BARRETT JAMES FRANCIS

THE LOYALIST

James Barrett

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Barrett J.

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Содержание

The Loyalist A Story of the American Revolution

FOREWORD

Historical facts constitute the background of this story. Its hero and its heroine are, of course, fictitious; but the deportment of General Arnold, the Shippen family, the several military and civic personages throughout the story is described, for the most part, accurately and in conformity with the sober truths of history. Pains have been taken to depict the various historical episodes which enter into the story – such as the attempted formation of the Regiment of Roman Catholic Volunteers, the court-martial of Major General Arnold, the Military Mass on the occasion of the anniversary of American Independence – with as much fidelity to truth as possible. The anti-Catholic sentences, employed in the reprimand of Captain Meagher, are anachronisms; they are identical, however, with utterances made in the later life of Benedict Arnold. The influence of Peggy Shippen upon her husband is vouched for by eminent authority.

Due appreciation and sincere gratitude must be expressed to those authors from whom much information has been taken, – to John Gilmary Shea, in his "History of the Catholic Church in the United States"; to Martin I. J. Griffin's "Catholics and the American Revolution"; to F. J. Stimson's excellent work, "Memoirs of Benedict Arnold"; to John Fiske's "American Revolution," and to the many other works which have freely been made use of in the course of this writing. Cordial thanks are also due to those who have generously assisted by suggestions and criticisms, and especially to those who have devoted their valuable moments to the revision of the proof sheets.

J. F. B.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

"Please continue, Peggy. You were telling me who were there and what they wore. Oh, dear! I am so sorry mother would not give me leave to go. Was it all too gay?"

"It was wonderful!" was the deliberate reply. "We might have danced till now had not Washington planned that sudden attack. We had to leave then, – that was early this morning, – and I spent the day abed."

It was now well into the evening and the two girls had been seated for the longest time, it seemed, on the small sofa which flanked the east wall of the parlor. The dusk, which had begun to grow thick and fast when Marjorie had come to visit Peggy, was now quite absorbed into darkness; still the girls had not lighted the candles, choosing to remain in the dark until the story of the wonderful experience of the preceding day had been entirely related.

The grand pageant and mock tournament, the celebrated Mischienza, arranged in honor of General Howe, who had resigned his office as Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's forces in America to return to England, there to defend himself against his enemies in person, as General Burgoyne was now doing from his seat in Parliament, was an event long to be remembered not alone from the extravagance of its display, but from the peculiar prominence it afforded the foremost families of the city, particularly that of the Shippens.

Edward Shippen was a gentleman of rank, of character, of fortune, a member of one of the oldest and most respected families in the city of Philadelphia, whose ancestor, of the same name, had been Mayor of the city nigh an hundred years before. He belonged to the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and while he took no active interest on either side during the years of the war, still he was generally regarded as one of the sympathizers of the Crown. Because of the social eminence which the family enjoyed and the brilliance and genial hospitality which distinguished their affairs, the Shippens were considered the undisputed leaders of the social set of Philadelphia. The three lovely Misses Shippen were the belles of the more aristocratic class. They were toasted frequently by the gay English officers during the days of the British occupation, for their father's house was often the rendezvous of the titled celebrities of the day.

"And was your Captain there, too?" continued Marjorie, referring, of course, to Captain Monstresor, the engineer of the undertaking, an erstwhile admirer of Mistress Peggy.

"You must know, my dear, that he arranged the spectacle. I saw little of him until the dance. In truth, he seemed more popular than General Howe himself."

Marjorie sat up.

"Tell me! Did the tournament begin the program?"

"No!" replied Peggy. "The military procession of boats and barges with Lords Howe and Rawdon, General Howe and General Clinton, opened the event in the late morning, sailing up the river to the Wharton House, the scene of the tournament."

Marjorie nodded.

"The noise of the guns was deafening. When the flotilla arrived at Walnut Grove, which was lined with troops and bedecked brilliantly with flags and bunting, the pageant opened."

"Where were you in the meantime?" asked Marjorie, careful to lose no detail.

"We were seated in the pavilions, – seven ladies in each, – clothed in Turkish garments, each wearing in her turban the favor to be bestowed on her victorious knight."

"And who was your knight?"

"The Honorable Captain Cathcart," quickly replied Peggy, her eyes beaming with a smile of evident satisfaction and proud joy.

"Lord Cathcart, whom I met here?"

"The same," answered Peggy. "He was the leader of the 'Knights of the Blended Rose.'"

"What an odd name!" she exclaimed.

"I know it. They were named after their device. They were dressed in white and red silk, mounted on gray horses and attended by esquires. They were preceded by a herald who bore their device, two roses intertwined above the motto, 'We droop when separated.' My knight rode at the head, attended by two British Officers, and his two esquires, the one bearing his lance, the other his shield emblazoned with his device – Cupid astride a lion – over the motto, Surrounded by love.'"

"You little Tory," interrupted Marjorie. "I shall tell General Washington that you are disloyal and have lent your sympathy to a British Officer."

