriet who was gazing dreamily into the fire. "Don't let's read, Peggy."

"But——" began Peggy when there came the excited tones of Mrs. Owen from the hall greeting a

guest:

"And is it really thou, John? What brings thee? Peggy will be so glad to see thee. Come in, and welcome."

"John! John Drayton!" cried Peggy springing to her feet as the door opened to admit the tall form of a youth. "What brings thee from the South? Hast thou news? Oh, come in! I am so glad to see thee. Is thee an express?"

"Yes, Peggy." The youth's clothing was bespattered with dried mud as though he had ridden hard and fast without time for attention to appearances. A handsome roquelaure^[1] was so covered that its color was scarce distinguishable. There were deep circles under his eyes as though he were wearied yet his manner was full of subdued joyousness. "Yes, I am an express. I have just brought Congress despatches which tell that on the 17th of January, under General Morgan we met Colonel Tarleton at the Cowpens in South Carolina, and utterly routed him."

"Did what?" gasped Peggy, while Harriet Owen sat suddenly bolt upright.

"Routed him! Wiped him out!" repeated young Drayton with a boyish laugh, and the old toss of his head that Peggy remembered so well. "We met Colonel Tarleton at the Cowpens, and we soundly whipped him."

[1] Cloak.

CHAPTER II—HARRIET MAKES A PRESENT

"Ah! never shall the land forget
How gushed the life-blood of her brave—
Gushed, warm with hope and valor yet,
Upon the soil they fought to save."

—"The Battle-Field," *Bryant*.

"It is not true," burst from the English girl. "It can't be. Met Colonel Tarleton and utterly routed him? Impossible!"

"It doth indeed seem too good to be true," cried Peggy.

"Impossible or not, it hath really happened," answered Drayton, laughing gleefully at their amazement. "I was detailed, at my own request, to bring the news to Congress. I wanted to see if you were in truth safe in your own home, Peggy. Another express riding at speed hath gone on to General Washington with the tidings. The victory hath gladdened every countenance and paved the way for the salvation of the country."

"Begin at the beginning and tell all and everything," commanded Peggy.

"But first let the lad make himself comfortable," interposed Mrs. Owen. "He is tired and weary, I doubt not. Take his hat and cloak, Peggy, while I bring him a chair. Harriet, tell Sukey to hasten with the dinner."

"Has thee become a macaroni^[2], John, that thee has such a fine cloak?" queried Peggy as she relieved Drayton of his beaver and roquelaure.

"With these clothes?" asked the youth quizzically. For the removal of the cloak exposed a very shabby uniform to view. "That roquelaure became mine by what you might call impressment, and 'thereby hangs a tale' which you shall hear anon. But now for Cowpens."

"Yes; let us hear about Cowpens," cried Peggy eagerly. "Oh! I can scarce wait the telling."

"It happened after this fashion," began Drayton settling himself with a sigh of satisfaction in the chair Mrs. Owen had brought. "Lord Cornwallis began again his march toward North Carolina with the first of the year. So General Greene detached Brigadier-General Morgan to harass the left flank of the British, and to threaten Ninety Six. We annoyed Cornwallis so much that he sent Colonel Tarleton with the light infantry and some cavalry to push us to the utmost."

"Colonel Tarleton advanced up the west side of the Broad River, while his lordship proceeded up the east side; the plan being for him to fall upon us should we attempt to recross and retreat into North Carolina. Well, I am bound to say that Colonel Tarleton did press us hard. So much so that we fell back before him until we reached the Cowpens, so called because the cattle are here rounded up and branded. It lies about midway between Spartanburg and the Cherokee Ford of the Broad River. The position was both difficult and dangerous, and though General Morgan didn't want to fight, he knew that the time had come when he had to."

"Well, what did the man do as we camped there the night before the battle? Why, he went among the men as they sat about the camp-fires, and told them he was going to fight and just what he wanted them to do. The result was a glorious victory the next day."

"We rose early and breakfasted quietly, and then prepared to fight. About eight o'clock the

enemy came in sight and drew up in line of battle. No sooner were they formed than they rushed forward shouting like a lot of demons. 'Tis Colonel Tarleton's way of attack, and oftentimes it scares the militia so that they become panic stricken, and break and run. This was the time when they didn't.

"The militia received the first onslaught, fired two volleys and then fell back, according to instructions. As they did so the British yelled and shouted, and advanced in a run. And then you should have seen how Pickens' sharpshooters got in their work. 'Wait until they are within fifty yards,' they had been told, 'and then fire.' They followed their orders to the letter, and picked off the men with the epaulettes until the ranks of the British were demoralized by the loss of officers. Then the second line cleared, and we regulars advanced, and charged. The next thing any of us knew the British infantry threw away their arms, and began to cry for quarter.

29

"Colonel Tarleton then ordered his dragoons to charge while he attempted to rally the infantry, but the rout was too complete. When he found that he could do nothing with the infantry, he made another struggle to get his cavalry to charge, hoping to retrieve the day, but his efforts proved fruitless. They forsook him, and went flying from the field of battle. Colonel William Washington pursued them until evening, and on his return drove before him a number of prisoners which he had collected on the route.

"There were six hundred men captured; ten officers and more than a hundred men killed, but Tarleton, I am sorry to say, escaped. All the cannon, arms, equipage, music and everything fell into our hands, while our loss was but twelve killed and sixty wounded. Oh, I tell you we were jubilant! We crossed the river, making a détour to escape his lordship, and brought our prisoners and booty safe to a junction with the main army. General Greene was delighted over the victory, for the destruction of Colonel Tarleton's force will cripple Cornwallis severely. After a few more such victories I think his lordship will realize that he no longer hath a Gates to deal with."

30

"Is it not wonderful?" broke in Peggy. "Oh, I knew that something would happen soon to cheer us up! It hath always been so from the beginning of the Revolution. There was Trenton in '76, just when every one thought the country lost; and Saratoga in '77, when our own dear city was in the hands of the British. Whenever it hath been so dark that it seemed as though we could not press forward something hath always occurred to renew our courage. I can see it all!" she cried enthusiastically. "The swamps, and the trees with the marksmen hidden behind them; the river, and the palmettos; the swift rush of the soldiers through the trees, and then the crash of arms, and victory!"

"I thought you were a Quaker," sneered Harriet. "Do Friends so delight in warfare?"

"But I am a patriot too," cried Peggy. "I can't help but feel glad that we were victorious, although I am not sorry that Colonel Tarleton escaped, as thee is, John. He was so good to me. Had it not been for him I would not have been home."

31

"It is utterly impossible," came from Harriet again. "Colonel Tarleton never did meet defeat, and I don't believe that he ever will. 'Tis some quidnunc story got up to keep the rebels fighting. And if it were true, you are cruel to rejoice when father may have been in the action. Or Clifford."

"But the Welsh Fusileers, thy father's regiment, stay always with Lord Cornwallis, do they not?" queried Peggy, whose residence among the British had taught her much concerning such matters. "And as for thy brother, Clifford, thee does not know where he is."

"No; I don't know," answered the English girl tearfully. "I would I did. But he might have been there. He is somewhere in these revolted colonies, and it's cruel to be so glad when he might be among those who are killed, or wounded." She flung herself back among the pillows of the settle as she finished speaking, and gave way to a passion of tears.

"But you would rejoice at an English victory, Mistress Harriet," spoke Lieutenant Drayton in surprise. The Harriet he remembered would have scorned to betray such weakness. "We do not exult over those who are slain or wounded, but we do delight in the fact that liberty is advanced whenever we win a battle. And we care for the wounded, even though they are foes. Also," he added, his brow darkening, "we give quarter, and your people do not."

32

"'Tis a great price to pay for freedom," remarked Mrs. Owen sadly. "And yet there are times when it can be obtained in no other way."

"But to—to say that they r-ran," sobbed Harriet. "The British wouldn't run."

"Oh, wouldn't they?" observed the lieutenant dryly. "These ran like foxes when the hounds are after them. And they took to cover worse than any militia I ever saw. But there!" he concluded. "What doth it matter? We whipped them badly."

"Harriet hath been ill, John," explained Peggy in a low tone. "Thee must not mind what she says."

"I don't," returned he good-naturedly. "There was never much love lost between us, as she knows, though I am sorry that she hath been ill. Are you as busy as ever, Peggy?"

33

"The dinner is ready, John," spoke Mrs. Owen as Sukey came to the door with the announcement. "Thee must be hungry. Come now, and eat. And thee must make thy home with us while in the city. It would give us great pleasure."

"Thank you, madam. I will accept gladly, though it will be but for a day or two. There will be return despatches from Congress to General Greene. I must go back as soon as the gentlemen have finished with me. I wait upon them this afternoon."

"Then thee won't be able to go with the girls to see the skating," remarked the lady leading the way to the dining-room.

"If they finish with me soon I will join them," he answered. "My! how good this table looks! 'Tis not often that I sit down to a meal like this."

"I wonder how you poor soldiers can fight so well when you have so little to eat," she said soberly. "'Tis in my mind often."

"Perhaps we fight the better for being hungry," he returned lightly. "We have to get filled up on something, you know. Supplies are in truth hard to come by. Clothing as well as food. General Greene went before the legislatures of all the states he passed through on his way South to plead that men, clothing, food and equipment might be forthcoming for the campaign. There is woeful remissness somewhere. Why, some of our poor fellows haven't even a shirt to their backs."

"And I have made twelve myself since I came back," exclaimed Peggy proudly. "And mother as many more. Mistress Reed hath twenty-two hundred to send to the Pennsylvania line now."

"No wonder 'Dandy Wayne' is so proud of his men," sighed the youth with a certain wistfulness in his voice. "The Pennsylvania line is the best dressed of any of the Continentals, and all because the women of the state look after their soldiers. Would that the other states would do as well!"

"Lieutenant Drayton," spoke Harriet suddenly. She had quite recovered her composure by this time. "Peggy did not tell you that I have made a shirt too."

"Not for the patriots?" he asked amazed.

"Yes; for the rebels," she replied.

"Come!" he cried gayly. "You are improving. We will have a good patriot out of you yet."

"Perhaps," she responded graciously, a roguish gleam coming into her eyes. "Are you in need of shirts, lieutenant?"

Drayton's face flushed, and then he laughed.

"I am not as badly off as some of our poor fellows, Mistress Harriet, but they would not come amiss. Why?"

"Because," said she speaking deliberately, "if you will accept it, I should like to give you the shirt that I made."

"To give it to me?" he queried astonished. He had always known that Harriet disliked him, and therefore could not understand this sudden mark of favor. "To give it to me?"

"Yes; to you. Will you promise to wear it if I give it to you?"

"Oh, Harriet," came from Peggy reproachfully, but John Drayton answered with a puzzled look:

"I shall most certainly wear the garment if you give it to me, mistress, and feel highly complimented in so doing."

"I will hold you to your word, sir," cried Harriet. With that she ran out of the room but soon returned with the garment in question. "There!" she said holding it up so that he could read the embroidered inscription. "See to what you have pledged yourself, John Drayton."

A twinkle came into his eyes, but he took the shirt from her, holding it tightly as he said:

"I shall abide by my word. And what think you the British would say if they saw what is here embroidered? This, mistress: 'That 'tis small wonder the rebels are successful when even our own women help to keep them in supplies.'"

"Oh, give it back," she exclaimed in consternation. "I did not think of that."

"Nay; a bargain is a bargain." Drayton folded up the shirt with a decided gesture. "You were trying to put up a 'take in' on me, but it hath redounded on yourself. Stand by your word, mistress."

"He hath thee, Harriet," cried Peggy laughing.

"I don't care," answered Harriet tossing her head. "'Tis across the shoulders, and if ever I hear of its being seen I shall know that he turned his back to the foe."

"Then you have heard the last of it, for that I will never do," said the lad solemnly.

[2] Macaroni—a dandy.

CHAPTER III—A GLIMPSE OF CLIFFORD

"They rose in dark and evil days
To right their native land;
They kindled here a living blaze
That nothing shall withstand.

“Then here’s their memory—may it be
 For us a guiding light,
 To cheer our strife for liberty,
 And teach us to unite.”

—*John Kells Ingram.*

When at length the two maidens started forth in the early afternoon they found that the news of the victory at the Cowpens was upon every tongue. The streets were filled with an eager, joyous crowd of people, all discussing the intelligence with mingled emotions of incredulity and delight. Slumbering patriotism awoke to new ardor, and despairing hearts thrilled anew with hope. From the depths of discouragement the pendulum swung to the other extreme, and all sorts of brilliant achievements were prophesied for the army in the South under Greene. 39

“How soberly they take the news,” observed Harriet as they passed a group of men who were quietly discussing the event. “See how gravely, almost sadly, those men are talking. In London we make a great ado when our soldiers win a victory.”

“But those are Friends, Harriet. See, thee can tell by their drab clothes and low, broad-brimmed beavers. And being such are therefore neutral. Neutrals do not rejoice at a Continental victory any more than—than some other people,” she added with roguish insinuation. “Those who are not of the sect are hilarious enough. Of a truth it doth seem as though their gladness verged on the unseemly.”

“That’s just it,” said the other accusingly. “You, and I doubt not many others in this city of Penn, think the least bit of exuberance a sin.”

“It hath not been so of late, Harriet. Indeed it doth seem as though, since thy people held the city, that we would never regain our old peacefulness.” 40

“I liked New York better than this,” went on the English girl peevishly. “There was so much more gayety.”

“But we are considered the more intellectual,” spoke Peggy quickly, who could not bear to hear the least aspersion against her beloved city. “’Tis often commented upon by those who come among us. Shall we turn into High Street, Harriet? Or does thee prefer to keep down Chestnut?”

“High Street by all means, Peggy. I think it would be the finest street in the world if it were not for the markets in the middle of it.”

“Does thee?” cried Peggy much pleased. “Why, I thought thee didn’t like Philadelphia?”

“I do like the city. The streets are so broad and regular, and these footways are like those we have in London. ’Tis the people that are not to my liking.” The girl sighed.

For a moment Peggy could not answer for indignation; then, choking back a crushing retort, she replied sagely:

“The people are well enough, Harriet. ’Tis thy feeling which is not right. Thee certainly has the megrims to-day.” 41

“Is not that Mr. Morris’s house?” asked Harriet as they reached the southeast corner of High and Front Streets.

“Yes,” replied Peggy gazing mournfully at the mansion indicated. “’Twas there also that General Arnold lived when he had charge of the city. I went there to one of his teas, Harriet. The city rang with his prowess at that time. Next to General Washington I liked him best of any of our generals, though I like not to speak of him now. Thy general, Sir William Howe, lived there when thy people held Philadelphia.”

“Ah!” said Harriet surveying the residence more intently. “So that is where he lived, is it? ’Tis a fine dwelling.”

“Mr. Morris hath made many improvements since he bought it, though it hath always been considered one of the best in the city,” Peggy informed her.

“He is very rich, isn’t he, Peggy?”

“He is said to be, Harriet, and is, I doubt not. He hath such great skill in financial matters that ’tis no wonder. The Congress hath put him in charge of the nation’s finances, I hear, and many hope that he will put our money upon a firm basis. He hath already been of great service to the patriots in advancing money, and he hath advised many of our people concerning investments. ’Tis owing to him that mother hath prospered of late,” concluded the girl warmly. “See the vessels, Harriet.” 42

They had turned now into Front Street, and stopped to look at the broad river filled with ice-floes. Out of the long length of the street upward of two hundred quays opened, forming so many views terminated by vessels of different sizes. There were three hundred at the time in the harbor disputing possession with the huge cakes of floating ice.

“And when the British left in ’78 they left us not one bark,” went on Peggy after they had stood for a moment in silence.

"I wonder," spoke Harriet musingly, "I wonder why England doth not send a great fleet over here to ravage this entire seaboard? If all these large towns could be so attacked at one time the revolted colonies would be conquered at once, and an end put to the rebellion."

"It would not conquer us," declared Peggy stoutly. "I have heard some say that with General Washington at their head they would retire beyond the mountains, and fight from there. Thee can never conquer us, Harriet."

Harriet made no reply, and they resumed the walk toward Poole's Bridge. A throng of promenaders, skaters and sliders filled the banks and glided over the smooth ice of Pegg's Run, as the extensive marsh which lay beyond the high table-land north of Callowhill Street was called.

This high waste ground had some occasional slopes down which some hundreds of boys were coasting. The whole area was a great ice pond on which it seemed as though all the skating population of Philadelphia had congregated. The city had long been preëminent in the sport. At this time her skaters were considered the most expert and graceful in the world, and the girls soon became absorbed in watching them as they mingled together and darted about, here and there.

"Are there none but boys and men?" questioned Harriet presently.

"'Tis not esteemed delicate for females to skate," Peggy informed her. "Though," she added lowering her voice instinctively, "we girls of the Social Select Circle used to slip off where none could see, and practice it. Sally Evans got so skilled that she excelled in the 'High Dutch,' and I could cut my name on the ice, but alas for Betty Williams. She could hardly stand on her skates, and we were always having to help her up from a tumble."

"Is thee talking about me, Peggy?" demanded a voice, and Peggy gave a little cry of welcome as she turned to find Betty Williams standing behind her. "Hasn't thee anything better to do than to tell of thy friends' failings? And what is this I hear? That the express from the Cowpens is staying at thy house? Is he friend of thine? What luck thee has, Peggy."

"Thou shalt come and meet him for thyself, Betty. Yes; he is an old friend, Lieutenant John Drayton. Surely thee remembers hearing me speak of him?"

"A lieutenant? Charmante! I dote on army men," cried Betty rapturously. "I remember now about him. Does thee know him also, Harriet?"

"Yes," answered Harriet curling her lip. "He is a pretty fellow enough, and will never swing for the lack of a tongue. Lieutenant Drayton is no favorite of mine, though Peggy and her mother are fond of him."

"Yes; mother and I are fond of him," spoke Peggy with some sharpness, quick to resent a slur against one of her friends. "Perhaps he is deficient in the court manners to which my cousin hath been accustomed, but he treats even an enemy with courtesy, and thee has had no cause to complain of him, Harriet. Would that he could say as much for thee."

"Where was his courtesy when I asked him to return that shirt?" demanded Harriet. "A true courtier would not have kept it after I had expressed a wish for its return."

"Thee should not have presented it if thee did not wish him to keep it."

"What ever are you girls talking about?" demanded Betty with eager inquisitiveness. "Tell me all anent the matter. What shirt? Tell me this minute else I will perish with curiosity. That is, if 'tis no secret."

"Oh!" she cried merrily as with some laughter and many details both Harriet and Peggy unfolded the matter of the shirt. "Oh, Harriet! what a rout! I blame thee not for not liking him. How he discomfited thee! I'm so anxious to meet him. Does thee know Robert Dale, Harriet? We girls have always esteemed him the very nicest boy in the world. By the way, Peggy, father wrote that Robert hath been put in General Lafayette's division. The Select Corps 'tis called. 'Tis monstrous distinction."

"How?" asked Harriet. "I know him not though it seems as though I should, I have heard so much anent him. How is the Select Corps distinctive?"

"As though thee did not know," cried Betty incredulously. "Had I spent as much time with both armies as thee and Peggy have there would be naught about anything military that I did not know. But, for fear that the Select Corps is the one thing lacking in thy knowledge of camp, I will tell thee that its members are taken from the whole army for the active part of a campaign. The Select Corps is always in advance of the main army, and has the right to make the first attack on the enemy. 'Tis of vast distinction to be of it, and Robert must have proved himself valorous else he would not have been honored by being placed in it."

"But 'tis a position of danger as well as honor, Betty," remarked Peggy.

"If Mr. Washington does no more fighting than he hath done for the past few years your Robert Dale will be in no danger," observed Harriet, who was certainly in a bad mood for the day.

"Oh, as to that," retorted Betty airily, "we manage to get in a victory often enough to keep up our spirits. Really, Harriet, I do wish thee could meet Robert."

"And I wish that you both could meet my brother, Clifford," cried Harriet. "Why, none of the youths in the rebel camp at Middlebrook could compare with him in looks. He is so handsome,

and noble, and brave. Oh, I do wish that I could see him!" she ended, a pathetic quaver coming into her voice.

"Thee has not seen him since thee came to America, has thee?" asked Betty. Peggy, whose gentle heart was touched by the feeling her cousin exhibited, forgot how trying she had been, and pressed her hand tenderly.

48

"No, Betty. He left home soon after father came to join General Gage in Boston. When we were in New York City father had Sir Henry Clinton to go over the rosters of the different regiments to see if we could locate him, but we could find no trace of him. I did not mind so much until since I have been ill, but now I want to see him so much."

"Does he look like Cousin William, Harriet?" asked Peggy.

"No; he is more like your father than mine. Father says that Cousin David is like my grandfather, and Clifford is the living representative of the picture of grandfather."

"If he is like father he must be all that thee claims for him," spoke Peggy warmly. "I should dearly like to see him, Harriet, and perhaps thee will hear of him soon. If he is in this country anywhere with the British army thee will surely hear of him in time. Don't grieve."

"If thee does find him I hope that he will come to Philadelphia," laughed Betty, who had put up her hair and adopted young lady airs. "I like nice boys, be they English or American."

49

"Or French," put in Peggy slyly. "I've heard that thee takes a lesson each morning from one of the aides of Monsieur de la Luzerne, the French minister. Thee needs to be dealt with, Betty."

"Peggy Owen, Sally hath been telling thee tales out of school," cried Betty, her face flushing. "When did thee see her?"

"A hit! A hit!" laughed Peggy. "How thee mantles, Betty. Know then that I stayed with Sallie last night, and thereby increased my knowledge as to several matters. She said——"

"I must be going," uttered Betty hastily. "Good-bye, girls. Come and see me, Harriet, but leave thy cousin at home."

She darted away before Peggy could call out the merry retort that rose to her lips. Then the maiden turned to Harriet.

"And 'twould be wise for us to go too, Harriet," she said. "The air begins to grow chill, and thee must not take cold. See! many of the skaters and promenaders are leaving, and soon there will be none left. I did not know that 'twas so late. Is thee tired?"

"No; I believe that the walk hath done me good," answered Harriet, who did look better. "Still I feel a little cold. Let us walk fast, Peggy."

50

Recrossing the bridge they left the gay throng and started briskly down the narrow footway of Front Street. Suddenly the clatter of hoofs was heard, and the maidens turned to see a party of American horse approaching from the direction of Frankford. They were riding at speed, and the girls drew close to the curb of the walk to see them pass. As the dragoons drew near they saw that they were escorting a number of British prisoners.

"Hath there been another battle?" asked Harriet, growing pale.

"I think not," answered Peggy. "There is always an express to tell of it, if there hath been, before the prisoners come. These are not from the Cowpens, Harriet. They could not be, and come from that direction."

"True," said Harriet. "I wonder if the main army hath engaged with our troops? Oh, I like not to see our men made prisoners!"

Peggy made no reply, and in silence the two watched the troopers. As they came opposite to the place where the maidens stood one of the prisoners, a young fellow, leaned over and said something to the trooper next him. Then, with a light laugh he turned his face full upon them, and lifted his hat with jaunty grace.

51

As he did so Harriet sprang forward with an amazed cry:

"Clifford! Clifford! Clifford!"

CHAPTER IV—A STRANGE PRESENTIMENT

52

"He alone
Is victor who stays not for any doom
Foreshadowed; utters neither sigh nor moan;
Death stricken, strikes for the right,
Nor counts his life his own."

—Atlantic Monthly Calendar, 1908.

An exclamation of intense astonishment burst from the young fellow's lips, and he drew rein

quickly. If it was his intention to come to them he was not allowed to carry it out, for at this moment the leader of the troopers gave a sharp command, and the whole party swept onward at increased speed.

"Clifford! Clifford!" called Harriet again and again; but the youth gave no further heed, and the horsemen were soon beyond the reach of her voice.

"'Twas Clifford," she cried turning to Peggy with a sob. "Oh, Peggy, what shall I do? He is a prisoner."

"Is thee sure that it was he, Harriet?" questioned Peggy who had been amazed at what had taken place.

"Did I not see him? And did you not hear him speak? I could not tell what he said. Could you? He is a prisoner. I must get to him. Come! we must go faster, Peggy, so that we can see where they take him."

By this time the dragoons had turned into one of the cross streets, and when the girls reached the place of turning they had passed out of sight.

"I wish Cousin David were here. He would know what to do," cried Harriet greatly excited. "Couldn't we send for him, Peggy?"

"Father couldn't leave the army now, Harriet, as thee knows. Besides, it would take long to send for him, and thy brother might be gone before he could get here. We must find John. He will know what to do."

"Then let us hurry, hurry," exclaimed the English girl clasping her hands convulsively together.

Lieutenant Drayton was just ascending the steps of the Owens' dwelling as they reached Fourth Street, but catching sight of them he ran down the stoop to join them.

"The Congress hath but this moment finished with me," he said, "so that it was impossible for me to come to Pegg's Run. Was the skating fine? I should like to have seen it, and to have taken a turn— Why! what hath happened?" he broke off, all at once becoming aware of their perturbation. "You both seem somewhat upset."

"'Tis Harriet's brother," explained Peggy seeing that her cousin was unable to speak. "A party of American horse came from the North bringing in some prisoners, and Harriet saw her brother, Clifford, among them. She called to him, but they would not let him stop. They turned into Arch Street, and we lost sight of them."

"When did it happen, Peggy?"

"But now, John. Just as we were leaving Pegg's Run. Could thee find where they went?"

"Oh, Lieutenant Drayton, will you find him for me?" entreated Harriet.

"I will try, Mistress Harriet. If he is to stay in the city, he will be put in one of the jails. If he is to go on to the interior the party would stop at one of the inns for the night, as 'tis now too late in the day to go further. The thing to do will be to go to the jails, and if he be not there, to make the round of the inns. Be not over-anxious. If he is to be found, and surely 'twill be an easy matter, I will soon bring you word of it."

He lifted his beaver as he finished speaking, and left them. The two girls went slowly into the dwelling, and reported the affair to Mrs. Owen.

"John will find him, Harriet," said the lady soothingly. "That is, of course, if he stays in the city, and as the lad says, the troopers will of a certainty stop here for the night. Try to occupy thyself until his return. He will do everything he can to find thy brother. Should he be found then we will try to get his release in some manner; but now busy thyself about something. Thee is too much agitated, and will make thyself ill again."

"I know not what to do," objected Harriet sinking into her favorite seat on the settle before the fire. "What shall I do, Peggy?"

"Read to me from that poem, Harriet," suggested Peggy, bringing the volume to her cousin. "Thee was to do that this morning when John came with news of the battle. 'Twill make the time pass more quickly."

"I would rather talk," said Harriet, turning the leaves of the book rapidly. "I do not believe that a poem will content me. A tale would be more enthralling. Still there are some beautiful passages, and I will try some of them. Here is one that is considered one of the finest in the poem. Father read it to me once."

With a voice rendered more expressive than usual by reason of her unwonted emotion Harriet read that wonderful and pathetic invocation to light with which the blind poet begins the third canto of his immortal poem:

"Hail, holy Light, offspring of heaven first-born."

She was fond of poetry, and fond also of reading it aloud; so that soon her attention was caught by the musical cadence of the verse. Peggy watched her, amazed at the transition that now took place. She who had been so agitated and anxious a few moments before was absorbed by the rhythm of the poem. Her eyes kindled; her cheeks flushed, and her accents became sonorous:

"Thus with the year

Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead and ever during dark
Surrounds me——'

"Oh!" screamed the girl, suddenly letting the book fall to the floor as she pressed her hands to her eyes. "The dark! The dark!"

"What is it?" cried Peggy running to her. "What is the matter, Harriet?"

"Oh, I shall be blind! I shall be blind," broke from Harriet in agonized tones. "I know I shall. It came to me just now. Oh, Peggy! Peggy!"

"What a fancy!" cried Peggy giving her a little shake. "Thee is all upset, Harriet. Mother must give thee some Jesuits' Bark."

"But I shall be," moaned the girl. "I know that it will happen."

"Thy sight will dim with age, of course," said Peggy in a matter-of-fact tone. "Just as mine will, and as mother's hath already done. Then we will both wear bridge glasses, unless we use the spectacles with wire supports which Dr. Franklin hath invented. And thou wilt look at me over them; like this."

58

She tucked her chin down on her breast, and looked at her cousin so drolly that Harriet laughed through her tears.

"That's better," approved Peggy. "Thine eyes are all right, Harriet. I see naught wrong with them save that they are much prettier than mine; which is not at all to my liking."

Again Harriet laughed, well pleased with the compliment.

"I do believe that you are right, Peggy," she said. "I am full of fancies. But oh! you don't know how I felt for a few moments." She shivered, and passed one hand lightly over her eyes. "I've read that passage often, but never before did it affect me so. I could see the dark, the 'ever-during dark,' about me; and it came to me that I should be blind."

"Don't talk of it. Don't even think about it," said Peggy soothingly. "As I said, thee is all upset over thy brother, and therefore is prone to imagine many things. 'Tis lowness of mind that causes it. Now while we wait for John, we will make mother let us get the supper. Thou shalt make the chocolate, Harriet. In that thee excels."

59

And in this manner, talking to her as though she were a little child, Peggy beguiled her cousin into forgetfulness of her strange foreboding.

CHAPTER V—A DAY OF NOTE

60

"Great were the hearts, and strong the minds,
Of those, who framed, in high debate,
The immortal league of love, that binds
Our fair, broad Empire, State with State.

* * * * *

"That noble race is gone; the suns
Of years have risen, and set;
But the bright links those chosen ones
So strongly forged, are brighter yet."

It was late that night when Drayton returned.

"No," he said in answer to Harriet's eager questioning. "I found him not. I went to both the old and the new jails, but he was in neither. In fact, no prisoners have been received for some days. I then made the rounds of the taverns, but no such party was stopping at any of them. There was but one trace to be found: some of the loungers about the inns said that a party of horse was seen in the late afternoon riding toward the lower ferry. I will inquire in that direction to-morrow. 'Tis not customary to travel at night with prisoners, unless the need is urgent. I wonder that a stop for the night was not made in the city."

61

The dragoons had passed through the city, as the lieutenant found the next day; and, crossing the Schuylkill at Gray's Ferry had gone on to the Blue Bell Tavern, putting up there for the night. They were up and away early the next morning.

"Then how shall I find him?" queried Harriet as Drayton imparted this information to her. "Lieutenant, you are an officer in the army; tell me how to find my brother. I ought not to ask this of you, I know. I haven't always been kind or pleasant, but if you will only help me in this, I'll—I'll——Peggy, help me to plead with him."

"There is no need to plead, mistress," responded he quickly. "If I can be of service to you, it will be a pleasure. I will do what I can to find him. If he is an officer the task will be much easier. If I hear aught concerning him I will send you word at once. 'Twas said at the Blue Bell that the party was for the South, and if so, it may be that I shall overtake it. I leave to-morrow if the despatches of Congress are ready."

62

"So soon?" exclaimed Peggy in dismay. "Why, thee came but yesterday, John."

"A soldier's time is never his own, Peggy. It hath been delightful to have even these few days. After the hard marching of the past weeks 'tis like an oasis in the desert to tarry in a real home. From all I hear we are likely to be on the move for some time to come. 'Twas openly talked in camp, before I left, that 'twas our general's plan to draw my Lord Cornwallis as far from his base of supplies as possible. If that be true we shall do naught but march for some time to come. This is a good rest for me."

"If thy stay is so short then we must see that 'tis made as pleasant as possible," declared Mrs. Owen. And from that moment the three, for Harriet threw off her depression and was once more the charming girl that she had been at Middlebrook, devoted themselves so successfully to his entertainment that Drayton declared that it was well that he had a horse to carry him away; for he would never leave of his own volition.

63

"It hath been delightful," he reiterated as he was about to depart. "I doubt that 'tis good for me to have so much pampering. 'Twill give me a desire to play the messenger at all times, and make me long for comforts that are not to be found in camp, or on the march. You shall hear from me soon, Mistress Harriet. Even though I should not overtake your brother and the dragoons still you shall have word of it."

With that he was gone. Life with its duties resumed its accustomed routine at the Owens' dwelling with the exception that Harriet seemed much improved. The interest in her brother was the thing needful to arouse her, and she daily gained in strength. The two horses, Star and Fleetwood, were brought from the stables, and the girls with Tom as groom again rode whenever the weather was pleasant. And so a week passed. February was folded away in the book of years, and March was upon them; but if Drayton had overtaken the horsemen on his way South they had received no word.

"How warm the sun is," exclaimed Harriet as she and Peggy were returning from a long ride on the first of the month. "Were it not that I might receive word from Lieutenant Drayton about Clifford, I would suggest that we turn about and go on to Chestnut Hill. It would be pleasant to be out all afternoon."

64

"Nay," demurred Peggy. "The distance to Chestnut Hill makes it not to be thought of. Besides, dinner is at two, and mother wished us to be home in time for that. Though it is pleasant."

It was pleasant. The storm month had begun his sway with the mildness of the proverbial lamb. The air held just enough of keenness to be bracing, and the sky was blue with the blueness of May. There was the promise of spring in the woods. The almost dead silences of winter had disappeared. The song of the occasional robin was heard; the flutter of wings, and the almost silent noises of the trees and thickets, evidenced in the swelling buds of the bare branches.

The Germantown road was a favorite ride with them, and this day they stopped often to exclaim over the spaciousness of the landscape which the leafless trees admitted to their view.

65

"Do you think that I will hear to-day, Peggy?" asked her cousin wistfully after one of these stops.

"I know not, Harriet. John will let thee know as soon as he can, for he promised. I would not think so much anent it, if I were thee. What is the saying? 'A watched pot never boils.' Is not that it?"

"I can't help it, Peggy. If Clifford were not a prisoner I would not care so much. Just as soon as I find where he is I must try to secure his release. I know that Sir Henry Clinton would get him exchanged if I should ask it. I will write to him."

Instantly Peggy was troubled. She feared Harriet's activities. The council of the state was alert and watchful, and would tolerate no communications of any sort with the enemy. In fact, several women, wives and relatives of Tories in New York and other points within the British lines, had recently been arrested for this very fault. So it was a very grave face the maiden turned to her cousin.

"Harriet," she said, "does thee remember the trouble that we got into at Middlebrook by trying to pass letters to Sir Henry? Thee must not try to pass any letters here."

66

"But this is different, Peggy," protested the other girl eagerly. "I'm not going to do any spy work. I learned a lesson at that time that I shall never forget. You have my word, Peggy. I shall not break it. The only thing I should write would be but a line to ask for Clifford's exchange. There could be no harm in that."

"If thee sends a letter of any sort, Harriet, thee must first take it to Mr. Joseph Reed, the president of the council. If he sees no objection to it then he will send it through for thee. If thee does not care to go to him, mother would attend to it for thee. 'Twould be best to leave the matter with her in any case. She would do everything that could be done."

"But the army is not here," expostulated Harriet, who evidently had the matter strongly in mind. "I see no reason why I should submit my letter to Mr. Reed. There could be naught to report of war matters from Philadelphia. 'Tis not as it was at Middlebrook."

67

"Is it not?" queried Peggy. "Why, Harriet, the enemy want all knowledge that can be had of the movements of Congress. Philadelphia is the center of the government. Whatever transpires here is of great interest to Sir Henry. Therefore, the rules regarding letters are rigid. They must not attempt it, Harriet."

"Well, well, have it your own way," returned Harriet lightly. "I think you make too much of such a small thing, Peggy, but the affair can be arranged when Clifford's whereabouts become known. So we will say no more about it."

There was nothing that could be said, so Peggy held her peace; but she thought deeply. She would tell her mother, she resolved, and they would see that no communication was had with the British that was not through the regular channels. But what a responsibility these English cousins were, she mused, and so musing sighed heavily.

"Wherefore the sigh, cousin mine?" quizzed Harriet, bending low over her saddle to look into Peggy's eyes. "Is it because you are afraid of what I shall do? Fie, for shame! 'Tis you who are beset by fancies now. Fear nothing, Peggy. I shall bring no further trouble upon you. Is that what you were worrying about?"

"Yes," confessed Peggy frankly. "It was, Harriet."

"Then think of it no more. Have I not said that no trouble shall come to you? And there shall not. But a truce to seriousness. 'Tis much too fine for worry. Is not that a robin redbreast, Peggy?"

"Yes, Harriet. I have noticed several since we began our ride. 'Twill soon be spring. And it should be; for it is the first of Third month."

And so the topic of the letter was put aside for the time, and the maidens rode on through the trees chatting pleasantly. Suddenly the dull boom of a cannon smote their ears.

"A battle! A battle!" cried Harriet excitedly as they drew rein to listen. "Oh, what if our people have attacked the city?"

"Nay," spoke Peggy. "'Tis more like that there is something to celebrate. Listen! Does thee not hear bells?"

"I wonder what it can be?" exclaimed Harriet. "I hope that 'tis not another victory for the rebels."

"Let us hasten, Harriet. We can find out in no other way." Peggy called to Tom, and they set forward at speed.

The noise became a din as they entered the city. Cannon boomed from the shipping on the Delaware, and artillery thundered on the land. All the bells in the city were ringing. Hoarse shouts filled the air, and upon every side there were manifestations of joy.

"Oh, what can it be?" exclaimed Peggy with some excitement. "I wish we knew."

A short, thick-set little man, of dark, swarthy complexion was just crossing Front Street toward one of the quays as she spoke. He turned as he heard the exclamation, and came toward them.

"If you do not know, lassie, let me tell you," he said with a deep obeisance. "'Tis a great day. A great day, and will go down in history as such. Know then that this morning the last state ratified the Articles of Confederation, and by that act the Union becomes perpetual."

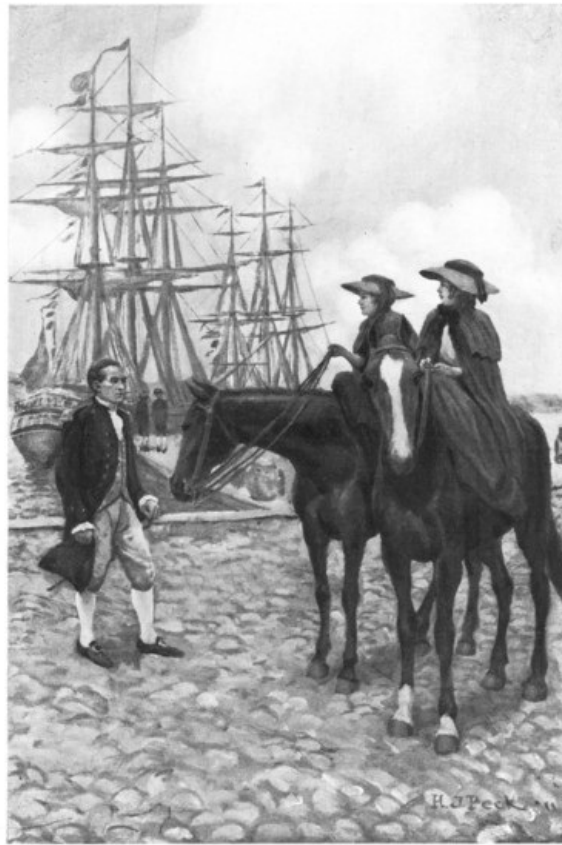
"Have they done it at last?" cried she. "Why, it hath been debated and discussed so long that we feared 'twould never happen. I did not know 'twas to occur to-day."