"I care little. The Yankees are without refinement – "

"Don't you dare say that," snapped Marjorie, her whole being animated with sudden anger. "It is untrue and you know it. They are patriots and – "

"Forgive me, dear," murmured Peggy, laying her hand on the arm of her irate friend. "I said that only in jest. I shan't continue if you are vexed."

There was silence.

"Please! I am not angry," Marjorie pleaded. "Do continue."

"I forget my story now. What did I tell? There was so much that I am confused."

"The Knights of the Rose!" suggested Marjorie.

"Oh, yes! Well, this body of knights made the circuit of the square and then saluted their ladies. On a sudden, a herald advanced with a flourish of trumpets and announced that the ladies of the Blended Rose excelled in wit, beauty, grace, charm and accomplishments those of the whole world and challenged a denial by deeds of arms. Whereupon a counter sound of trumpets was heard from afar and another herald galloped before a body of knights in black and orange silk with the device – a wreath of flowers surrounding a burning heart – over the motto, 'Love and Glory.' These were the Knights of the Burning Mountain, who came to dispute the claim of the Knights of the Blended Rose."

"It must have been gorgeous!" exclaimed Marjorie, clasping her hands before her.

"Indeed it was. Well, after several preliminaries, the encounter took place, the knights receiving their lances together with their shields from their esquires, whereupon they saluted and encountered at full speed, shivering their spears against the shield of their adversaries. They next encountered and discharged their pistols and then fought with swords. Again the two chiefs of the warring factions, Captain Cathcart of the Blended Rose and Captain Watson of the Burning Mountain, met in mid field to try their arms as champions of their respective parties. They parried and thrust with true knightly valor until Major Grayson, as marshal of the field, intervened at the critical moment, declaring the ladies of both parties to be fully satisfied with the proofs of love and the feats of valor displayed by their knights. He then commanded the combatants to desist. Thus ended the tournament."

"How wonderful!" sighed Marjorie. "I would I had been present. And your knight was the hero?"

"Of course," replied Peggy with a smile. "I am sure that he would have worsted Captain Watson, had not the Major stepped in. But the banquet was splendid."

"And Captain Cathcart!" reminded Marjorie, with a slight manifestation of instinctive envy.

"Why! He attended me, of course," was the proud response. "Each knight escorted his lady through the triumphal arches erected in honor of the Generals who were present, along the long avenue lined on both sides with the troops and the colors of the army. At the third arch, which was dedicated to General Howe and which bore on its top a huge flying figure of Fame, we entered the great Hall.

There refreshments were served and the dancing began. It continued until midnight. The windows were then thrown open and we witnessed the wonderful display of fireworks. And then the supper!

"Gorgeous, of course!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"Gorgeous, indeed!" Peggy repeated – "a great room, with fifty or more pier glasses, draped with green silk and hundreds of varieties of flowers of as many hues and shades. An hundred branches of lights, thousands of tapers, four hundred and thirty covers, and there must have been more than twelve hundred dishes. The attendants were twenty-four black slaves garbed oriental fashion with silver collars and bracelets. And then we danced and danced until dawn, when we were interrupted by the sound of distant cannon."

"And then your knights were called to real war," remarked Marjorie.

"For the moment all thought this to be part of the program, the signal for another great spectacle. Suddenly everything broke into confusion. The officers rushed to their commands. The rest of us betook ourselves as best we could. We came home and went to bed, tired in every bone. Mother is sorry that I attended, for she thought it too gay. But I would not have lost it for the world."

And perhaps her mother was right. For Peggy was but eighteen, the youngest of the Shippen family. The other girls were somewhat older, yet the three were considered the most beautiful débutantes of the city, the youngest, if in anything, the more renowned for grace and manner. Her face was of that plumpness to give it charm, delicate in contour, rich with the freshness of the bloom of youth. Her carriage betrayed breeding and dignity. And all was sweetened by a magnetism and vivacity that charmed all who came within her influence. Still her attitude was the more prepossessing than permanent.

Like her father, she was a Quaker in many of her observances. To that creed she adhered with a rigorous determination. She had so often manifested her political sympathies, which were intensified to an irrational degree as appeared from passionate disclosures, that her father was led to observe that she was more a Tory at heart than General Howe himself.

Her companion, Marjorie Allison, was about her own age, but as intensely American as she was English. Her parents had always lived in Philadelphia, as their parents had before them, coming originally from the Mother country to which they were now opposed in martial strife. The thrill of patriotism for the cause of the infant republic, which throbbed violently within her breast, had been inspired to enthusiasm more by the intense antipathy for the Church of England than for the government itself. This antipathy was kept alive and invigorated by the doleful memory of the privations and adversities endured by her ancestors from the agents of this same government because of their Catholic worship and their heroic efforts to follow their religious convictions.

The sympathies of the Allisons were undivided. They were notorious Whigs, ardent champions of the rights which the new government so strongly asserted, and which they had pledged themselves stoutly to defend; ardent champions of the eternal principles on which the new republic was built. The psychology of the Allisons' allegiance did not differ from that of innumerable other families. Usually, strange to relate, society, while constantly moving forward with eager speed, is just as constantly looking backward with tender regrets. But no regrets were here. Religious persecution leaves no tender memories in its trail. Dissatisfaction with the past is seldom rendered more memorable than by the fanatic attempt to separate the soul from its God.

Marjorie and Peggy had been friends from girlhood. They understood each other very well. Each knew and appreciated the other's peculiarities, her virtues and her foibles, her political propensities and religious convictions. They never discussed their religious differences. They avoided such a clash out of respect for each other's convictions. Not so, however, in matters relating to the form of government. Marjorie was a Whig, an ardent champion of the rights of the Colonists, while her more aristocratic friend was Tory in her sentiments, moderate, it is true, but nevertheless at times much inclined to the extreme. Notwithstanding these differences, their friendship had been constant and they had always shared their joys and sorrows.

The days of the British occupation of the city had been glorious ones for Peggy and her sisters. The love of display and finery which was characteristic of them was satiated by the brilliance and the gayety of the winter season during which the titled British Officers were fêted and entertained extravagantly. None outshone the Shippens in the magnificence of their entertainments. Their house was ever open in hospitality, and more than once it had been whispered about that their resources had reached the point of exhaustion.

At these functions Marjorie found herself a welcome guest. For Peggy took care that her little friend was never overlooked, even if on one occasion a pang of regret sent her to bed with copious tears when the favor for the evening had been bestowed upon her fair guest. Marjorie, however, maintained a mature composure and a marked concern, as was her wont, throughout it all, and Peggy again reassured herself that her misgivings were without foundation. For Marjorie disliked the titled gentry. They were without exception hostile to the faith to which she so steadfastly adhered. She bore with them merely for the pleasure which she derived from the coterie made brilliant by their participation.

And so the winter passed, giving way to lovely, spring, whose gentle zephyrs dispelled the cold, the ice and the snow that had sent the British into the ballrooms for protection, and had afflicted and distressed the patriots at Valley Forge. With the advent of favorable weather, operations began anew; the hopes and the courage of the colonists were now exalted to the highest pitch. The disasters of Long Island and Fort Washington had been offset by the victory at Saratoga. While the British had taken and held the important cities of New York and Philadelphia as well as the town of Newport, still they had lost an army and had gained nothing but the ground on which they were encamped.

Now, at the beginning of the fourth period of the war, the joyful news was heralded far and wide that the government of France had formally acknowledged the independence of the United States and that help was on the way to assist the Colonists in their struggle. At the same time the conciliatory measures of Lord North in Parliament gave indication to the patriots that the British Government was weakening. The joy of the Whigs knew no bounds, and Marjorie was beside herself as she related the glad tidings over and over again. The fourth epoch of the war augured well for the success of the cause.

II

In all the Colonies there was at this stage of the war no city more important than Philadelphia. Whatever there was among the Colonists of wealth, of comfort, of social refinement, of culture and of courtly manners was here centered. Even the houses were more imposing than elsewhere throughout the country. They were usually well constructed of stone or brick with either thatched or slated roofs. They were supplied with barns bursting with the opulence of the fields. The countryside round about was teeming with fatness. Indeed, in all the colonies no other place was so replete with affluence and comfort.

Nor was it without its gentry, cultured and dignified. Its inhabitants were, for the most part, made up of members of old Quaker families and others faithful to the Church of England and devoted to the political principles of the Mother country, – the proud possessors of wealth and the exemplars of the most dignified deportment. Already were its fair sex renowned abroad as well as at home for their "beauty, grace and intelligence." They moved with all the gayety and charm of court ladies. The wealth and luxury of a capital city were there; for even in the infancy of the republic, Philadelphia had attained a distinction, unique and preëminent. What was more natural, then, than that their allegiance should be divided; the so-called fashionable set adhering to the crown; the common townsfolk, the majority of whom were refugees from an obnoxious autocracy, zealously espousing the colonists' cause, and the middle class, who were comprised of those families holding a more or less neutral position in the war, and who were willing to preserve their estates and possessions,

remaining undecided, and in their manner maintaining good offices with both sides throughout the strife.

The British Army took possession of the city, after its victorious encounter on the Brandywine, on the twenty-sixth of September, 1777. Sir William Howe selected for his headquarters the finest house in the city, the mansion which was once the home of Governor Richard Penn, grandson of William Penn. Here General Howe and his staff of officers passed a gay winter. They were much more interested in the amusements, the gayeties, the dissipations carried on in this old Quaker City than in any efforts to capture the army of General Washington.

The infatuate populace, indifferent to the progress of the Revolution, unaffected for the most part by the righteousness of the cause of the Colonists, became enamored of the brilliance and the fashion and the display of the English nobility. They cordially welcomed General Howe and his young officers, electing them the leaders and the favorites in all the social gayeties and amusements of the season. Such was the luxury and dissipation of the British in the city, at dinner parties, cock-fights, amateur theatrical performances, that Dr. Franklin was led to remark in Paris that General Howe had not taken Philadelphia as much as Philadelphia had taken General Howe.