"Nor did any of us," returned he genially. "I fancy that it took even the Congress by surprise. 'Twas announced at noon, by a discharge of artillery, the signal agreed upon. I am going now to add my quota to the rejoicing by firing a *feu de joie* from my ship yonder."

He indicated a frigate beautifully decorated with a variety of streamers anchored just off the quay.

"The 'Ariel,'" read Harriet, at which Peggy opened her eyes wide.

"If that is thy ship then thee must be that John Paul Jones who fought that wonderful battle with the 'Serapis' two years ago," ejaculated she. For the "Ariel" was the vessel which was given that gallant officer in place of the "Bon Homme Richard" which had been so battered in that memorable engagement that it had sunk two days after the fight.



"THEE MUST BE JOHN PAUL JONES"

"The very same," he answered with a profound courtesy. "The very same, at your service, ladies." 71

"And thou hast stopped to give us information just as though thee was an ordinary man," she said in so awed a tone that he burst out laughing.

"Well, and why not? Could I not give it as correctly as another? I am honored to be of service."

He swept them another courtesy, and a little confused by the meeting the two girls thanked him, and rode on.

On every hand the citizens demonstrated the importance of the happy occasion. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the President of Congress received congratulations. At night the evening was ushered in by an elegant display of fireworks while the gentlemen of Congress, the civil and military officers, and many of the principal citizens partook of a collation spread for them at the City Tavern.

The first great step toward making the union permanent was taken. There were many pitfalls awaiting the young nation ere one republic could be moulded out of thirteen sovereign states. There were concessions to be made, mistakes corrected, in later years a baptism of blood, before E Pluribus Unum could be properly the motto of the new United States. But the first step toward becoming a nation among the nations was taken when the states entered into a firm league of friendship on this day for their common defense, the security of their liberties and their mutual general welfare. A people struggling for liberty always become the favorites of heaven, and how far-reaching the links forged between the states was to become was known alone to the Ruler of all. 72

CHAPTER VI—A MESSAGE OF INDIGNATION 73

"Thou art a traitor:
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;
And from the extremest upward of thy head,
To the descent and dust beneath thy feet,
A most toad-spotted traitor."

—"King Lear," *Shakespeare*.

"Mother, did thee know about the celebration?" asked Peggy, as the two girls entered the sitting-room where Mrs. Owen sat sewing.

"Yes. Friend Deering was here but now, and told me the cause of it. A post-rider hath come from

the South, Harriet; there is a letter."

"From Lieutenant Drayton?" cried Harriet, taking the missive eagerly. "Oh, I wonder if he hath found Clifford?"

"That were best known by reading it," suggested Peggy, as her cousin stood holding the letter without breaking the seal. "Open it quickly, Harriet. I am beset with curiosity."

Without more ado Harriet tore open the epistle. As she did so a sealed enclosure fell to the floor, but she was too intent upon what Drayton had written to notice it for the moment. The latter ran:

"Esteemed and Honored Madam: It is with great pleasure that I take up my pen to inform you that at length I have located your brother; and a lively time it gave me, too. I left Philadelphia, as you doubtless remember, on Friday, but it was not until Sunday night that I overtook the party of American horse who had your brother in charge.

"I had inquired concerning them at every inn on the highway, but they had either passed without stopping or had just left; so that I almost despaired of ever coming up with them. By great good fortune, however, I found them at The Head of the Elk^[3] where I purposed to stay Sunday night. Supper was over, and prisoners and captors sat about the fire in the common room of The Three Lions Tavern when I entered. There were five prisoners in all, and I looked at each one carefully, hoping to recognize your brother by your description of him.

"One, the youngest of the lot, had something strangely familiar about him, and all at once it came to me that he looked like Peggy."

"It could not have been Clifford, then," Harriet paused to remark, looking at her cousin wonderingly. "I see no resemblance to you, Peggy."

"But thee said that he looked like father," reminded Peggy. "I am like father too, save my eyes and hair, which are dark, like mother's. If thy brother looks like father 'twould be natural that John should think him like me. Read on, Harriet. Perchance 'twas not he, after all."

"I was sure then," continued Harriet, reading, "that this was your brother; so, after obtaining permission from the officer in charge, I approached him and said:

"I cry you pardon, sir, but are you Clifford Owen, brother of Mistress Harriet Owen?"

"He looked at me queerly, it seemed to me, before he replied:

"I am not he; but if it were my name I see not what concern it is of yours."

"I bear a message to one Clifford Owen," I told him. "If you are not he of course 'twould be of no moment to you."

"No," he said, and seemed disinclined to talk. Seeing him so I left off for a time, but after some chat with the others, I turned to him again.

"If you are agreeable, sir, I would fain know your name?"

"You are persistent," he cried with some heat. "I am not the man you seek; then why should you wish my name?"

"And why should you not tell it?" I returned. "Unless, perchance, there are reasons for its suppression. We of these states oftentimes have to do with persons who care not for us to know their names."

"It is Wilson Williams, sir," he answered, springing to his feet. "Now will you cease your questions? I know not why you should pester me with them. Is't the fashion of Americans to annoy prisoners in such manner?"

"Since you are not the man, I will trouble you no further, sir," I answered with spirit. Turning my back upon him I began chatting with the others, who seemed not averse to conversation.

"I had a shrewd suspicion that he was Clifford, passing for some reason under another name, so I led the talk to the war and its progress, gradually giving utterance to speeches that grew more and more inflammatory, hoping to make him declare himself under the heat of controversy. I saw that he writhed under the conversation, so at length I observed:

"Even you British are coming to our way of thinking. The great Pitt, Charles Fox, and others among you know that 'tis the same spirit that animates us that stirred our common ancestors to resist the oppression of Charles First. None of you can be among us long without acknowledging this. Why, in Philadelphia, there is at this moment an English maiden who was bitter against us when she came among us, but who hath gradually been brought to our manner of belief. As a token of this she hath conferred upon me, an officer of the patriot army, a great mark for her favor." This I said, Mistress Harriet, to stir him. You must give me your pardon in the matter, for I thought but to serve you. And when I had said this I went to my saddle-bags which had been placed in a corner of the room, and drew forth the shirt that you had given me.

"This hath she made for me," I said holding it up to view. "And this," pointing to the inscription, Harriet Owen a loyal subject of the king, 'hath caused us much amusement.' I could not but smile as I held it up, for it came to me that you had said that if it were seen by the English you would know that I had turned my back to the foe. And here it was back to the enemy even before seeing service. The words had no sooner left my lips than here was my young man on his feet. Snatching the garment from my hands he tore it into pieces before I could prevent.

"There, sir!" he cried, tossing the shreds into the fire. "No Yankee shall wear a shirt of my sister's making. If you want satisfaction you shall have it."

"He clapped his hand to his side for his rapier, but, being a prisoner, of course found it not. 'A sword!' he cried furiously. 'A sword! A sword!'"

79

"Sir," I said, saluting him, "I fight with no prisoner. And now that you have acknowledged that Mistress Harriet Owen is your sister, perchance you will permit me to give you her message. She wished you to inform her of your destination that she might exert herself to secure your release. Write her at Philadelphia, in care of Madam David Owen, who is a cousin of yours, as, I dare say, you know. I make no doubt but that your sister will be able to get you a parole."

"With your aid?" he fumed. "I will rot in prison before I accept aid from a Yankee captain."

"A lieutenant, sir," I corrected. "By some oversight I have not yet the honor to be a captain. Perchance the matter will be adjusted after our next victory. I will bid you a very good-night, sir."

"Now by my life!" he cried, flinging himself upon me. "You shall not leave this room until I have some satisfaction." With that he began belaboring me with his fists. Of course 'twas not in human nature to withstand such an onslaught without a return in kind, so presently here we were on the floor, rolling over and over, and pummeling each other like two schoolboys.

80

"At length the officer of the troopers and some of the others pulled me off, for I was at the moment on top, having obtained the mastery.

"Have done, lieutenant," cried the officer. "Do you want to kill him? I can't have my prisoner beat up."

"I got up, rather reluctantly, I must confess, for the young gentleman had been trying and had brought it upon himself, and turned to the others to make excuses. But they all, even his fellow prisoners, were laughing. They had perceived the trick I had used to make him declare himself, and were well pleased with the bout, as no bones were broken, or blood shed. Have no fear either, mistress; save a few bruises and perchance a black eye your brother is no worse hurt than he should be.

"Your brother was sullen, and took the chaff with anything but a good grace; so, after a little, I bade them all good-night and went to my room to write you a report of the matter, which I fear will not be at all to your liking. A little later I heard him calling for inkhorn and powder,^[4] so that if he writes in heat to you, this will inform you of the reason.

81

"Monday morning.—I did not finish the letter last night, but hasten to do so this morning before starting on my journey South. Early the captain of the dragoons came to me laughing:

"Here's a kettle of fish, Drayton," he said. "The Englishman vows he'll have your blood. Oh, he's in a pretty temper. He is pleading for a sword, and hath promised us everything but his life for one. He hath writ to his sister too, and I am to send it. How to do it I know not. If you are in favor with her perchance you can attend to it."

"I can," I replied. "I have one of my own to send. I am leaving immediately, captain, and after I am gone tell our friend that his sister hath no more liking for me than he seems to have, and but used me for messenger, lacking a better.

"I shall tell him naught, I dare not," he said. "Only go not near him before you leave, lieutenant. I know not what will happen if you do."

82

"And I know that whatever happens I must have a whole skin for the delivery of my despatches," I answered laughing.

"Enclosed please find the letter your brother hath writ, and permit me to thank you for the enjoyableness of this little frisk. If I have gained an enemy, you at least have found a brother; so honors are even. Whenever you have another service to perform you have only to call upon him who subscribes himself

"Your humble and devoted servant,
"JOHN DRAYTON.

*"To Mistress Harriet Owen,
"Philadelphia, Pa."*

"The wretch!" cried Harriet, throwing the letter to the floor in a pet. "How dare he act so? Oh, I wish that Clifford had run him through. 'Twere well for John Drayton that he had no sword. How dare he flout him in that manner?"

"Softly, softly, my child," spoke Mrs. Owen mildly, with difficulty suppressing her smiles, while Peggy laughed outright. "Methinks both the lads were at fault, but John wished only to satisfy himself of the other's identity. And he did serve thee in that, Harriet. But why should Clifford wish to conceal it?"

83

"I know not," answered Harriet soberly. "I suppose 'twas because he feared father would make him withdraw from the service should he find him."

"Mayhap he explains the matter in his letter," suggested Peggy picking up the neglected enclosure, and handing it to Harriet.

"Oh, yes; the letter," cried Harriet tearing it open eagerly. "Why!" she exclaimed casting her eye quickly down the page. "He's angry! Just listen.

“And is it true,” began the missive without heading or beginning of any sort, “that Harriet Owen, my sister Harriet, hath so far forgot her duty to her king as to labor in behalf of his rebellious subjects? And such an one as you have chosen to favor, Harriet! Could not the daughter of Colonel William Owen, of the Welsh Fusiliers, find a better object than this whippersnapper of a Yankee captain?”

84

“Harriet! Harriet! And has it come to this? Are you a traitor to your country and your king? To make a shirt for a rebel were infamy enough, but to embroider your name across its shoulders that all might see that Harriet Owen, a loyal subject of the king, was so employed surpasses belief.

“Harriet, if this be true, if you have forgot what is due yourself, your brother, your father, your country and the most illustrious prince that ever sat upon the throne—if you have forgot your duty to all these, I say, then never more shall I call you sister. Never will I write the name of Clifford Owen again, but go down to my grave under the one I have chosen.

“But, my sister, I cannot believe it of you. I cannot believe that so short a time could change you so. Some one other than you must have made that shirt, and this popinjay of a captain—or is it a lieutenant? no matter!—hath stolen it to flaunt before me, and to stir me to anger.

“Would that when I saw you in Philadelphia I had stopped, in spite of my captors. It was not permitted, and at the time, I was content that it should be so, for I feared that father might be with you. I dread his displeasure when he meets me; for, as you know, he hath, in truth, great cause to be offended with me. Should the matter have truth in it that you have become imbued with the virus of this rebellion, it may be that a short account of how I have been fighting for the glory of old Britain will bring you back to a realizing sense of your duty.

85

“Know then that when I left you home,—and why did you ever leave there? This country is no place for a girl bred as you have been.—After I had left there, I say, I obtained a commission by the help of Lord Rawdon. I think he knew who I was; we met him once, if you remember, but he said naught about the matter. He saw at once that I wished my identity kept sub rosa, and the army was greatly in need of men. Of course it cost a pretty penny, and I expect a scene with father about it. Pray that I may distinguish myself ere we meet.

“I came with Lord Rawdon to the colonies, and have been with him ever since, mostly in the province of Georgia. We conquered that colony and garrisoned Savannah, where you and father would, no doubt, have found me had not that storm driven Sir Henry Clinton elsewhere to land. I was sent to Charlestown after you left for Camden and was stationed there for some months. Then his lordship sent me to New York by sea with letters for General Clinton. I was tired of the Southern climate, and another gladly exchanged with me, and went South while I remained in New York.

86

“There was lately some information to be procured about the rebel forces, and volunteering for the service I was captured by some of the enemy’s scouts. There were a number of British prisoners in the rebel camp, and, as they seem not to be any too well supplied with rations, we prisoners are sent somewhere to the interior to be fed and kept out of the way of mischief. I think our destination is Charlottesville, where the Convention prisoners^[5] are. ’Tis said that there is a regular colony of them at that place, which is, I believe, in the province of Virginia. There is to be a short stop at Fredericksburg before going on to the encampment of prisoners, for what reason I know not. If you will write immediately to that place I think I will receive it.

87

“But, Harriet, dearly as I would love to hear from you, if you have grown to sympathize with these revolted colonies in this broil against the king, if you are false to your country, as that fellow would have me believe, then write me not.

“How can one sympathize with such obstinate people as these rebels are? When one is in their company they are barely civil, and that is, as Jack Falstaff says, by compulsion. They seem to grow stronger by every defeat. And why do they? They seem like Antæus, of whom ’twas fabled that being a son of the goddess Tellus, or the earth, every fall he received from Hercules gave him more strength so that the hero was forced to strangle him in his arms at last. Would that our minister could send us a Hercules to conquer these rebels.

88

“If you can secure my release, Harriet, do so. I am quite sure that Sir Henry Clinton, if the matter is brought to his attention, would exert himself regarding an exchange. As you are doubtless aware, an affair of this kind must be kept prominently before the notice of the great ones, else it will be shelved for some other thing that is pressed with more persistence. And yet, if nothing can be accomplished save by the connivance of that captain, lieutenant, or whatever he may be, I would rather a thousand times stay as I am. Write me, if you are still my loyal sister.

“WILSON WILLIAMS
(CLIFFORD OWEN).’

“If ever,” spoke Harriet with tears of vexation filling her lovely eyes, “if ever I see that John Drayton again I will give him occasion to remember it. Clifford never wrote such a dreadful letter to me before. Peggy Owen, ’tis no laughing matter.”

89

“No,” agreed Peggy merrily. “No, ’tis not, Harriet. And yet I cannot help but laugh. I cry thy pardon, my cousin, but, but——” Unable to finish she gave vent to another peal of laughter.

[3] Now Elkton, Maryland.

[4] Horn ink-bottle, and powder, or sand, to dry the written page.

[5] At Burgoyne's earnest solicitation General Gates consented that the surrender at Saratoga should be styled a "convention." This was in imitation of the famous convention of Kloster-Seven, by which the Duke of Cumberland, twenty years before, sought to save his feelings while losing his army, beleaguered by the French in Hanover. The soothing phrase has been well remembered by the British, who to this day speak of the surrender as the "Convention of Saratoga."

CHAPTER VII—HARRIET TAKES MATTERS IN HAND

90

"I feel less anger than regret.
No violence of speech, no obloquy,
No accusation shall escape my lips:
Need there is none, nor reason, to avoid
My questions: if thou value truth, reply."

—"Count Julian," *Walter Savage Landor*.

"And if it had not been for your insisting upon it that shirt would never have been made," went on Harriet in an aggrieved tone.

"I think that 'twas I more than Peggy who persuaded thee to make the shirt," said Mrs. Owen quietly. "It was done to woo thee from thy fancies, Harriet, rather than with any purpose to get thee to aid our soldiers. If thee will write to thy brother and explain the matter to him he will forgive thee it. Further, according to John's letter, had it not been for that very same garment thy brother would not have acknowledged his identity. So thou seest, my child, that good hath come out of it after all."

91

"Why, so it hath," acknowledged Harriet brightening. "I had not thought of it in that light, madam my cousin. And would you mind if my brother were to come here, if a parole can be obtained for him?"

"Of course he must come here," returned the lady with a smile of gratification. She was pleased that Harriet should show thoughtfulness for her convenience. It had not always been the case with either the girl or her father. Colonel Owen was wont to demand a thing rather than request it, and Harriet herself had been somewhat addicted to obtaining her desires in the same fashion at Middlebrook. Of late, however, she was evincing more consideration for both Peggy and herself. "David would not wish it otherwise."

"'Tis very kind of you, my cousin," said the girl with sudden feeling. "But you will like Clifford. Indeed no one can help it."

"I am quite sure that we shall," responded Mrs. Owen graciously. "His letter bespoke him to be a lad of parts. And now as to the parole. That must first be accomplished before the exchange can be thought of; the latter will of necessity take time."

92

"How much?" queried Harriet. "I know that 'twas long before father got his, but that was in the early part of the war, before England had consented to exchange prisoners."

"I know not how long 'twill take, Harriet." Mrs. Owen threaded her needle thoughtfully. "Those things seem in truth to go by favor. As thy brother well says, if those in authority exert themselves it should be arranged quickly. If they do not then the matter drags along sometimes for months."

"Awaiting the convenience of the great," added the girl with some bitterness. "And such convenience is consulted only when they have need of further service. The past is always forgotten. Still, father stands well with Sir Henry, and I myself rendered him no little service by what I did at Middlebrook. I think,—nay, I am sure,—that if I can get his ear he will see that the affair is adjusted according to my wishes. I will write to him."

"It may be, Harriet, but thee must make up thy mind to endure some little delay. It seldom happens that there are not some rules or regulations to observe, all of which take time. For thy sake we will hope that Clifford's case will be the exception in such matters. We can do naught to-day about it because of the celebration, but to-morrow thou and I will go to Mr. Joseph Reed, the president of the council, who will advise us about the parole and anent the exchange also."

93

"Harriet," said Peggy suddenly, "does thee remember that when thy brother is exchanged he must return at once to the British lines? Thee had better not be too eager anent the exchange."

"But I intend to go back with him," Harriet informed her composedly.

"Thee does?" asked Peggy in surprise. "Why?"

"'Tis so much gayer in New York, Peggy. Don't you remember the times we had before father made us go South? Beside, I cannot hear at all from father here. As you know, 'tis almost impossible to get letters through the lines to him, and I have had no word since I have been here. I know not whether he is in Camden, where we left him, or with my Lord Cornwallis."

"But would he wish thee to be there, my child?" questioned Mrs. Owen gravely. "I cannot but think that he would prefer that thee should remain with us until he either comes or sends for

94

thee."

"He would not mind if I were with Clifford," returned the girl lightly. "We could have great sport there together. Besides, if I wish it father would not care. If he did I could soon bring him to look at the affair with my eyes. I usually do about as I please; don't I, Peggy?"

"Yes; but Cousin William did not always approve of thy way," reminded Peggy. "If thee continues to dwell in the house thy father had 'twill cost greatly, and once he spoke to me about thy extravagance. He said that both thee and thy brother were like to bring him to grief. 'Twas for that reason that he welcomed the idea that I should look after the expense. Does thee not remember?"

"I remember naught but that I wondered that you should prefer housewifery to pleasuring," answered Harriet gayly. "Father is always complaining about extravagance, but he likes right well for me to appear bravely before his friends. La! when one has position to maintain one must spend money, and no one knows it any better than my father."

Peggy was silent. Did her cousin wish her brother's exchange solely that she might return to New York, or was she in truth anxious to be where she could hear from her father? Had she really any natural affection for either, she wondered. Harriet began to laugh at her expression.

"I always know when you are displeased, cousin mine," she said putting her arm about her. "You pull down the corner of your mouth, so." Suiting the action to the word. "And your eyebrows go up, so. Now, confess: when you were with us, didn't you want to come back to your own people?"

"Yes," admitted Peggy, "I did. But it was because of my mother. Thy father would not be with thee there, and as thy brother is in the army also, he may be sent anywhere in the States at any time. While I know that thee must find it far from agreeable to be with those who are not of thy politics, still 'tis the wish of thy father that thee should stay here."

"Will you never be naught but a prim little Quakeress?" cried Harriet shaking her. "Know then that I have wishes too, and friends there who are almost as close as kinspeople. Then, too, you would be relieved of me here. Just think how delightful that would be," she ended teasingly.

"I am not thinking of us at all," confessed truthful Peggy, "but of what is best for thee. I feel as though I were responsible to Cousin William for thee."

"Don't you worry, mother mentor," cried Harriet dancing about gleefully. "When Clifford comes your responsibility ceases. How he will laugh when he finds that I can no longer care for myself. I am going now to my room, little mother. If I stay longer than you think best call me."

"Thee is saucy," was Peggy's retort, as Harriet ran out of the room, pausing only long enough to make a mouth at her.

But Harriet's high spirits had vanished the next morning when she returned from her visit to Mr. Reed.

"What think you?" she cried bursting in upon Peggy who was ironing in the kitchen. "Mr. Reed will see that the parole is given Clifford, but the exchange must wait until an American prisoner is found of equal rank with Clifford, who can be given for him. Isn't it provoking!"

"I should think thee could bear the delay patiently so long as thee will have thy brother with thee," remarked Peggy quietly. "'Twould be far more vexatious if the parole could not be given."

"Why, of course, Peggy. Oh, well! I suppose that I must content myself. Thank fortune, I can at least write to Clifford. If he were not in the rebel lines even that would be denied me. I am going to write him now."

"Mr. Reed was much taken with Harriet," observed Mrs. Owen, entering the kitchen as the English maiden left it.

"But not more than thee appears to be, mother," smiled Peggy. "'Tis amusing to see the difference with which thee regards her now, and the way it was at Middlebrook."

"She seems much improved," answered her mother. "Does thee not think so? So much more thoughtful of others. It did not strike me that she was much given to consideration then; but now —"

"But now thee has had her under thy wing for nearly three months; thee has nursed her back to health, and humored her every whim as though she were a child of thine until thee regards her as though she were thy very own. Thou dear mother!" The girl stopped her ironing long enough to kiss her mother tenderly. "Doesn't thee know that whatever thee broods over thee loves?"

Mrs. Owen laughed.

"How well thee knows me, Peggy. But thou art fond of her too, art thou not?"

"Yes, I am, mother," admitted the girl. "Whenever we go anywhere I am proud of her beauty, and that she is my cousin. And my friends here are charmed with her. Even Sally and Betty—though she sometimes makes dreadful speeches because of being for the king. She can be so sweet, mother, that at times I must steel myself against her, lest I should be more tolerant of her opinions than is wise."

"As to her being for the king, my child, that, as thee knows, is because of being English. And I would not have her feign a belief in the cause of Liberty did she not of a truth hold it to be just. An open foe is ever best, Peggy."

"It isn't politics, mother. At least not her feeling toward us, though it is trying to stand some of her comments, but—"

"Peggy, thee is troubled anent something," asserted the lady taking Peggy's face between her hands and gazing anxiously into her eyes. "What is it, my child?"

"'Tis anent the delay, mother. Should the exchange be effected quickly then there would be no cause for worry. But if it must be long, as Harriet thinks it may be, then I fear that my cousin will try to communicate with Sir Henry Clinton. In fact, she spoke of doing it yesterday, and I cautioned her against it. She said that she would not bring harm to us; but, mother, at her home in New York she was not always scrupulous about her promise. In truth, she let nothing stand in her way when she had her heart set on doing a thing. I intended telling thee about the chat when we returned from our ride yesterday, but what with the celebration and the letters it escaped my mind."

"Thee may dismiss the matter from thy thoughts, Peggy, for she spoke about that very thing to Mr. Reed. He told her that it would not help the exchange at this time, but that after her brother came it could be taken up. Then, he said, he would see that whatever she might wish to communicate to the British commander should reach him."

"Oh, I am so glad," exclaimed Peggy. "It hath given me no small concern, mother. I did not think my cousin would wittingly cause us trouble, but I feared that on the impulse of the moment, she might try to pass a letter through the lines. Thee knows what that would mean, mother?"

"Yes; and she does also, for Mr. Reed went into it with her. He told her to be very careful in speaking even about writing to Sir Henry, as the people were in no mood to tolerate communications with the enemy. She understands all that it means, my child. I think she will do naught until Clifford comes, and perhaps he will be better of judgment than she."

"I am so glad," said Peggy again, and much relieved resumed her neglected ironing.

The days passed. March glided into April, but the soft sweet days of spring brought no letter from Clifford. If the parole had been given Harriet did not know of it. She fumed and fretted under the waiting.

"Why do I not hear from him?" she cried one morning. "It hath been a month since I wrote, and it doth not take half so long to hear from Virginia. I do wish that either I would hear from Clifford, or that Mr. Reed would let me know anent the parole."

"Thee is like to get one of thy wishes, for here comes Mr. Reed now," said Peggy who was standing by the front window of the living-room.

"Let me go to the door, madam my cousin," exclaimed Harriet as Mrs. Owen started to answer the knocker.

"Very well, Harriet," assented the matron with a smile.

But both Peggy and her mother were startled to hear Mr. Reed say gravely, in answer to Harriet's eager questioning:

"Nay; 'tis not about the parole I am come, Mistress Harriet, but anent a more serious matter."

"And what, sir, could be more serious than my brother's release?" came Harriet's clear voice.

"A charge against you, mistress, would be much more serious," was the reply.

"Of what do you accuse me, sir?" was the girl's haughty query.

"I accuse you of nothing, but I insist upon truthful answers to some questions. For the sake of these cousins with whom you are staying I entreat you to reply with truth, and nothing but truth."

"Come, Peggy," cried Mrs. Owen rising. "We will see what this means."

CHAPTER VIII—HOSPITALITY BETRAYED

"For right is right, since God is God;
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

—"The Right Must Win,"
Frederick William Faber.

"What is the trouble, Friend Reed?" asked Mrs. Owen as she entered the hall.

"I wish you good-morning, Mrs. Owen. It grieves me to enter David Owen's house upon such mission as I must this day perform, but war is no respecter of persons. Were it my own household I still must subject its inmates to a most rigid inquiry." Mr. Reed fumbled nervously with his cocked hat as he spoke, and looked the embarrassment that he felt.

"Come in, Friend Reed." Mrs. Owen threw wide the door of the sitting-room with a smile. "Thee

may make all the inquiries thee wishes without apology. And what is the trouble?"

"Madam—I need hardly ask, and yet I must—did you know that this girl here had been communicating with the enemy?"

104

"No; I did not know of it. Harriet, is such the case? Hast thou indeed been guilty of this?"

"Yes," admitted Harriet defiantly. "I did write to Sir Henry Clinton about my brother. If that is communicating with the enemy then I am guilty."

"This then," said Mr. Reed producing a letter from his coat, "this then is yours?"

Harriet took the missive and scanned it quickly.

"Well," she said. "And what then? It is mine, and, as may be seen, 'tis innocent enough. It merely asks the commander to get my brother's exchange as soon as he can. It speaks too of the services our family have rendered to the cause. Why should it not be written? Am I not English? Have I not a right to ask aid from my own people?"

"Undoubtedly, mistress; but in times like these there are regulations to be observed by both sides. One who breaks them does so at his own risk, and subjects himself and those with whom he abides to suspicion. I warned you against this very thing. I promised to attend to any letter you might wish to send to the British commander after we had found an officer who might be exchanged for your brother. That you preferred to risk sending a message through the lines irregularly rather than to benefit by my assistance doth not speak well for the harmlessness of the letter, however innocent it doth appear on the surface."

105

"But it contains nothing that can harm any one," she protested. "And you were so long in telling me about the parole. Why, look you! 'Tis all of a month since you promised to get my brother here, and he hath not come yet! Think you I could wait longer? The letter hath not been written five days, and had you obtained my brother's release as you promised 'twould not have been written at all. 'Tis unfair to hold me to account for a matter for which you yourself are to blame."

"Your brother was not at Fredericksburg as you thought he would be, Mistress Harriet," answered he. "I was but seeking to find where he had been taken. The delay was in your service. Why did you not come to me instead of taking matters in your own hands? I would have explained. As the affair now stands you have not only brought punishment upon yourself, but you have subjected these, your cousins, to suspicion."

106

"As to myself," she said superbly, "it doth not matter. I was right to seek aid of my own people. I would do it again if it were to do over. My brother's welfare merits any risk I might run. As for Peggy and her mother, it is needless to say anything. They are not responsible for any of my doings, and cannot be held for them. 'Tis ridiculous to tell me that I have brought suspicion upon them, and 'tis done merely to fright me."

"You speak that which you know not of," he said soberly. "These be parlous times, mistress. Have you forgot that at Middlebrook you played the spy? Have you forgot that despite that fact you are brought again in our lines on the plea of ill health? Have you forgot that your father is a colonel in the British army, and that you yourself are an English girl? There are those who say that these facts show plainly that your cousins but use their patriotism as a mask to aid the side with which they truly sympathize."

107

Harriet stared at him in dismay, and turned very pale as a wail broke from Peggy:

"Oh, Harriet, Harriet! why did thee do it? And thee promised."

"No harm shall come to you, Peggy," cried Harriet. "Sir," turning to Mr. Reed, "believe me when I say that these two had naught to do with either the writing or the sending of the letter. In truth, they knew not when 'twas done, nor how."

"And how shall your word be believed when you think nothing of breaking it?" he questioned. "You promised your cousin, it seems; you also promised me that you would not hold communication with the enemy without first consulting me. We cannot trust you. Beside, the letter was returned with this warning from His Excellency, General Washington:

"GENTLEMEN OF THE COUNCIL:

"Permit no communication whatever between the writer of this letter and the enemy. Young as she is, she hath already shown herself very adept as a spy."

108

"What, what are you going to do to them?" asked the girl, in consternation. "In very truth, sir, they had naught to do with the matter."

"We know it," he made answer. "And yet, despite past services, despite the fact that David is in the field, there were some who whispered against them. The purest patriots in times like these are subjected to suspicion by the least untoward action. A year ago who would have thought that General Arnold would try to betray his country? I, myself, have been approached with offers from an emissary of the king. Because Mrs. Owen and her daughter are so well known for patriotic services, because we know them to be persons of high honor and unquestioned integrity, we have permitted no reflection upon them. But this state of things will not continue if you are allowed to remain with them. Therefore, we have decided that your punishment shall be——"

"What?" she cried anxiously. "Oh, I pray 'tis not arrest."

"Wait," he said. "The arrest was thought of, but the council consented to give it o'er on condition that you withdraw immediately into the enemy's lines. In short, mistress, you are to be sent to

109

New York."

"Banished to New York?" she repeated in amazement. "Why, that is where I want to be. Good sir," sweeping him an elaborate courtesy, "I thank you and the excellent gentlemen of the council. The punishment is most agreeable to my liking."

"And to ours," he answered her sternly, offended by her levity. "Be ready, therefore, to go tomorrow morning. In company with a number of other women, Tories and wives of Tories guilty of the same misdemeanor as yourself, you will be sent under escort to the British. Mistress Owen, you have my sympathy and congratulation also that the matter is no worse. I will bid you all a very good day."

Harriet sank down on the settle as the door closed upon the gentleman, and looked expectantly at the other two. But neither Mrs. Owen nor Peggy spoke. The matron quietly resumed her sewing, while Peggy stared at her as though this new breach of trust was more than she could believe.

"Say something, one of you," cried the girl suddenly. "I'd rather you would be angry than to sit there like that."

"How could thee do it?" came from Peggy. "Oh, Harriet! doesn't thee ever keep thy word?"

"Well, I promised not to bring any harm upon you, and I didn't; did I? Mr. Reed tried to scare us anent that, but he soon told the truth of the matter."

"It was not owing to thee that harm did not result to us, Harriet," said Mrs. Owen in a serious tone. "I dare not think what would have happened had we not been in our own city, and have given proof many times of our patriotism. I am not going to rail at thee, child; for I believe that thee did not wittingly try to injure us. But reflect on this: here were we all, Mr. Reed, Peggy and myself, who were trying to aid thee in getting a release for thy brother. We did all that could be done, and cautioned thee against trying to do anything without our help. We had thy best interests at heart, Harriet. Now, dear child, doth it not seem that something was owing to those whose hospitality thou wert enjoying? Was not the letter inexcusable as a breach of hospitality?"

"Oh," cried the girl bursting into tears. "I see now that it was. I did not mean to bring harm to you, madam my cousin. Oh, I was wrong in doing it. I am sorry now."

"Then we will dwell no longer upon that feature of it," remarked the lady. "The thing now is to see what good can be got out of it. Thou wilt see about thy brother's exchange, wilt thou not? He should be there with thee."

"Yes," assented the girl miserably. "I will go to Sir Henry at once anent it. In that way 'tis much better to be where I can see him. Still, while I am glad to go I shall miss you both. You have been very good to me, but it will be gayer there. We British know better than you how to make merry. But if I were to be ill again I know of no place that I would rather be than here."

"If thee only cares for us when thee is ill or in trouble, thee can just stay with the British," cried Peggy indignantly. "Thy family seem to think that we live for naught else than to do you service. I wonder if the day will ever come when one of you will meet favors with aught but trickery?"

"Peggy," chided her mother sharply.

"I can't help it, mother. I am sick and tired of deceit and falsehood, and the knavery that makes us appear like traitors to the country. I am glad that she is going." With this passionate outbreak Peggy burst into tears.

Harriet looked at her for a moment unable to make any reply, but presently she spoke in tones that were unusually gentle for her:

"Peggy, the day will come when you shall see what I will do. We are not all bad, if we are English."

"Don't ever promise about anything any more," sobbed Peggy. "I can never believe thee again."

But all of her resentment vanished the next morning as a hay cart drew up before the door under escort of a guard. There were a few women in the cart, and a number of people, men and boys mostly, had collected to view the departure.

"Oh, Harriet," she sobbed putting her arms about her, "since thee must go I wish the mode was different."

For an instant Harriet's lips quivered. She grew very pale and clung to Peggy convulsively. It was only for an instant, however, that she displayed any emotion.

"Oh, well," she said with a toss of her head. "The mode is well enough, I dare say, since 'twill convey me to New York. And Fleetwood is to go with one of the men."

But Peggy knew that in spite of her brave front the girl was humiliated at the manner of her departure. Without a glance at the surrounding crowd of curious ones Harriet took her place in the cart, and settled herself comfortably.

"If a letter should come from Clifford, madam my cousin," she said leaning forward to speak to Mrs. Owen, "I pray you to read it. Then write him in answer what hath befallen me. Tell him I will spare no effort to have him join me soon in New York. And so farewell!"

She smiled brightly at them, and waved her hand repeatedly as the cart drove off. Peggy and her mother stood watching it as long as it was in sight.

"Oh, mother, I am so tired of it all," said the girl, with tears. "Will nothing ever be right any more? Will this long war and all its complications never be over with? I am so weary, mother."

"Give not way to such feelings, Peggy," said her mother, drawing her into the house. "It doth seem dark at times, and this happening is in truth a sad ending to Harriet's stay with us. But everything will come right in time. Do not doubt it. Have faith. All will be well some time."

CHAPTER IX—THE DICTATES OF HUMANITY

"The sweetest lives are those to duty wed
Whose deeds both great and small,
Are close knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells;
The Book of Life the shining record tells."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

After the departure of an inmate of a family, whether that person has been pleasant or otherwise, there follows a feeling of blankness, of something amiss. Distance, in truth, produces in idea the same effect as in real perspective. Objects are softened, and rounded, and rendered doubly graceful; the harsher and more ordinary points of character are mellowed down, and those by which it is remembered are the more striking outlines that mark sublimity, grace, or beauty. And so it was with Harriet.

Her irritability, her unpleasant remarks, her ceaseless demand upon their service were soon forgotten. The grace and dignity that distinguished her from others were remembered to her advantage. The pleasant smile, the pretty manner, the imperious bearing were idealized in the softening glamour of absence. The mode of her departure had palliated whatever of resentment Mrs. Owen and Peggy might have felt for the girl's breach of hospitality.

"I believe that I am lonesome without Harriet," declared Peggy one evening. "Is thee, mother?"

It was the seventh day of Harriet's absence. Tea was over. The servants had retired for the night, and mother and daughter sat alone in the sitting-room, knitting by the light of the candles.

"'Tis most natural for us to miss her, my daughter. She hath been with us so long, and with thee especially that 'tis not to be wondered at that thee feels lost. Harriet hath many good qualities. She hath been left to follow her own impulses too much, but I hope that her association with thee hath been of benefit to her."

"With me, mother?" exclaimed Peggy flushing scarlet at this praise. "Thee should not say that. In truth, I don't deserve it, mother. I was often vexed with her, and sometimes gave way to sharpness. I oftentimes went to my room to gain control of myself. I have a temper, mother, as thee must know."

"I do, my child; but I know too that thou art trying to get the mastery of it. Because thou didst so strive is the reason that I believe that companionship with thee will make Harriet better. She hath received impressions that cannot fail to be of advantage to her. I am hoping that Harriet will make a noble woman."

"I wonder," said Peggy musingly, "why Clifford did not write to her? It would have saved all this trouble had he done so."

"Thee must remember that he said in his letter that he thought they were to stop for a time at Fredericksburg. They may not have done so, or he may have been taken elsewhere after a short stop. Mr. Reed says that there was no report of any such party at any of the taverns there."

"The parole will not be given now, will it, mother?"

"I think Mr. Reed would exert himself further in the matter did we desire it, Peggy, but 'tis best to let it drop for the present. If there are whispers anent our having our cousins with us, 'twere best to let Harriet see to an exchange for the lad. If that could be obtained his whereabouts would have to be made known. For ourselves, we will live very quietly for a time. It may be as well that the boy did not come. Should he prove a lad of spirit, as I make no doubt he is, between him and Harriet they might have caused greater trouble than she did."

"Yes," assented the girl thoughtfully. "'Tis as well as thou sayest, mother. Still, I have heard so much anent my cousin, Clifford, that I confess that I am somewhat curious about him. I think I should like to see him."

"I have wondered about him also, Peggy. Is he like William, I wonder, or doth he take after his mother? William could be agreeable at times, but one was sometimes cognizant only of his failings."



"I HAVE HEARD NOTHING"

Thus conversing the minutes passed quickly. The house was very still, and the monotonous quiet was broken only by the click of the needles. The tall clock in the hall had just announced the usual bedtime when there sounded three loud raps on the front door.

"That was the knocker," cried Peggy, starting up. "I wonder who it can be at this time of night?"