The general plan of campaign for the year 1777 did not include the capture of Philadelphia. Howe had been ordered to march from New York, which he had taken the preceding August, to the vicinity of Albany. There he was to join forces with the army from Canada under General Burgoyne, which was to penetrate northern New York. Why he elected to march against Philadelphia and be obliged to retrace his steps in order to reach Burgoyne was unknown at the time. The total collapse of Burgoyne's expedition at Saratoga and the menace of the American Army under General Washington obliged him to alter his plan and to remain in the vicinity of Philadelphia, which city he made his headquarters for the winter.

In the meantime the army of General Washington, which had been continually harassing the English forces, went into winter quarters in close proximity, at Valley Forge, a bare twenty miles distant, northwest of the city. Here the little army of the Colonists menaced the position of the British while enduring with heroic fortitude the severities of the winter season. Shoeless and shivering, the soldiers prepared these winter quarters of cold huts, rudely constructed; themselves overcoated in torn blankets, with stuffed straw in their boots for want of stockings. Their food was as scarce as their clothing and at one time more than two thousand men were reported unfit for duty because barefoot and otherwise naked. Many a night the men were compelled to remain seated by the fire for want of blankets. Day by day the supply of fuel diminished, and the neighborhood became more destitute of trees and timber.

The morale of the troops seemed to feed on misfortune; but their hopes and courage were suddenly intensified when the news of the Alliance with France reverberated throughout the camp to the booming of cannon and the shouts of the whole army. There was no respite, however. While the enemy was living in luxury and comfort in the gay city, the Continentals under the patience of Washington, and the military genius of Von Steuben, were being rounded into a toughened and well drilled fighting machine, strong in organization and bold in spirit, a worthy match for the rapid and accurate movements for which the better equipped British army was becoming famous.

That Sir William Howe found it easier to loiter in Philadelphia than to play a strategic game against Washington in the depths of an American winter, was due no less to the want of decision which characterized all of his actions than to the stupid mismanagement with which the campaign of 1777 was directed. The British had gained the two most important American cities, New York and Philadelphia, but the entire American army was still in the field. The acquisition of territory was of no military importance while the forces of the enemy remained intact and well organized. Moreover, Burgoyne was left to his fate and at Saratoga an army was lost.

Nor was any advantage to be derived from the possession of the American capital. Washington's position at Valley Forge had held the British in check all winter. And whatever of work the Congress

was required to do could as well be done at York as at Philadelphia. As a basis for military operation the city was without value, for it was difficult to defend and hard to supply with foodstuffs. But it was rich, extravagant, fashionable, a "place of crucifying expenses," and its fine houses, good pavements, and regular arrangement of streets, impressed Howe as the most fitting place for the British Army to establish winter quarters. And so they sat down to wait for spring.

III

"We shall never forget the splendor of it all; it was wonderful!" exclaimed Peggy with a deep sigh.

"A farewell party!" said Marjorie. "Undoubtedly the gallant Britishers outdid themselves. Howe leaves soon, does he not?"

"Yes. Next week."

"Which means that the period of entertaining is about to come to an end."

"I suppose. But wasn't the winter glorious? I shall never forget it."

A smile covered her face, dotting her cheeks with two tiny dimples. She held her hands together over her knees while she sat quite motionless, her eyes looking out into the darkness of the room.

Presently she bethought herself.

"Let us light the tapers!" she announced, jumping up from the sofa.

"It is late," Marjorie remarked, as she, too, prepared to arise. "I must leave for home."

"Stay! It is still early. Soon we shall be obliged to settle into quietude. Dark days are before us."

"Why!" Marjorie exclaimed. "I should think that the future augurs well. I do wish the soldiers would evacuate the city."

"When General Howe leaves, all may as well leave with him."

"When does he leave, did you say?" impatiently asked her true American friend.

"Next week, I understand. The great Mischienza, you know, was arranged in his honor as a farewell celebration."

"General Clinton, I presume, will succeed. He seems the most logical choice."

"Yes. He already has been appointed to the supreme command."

"I hope he decides to evacuate."

"I do not know. Perhaps," was the sole response.

But it already had been decided. Upon the departure of General Howe, instructions were forwarded from the ministry to Sir Henry Clinton, the new Commander-in-chief, to evacuate the city at once. The imminent arrival of the French fleet, together with the increasing menace of the Continental Army at Valley Forge, constituted a grave peril to the isolated army of the British. Hence it was determined that the capital city must be abandoned.

Clinton intended to transfer his army to New York by water in order that the bulk of his forces might be concentrated for the spring campaign. On account of the vast number of Tories who, apprehensive of their personal effects, had begged to be transferred with him, he was obliged to forego his original intention of sailing by water in favor of a march overland. Accordingly on the morning of June 18, 1778, the rear-guard of the British marched out of the city and on that same afternoon the American advance entered and took possession with Major General Benedict Arnold, the hero of Saratoga, as Military Governor.

The joy of the Whig populace knew no bounds. No longer would the shadows of dark despair and abandoned hope hang like a pall over the capital city. No longer would the stately residences of the Tory element be thrown open for the diversion and the junket of the titled gentry. No more would the soldiery of an hostile army loiter about the street corners or while away the hours at the Taverns or at the Coffee Houses. The Congress was about to return. The city would again become the political

as well as the civic center of American affairs. The people would be ruled by a governor of their own accord and sympathy. Philadelphia was to enter into its own.