"We shall soon see," said her mother taking up a candle and proceeding to the hall. "Who is it?" she called cautiously.

"'Tis I, Sally. Open quickly. I have news," answered the clear voice of Sally Evans.

Mrs. Owen unbolted the door hastily, and Sally tumbled rather than stepped into the hall. Her calash was untied, and her curly locks had escaped their ribbon and hung in picturesque confusion about her face.

"Harriet!" she gasped. "I want Harriet."

"Harriet is gone, Sally," exclaimed Peggy. "Has thee not heard?"

"Gone where?" asked Sally in dismay. "I have heard nothing. She must be found, wherever she hath gone. There is news——"

"Come in and sit down," said Mrs. Owen drawing her into the sitting-room. "Now tell us what hath occurred."

"I should tell Harriet," persisted Sally, who was plainly excited. "Where hath she gone?"

"She was sent to New York for communicating with the enemy," replied Mrs. Owen. "'Tis strange that thee heard naught of it. It happened a week since."

"We have been so busy," explained Sally recovering herself a little. "What shall I do? Her brother is dying in the Williamsburg Hospital."

"What! Not Clifford?" cried Mrs. Owen and Peggy simultaneously.

"Yes; Dr. Cochran, who hath been appointed director-general of all the hospitals since Dr. Shippen resigned, hath just returned from a tour of inspection of the Southern division. At our hospital at Williamsburg he found Harriet's brother, Clifford, who told him who he was. He was a prisoner, as we know, and was shot while trying to make his escape. The doctor promised to let his sister know of the matter as soon as he reached Philadelphia. He was too busy to come himself, but sent me. Oh, I ran every step of the way, and now she is not here."

"No," said Mrs. Owen. "She is not here. Oh, the poor boy!"

"Why, I have forgot his note," exclaimed Sally. She drew an unsealed letter from the bosom of her gown and handed it to Mrs. Owen. The lady opened it at once.

"Come to me, Harriet," she read, "if you wish to see your brother alive. I am dying, and I wish not to die alone in a strange land with none of my kinspeople near me. The doctor will find a way for you. Can write no more. Come!"

"Would that the child had not been so hasty," sighed the matron folding the missive thoughtfully. "And now what is to be done? We must let her know, of course. I will see Mr. Reed in the morning."

"But 'twill be too late for her to go to him by the time she gets the word," said Sally. "How long doth it take to send a letter to New York?"

"All of three days. More, if the roads are bad. I fear too that 'twill be too late, but it must be done." Mrs. Owen let her head fall on her hand and sat in deep perplexity for a while. "Sally," she said abruptly, "can the doctor be seen to-night?"

"He might see thee, Mrs. Owen," answered Sally. "We are monstrously busy, but the case is exceptional. And that reminds me that 'tis time I was returning." She rose as she spoke.

"Alone? Nay; wait until I get my cloak."

"Tut, tut!" cried Sally. "An army nurse afraid? Why, I would not fear a whole Hessian regiment. Nay; I will not hear of taking thee out at night, Mrs. Owen."

"Let us both go, mother," suggested Peggy, running for their wraps.

"And I would like to see the doctor," said Mrs. Owen as Sally began again to expostulate.

The walk to the hospital, which occupied the entire square between Spruce and Pine Streets and Eighth and Ninth Streets, was short. Peggy and Sally talked in low tones over Harriet's absence and the cause thereof, while Mrs. Owen mused in silence. The lady was still thoughtful after her interview with Dr. Cochran.

"How did the doctor say he was, mother?" asked Peggy as they started for home.

"Badly hurt, my child. He was sorry for the lad's sake that Harriet was not here. Clifford, it seems, looks to her coming with great eagerness. 'Tis his one hope of life, the doctor thinks."

Peggy fell into silence. The night was beautiful. One of those soft balmy nights that come sometimes in the early spring, leading one to thoughts of summer joys. But its sweet influence was not felt by these two. One idea possessed the minds of both, and each waited for the other to give voice to it.

"Mother," spoke Peggy abruptly as they reached the stoop of their own dwelling, "thee means that one of us must go to my Cousin Clifford, doesn't thee?"

"Yes; one of us must go," answered her mother. "One must remain here to have the house in readiness for David should he have need of it. The other must respond to the poor lad's appeal for his kinsmen."

"'Twill mean more whispers against our patriotism, will it not, mother?"

"It cannot be helped, Peggy. If others choose to believe ill of us for doing a deed of mercy then we must pay no heed. We must so order our conduct that our friends will know that we are loyal to the cause, even though we do minister to an English cousin. The others matter not. 'Tis David's kin who calls, and not to heed the call were to be false to the dictates of humanity. And now which one of us shall go, Peggy?"

"Mother, I must be the one, of course. Thee must be here to look after affairs and in case father should have need of thee. I will go. I knew that I must as soon as Sally told her news. But oh, mother! I have been home such a little while! What if something should happen to keep me from thee as it did before?"

"Peggy, if thee talks like that I cannot let thee go," exclaimed her mother. "If it were in either of the Carolinas I would not think of permitting it even to succor a poor wounded boy. It should take but a short time to go and come. I talked it over with the doctor. He had thought that Harriet might wish to go, and, not knowing of her departure, made arrangements whereby she might go with one of the nurses who hath been here on a furlough. She returns to-morrow in a cabriolet with her son. Thou art to take Harriet's place. Thee will not mind, Peggy."

"No, mother. I shall murmur no more. 'Tis right to go. Thee will let Harriet know, though how she can do anything I see not. She will not be allowed to enter the lines again. What time doth the cabriolet with the nurse start? Should we not begin to prepare for the journey now?"

And seeing her so willing to accept the charge the mother in Mrs. Owen would not down. She drew the girl in a close embrace.

"If it were not right, Peggy," she murmured. "If the doctor had not already prepared a place, or if I thought for a moment that harm would befall thee, I should not let thee go. But——"

"Why, mother, there is naught else to do," answered Peggy cheerfully. "Thee must not think of harm. I was foolish to give way, and so art thou, mother mine. Of course naught will happen, and it is the right thing to do. What shall I take? And we should have supplies also, should we not?"

And with the Quaker habit of self-repression mother and daughter put aside their emotion to prepare for the coming journey.

“Such was the season when equipt we stood
On the green banks of Schuylkill’s winding flood,
A road immense, yet promised joys so dear,
That toils and doubts and dangers disappear.”

—“The Foresters,” *Alexander Wilson*.

“There are lint and bandages in the large bundle, Peggy. Dr. Cochran says they can scarce get enough of them. The hospitals as well as the departments of the army are in sore need of supplies. Ah me! the long, grim, weary years of fighting have made the people slow to respond to the necessities of our soldiers, and the Congress hath not the power to make levies. I would send sheets and pillow cases if there was room. We shall see when thy companion comes. The hamper is filled with jellies and delicacies. Thou wilt divide them with the other poor wounded ones. They will be glad of them, I make no doubt. And thy portmanteau is all packed, child. I think we have forgot nothing. There is but little time left to dress for the journey.”

128

Mrs. Owen cast an anxious glance at the array of bundles as she enumerated them, locked the portmanteau, and gave the key to her daughter.

“I know, mother, but it will not take me long. I will run down to the stables to say good-bye to Star now, and then dress. How I wish the dear thing could go too!”

“I fear thee will have to be content without her for this time, Peggy. It will not be for long.”

“True, mother,” assented the girl cheerfully. “And the very first thing I shall do when I come back will be to take a long, long gallop. I will be gone just a moment.”

She ran out of the room as she finished speaking, and without pausing for even a passing glance at the trees or the terrace, went swiftly through the orchard to the stables.

“Thou dear thing!” she exclaimed laying her head on the mare’s silky mane. “I do wish thee was going with me. Thee has been my companion through so many jaunts that I don’t feel quite right at leaving thee. Oh, I do wish thee was going!”

The little mare whinnied and rubbed her nose gently against her young mistress as though she too would like to go. Peggy stroked her softly.

129

“I do wish thee was going,” she said again. “Then no matter what happened I would always have a way to get back to mother. Why, Peggy Owen!” she exclaimed as the full import of the words she had just spoken came to her. “What whimsies have beset thy brain that thou shouldst say that? What could happen? Thee must not get the megrims, Peggy, before thee has started. There, Star! I must not linger with thee. Now I have kissed thee just on the spot that gave thee thy name. Thou wilt remember thou art to give me a good ride when I come back.”

Peggy gave a last lingering caress to her pet, and turned reluctantly to leave her. As she did so she found herself face to face with Sally Evans and Betty Williams.

“We thought we should find thee here,” cried Sally. “When the doctor told me that thee was to go down to see Harriet’s brother, I went for Betty at once. We came to see thee off.”

“Oh, Peggy, I think thee has the most luck,” grumbled Betty. “The South hath all the fighting, and thee is going right there.”

130

“Why, no, Betty,” corrected Peggy with a laugh. “The fighting is in the Carolinas, and I go only to Virginia. There is no warfare there. I should not go if there were.”

“Well, I should, and I had the chance. I suppose Virginia is not Carolina,” went on Betty, who was hazy about her geography, “but ’tis much nearer than Philadelphia. I do think, Peggy Owen, that thee has the most delightful adventures in the world,” she ended with a sigh.

“I am afraid that it will not be very pleasant to go to a cousin who is dying,” returned Peggy soberly. “Come, girls! ’tis time for me to dress. Let us go to my room. I am to go with a nurse and her escort. She hath been up here on a visit, and ’tis fortunate that she returns just at this time.”

“I knew thee would go just as soon as I knew that Harriet was not here,” said Sally, winding her arm about her waist. “There was naught else to do.”

“That was what mother and I thought, Sally. Would that I had thy skill and experience in nursing. Then perchance I could bring my cousin back to health.”

131

“Well, thee shouldn’t want to, Peggy,” cried Betty. “Look how the British treat our poor fellows when they are wounded. Yet we treat our prisoners as though they were friends, and not enemies. I get out of patience with Sally here when I see her so good to them when any are brought into the hospital wounded. And why does thee do it, Sally?”

“To make them ashamed of themselves,” answered Sally promptly. “They look upon us as provincials and almost barbarians. When they find us actuated by feelings of humanity it begins in time to dawn upon them that they are dealing with kinsmen and brothers. Sometimes they are brought to such a keen realization of this that they refuse longer to fight us, and so leave the army. I have reasoned with some of them,” she ended demurely.

“I’ll warrant thee has,” laughed Peggy.

Thus chatting the girls walked slowly to the house, and then up to Peggy's own little room where they began to help the latter to dress for the journey. She was ready presently, and then Sally cleared her throat in an oratorical manner.

132

"Mistress Peggy Owen," she began, untying with a flourish a small package which had escaped Peggy's notice, "on behalf of The Social Select Circle, of which thee is an honored member, I present thee with this diary with the injunction that thou art to record within its pages everything that befalls thee from the time of thy leaving until the day of thy homecoming."

"All and everything," supplemented Betty eagerly.

"Why, girls, 'tis beautiful," cried Peggy pleased and surprised by the gift. "It is sweet to be so remembered, and if The Circle wishes me to set down all the happenings of my journey, I will do so with pleasure. But there will be no adventures. 'Tis not to be expected on such a jaunt."

"Every jaunt holds possibilities," observed Sally sententiously. "When thee was away before, look at all that befell; yet we have not heard the half of what happened because thee forgot. Now if thou wilt write every day in this little book for the benefit of thy friends The Circle can enjoy thy journey as well as thou."

133

"I'll do it," promised Peggy. "But you must not expect much. I shall be gone such a short time that you girls will scarcely have begun to miss me ere I shall be home again. 'Twill be a sad journey, I fear."

"But thy cousin may get well," interposed Betty. "Just think of the romance contained in an unknown cousin. The relationship is just near enough to be interesting," she ended with such a languishing air that both Peggy and Sally shook her.

"Such an utterance from a member of The Social Select Circle," rebuked Peggy. "I'm surprised at thee, Betty."

"Oh, the edict against the other sex is revoked now," declared Betty. "And didn't we always have better times when Robert was with us than when we were alone?"

"We wouldn't now, though," answered Sally. "He doesn't speak French, Betty."

"Sally, thee is dreadful! Don't listen to her, Peggy. She is always trying to tease."

"I shall not, Betty," consoled Peggy, casting a mischievous glance at Sally. "Never mind. Thee is patriotic, anyway."

134

"How?" asked Sally as Betty, foreseeing some further jest, would not speak.

"By helping to cement the French Alliance, of course," laughed Peggy.

"Thee is worse than Sally," pouted Betty turning to look out of the window. "Peggy, is thee to go in a one-horse cabriolet? Because there is one coming up Chestnut Street now. Let me see! A woman is within and it is driven by a young man. Heigh-ho! 'Tis a promising outlook. There is a baggage wagon following with two men on the seat. Thee will be well escorted, Miss Peggy Owen."

"It must be the nurse," exclaimed Peggy. "And mother is calling, too. Come, girls."

They ran lightly down-stairs, and soon Mrs. Johnson, the nurse, was shown in. She was a large, motherly-looking woman of middle age, with a pleasant smile and kind eyes. Peggy felt drawn to her at once.

"And so this is to be my young companion," she said, drawing the girl toward her as Mrs. Owen presented her daughter. "I predict that we shall be great friends, my dear. Of a truth 'twas most pleasing news when the doctor told me that I should have your company. The journey is long, 'twill take all of ten days to reach Williamsburg, so that unless there is conversation to enliven the way, 'tis apt to be most tedious. Now, Fairfax, my son, is an excellent escort but an indifferent talker. He looks well to the needs of the horses, and we shall not suffer for lack of attention, save and except conversation from him. That we shall have to furnish ourselves."

135

"The cabriolet is somewhat light to carry three persons," observed Mrs. Owen reflectively as she returned from carrying out some bundles to the baggage wagon.

"We considered that, madam, but Fairfax will ride part of the time in the baggage wagon when the roads become so rough that the load seems heavy for the horse. 'Tis too bad that he has not his horse with him, but we knew not when we came that we were to have the pleasure of Miss Peggy's company on our return. We shall manage nicely, I dare say. The two men in the baggage wagon are an addition also that we did not expect. They have charge of some supplies for the hospital which Dr. Cochran is sending with us. I was glad to have them. 'Tis more agreeable in a long journey to have a party."

136

"Mother!" breathed Peggy, her eyes glowing with the idea. "Could not the young man ride Star?"

"I was just thinking of that, my child," said Mrs. Owen with an indulgent smile. "'Tis in truth a way opened for thee to take thy pony."

"Do you indeed mean that Fairfax may ride a horse of yours, my dear?" questioned Nurse Johnson, rising. "Why, that is most welcome news. You are generous."

"Nay," protested Peggy. "I thought mostly of myself, I fear; I wish very much to have my little mare with me, and I do not deserve thy praise, friend nurse—" She paused in some confusion. "I should say Mrs. Johnson."

"Nay; let it be friend nurse," replied the good woman laughing. "I think I like it. And I shall call you Peggy. And your own saddle can be put in the baggage wagon, and you can take a little gallop occasionally to relieve the monotony of riding."

"Thee relieves me of all fear that Peggy will not be well taken care of," declared Mrs. Owen as the two left the room. "And sheets, friend? Has thee plenty of them? If there is room I could give thee a number."

The nurse's eyes filled with tears.

"We have need of everything, madam," she said. "'Twill gladden our hearts to receive anything in the nature of supplies."

They were ready at last, and Peggy approached her girl friends for a last good-bye.

"Thee has a silent knight for thy escort, Peggy," whispered Betty through her tears, with a glance in the direction of Nurse Johnson's son, who had not spoken to them. "Be sure to write in the diary if he speaks to thee at all through the journey. And mind! thee must put down the very words he says."

"Betty, Betty, thee is grown frivolous," expostulated Peggy. "Sally, thee must deal with her severely."

"She shall help me to care for the next doughty Englishman that comes to the hospital," declared Sally. "Still, Peggy, if the young man should break his silence 'twould be naught amiss to record the happening, for the delectation of The Circle."

"Thee is as bad as Betty, Sally. I shall keep the diary right with me, girls, and put down whatever of interest occurs."

"And thou wilt send word of thy safe arrival as soon as thou canst, my child," said Mrs. Owen, holding her close. "If such a thing should be that thy cousin recovers we will see what can be done anent his coming here. And now farewell!"

Peggy clung to her without replying, and then quietly took her place in the cabriolet beside the nurse. She smiled bravely at them, and as the cabriolet started she leaned out and waved farewell as long as she could see her mother.

CHAPTER XI—ON THE ROAD

"The rolling world is girdled with the sound,
Perpetually breathed from all who dwell
Upon its bosom, for no place is found
Where is not heard, 'Farewell.'"

—*Celia Thaxter.*

As the little caravan turned from Chestnut Street into Seventh so that she could no longer see her home Peggy's lips quivered, and it was with difficulty that she refrained from bursting into tears.

"Give not way to idle grief at our parting," her mother had admonished her. "Thee will have need of all thy fortitude to attend thy cousin, and 'twere sinful to waste thy strength in weeping."

With this counsel in mind the girl struggled bravely against her emotion, and presently, wiping her eyes, turned toward the nurse. For youth is ever buoyant, and it is not natural for it to give way long to sadness. They had passed the Bettering House by this time and were well on their way toward the lower ferry.

"Thee will think me but a dull companion, I fear, friend nurse," she said. "But I grieve to leave my mother even for so short a time. In truth, I have but recently returned home after a long absence."

"Partings are always sad, my child, even when they are but for a few days," replied Nurse Johnson sympathetically. "I felt just so when I bade my sister farewell this morning. We had not seen each other for ten years until I came for this visit, and 'tis like to be as long again before we get another glimpse of each other if this fearful war continues. In times such as these separation from loved ones is fraught with more than the usual sorrow; for one never knows what will happen. But you have borne up bravely, child. I feared a scene. Most girls would have treated me to such. You have the making of a good nurse, Peggy, with such control."

"'Tis another time that I merit not thy praise," explained the maiden. "'Tis all due to mother. She cautioned me about giving way to my feelings, thinking that I would need my strength for the journey."

"Your mother is right," said Nurse Johnson soberly. "The way is long and we shall have much ado to beguile the tediousness of it. As a beginning, can you tell me if those earthworks yonder are the remains of British entrenchments?"

"Yes," answered the girl. "Traces of their lines are still discoverable in many places about the city. If thee rode out the Bristol road at all thee must have seen a large redoubt which commands the Delaware. Its parapet is considered of great elegance, though there are those that contend that the parapet was constructed with more regard to ornament than for fortification. Just this side of the battery are the barracks they built."

"And were you in the city when they held possession?"

"No. Mother and I were at Strawberry Hill, our farm on the Wissahickon. Thee should have seen our city before the enemy held it, friend nurse. There were great trees all along the banks of the Schuylkill here which were called the Governor's Woods. The English cut them down for firewood, and to help build their fortifications. And so many of our beautiful country places were burned."

142

"'Tis so all over the land, my child," returned the nurse sadly. "War leaves a train of wrecked and desolated homes wherever it is waged. We of Virginia have been fortunate so far to escape a wholesale ravage of the state. True, there have been some predatory incursions, but the state as a whole has not been overrun by the enemy. If General Greene can continue to hold Lord Cornwallis' attention in the Carolinas we may not suffer as those states have."

Thus she spoke, for no one imagined at this time that Virginia would soon become the center of activities. And so chatting they crossed the river, and by noon were in Chester, where they baited their horses and refreshed themselves for the afternoon journey.

It was spring. The smooth road wound beneath the budding foliage of the forest. The air was fresh and balmy, and laden with the perfume of flowers and leaves. The sky was blue, and Peggy followed with delight the flight of a hawk across its azure. Robins flew about merrily, with red breasts shaken by melodious chirpings, and brilliant plumage burnished by the sunlight. The maiden began to feel a keen enjoyment of the drive, and chatted and laughed with an abandon foreign to her usual quiet demeanor.

143

They lay at Wilmington, Delaware, that night, and early the next morning were up and away again. Mindful of her new diary Peggy recorded her impressions of the country through which she passed for the benefit of her friends of The Social Select Circle.

"The country is beautiful," she wrote enthusiastically on the fourth day of her journey after passing from Wilmington through Newcastle, and Head of the Elk, and crossing the Susquehanna River. "Though it seems to me more sandy than Pennsylvania. I think this must arise from being so near the coast. The Susquehanna is very broad at this crossing, but it cannot compare with the Delaware for limpidness and whiteness. Nor are its banks so agreeable in appearance. Tomorrow we enter Baltimore, which I long to see, for Nurse Johnson says 'tis a monstrously fine city."

144

"And is thee going to tell us naught but about the country, Peggy?' I hear thee complain, Betty Williams. Know then, thou foolish Betty, that the 'Silent Knight,' as thee dubbed him, hath not yet broken that silence. Each morning he bows very gravely and deeply. Oh, a most ornate obeisance! Thee should see it. This I return in my best manner, and the ceremony for the day is over. If he hath aught to communicate he seeks his mother at the inns where we stop for refreshments. Truly he is a lad beset by shyness."

"And where is thy tongue, Peggy?' I hear thee ask."

"Well, it may be that I shall use it if he does not speak soon. Such shyness doth engender boldness in us females. Will that please thee, thou saucy Betty?"

"Although," soliloquized Peggy when she had made this entry, "it may not be shyness at all, but wisdom. I have heard mother say that wise men are not great talkers, so when the young man does speak I make no doubt but that his words will be full of matter. I must remember them verbatim, and set them down for the edification of The Circle."

145

They reached Baltimore that night instead of the next day; at so late an hour there was no time to see the little city. It was one of the most important places in the new states at this time, ranking after Philadelphia and Boston in size, and growing rapidly, having been made a port of entry the year before. There was a quarter composed entirely of Acadian families speaking nothing but French, Nurse Johnson told her, and Peggy made a particular note of the fact for Betty's delectation.

"Perchance when I return I can see more of it," said the maiden philosophically as they were getting ready for their departure early the next morning.

"I hope that you can, my dear," said Nurse Johnson. "'Twill be a hard ride to-day, for we want to make Colchester by nightfall. I have a cousin there with whom we can stop, which will be vastly more pleasurable than to stay at an ordinary. If we do not make the place to-night there would be no time for visiting to-morrow."

The roads were good and hard, and the riding pleasant in the early morning. But as the day advanced the atmosphere became sultry, and Peggy was conscious of more fatigue than she had felt at any time through the journey.

146

"Fairfax must change with you, and let you ride Star for a time," spoke Mrs. Johnson, regarding her with solicitude. "I am sure that will rest you."

"I think it will," answered Peggy. "I do feel just a little weary of the carriage, friend nurse. Perhaps thy son would like the change also? It must be lonely for him riding all alone."

Nurse Johnson laughed as she caught the girl's look.

"You must not mind his not talking," she said. "I think he hath never spoken to a girl in his life. Still, he is a good son, for all his shyness."

The change to Star's back was made, and they started forward at renewed speed. Peggy's spirits rose as she found herself on the little mare, and she rode ahead of the vehicle sometimes, or sometimes alongside of it chatting gayly. So pleasantly did the time pass that none of them noticed that the sky had become overcast with clouds. A heavy drop of rain falling upon her face compelled the girl's attention.

147

"Why, 'tis raining," she exclaimed in surprise.

"There's going to be a thunder-storm," cried Nurse Johnson viewing the clouds in dismay. "How suddenly it hath come up. Fairfax, we must put in at the nearest plantation. Let Peggy get back in with me so that she will not get wet. Then we must make speed."

The lad got out of the vehicle obediently, and approached the girl to assist her from the horse. As she sprang lightly to the ground, he gazed at her earnestly for a moment as though realizing the necessity of speech, and said:

"It looks like rain."

As he spoke the far horizon was illuminated by a succession of lurid flashes of lightning which shone with fiery brilliancy against the black masses of thunder-clouds. The muttering of thunder told that the storm was almost upon them. The fact was so evident that no living being could deny it. The lad's observation differed so from what she had expected from him that there was no help for it, and Peggy gave way to a peal of merry laughter.

148

"I cry thee pardon, Friend Fairfax," she gasped. "It doth indeed look like rain."

For a second the young fellow stood as though not realizing the full import of what he had said, and then, as heavy drops began to patter rapidly through the trees, the girl's merriment infected him and he too burst into laughter.

"It is raining," he corrected himself, which remark but added to the girl's mirth.

"Where are we?" asked his mother as Peggy took her place beside her.

"We are near His Excellency's plantation, mother."

"His Excellency?" cried Peggy. "Do you mean General Washington's house, friend nurse?"

"To be sure, Peggy," said Mrs. Johnson glancing about her. "Mount Vernon lies just beyond us on our left. We must put in there."

CHAPTER XII—THE HOME OF WASHINGTON

149

"By broad Potowmack's azure tide,
Where Vernon's Mount in sylvan pride,
Displays its beauties fair."

—"Ode to Mount Vernon,"
David Humphreys.

"Oh, I wonder if Lady Washington hath returned yet from headquarters," cried Peggy so interested in the fact that she might again behold that lady that she forgot that it was raining. "I would like so much to see her! I knew her quite well at Middlebrook in New Jersey when the army lay there for winter quarters two years ago. Mother and I were there with father."

"'Tis early for her to return from headquarters, is it not?" asked the nurse, touching the horse lightly with the whip. "Methinks that I have heard her say that she always heard the first and last guns of a campaign; and campaigns do not begin in April at the North."

150

"True," said Peggy. "Then will it not be an intrusion to go there during her absence?"

"Intrusion to escape a thunder-storm?" laughed Mrs. Johnson. "Hardly, my child. We should be welcome even though we did not seek to avoid a drenching. The general hath left orders with his overseer, Mr. Lund Washington, that hospitality should be extended to every one the same as though he were there in person. Then too every one in this part of the country goes to Mount Vernon for help in every sort of distress. Oh, yes! we shall be very welcome."

"Mount Vernon?" mused the girl. "I wonder why 'tis so called? We call our country home 'Strawberry Hill,' but that is because of the vast quantities of strawberries that grow there. I see not why the general should call his place Mount Vernon."

"I can enlighten you as to that, Peggy. The estate formerly belonged to his half-brother, Lawrence Washington. He too was of a military turn, and served with Admiral Vernon of the British Navy in an expedition against Carthage in South America. He married Anne Fairfax on his return, and built this house on the estate left him by his father. So great was his admiration

151

for the gallant admiral that he called his home Mount Vernon, in his honor. There was but one child born of the union, and on her death General George Washington, who was a great favorite with his brother, became his heir. Lawrence died also, so the general came into possession. He hath left the place much as his brother had it, though he contemplates its enlargement when relieved of military duty, I hear. My husband's mother was of the Fairfax family, which is the reason my son is so called. 'Tis the fashion among Virginians to give family names to their children. There! we are going to be caught by the storm after all!"

There came a vivid flash of lightning followed by a deafening peal of thunder as she finished speaking. Their horse reared in affright, then plunged forward in a terrified run. The storm was upon them in all its fury. The rain beat into the cabriolet from all sides, and soon they abandoned any effort to keep dry. It seemed to Peggy that she had never seen such a storm before, and never had she been out in such a one. The rain came down in torrents. Flash after flash of dazzling light darted across the sky, accompanied by a continuous roar of thunder like the discharge of artillery. It was impossible to hear each other speak, so they drew close together, the nurse controlling the horse as best she could.

Suddenly as they ascended a small steep hill from the edge of a wild ravine the mansion with all its surroundings came into view. Peggy forgot that her garments were wet through and through; forgot that it was raining so hard that the outlines of the dwelling were blurred and indistinct, and leaned forward eagerly to see the home of General Washington.

Stately trees shaded the lodges which stood on each side of the entrance gate; and, as they drove through, a colored boy darted from one of the lodges and taking hold of the bridle rein ran abreast of the animal with them to the dwelling.

The villa, as General Washington called it, was at this time not so large as it is now, the general having enlarged and added to the mansion after the Revolution. It was, however, a house of the first class then occupied by thrifty Virginia planters; of the old gable-roofed style, two stories in height, with a porch in front, and a chimney built inside, at each end, contrary to the prevailing custom. It stood upon a most lovely spot, on the brow of a gentle slope which ended at a thickly wooded precipitous river bank, its summit nearly one hundred feet above the water. Before it swept the Potomac with a magnificent curve, and beyond the broad river lay the green fields and shadowy forests of Maryland.

The door opened as the carriage reached the porch, and a man came hastily to their assistance. He said not a word until they were safely within the entrance hall, and then he turned to Nurse Johnson with a smile.

"Well, well, Hannah Johnson," he said. "Who would ever have thought of seeing you here? Quite a little sprinkle we're having."

"I should say it was a sprinkle, Lund Washington," retorted Nurse Johnson, gazing ruefully at her wet clothing. "It strikes me more like a baptism; and you know I don't hold with immersion."

"I know," he said laughing. "Never mind. We'll soon get you fixed up." Mr. Lund Washington was General Washington's relative, who had charge of the estate while the owner was away to the war.

At this moment a pleasant-faced, plump little woman came bustling into the hall, and hastened to greet them.

"I could not come sooner, Hannah," she said. "I was making a lettuce tart which we are to have for supper. Come right up-stairs, both of you, and change that wet clothing. Nay, my child," as Peggy mindful of her dripping garments hesitated. "It doth not matter about the dripping. All that concerns us is to get you both into dry garments."

With such a welcome Peggy felt at home at once, and followed the overseer's wife obediently up the broad stairway to one of the chambers above. Mrs. Washington went to a chest of drawers and drew forth some folded garments.

"These are just the things for you, my dear," she said. "They were Martha's, and will fit you exceedingly well."

"I thank thee," said Peggy taking them reverently, for Martha had been Lady Washington's only daughter, and she had been told of her early death.

"I see you are a Quakeress," said Mrs. Washington pleasantly. "We have many such down here, though not so many as are in your state. How vastly the frock becomes her. Doth it not, Hannah?"

"It does indeed," replied Nurse Johnson glancing at the girl with approval. "Child, you should never wear aught but colors. You were never made for the quiet garb of your sect."

"Some of our Society are not so strict anent such matters as they might be," Peggy told them, a smile coming to her lips as she recalled the numerous rebukes concerning gay apparel given by the elders at the meetings. "'Tis only of late that I have dressed so quietly."

"Now, my dear," spoke Mrs. Washington, setting a dainty lace cap on the maiden's dark hair, "look in the mirror, and see if the result doth not please you."

"It pleases me well," answered Peggy surveying her reflection with a smile. "In truth it hath been long since I have been arrayed so gayly. Mother doth not approve of much dressing while the war lasts."

"Your mother is right," concurred the lady with warmth. "Mrs. Washington feels just the same

about the matter. Still, I doubt if your mother would remain of that opinion were she to see you now. Would that she could, or that a limner^[6] were here to depict your likeness.”

In truth the girl made a charming picture in the dainty frock of dove-colored Persian flowered with roses of cherry hue, and finished with a frill of soft lace from which her white throat rose fair and girlish. A pair of high-heeled red slippers completed the costume, and Peggy would have been more than human if her eyes had not brightened, and her cheeks flushed at her image in the mirror.

Mrs. Washington led them at once to the great dining-room, where they found Mr. Washington, and young Fairfax Johnson who had arrived a short time after them. The storm had ceased, but the clouds still hung dark and lowering, producing an early twilight. A house servant was just lighting the myrtle-berry candles in the lusters as they entered the room, and the light glistened from the floor, scoured to a shining whiteness. The blacks brought in the supper immediately, and the little party gathered about the table informally. Peggy found herself seated beside Fairfax Johnson.

A spirit of mischief seized her, and made her sit silent, waiting for him to speak.

“For,” she thought roguishly, “’twill never do in the world to have naught to record for the girls but those two remarks, ‘It looks like rain,’ and ‘It is raining.’ If I do not speak he must, or else be guilty of discourtesy.”

Her patience was soon rewarded. The youth struggled bravely with his bashfulness, and presently turned to her.

“It hath stopped raining,” he said.

Peggy’s dimples came suddenly, and her eyes twinkled, but she answered demurely:

“It hath, Friend Fairfax, for which I am glad. It was a severe storm. Did thee get very wet?”

“Yes,” he answered. “It rained hard.”

“Oh, dear!” thought the girl. “Will he never have anything to say except about that rain? I wonder what Betty would do? Such a nice lad should be broken of his shyness.” Then aloud: “And Star, friend? Is she all right?”

“Yes. Didn’t seem to mind it a bit, after the first scare. Did you get wet?”

“Yes. Monstrously so,” replied Peggy, surprised that he was doing so well. “He won’t need any help if this continues,” was her mental comment. Then, “Mrs. Washington gave me some of Lady Washington’s daughter’s clothes to wear. They just fit me. Was she not kind?”

“Very,” he answered briefly. “If—if getting wet always makes you look like you do to-night you had better get wet every day,” he blurted out abruptly, and then turned from her decidedly, blushing furiously.

Peggy caught her breath at the suddenness of the thing, and colored also.

“Peggy, Peggy,” she chided herself reproachfully. “Thee should not have spoke about thy frock. No doubt the lad deemed it duty to say something of the kind to thee. ’Twas not seemly in thee. And how shall I answer him?”

She was saved the necessity of a reply, however, by Mr. Washington, who said:

“You are quite well acquainted with the general and his wife, Hannah tells me, Miss Peggy. If ’twould please you to see something of the estate I will take you about a little in the morning before you start. You should see something of the place while you are in these parts.”

“Oh, I should be pleased,” cried Peggy her animation returning at this. “Thee is very kind, sir.”

“The pleasure will be mine,” was the courteous reply.

And so it happened that Peggy rose betimes the next morning, but early as she deemed it Mr. Washington was awaiting her. He had a little pony saddled and bridled ready for her to mount.

“We will have time for a short look about before breakfast,” he said kindly. “’Tis my custom to ride to all the farms through the day, as the general does when he is home. ’Twould take too long for us to do that, but you can form an idea of the extent of the plantation by this détour.”

Thanking him Peggy mounted, and they set off at a brisk pace. All trace of the storm had passed save a dewy freshness of the air, and the wetness of the grass. The sun was shining with all the warmth and brightness of an April day in Virginia. The birds were twittering amid the new-born leaves, and the hyacinths and tulips were coming to their glory in the gardens. The smiles of cultivation were on every hand, and the air was heavy with the perfume of growing things after a rain.

The grounds in the immediate vicinity of the mansion were laid out in the English taste, Mr. Washington told her. The estate itself consisted of ten thousand acres which were apportioned into farms, devoted to different kinds of culture, each having its allotted laborers. Much, however, was still wild woodland, seamed with deep dells and runs of water, and indented with inlets; haunts of deer and lurking places of foxes. The whole woody region along the Potomac with its forest and range of hills afforded sports of various kinds, and was a noble hunting ground.

The girl found that the plantation was a little empire in itself. The mansion house was the seat of

government, with dependencies, such as kitchens, smoke-houses, work-shops and stables. There were numerous house servants for domestic service, and a host of field negroes for the culture of the crops. Their quarters formed a kind of hamlet apart, composed of various huts with little gardens and poultry yards, all well stocked, and swarming with little darkies gamboling in the sunshine.

Among the slaves were artificers of all kinds: tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, wheelwrights, smiths, and so on; so that the plantation produced everything within itself for ordinary use. The time was too short to permit of Peggy's seeing more than a small part of the whole, but she saw enough to permit of an estimate of the estate. As they returned to the mansion Mr. Washington assisted her to dismount, saying as he did so:

"No view of Mount Vernon is complete without a look at the Potomac from the wharf, Miss Peggy. You will just have time for that before the call comes for breakfast. Be quick; for yonder comes Mrs. Washington, and she won't want the cakes to cool."

"I will be back in a minute," cried Peggy catching his mood. Laughing gayly she ran swiftly across the sward under the trees and on to the wharf, which lay a little below the mansion, in front of the deer park.

"This is the place in truth for a fine view," commented the girl as she reached the extreme end of the wharf. "Peggy, take a good long look. Thee will never have another chance, I fear. Heigh-ho! what will the girls say to this? 'Twill take the most of three pages in the diary to transcribe the half of this momentous day. It is a beautiful river, though of course I am partial to my own Delaware. No wonder the general loves his home. How the river winds and curves—Why!"

Peggy stopped short in her musings, and opened her eyes wide in surprise; for a large ship was bearing directly toward the wharf. For a moment she gazed, and then, as the ship veered slightly in her course, she caught sight of the flag at the taffrail. And at sight of that flag every drop of color left her face. For the flag was the emblem of England, and the ship was headed for Mount Vernon.

[6] Portrait-painter.

CHAPTER XIII—THE APPEARANCE OF THE ENEMY

"The word went forth from the throne:
'Reap down their crops with your swords!
Harry! ravage!
Hound on the rage of your hireling hordes,
Hessian and savage!"

—*Leonard Woolsey Bacon.*

For one long moment the girl stood staring at that flag, so stricken with terror as to be incapable of motion. Too well she knew the meanings of its presence. The descent of a British ship upon any part of the coast at this time brought destruction and ruin to all that lay in its path. Fire and sword, ravage and waste followed in its wake. And this was a British cruiser, and it was headed for Mount Vernon. Peggy wrung her hands in anguish and a sob broke from her lips.

"Oh, the general's home! The general's beautiful home will be burned!"

With the words came a realization of the necessity for action. With an effort she threw off the numbing dread that beset her, and turning fled swiftly to the mansion. As she reached the porch Mr. Lund Washington came to the door.

"You are just in time," he called cheerily. "Breakfast is ready, and Mrs. Washington feared if you lingered much longer 'twould be cold. Is not the view—Why! what hath happened?" he broke off catching sight of her pale face.

"The British!" panted Peggy. "The British are coming up the river!"

With an exclamation of alarm Mr. Washington sprang past her and hurried toward the wharf. At the same moment cries and shouts rent the air and from all over the plantation the negroes came running. Some were ashen with terror, and ran into the house weeping and wailing. The bolder spirits gathered on the banks of the river to watch the approach of the vessel. From the mansion came Mrs. Lund Washington and Mrs. Johnson, alarmed by the outcries and uproar of the darkies.

"And what is it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Washington as Peggy sank weakly on the steps of the porch. "Why are you so pale? Know you the cause of the commotion?"

"It's the British," repeated the maiden fearfully. "A British ship is coming."

"A British ship!" Each woman's face paled at the words. They were fraught with such awful meaning. They too stood stricken as Peggy had been with terror. Then Mrs. Washington spoke calmly, but it was with the calmness of despair:

"Let us not despond. It may be that they will exempt this place from destruction. Let us hope."

"No," said Peggy with conviction. "They will not spare it. 'Tis our general's home. They have tried so many times to capture him; there have been so many plots to kill him, or for his betrayal, that anything that can strike a blow at his heart will be used. I fear, oh, I fear the worst!"

Meantime the cruiser drew up alongside the wharf. As soon as the vessel was made fast the captain stepped ashore and approached the spot where Mr. Lund Washington stood.

167

"What plantation is this?" he demanded brusquely.

"It is Mount Vernon," replied the overseer.

"Mount Vernon, eh? The seat of the rebel leader?"

"It is General Washington's home, sir," was the reply.

"So I thought, so I thought," returned the officer with a chuckle. "Are you in charge here?"

"Yes; I am Lund Washington, General George Washington's relative, and represent him during his absence," Mr. Washington informed him with dignity.

"And I am Captain Graves of the English navy," responded that officer pompously. "In command of the 'Acteon' there. Now, sir, I want breakfast for my crew, and that quickly. And then supplies: flour, corn, bacon, hams, poultry and whatever else there may be on the estate that will feed hungry soldiers. Now be quick about getting them."

"And if I refuse?" said Mr. Washington.

"Refuse!" roared the officer. "If you refuse, by St. George I'll burn every building on the place and run off all your negroes. Now do as you please about it."

168

Mr. Washington hesitated no longer.

"I will comply with your demands," he said simply. He would do anything rather than that the general should lose his home.

"And mind," called Captain Graves, "I want no dallying."

"There will be none," answered the overseer quickening his footsteps.

"Wife," he said as he reached the porch where Peggy and the two women awaited him, "we must have breakfast for the crew as quick as it can be gotten. Do you see to it while I attend to what is wanted for supplies."

Peggy looked up in amazement, thinking that she had not heard aright.

"Is thee going to give them breakfast and supplies from General Washington's place, sir?" she asked.

"I must, my child," replied Lund Washington sadly. "The captain threatens to burn the houses, and run off with all the slaves if I do not. I cannot help myself. They would take what they want anyway."

169

"Then thee should let them take it," cried Peggy excitedly. "The general won't like for thee to feed the enemy from his stores. He won't like it, friend."

"I am in charge of the property," repeated the overseer. "If anything happens to the place while 'tis in my charge I will be responsible. I will comply with any reasonable demand rather than have the plantation razed."

"The general won't like it," Peggy reiterated in a low tone as Mr. Washington began to give orders to the slaves concerning the supplies while his wife hastened to see about breakfast. "He won't like it. I know that he would rather have his home burned than that the enemy should be supplied from his plantation. Oh, I know he won't approve of it."

"Lil' missy's right," declared a venerable darky who stood near. "Marse George ain't gwine ter laik hab'n de enemy fed offen his craps. 'Tain't fitten dat he'd fight 'em, an' feed 'em, too."

"That is just it," declared the girl turning toward him quickly, surprised that a negro should grasp the point of honor affected. "What is thy name?" she added. "I should like to know it."

170

"Lawsy, missy! doan you know old Bishop?" said the old darky, bowing deeply. "Why, I wuz Marse George's body sarvant all froo de French an' Indian Wahs. Bin wif him most ebbrywhar, old Bishop has. Too old to go enny mo' dough, an' so he has Mista Willum Lee to look aftah him. P'raps you might hab seen Mista Lee. A black, sassy nigga, lil' missy."

"Yes," answered Peggy smiling. "I know him, Bishop. I used to see him often at Middlebrook. And so thee is Bishop?"

For Peggy had heard General Washington speak affectionately of his former body servant. Bishop was too old now for camp life, but he had, as he said, served General Washington through the French War. He was almost eighty years old now. There were deep furrows upon his cheeks, his hair was gray, and his form was bent by the weight of his years, but old Bishop knew his master's heart, and knew that that master would rather lose his whole property than to have it succor the enemies of his country.

171

So the venerable darky and the maiden watched with sorrow the labor of the slaves as they ran back and forth to the ship, laden with flour, hams, bacon from the storehouses; chickens, geese

and turkeys from the poultry yards; fruits and vegetables from the cellars; while the air was filled with the shrill cries of swine being slaughtered.

It was over at last. The crew had been fed; the ship was heavily laden with supplies, and with a sarcastic acknowledgment of their courtesy the captain weighed anchor and sailed away. And then the family sat down to a belated breakfast.

The meal was a mere pretense, however, and soon after it the cabriolet was brought round, and Peggy and her companions set forth once more upon their journey.

"I wish," said Mrs. Johnson as they drove away from the mansion, "I wish you were safe at home, Peggy. I don't believe that I am doing right in permitting you to go on."

"I must," spoke Peggy quickly. "There is my cousin dying, friend nurse. I must go on. Does thee fear an invasion of the whole state?"

"It looks as though the invasion were here, Peggy. Of course, it may be but a predatory incursion as others have been before, but I fear, I fear——" ended the good woman shaking her head.

"How much longer will it be before we reach Williamsburg?" inquired the girl.

"We should be there the fourth day from this," replied Nurse Johnson. "Of course it may be the right thing for you to go on, as you are so near the end of the journey; but I do wish you were safe at home."

"I shall lose no time in returning after I have done all for my cousin that can be done," declared Peggy. "I think mother would wish me to go on now, but when all is over——"

"Then you must get back as quickly as possible," said the nurse.

After all Peggy and old Bishop were right regarding General Washington's feelings concerning the raid on the plantation.

"It would have been a less painful circumstance to me," he wrote to his representative when he heard of the matter, "to have heard that, in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burned my house and laid my plantation in ruins."

So sensitive was this man concerning anything that would seem to touch his honor.

CHAPTER XIV—THE JOURNEY'S END

"Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life working...
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

Late afternoon of the fourth day after leaving Mount Vernon found the little party drawing near to the lowland city of Williamsburg. The road had no other travelers than themselves. There were no more thick woods, the road running in a blaze of sunshine past clumps of cedars, and wayside tangles of blackberry, sumac and elder bushes.

Presently the spires of churches and the roofs of several large buildings came into sight, clustered in one small spot, as it seemed to Peggy, until they entered the town itself, when they receded to their proper distances. The maiden leaned forward eagerly to see the place, for she had heard much of its gayety and fashion.

One broad unpaved street was the main thoroughfare of the town. It was very straight, shaded by mulberry and poplar trees, and ran for a measured mile from the Capitol at one end to the goodly college of William and Mary at the other. Houses, vine-clad, with wide porticoes and large gardens, bordered it, and two or three narrower streets debouched from it.

"This is the Duke of Gloucester Street, my dear," explained Nurse Johnson as they entered the broad thoroughfare. "Yonder lies the Capitol where the courts convene. Once it was the center of all the legislation of the state, but all that is past since the capital hath been removed to Richmond."

"Hath it?" exclaimed Peggy in surprise. "I did not know it. When was it, friend nurse?"

"'Twas done two years ago," responded the nurse sadly. "Williamsburg was deemed too accessible to the enemy, so the government was removed to Richmond. I doubt not that we should be thankful, since the British did march for the capital in their late invasion of the state. The worst feature of the matter is that the traitor, Arnold, led the force that sacked and burned Richmond in January. No doubt 'twould have been our fate had the government still been here. Look well at the college, Peggy. It hath sent forth many of the men who are of prominence in the nation."

Peggy regarded the college with great interest, for its fame was far spread, as it was the second university to be founded in the New World, Harvard being the first.

On the right of the large campus was the president's house, built of brick alternately dull red and gray, brought over from England. Opposite was another building of like proportions and architecture known as the Brafferton School, built and endowed as an Indian seminary, a modest antitype of Hampton.

Although there were a number of shops and ordinaries, as the taverns were called, the town was thinly peopled, and Peggy was conscious of a chill of disappointment. Where was the glitter and glamour of pageantry of which she had heard so much?

Was this modest hamlet with its few detached houses with no pretensions to architectural beauty the gay capital of Virginia? As though divining her feeling Nurse Johnson spoke.

"Virginia is a state of large plantations and few cities," she said.

"Williamsburg is not like Philadelphia, my dear, and yet it hath had its share of gayety. Before the war began 'twas a goodly sight in winter to see the planters and their families come in for divertisement and enjoyment. 'Twas very gay then. Gloucester Street was filled with their coaches and the spirited horses of the youths. Those were gladsome times that I fear me we shall see no more since the capital hath been removed."

She sat for a time lost in thought, and then spoke mournfully:

"Ah, child, 'tis sad to see the passing of greatness. There are many like me who grieve to see the old town overshadowed. And this," she continued as they passed a long low building with a wide portico and a row of dormer windows frowning from the roof, "this is the Raleigh Tavern. Its Apollo room is a famous place for balls, and meetings of belles and beaux. We are entering Palace Street now, Peggy. That large building at the end was formerly the Government Building, or the Palace, as 'tis called, where the royal governors were wont to dwell. The old powder magazine yonder held the spark that ignited the wrath of Virginians to rebel against the king. And this, my dear, is the end of our journey. 'Twas formerly the barracks of the mansion, but 'tis now used for a hospital."

Peggy was conscious of quickening heart throbs as she alighted from the cabriolet, and ascended the few steps that led to the door of the building.

The westering sun cast a pleasant glow through the wide hall, for the entrance doors were thrown back, but Peggy had time for only a glance. The nurse led the way at once to one of the rooms which opened from the hall, saying:

"I must give report of the supplies immediately to the storekeeper, my child. Then I will see the matron and find where your cousin lies. Sit you here for a short time."

Peggy sank obediently into the high-backed chair that the nurse pulled forward, and waited with some trepidation for the summons to go to her cousin. The office was full of business. A large force of storekeepers were busied in giving bedding and other necessaries to what seemed to Peggy an endless stream of nurses; while a number of clerks bent over their books, deep in the accounts of the storekeepers.

The song of birds came through the open window near which the girl sat. A bee hummed drowsily over a budding peach tree that stood just outside, and all at once it came to her that she was a long, long way from home. All her light-heartedness had vanished. The sunshine, the budding trees, the journey with its pleasant companionship, and, above all, her own youth, had served to lull into forgetfulness, for the time being, the purpose of the journey. Now, however, the passing to and fro of the nurses, the coming and going of the doctors with their low-toned orders, all brought a vivid realization of her mission, and Peggy felt suddenly faint and weak.

"I wish mother were here," she thought, a great wave of longing sweeping over her. "Oh, I do wish that mother were here, or else that everything was done that must be done so that I could go back."

At this point in her musings Nurse Johnson returned, and it was well that she did so, for Peggy was getting very close to the point of breaking down.

"You are tired," exclaimed the nurse at sight of her face. "Child, give o'er the meeting until to-morrow. You would be more fit then."

"'Tis naught, friend nurse," said Peggy rousing herself resolutely. "I fear me I was getting just a little homesick. And how is my cousin? Is he—is he—"

"He is better," the nurse hastened to tell her. "Much better, the matron says, and longing for his sister. You are to go to him at once, but he must not do much talking as he is still very weak. With careful nursing he may pull through. And now come, but be careful."

Peggy arose and followed her across the hall into a large room, scrupulously clean, and bare of furniture save the rows of beds, some small tables and a few chairs.

On one of the beds in the far corner of the room lay a youth so like her father that Peggy could not repress an exclamation. His eyes were closed; his face very pale, and serene in its repose. His hair was light brown in color, with auburn lights in it that fell low over his forehead. Peggy drew near and looked at him with full heart.

"How like he is to father," she murmured with a quick intake of her breath. "He doth not look like

either Cousin William, or Harriet. Oh, he should have been my brother!"

The nurse bent over the lad, and touched him gently.

"Captain Williams," she said. "Here is some one to see you."

His eyes opened, and Peggy almost gasped, so like were they to David Owen's.

"Harriet," whispered the youth making a weak attempt to rise. "Hath she come at last?"

"It is not Harriet," said Peggy touching his forehead gently, "but Peggy, my cousin."

The young fellow turned a wondering look upon her.

"But Harriet, Harriet?" he murmured. "Why do you call me cousin?"

"Thee is not to talk," cried Peggy quickly, as the nurse shook a warning finger. "I call thee cousin because thou art my Cousin Clifford. Harriet could not come because she had been sent to New York. I am Peggy. Peggy Owen, thy very own cousin. I have come to care for thee, and to take thee home when thou art strong enough. And that is all," she ended breathlessly as the nurse again nodded a warning.

"I want Harriet," reiterated the youth turning away from her. "Why have you come? I want you not."

This was more than the girl could stand. She had been on the road for ten long days and was fatigued almost beyond the point of endurance. And when Clifford, who was so like her father that she had been stirred to the very depths of her being, said:

"I want you not. Why have you come?" she could no longer control her feelings but burst into tears.

"I came because thy sister was sent on to New York and could not come," she sobbed.



"WHY HAVE YOU COME?"

"Because thee said in thy letter that thee didn't want to die with none of thy kin near. And I have come all the way from Philadelphia to be with thee if thou shouldst die, and to take thy last messages."

"I am not going to die," said he in an obstinate voice. "And I shall save my last messages for my sister."

At that Peggy looked up in blank amazement, thinking she had not heard aright. She had made no small sacrifice to come to Virginia to minister to him on his death-bed, if need be; or to bring him to health by careful nursing. And now for that cousin to tell her that he would give her none of his messages was unsettling to say the least.

And so the girl looked up, and met the lad's eyes, which held a queer look of defiance. His lips were bloodless, but they were set in a straight line of determination. He looked so like a great big spoiled child that Peggy's tears vanished as if by magic, and she gave vent to a low laugh. A laugh so sweet and girlish that many who heard it smiled in sympathy, and turned to get a

glimpse of the maiden.

"Thee is a great big goose," she cried wiping her eyes. "And I am another. I shall hold thee to thy words as a promise. Thee is to save thy last messages for thy sister. And until she comes, which, I make no doubt, will be soon, I shall care for thee whether thee likes or not. And I shall begin right now by fixing that pillow. Thee is not comfortable. Nurse, please may I have some vinegar? My cousin's head is so hot. There! Sleep now, and to-morrow thee may talk some more. Sleep, my cousin."

And Peggy, mistress of herself once more, firmly checked the feeble remonstrances of the youth and began stroking his forehead with soft, soothing touches. Finding his protests of no avail her cousin submitted to her ministrations, and soon, in spite of his efforts to keep awake, his eyelids drooped, the drawn look of his face relaxed, and he slept.

"And now you too must rest," said the nurse. "Come, my child, to my home."

"But these other poor fellows," said Peggy. "Can we not make them comfortable first?"

"We will let the others attend to it for to-night, Peggy. The first duty in nursing is to keep one's self in trim, otherwise the nurse herself becomes a patient. Come."

And nothing loth Peggy followed her.

CHAPTER XV—PEGGY IS TROUBLED

"Blow, blow thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude."

—*As You Like It.*

Half hidden by lilac bushes and trellised grape-vines the cottage of Nurse Johnson stood in Nicholson Street. A tiny garden lay on one side of the house, and back of it a small orchard extended through to Palace Street.

It was a week later, and Peggy stood by the open window of the living-room of the cottage gazing thoughtfully at the garden. The sunshine lay warm upon the thick green grass studded with violets. Daffodils flaunted golden cups at their more gorgeous neighbors, the tulips. The lilac bushes were masses of purple and white blossoms. The apple trees in the orchard were great bouquets of rose and snow. It was a pleasant place, cool and inviting under the trees.

But Peggy was looking with eyes that saw not its pleasantness. She was considering the events of the past few days. The matron of the hospital had acceded to her desire to assist in the care of her cousin, and she had devoted herself to him assiduously. But Clifford's manner toward her troubled her, and there was a pained expression upon her face as she gazed into the pretty garden. Unconsciously she sighed.

Nurse Johnson threw aside her sewing and came to her side.

"Child," she said, "what troubles you? Are you homesick?"

"Friend nurse," answered Peggy abruptly, "my cousin doth not like me."

"Why do you think so, Peggy?" asked the nurse quietly. "Hath he been rude?"

"Rude? Oh, no! I would he were," answered the girl. "Were he rude or cross I should think 'twas merely his illness. Mother says the best of men are peevish when convalescing, but my Cousin Clifford is not cross. Yet he is surely getting well. Does thee not think so?"

"Yes," responded Mrs. Johnson with conviction. "He surely is. He began to mend from the day you came. The matron, the doctors, the nurses all say so."

"And yet," said Peggy sadly, "'tis not because of my coming, nor yet of my care that he hath done so. It seems rather as though he were trying to get well in a spirit of defiance."

"He is an Englishman, Peggy. Saw you ever one who was not obstinate? The nurses have remarked the lad's frame of mind, and 'tis commonly thought that he believed that you desired him not to recover."

"What?" cried Peggy horrified. "Oh, friend nurse, why should he think such a dreadful thing? I desire his death? Why, 'tis monstrous to think of."

"A mere fancy, child; though why any of us should wish any of the English to live is more than I can understand. What with all the ravaging and burning that is going on 'twould be small wonder if we should desire the death of them all. But if he lives, Peggy, as he seems in a fair way to do, 'twill be owing to your care."

"Still," said Peggy, "I wish he were not so cold to me. Mother and I cared for Cousin William, his father, when he was wounded, and often he was irritable and would speak crossly. Yet he always seemed to like it right well that we were with him, and would say sometimes that he knew not what he would have done without us. And Harriet! why, when Harriet was ill with fever she was

petulant and fretful at times, but there were other occasions where she was sweet and grateful. But Clifford accepts my attentions in a manner which shows plainly that he would prefer another nurse, but that he submits because he cannot help himself. As of course he cannot," she added smiling in spite of herself. "Sometimes I would rather he would be cross if he would discover more warmth of manner."

"Don't mind him, child. It is, it must be some vagary of his illness. I should not pay much attention to it, and I were you."

"He does not know that I notice it," the girl told her. "But I cannot help but think of it, friend nurse. 'Tis strange that he should dislike me so. 'Twould cause mother much wonder."

"Have you writ anent the matter to her, Peggy?"

"No; 'twould worry her. I have told her only of his condition and that I hope that he will soon be strong enough to start for Philadelphia. When does thee look for Dr. Cochran to come?"

"About the first of June. Should your cousin be well enough you might start north before that time. For my part, while sorry to lose you, I shall be glad when you are at home with your mother. You have been so occupied with your cousin that you may not have noticed that the militia are drilling every evening now."

"I have seen them on the Market Green," answered Peggy. "Is the fact alarming, friend nurse?"

"The cause of such frequent drill is quite alarming, child. The British, under General Arnold, have come out of their quarters at Portsmouth, and have started up the James on another ravaging expedition. General Phillips hath joined the traitor and hath sent a large force against Richmond again. They are plundering and destroying every plantation and town on the south side of the river. 'Tis wonder they have not come to Williamsburg ere this. I fear that they will soon. Would there were a way for you to go home, Peggy."

"If it were not for Clifford I could go on Star," mused Peggy.

"Alone? Why, child, I should not be easy one moment if you were to start on that journey all by yourself. Ten days on that lonely road? 'Tis not to be thought of."

"No," sighed the girl. "I suppose not, friend nurse. There is but one thing to do at present, and that is to care for my cousin. And that reminds me that 'tis time to go to him now."

Throwing aside all her melancholy, for Peggy had been taught that gloom had no place near the sick, she went into the kitchen, took from its place on the dresser a salver which she covered with a napkin, placed thereon a bowl of steaming broth, for Peggy permitted no one to prepare his food but herself, and then regarded it thoughtfully.

"There should be some brightness," she mused. "'Tis passing hard to lie all day in bed with no hint of the spring time. I have it."

She ran out to the empurpled grass where the violets grew thickest, and gathered a small nosegay of the largest blossoms. These she brought in and laid daintily on the salver beside the bowl of broth.

"As thee cannot go to the blossoms I have brought the blossoms to thee," said she brightly when she reached her cousin's bedside. "See, my cousin, 'tis a bit of the May, as thee calls it, although May hath not yet come in truth; but 'tis very near. Friends say Fifth month, though 'tis not so pretty a name as thine. Thou canst hold them if thou wishest. 'Tis so small a bunch that it will not tire thy poor, weak fingers."

"I thank you," said the lad coldly. "I fear me that you put yourself to too much trouble for me." He took the violets listlessly, never vouchsafing them so much as a glance.

"And how does thee do this morning, my cousin?" The girl shook up the pillows, then slipped them under his head so that he half sat, half reclined in the bed, cheerfully ignoring the chilly reception that the poor violets received. "I think thee looks brighter."

"I rested well, Mistress Peggy," he answered briefly, and then he dropped the blossoms, and taking the spoon from her, added: "I will not trouble you to feed me this morning. I am quite strong enough to feed myself."

"Very well," assented Peggy with becoming meekness, quietly arranging the salver in front of him.

The lad began strongly enough, but soon his hand began to tremble. The perspiration stood on his forehead in great drops as he continued to make the effort, and presently the spoon fell with a clatter from his nerveless fingers. He sank back, panting and exhausted, on his pillows.

"Thou foolish boy," rebuked Peggy gently wiping the perspiration from his brow. "Thee must not waste thy strength if thee wishes to get well soon. Thee must be patient a little longer, my cousin."

"Would I had died," broke from him passionately, tears of humiliation in his eyes, "ere I was brought to lie here like a baby compelled to accept services that I wish not."

A deep flush dyed the girl's face, and she choked. For a moment she feared lest she should lose her self-control, then mastering herself—Peggy had been well schooled in self-repression—she said mournfully:

"Thee must not excite thyself, Cousin Clifford. Suffer me to care for thee a little longer. If it can

be arranged so that another may take charge of thee, it shall be done. I knew not that thou didst dislike me so much."

He made no reply, but partook of the broth she gave him without protest. Then, because it was part of her duty to wait beside him until the morning visit of the surgeon, she picked up the little bunch of violets and sat down quietly.

Her heart was very full. She could not understand the youth's aversion. It was as though he held something against her that she had done; the resentment of an injury. In wondering perplexity she fondled the violets, and with unconscious yearning her thoughts flew back to far-off Philadelphia, and the long ago time when there was no war, and she had not known these troublesome cousins.

195

What times she, and Sally, and Betty, and all the girls of The Social Select Circle had had gathering the wild flowers in the great woods! When was it they had gone there last? It came to her suddenly that it had been six long years before, just after the battle of Lexington. They had made wreaths for their hair, she remembered. Was it violets that made Sally's, she wondered, the blue of the flowers she held stirring her memories vaguely. No; it was quaker-ladies, and they were blue as Sally's eyes. They never would go to the great woods again because the British had felled the trees.

At this point in her meditation Peggy looked up with a start to find her cousin regarding her with such an intent look that the color mantled her cheek and brow. He seemed as though he was about to speak, and, fearful that there would be another outbreak which would agitate him, she began speaking hurriedly:

"I am thinking of the great wood, cousin, which used to lie along the banks of the Schuylkill River at home. We went there in spring time for violets, and all the wildings of the forest. Thee should have seen the great trees when they were newly leaved, and again in the autumn when they were clothed in scarlet and gold; and——"

196

"What have you done with Harriet?" interrupted he in a tense tone.

"What have I done with Harriet?" repeated Peggy so surprised by the question that she let the violets fall to the floor unheeded. Clifford had not mentioned his sister's name since the first day she came. "I told thee, my cousin, that the council had sent her to New York, because she communicated with Sir Henry Clinton which is not allowed. She had been warned, but she heeded it not. Does thee not remember?"

"I know what you told me," he made answer. "Think you that I believe it? Nay; I know that your people have prevented her from coming to me."

For a moment Peggy was so amazed that she could only stare at him. When she had recovered sufficiently to speak she said clearly:

"I think thee must be out of thy mind, cousin. I spoke naught but truth when I told thee of Harriet. I should not know how to speak otherwise. Why should we hinder thy sister from coming to thee? There would be no reason."

197

"At one of the taverns where we stopped on the way down here, a captain, a whipper-snapper Yankee, flaunted a shirt in my face made by my sister." The boy's eyes flashed at the recollection. "I wrote her praying her to tell me that he did it but to flout me. I prayed her to write that she was still loyal to her king and country. And she answered not. I sent another letter, and still there was no reply. Then I tried to escape to get to her, and I was wounded in the attempt. The director of the hospital here promised, to quiet me, that he would see that she received a letter, and I wrote for her to come. Harriet would have come had she not been prevented."

"But why should she be prevented?" demanded the astounded Peggy.

"Because 'twas feared that once she was with me she would return to her allegiance. That my influence would make her remember that Colonel Owen's daughter could show no favors to a Yankee captain; that——"

198

"Clifford Owen," interrupted the girl sternly, "listen to me. Thou art exciting thyself needlessly. Thy sister likes the Yankee captain, as thee calls him, no more than thee does. She did make that shirt; but 'twas done because she was as full of idle fancies as thou art, and mother sought by some task to rid her of the megrims. She gave it to John hoping to flout him, thinking that he would not wear a garment bearing the inscription embroidered, in perversity, upon it. She did write to thee. Not once but several times. That thee did not receive the letters is to be deplored, but not to be wondered at, considering the state of the country. She exerted herself on thy behalf to procure a parole, and 'twas near accomplishment when, impatient at the delay, she wrote to Sir Henry Clinton imploring him to ask thy exchange. As I have told thee, 'tis not permitted for any to communicate with the enemy, and so she was sent to New York. And now thee has the gist of the whole matter," concluded Peggy with dignity.

199

"And why is she not here?" he asked obstinately.

The girl rose quickly.

"I have told thee," she said quietly. "I will say no more. If thee chooses to doubt my word then thee must do so. I have spoke naught but truth. My cousin, thee will have to get another nurse. I am going back to my mother. 'Twas a mistake to come. I but did so because mother and I felt sorrow for thee alone down here with none of thy kin near, and perchance dying. 'Twas a mistake, I say, to have come, but I will trouble thee no longer. I shall start home to-day on my

pony. The way is long, and lonely; but better loneliness and fatigue than suspicion and coldness. I hope thee will recover, my cousin. Farewell!"

She turned, standing very erectly, and started to leave the room. Before she had taken a half dozen steps, however, there came the quick beat of the mustering drum from the Market Green, and a hoarse shout from without:

"The British! The British are coming!"

CHAPTER XVI—THE TABLES TURNED

200

"Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed—at the praise of their own loveliness."

—Byron.

Instantly the little town was all commotion. From every quarter men came running in answer to the call, ready to defend their homes from the invader; while women huddled together in groups, or gathered their treasures and fled with them to the forest. Mustered at length, the militia, pitifully few in numbers, sallied forth to meet the enemy. From the southward came the strains of martial music as the British approached, and mothers, wives, and sisters waited in breathless suspense the result of the encounter.

The sound of a few shots was borne presently on the breeze, followed by the rush of running men, and the militia which had marched forth so bravely but a short time before, came flying back, panic stricken.

201

"There are thousands of them," cried the panting men. "We could not stand against the whole British army." On they ran, while from the other direction came the first division of Major-General Phillips' army, the Queen's Rangers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe, which marched in with drums beating, and colors flying.

At the first alarm Peggy had paused abruptly, hardly knowing what to do. Her first impulse had been to return to the cottage, but remembering that Fairfax was with the militia, and Nurse Johnson somewhere about the hospital, she hesitated. As she did so there came a peremptory voice from the bed:

"Mistress Peggy!"

"Well, my cousin?" Peggy went back to Clifford reluctantly.

"Are my people truly coming?"

"They seem to be," answered the girl.

"And where were you going?"

"I really don't know," answered she. "I would be alone at Nurse Johnson's cottage, which I would like not. Solitude is conducive to fear, and I wish ever to present a brave front in the presence of the enemy. I shall remain somewhere about the hospital by necessity."

202

"Stay by me," he said.

"But thee has hardly ceased telling me that thee does not want me near thee?" cried the girl opening wide her eyes in surprise.

"I have not changed my opinion concerning the matter," he said grimly. "But I am an English officer, and the safest place for you is by my bedside. Therefore, mistress, I command you to sit here by my bed."

"I don't want thy protection," began Peggy hotly. "I think I prefer thy soldiers."

"Did I want your nursing?" he demanded savagely. "No, I did not; yet was I compelled to submit to it. And while I did not desire your attendance, still you have attended me. For what purpose I know not, nor doth it now matter. The fact remains that I am under an obligation of which I would be quit. I will requite whatever of service you have rendered me by procuring exemption from pillage or annoyance for both yourself and the friends with whom you are staying. Sit you here beside me, Mistress Peggy, and bide the result."

203

"Clifford Owen," retorted the maiden so bitterly angry that she could scarcely speak, "were it not for those friends who have been so kind to me, I would die rather than accept aught from thy hands. But because of them I will take whatever of favor thee can obtain for us. But 'tis under protest. Under strong protest, I would have thee understand."

"So?" he said. "That is quite as it should be."

For one long instant the two gazed at each other. The lad's whole appearance betokened the keenest enjoyment of the situation. He looked as though he had received a draught of an elixir of

life, so animated and strong did he appear.

Peggy, on the contrary, found no pleasure in the state of things. She was as near blind, unreasoning wrath as her gentle nature ever came. Had it not been for Nurse Johnson and her son, she would have left her cousin's bedside forthwith. As it was she sat down beside him in anything but a meek frame of mind.

204

The streets of the little city thronged with the red coats of the British, and they took possession of public buildings, dwellings, and shops as though they were masters returning to their own.

It was not long before several soldiers under the leadership of an officer made their appearance in the hospital. Rapidly they went through the rooms searching for British prisoners among the wounded and sick inmates. There was no rudeness nor annoyance of any sort offered to either the American sick, or their white-faced nurses. As they approached his bed Clifford sat up stiffly, and gave the officer's salute.

"Ha!" cried the English officer. "What have we here?" and he paused beside him.

"I am Captain Williams, of the Forty-eighth Regiment, sir," declared Clifford with another salute. "I have been a prisoner with the enemy since the last week of February."

"Ha! yes; I remember. Taken at Westchester while on private business for Sir Henry Clinton," said the other.

205

"The very same, sir. And this," indicating Peggy, "is my cousin, Mistress Margaret Owen, of Philadelphia, who hath been put to no small inconvenience by my illness. She hath nursed me back to health, or at least until I am on the road to recovery. For the sake of whatever service I have been able to render General Sir Henry Clinton, I beg you to see that neither she, nor any of the inmates of the house where she dwells, be subjected to annoyance. She hath also a pony, I believe, of which she is very fond. Wilt see that it is exempted from impressment? It is needless to say that any favor rendered me in the matter will not go without recompense."

A significant glance was exchanged between the two which Peggy did not notice. What she did see, however, was that the officer saluted in turn, saying pompously:

"Whatever you desire in the matter, captain, will be done. If the young lady will come with me to show me the house I will at once put a guard on the premises. I promise that she will suffer no annoyance of any sort."

206

As Clifford spoke of her as his cousin, Peggy felt a quick revulsion of feeling. It was the first time he had so called her. Then, as he openly acknowledged his indebtedness to her nursing, the girl's anger toward him died away. After all, she thought, the lad was doing his best to repay her for what she had done. That he was doing it from a desire to be quit of the obligation did not matter in the least. She knew now how he had felt during the time when he had submitted to her attentions, and a sense of justice made her aware that he was acquitting himself handsomely. And so as she rose to accompany the officer to the cottage, she said humbly:

"I thank thee, my cousin. I will not forget thy kindness in the matter."

A puzzled look came into the youth's eyes at her changed demeanor, but he merely gave a slight bow, and motioned her to go on with the officer. But Peggy was not yet through with him.

"May I come again to attend thee?" she asked in a low tone. "Thee is not well yet, thee must know."

"Yes," he said. "Come, and you will, mistress. I will not mind your ministrations so much now."

207

And in much better spirits than she had deemed possible a few moments before the girl accompanied the officer to the cottage. Nurse Johnson came to the door wringing her hands as they neared the entrance.

"There will be naught left, Peggy," she said despairingly. "The soldiers are in the house now stripping it of everything. 'Twill be a mercy if the house is left."

Before Peggy could make reply the officer removed his cocked hat, bowing courteously.

"That shall be stopped immediately, madam," he said. "War is not a gentle thing, and sometimes suffering must fall upon even our friends. In this case, however, your inconvenience will be short."

The good woman had not recovered from her bewilderment at this speech, ere he pushed past her into the house, and they heard him reprimanding the looting soldiers sharply.

"What doth it mean, child?" she gasped as every article taken was restored to its place, and a guard mounted before the dwelling. "Why are we so favored when our poor neighbors are faring so ill?"

208

"'Tis Clifford," Peggy told her. "He insisted that my friends and I should not be subjected to annoyance by his people as a return for nursing him."

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed the nurse. "And you thought he did not like you!"

"He doesn't, friend nurse. He made sure that I should understand that his feeling toward me had not changed, but he felt that he was under an obligation of which he would be quit. Still," a little gleam came into Peggy's eyes as she spoke, "he did think that he would not mind my ministering to him so much now."

"Of course not," laughed Nurse Johnson. "He will think it his due now. Isn't that like an Englishman? But I am very thankful none the less, though I see not how he could do other than he hath done. It is certainly reassuring to know that we shall not be molested."

So Peggy and her friend stayed in the cottage, or went back and forth to the hospital untroubled, save for the irksomeness of having armed men about the dooryard. And in the stable Star ate her oats, or tossed her slender head unwitting of the fact that she had been saved from helping in the marauding expeditions of the enemy. 209

"I have misjudged my cousin," thought Peggy with a warm glow of gratitude toward the lad as she prepared his breakfast the next morning. "And yesterday I was so angry. Peggy, Peggy! will thee never learn to govern thy temper? Thee must be more patient, and guard thy unruly tongue better. Heigh-ho! 'tis an adventurous jaunt after all, though still I would I were with mother. There! I don't believe that my cousin will ignore my offering this morning."

And with this she placed a few violets on the platter, and started for the hospital, going through the gate of the orchard which opened into Palace Street.

As she closed the gate and turned in the direction of the hospital she saw an officer coming down the street. There was something strangely familiar in his appearance, and Peggy was so impressed with the idea that it was some one she had met that she regarded him keenly. She stopped as though she had received a shock as she recognized him. For the man was Major-General Benedict Arnold, and he was coming directly toward her. 210

CHAPTER XVII—AN UNWELCOME ENCOUNTER 211

"He stood alone—A renegade
Against the Country he betrayed."

Peggy leaned against the fence for support, trembling violently. General Arnold was evidently bound for the palace, and she must pass him if she continued on her way to the hospital. The thought of running back to the house, and waiting until he had passed came to her, but she found herself incapable of moving. Peggy was obliged to resign herself to the encounter.

The scarlet and gold of the British uniform well became him, Peggy could not but observe. His dark, handsome face looked impassively from under his laced, cocked hat, and with quickening heart-throbs she saw that he still limped. Wildly she hoped that he would pass by without noticing her, and she watched his approach with a sort of fascination.

The birds sang merrily above her head, flitting from tree to tree across the blue of the sky. From the topmost bough of a near-by mulberry tree an oriole poured forth a flood of melody. A fresh river breeze bearing on its wings the odors of the sea stirred the maiden's hair and touched her flushed cheeks with refreshing coolness. 212

Alas! as he came directly in front of her he raised his eyes, and then stopped abruptly with an exclamation of surprise and wonder.

"Why! it is Miss Peggy Owen, is it not?" he asked with a genial smile.

"Yes," answered she faintly. "It is, Fr——" then she stopped. The word friend stuck in her throat. She could not utter it. Friend? Nay, he was not that. He had forfeited the title forever. And so, after a brief hesitation, she continued: "It is I, in truth, General Arnold."

A flush had come into his swarthy face as she substituted the title "general" for friend. He bent his dark compelling eye upon her with wistful eagerness.

"Miss Peggy," he said, holding out his hand with a winning smile, "we are both a long way from home. I little thought to find my girl friend down here. I give you greeting." 213

"And I give thee greeting also, sir," she returned. But she did not put out her hand. She could not.

She had been taught all her life to return good for evil. To submit to baseness and ingratitude with meekness; but Peggy could not bring herself to clasp Benedict Arnold's hand in greeting. Above the singing of the birds she heard John Drayton's heart-broken cry, "My general! my general! my general!" She saw again the anguish of strong men at the defection of a brave soldier. How Drayton had loved him—this dashing, daring leader who had ruined his ideal of manhood. The blankness and awfulness of the pall that had settled upon the country after his desertion had not yet been dissipated. Men had not yet ceased to look suspiciously upon each other. Officers spoke with hushed voices even yet of how the great heart of General Washington had been all but crushed by this man's falseness. And now he stood before her with outstretched hand in the April sunshine. 214

"I give thee greeting, sir," she said with unsmiling lips. "Greeting and good-day." And she made as if to pass him.

"Stay," he said, his face crimsoned, and dark with anger. "Am I not fit to be spoken to? You regard me as a traitor, do you not? Yes; your eyes tell it though you say it not. My little maid, may

not a man change his opinions? Have I not heard that your father was not always of the belief that bloodshed was lawful? Nay; even you yourself have changed since the beginning of the war. Once you and your family held that resistance to the powers that be was wrong. That submission to the king was not only proper but duty as well. Have I not the right to change my views and opinions also?"

"Yes," she made answer. "Thee has the right. Any man may change."

"Then why condemn me?" he cried with passion.

"I do not condemn thee, sir; I leave that to God and thy conscience," she said. "But oh!" she cried unable to control herself longer, "why did thee not do it openly? No man would have held thee to blame had thee come out boldly, and acknowledged thy changed views. But to seek to give our strongest fortress into the hands of the enemy; to betray a brave man to death, to destroy the idol that thee had made for thyself in the hearts of thy soldiers, to bring sorrow to General Washington, who hath so much to bear; this was not well, sir. 'Twas not done in the honorable manner that men had a right to expect of Benedict Arnold. And now, to come with fire and sword against thine own people! How can thee do it? How can thee?"

215

"You do not understand. There have been men who have been willing to bear infamy that good might come of it. I sought to be one of them. When the colonies have been restored to their rightful allegiance the matter may appear in a different light. Miss Peggy, you do not understand."

"No," she answered reluctant to prolong the interview. "I do not, sir; nor do I wish to."

"Child," he said, regarding her with a winsome smile, "once you were beset with pride because you walked the length of a drawingroom by my side. Will you pleasure me with your company down this street?"

216

Peggy's eyes were misty, and her voice full of infinite sadness as she replied:

"When I was proud to walk with thee, thou wert a brave soldier, wounded in the defense of thy country. Now thou hast betrayed that country, and thou hast come against thine own people, plundering and burning the property of thy brothers. I walk with no traitor, sir."

Over his dark forehead, cheek, and neck the red blood rioted at her words, and his dark eyes flashed ominously.

"So be it," he said at length. "Enemies we are, then. I could have served you greatly. Perhaps it would have been better for you to have been more politic; but no matter. Benedict Arnold forces his presence upon no one. This one thing, however, I ask of you: Tell me, I pray, where John Drayton is. But answer that and I will leave you in peace."



"BENEDICT ARNOLD FORCES HIS PRESENCE UPON NO ONE"

"Thee means to tempt him," breathed Peggy, looking at him with startled glance. "Thee has no right to know that. He was broken-hearted over thy defection from thy country. He shed tears of sorrow. He and Daniel Morgan also. He would not wish to hear from thee. Molest him not, I beg of thee."

217

"Ah! that touched you," he cried. "If you are so sure of his loyalty why ask me not to molest him? Are you afraid that he will come to me for the love he bears me?"

"No," responded the girl indignantly, stung to the quick by his sneering manner. "John is fighting with the army, as he should be. Thee could not persuade him to leave his duty, sir. I trust him as I do myself."

"How now!" he cried. "Wilt lay a wager with me that another two months will not find John Drayton fighting by my side? Wilt lay a wager on't, my little maid?"