CHAPTER II

I

"It won't do, I tell you. And the sooner he realizes this the more satisfactory will it become for all concerned."

"Sh-h-h," answered Mrs. Allison in a seemingly heedless manner. She was seated by the side window in her old rocker, intent only on her three needles and the ball of black yarn. "Judge not, that you may not be judged!" she reminded him.

"He is too imprudent. Only today he contemptuously dismissed the Colonel and the secretary; later he requested them to dine with him. We don't like it, I tell you."

As a matter of fact, there was no more staunch defender or constant advocate of the cause of the Colonists than Matthew Allison himself; and when the proclamation of the new Military Governor ordering the closing of the shops and the suspension of business in general until the question of ownership was established, had been issued, he was among the first of the citizens to comply with it. True, his sole source of income had been temporarily suspended. But what matter? It meant order and prevented the wares from falling into the hands of the enemy. His small shop had enabled himself together with his wife and daughter to eke out a comfortable existence. Their cozy home while unmistakably plain and unadorned with the finer appointments indicative of opulence, nevertheless was not without charm and cheeriness. It was delightful in simplicity and neat arrangement.

Allison had welcomed the entry of General Arnold into the city as a hero coming into his own, but he was not slow in perceiving that the temperament of the man rendered him an unhappy choice for the performance of the onerous duties which the successful administration of the office required. Readily and with genuine satisfaction did he yield to the initial mandate of the Governor; but when the scent of luxury from this same Governor's house, the finest mansion in the city and the identical one lately occupied by the British commander, was diffused throughout the city causing murmurs of criticism and dissension, Matthew Allison forgot for the moment his oath of fealty and gave expression to pain and dissatisfaction.

"Why allow yourself to be disturbed at his manner of living?" asked his wife, picking up the conversation at the point where he had left it.

"And you and I and the vast majority of us sacrificing our all. Why they tell me that his quarters abound in luxury to a degree never excelled by Howe himself."

"Well!" was the simple reply.

"And the Massachusetts Regiment has been appointed his guard of honor; and that two armed soldiers have been stationed at the doorposts."

Allison spoke with evident passion, the ardor of which pervaded his entire being.

"And yet I dare say you would be the first to disapprove of the other extreme," admonished Mrs. Allison in her soft and gentle way. "Under martial law you know, there must be no relaxation of discipline, notwithstanding the fact that the Americans once more control the city."

"Laxity or no laxity, it is extravagant for him to be housed in the finest mansion in the city with a retinue of servants and attendants only excelled by Sir William Howe; to be surrounded by a military guard of selective choice; to maintain a coach and four with footmen and servants, all equipped with livery of the most exclusive design; to live in the greatest splendor, notwithstanding the avowed republican simplicity of the country as well as the distressed condition of our affairs and finances. Who is paying for this extravagance? We, of course. We are being taxed and supertaxed for this profligate waste while our shops are closed to all future trade. These are not alone my opinions;

they are the expressions of the men about town. This was the sole topic of conversation today at the Coffee House."

For where else would the news of the day be found if not on the street corners or at the Coffee House? This latter institution, like its London prototype, was the chief organ through which the public opinion of the metropolis continually asserted itself. Its convenience lay in its adaptability for the making of appointments at any hour of the day, or for the passing of an evening socially for a very small charge. It had its characters who became as famous as the institution itself, its orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, its medical men who might be consulted on any malady merely for the asking, its poets and humorists who in winter occupied the chairs of learning nearest the stove and in summer held the choice places on the balcony, and who discoursed fables and politics with renewed embellishment upon the advent of every newcomer. The atmosphere always reeked with the fumes of tobacco. Nowhere else was smoking more constant than at the Coffee House. And why any one would leave his own home and fireside to sit amid such eternal fog, was a mystery to every good housewife. But every man of the upper or the middle class went daily to the Coffee House to learn and discuss the news of the day.

"I suppose Jim Cadwalader waxed warm today on the subject and gave you inspiration," submitted Mrs. Allison. "Why do you not suspend your judgment for a while until you learn more about the Governor, – at any rate give him the benefit of a doubt until you have some facts," mildly replied Mrs. Allison with that gentle manner and meekness of temper which was characteristic of her.

"Facts!" said he, "I am telling you that these are facts. The Colonel saw this, I tell you, for he dined with him. And I want to tell you this," he announced pointing towards her, "he hates the Catholics and is strongly opposed to any alliance with a Catholic country."

"Never mind, my dear. We cannot suffer for that."

"I know, but it may concern us sooner or later. Our fathers endured severe tortures at the hands of a bigoted Government, and if the new republic gives promise of such unhappy tidings, we may as well leave the earth."

"I would not take any undue alarm," quietly answered Mrs. Allison as her deft fingers sped on with the knitting. "General Washington is broad-minded enough to appreciate our loyalty and our spirit of self-sacrifice. And besides the new French Alliance will prevent any of the intolerance which made itself manifest in the person of King George. With a Catholic ally, the government cannot very well denounce the Catholics as you will discover from the repealing of several of the laws which rendered life more or less obnoxious in some of the colonies. And I think, too, that we have given more than our share to the cause. With so much to our credit, no public official, whatever his natural inclination, can afford to visit his bigotry on us. I would not worry about General Arnold. He will not molest us, I am sure."

"I don't think that he pleases me anyway."

"And why?" she paused to ask. "Because he maintains too expensive a livery, or has surrounded himself by too many attendants?"

"No. I dislike the man. I do not like his traits."

"It is unkind of you to say that. Who enjoys a greater reputation for skill or bravery or personal courage than he? What would have become of Gates, or our army, or the French Alliance were he not at Saratoga, and there too without a command, you must remember."

"I know all that, but he is too blunt, too headstrong, too proud, too – "

Marjorie's figure at the door interrupted him.

II

Although Mistress Allison was not twenty, she maintained the composure of a married woman, sedate and reserved like the matrons of this period. Her dress was neat and well chosen, a chintz

cotton gown, of a very pretty blue stamp, blue silk quilt and a spotted figured apron. The vivacity of her manner and the winsomeness of her behavior were prepossessing, and she was beautiful to look upon: her complexion as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red; and her lips, of a still deeper crimson. Her small oval face was surmounted by a wealth of dark brown hair, craped up with two rolls on each side and topped with a small cap of beautiful gauze and rich lace, – a style most becoming to a girl of her age. Health, activity, decision were written full upon her, whether in the small foot which planted itself on the ground, firm but flexible, or in the bearing of her body, agile or lofty.

She was the only child of Mr. Allison and a much admired member of the city's middle class. And while it is true that a certain equality in class and social refinement was an attribute of the American people which found great favor in the eyes of the older world inhabitants, it is equally true that this equality was more seeming than real. This was due to a great extent to the distinction established by the wealth and the liberties enjoyed by the various classes of people. It was said, and not without a semblance of truth, that the inhabitants of Philadelphia were rated according to their fortunes. The first class was known as the carriage folk, who proclaimed, almost without exception, their pretended descent from the ancient English families by their coats of arms imprinted upon their carriage doors. The second class was composed of the merchants, lawyers, and business men of the city; and the third class, were those who exercised the mechanical arts. These felt their social inferiority and never hoped for any association with the upper classes. The Allisons were of the middle rank, and were looked upon as its most respected members.

Plain, simple-living folk, they made no pretense to display. Neither did they affect aristocracy. Their manner of living was as comfortable as their modest means would allow. It was a common habit for the people of this class to indulge in luxury far beyond their resources and no small amount of this love of ostentation was attributed to the daughters of the families. In this respect Marjorie offended not in the least. Whether assisting her father in the shop during the busy hours, or presiding at the Coffee House, or helping her mother with the affairs of the household, she was equally at home. Neither the brilliance of the social function, nor the pleasures of the dance roused unusual desires in her. Indeed she seldom participated in such entertainments, unless on the invitation and in company with the Shippen family with whom she was on the most intimate terms of friendship. The gay winter season of the British occupation of the city produced no change in her manner or attire. The dazzling spectacle of the Mischienza found her secluded in her home, more from her own desire than from her pretended deference to the wishes of her mother.

Her happiness was in her homelife. This was the center of her affection as well as of her tenderest solicitude. Here she busied herself daily, either in the care of the house, and the preparation of the meals, which were by no means sumptuous owing to the scarcity of all foodstuffs, or at the wheel where she made shirtings and the sheetings for the army. A touch of her hand here and there, to this chair, slightly out of place, to this cup or that plate in the china-chest, to the miniature on the wall, leaning slightly to one side, or the whisk of her sweeping-brush through the silver-sand on the floor, transformed a disorderly aspect into one of neatness and taste. It was here that she spent her days, enduring their unvarying monotony, with sweet and unbroken contentment.

As she hurriedly entered the house, she arrested the attention of her father and put a period to the conversation.

"Oh, Father, have you heard?"

"What news now, child!"

"Washington has engaged the British."

"And how fared?"

"They were compelled to withdraw."

"Thank God."

"Where, Marjorie, did you come by this good news?" inquired the mother.

"At the State House. A courier arrived from Monmouth with the tidings," answered Marjorie, still nervous to narrate the story, and forgetting to remove her hat.

"When did this happen?" asked her father, impatiently.

"It seems that General Washington started in pursuit of Clinton as soon as he had evacuated the city. He had decided that an attack must be made as soon as possible. When the British reached Allentown, they found the American army gaining the front and so they turned towards Monmouth. Near the Court House the British were outflanked and the Americans gained the superior ground and so the battle was won. Then General Lee ordered a retreat."

"A retreat?" exploded Mr. Allison. "What for?"

"I do not know, but that was the report. Lee retreated when Washington arrived on the scene," continued Marjorie.

"And then?"

"He rallied the troops to another front and began the attack anew, driving the British back a considerable distance. Nightfall ended the battle, and when day broke, Clinton had withdrawn."

"And Lee ordered a retreat!" exclaimed Mr. Allison. "A damned poltroon!"

"All say the same. The crowd was furious upon hearing the message, although some thought it too incredible. The joy of victory, however, made them forget the disgraceful part."