"No; I will not," she said, her eyes dilated with scorn at the proposition. "Neither will I tell thee where he is so that thou canst vilely try to woo him from his allegiance. John is loyal to his country. He hath been severely tried, and not yet found wanting. I should be less than friend to consent that thou shouldst make an attempt upon his honor."

218

"You have told me where he is, Mistress Peggy, without knowing it," and he laughed maliciously. "Daniel Morgan hath been, until of late, with General Greene's army in the Carolinas. If Drayton and Morgan were together it follows as a matter of course that Drayton is also with Greene."

"Oh!" ejaculated Peggy in dismay. Then her native wit came to her aid. "But that was last fall," she objected. "It doth not follow that even if he were there then, he is now. At that time thou wert with the enemy in New York; yet now thou art in Virginia. Why should he remain stationary any more than thou shouldst?"

"Well reasoned," he approved, still laughing. "It doth not matter where he is, Mistress Peggy. I can find him if I wish. And I may wish. Do you live here?" indicating the cottage abruptly.

"For the time being, sir," answered Peggy, longing to terminate the interview. "I am here to care for my cousin, who is of the British army."

"Which accounts for the guard. Ah! Mistress Peggy, I see that despite your Whig proclivities you know the wisdom of having a friend among the enemy. Perhaps you would have met my friendly overtures in another spirit had it not been so. I give you good-day. Perchance we may meet again."

219

Bowing low he left her, and feeling somehow very uncomfortable Peggy went on to her cousin.

CHAPTER XVIII—UNDER THE LINDENS

220

"Snatch from the ashes of your sires,
The embers of the former fires;
And leave your sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame;
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won."

—"The Giaour," *Byron*.

"You are late," spoke Clifford Owen with anything but an amiable expression when at length Peggy reached his bedside. "Methought you had forgot that I lay here without breakfast?"

"Nay, my cousin," said the girl apologetically. "I started with thy breakfast some time since, but one of thy generals stopped me; and then, as the broth was cold, I tarried in the hospital kitchen to warm it."

"Is it the everlasting broth again?" queried the boy irritably. "Odds life! I think that Yankee doctor is determined to keep me here all summer. How can a fellow gain strength with naught but broth to eat?"

221

"Thee should not speak so of the good doctor," reproved Peggy gently. "And to show thee that thee should not, know that that same Yankee doctor said, when I was warming the broth, that thee was strong enough to take something other than it. And he had me prepare, what does thee think? Why, a soft-boiled egg and a bit of toast. So there, my cousin! is not that a nice breakfast?"

"It isn't half enough," grumbled her cousin. "One little egg, and one piece of toast that would scarce cover a half joe. Why, I could eat a whole ox, I believe. I tell you the fellow wants to keep me on a thin diet for fear that I will get strong enough to fight. I am going to have one of the British surgeons look me over."

"Thee is cross, and hungry; which is vastly encouraging," commented the maiden sagely.

The youth looked up at her with the merest suspicion of a smile.

"If being cross and hungry are encouraging symptoms," he said somewhat grimly, "I think I ought to get up right now. I'd like to tear this bed to pieces, I am so tired of it; and as for hunger ——" He paused as though words failed to express his feelings.

222

"Then thee had better fall to at once," suggested Peggy. "And thee is talking too much, I fear."

"No," he said. "The coming of the army hath put new life into me. I am no longer a prisoner, Mistress Peggy. That in itself is enough to cure one of any malady. Think! 'twill not be long ere I shall come and go at pleasure. Nor shall I be bound by a parole."

"But thee must be patient a little longer," advised the maiden, as he resigned the tray to her with a sigh of content. "Thee must not overdo just at this time, else thee will tax thy new-found strength too much. And I wish to thank thee again, my cousin, for thy kindness yesterday. Thy people have not molested us in any way, and thy friend, the officer who spoke with thee, hath placed a guard about our house to ensure our safety. Both Nurse Johnson and I appreciate thy thoughtfulness. We might have fared ill had it not been for thee."

"I like not to be beholden to any," he remarked. "'Twill serve to repay in part for your nursing. I see not yet why you should journey so far to care for an unknown kinsman."

"Thee did not seem unknown to me, my cousin," returned Peggy quietly. "Thy father stayed with us for nearly a year when he was upon parole in Philadelphia. And I have been with Harriet for two years almost constantly. Then, too, the dictates of humanity would scarce let us leave thee down here without any of thy kin near. That is all, Clifford."

And Peggy would discuss the matter no further. Her heart was very warm toward her cousin, and she did not wish a repetition of the conversation of the day before. Seeing that he was inclined to converse too much she quietly withdrew, and busied herself in other parts of the hospital, winding bandages for the surgeons, or reading to the sick. She feared to return to the cottage lest she should again meet with General Arnold; and that, Peggy told herself, she could not bear. At length, however, just about sunset, which was her usual time for returning, she ventured forth.

The evening was a lovely one. The sun had sunk beyond the belts of forest lying to the westward of the town, leaving the sky rosy and brilliant. The street was deserted, and breathing a sigh of relief the maiden hastened to the cottage. She found Mrs. Johnson awaiting her.

"You are late, child," she said with so distraught an air that Peggy looked up quickly. "I was beginning to fear that some ill might have befallen you. What kept you so?"

"Friend nurse," answered Peggy with some agitation, "General Arnold stopped me this morning when I went to the hospital with my cousin's breakfast. I feared lest I should meet with him again, so I waited until the street was clear."

"Arnold, the traitor?" exclaimed Nurse Johnson.

"The very same. I knew him in Philadelphia when he was our general. I liked not to talk with him, but he would not let me pass. Friend nurse, does thee think the British will stay here long?"

"'Tis hard to tell, Peggy. I blame you not for not wanting to meet with him, but 'tis a thing that will be unavoidable in this small town if they stay any length of time. I think he must be with General Phillips at the palace. I wish," ended the good woman with the feeling that all Americans held toward the traitor, "I wish that we might do something to capture him. 'Tis said that His Excellency is most anxious to effect it."

"Yes; but naught can be done with an army back of him. But something worries thee, and I have done naught but speak of my own anxiety. What is it?"

"'Tis Fairfax," Nurse Johnson told her in troubled tones. "He is hiding in the forest, and wishes to come home for the night. I had a note from him. He tried to creep in to-day, but was deterred by seeing the guard in the yard. Of course, I knew that the militia must have fled to the forest, and the poor fellows are in want of food because the British have ravaged all the plantations near. If the boy could get in without the knowledge of the guard he could stay in the garret until the soldiers leave. But how to accomplish it I know not. He will be in the palace grounds to-night a little after sunset, he said. And he wished me to meet him there. But I promised the guard that I would cook them Indian cakes to-night, and so I cannot leave without arousing their suspicion. 'Tis time to go now, and to serve the cakes also. What to do I know not."

"Why could I not go to thy son, while thee stays and cooks the cakes?" asked Peggy eagerly.

"Why, child, that might do! I did not think of that; yet I like not to send you out again so late."

"It is not late. The dark hath come only in the shadow, which will be the better. And where will he be, friend nurse? The grounds are so large that I might go astray if I did not know the exact spot."

"He will be in the great grove of lindens which lies on the far side of the grounds," the nurse told her. "Yet I like not——"

"Say no more, friend nurse," said Peggy quickly. "'Tis settled that I am to go. Now tell me just what thee wishes me to do."

After some further expostulation on the part of the nurse she consented that the girl should go to meet the lad, carrying some of his mother's clothes which he should don, and so arrayed come back to the cottage.

"I wonder," mused Nurse Johnson, "if he knew that the English general hath his headquarters in the palace. 'Tis a rash proceeding to venture so near. If he is taken they will make him either swear allegiance to the king, or else give him a parole. Fairfax will take neither, so it means prison for the boy. Foolish, foolish, to venture here!"

"But all will be well if we can but get him here unbeknown to the guard," consoled Peggy.

"Friend nurse, cook many cakes, and regale them so bountifully that they will linger long over the meal; and it may be that Fairfax can slip in unobserved."

"The very thing!" ejaculated the nurse excitedly. "What a wit you have, Peggy. I begin to think that we can get him here, after all."

She bundled up one of her frocks hastily, saying as she gave it to the girl:

"Of course you must be guided by circumstances, my child, but come back as quickly as possible lest the guard be through with the meal. If they can be occupied——"

"I will hasten," promised Peggy. "And now good-bye. Oh, I'll warrant those guards will never have again such a meal as thee will give them. Now don't be too anxious."

"But I shall be," answered the nurse with a sigh. "Not only anent Fairfax but you also."

Peggy passed out of the cottage quickly, and went toward the hospital. It was so usual a thing for her to go back and forth that the going attracted no attention from the guards. Now the hospital had an entrance that opened directly into the palace grounds, and Peggy availed herself of this convenience.

The grounds were very large, and it was fortunate that she knew the exact situation of the grove of linden trees, else she must have become bewildered. The lawns were in a sad state of neglect, overrun with vines and wild growths; for, since Lord Dunmore, the last royal governor, had left, the mansion had held but an occasional tenant. So much of underbrush was there that it was a comparatively easy matter for Peggy to pass unobserved through the trees in the gathering dusk of the twilight. A guard had been placed in the immediate vicinity of the mansion, and the town itself was thoroughly picketed so that sentinels in the remoter parts of the grounds were infrequent. And unobserved Peggy presently reached the great grove of lindens, the pride of the former royal governor.

The moon was just rising through a bank of threatening clouds which had gathered since the sunset. They obscured the moonlight at one moment, then swept onward permitting the full light of the orb to shine. Peggy's voice trembled a little as she called softly:

"Friend Fairfax!"

"Mistress Peggy!" Fairfax Johnson rose slowly from the copse near the grove, and came toward her.

"Is it thou?" asked Peggy in a low tone. Then as he drew closer: "Thee is to put on this frock, friend. 'Tis thy mother's. Then thee is to come boldly back to the cottage with me, and enter while thy mother hath the guard in the kitchen regaling them with Indian cakes and honey. Be quick!"

The youth took the bundle silently, and retired a short distance from her. The clouds cleared in the next few moments, discovering Master Fairfax arrayed in his mother's frock, which was a trifle long for him. He stumbled as he tried to approach Peggy, and grabbed at his skirts awkwardly.

"Thee must not stride, friend," rebuked Peggy in a shrill whisper. "Thee is a woman, remember. Walk mincingly. So! Hold not thy skirt so high. Thy boots will betray thee. No woman had ever so large a foot. Oh, dear! I don't believe that thee will ever get by the guards. And thy mother is uneasy about thee."

"I'll do better," answered the youth eagerly. "Indeed, I will try to do better, Mistress Peggy. Show me just once more. Remember that I've never been a woman before."

"'Tis no time for frivolity," chided the girl, laughing a little herself. "There! 'tis a decided improvement, Friend Fairfax. I think we may start now. And as we go thee may tell me why thee should be so rash as to venture into the town while the enemy is here. Thy mother wondered anent the matter. Why did thee, friend?"

"Why, because the Marquis de Lafayette hath entered the state, and is marching to meet the British," he answered. "The militia of Williamsburg is to join him. We march at daybreak. I wanted to see mother before going, and to get something to eat. I have eaten naught since yesterday morning."

"Why, thou poor fellow," exclaimed Peggy. "No wonder thee would dare greatly. And 'tis venturesome, friend. Vastly so! And hath the Marquis come from General Washington?"

"Yes; he hath twelve hundred regulars, and everywhere in tide-water Virginia the militia are rising to join him. We must do all we can to keep the old Dominion from being overrun by the enemy. The meeting place is near the Richmond hills."

"Thank you for the information," came a sarcastic voice, and from out of the gloom there stepped a figure in the uniform of an English officer. The moon, bursting through the clouds at this moment, revealed the dark face of Benedict Arnold. Peggy gave a little cry as she recognized him.

"So this is your trysting place," he said glancing about the grove. "Upon my word a most romantic spot for a meeting, but a trace too near the enemy for absolute security. You realize, do you not, that you are both prisoners?"

"Sir," spoke Fairfax Johnson, "do with me as you will, but this maiden hath done naught for which she should be made a prisoner. She but came to conduct me to my mother."

"And 'tis no trysting place," interposed Peggy with some indignation. "The lad but ventured here to see his mother. He hath eaten nothing since yesterday morning. The least, the very least thee can do is to first let him see his mother, and have a good meal."

"And then?" he questioned as though enjoying the situation. "Upon my word, Miss Peggy, you plead well for him. I have heard you plead for another youth, have I not?"

"Thee has," answered she with spirit. "But then I pleaded with an American officer, a gallant and brave man. Now——"

"Yes, and now?" he demanded fiercely. "Have I no bowels of compassion, think you, because I have changed my convictions? I will show you, Mistress Peggy, that I am not so vile a thing as you believe. Go! You and this youth also. The information he hath so unwittingly given is of far more value than he would be as a prisoner. We had not yet been advised of Lafayette's whereabouts, and we were anxious to know them. We have tarried at this town for want of that very intelligence. Therefore, go! but take this advice: Hereafter, choose your meeting place at a spot other than the enemy's headquarters." He laughed sneeringly, and turning strode off under the trees.

"I would rather he had taken me prisoner," observed the lad gloomily.

"Well, I am glad that he did not," answered Peggy. "Thy mother would have grieved so. Come, Friend Fairfax! With such a man one knows not how long his mood of mercy will last. Let us hasten while we may."

He followed her awkwardly. They reached the cottage without further molestation, and entered it unobserved.

On the morning following the drums beat assembly soon after the sounding of the reveille. The different commands filed out of their camps, and, forming into a column, took up the line of march out of the city.

CHAPTER XIX—HARRIET AT LAST

"Awake on your hills, on your islands awake,
Brave sons of the mountain, the frith, and the lake.
Be the brand of each chieftain like Fin's in his ire.
May the blood through his veins flow like currents of fire.
Burst the base foreign yoke as your sires did of yore,
Or die like your sires, and endure it no more."

—"Battle Song," *Scott*.

With the courage born of the desperateness of the situation the citizens of Williamsburg set about repairing the devastation wrought by the invader. Wrecked homes and desolated families followed fast in the wake of the British army. From field and hills the militia assembled to repel their approach, leaving the crops to the care of the men too old for service, the women who bravely shouldered tasks too heavy for delicate frames, and the few negroes who remained faithful to their owners. Patiently demolished gardens were replanted, poultry yards restocked, depleted larders replenished in order that want, stark and gaunt, might not be added to other foes.

And the sunny days of April became the brighter ones of May, and the forests about the city blossomed into riotous greens, starred by the white of dogwood, or the purplish-pink mist of the Judas-tree. The mulberries and sycamores were haunts of song. Out of the cerulean sky the sun shone brilliantly upon the leaf-strewn earth. All Nature rejoiced, and sent forth a profusion of bloom and verdure as though to compensate the land for the bloody war waged throughout its length and breadth. For that great game, whose moves and counter-moves were to terminate so soon in the cul-de-sac of Yorktown, had begun. From the seacoast where Greene had sent him Cornwallis, recovered at last from the dearly bought victory of Guilford Court House, was moving rapidly across North Carolina for a junction with the forces in Virginia. There was no longer a doubt but that the subjugation of the state was the aim of the British.

An empty treasury, a scarcity of arms, a formidable combination to oppose in the West, a continual demand upon her resources to answer for the army in the North, with all these contingencies to face Virginia had now to prepare to meet this new foe advancing from the South.

Late one afternoon in the latter part of May Peggy and her cousin sat in the palace grounds under the shade of a large oak tree. The girl had been reading aloud, but now the book lay closed upon the grass beside her, and she sat regarding the youth who lay sprawled full length upon the grass.

"And so thee is going back to the army?" she asked. "Is thee sure that thee is strong enough?"

"Yes; I tire of inaction. I told General Phillips when he passed through two weeks ago on his way to Petersburg that I would join him when the combined army reached Richmond. I would have

gone with him then but that I hoped Harriet might still come here. I do not understand why I have not heard from her, if she is, as you say, in New York."

"I wish thee could hear, my cousin," said Peggy patiently. "I would that thee might hear from her for my own sake as well as thine. It vexes me for thee to doubt my word, and thee will never believe that I have spoken truth until thee hears from her."

"But consider," he said. "It hath been more than a month since you came. When you first came you said that she was in New York. If so, why hath she not written? Ships pass to and from there with supplies and messages for the forces here. 'Twould have been easy to hear."

"I am sorry that I cannot relieve thy uneasiness," Peggy made answer. "It is not in my power to do so, Clifford."

"I am uneasy," he admitted, sitting upright. "Sometimes I am minded to set forth to see what hath become of her."

Peggy looked at him with quick eagerness.

"Why not?" she asked. "My cousin, why should we two not go to Philadelphia? Then thee could go on from there to New York to thy sister. Why not, Clifford? My mother——" Her voice broke.

"You want to go home?" he asserted.

"Yes; oh, yes!" she answered yearningly. "Thee is well now. There is naught to do but to amuse thee by reading or by conversation. The troops are now all on the south side of the James River with thy general, Lord Cornwallis. 'Twould be a most excellent time, Clifford, for a start toward Philadelphia. We would have none but our own soldiers to meet."

"Our own soldiers' mean my foes, Mistress Peggy," he rejoined with a half smile. "You forget that I am an Englishman. We would never reach your home were we to start. I am not going to risk my new-found freedom by venturing among the rebels."

"But I am a patriot, and thou art a Britisher, as thou say'st. Why not depend upon me when we are among the Americans, and upon thee when with thy forces?" asked the maiden ingenuously.

The lad laughed.

"Nay," he returned. "We should need a flag that would show that we were non-combatants. No; 'twill not do. I shall go back to the army, and you——"

"Yes?" she questioned. "And I, my cousin? What shall I do? Twice already in the past month thy army hath visited this city. How often it will come from now on none can tell. All tide-water Virginia seems swept by them as by a pestilence. Get me a flag and let me pass to my home."

"'Tis not to be thought of for a moment," he answered quickly. "I will not even consider the thing. I have deliberated the matter, and, as I feel to some extent responsible for your well-being, I have finally decided what were best to be done. Know then, Mistress Peggy, that I shall in a few days conduct you to Portsmouth, where the frigate 'Iris' lies preparing to return to New York. I shall send you on her to that port."

Peggy was too astonished for a moment to speak. The youth spoke with the quiet assurance of one who expects no opposition to his decision. The girl chafed under his manner.

"Thee takes my submission to thy authority too much for granted, Cousin Clifford," she remarked presently, and her voice trembled slightly. "I am not going to New York. I spent a year there among the British, and 'tis an experience that I do not care to repeat. Thee does not choose to be a prisoner, my cousin; neither do I."

"If you were ever a prisoner there I know naught concerning it," he answered. "Surely if Harriet is there, as you would have me believe, 'tis the place for you. If you are the friends you seem to be what would be more natural than for you to go to her, since to return to your own home is out of the question? The vessel sails the first of June. I shall put you on her. There is naught else to do."

"I go not to New York," was all the girl said. She had not told Clifford any of the unpleasant incidents connected with his father, or sister. She had been taught to speak only good, forgetting the evil. Now, however, she wondered if it would not have been better to have enlightened him concerning some of the events.

"We will not discuss the matter further for the present," he said stiffly. "I know best what to do in the matter, and you will have to abide by it. I see naught else for you to do."

Peggy's experience with boy cousins had been limited to this one, so she was ignorant of the fact that they often arrogate to themselves as a right the privilege of ordering their girl relatives' affairs. She did not know that these same masculine relatives often assumed more authority than father and brother rolled into one. She was ignorant of these things and so sat, a wave of indignant protest surging to her lips. Fearing to give utterance to the feeling that overwhelmed her she rose abruptly, and left the grounds.

"I will walk as far as the college and back," she concluded. "I must be by myself to think this over. What shall be done? Go to New York I will not. And how determinedly my cousin speaks! Doth he think that I have no spirit that I will submit to him?"

And so musing she walked slowly down Palace Street, under the shade of the double row of catalpa trees which cast cooling shadows over the narrow green. At length just as she turned to

enter Duke of Gloucester Street there came the sound of bugles. This was followed by the noise of countless hoof beats; then came the sharp tones of military command: all denoting the approach of a body of mounted men.

242

The people began running hither and thither, and soon the street was so filled with them that Peggy could not see what was coming. As quickly as possible she made her way to the steps of the Capitol, and ascended its steps that she might have a good view of the approaching force. From the Yorktown road another detachment of British filed into town. The citizens of the little city viewed their entrance with feelings in which alarm predominated. What could they want in Williamsburg, they asked themselves. Had they not been stripped of almost everything in the shape of food that they should be compelled to support a third visit from the enemy? A flutter of skirts in the rear division of the cavalry drew attention to the fact that a girl rode among them and, surprised by this unusual incident, Peggy leaned forward for a keener glance.

A cry of amazement broke from her lips as the girl drew near. For the maiden was Harriet Owen on her horse, Fleetwood.

Harriet herself, blooming and beautiful! Harriet, in Joseph of green, with a gay plume of the same color nodding from her hat, smiling and debonair, as though riding in the midst of cavalry were the most enjoyable thing in the world. Peggy rubbed her eyes, and looked again. No; she was not dreaming. She saw aright. The vision on horseback was in very truth her cousin Harriet. With a little cry Peggy ran down the steps, and pushed her way through the gaping crowd.

243

"Harriet," she called.

Harriet Owen turned, saw her, then drew rein and spoke to the officer who rode by her side. He smiled, saluted her courteously as she dismounted lightly, and gave Fleetwood's bridle into the hand of an orderly. Quickly the English girl advanced to her cousin's side.

"Well, Peggy?" she said smilingly.

CHAPTER XX—VINDICATED

244

"'Tis just that I should vindicate alone
The broken truce, or for the breach atone."

—*Dryden.*

"Thee has come at last," cried Peggy, a little catch coming into her voice. "Oh, Harriet! Harriet! why didn't thee come before? Or write?"

"Why, I came as soon as I could, Peggy. When I knew that the Forty-third was to be sent down I went to Sir Henry for permission to accompany the regiment. The colonel's wife bore him company, which made my coming possible. Oh, the voyage was delightful! I love the sea. And the military also. You should have heard the things they said to 'this sweet creature,' as they styled me. And how is Clifford?"

"He is no longer an invalid, Harriet. He hath quit the hospital, and taken rooms at the Raleigh Tavern. Thee can see the building from here if thee will turn thy head. 'Tis the long low building with the row of dormer windows in the roof. He talks also of returning to the army, but hath been waiting to hear from thee. He hath worried. I am so glad that thou hast come, and he will be glad also. I do believe that thee grows more beautiful all the time."

245

"Sorry that I can't say the same for you," laughed Harriet, pinching Peggy's cheek playfully. "What have you been doing to yourself? You are pale, and thinner than when I saw you last. Mercy! how long ago it seems, yet 'twas but the first week in last month. I have had such a good time in New York, Peggy," she ran on without waiting for answers to her questions. "The routs and the assemblies were vastly entertaining. And the plays! Oh, Peggy, you should have been there. I thought of you often, and wished you with me, you little gray mouse of a cousin! Why do you wear that frock? I like it not."

"Did thee in truth think of me?" asked Peggy wistfully. "With all that pleasuring I wonder that thee had time."

246

"Well, I did of a certainty. Particularly after your mother's letter came telling me about Clifford, and how you had gone down to care for him. Of course I knew that he was in good hands, so I didn't worry. Is this the hospital?"

"Yes," answered the Quakeress who had been leading Harriet toward the spot during the conversation. "I left thy brother in the palace grounds, and I thought thee would like to be taken directly to him. Hath Captain Williams come in yet?" she inquired of an attendant.

"Captain Williams," repeated Harriet who seemed to be in high spirits. "How droll that sounds! Are these the palace grounds?" as Peggy on receiving the attendant's answer led the way into them. "Oh! there is Clifford!"

She made a little rush forward with outstretched arms as she caught sight of her brother, crying joyously:

"Clifford! Clifford!"

The youth rose at her cry. Over his face poured a flood of color. Incredulity struggled with joy, and was succeeded by a strange expression. His face grew stern, and his brows knit together in a heavy frown. He folded his arms across his breast as his sister approached, and made no motion to embrace her. Peggy was nonplussed at the change. What did it mean! He had been so anxious for her coming, and so uneasy about her. She could not understand it. Harriet too seemed astonished at this strange reception.

247

"One moment," he said, and Peggy shivered at the coldness of his tones, "do you come, my sister, as a loyal Englishwoman, or as a rebel?"

"Loyal?" questioned Harriet wonderingly. "Why, of course I'm loyal. What else could I be?"

"And that Yankee captain? The one to whom you gave that shirt?"

"The Yankee captain?" A puzzled look flashed across Harriet's face. "Oh! do you mean John Drayton? Well, what about him?"

"Is he not favored by you?" queried Clifford, a light beginning to glow on his countenance.

"Favored by me? John Drayton!" Harriet's lip curled in disdain. "What nonsense is this, Cliff? I dislike John Drayton extremely. Didn't Peggy tell you?"

248

"Then come," he said opening his arms.

"You silly boy," cried Harriet embracing him. "I am minded not to kiss you at all. What put such absurd notions in your head? How well you look! Not nearly so pale as Peggy is. One would think she was the invalid. Come, Peggy! 'Tis fine here under the trees. Sit down while you both hear about the gayeties of New York. And the war news! Oh, I have so much to tell. Sir Henry says the game is up with the colonies this summer. But oh, Cliff——"

"Have you been in New York?" he interrupted.

"Of course. Didn't Peggy tell you how the Most Honorable Council of the revolted colony of Pennsylvania," and Harriet's voice grew sarcastic, "banished me to that city because I tried to get a letter to Sir Henry Clinton concerning your exchange? It hath afforded much amusement at the dinners when I would take off Mr. Reed's solemn manner. 'Tis strange that Peggy did not tell you."

249

"She did," he replied, and turning he looked at Peggy as though seeing her for the first time. A gaze that embraced the gray gown that clung close to her slender figure; the snowy whiteness of her apron, the full fichu fastened firmly about the round girlish throat; and the simple cap of fine muslin that rested upon her dark tresses. "She did," he repeated, and paused expectantly as though for her to speak.

But she made no comment. It was enough that she was vindicated at last. It had hurt Peggy that her cousin should doubt her word, and now her sole feeling was one of content that he should know that she had indeed spoken naught but truth.

"Then if Peggy told you that I was sent there I see not why you should ask if I came from there," spoke Harriet in perplexity. "Clifford, have you seen father?"

"No," his face clouding. "I dread meeting him, Harriet. You know that he left you and the home in my charge. Had I known that you would not remain I would never have left you. And why did you not stay there, my sister?"

250

"Alone, Clifford? Did you not know me better than that? Know then, brother mine, that if you can serve your country, Mistress Harriet Owen can also. Oh, I have seen service, sir. I was a spy in the rebel headquarters at Middlebrook, in the Jerseys, for nearly a whole winter."

"You, Harriet! A spy?" he cried aghast. "Not you, Harriet?"

"Don't get wrought up, Cliff. Father knew it, and consented. We were well paid for it. Didn't Peggy tell you about it?" Harriet turned a smiling countenance upon Peggy. "She knew all about it. I stayed with our cousins while there."

"I think there is much that Cousin Peggy hath not told me," he remarked, and again he looked at the girl with a curious intent glance. Peggy felt her color rise under his searching gaze. "I will depend upon you for enlightenment as to several things."

The shadows lengthened and crept close to the little group under the trees. Fireflies sparkled in the dusk of the twilight. A large white moth sailed out of the obscurity toward the lights which had begun to glimmer in the hospital windows. An owl hooted in a near-by walnut tree. Peggy rose suddenly.

251

"We should not stay here," she said. "Clifford is no longer an invalid, 'tis true; still he should not remain out in the dew."

"I have scarcely begun to talk," demurred Harriet. "I think I should know what will suit my own brother, Peggy."

"Our Cousin Peggy is right, Harriet," observed Clifford in an unusually docile mood. "I should not be out in the dew, and neither should you. To-morrow there will be ample opportunity to converse. I confess that I do feel a little tired. Then too there are matters to ponder."

"Of course if you are tired," said his sister rising, "we must go in. To-morrow, Peggy, you will find

yourself like Othello—your occupation gone.”

“I shall not mind,” Peggy hastened to assure her. “Thy brother hath desired thy coming so much that I make no doubt that he will enjoy the companionship.”

“I dare say he did want me,” was Harriet’s self-complacent remark. “Still, Peggy, there’s no denying the fact that you are a good nurse. Is it not strange, Clifford, that she hath nursed all three of us? Father when he was wounded in a skirmish at their house; me when I was ill of a fever, and now you.”

“No; she hath not told me,” he answered. “She hath been remiss in this at least, Harriet. Now —”

“I think mother did the most of the nursing,” interrupted Peggy hastily. “And after all, ’tis over now. There is no necessity to dwell upon what is past. We will bid thee good-night, my cousin.”

“And where do you stay?” inquired Harriet as Clifford left them at the cottage gate. “Is this the place? How small it is! Will there be room for me, Peggy?”

“Thee can share my room, Harriet. Mother made arrangements with Nurse Johnson, with whom I came to Williamsburg, that I was to stay with her. She is most kind, and will gladly receive thee.”

“Let’s hurry to bed,” pleaded Harriet. “I do want to tell you about Major Greyling, and—well, some others. We can talk in bed.”

“Very well,” was Peggy’s amused response. “But I have somewhat to tell thee also. Wilt promise to let me talk part of the time?”

“Don’t be a goose,” said Harriet giving her a little squeeze. “I have something important to tell you.”

“Then come in,” said Peggy, opening the door.

CHAPTER XXI—A RASH RESOLVE

“How much the heart may bear, and yet not break!
How much the flesh may suffer and not die!
I question much if any pain or ache
Of soul or body brings our end more nigh:
Death chooses his own time; till that is sworn,
All evils may be borne.”

—*Elizabeth Akers Allen.*

“Has thee had any news of the army lately, friend nurse?” questioned Peggy one morning a week after Harriet’s arrival.

Nurse Johnson glanced quickly about to make sure that they were alone before she replied:

“I had a short letter from Fairfax a few days since, Peggy. He said that the Marquis had received word that a force under General Wayne was coming to help in the defense of the state. He was on the point of breaking camp at Richmond and marching up to the border to meet him. Cornwallis hath already begun operations on the south side of the James. ’Tis said that he boasts that the people will return to their allegiance as soon as they find that their new rulers are not able to give them military protection. With that end in view the earl hath established a veritable reign of terror wherever his troops march. He is harrying and ravaging all plantations, running off the negroes, or inciting them against their masters. In truth,” ended the good woman with some bitterness, “if aught escaped the vigilance of the invading forces under Phillips and Arnold it hath been reserved only for the keener eye of a more pitiless enemy.”

“And thy son, friend nurse? Is he well?” inquired the girl, for a shadow lay on Nurse Johnson’s brow that was not caused by the tidings of Cornwallis’ ravages, harrowing as they were.

“I am worried about him, Peggy,” she admitted. “He is in truth far from well, and feared an attack of fever when he wrote. He did not like to ask for leave to come home, the need of men is so great; but felt that he must do so did he not get better.”

“How dreadful a thing war is!” sighed Peggy. “The poor fellow! to be ill and weak yet to stay on because of the need the country hath of men. ’Tis heroic, friend nurse.”

“Ah, child, ’tis little a mother cares for heroics when her only son is suffering for lack of care. Sick and starving also, it may be.”

“I have been selfish,” broke from the girl remorsefully. “I have been so full of my woe that I had forgot how our poor soldiers are in want of everything. It hath seemed to me at times that I could not bear to stay down here longer. Thee knows I have not heard from mother at all. I know she must be worried if she hath not heard from me.”

“Your being here is cause for worry,” said the nurse soberly. “Williamsburg is in the path of the armies, though it does seem as though we had been visited enough by them. Would that you were

home, Peggy, but I see no way of your getting there. The expresses can scarce get through."

"Thee said that General Wayne was to join the Marquis," spoke the girl eagerly. "He is from my own state, friend nurse. I make no doubt but that he would help me could I but reach his lines. And the Marquis—Why, Robert Dale is with the Marquis' forces! I remember now that Betty told me he had been placed there for valor. Thee sees that I have plenty of friends could I but reach our own lines unmolested."

257

"'Tis not to be thought of," said Nurse Johnson shaking her head decidedly. "No, Peggy; 'tis irksome to stay here under the conditions of things, but I see not how it can be helped. Ah! here is your cousin. How beautiful she is!"

"Where are you going, Peggy?" asked Harriet as she entered the room, her wonderful gray eyes lighting into a smile at Nurse Johnson's last words.

"I am going to the college to see the museum of natural history, Harriet. Will thee come with me?"

"Not I, Peggy. Such things are too tiresome," yawned Harriet. "And Clifford won't go for a ride. He said that he had something to attend to to-day. 'Tis no use to tease Cliff when he makes up his mind. He is worse than father."

"Well, if thee won't come," and Peggy tied the ribbons of her leghorn hat under her chin, "thee must not mind if I go."

258

"I wish I were back in New York," pouted her cousin. "'Tis slow down here. Had I known that Clifford was so well I would not have come. However, there will be some amusement when the army under Lord Cornwallis gets into quarters. I dare say father will take a house then. Of course he will want us to look after it."

"Is thy father with Lord Cornwallis?" asked Peggy quickly.

"Of course, Peggy. The Welsh Fusileers always stay with him. When we left him at Camden he was to join Cornwallis, you remember."

"Yes," assented Peggy absently, "but I had forgot for the moment."

In thoughtful mood she left the cottage. It seemed to her as though she were caught in the meshes of a web from which there was no escape. Here were Clifford and Harriet with the possibility of Colonel Owen appearing upon the scene at any moment. When he came Peggy knew that she would be unable to do anything. If only she could reach the American lines, she thought, a way would be opened for her to proceed to Philadelphia.

259

The air was rife with rumors concerning the capture and narrow escapes of the postriders. It seemed almost next to impossible for them to get through to Philadelphia! How then could she, a mere girl, hope to accomplish what they could not?

"And yet," Peggy mused, "I must try. I dare not wait until Cousin William comes for he will take Harriet and me with him wherever he goes. I know not how it will end."

She had reached the college campus by this time, and now paused thoughtfully looking up at the statue of Norborne Berkeley, Lord Botetourt,—most beloved of all the royal governors,—which had been erected on the green.

"I bid you good-morrow, little cousin," spoke a voice pleasantly, and Peggy started to find Clifford beside her.

The lad smiled at the glance of surprise that Peggy gave at his mode of address, and continued:

"I thought you had deserted me entirely. Was care of me so irksome that you are glad to be rid of me?"

260

"No, Clifford; but thee had thy sister," responded Peggy who had in truth left the brother entirely to his sister. "Thee had no need of me longer, as thee is not now an invalid."

"True, I am no longer an invalid, Cousin Peggy. Still are there not some matters to be settled betwixt us? Why have you not reproached me for my doubt of you?"

"When thee found that I had spoke naught but truth what more was there to be said, my cousin?" queried Peggy seriously. "Thy conscience should do the reproaching."

"And it hath," he rejoined. "You have given me no opportunity to ask pardon but I do so now. There were many things that I did not know that Harriet hath told me. There are still many that require explanation in order to have a good understanding of affairs. But this I have gathered; all of us, father, Harriet and I, seem to be under deep obligation to you and your family. And my debt is not the least of the three. I wish to repay you in some measure for your care of me. As my excuse I can only say that while I knew that we had cousins in this country I knew little concerning them. I left home shortly after father came over, and so knew naught of his stay with you. And that captain with the shirt Harriet made—" he paused abruptly and clenched his hands involuntarily. "I thought you were like him and all other Americans I had met," he continued—"boasting braggarts who had wooed my sister from her true allegiance. I cry your pardon, my cousin. Will you give it me?"

261

"For all doubt of me, thee has it, Clifford," responded the girl sweetly, touched by his evident contrition. "But for what thee thinks of Americans, no. There are some among us who are not as we would have them be. Among all peoples the good and bad are mingled. I dare say thee is not

proud of all Englishmen. We are not a nation of braggarts, as thee thinks. It hath taken something more than braggadocio to repulse thy soldiers for six long years. It hath taken courage, bravery and a grim resolution to win in spite of famine and the greatest odds that ever an army faced. Those things belong not to boasters, my cousin."

262

"A truce, a truce," he cried. "I am routed completely. I admit that Americans have bravery. Odds life! and tenacity also, when it comes to that. Where get they that obstinacy that enables them to rise after every defeat?"

"Where do they get it?" she asked. "Why, from their English blood, of course. Thee and thy fellows forget that they are of thine own blood. Oh, the pity of it! And see how thy people are treating this state!"

"'Tis fortune of war," he uttered hastily. "And that brings me to the pith of this interview. I have intelligence that Lord Cornwallis is marching toward Richmond, which he will reach the last of this week. Therefore, I shall escort you and Harriet to Portsmouth to-morrow, and see you aboard the 'Iris,' bound for New York. I wish to join the earl at Richmond, and I wish to see you in safety before doing so."

"Thee must leave me out of such a plan, Clifford," spoke Peggy quietly. "I am not going to New York. When I was there before only the river lay betwixt my mother and me, yet I was not permitted to cross it. I should be a prisoner as thee would be in Philadelphia. I could not bear it."

263

"But you cannot remain here, Peggy," he remonstrated. "I am doing what seems to me the best that can be done for you. The country is overrun by soldiers of both sides. Were you able to get through the British lines there still remain the rebels."

"Thee has no need to trouble concerning me at all, my cousin," spoke Peggy with some heat. "If I can reach the rebel lines, as thee calls them, I shall be sent through. I am not going to New York in any event."

"I shall not permit you to remain here," he said, determination written on every feature. "I am your nearest male relative in this part of the country, and as such I shall do what I think is best for you. Come, little cousin, be reasonable. Harriet shall use her influence, once New York is reached, to see that you go to your mother. Will not that content you?"

"It doth not content me," replied the girl, her whole nature roused to resistance. Too well she knew what Harriet's promises were to rely upon them. "I am grateful to thee, Clifford, for thy thought of me; but thee must give o'er anything that hath New York for its end and aim."

264

"But I cannot let you stay here," he cried again. "The game is up as far as these people are concerned. I cannot let you remain to be a sharer in their miseries and distresses. Be reasonable, Peggy."

"I am reasonable, Clifford. Reasonable with the reason born of experience. These people are my people. If I cannot get home I prefer to share their misery, rather than to be at ease among the British. Attend to thy sister, but leave me to do as I think best, I beg."

"'Tis futile to talk further concerning the matter," he said. "You must be made to do what is best for you." With this he left her.

"I can tarry here no longer," Peggy told herself as she watched Clifford's retreating figure. "My cousin is sincere in the belief that it is the best thing to do. Were Harriet to be relied upon—But no; too many promises have been broken to trust her now. I must try to get to our lines. I will go in the morning."

265

The light was just breaking in the east the next morning when Peggy softly stole into the stable where Star was, and deftly saddled and bridled the little mare.