"My faith in him has never faltered," quietly observed Mrs. Allison, as she prepared to resume the knitting from which she had ceased on the sudden entry of Marjorie.

"And his pretended friends must now croak forth his praises," rejoined her husband.

"There were shouts and cheers," continued Marjorie, "as the news was being announced. Each newcomer would add another detail to the story with beaming delight. All said that the retreat from the city and the defeat of the British augured a speedy termination of the war. The country is wholly united again under General Washington."

"And what will become of Lee?" asked the father.

"The traitor!" snapped Marjorie. "They ought to court-martial him. The crowd greeted his name with hisses when the details began to impress themselves upon them. I dare say, he has few friends in the city tonight, expect perhaps among the Tories. He is a disgrace to the uniform he wears."

"Undoubtedly, the losses were heavy."

"No one seemed to know. The minor details of the engagement are still unknown. They will come later. The consoling feature is that the enemy were compelled to withdraw, which would indicate that they were worsted. The remnants, I suppose, will concentrate at New York. There will occur the next great battle."

"God grant that it will soon be over," exclaimed Mrs. Allison.

"And now, daughter, have you more news?" asked her father.

"Oh, yes! General Arnold is going to give a ball at the City Tavern on the Fourth of July to the officers of the French Army. It will be under the auspices of the American officers of Washington's command and in honor of the loyal ladies who had withheld from the Mischienza. And I have been invited to attend."

"I should think that we have had enough of social life here during the past winter," quietly announced the father.

"Well," replied Marjorie, "this affair is to exclude all who participated in the English Army festivities. Only Americans will be present."

"How did you come by this report?" asked her mother.

"Peggy Shippen. I stopped there for a short time. They told me of the proposed invitation and that I was included."

"How came they by the news?"

"I suppose General Arnold told them."

"Is he acquainted with them? I wonder – "

"Yes. They were presented to him, and he has already honored them with his visit."

"I don't like this," said Mr. Allison, "and you can be assured that there will be little restriction as to the company who will comprise this assemblage. The Governor will take sides with the wealthy, be their sympathies what they may. Well, if he establish the precedent, I dare say, none will be so determined as to oppose him. Do you wish to go, daughter?"

"I think I might enjoy it. The French soldiers are so gallant, I might find much pleasure there."

"Very well, you shall attend," said her father.

III

And so it was decided that Marjorie would be present at the Governor's Ball. As custom did not require mothers to accompany their daughters to such functions, but allowed them to go unattended, Mrs. Allison preferred to remain at home. To what splendor and gayety the affair would lend itself was a matter of much speculation. This was the Governor's first event, and no one was aware of his prowess on the ballroom floor.

Once the list of invitations had become public, it was understood quite generally that no distinction was made between those that had, and those that had not, attended the Mischienza. Whether the number would be surprisingly small, or whether the affair would fail of success without the Mischienza ladies, could not be foretold. Indeed such speculations were idle, since no discrimination had been made. There were a number of young French Officers in the town and one or two of General Washington's aides had remained because of the pressure of immediate business after the British evacuation. These of course would attend. All the other available young men belonged to the families who had held a more or less neutral position in the war, and who had not offered their services to the patriots nor yielded allegiance to the foe. As these neutrals were among the most prominent people of the city, their presence would, of course, be altogether desirable.

Marjorie was invited through the efforts of Peggy Shippen, who had proposed her name to His Excellency on the occasion of his visit to her house. She would be included in their party and would be assigned a partner befitting her company. Because of the prominence of the Shippens, it was thought that the gallant young French Officers, would be assigned to them. Marjorie rejoiced at this although the Shippen girls evinced no such sentiment. Whether it was because the French alliance was distasteful to them or because their Tory leanings took precedence, they preferred other guests for partners. But as the matter was to be decided by lot, their likings were not consulted.

Ere long the city was agog with speculation respecting the coming ball. The battle of Monmouth was accorded a second place. The disdain of the middle class, who had been embittered against such demonstrations by the profligacy displayed during the days of the British occupation, soon began to make itself felt. That it was the first official or formal function of the new republic mattered little. A precedent was about to be established. There was to be a continuation of the shameful extravagance which they had been compelled to witness during the winter and which they feared they would be forced to maintain for another protracted period. Living was high, extremely high, and the value of the paper currency had depreciated to almost nothing. Indeed it was said that a certain barber in the town had papered his entire shop with the bills and that a dog had been led up and down the streets, smeared with tar, and adorned cap-a-pie with paper money. To feed and clothe the army was expense enough without being compelled to pay for the splendors of a military ball. Small wonder that the coming event aroused no ordinary speculation.

Nevertheless preparations went on with growing vigor and magnificence, and not the least interested was Marjorie. The event was now awaited with painful anxiety. Even the war for a moment was relegated to a place of minor import.

CHAPTER III

I

An imposing spectacle greeted Marjorie's eyes as she made her way in company with the Shippen girls into the ballroom of the City Tavern. The hall was superb, of a charming style of architecture, well furnished and lighted, and brilliantly decorated with a profusion of American and French flags arranged in festoons and trianguloids and drapings throughout its entire length and breadth, its atmosphere vocal with the strains of martial music. Everywhere were women dressed with elegance and taste. The Tory ladies, gowned in the height of fashion, were to Marjorie a revelation at once amazing and impressive.