"We are going home, Star," she whispered as she led the pony out of the stable and yard to the road. "It will all depend on thee, thou dear thing! Do thy very best, for thee will have to get us there."

CHAPTER XXII—FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY

266

"Our country's welfare is our first concern:
He who promotes that best, best proves his duty."

—*Harvard's Regulus.*

Westward rode Peggy at a brisk pace. There were not many people stirring, the hour was so early. The few who were abroad merely glanced curiously after her, as she passed, without speaking. With a feeling of thankfulness she soon left the deserted streets, and, passing the college with its broad campus of green where the golden buttercups seemed to wave a cheerful greeting, increased her speed as she reached the cleared space of the road which stretched bare and dusty between the town and the forest.

"At last we are started," exulted the girl, drawing a deep breath as she entered the confines of

the great woods. "We ought not to get lost if we follow the road, Star. And too I have been over every bit of it, and my diary will tell the places we went through in case I should forget. But first ——" She pulled the pony into a walk; then, letting the reins hang loosely, drew forth a little white flag made of linen, and fastened it to the bridle.

267

"Clifford said we could not get through without a flag," she mused. "Well, that should show that we are non-combatants. And we do not wish harm to any; do we, Star?"

The forest was on every hand. The narrow road wound deviously under great trees of fir, and pines, and beech, shady, pleasant and cool. Suddenly there came a medley of bird notes from out of the woods; clear, sweet and inexpressibly joyous, the song of the mocking-bird. As the morning hours passed and Peggy found that she was still the only traveler upon the road, her spirits rose, and she became agreeably excited over the prospects of the journey.

"We will ride hard, Star, until to-morrow night," she cried catching at a fragrant trailer of wild grape that hung from an overarching tree. "To-morrow night should find us at Fredericksburg, if we go as fast as we did coming down in the cabriolet. And I know we can do that."

268

And so, talking sometimes to Star as though the little mare understood, sometimes listening to the call of birds, the whirr of insects or the murmur of the wind in the tree tops, the day passed. It was drawing near nightfall when Peggy rode into New Castle, a small village on the Pamunkey River, tired but happy. She had not been molested and the first day was over. Peggy went immediately to the house where she had stopped with Nurse Johnson on the way down.

There were no signs of the British, she was told at this place. It was rumored that the Marquis de Lafayette had crossed the river further to the west on his way to join General Wayne. Peggy rejoiced at the news.

"We have timed our going just right, Star," she told the little mare as she made an early start the next morning. "Lord Cornwallis will not reach Richmond until the last of the week, and the Marquis hath just passed on. I could not have chosen better."

Filled anew with hope as the prospects seemed more and more favorable Peggy rode briskly toward Hanover Court House, for she planned to reach this place by noon. The road wound along the banks of the Pamunkey, under large tulip trees so big and handsome that she was lost in wonder at their magnificence.

269

In this happy frame of mind she proceeded, marveling often at the fact that she seemed to be the only one on the road. It was the second day, and she had met no one nor had any one passed her. 'Twas strange, but fortunate too, she told herself.

The morning passed. The road, which had been for the greater part of the way shaded by the great trees, now suddenly left the woods and stretched before her in a flood of sunshine. A lane branched off to the right, running under a double row of beech trees to a large dwelling standing in the midst of a clover field not more than half a mile distant. The country was thinly settled throughout this section, the houses so scattering that this one seemed to beckon invitingly to the tired maiden.

"Methinks 'twould be the part of wisdom to bait ourselves there, Star," she said musingly. "I think we will take an hour's rest."

270

With that she turned into the shady lane, and soon drew rein in front of the house.

"Friend," she said as an elderly, pleasant-looking woman came to the door, "would thee kindly let me have refreshment for myself and horse; refreshment and rest also, friend?"

"Light, and come right in," spoke the woman heartily. "A girl like you shouldn't be riding about alone when the British are abroad in the land."

"But the British have not yet crossed the James," answered Peggy cheerfully.

"Why, a detachment passed here not an hour ago, bound for Hanover Court House," spoke the woman abruptly. "Didn't you know that Cornwallis was following the Marquis de Lafayette trying to keep him from meeting General Wayne?"

"I did not know," answered the maiden paling. "Why, I am going through Hanover Court House myself. I want to reach Fredericksburg to-night."

"You'd better bide with me until we hear whether they have left there, and in what direction they ride, my dear. I should not like a daughter of mine abroad at such a time. Where are you from?"

271

"I came from Williamsburg, and I am trying to get home," Peggy told her. "I live in Philadelphia, and came down to nurse a cousin who was wounded. There was no one to come with me, and it seemed a good time to start, as I thought Lord Cornwallis was still at Petersburg."

"Bless you, child! it never takes them long to scatter for mischief when they enter a state," exclaimed the woman. "I think 'twill be best to hide that mare of yours, if you want to keep her. There's no telling when others of the thieving, rascally English will be along. Here, Jimmy," to a youngster of ten who stood peeping at Peggy from behind the door, "take the nag down to the grove behind the mills, and don't forget to feed her. You are the second person from tide-water to ask for rest in the last twenty-four hours," she continued leading the way into the dwelling. "The other was a lad from the militia who came last night. Most sick the poor fellow is, too."

"What became of him?" asked Peggy interested on the instant. "I hope the British did not get him."

272

"Well, then, they didn't," was the laconic response. "I've got him here hidden in the garret. We'll go up to see him as soon as you have something to eat. The boy needs looking after a bit."

"I have some skill in nursing, friend," spoke Peggy modestly. "If I tarry with thee until 'tis wise to go on I might be of assistance in caring for him."

"Have you now? Then between us we will bring him round nicely. It's providential that you came. I was wondering how to give him proper care without attracting too much attention from the darkies. There are not many left me, and they seem faithful, but 'tis just as well not to rely too much on them."

The attic was a roomy garret extending over the entire main building. Two large windows, one in each end of the gambrel roof, afforded light and air. Boxes, trunks, old furniture, and other discarded rubbish of a family filled the corners and sides, affording many recesses that could be utilized as hiding-places in an emergency. A large tester bed spread with mattress and light coverlids stood in the center of the space, and upon it reposed the lithe form of a youth. Peggy gave an ejaculation of astonishment as her hostess led her to the bed.

273

"'Tis Fairfax Johnson," she cried. "Oh, friend, how does thee do? Thy mother told me that thee was not well. How strange that I should find thee here!"

"Why, 'tis Mistress Peggy!" exclaimed the young fellow, sitting up quickly, a deep flush dyeing his face. "How, how did you get here?"

"I am trying to get home," she told him. "I left Williamsburg yesterday morning, and hoped to reach Fredericksburg to-night, but our good friend here tells me that the British are at Hanover Court House. I am to bide with her until they pass on."

"That is best," he said. "'Twas but an advance force on a reconnoitering expedition that passed this morning. The rest will be along later. You should not be here at all."

"I know," replied Peggy, surprised by this speech from Fairfax. It was the longest he had ever made her. "Or rather I didn't know, Friend Fairfax, else I would not be here. And how does thee do? I am to help care for thee."

274

"You!" again the red blood flushed the lad's cheek and brow. "Why, why, I'm all right. A little rest is all I need."

"I shall care for thee none the less," answered the maiden demurely, the feeling of amusement which she always felt at his shyness assailing her now.

"And here is cool milk and toast with sweet butter and jam," spoke the hostess. "Boys all like jam, so I brought that for a tid-bit. With the eggs it should make a fairish meal. Now, my lad, I'll leave you to the mercy of your young friend while I run down to see about things. It is pleasant for you to know each other. Come down when you like, my dear," she added turning to Peggy as she left the room.

"Oh!" uttered Fairfax in such evident dismay that Peggy found it impossible to suppress the ripple of laughter that rose to her lips.

"I shall tell thee all about thy mother while thee eats," she said arranging the viands before him temptingly. "Thy mother is worried anent thee, friend, but she herself is well. She——"

275

"Listen," he said abruptly.

A blare of bugles, the galloping of horses, the jingle of spurs and sabres filled the air. Peggy ran to the front window and looked out.

"'Tis a body of men in white uniforms," she cried. "They are mounted upon fine horses, and are clattering down the lane toward the house."

"'Tis Tarleton with his dragoons," he exclaimed hastening to the window for a view of them.

"Then thee must hide," ejaculated Peggy. "Quickly! They may search the place. Hurry, friend!"

"But you," he said, making no move toward secreting himself.

"Go, go," cried she impatiently. "I know Colonel Tarleton, and fear naught from him or his troopers. Hide, friend! Here, take the food with thee. 'Tis as well to eat while thee can."

So insistent was she that the lad found himself hurried to a retreat behind some boxes in spite of himself. Peggy then hastened down-stairs to the good woman below. A quick glance at the girl told her that the boy was in hiding.

276

"And do you go to my room, child," she said pointing to a door under the stairway. "We will make no attempt at concealment, but 'tis more retired. It may be that they will not stop long. Goodness knows, there is not much left to take."

Peggy had scarcely gained the seclusion of the room ere the British cavalry dashed up.

"In the name of the king, dinner," called Colonel Tarleton, loudly.

"Of course if you want dinner, I suppose that I'll have to get it," Peggy heard the mistress of the dwelling reply, grumblingly. "But some of your people have already been here, and you know 'tis against their principles to leave much."

A great laugh greeted this sally as the troopers dismounted, tying their horses to trees, or fences as was convenient.

"Get us what you have, my good woman, and be quick about it," Tarleton cried in answer. "We've come seventy miles in twenty-four hours, and must be in the saddle again in an hour's time. Now be quick about that dinner."

The dragoons, seemingly too weary for anything but rest, flung themselves upon the grass to await the meal. Tarleton and one of his lieutenants stretched out upon the sward directly under the window of the room where Peggy was. For a time they lay there in silence, then the junior officer spoke:

"Will it be possible for us to reach Charlottesville to-night, colonel?"

"Charlottesville!" Peggy's heart gave a great bound as she heard the name. Charlottesville was the place where the Assembly was in session at that very time. But Colonel Tarleton was speaking:

"Not to-night, lieutenant. But to-morrow we'll swoop upon the Assembly and take it unawares. By St. George, 'twill be rare sport to see their faces when they find themselves prisoners. Although I care more for Jefferson and Patrick Henry than all the others together. We'll hang those two."

The girl wrung her hands as she listened. Jefferson, the governor of the state, the writer of the Declaration of Independence; and Patrick Henry, he who had been termed the Voice of the Revolution! Oh! it must not be! But how, how could it be prevented? They should be warned.

"If I but knew where Charlottesville is," cried the girl anguished by her helplessness. "What shall be done? Oh, I'll ask Fairfax."

Up to the garret she sped unnoticed by any one. The troopers were outside, the members of the household busily engaged in preparing the dinner.

"Friend Fairfax," she called.

"Yes," answered the lad rising from behind the boxes.

"Colonel Tarleton is after the Assembly at Charlottesville. He wants especially to capture the governor and Patrick Henry."

"Why, they'll hang them if they do," cried Fairfax excitedly. "How do you know, Mistress Peggy?"

"I heard him say so," answered Peggy. "Friend, what shall we do? They should be warned."

"Yes," he answered. "That is what I must do."

"Thee?" she cried, amazed. "Why, thee is weak and sick, Friend Fairfax. Thee cannot go."

"I must. Oh," he groaned. "If I but had a horse. If I but had a horse I could get to Charlottesville before them."

"It might cost thee thy life," the girl reminded him. "Thee is too ill to go."

"What am I but one among many?" he said. "I must try to steal one of their horses."

"Thee need not run such risk. Thee shall have my own little Star," cried Peggy thrillingly. "We can go now to the room under the stairs, and while the troopers are at dinner, slip through the window and down to the grove where she lies hidden. Come, friend."

CHAPTER XXIII—A QUESTION OF COURAGE

"What makes a hero?—An heroic mind,
Express'd in action, in endurance prov'd."

—*Sir Henry Taylor.*

As they reached the door of the room under the stairs, however, their hostess came into the hall. A frown contracted her brow at sight of Fairfax.

"This is folly," she exclaimed. "Boy, don't you know that Tarleton's troopers are outside?"

"Yes; and they plan to go to Charlottesville after dinner to capture the Assembly," Peggy told her before the youth could reply. "Friend Fairfax is to slip away to warn them."

"Come in here," she said drawing them into the dining-room. "Now," speaking rapidly as she closed the door, "what is the plan? I may be able to help."

"We are going through the window of thy room to the grove where my horse is while thee gives them dinner," explained the maiden.

"Why, child, that won't do at all. They will leave a guard outside, of course. You could not pass them. Let me think."

For a brief second she meditated while the boy and the girl waited hopefully.

"Are you able to do this?" she asked presently of Fairfax.

"Yes," he answered. "Only devise some way for me to leave quickly. Every moment is precious."

"You are right," she replied. "Now just a minute."

She left the room, returning almost immediately with two flowered frocks of osnaburg, and two enormous kerchiefs of the same stuff.

"These are what the mammies wear," she said arranging one of the kerchiefs about the lad's head turbanwise. "There, my boy! you will pass for a mammy if not given more than a glance."

"Thee will make a good woman yet, Friend Fairfax," remarked Peggy smiling as she noted that the youth moved with some ease in the skirts.

"Yes," he assented sheepishly.

"Follow me boldly," spoke the hostess. "We will pass through the yard from the kitchen to the smoke-house. If any of the dragoons call, mind them not. Above all turn not your faces toward them. Go on to the smoke-house, whatever happens. There is a back door through which you can go down the knoll to the ravine. Follow the ravine westward to the grove which lies back of the mill where the horse is. If you keep to the ravine 'twill lead you into the road unobserved by any. Now if everything is understood we will go."

They followed her silently through the kitchen and out into the yard. The hostess kept up a lively stream of talk during the passage to the smoke-house.

"I reckon we'd better have another ham," she said in a voice that could be heard at no little distance. "There are so many of those fellows. Aunt Betsy 'low'd there were more than a hundred, and I reckon she's right." There were in truth one hundred and eighty cavalymen, with seventy mounted infantry. "A few chickens wouldn't go amiss either. They might as well have them. The next gang would take them anyway." And so on.

From all sides came grunts of satisfaction, showing that the remarks had been overheard by many of the dragoons, which was intended. The smoke-house was reached in safety, and the good woman led them to the rear door.

"I'll keep them here as long as I can," she said, "if I have to cook everything on the place. You shall have at least two hours' start, my boy. God bless you! It's a brave thing you are doing, but those men must be warned."

"I know," he answered. "And now good-bye."

"And do you stay in the grove until these British are gone, my dear," she advised Peggy. "I will feel better to have you down there out of their sight. Jimmy shall come for you as soon as they are gone. You won't mind?"

"I shall like it," answered Peggy. "Come, friend."

"I will have to ride hard and fast, Mistress Peggy," said Fairfax. When they reached the grove a few moments later he removed Peggy's saddle, strapped on a blanket, and unfastened the bridle. "It may be the last time you will see your little mare."

"I know," she answered. Winding her arms about the pony's neck she laid her head upon the silken mane, and so stood while the lad doffed the osnaburg frock and disfiguring turban. As he swung himself lightly to Star's back the girl looked up at him through tear-filled eyes.

"Friend Fairfax," she said, "thee is so brave. Yet I have laughed at thee."

"Brave? No," he responded. "'Tis duty."

"But I have laughed at thee because of thy shyness," repeated the girl remorsefully. "Thee always seems so afraid of us females, yet thee can do this, or aught else that is for thy country. Why is it?"

Over his face the red blood ran. He sat for the briefest second regarding her with a puzzled air.

"To defend the country from the invader, to do anything that can be done to thwart the enemy's designs, is man's duty," he said at length. "But to face a battery of bright eyes requires courage, Mistress Peggy. And that I have not."

The words were scarcely uttered before he was gone.

The British were at the house, and some of them might stray into her retreat at any moment; the youth who had started forth so bravely might fail to give his warning in time to save the men upon whom the welfare of the state depended; she might never see her own little mare again; but, in spite of all these things the maiden sank upon a rock shaken with laughter.

"The dear, shy fellow!" she gasped sitting up presently to wipe her eyes. "And he hath no courage! Ah, Betty! thy 'Silent Knight' hath spoken to some purpose at last. I must remember the exact words. Let me see! He said:

"'To defend the country from the invader, to do anything that can be done to thwart the enemy's designs, is man's duty. But to face a battery of bright eyes requires courage, Mistress Peggy. And that I have not.'

"Won't the girls laugh when I tell them?"

It was pleasant under the trees. An oriole swung from the topmost bough of a large oak pouring forth a flood of song. Woodpeckers flapped their bright wings from tree to tree. A multitude of sparrows flashed in and out of the foliage, or circled joyously about blossoming shrubs. From distant fields and forests the caw of the crows winging their slow way across the blue sky came

monotonously. A cloud of yellow butterflies rested upon the low banks of the ravine crowned with ferns. Into the heart of a wild honeysuckle a humming-bird whirred, delighting Peggy by its beauty, minuteness and ceaseless motion of its wings. And so the long hours of the afternoon passed, and the westering sun was casting long shadows under the trees before Jimmy came with the news that the British had gone.

"And wasn't that Colonel Tarleton in a towering rage," commented the mistress of the dwelling as Peggy reëntered the house. "He stormed because dinner was so late. And such a dinner. I'll warrant those troopers won't find hard riding so easy after it. Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry will owe a great deal to fried chicken, if they get warned in time. It took every chicken I had on the place, and not a few hams. But it gave that boy a good start, so I don't mind. Do you think he'll get through, my dear?"

"Yes, I do," answered Peggy. "If it can be done I feel sure that Fairfax Johnson can do it. I must tell thee what he said," she ended with a laugh. "It hath much amused me."

"I don't wonder that you were amused," observed the good woman, laughing in turn as Peggy related the youth's speech. "Those same batteries have brought low many a brave fellow. 'Tis as well to be afraid of them. He is wise who is ware in time. Yet those same bashful fellows are oftentimes the bravest. Methinks I have heard that General Washington was afflicted with the same malady in his youth. And now let us hope that we will have a breathing spell long enough to become acquainted with each other."

Four days later a weary, drooping youth astride a limping little mare came slowly down the shady lane just at sunset. Peggy was the first to see them, and flew to the horse-block.

"Oh, thee is back, Friend Fairfax! Thee is back!" she cried delightedly. "And did thee succeed? How tired thee looks! And Star also!"

"We are both tired," he said dismounting and sinking heavily against the horse-block. "But we got there in time. Governor Jefferson and his family escaped over the mountains. Mr. Henry and others scattered to places of safety. They captured seven, because they heeded not the alarm, and lingered over breakfast. But not—not Patrick Henry nor Thomas Jefferson."

He swayed as though about to fall, then roused himself.

"Look to the mare! She, she needs attention," he cried, and fell in an unconscious heap.

"And somebody else does too, I reckon," spoke the mistress of the dwelling, running out in answer to Peggy's call. "Jimmy, do you begin rubbing down that little mare. I'll be out to look after her as soon as Peggy and I get this boy attended to. Poor fellow! he has gone to the full limit of his strength."

CHAPTER XXIV—AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

"Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed."

—"Lady of the Lake," *Scott*.

There followed some days of quiet at the farmhouse. Their peacefulness was gladly welcomed by the inmates after the turmoil caused by passing troops, and Peggy and her hostess, Mrs. Weston, hoped for a continuance of the boon. But if the days were tranquil they were far from idle.

Beside the household tasks there were Fairfax Johnson to be cared for, and the little mare to be brought back to condition. Peggy found herself almost happy in assisting in these duties, so true is it that occupation brings solace to sorely tried hearts.

The youth's illness soon passed, but there remained the necessity for rest and nourishment. Rest he could have in plenty, but they were hard pressed to furnish the proper nourishment. The place had been stripped of almost everything, and had it not been for the grove where a few cows shared Star's hiding-place, and an adjoining swamp in whose recesses Mrs. Weston had prudently stored some supplies the household must have suffered for the lack of the merest necessities. Still if they could remain unmolested they could bear scanty rations; so cheerfully they performed their daily tasks, praying that things would continue as they were.

If there was peace at the farmhouse it was more than could be said for the rest of the state. Hard on the heels of Lafayette Cornwallis followed, cutting a swath of desolation and ruin. Tarleton and Simcoe rode wherever they would, committing such enormities that the people forgot them only with death. Virginia, the last state of the thirteen to be invaded, was harried as New Jersey had been, but by troops made less merciful by the long, fierce conflict.

Hither and thither flitted Lafayette, too weak to suffer even defeat, progressing ever northward,

and drawing his foe after him from tide-water almost to the mountains. Finding it impossible to come up with his youthful adversary, or to prevent the junction of that same adversary's forces with those of Wayne, Cornwallis turned finally, and leisurely made his way back toward the seacoast. He had profited by Greene's salutary lesson, and did not propose to be drawn again from a base where reinforcements and supplies could reach him. Information of these happenings gradually reached the farmhouse, filling its inmates with the gravest apprehensions.

One warm, bright afternoon in June Peggy left the house for her daily visit to Star. With the caution that she always used in approaching the hiding-place of her pet the girl reached the grove by a circuitous route. A sort of rude stable, made of branches and underbrush set against ridge poles, had been erected for the pony's accommodation, and as she drew near this enclosure Peggy heard the voice of some one speaking. Filled with alarm for the safety of her mare she stole softly forward to listen. Yes; there was certainly some one with the animal. As she stood debating what was to be done, she was amazed to hear the following speech made in a wondering tone:

"Now just why should you be down here in Virginia when your proper place is in a stable in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Star? Hath some magic art whisked you here, or what hath happened? I wish thee could speak, as Peggy would say, so that thee could unravel the matter for me."

"John! John Drayton!" screamed Peggy joyfully running forward. "How did thee get here? I thought thee was in South Carolina. 'Tis Peggy, John."

"Peggy?" exclaimed Drayton, issuing from the enclosure. "Peggy! I see it is," he said regarding her with blank amazement. "But how did you get here? I thought you safe at home in Philadelphia?"

"'Tis a long story," cried she, half crying. "And oh, John! does thee know that Cornwallis is fast approaching this point with his army? Is't not dangerous for thee to be here?"

"Nay," he replied. "I seek his lordship."

"Thee what?" she cried, amazed.

"Never mind about it now, Peggy," he said drawing her under the shade of a tree. "Sit down and tell me how you came here. Is it the 'cousins' again?"

"Yes, 'tis the cousins," answered the maiden flushing. "I could not do other than come, John. Mother and I did not know that the enemy had invaded the state. At least," correcting herself quickly, "we did know that General Arnold had made a foray in January, but 'twas deemed by many as but a predatory incursion, and, as we heard no more of it, we thought he had returned to New York. I saw him, and spoke with him, John," she ended sadly.

"But the cousins, Peggy! The rest can wait until you tell me what new quidnunc tale was invented to lure you here."

"Thee must not speak so, John," she reproached him. "Thee will be sorry when I tell thee about Clifford's illness. He was nigh to death, in truth, but 'twas not for me he sent, but his own sister Harriet." Forthwith she related all the occurrences that had led to her coming. Drayton listened attentively.

"I wish that you and your mother were not so kind hearted," he remarked when she had finished her narrative. "No, I don't mean that exactly. I could not, after all that you did for me. But from the bottom of my heart I do wish that those relatives of yours would go back to England and stay there. They are continually getting you into trouble."

"Would thee have us refuse my kinsman's plea?" she asked him. "'Twould have been inhuman not to respond to such an appeal."

"I suppose it would," he replied grumblingly. "But I don't like it one bit that you are here among all the movements of the two armies. See here, Peggy! The thing to do is to get you home, and I'm going to take you there."

"Will thee, John?" cried Peggy in delight. "How good thee is! Oh, 'tis a way opened at last. But won't it cause thee a great deal of trouble?"

"So much, my little cousin, that we will not permit him to undertake it," spoke the wrathful tones of her cousin. "I am sorry to interrupt so interesting a conversation, but 'tis necessary to explain to this,—well, gentleman, that 'tis not at all necessary for him to trouble concerning your welfare. I am amply able to care for you."

"Clifford!" ejaculated Peggy starting up in surprise, and confronting the youth, who had approached them unnoticed.

"Yes, Clifford," returned the lad who was evidently in a passion. "'Tis quite time that Clifford came, is it not? As I was saying, 'twill not do to take this gentleman from his arduous duties. This Yankee captain meddles altogether too much in our private affairs. It is not at all to my liking."

"So?" remarked Drayton cheerfully. He had not changed his position, but sat slightly smiling, eyeing the other youth curiously.

"No, sir," repeated Clifford heatedly. "We will not trouble you, sir. Further, we can dispense with your presence immediately."

"That," observed Drayton shifting his position to one of more ease, "that, sir, is for Peggy to

decide."

"My cousin's name is Mistress Margaret Owen," cried Clifford. "You will oblige me by using it so when 'tis necessary to address her. Better still, pleasure me by not speaking to her at all."

296

"Clifford, thou art beside thyself," cried Peggy who had been too astonished at the attitude of her cousin to speak. "John is a dear friend. I have known him longer than I have thee, and——"

"Peggy, keep out of this affair, I beg," cried he stiffly. "The matter lies betwixt this fellow and myself. Captain, I cry you pardon, sir,"—interrupting himself to favor Drayton with an ironic bow,—"I fear me that I rank you too high. Lieutenant, is't not?"

"Nay, captain. Captain Drayton, at your service, sir." The American arose slowly, and made a profound obeisance. "Methinks at our last little chat I remarked that perchance another victory would so honor me. 'Twas at Hobkirk's Hill."

"You said a victory, sir," cried the other with passion. "Hobkirk's Hill was a defeat for the rebels."

"A defeat, I grant you." Drayton picked a thread of lint from his sleeve, and puffed it airily from him. "A defeat so fraught with disaster to the victors that many more such would annihilate the whole British army. A defeat so calamitous in effect that Lord Rawdon could no longer hold Camden after inflicting it, and so evacuated that place."

297

"'Tis false," raged Clifford Owen. "If Lord Rawdon held Camden, he still holds it. He would evacuate no post held by him."

"Perchance there are other war news that might be of interest," went on Drayton provokingly, evidently enjoying the other's rage. "I have the honor to inform you, sir, that Fort Watson, Fort Motte and Granby all have surrendered to the rebels. They have proceeded to Ninety Six, and are holding that place in a state of siege. The next express will doubtless bring intelligence of its fall. Permit me, sir, to felicitate you upon the extreme prowess of the British army."

"And what, sir, is the American army?" stormed Clifford. "A company of tinkers and locksmiths. A lot of ruffraff and ragamuffins. What is your Washington but a planter? And your much-lauded commander in the South? What is he but a smith? A smith?" he scoffed sneeringly. "Odds life, sir! can an army be made of such ilk?"

"The planter hath sent two of your trained generals packing," retorted Drayton. "The first left by the only 'Gate' left open by the siege; the other did not know 'Howe' to take root in this new soil. The third remains in New York like a mouse in a trap, afraid to come out lest he should be pounced upon. Our smith——" he laughed merrily. "His hammer hath been swung to such purpose that my Lord Cornwallis hath been knocked out of the Carolinas, and the South is all but retaken. Training! Poof! 'Tis not needed by tinkers and locksmiths to fight the English."

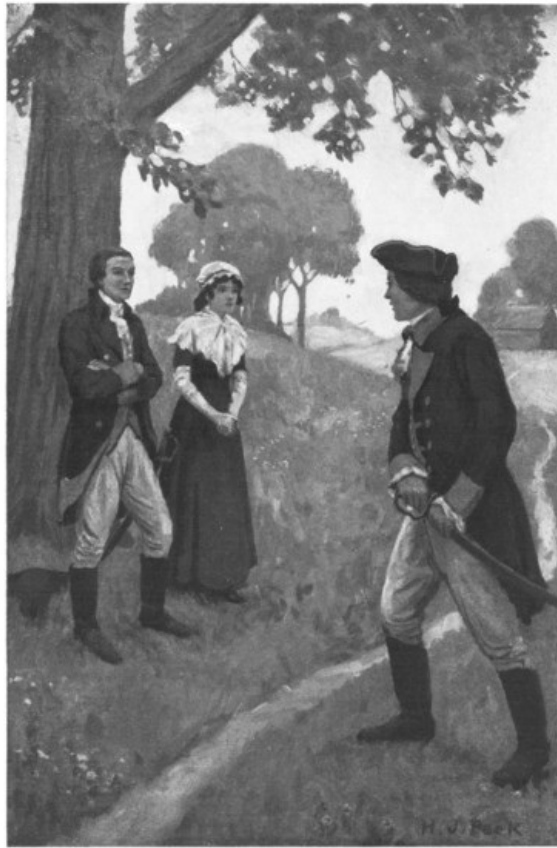
298

"Draw and defend yourself," roared the English lad, whipping out his sword furiously. "Such insult can only be wiped out in blood."

"Thou shalt not," screamed Peggy throwing herself before him. "Thou shalt not. I forbid it. 'Twould be murder."

"This is man's affair, my cousin," he said sternly. "Stand aside."

"I will not, Clifford," cried the girl. "I will not. Oh, to draw sword on each other is monstrous. For a principle, in defense of liberty, then it may be permitted; but this deliberate seeking of another's life in private quarrel is murder. Clifford! John! I entreat ye both to desist."



"DRAW AND DEFEND YOURSELF!"

"She is right, sir," spoke Drayton. "This is in truth neither time nor place to settle our differences."

"And where shall we find a better?" cried Clifford, who was beside himself with rage. "If you wish not to bear the stigma of cowardice, you must draw."

But Drayton made no motion toward his sword.

"Nay," he said. "'Tis not fitting before her. I confess that I was wrong to further provoke you when I saw you in passion. In truth you were so heated that to exasperate you more gave me somewhat of pleasure. I cry you pardon. There will no doubt be occasion more suitable——"

"I decline to receive your apology, sir," retorted Clifford Owen hotly. "Perchance a more suitable occasion in your eyes would be when I am at the disadvantage of being a prisoner. Or, perchance, you find it convenient to hide behind my cousin's petticoats. Once more, sir; for the last time: If you have honor, if you are not a poltroon as well as a braggart and a boaster, draw and defend yourself."

"It will have to be, Peggy," said Drayton leading her aside. "There will be bad blood until this is settled, and your cousin hath gone too far. Suffer it to go on, I entreat."

"'Tis murder," she wailed weeping. "Thou art my dear friend. Clifford is my dear cousin. Oh, I pray ye both to desist."

"If you flout me longer I will cut you down where you stand," roared the British youth fiercely. "Is it not enough that I must beg for the satisfaction that gentlemen usually accord each other upon a hint?"

Drayton wheeled, and faced him jauntily.

"'Tis pity to keep so much valor waiting," he said saluting. "On guard, my friend."

CHAPTER XXV—HER NEAREST RELATIVE

"In all trade of war no feat
Is nobler than a brave retreat;
For those that run away and fly
Take place at least of the enemy."

—*Samuel Butler.*

Fearful of what might result from the encounter Peggy hid her face in her hands as the two

youths crossed swords. But at the first meeting of the blades, impelled by that strange fascination which such combats hold for the best of mortals, she uncovered her eyes and watched the duel breathlessly.

Clifford, white and wrathful, fuming over Drayton's last quip, at once took the initiative, and advanced upon his adversary with a vehemence that evidenced his emotion plainly. Drayton, on the contrary, was cool and even merry, and parried his opponent's thrusts with adroitness. Both lads evinced no small skill with the weapons, and had Peggy been other than a very much distressed damsel she might have enjoyed some pretty sword play. 302

The wrist of each youth was strong and supple. Each sword seemed like a flexible reed from the point to the middle of the blade, and inflexible steel from thence to the guard. They were well matched, and some moments passed before either of them secured the advantage.

It was quiet in the grove. No sound could be heard save the clash of steel and the deep breathing of the contestants. No bird note came from tree or bush. Not a leaf stirred. A hush had fallen upon the summer afternoon. To the maiden it seemed as though Nature, affrighted by the wild passions of men which must seek expression in private fray despite the fact that their countries were embroiled in war, had sunk into terrified silence.

Presently, even to Peggy's inexperienced eye, it became apparent that Clifford was tiring. Drayton, who from the beginning of the encounter had fought purely on the defensive, was quick to perceive the other's fatigue. Suddenly with a vigorous side-thrust he twisted the sword from his antagonist's grasp, and sent it glittering in the air. Finding himself disarmed Clifford quickly stepped backward two or three steps. In so doing his foot slipped, and he fell. Instantly Drayton stood over his prostrate form. 303

"Forbear, John," shrieked Peggy in horrified tones. "Thee must not. Is he not helpless?"

"Have no fear, Peggy," answered the young man lightly. "He shall meet with no hurt, though in truth he merits it. Sir," to Clifford who lay regarding him with a look of profound humiliation, "you hear, do you not? I spare you because of her. And also because I am much to blame that matters have come to this pass betwixt us. Rise, sir!"

"I want no mercy at your hands," retorted the other, his flushed face, his whole manner testifying to his deep mortification. "You have won the advantage, sir. Use it. I wish no favor from you."

"'Tis not the habit of Americans to slay a disarmed foe, sir. If you are not satisfied, rise; and have to again." 304

"No, no!" cried Peggy, possessing herself of the fallen sword. "Is there not already fighting enough in the land without contending against each other? Ye have fought once. Let that suffice."

"My sword, Peggy," exclaimed Clifford, rising, and stepping toward her.

"Thee shall not have it, unless thee takes it by force," returned the girl, placing the weapon behind her, and clasping it with both hands. "And that," she added, "I do not believe thee would be so unmannerly as to use. Therefore, the matter is ended."

Drayton sheathed his sword on the moment.

"I am satisfied to let it be so," he said. "And now, Peggy, as to ourselves: what will be the best time for you to start home?"

"If that subject be renewed our broil is anything but settled," interposed Clifford Owen sullenly. "I believe I informed you that, as the lady's nearest relative, I am amply able to look after her."

"As to our quarrel," replied Drayton, regarding him fixedly, "perchance the whirligig of time will bring a more suitable occasion for reopening it. When that occurs I shall be at your command. Until then it seems to me to be the part of wisdom to drop the matter, and to consider Peggy's welfare only. As you are aware, no doubt, the British are in this immediate vicinity. Any moment may see them at this very place. Let us cry a truce, sir, for the time being, and determine what shall be done to promote her safety." 305

"How know you that the British are near here?" demanded Clifford suspiciously. "Your knowledge of their movements will bear looking into. It savors strongly of that of a spy, sir."

For a second the glances of the young fellows met. Their eyes flashed fire, and Peggy's heart began to throb painfully. Oh, would they fight again! How could she make peace between them? She must; and so thinking started forward eagerly.

"Listen to my plan," she said. "Ye both——"

The sentence was never finished. Upon the air there sounded the shrill music of fifes, the rattle of drums, the hollow tramp of marching men, the rumbling of artillery, the cantering of horses; all sounds denoting the passing of a large force of armed men. 306

With a sharp cry of exultation Clifford Owen sprang toward John Drayton.

"'Tis the king's troops," he cried, clutching him tightly. "The king's troops! Now, my fine fellow, you shall explain to his lordship how you came by your information. Ho!" he shouted. "What ho! a spy!"

"It is not thus that I would meet his lordship," answered Drayton wrenching himself free of the other's hold. "Until then, adieu, my friend."

Without further word he leaped down the embankment, and disappeared among the underbrush

in the ravine, just as two British infantrymen, attracted by Clifford's cry, came running through the grove.

"Did you call, sir?" called one, saluting as he saw the uniform of the young man.

"I fell," answered Clifford, stooping to pick up the sword that Peggy had let fall. "Perchance I cried out as I did so. The embankment would be a steep one to fall down. Does the army stop here? I sent word to the general there was no forage to be had, and to pass on to Hanover Court House. I found no place where he would fare so well as at Tilghman's Ordinary."

307

"'Tis for that place he is bound, sir," replied the soldier, saluting again. "But a few of us delayed here to—to—" he paused, then added: "Shall we go through that enclosure there, captain?"

"My own little mare is there, Clifford," spoke Peggy indignantly.

"Which we will bring ourselves, men," he said dismissing them with a curt nod. "You will wish to ride her, of course, my cousin."

"If I go with you," she answered.

"There is no 'if' about it," he said grimly. "You are going."

"As my nearest male relative in this part of the country' I suppose thee commands it," she observed with biting sarcasm. "Clifford, does thee forget that I am an Owen as well as thou?"

"I do not," he made answer.

"I think thee does," she cried. "An Owen, my cousin, with the Owen temper. 'Tis being tried severely by thee. I know not how much longer I can control it."

308

"I see not why you should be displeased with me," he remarked, plainly surprised that such should be the case. "I am doing all I can for you. At least, I will try to do as much as that—that —"

"Yes?" she questioned coldly. "Does thee mean Captain Drayton? He is my friend. Mother and I esteem him highly. Pleasure me by remembering that in future."

"If he is your friend 'tis no reason why he should address you so familiarly. I like it not."

"I tire of thy manner, Clifford. I am not thy slave, nor yet under bonds of indenture to thee that thou shouldst assume such airs of possession as thee does. I tire of it, I say."

"If I have offended you I am sorry," he said sulkily. "I have a hot temper and a quick one. I have held resentment against that—captain ever since last February, when he flouted me with that shirt of my sister's making. It did seem to me then, as it hath to-day, that he took too much upon himself. Now it appears that I am guilty of the same fault. At least, being your near relative should serve as some excuse for me."

309

"I think thee has made that remark upon divers occasions, my cousin. Is not thy father with Lord Cornwallis?"

"Yes, of course. Why?"

"Then kindly remember that being cousin-german to my father, he stands in nearer relationship to me than thee does. Should I have need of guidance I will ask it of him. Does thee understand, my cousin?"

"Only too well," he burst forth. "And all this for the sake of a Yankee captain. Oh, I noticed how solicitous you were lest he should be hurt."

"And was solicitude not shown for thee also? Thou art unjust, Clifford."

With crestfallen air the youth led Star from the rude stable, and without further conversation they started for the house.

CHAPTER XXVI—TIDE-WATER AGAIN

310

"Now all is gone! the stallion made a prey,
The few brood mares, and oxen swept away;
The Lares,—if the household shrine possessed
One little god that pleased above the rest;
Mean spoils indeed!"

—"Juvenal," *8th Satire*.

A cry of horror broke from Peggy's lips as they came in sight of the house. The barns, granaries, smoke-houses, and other dependencies were in flames. Clothing and even furniture were being carted from the dwelling by the soldiery; that which could be carried easily being appropriated by them, and the rest consigned to the fires. At some little distance from the dwelling, pale but composed, bearing herself with the fortitude of a Roman matron, stood Mrs. Weston, surrounded by a group of wailing slaves, her little boy clinging to her skirts. She beckoned the girl to her side when she caught sight of the cousins.

"They are leaving nothing, absolutely nothing," she whispered. "How we shall sustain life, if that is left us, is a problem I dare not face. They found the cows."

"Oh," breathed Peggy. "What shall thee do? And Fairfax?"

"Is undiscovered so far. If the house is not burnt he may remain so. The boy wanted to fight this whole force. I had hard work to convince him of the folly of such a course. And you, Peggy? You will go with your cousin, will you not?"

"Why, how did thee know 'twas my cousin?" queried Peggy in surprise.

"'Tis plain to be seen that he is kin, child. The resemblance is very strong. Perhaps I did wrong, but when he came this afternoon to look over the place as a possible site for some of the army to camp I thought at once that it must be your British cousin. When he told me that his lordship was to make his headquarters at Tilghman's Ordinary at Hanover Court House, and that the whole of the army would have to be quartered in the near vicinity, I knew what that meant. So I took it upon myself to tell him at once where you were, and sent him in search of you. Go with him, Peggy. The safest place in the state at the present time is in the enemy's lines. 'Tis the wisest thing to do. And oh, my dear! My dear! don't start out again alone so long as this awful war continues. Go with your cousin."

"I fear me that I must," said the maiden sadly. "But if I do what hope is left me of getting home? After these troops pass on, the road will be clear, will it not? Then what would be the risk for me to start forth? If I could get to our own lines thee knows that all would be well. Surely our army is somewhere near."

"'Tis not to be considered for an instant, child," spoke the matron quickly. "After the regular army hath its fill of pillage there always comes the ruffraff to gather up what their masters have left. Scoundrels they are; utterly devoid of every instinct of humanity. I would not have you meet with them for the world. Peggy, be advised by me in this, and ride on with your cousin."

"I must go," broke from Peggy. "I see that I must. But 'tis bitter to go back; 'tis bitter to be compelled to be with such an enemy as this army; 'tis bitter also to leave thee like this, destitute of everything. How terrible a thing is war," she cried bursting into sudden weeping. "Oh, will the time never come when nations shall war no more? I long for the day when the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning-hook."

"And so do we all," cried Mrs. Weston taking the girl into a tender embrace, for she perceived that she was near the limit of endurance. "Now mount that little mare of yours, and go right on with your cousin." She motioned Clifford to approach. "Unless your orders are such that you cannot, young man," she said, "take your cousin away from here at once."

"I will do so gladly, madam, if she will but go with me," he returned. "Will you come, my cousin?"

"I must, Clifford," answered Peggy, striving for composure. "There seems naught else for me to do. Mrs. Weston thinks it the wisest course."

"I thank you, madam," he said bowing courteously. "And I pray you believe me when I say that this plundering and burning are not at all to my liking. 'Tis winked at by the leaders, and for that reason we, who are of minor rank and who do not approve such practices, must bear with them. Come, my cousin."

"For those words, Clifford, I will forgive thee everything," exclaimed the overwrought girl.

"There are many who feel as I do," he said assisting her to mount. "I like army life, my cousin. There is nothing so inspiring to my mind as the blare of bugle, or the beat of drum. The charge, the roar of musketry, the thunder of artillery, all fill me with joy. They are as the breath of life to my nostrils. Glory and honor lie in the field; but this predatory warfare, these incursions that for their end and aim have naught but the destruction of property—Faugh!" he concluded abruptly. "Fame is not to be gained in such fashion."

In silence they rode down the shaded lane to the road. The main army had long since passed on, but the rear guard and baggage train still filled the cleared stretch of road from which the lane turned. As had been the case in every state that the English had entered, a number of loyalists with their families flocked to the British standard, and traveled with the army. Clifford, who was obliged to rejoin his command, found a place for Peggy among these persons, promising to return as soon as possible.

The company was not at all congenial to the girl. The feeling between loyalist and patriot was not such that either was easy in the presence of the other. Women are ever more intensely partisan than men, and the comments of some of these latter against their own countrymen tried Peggy severely, but she bore it patiently, knowing that this was the best that could be done in the matter. When at last Hanover Court House was reached, Clifford came to see about accommodations for her; and on this, as well as the days that followed, Peggy had no cause to complain of his manner. That little reference concerning the nearer kinship of his father had been productive of good fruit, and he no longer insisted upon his own relationship offensively. So agreeable was his behavior that when, at length, he brought his father to her she said not one word to Colonel Owen about placing herself under his care. The colonel himself seemed in high good humor, and greeted her with something of affection.

"And so we are met again, my little cousin," he said warmly. "Clifford tells me why you are in this part of the country, and it seems that 'tis to your nursing that he owes his continuance upon this mundane sphere. Harriet hath not yet returned to New York, I understand, so we will be a

reunited family. It hath been some years since we have had that pleasure. 'Twill be all the greater for having you with us."

"I thank thee, Cousin William," answered Peggy, responding at once to his unexpected graciousness. "And thee will be glad to know that Harriet hath quite recovered from her illness. She grows more beautiful, I think, were that possible."

"And this son of mine? What think you of him?" asked he. "I had some cause for offense with him, but since he hath shown himself worthy to follow in my footsteps I have forgot displeasure. He looks like David, does he not?"

"So much, my cousin, that I cannot but think that he should be my father's son instead of thine. How strange that he should look so much like him!"

"Yes. And I'll warrant because of that you consider him better looking than his father," said Colonel Owen laughing heartily.

"But father hath uncommon good looks," answered she. "And thee does resemble him to some extent."

"Well," he said laughing again, "I suppose I'll have to be satisfied with that. Now, Peggy, if this boy does not look well to your comfort, just let me know. I am obliged to be with my regiment, but I shall manage to look in upon you occasionally. Captain Williams," he made a wry face at the name, "hath somewhat more leisure."

And so Peggy found herself well cared for, and in truth she needed much comfort in the ensuing days. Of that march when Cornwallis continued his retreat toward tide-water she never willingly spoke. To Point of Fork and then down the river to Richmond the British commander proceeded by leisurely marches, stopping often for rest, and oftener to permit his troops time for depredations. Scene after scene of rapine followed each other so rapidly that the march seemed one long panorama of destruction. She thought that she knew war in all its horrors. Their own farm had been pillaged, their barn burned, and they had suffered much from the inroads of the enemy; but all this was as naught to what Virginia had to endure.

It had come to mean comparatively nothing to these people to see their fruits, fowls and cattle carried away by the light troops. The main army followed, collecting what the vanguard left. Stocks of cattle, sheep and hogs together with what corn was wanted were used for the sustenance of the army. All horses capable of service were carried off; throats of others too young to use were cut ruthlessly. Growing crops of corn and tobacco were burned, together with barns containing the same articles of the preceding year, and all fences of plantations, so as to leave an absolute waste. This hurricane, which destroyed everything in its path, was followed by a scourge yet more terrible—the numerous rabble of refugees which came after, not to assist in the fighting, but to partake of the plunder, to strip the inhabitants of clothes and furniture which was in general the sole booty left to satisfy their avidity. Many of these atrocities came directly under the girl's vision; there were others of which she was mercifully spared any knowledge.

In ignorance also was she of the fact that hard after them, not twenty miles away, rode Lafayette. His forces augmented by additions from Greene, by the Pennsylvanians under Wayne, by Baron Steuben's command, and by the militia under General Nelson, he no longer feared to strike a blow, and so became the hunter instead of the hunted. Consequently there was constant skirmishing between the van and the rear of the two armies.

The month was drawing to a close when the army fell back to Williamsburg, and halted. The heat had become so intense that the troops were easily exhausted, and necessity compelled a rest. Peggy was glad when the spire of Bruton Church came into sight.

"I am so tired, Clifford," she said wearily when the lad came to her as the army entered the place from the west. "Tired and sick at heart. I know not what form is used in leaving, if any, but if there be custom of any sort to observe, let it be done quickly, I pray thee. And then let us go to the cottage to Nurse Johnson."

"There is no form to comply with," he said, regarding her with compassion. "We will go at once, though not to the cottage. Father hath taken a house more commodious on the Palace Green, and hath sent me for you. Harriet will be there also."

And, though well she knew that taking a house meant in this instance the turning out of the inmates that they might be lodged, Peggy, knowing that protest would be of no avail, went with him silently.

CHAPTER XXVII—PEGGY RECEIVES A SHOCK

"Chains are round our country pressed,
And cowards have betrayed her,
And we must make her bleeding breast
The grave of the invader."

—Bryant.

Harriet, with her chestnut hair flying in a maze of witching ringlets, her eyes starry with radiance, came dancing to meet them as they entered the house which Colonel Owen had taken for his use.

"Father told me that you had come," she cried embracing Peggy rapturously. "Is it not delightful that we are all together at last, Peggy? Here are father, Clifford, you, and last, but not least, your most humble and devoted servant, Mistress Harriet Owen. Oh, I am so happy! And why did you run away, you naughty girl? Still, had you not done so I should have missed seeing father and the army."

"I was trying to get home," answered Peggy, forgetting her weariness in admiration of her cousin's beauty, and wondering also at her light-heartedness. 322

"Home to that poky Philadelphia, where tea and rusks, or a morning visit are the only diversions?" laughed Harriet. "You quaint little Quakeress, don't you know that now that the army hath come we shall have routs, kettledrums, and assemblies to no end?"

"Be not so sure of that, Harriet," spoke her brother. "Lord Cornwallis is not so inclined toward such things as is Sir Henry Clinton. He is chiefly concerned for this business of warfare."

"On the march, I grant you, Clifford, but when the army camps there are always pleasurings. 'Twas so at Charlestown, and Camden, and 'tis the case in New York. We shall have a gay time, Peggy."

"Suppose, Harriet, that you begin giving our cousin a good time by taking her to a room where she may rest," suggested the youth. "Do you not see that she is greatly fatigued? The march hath been a hard one."

"She does indeed look tired," remarked Harriet glancing at Peggy critically. "Come on, Peggy. I'll take you to our room. 'Tis much larger than the one we shared at Nurse Johnson's." 323

And so chatting she conducted the weary girl to a large, airy chamber on the second floor of the dwelling, leaving her with reluctance at length to seek the rest of which Peggy stood so much in need.

Meanwhile, much to the consternation of the citizens of Williamsburg, the entire army marched in and took possession of the little city. Cornwallis seized upon the president's house at the college for his headquarters, forcing that functionary with his family to seek refuge in the main college building. As the origin of the institution was so thoroughly English, and it had remained in part faithful to the mother country, he caused it to be strenuously guarded from destruction, or injury of any sort. Indeed, this attitude had been maintained toward the college by all the English throughout the war.

Officers of the highest rank followed the example set them by their commander, and seized upon whatever dwelling pleased their fancy, sometimes permitting the rightful owners to reserve a few rooms for their own use; more often turning them out completely to find shelter wherever they could. The men of minor rank took what their superiors left, while the rank and file camped in the open fields surrounding the town. Parties were sent out daily on foraging expeditions, and once more York peninsula was swept by the devastating invader. 324

Of all that occurred in the five days that succeeded the army's entry into the city Peggy knew nothing. She was so utterly worn out that she did not leave her room, and alarmed by this unusual lassitude in her Colonel Owen insisted that she should keep to her bed. By the end of the week, however, she felt quite herself again, and resolving to seek Nurse Johnson without delay, she arose and dressed herself.

"I must tell her of Fairfax," she thought as she went down the stairs to the drawing-room. "It hath been unkind in me to keep the poor woman waiting so for news of her son, but I have in truth been near to illness. I know not when my strength hath been so severely tried. Peggy, thee must display more fortitude. I fear thee has a long wait before thee ere thee shall behold thy home again, and thee must call forth all thy endurance to meet it. Megrims have no place in thy calendar, Peggy." 325

Thus chiding herself she reached the drawing-room where Colonel Owen sat with his son and daughter.

"'Tis quite time you came down, my little cousin," cried the colonel as she entered the room. "Clifford here hath been importuning me to have a surgeon, to dose you with Jesuit's bark, and I know not what else. Zounds! the boy hath shown as much solicitude as if it had been Harriet. I had hard work to convince him that all you needed was rest."

"Clifford hath been most kind, Cousin William," she said. "And so have you all. I could not have been more tenderly cared for at home. Fatigue was all that ailed me, however, and I have now recovered from that."

"Come! that's good news," cried William Owen. "And now you shall hear something of great import. This son of mine hath quite puffed me up with pride. It seems that Earl Cornwallis wished some boats and stores of the rebels on the Chickahominy River destroyed, and all the cattle thereabouts brought in for the use of the army. He detailed Colonel Simcoe to accomplish the matter. Now mark, Peggy! what does this same Colonel Simcoe do but ask for Captain Williams, Captain Williams, understand, to accompany him, avowing that he was one of the most promising young officers in the army. It seems also that a little skirmish took place between the rebels and Simcoe's forces in which a certain Captain Williams particularly distinguished himself. Egad! I 326

hear encomiums on all sides as to his conduct. Would that his commission was in his own name!"

"And what do you think, Peggy?" exclaimed Harriet before Peggy could make reply to her cousin. "Your old friend——"

"Harriet," interrupted Clifford warningly. "We agreed not to speak of that."

"What is it, Clifford?" asked Peggy turning to him with alarm. "Hath any of my friends met with injury? Hath any been made a prisoner? Or wounded? Or—or killed?"

"No," he told her kindly. "None of these things has happened. One of your friends took part in the engagement which father has just mentioned. There occurred an incident after the mêlée which was curious, but 'twas nothing that should concern you. I would rather not tell you about it. You will know it soon enough." 327

"If none of those things happened," she said relieved, "there is naught else that I care about if thee does not wish me to know. Was thy side the victor, my cousin?"

"Yes; though I understand that the rebels claim it also. The loss was quite heavy on both sides for so small an action. You are arrayed for the street, Peggy? Are you going out?"

"To Nurse Johnson's, Clifford. I saw her son while away, and she would be glad to have news of him," Peggy explained frankly. "I ought to have gone before this."

"I would not go elsewhere, and I were you," he said. "Harriet and I are going for a short ride after parade. Would you like to accompany us?"

"Yes," she replied. "I will not stay long, Clifford." 328

Peggy started forth with this intention, but it took some little time to reach the cottage so filled were the streets with troops. It seemed to the girl that every foot of ground held a red coat. When she at length arrived at the place it was to find Nurse Johnson out. She would soon be back, she was told, so the girl sat down to wait for her. Finally the good woman made her appearance, but there was so much to tell that it was high noon before the visit was ended.

"I shall miss the ride," mused Peggy passing quickly through the tiny orchard to the gate which opened on Palace Street. "I hope that my cousins won't wait for me, or that they will not be annoyed. Why, John!"

For as she turned from shutting the gate she came face to face with John Drayton.

"Is thee mad," she cried, "to venture here like this? 'Tis certain death, John."

"Is anything liable to happen to a fellow who wears such a garb as this in a British camp?" he asked indicating his clothes by a careless gesture.

Peggy's glance swept him from head to foot. He was clad in the uniform of a British officer, and seemed not at all concerned as to his safety. An awful suspicion clutched her, and again her gaze took in every detail of that telltale uniform. Then her eyes sought his face and she looked at him searchingly, as though she would read his very soul. Suddenly she leaned forward and touched the red coat fearfully. 329

"What doth it mean?" she whispered, all her apprehension and doubt contained in the query.

Over Drayton's face swept a swift indescribable change at her words. He drew a deep breath before answering, and when he spoke his voice held a harshness she had never heard before:

"What doth such a thing usually mean, Peggy?"

"Not, not that, John," she cried piteously. "Thee can't mean what that uniform says. Thee can't mean that, John?"

"Just that," he answered tersely.

With a low cry she shrank from him, her eyes wide with horror.

"A deserter! Thou?" she breathed.

"Even I, Peggy." 330

All the color left her face. She swayed as though about to fall, but when Drayton put forth his arm to support her she waved him back. For a long time Peggy stood so overwhelmed that she could not speak. Then she murmured brokenly:

"But why? Why?"

"I will answer you as I did his lordship," replied the youth clearly. "When he asked that same question, I said: 'My lord, I have served from the beginning of this war. While my commander was an American it was all right, but when I was sent here to be under a Frenchman I thought it time to quit the service.'"

"And is that all thy reason?"

"Is it not reason enough, Peggy?"

"No," she cried passionately. "It is not. Oh, I see it all! Thee has heard from General Arnold."

"Why should you think that?" Drayton regarded her queerly. "What would hearing from him have to do with my desertion?"

"Everything," she answered wildly. "He hath wooed thee from thy allegiance, as he said he

would. 'Twas on this very spot that he boasted that not two months would pass before thee would be fighting by his side. And I defended thee because I believed that naught could turn thee from thy country. Why look thee, John! how short hath been the time since thou wert made a captain! For valor, thee said, at Hobkirk's Hill."

"That was under Greene," he made answer. "He is not a frog-eating Frenchman."

"Yet that same Frenchman hath left country and family to give his services, his money, his life if necessary to help an alien people in their fight for liberty. And thee cannot fight under such a man because, forsooth, he is French. French," with cutting scorn, "who would not rather be French, English, German, or aught else than an American who would desert his country for so small a thing?"

"Don't, Peggy," he pleaded. "It—it hurts."

"And I have been so proud of thee," she went on unheeding his plea, her voice thrilling with the intensity of her feeling. "So proud of thee at Middlebrook, when thee was spoken of as a lad of parts. So proud when General Washington himself said he wished the whole army had thy spirit. I treasured those words, John Drayton. And again I have been proud of thy conduct in battle, and for all thy career, because I thought of thee as my soldier. Oh!" she cried with passion, "I would rather thee had died in battle; and yet, from the opening to the close of every campaign I have prayed nightly that thee might be spared."

Drayton adjusted his neck ruffles, and swallowed hard.

"Peggy," he said. "Peggy——" and paused.

"I think my heart will break," she sobbed; and with that last cry she left him standing there.

CHAPTER XXVIII—VERIFIED SUSPICIONS

"The way is long, my children, long and rough,
The moors are dreary, the woods are dark;
But he that creeps from cradle on to grave,
Unskil'd save in the velvet course of fortune,
Hath miss'd the discipline of noble hearts."

—*Old Play.*

How could he do it? the girl asked herself as she made her way with unseeing eyes back to her cousin's dwelling. After all his years of service, after enduring hardships that would tax any man's soul to the utmost, to desert now. What had become of the spirit that had carried him through all that dreadful march through the wilderness to Quebec? Where was the enthusiasm that had sustained him through the disastrous campaigns of South Carolina? Oh, it was past all belief!

Many patriots, she knew, had come to consider the American cause hopeless; many of the best men were weary of the long war; many also had lost interest because of the French Alliance; but that John Drayton had deserted because he had been sent to serve under the Marquis de Lafayette she could not believe. Had he not told her with exultation at Middlebrook that he was to be in that same Marquis's corps of light infantry?

That was not the reason, she told herself miserably. It was plain to her that he had heard from the traitor Arnold who, to add to his infamy, had sought repeatedly to corrupt the men of his former command. Undoubtedly Drayton had been won from his allegiance through his affection for his old leader.

Harriet and Clifford cantered to the gate just as she was entering the door of the dwelling. Harriet called to her gleefully as she dismounted:

"You should have gone with us, Peggy. 'Twas vastly enjoyable. What think you? Lord Cornwallis himself rode with us for a time. He is to dine with father on Monday. Why! what hath happened?" she broke off at sight of her cousin's pale cheeks and woe-filled eyes.

"She hath seen the Yankee captain," exclaimed Clifford joining them. "Is not that the trouble, my cousin?"

"Yes," assented Peggy drearily. "I saw him, Clifford. Oh!" with sudden enlightenment, "was his desertion what thee was keeping from me?"

"That was it, Peggy. I knew that you would know that he had joined us some time, but I hoped that it could be kept from you until you were stronger."

"Thee is very thoughtful," said Peggy her eyes filling at this kindness. "Still, Clifford, 'tis as well to know it now. Time could not allay one pang caused by treachery."

"Peggy," said her cousin abruptly, "you talked with him, did you not?"

"Yes, Clifford."

"And do you consider him sincere when he says that the reason for his desertion is that he was sent to serve under the Marquis de Lafayette?"

"No," she returned apathetically. "No, Clifford."

"Ah!" he cried triumphantly. "I thought so. You think with me, then, my little cousin, that the fellow is a spy?"

"A spy?" A light flashed into the girl's eyes, and she looked at him eagerly. It faded as quickly as it came, however, and she shook her head sadly. "He is no spy," she said. "I would he were, so that he was true to liberty."

"Then I beg of you to tell me his true reason for deserting," he urged. "I like him not; nay, nor do I trust him, yet if he be sincere in renewing his allegiance to our king then I will give o'er my suspicions regarding him."

"I believe that 'twas caused by General Arnold," she told him. "Last spring when he was here in Williamsburg he boasted that John would soon be fighting with him. He hath won him from his duty through his affection, for John loved him greatly. I doubt not his sincerity," she concluded with such anguish in her tones that Harriet was touched.

"He isn't worth a thought, Peggy," she cried. "And what else could you expect from John Drayton?"

"She speaks truth, my cousin," said Clifford. "Desertions occur daily from both sides. Those who are guilty of them are not persons actuated by the highest motives. I would think no more of it."

"Don't," exclaimed the girl struggling for control. "He was my friend. Thee must not speak of him like that. Oh!" she cried with a burst of tears, "how shall I bear it?"

"Tell her how it occurred, Cliff," suggested Harriet. "She might just as well know all about it."

"Yes, tell me," said Peggy looking up through her tears. "I want to know everything to see if aught can justify him."

"It happened after this manner," began the youth complying with the request with visible reluctance. "After the encounter with the rebels the other day when they were retiring from us under a hot fire, what does this fellow do all at once but dash from among them and come toward us, crying: 'I'm going to cast in my lot with you fellows.'"

"This seemed to incense his comrades greatly. They ceased to fire at us and turned their muskets against him. 'Twas marvelous that he escaped unhurt, but he did, and was received with cheers and shouts of admiration by our troops. Odds life!" ejaculated the youth with grudging approval, "he hath pluck enough when it comes to that, but I like not a turncoat. 'Tis said that my Lord Cornwallis is much taken with him, and hath declared that he would like a regiment like him. Pray heaven that he doth not repent it. I never liked him, you remember, and still less do I regard him now. I shall keep an eye on him."

"I thank thee for telling me about it, Clifford," said Peggy. "I think I will go to my room. I—I am tired."

Seeing that the girl was losing command of herself her cousins permitted her to leave them without further word, and at last Peggy could give way to the sorrow that was overwhelming her.

The sun shone as brightly as of yore; the birds sang sweetly in the tree tops, and flowers blossomed in the meadows; all the world of Nature went on as before. For no act of man affects the immutable laws of the universe, and with indifference to woe, or grief, or breach of trust they fulfil their predestined designs though everything that makes life dear may be slipping from one's grasp. Peggy was wondering dully at this one morning, a few days later, as she went down to breakfast.

"Peggy," exclaimed Harriet startled by the girl's haggard looks, "you will make yourself ill by so much grieving. I doubt that 'tis best for you to keep your room as you do. Remember how you made me shake off the megrims by exertion in Philadelphia? Well, I shall play the physician now, and make you bestir yourself. She should, shouldn't she, father?"

Colonel Owen looked up from his place at the head of the table and regarded the maiden disapprovingly.

"Peggy is a foolish little girl," he remarked with some sharpness. "Captain Drayton hath returned to his true allegiance, and I see no reason why such a show of grief should be deemed necessary. 'Tis not only unseemly, but vastly indelicate as well. As for action, not only she but all of us will have to move whether we choose or not. The army goes on the march again to-morrow."

"Where, father?" asked Harriet in surprise. "Is 't not a sudden determination on his lordship's part?"

"Somewhat. He hath received an express from General Sir Henry Clinton which says that all movements of the rebel general indicate a determination to attack New York City. Washington hath been joined by the French troops, and the activities of the allies denote a settled purpose which hath alarmed Sir Henry for the safety of the city. Therefore, he desires the earl to send him some troops, which will leave his lordship too weak to hold this place. In consequence we are off to-morrow for Portsmouth across the James. Zounds!" he burst forth grumblingly. "I don't mind campaigning in seasonable weather, but this hot climate makes a move of any sort an exertion not to be undertaken save by compulsion."

"Must we go, father?" pouted Harriet, "Could you not get leave of absence, and continue here? We are so comfortable."

"Stay here to become a prisoner of war, my dear?" questioned her father sarcastically. "Methought you were abreast of war news sufficiently to know that that boy general of a Frenchman hath kept within a dozen miles of us of late. The army will scarcely be out of here before he marches in. Egad! but he needs a lesson. His lordship merely laughs when I tell him so, and declares that the boy cannot escape him. He will attend to him in time. Nay, Harriet; we shall have to go, though I confess to a strong disinclination to move."

341

The occupation of Williamsburg by the army under Cornwallis lasted nine days; that of Portsmouth was little more than thrice that time, for upon the engineers reporting that the site was one that could not be fortified the British general put his troops aboard such shipping as he could gather and transferred them bodily to Yorktown. Here he set the army and the negroes who had followed them to laying out lines of earthworks, that he might hold the post with the reduced number of troops that would be left him after detaching the reinforcements needed by Clinton. And now ensued a pause in the daily excitements and operations of the Virginia campaign.

Yorktown was not much more than a village. It had been an emporium of trade before the Revolution, while Williamsburg was the capital of the state. The site of the town was beautiful in the extreme, stretching from east to west on the south side of the noble York River, a small distance above where the river empties into Chesapeake Bay.

342

Both Peggy and Harriet rejoiced in the change, and much of their time was spent on the high point of land to the east of the village which gave outlook upon Chesapeake Bay, gazing at the wide expanse of water. Upon several of these occasions Peggy encountered Drayton, but the two merely looked at each other without speaking, the girl with eyes full of reproach, the youth with an expression that was unfathomable. Harriet now began to twit her unmercifully upon her change of attitude toward him.

"It is too amusing," she said one day after one of these chance meetings. "You were such friends at Middlebrook, Peggy, and now you will not speak to him. All because he hath come to the conclusion that the king hath the right of it."

"I have already told him how I feel anent the matter," answered Peggy with a sigh. "There is no more to be said."

343

"Would I had been a mouse to have heard it," laughed Harriet. "Clifford hath not even yet learned to trust him, though father chides him for his feeling, and is disposed to make much of the captain. I think my brother hath never got over the fear that he may have been in favor with me. 'Tis all vastly entertaining."

"Treachery never seems amusing to me," remarked Peggy quietly.

"I don't think I should term taking sides with the king treachery," retorted her cousin. "It seems to me that 'tis the other way. You, and others with Whiggish notions, are the traitors. 'Tis an unnatural rebellion."

"'Tis idle to speak so, Harriet, and useless to discuss it. We shall never agree on the subject, and therefore what purpose is served by talking of it?"

"Only this," rejoined Harriet mischievously, turning to note the effect of her words upon her cousin: "we were speaking of Captain Drayton, were we not? Well, Peggy, you will have to get over your feeling toward him, for father hath invited him to dine with us to-morrow."

344

"Oh, Harriet!" gasped Peggy. "Why did he?"

"Because he thinks both you and Clifford need a lesson in politeness. Clifford, because of his suspicions, and you because you do not speak to him."

"Oh!" said Peggy in pained tones. "Would that he had not asked him. 'Twas thoughtless in Cousin William."

"I think father ought to have the right to ask whom he chooses to his own house," declared Harriet, who was in one of her moods. "He says that when one of these misguided rebels realizes his error and strives to rectify it we should encourage him, so that others may follow his example. I expect rare sport when you meet."

Peggy said no more, knowing how useless it would be to plead with either Colonel Owen or Harriet once either had determined upon any course. So, nerving herself for the ordeal, she went down to dinner the next day in anything but a happy frame of mind.

To her surprise only Colonel Owen and Harriet were in the drawing-room. There was no sign either of Clifford, or of John Drayton.

345

"Are you disappointed, Peggy?" asked Harriet with some sarcasm, catching the girl's involuntary glance about the apartment. "So are we, and father thinks it unpardonable in a guest to keep us waiting so. I always said that Captain Drayton lacked manners."

Before Peggy could reply the door was flung open, and Clifford dashed into the room.

"What in the world is the matter?" queried Harriet startled by his manner of entrance. "One would think that you had affairs of state to communicate that would brook no delay."

"And so I have," cried the lad with exultation. "Do not all of you remember that I was not taken

with that Yankee captain? Did I not say from the beginning that he was not to be trusted? I was right, but no one would heed me. I knew after the way he boasted the day we met with the sword in Hanover that he was an unregenerate rebel, but my suspicions were laughed at. I was right, I say."

"Clifford, what do you mean?" cried his sister. Peggy did not speak, but stood waiting his next words with feverish eagerness, her breath coming quickly, her eyes dilated, her hands clasped tightly.

"Go on, my son," spoke Colonel Owen with some impatience. "We all know your feelings on the subject. What hath happened to verify such suspicions?"

"Just this," answered he with triumph: "last night the fellow stole out and met one of the enemy. In company with another officer I followed after him as he stole through the lines. Beyond Wormeley's Creek the meeting took place, and we apprehended him on his return. His spying mission is over. He will do no more harm."

"Clifford!" shrieked Peggy. "What does thee mean?"

"That because he is a spy," cried Clifford, "he is condemned to die at sunrise."

CHAPTER XXIX—"I SHALL NOT SAY GOOD-BYE"

"How beautiful is death when earned by virtue!
Who would not sleep with those? What pity is it
That we can die but once to save our country."

—Addison's *Cato*.

"He is to die at sunrise." The announcement came with such suddenness that for a moment no one spoke. Peggy stood as though stricken. Colonel Owen was the first to recover himself.

"Suppose that you unravel the matter from the beginning," he suggested. "'Twill be the better understood. Do I hear aright that you were the means of discovering his duplicity?"

"It was I of a truth," answered Clifford speaking rapidly. "I never trusted him; so, while the rest of you made much of him and received him into your confidences, I kept my eyes open. For a long time no act of his justified suspicion, and it did seem as though distrust was groundless. And then, 'twas just after we entered camp here at Yorktown, I came upon him one night in the woods south of the Moore House. He was pretty far afield, so I spoke to him sharply. He laughed, and said that the heat had made him sleepless, and that he preferred the air to the closeness of his quarters. I said no more, but resolved to double my watch of him. This I did, and three times have I seen him leave camp without permit. Confiding my fears regarding the reason for such absences to Lieutenant Bolton we followed him last night, and our vigilance was rewarded. Drayton met one of Lafayette's men, and we were close enough to them to hear him repeat the orders issued by Lord Cornwallis yesterday to Lieutenant-Colonel Dundas concerning some movements which were to take place from Gloucester Point, and also impart other important information.

"Fearful lest some untoward incident might contribute to his escape we let him return unmolested to the camp before apprehending him. His lordship is quite cut up over the matter, and hath commended me publicly for my alertness. He hath also," concluded the youth proudly, "placed the prisoner in my entire charge, leaving all proceedings in the affair to be arranged by me. There will be no flaw in carrying out the sentence, I promise you."

"And all this time, while I have thought him disloyal, he hath been true, true!" cried Peggy brokenly. "Oh, I should have known! I should have known!"

"And he is in your charge, Cliff?" asked Harriet. "My, but you are coming on! Father will have to look to his laurels."

"You are o'er young, my son, to have the management of so serious an affair," remarked Colonel Owen gravely. "Lord Cornwallis likes young men, and hath favored them upon many occasions when 'twould have been better to give preference to older men. However, if you see that his confidence is not misplaced we shall all be proud of you."

"Have no fear, sir," said Clifford pompously. "I have placed the prisoner in a small cottage where there is no possibility of holding communication with any one. He is not only well guarded, sir, but I have the door locked upon the outside, and I myself carry the key. Even Lord Cornwallis could not see him without first coming to me. Oh, I have provided well against any miscarriage of justice."

"Thee must let me see him, Clifford," spoke Peggy abruptly. "I shall never know peace unless I have his forgiveness. Thee will let me see him, my cousin?"

"What you ask, Peggy, is utterly impossible," answered Clifford. "He shall not have one privilege. A spy deserves none. 'Twas not my desire that the execution should be deferred until morning. There should be no delay in such matters. Spies should be dealt with summarily."

"You forget, son, that doctrine of that sort works both ways," observed his father, smiling at the youth's important air. "We have spies of our own in the enemy's lines. Too great harshness of dealing will be retaliated upon our own men."

"Clifford," cried Peggy going to him, and laying her hand upon his arm pleadingly, "does thee not remember how he spared thee? He could have slain thee when he had thee at his mercy. Thee will not refuse me one little hour with him, my cousin."

351

"I shall not grant one minute," returned he sternly. The look which she had seen when he refused to greet Harriet until satisfied of her loyalty came now to his face. "He shall not have one privilege."

"'Twould be inhuman not to permit it, Clifford. 'Tis not justice thee seeks, but the gratifying of thine own rancor toward him."

"She is right, my son," spoke Colonel Owen. "You lay yourself open to that very charge. To guard closely against escape is right. To take every precaution against the miscarriage of the sentence is duty. But to refuse a small privilege is not only against the dictates of humanity, but 'tis impolitic as well. The vicissitudes of war are many, and by sad fortune you might find yourself in the same condition as this young fellow. 'Tis the part of wisdom to grant what one can in such cases."

"Captain Williams needs no instructions as to his duty, sir," returned Clifford hotly.

Colonel Owen laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"I had forgot," he said ironically. "I cry you pardon. Captain Williams, of course, is conversant with the entire code of civilized warfare. I shall say no more." He arose and left the apartment.

352

"Clifford, thee must let me see John," urged Peggy with feverish insistence. "A little time is all I ask. It could not matter, nor make the least difference in carrying out thy duty. One little hour, Clifford!"

"Say no more," he cried harshly. "I will not permit it."

"Thee shall, Clifford Owen." Peggy's own voice grew hard in the intensity of her feeling. "I have never asked favor of thee before, and yet thee is indebted to me. Have I not cared for thee in illness? Thee has said that thee would try in part to repay what thee owed me. This is thy opportunity. When thee was about to die among strangers I came to comfort and console thee in thy last hours. Wilt not let him have a like consolation? Clifford!" Her voice broke suddenly. "Thee will let me see him."

"No," he responded inexorably. "Where are you going?" he asked abruptly as the girl turned from him with determination written on her countenance.

353

"I am going to Lord Cornwallis," answered Peggy. "I shall lay this matter before him, and show him that 'tis not zeal which animates thee in the discharge of thy duty, but private hatred. I make no doubt but that he will accord me permission to see John."

"I make no doubt of it either," ejaculated the boy savagely. He was well enough acquainted with his chief to know that a demand made by so winsome a maiden would be granted. "Come back here, Peggy. I'll let you see him. I don't care to have Lord Cornwallis, or any one else, mixed up in our private affairs. But mind! it will only be for one hour."

"Thank thee, Clifford. 'Tis all I ask," she said sorrowfully. "When will thee take me to him?"

"So long as it has to be, it might as well be now," he told her sulkily. "Are you ready?"

"Yes, Clifford."

"And the dinner, good people?" broke in Harriet. "Am I not to be pleased by your company?"

"The dinner can wait," exclaimed her brother shortly. "We'll get this business over with."

354

Too intent upon her own feelings to give heed to the dourness of the lad Peggy followed him silently as he strode from the house. In all her after life she never forgot that walk: the glare of the sun; the soft touch of the breeze which came freshly from the sea; the broad expanse of the river where it melted into the broader sweep of the bay; the frigates and shipping of the British lying in the river below, and above all the heaviness of her heart as she followed her cousin to the place where John Drayton awaited death.

Eastward of the village, on its extreme outskirts stood a small one story house with but one window and a single door. It was quite remote from the other dwellings of the town, and the tents of the army lay further to the east and south so that it practically stood alone. A mulberry tree at some little distance from the house afforded the only relief from the blazing August sun to be found in that part of the village. Two sentries marched to and fro around the hut, while a guard, heavily armed, sat just without the threshold of the door. Clifford conducted the girl at once to the entrance. The guard saluted and moved aside at his command.



SHE STEPPED INTO THE ROOM

"You shall have just one hour," said the youth, unlocking the door. "I shall call when 'tis time."

355

Peggy could not reply. In a tumult of emotion she stepped into the one room of the hut. The air was close and the heat almost intolerable after the freshness of the sea breeze outside. Coming from the dazzling glare of the sun into the darkened interior she could not see for a moment, so stopped just beyond the door, half stifled by the closeness of the atmosphere. When the mist cleared from her eyes she saw a small room whose only furniture consisted of a pine table and two chairs. Drayton was seated with his back toward the entrance, his head resting upon his arms, which were outstretched upon the table. The maiden advanced toward him timidly.

"John," she uttered softly.

The youth sprang to his feet with an exclamation of gladness.

"Peggy," he cried. "Oh, I did not hope for this."

356

"I had to see thee," she cried sobbing. "Oh, John, John! thee was loyal all the time, and I doubted thee. All these weeks I doubted thee."

"'Tis not to be wondered at, Peggy," he said soothingly, seeing how distressed she was. "Appearances were against me. But why should you think that General Arnold had aught to do with it? I could not understand that."

"He had asked for thy address, John," she told him through her tears. "And he said that thee would be fighting with him before two months had passed. When I saw thee in that uniform I thought at once that he had succeeded in wooing thee from thy duty." In a few words she related all that had passed between her and the traitor. "Can thee ever forgive me?" she concluded. "And did I hurt thee much, John?"

"It's all right now, Peggy," he said with a boyish laugh. "But I would rather go through a battle than to face it again."

"Why didn't thee tell me, John?"

"For two reasons: First, the redcoats swarmed about us, and 'twould not have been safe. Second, you were with your cousins, and I knew that Clifford at least would be suspicious of me—particularly so if you were not distressed over my desertion. 'Twas best to let you think as you did, though I was sorely tempted at times to let you know the truth. I thought that you would know, Peggy. I was surprised when you didn't." It was his only reproach,

357

Peggy choked.

"I ought to have known, John. I shall never forgive myself that I did not know. Was it necessary for thee to come?"

"Some one had to, and the Marquis wished that I should be the one. You see, he could not understand why Cornwallis faced about, and made for the seaboard. He did not have to retreat, but seemed to have some fixed purpose in so doing that our general could not see through. Nor

could any of us. The Marquis sent for me, and explained the dilemma, saying that he needed some one in the British camp who could get him trustworthy intelligence on this and other things. The service, he pointed out, was full of risk but of inestimable value. I should be obliged to be with the enemy for a long time. It might be weeks. If I were discovered the consequence would be an ignominious death. Of course I came. When there is service, no matter the nature, there are not many of us who are not glad to undertake it.”

358

“But to die?” she gasped.

“I shall not pretend that I don’t mind it, Peggy,” went on the youth calmly, but with sadness. “I do. I would have preferred death in the field, or some more glorious end. Still, ’tis just as much in the service of the country as though I had died in battle. Were it to be done again I would not act differently.”

“Thee must not die, John,” she cried in agonized tones. “Is there no way? No way?”

“No, Peggy. I would there were. I’d like to live a little longer. There’s going to be rare doings on the Chesapeake shortly. Let me whisper, Peggy. ’Tis said that walls have ears, and I would not that any of this should reach Cornwallis just at present. ’Tis glorious news. The Marquis hath word that the French fleet under the Count de Grasse hath sailed from the West Indies for this bay. ’Twill bring us reinforcements, beside shutting Cornwallis off from his source of supplies. His lordship hath not regarded the Marquis seriously as an adversary because of his youth, and so is fortifying leisurely while our young general hath encompassed him in a trap. He is hemmed in on all sides, Peggy.”

359

“Wayne is across the James ready to block him should he try to retreat in that direction; the militia of North Carolina are flocking to the border to prevent the British commander cutting a way through that state should he get past Wayne. The Marquis is in a camp of observation at Holt’s Forge on the Pamunkey River ready to swoop down to Williamsburg on the arrival of the fleet. General Nelson and the militia of this state with Muhlenberg’s forces are watching Gloucester Point. Best of all,—lean closer, Peggy,—’tis whispered that Washington himself may come to help spring the trap. He hath led Sir Henry into the belief that he is about to attack New York, and my Lord Cornwallis feels so secure here that he expects to send his chief reinforcements to help in its defense. If the French fleet comes, the end of the war comes with it. Ah, Peggy! if it comes.”

360

“Thee must live, John,” cried she excitedly. “Oh, thee must be here if all this happens. Help me to think of a way to save thee.”

“I have done naught but think since I was brought here, Peggy. If I could get past that guard at the door there would be a chance. But what can I do with a locked door? I have no tools, naught with which to open it. There is no other entrance save by that door and that window. No;” he shook his head decidedly. “’Tis no use to think, Peggy. The end hath come.”

“And how shall I bear it?” she cried.

“’Tis for the country, Peggy.” He touched her hand softly. “We must not falter if she demands life of us. If we had a dozen lives we would lay them all down in her service, wouldn’t we? If I have helped the cause ever so little it doth not matter that I die. And you will let the Marquis know what hath happened? And General Greene? I am glad you came. It hath sweetened these last hours. I’ll forgive Clifford everything for permitting it. You are not to grieve, Peggy. If I have been of help to the cause in any way it hath all been owing to you. I have in very truth been your soldier.”

361

“Peggy!” came Clifford’s voice from without the door. “Time’s up!”

“Oh, John,” whispered Peggy, white and shaken. “I can’t say good-bye. I can’t—”

“Then don’t,” he said gently leading her to the door. “Let us take a lesson from our French allies and say, not good-bye—but *au revoir*.” Then with something of his old jauntiness he added: “Wait and see what the night will bring; perhaps rescue. Who knows? Go now, Peggy.”

“We were speaking of rescue,” he said smiling slightly as Clifford, fuming at Peggy’s delay, entered the room. “I have just said that we know not what a night will bring forth, so I shall not say good-bye, but *au revoir*.”

“You will best say good-bye while you can, Sir Captain,” growled Clifford. “You will never have another chance. Come, my cousin.”

CHAPTER XXX—WHAT THE NIGHT BROUGHT

362

“’Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its luster and perfume,
And we are weeds without it.”

—“The Task,” *Cowper*.

“Who is the relief for to-night?” queried Clifford of the guard as he closed and locked the door of

the hut.

"Samuels, sir," responded the soldier saluting.

"Tell him that I shall take charge at midnight," commanded Clifford. "I am going to stand guard myself so as to make sure that naught goes amiss." Then turning to Peggy he added: "I liked not the last remark of that captain. It savored too much of mischief."

But Peggy, knowing that Drayton had uttered it solely for her comfort, made no reply. The afternoon was well on toward its close when they reached their abode, and the girl went straight to the room which she and Harriet occupied in common.

Harriet had just donned a dainty frock of dimity, and was now dusting her chestnut ringlets lightly with powder. She glanced at Peggy over her shoulder.

"There is to be company for tea, Peggy," she said. "Two officers. Will you come down?"

"No," answered Peggy sinking into a chair. "I would rather not, Harriet."

"Don't you want something to eat, Peggy?" she asked after a quick look at Peggy's face. "You have eaten naught since breakfast. Or a cup of tea? You will be ill."

"No, I thank thee, Harriet." The maiden leaned her head upon her hand drearily. The world seemed very dark just then.

"Tell me about it, my cousin," spoke Harriet abruptly. "'Twill relieve you to talk, and I like not to see you sit there so miserable."

And at this unlooked-for sympathy on Harriet's part Peggy broke into sudden, bitter weeping.

"He is to die," she cried. "There is no escape, Harriet. Thy brother holds the key, and is to stand guard himself lest aught should go amiss. He is cruel, cruel. Oh, the night is so short in summer! The sunrise comes so soon! Would that it were winter."

"Now just how would that help you, Peggy?" demanded Harriet staring at her. "If one is to die I see not how the season could lessen one pang. After all, Peggy, you must admit that John Drayton deserves his fate. He is a spy. He knew the risk he ran. The sentence is just. 'Tis the recognized procedure in warfare."

"That doth not make it less hard to bear," cried Peggy with passion. "Grant that 'tis just, grant that 'tis the method of procedure in warfare, and yet when its execution falls upon kinsman or friend there is not one of us who would not set such method of procedure at naught. Why, when thee——" She paused suddenly.

"Yes? Go on, Peggy," said her cousin easily. "Or shall I finish for you? You were about to speak, my cousin, of the time when I was a spy. You are thinking that I was perhaps more guilty than John Drayton, insomuch as he hath but given out information while I planned the captivation of both the governor of the Jerseys and the rebel general. And you are thinking, are you not? that you laid yourself under suspicion because of a promise to me. And you are thinking, my little cousin, of how you stole out like a thief in the night to aid me to make my escape. You are thinking of that long night ride, and of all the trials and difficulties in which it involved you. You are thinking of these things, are you not?"

As the girl began to speak Peggy ceased her weeping, pushed back her hair, and presently sat upright regarding her with amazement.

"Yes," she almost gasped as her cousin paused. "Yes, Harriet; I was in very truth thinking of those things."

"And you are thinking," continued Harriet placing a jeweled comb in her hair, and gazing into the mirror, turning her head from side to side to note the effect, "that in spite of all that befell, you took me back to Philadelphia with you when I was ill, and cared for me until I was restored to health. And you are thinking of what you have done for father, and for Clifford. What a set of ingrates you must consider us, Peggy."

"Why does thee say these things to me, Harriet?" demanded Peggy. "How did thee know what I was thinking? And yet thee, and thy father, and—and Clifford too, sometimes, have been most kind to me of late. Why does thee say them?"

"Because I should say them were I placed as you are," returned her cousin calmly. "I think I would shout them from the house-top."

"To what purpose, my cousin? It would not procure John's release. All that can be done was done when Clifford let me see him."

"I would not be so sure of that and I were you," observed Harriet quietly.

"Harriet! What does thee mean?" cried Peggy, her breath coming quickly.

"Peggy, I told you once that some time I should do something that would repay all your favors, did I not?"

"Yes." Peggy's eyes questioned her cousin's eagerly.

"Well, don't you think it's about time that I was fulfilling that promise, my cousin? Suppose now, only suppose, that I could effect this captain's escape? Would that please you?"

"Harriet, tell me. Tell me!" Peggy's arms were about her in a tight embrace. "Thee knows,

Harriet."

"Did it want its captain then?" laughed Harriet teasingly. "Oh, Peggy, Peggy! what a goose you are! Now sit down, and tell me where John Drayton is, and what Clifford said and did. Then I will unravel my plan."

"There are two sentries beside the guard, Harriet," Peggy concluded anxiously, as she related all that had occurred. "They patrol the house, meet and pass each other so that each makes a complete round of the hut. I see not how thee can do anything."

"Don't be so sure, Mistress Peggy," came from Harriet with such an abrupt change of voice that Peggy was startled.

"That sounded just like Clifford," she said.

"Certainly it did." Harriet's eyes were sparkling now. "I can do Clifford to the life. I can deceive even father if the light be dim. I am going to be Captain Williams to-night, Peggy. Clifford is so cock-sure of himself that he grows insufferable. 'Twill be rare sport to take him down a peg. Did'st notice how he spoke to father? He needs a lesson. And father hath been in service so long that he ought to look up to him."

"But," objected Peggy with some excitement, "Clifford will be there on guard. Then how can thee represent him?"

"He will retire early, as he hath already lost much sleep from watching and following after John Drayton. He will sleep until 'tis time to go to the watch, and, Peggy, after Clifford hath lost sleep he always sleeps heavily. He will ask father to waken him, and father in turn will ask me to take note of the time for fear that he might doze. Now I have one of my brother's uniforms which I brought in this afternoon thinking that there might be need of it. I shall don it, after slipping the key of the hut from Cliff's pocket. Then, presto! Captain Williams will go to take charge of his prisoner. If it be somewhat before midnight 'twill be regarded as the natural zeal of a young officer."

"But I see not—" began Peggy.

"If I am the guard with the key in my possession, what doth hinder the door from being opened, my cousin? If I choose to go in to speak to the prisoner of what concern is it to any? Is he not in my charge?"

The girl spoke with such an assumption of her brother's pompous air that Peggy laughed tremulously.

"I do believe that thee can do it," she cried. "Harriet, thee is wonderful!"

"Certainly I can do it," returned Harriet, well pleased with this admiration. "I shall go in and speak to the captain; explain that he is to come out when I let him know that the sentries have passed. When they meet and cross each other there must be a brief time when the front of the dwelling hath but the solitary guard. Once out, however, he will have to rely upon himself. I can do no more."

"He would not wish thee to, Harriet," spoke Peggy quickly. "He told me that could he but pass the door and the guard he did not fear but that he could escape."

"If Clifford goes to bed early the thing can be done," said Harriet going to the door. "It all depends upon that. Now, Peggy, I will send you up some tea. 'Twill be best for you to remain here; such a distressed damsel should remain in seclusion. I will come back after tattoo."

In spite of her cousin's optimistic words Peggy spent the time before her return with much apprehension. It seemed to her that the night was more than half gone ere she appeared. In reality it was but ten o'clock.

"Father thought he had better not go to bed at first," she said her eyes glowing like stars. "I persuaded him that he ought not to lose his rest—that while with the army he never knew when he might be called upon for service which would not admit of repose. Therefore, 'twas the part of wisdom to get it while he could, and I would see that he was aroused in time to call Clifford. Everything hath gone just as we wished, and what we have to do must be done quickly. I must be back in time to restore the key to Cliff's pocket, and then to waken father. Help me to undress, Peggy."

With trembling fingers Peggy unfastened her frock, and soon Harriet stood before her arrayed in the uniform of a British officer.

"Captain Williams, at your service, madam," she said, bowing low, a cocked beaver held gallantly over her heart. Peggy was amazed at the transformation. Every mannerism of Clifford was reproduced with such faithful exactitude that were it not for her wonderful eyes and brilliant complexion she could pass easily for her brother.

"I did not know that thee was so like him," murmured Peggy. "But thine eyes, Harriet. Clifford hath never such eyes as thine."

"'Tis lucky that 'tis dark," answered Harriet reassuringly. "They will not be noticed in the dark. Besides, the guard will be so thankful for relief that 'twill be a small matter to him what my eyes are like. Come, my cousin."

With a stride that was in keeping with the character she had assumed Harriet went swiftly downstairs to the lower story of the dwelling followed by the trembling Peggy, and soon they were

outside in the fresh air of the night.

It was dark, as the girl had said. Only the stars kept watch in the sky, and objects were but dimly perceivable. The noises of the great camp were for the most part stilled. The rows and rows of tents lying southward and eastward of the village gleamed white and ghostlike through the clear obscurity. The glimmer of the dying embers of many camp-fires shone ruddily in the distance, while an occasional sentinel could be descried keeping his monotonous vigil. Silently and quickly went the two girls toward the hut where Drayton was. Presently Harriet stopped under the mulberry tree.

"Wait here," she whispered. Peggy, in a quick gush of tenderness, threw her arms about her.

"If aught should happen to thee," she murmured apprehensively.

"For shame, Mistress Peggy," chided Harriet shaking with merriment. "Is this thy Quaker teaching? Such conduct is most unseemly. Fie, fie!" Unloosening Peggy's clasp she walked boldly toward the hut.

In an intensity of anxiety and expectation Peggy waited. On the still air of the summer night Harriet's voice sounded sharply incisive as she spoke curtly to the guard, and hearing it Peggy knew that had she not been in the secret she could not have told it from Clifford's.

"A bit early, aren't you, sir?" came the voice of the guard.

"I think not, Samuels," replied the pseudo Captain Williams in his loftiest manner, and with a sly chuckle the guard saluted and walked away.

A candle was burning dimly in the hut, and by its feeble rays Peggy could discern the outlines of her cousin as she took her place on guard. The sentries passed and repassed. Presently Harriet rose, coolly unlocked the door and passed inside. Peggy waited breathlessly. After a few moments her cousin reappeared, and again assumed the watchful position at the door. At length the moment for which they waited came. The sentries passed to the side where they crossed on the return rounds. Harriet swung open the door, and a form darted quickly out. The intrepid maiden closed the door noiselessly, and by the time the sentinel had reappeared was sitting stiffly erect, on guard once more.

Soon Peggy felt her hand caught softly.

"John," she breathed.

"Peggy," he answered in so low a tone that she could scarcely distinguish the words. "How did you manage it? I thought your cousin my most implacable enemy."

"'Twas Harriet," she told him. "She wears Clifford's uniform."

"Harriet!" Drayton's whisper expressed the most intense astonishment. "Harriet!" And even as he spoke the name she stood beside them.

"Come," she said. They glided after her, pausing only when they had reached a safe distance from the hut.

"We must not stop to talk," said the English girl in peremptory tones. "Captain Drayton, you will have to depend upon yourself now."

"Gladly," he responded having recovered from his amazement by this time. "How can I thank you, Mistress Harriet? I—"

"You owe me no thanks," she interrupted coldly. "I did it for Peggy. We cannot stay longer. We must get back with the key before Clifford wakes. Go!"

"Yet none the less do I thank you," spoke the youth huskily. "'Twould have been a shameful death. I thank you both. Good-bye!" He said no more, but disappeared into the darkness.

With anxiety the girls returned to the house. All was as quiet as when they left. Without incident the key was restored to Clifford's pocket, and, donning her own attire, Harriet went to rouse Colonel Owen. For it was near midnight.

CHAPTER XXXI—THE DAWN OF THE MORNING

"What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner; O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave!"

—*Francis Scott Key.*

"Hurrah! the foes are moving. Hark to the mingled din
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum, and roaring culverin!

Now by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies now—upon them with the lance!”

—“The Battle of Ivry,” *Macaulay*.

Would the escape be discovered at once? The maidens asked this over and over as they crept into bed, and lay listening to every sound with feverish expectancy. But the night hours came and went, bringing with them no incident that betokened any unusual commotion in the camp. So, declaring that naught was to be learned until morning, Harriet dropped into slumber. Not so Peggy. 377

With the first faint streaks of the dawn sounded the bugle and drum beat of the reveille, and she arose, dressed, and went down to the small portico in front of the house, hoping to hear something which would assure her that Drayton had not been retaken.

The sweet coolness of the early morning came restfully after the excitement of the night, and under its pleasantness Peggy felt all her anxieties fade away, and in their stead there came a deep feeling of peace. Over the world the darkness of the night still brooded, but lightly like a thin curtain whose filmy meshes were even now dissolving under the growing brightness. All the stars save the morning one had been extinguished by the gray dawn, and this first messenger of the day still hung tremblingly in the east, a prophet sign of the light and glory to follow. From the distance came the noises of the great camp, and from a neighboring bush sounded the melody of a mocking-bird. The world was sweet and fair, and life, in spite of dark moments, was well worth while. Peggy had reached this point in her musings when the voice of Colonel Owen startled her: 378

“You are up early, my little cousin. I feared that you would not sleep.”

There was an unwonted note of solicitude in his tones, and it came to the girl with something of a shock that he was thinking of the execution which was to have taken place at this hour. She opened her lips eagerly to reply, and then there came the thought that not yet could she declare her thankfulness until the escape had become known.

“Sometimes,” continued the colonel coming from the door to her side, “sometimes, Peggy, ’tis wise to move about in sorrow. Action distracts the mind, and anything that draws the thoughts from grief is of benefit. Come, my little cousin! let’s you and I go to see the sun rise over the river. ’Tis said to be wondrously beautiful. Will you come?”

“Yes,” answered she gently, touched by his thought of her.

“We shall have just time to reach the point,” he said leading the way to the gate, “but there will be need for haste.” 379

The main street of the village faced the river, and this they followed eastward. The way led by the hut where Drayton had been confined, and Peggy glanced quickly at it. It was closed and apparently deserted, with no sign of sentinel, or guard. She gave a sigh of relief. William Owen’s brow contracted in a frown.

“Peggy, I did not think,” he exclaimed with contrition. “I forgot that we should pass by the place.”

“It doth not matter,” she returned so cheerfully that his face brightened. “Shall we go on, Cousin William?”

The walk took them through rows and rows of tents where the soldiers were busily engaged in preparing breakfast, and on to a high point of land far to the east of the village facing Chesapeake Bay.

The shadows still lay darkly under trees and shrubs. The distant woods were veiled and still, but already in the east a faint rose bloom was creeping. Below them was the river and on its broad bosom floated the British ships. The soft murmur of the waves as they caressed the shore came ripplingly with musical rhythm. The color of the sky deepened and grew to deepest crimson, and water, tents, woods and fields bloomed and blushed under the roseate effulgence. Great shafts of golden light flamed suddenly athwart the rosy clouds. The green of the woods, and the purple mists of the horizon became gradually discernible. The waters were tinged with rainbow hues. As the crimson, and purple, and gold of the river mingled with the gold, and purple, and crimson of the bay the sun rose majestically from a sea of amber cloud. A wonderful blaze of glory streamed over river and bay. Suddenly from around a bend to the southward, as though they were part of the picture, three ships sailed into the midst of the enchanting spectacle. Three ships, full rigged, towering pyramids of sails, which moved with graceful dignity across the broad expanse of glorified water, and came to rest like snowy sea-gulls near the Gloucester shore. 380

“The French fleet,” burst from Peggy’s lips involuntarily.

“The French fleet! Nonsense! Girl, why do you say that?” exclaimed her cousin. “What reason have you for thinking them so? No, they are the ships that Sir Henry was to send as convoy to the transports. We have expected them.” He regarded the vessels keenly for a time, and all at once an uneasy expression crossed his face. 381

“Why do they not answer the signals of the ‘Charon’?” he muttered. “See! They do not respond, yet our ship signals. Odds life, my cousin! I believe that you are right.”

Peggy began to tremble as Drayton’s words came to her.

“If the French fleet comes, the end of the war comes with it.” Could it be? Was it in very truth the

beginning of the end?

That for which the people prayed had come at last; for it was indeed the French fleet, and with its coming came the dawn of victory. The sun of Liberty was brightening into the full day of Freedom when, her last fetter thrown aside, America should take her place among the nations.

"There is a fourth vessel coming," remarked Colonel Owen presently. "A frigate this time. The others were ships of the line. We must go back, Peggy. My Lord Cornwallis should know of this arrival."

382

With a great hope filling her heart Peggy followed him silently back to the dwelling. He left her at the door, and hastened to the house of Secretary Nelson, where the earl had his headquarters. Harriet was already at the breakfast table.

"Where have you been, Peggy?" she asked. "Here I have searched all through the house but could find no one. I was beginning to regard myself as a deserted damsel. Were you seeking further adventures?"

"No, Harriet," Peggy laughed lightly. "I went with thy father to see the sun rise over the river. 'Twas a beautiful sight. Thee must see it. Four ships came while we were there and Cousin William hath gone to inform Lord Cornwallis of the fact."

"The English fleet, I make no doubt," remarked Harriet carelessly. "I think it hath been expected. Did'st see anything of Clifford?"

"No." A perplexed look shadowed Peggy's face. "Nor did I hear a word anent the escape, Harriet. The hut was closed, and there was no sentry about it. 'Tis strange that we have heard naught regarding the matter. Would that Clifford would come."

383

As though in answer to her wish Clifford himself at this moment appeared at the door. He was haggard and pale, and he sank into a chair as though utterly weary.

"You are worn out, Clifford," exclaimed Harriet with some anxiety. "Have a cup of tea. You take your military duties far too seriously, I fear me."

"Yes, I will take the tea, Harriet," said the youth drearily. "Make it strong, my sister. Everything hath gone awry. That Yankee captain escaped."

"Escaped?" Harriet brought him the tea, which he quaffed eagerly. "Tell us about it, Clifford. How did it happen?"

"I can't understand it," he said dejectedly. "'Tis more like magic than aught else. When I got to the hut last night the sentries were there on duty, but there was no guard. I asked where Samuels was, and was astonished when they declared that I myself had sent him away an hour before. Suspecting something wrong at this I went at once inside the hut, and found it empty. The door was locked, the key in my possession all the time, but Drayton was gone. As near as I can get at it some one impersonated me, and released him. But how came any one by a key? There was a plot on foot yesterday for his rescue. His parting remark to you, Peggy, seemed to indicate that he expected something to happen, but I thought that I had taken every precaution."

384

"Then he did escape, Clifford?" questioned Peggy eagerly.

"Yes," answered the lad with bitterness. "He escaped. I do not expect you to be sorry, Peggy, but I would almost rather have died than to have it happen while he was in my charge. 'Tis a dire misfortune."

"But not of such gravity as another that hath befallen us, my son," said Colonel Owen coming into the room in time to hear the last remark. "The French fleet hath entered the Chesapeake, and now lies at anchor off the Gloucester shore. Peggy recognized it at once, though I see not how she knew. His lordship hath despatched a courier to find if there are others lower down the bay."

385

"Why should the coming of the French fleet be of such consequence?" queried Harriet.

"It shuts off our communication with New York, which means that we can receive neither supplies nor reinforcements from Sir Henry Clinton. If our fleet doth not come to our assistance we may find ourselves in a desperate situation."

"There is no cause for worry, sir," spoke Clifford. "If we are cut off on the water side, what doth hinder us from retreating through North Carolina to our forces further South?"

"Thee can't," uttered Peggy breathlessly. "I am sorry for thee, Cousin William, and for thy army. Still I am glad that at last the long war may be brought to a close."

"Peggy, just what do you mean?" demanded Colonel Owen sharply.

"I was considering our own forces," answered Peggy who had spoken without thinking. "Would not the Marquis, and General Wayne, and all the militia try to keep thy people from cutting through?"

"Fore George, they would!" ejaculated the colonel. "At least they should try. By all the laws of military warfare they should have us surrounded, and if that be the case we are in for a siege. Come, Peggy, you are improving. We shall have a warrior of you yet."

386

"Don't, Cousin William," cried Peggy. "'Tis not my wisdom at all. I but repeat what I have heard."

"'Tis sound policy, wherever you may have heard it," declared Colonel Owen. "Though I hope for our sakes that the rebels may not enforce it. Come, my son. We have no time for further

loitering.”

Roused from his dream of security at last Cornwallis, as had been foreseen, meditated a retreat through the Carolinas. It was too late. The James River was filled with armed vessels covering the transfer of French troops which had been brought to the assistance of Lafayette. He reconnoitered Williamsburg, but found it was too strong to be forced. Cut off in every direction, he now proceeded to strengthen his defenses, sending repeated expresses to Sir Henry Clinton to apprise him of his desperate situation.

The days that ensued were days of anxiety. All sorts of rumors were afloat in the encircled garrison. One stood forth from among the rest and was repeated insistently until at length it crystallized into verity: Washington himself was coming with his army and the allies. Colonel Owen's face was grave indeed as he confirmed the tidings. 387

“I cannot understand how the rebel general could slip away from the Hudson with a whole army right under Sir Henry's nose,” he complained. “I know that the commander-in-chief expected an attack, and was preparing for it; for that very reason he should have been more keenly upon the alert. Where were his scouts, his spies, that he did not know what his adversary was doing? Had he no secret service? He grows sluggish, I fear me.”

The situation brightened for Cornwallis when part of the English fleet under Admiral Graves took a peep in at the Chesapeake, but only a slight action with the French vessels followed, and then the English ships sailed away to New York. Once more the black cloud lowered, and soon it burst in all its fury over the doomed army. On the twenty-eighth of September the videttes came flying in to report that the combined army of Americans and French were advancing in force. Seeing himself outflanked the British commander withdrew into the town and the inner line of defenses, and began a furious cannonading to prevent the advance of the allies. And now from Sir Henry came the cheering intelligence that the British fleet would soon come to his relief. 388

Colonel Owen and Clifford were on duty almost constantly, and the two girls were much alone. The servants left precipitately, and the maidens gladly undertook the housework as a relief from anxiety. Soon the firewood gave out, and they were reduced to the necessity of living on uncooked food. Encompassed on every side there was no opportunity for foraging, and the supplies of the garrison depleted rapidly. But meagerness of rations could be borne better than sound of cannon, although there was as yet no bombardment from the Americans—a state of affairs, however, that did not last long.

On the afternoon of the eighth of October Peggy and Harriet sat on the small portico of the dwelling listening to the cannonading which had been going on all day from the British works. 389

“Harriet,” spoke Peggy abruptly, “does thee remember that father is outside there with the army?”

“Oh, Peggy,” gasped her cousin. “How dreadful! Suppose that father, or Clifford, should hurt him? Wouldn't it be awful?”

“Yes,” assented Peggy paling. “Or if he should hurt them.”

“There is not so much danger of that,” said Harriet. “Clifford said that while they seemed to be throwing up earthworks there had been no big guns mounted, and he did not believe that the rebels had many. 'Twould be a great task to transport heavy ordnance from the Hudson.”

“But they have had the assistance of the French fleet,” reminded Peggy. “Thee should know by this time, Harriet, that if General Washington undertakes aught, he does it thoroughly. I fear we shall find soon that he hath brought all his artillery.”

As if to confirm her words there came at this moment a deafening crash, a tearing, screeching sound, as a solid shot tore through the upper story of the house. The two maidens sprang to their feet, clasping each other in terror. Long after Peggy learned that it was Washington himself who had fired the shot. Instantly the roar of cannon and mortars followed. The earth trembled under the thunder. The air was filled with shot and shell, and roar of artillery. The bombardment of the town had begun, and Earl Cornwallis had received his first salutation. 390

In the midst of the commotion Clifford came running.

“Get to the caves,” he shouted. “Ye must not stay here.”

Panic-stricken, the girls hastened after him to the bluff over the river in the side of which caves had been dug in anticipation of this very event.

“You should not be here, Peggy,” said the youth when they had reached the protection of the dugout. “If you wish I will try to get a flag to send you outside. 'Tis no place for a rebel.” This last he spoke with some bitterness. 391

“And leave me alone, Peggy?” cried Harriet in dismay. “Oh, you would not!”

“No, Harriet,” answered Peggy who in truth would have preferred almost any place to Yorktown at that moment. “I will not leave thee if thee wishes me to stay.”

“Then ye must go over to Gloucester Point,” cried the lad. “'Tis said that all the women and children are to be sent there.”

“No,” said Harriet decidedly. “We will stay right here. We will be safe, and I will not leave you and father. Why, you both might be killed, or wounded.”

And from this stand neither Clifford nor her father could move her. The time that followed was

one to try the stoutest heart. The houses of the village were honeycombed by shot. Scenes of horror were enacted which passed all description. Shot and shell rained without cessation day and night. Horses, for lack of forage, were slain by hundreds, and the girls had no means of finding out if their own pets were included in the slaughter. The shrieks and groans of the wounded mingled with the roar of artillery, and added to the awfulness. And nearer, ever nearer, approached the allies. The first parallel^[7] of the Americans was opened and passed.

392

From the outlying redoubts the British were forced backward, and the second parallel opened. The situation was becoming desperate. The defenses were crumbling under the heavy, unceasing fire. Abatis, and parapet, and ditch were splintered, and torn, and leveled. The garrison was losing many men, and closer still came the patriots. The end was fast approaching. The Hector of the British army was opposed by a leader who never left anything to chance.

And in the caves there was no occupation to relieve the tension, save that of watching the shells. Peggy and Harriet stood at the entrance of their dugout on the evening of the eleventh of October engaged in this diversion. Sometimes the shells of the besieging army overreached the town and fell beyond the bluff into the river, and bursting, threw up great columns of water. In the darkness the bombs appeared like fiery meteors with blazing tails. Suddenly from out of the clouds of smoke and night a red-hot shell soared, curved, and fell upon the "Charon," the British ship lying in the river. Almost instantly the vessel was enwrapped in a torrent of fire which spread with vivid brightness among the rigging, and ran with amazing rapidity to the top of the masts. From water edge to truck the vessel was in flames. The "Guadalupe," lying near by, together with two other smaller ships, caught fire also, and all the river blazed in a magnificent conflagration. About and above them was fire and smoke, while cannon belched thunder and flame.

393

"Oh, this awful war! This awful war!" shrieked Harriet suddenly. "I shall go mad, Peggy."

Peggy drew her back within the cave. "Let us not look longer, Harriet," she said soothing the girl as she would a child. "I hope, I believe that it will not last. How can it go on? Oh, Harriet, Harriet! we could bear anything if it were quiet for only a little while."

"At first," sobbed Harriet, "I thought I could not bear for the British to be beaten; but now if only father and Clifford are spared, I care not."

394

It was near the end now. After a gallant sortie by which the English regained a redoubt from the French only to lose it again, and after an attempt to cut through on the Gloucester side of the river Cornwallis gave way to despair. On the morning of the seventeenth Clifford came to the cave. He was haggard, disheveled, and grimy with powder. Tears were streaming from his eyes, and his appearance was so woebegone that the maidens ran to him with cries of alarm.

"Harriet," he cried, flinging himself on the ground with a sob, "it's all over! They are beating the parley."

[7] Parallel—a line of entrenchments parallel to those of the British.

CHAPTER XXXII—"LIGHTS OUT"

395

"Oh! these were hours when thrilling joy repaid
A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears—
The heartsick faintness of the hope delay'd,
The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears,
That tracked with terror six long rolling years."

—"Lord of the Isles," *Scott*.

As the youth spoke the cannonading which for ten long days of thunderous bombardment had raged incessantly suddenly ceased, giving place to a stillness painful in its intensity.

"What doth that mean?" exclaimed Harriet.

"It means a cessation of hostilities," explained Clifford huskily. "It means that old Britain is beaten. Oh! if I were Cornwallis, I'd fight until there was not a man left. I'd never yield."

"Blame him not, Clifford," said Harriet. "He hath made a brave defense. For my part, I am thankful that 'tis over. Have you seen father?"

396

"No," answered the youth. "Not since yesterday."

"Then let us find him," suggested she. "'Twill be a relief to get out of this cave. Come, Peggy!"

And nothing loth Peggy followed her. The village was utterly wrecked. On every side were mute tokens of the fury of the siege. The houses were completely dismantled; in many instances literally riddled by shot. The streets had been torn into great holes and ploughed into deep furrows by the burrowing of shells. There were sights of horror everywhere, and the girls grew faint and sick as they hastened with averted eyes to their former dwelling, which was found to be less dilapidated than many of the others. Clifford went in search of his father, and soon returned

with him. Colonel Owen was as gloomy as his son over the prospect of surrender. He frowned at sight of Peggy.

"I suppose that you are rejoicing over our defeat, my little cousin," he exclaimed harshly.

"I am glad indeed that the cause hath succeeded, my cousin," answered the girl frankly. "We have fought so long that 'tis matter for rejoicing when at length the victory is ours. Yet," she added meeting his look with one of compassion, "I am sorry for thee, too. I grieve to see either a proud nation or a proud man humbled."

"And is it indeed over, as Clifford says, father?" questioned Harriet.

"Yes," he told her, his whole manner expressive of the deepest chagrin. "Washington hath consented to a cessation of hostilities for two hours, but there is no doubt as to the outcome. Our works are shattered, and the ammunition almost exhausted. There is naught else to do but surrender, but 'tis a bitter dose to swallow."

He covered his face with his hands and groaned. Clifford turned upon Peggy with something of irritation.

"Why don't you say what you are thinking?" he cried. "Say that you are glad, but don't for pity sake look sorry for us!"

"I am not thinking of thee at all," returned Peggy wistfully, "but of father. Neither thee nor thy father is hurt, but what of my father?"

"And do you wish to go to him?"

"Yes," she uttered eagerly.

"It can be arranged," he said. "I will see to a flag." As he started to leave them William Owen looked up.

"Include Harriet in that too, my son," he said. "This will be a sad place for her until after the manner of capitulation hath been arranged."

"I shall not go, father," interposed the maiden raising her head proudly. "An English girl hath no place among victorious foes. Send Peggy and you will, but I shall not leave you in your humiliation."

"So be it," he said.

Thus it came about that Peggy found herself outside the British works, advancing toward the American lines under a flag. Less than three hundred yards from the shattered works of the British the second parallel of the patriots extended, and in front of it were the batteries which had raked the town with such destructive fire. Midway of this distance they beheld the solitary figure of a man approaching, also bearing a flag. At sight of him Peggy forgot her escort, forgot everything, and ran forward uttering a cry of gladness.

"Father, father!" she screamed.

"My little lass!" David Owen clasped her in a close embrace. "I was coming in search of thee. I have been wild with anxiety concerning thee since I learned that thou wert in the town. It hath been a fearful time! Had not our cause been just I could not have borne it. There is much to tell and hear, lass. Let us seek a place more retired."

The batteries of the patriots, the redoubts taken from the enemy, and the parallel, were connected by a covert way and angling works, all mantled by more than a hundred pieces of cannon and mortars. David Owen hurried his daughter past these quickly, for the girl paled at sight of the dreadful engines of war whose fearful thundering had wrought such havoc and destruction. Presently they found themselves somewhat apart from the movements of the army, and Peggy poured forth all her woes. There was indeed much to relate. She had not seen her father for three long years, and in his presence she felt as though there could no longer be trouble.

"And after they had been so kind of late," concluded Peggy in speaking of their cousins, "they seemed just to-day as though they did not wish me with them. Even Harriet, who hath been clamorous for me to remain with her, seemed so."

"Mind it not, lass," said he consolingly. "'Tis because they did not wish a witness to their humiliation. After the first brunt of feeling hath worn away I make no doubt but that their manner will be better even than before. Ah! yonder is Captain Drayton. The boy hath been well-nigh crazed at thy peril. I will call him."

The rest of the day and the next also flags passed and repassed between the lines, and on the afternoon of the latter commissioners met at the Moore House to draw up articles of capitulation. These were acceded to and signed. The British received the same terms which they had imposed upon the Americans at Charlestown. Nothing now remained but the observance of the formal surrender, which was set for the next day.

The nineteenth of October dawned gloriously. About noon the combined armies marched to their positions in the large field lying south of the town, and were drawn up in two lines about a mile long, on the right and left of a road running from the village. On the right of the road were the American troops; on the left those of the French. A large concourse of people had gathered from all the countryside to see the spectacle. Every countenance glowed with satisfaction and joy. The long struggle was virtually ended. It had been a contest not for power, not for aggrandizement,

but for a great principle.

To Peggy's joy it was found that her little mare had not been killed, and so, mounted on Star, she was permitted to view the pageant by her father's side.

The French troops presented a most brilliant spectacle in white uniforms with colored trimmings, and with plumed and decorated officers at their head. Along the line floated their banners of white silk embroidered with the golden lilies. They were gallant allies in gallant array. Their gorgeous standards caught the glint of the sun and glittered and sparkled in its rays. But the girl turned to view the less attractive Americans. 402

There was variety of dress, poor at best. The French gentlemen laughed at the lack of uniform, but respected the fighting abilities of the men so clad. But if many wore but linen overalls there was a soldierly bearing that commanded attention. These men were conquerors. Their very appearance bespoke the hardships and privations they had undergone to win in the struggle. Over their heads there fluttered the starry banner which through their exertions had earned its right to live. Through these men a nation had been born into the world. The golden lilies were soon to wither; the red, white and blue of America was to be taken later by France in their stead.

At two o'clock the captive army filed out of the garrison. "Let there be no cheering," had been the order from Washington. "They have made a brave defense." And so the march was made between silent ranks of conquerors, the music being the then well-known air of "The World Turned Upside Down." The tune probably expressed very accurately the feelings of the men who were to lay down their arms that autumn afternoon. Their world had indeed been turned upside down when they were prisoners of the men whom they had affected to despise. Each soldier had been given a new uniform by Cornwallis, and the army marched quietly and with precision to the field where they were to lay down their arms. But if there was quietness there was sullenness also. The pride and spirit of Britain were put to a severe test, and many could scarcely conceal their mortification as they marched with cased colors, an indignity that had been inflicted upon the garrison at Charlestown. 403

As they came forth every eye sought, not the plumed leader of the French, but the plainly attired gentleman who sat upon a noble charger, and viewed their coming with an inscrutable countenance. This was the man but for whom they would have been victorious—that noble and gracious figure which signified to all the world that the American Revolution had ended in complete victory, the Virginia planter, whom they had despised at the beginning of the conflict. They regarded him now with something nearly approaching awe—the leader who had encountered trials and obstacles such as no general had ever before been called upon to face. The trials had been overcome and endured; the obstacles surmounted, and the country carried on to victory in spite of itself. 404

Earl Cornwallis pleaded indisposition, and sent the soldiers who worshipped him out to stand their humiliation without him. It was General O'Hara who tendered his sword to General Washington who, with dignity, motioned that it should be given to General Lincoln, who had been in command at Charlestown when that place surrendered to the British.

It was over at last, and the stars and stripes floated from the redoubts at Yorktown. The officers were released on parole, and the men were to be held prisoners in the states of Virginia and Maryland.

"And now what shall be done with thee, lass?" queried David Owen of Peggy.

"Let us go home, father," cried Peggy. "I am so tired of war and its surroundings. Can thee not get a leave?" 405

"Yes," he said. "To-morrow we will start for home."

"For home and mother," cried Peggy joyfully.

The Stories in this Series are:

PEGGY OWEN
PEGGY OWEN, PATRIOT
PEGGY OWEN AT YORKTOWN
PEGGY OWEN AND LIBERTY



Mrs. Madison was born in Kirksville, Adair County, Missouri, but when she was four years old her parents removed to Louisiana, Missouri, and there her girlhood was spent. She was educated in the public schools of that place, and graduated from the High School with the highest honor—the valedictory.

As a child she was passionately fond of fairy stories, dolls and flowers. Up to her eleventh year the book that influenced her most was “Pilgrim’s Progress.” Mrs. Madison’s father had a large library filled with general literature, and she read whatever she thought interesting. In this way she became acquainted with the poets, ancient history and the novelists, Dickens and Scott. It was not until she was twelve that she came in contact with Miss Alcott’s works, but after that Joe, Meg, Amy and Beth were her constant companions. At this time she was also devoted to “Scottish Chiefs,” “Thaddeus of Warsaw” and “Ivanhoe,” and always poetry.

She doesn’t remember a time when she did not write. From her earliest childhood she made up little stories. In school she wrote poems, stories and essays. When she became a teacher she wrote her own stories and entertainments for the children’s work.

Mrs. Madison’s stories for girls are:

Peggy Owen

Peggy Owen, Patriot

Peggy Owen at Yorktown

Peggy Owen and Liberty

A Colonial Maid of Old Virginia

A Daughter of the Union

In Doublet and Hose

A Maid of King Alfred’s Court

A Maid of the First Century

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PEGGY OWEN AT YORKTOWN ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or

access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on

the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS

OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.