On a raised dais sat the Governor in his great chair. He was clothed in the regulation buff and blue uniform of a Major General of the Continental Army. On his shoulders he wore the epaulets and about his waist the sword knots General Washington had presented to him the preceding May. He bore also upon his person the most eloquent of martial trophies, for his leg, wounded at Quebec and Saratoga, rested heavily on a small cushion before him.

Marjorie who saw him for the first time, was attracted at once by his manly bearing and splendid physique. His frame was large, his shoulders broad, his body inclined to be fleshy. His very presence, however, was magnetic, still his manner was plain and without affectation. He looked the picture of dignity and power as he received the guests in their turn and greeted each with a pointed and pleasant remark.

"Isn't he a handsome figure?" whispered Peggy to Marjorie as they made their way slowly to the dais.

Marjorie acquiesced in the judgment. He was still young, hardly more than thirty-five, his weather-beaten face darkened to bronze from exposure. His features were large and clean cut with the power of decision written full upon them. A firm and forcible chin, with heavy lines playing about his mouth; eyes, large and black, that seemed to take toll of everything that transpired about them, suggested a man of extravagant energy, of violent and determined tenacity in the face of opposition. No one could look upon his imposing figure without calling to mind his martial achievements – the exploits of Canada, of the Mohawk, of Bemis Heights.

"So this is your little friend," said he to Peggy, eyeing Marjorie as she made her presentation courtesy. He was now standing, though resting heavily on his cane with his left hand.

"Mistress Allison, this privilege is a happy one. I understand that you are a violent little patriot." He smiled as he gently took her hand.

"I am very pleased, Your Excellency. This is an occasion of rare delight to me."

"And are you so intensely loyal? Your friends love you for your devotion, although I sometimes think that they miss General Howe," and he smiled in the direction of Peggy as he turned to her with this remark.

"You know, General," Peggy was always ready with an artful reply, "I told you that I was neither the one nor the other; and that I wore black and white at the Mischienza, the colors now worn by our American soldiers in their cockades in token of the French and American Alliance."

"So you did. I had almost forgotten."

"And that there were some American gentlemen present, as well, although aged non-combatants," she continued with a subtle smile.

"For which reason," he responded, "you would, I suppose, have it assume a less exclusive appearance."

"Oh, no! I do not mean that. It was after all a very private affair, arranged solely in honor of General Howe."

"Were some of these young ladies at the Mischienza? And who were they that rewarded the gallant knights?" he asked.

"Well, the Chew girls, and my sisters, and Miss Franks. There was Miss White, and Miss Craig," she repeated the list one after the other as her eyes searched the company assembled in the hall. "And that girl in the corner, Miss Bond, and beyond her, her sister: then there was Miss Smith. Miss Bond I am told is engaged to one of your best Generals, Mr. John Robinson."

"We are accustomed to call Mr. Robinson, General Robinson in the army," he ventured with a smile.

She blushed slightly. "We call him Mr. Robinson in society, or sometimes Jack."

"And who might have been your gallant knight? May I ask?"

"The Honorable Captain Cathcart," was her proud reply.

"And who has the good fortune to be your knight for this occasion?" he questioned, seeking in their hands the billet of the evening.

"We do not know," Marjorie murmured. "We have not as yet met the Master of Ceremonies."

He looked about him, in search evidently of some one. "Colonel Wilkinson!" he called to a distinguished looking officer on his right, "have these fair ladies been assigned to partners?"

The Colonel advanced and presented them with their billets, which were numbered and which bore the name of the partner that was to accompany them during the entire evening. Peggy opened hers and found the name of Colonel Jean Boudinot, a young French Officer. Marjorie saw written upon hers a name unknown to her, "Captain Stephen Meagher, aide-de-camp."

"Captain Meagher!" exclaimed the Governor. "He is one of General Washington's aides, detailed for the present in the city. Do you know him?"

"No," replied Marjorie timidly, "I do not, I am sorry to say. I have never had the privilege of meeting him."

"There he is now," said he, indicating with a gesture of the eyes a tall young officer who stood with his back toward them.

Marjorie looked in the direction indicated. A becomingly tall and erect figure, clad in a long blue coat met her gaze. Further scrutiny disclosed the details of a square cut coat, with skirts hooked back displaying a buff lining, and with lappets, cuff-linings and standing capes of like color. His bearing was overmastering as he stood at perfect ease, his hand resting gently on a small sword hanging at his side; his right wrist showed a delicate lace ruffle as he gestured to and fro in his conversation. As he slightly turned in her direction, she saw that he wore his hair drawn back from the face, with a gentle roll on each side, well powdered and tied in a cue behind. His features were pleasant to look upon, not large but finely chiseled and marked with expression. Marjorie thought what a handsome figure he made as he stood in earnest conversation, dominating the little group who surrounded him and followed his every move with interest and attention.

"Let me call him," suggested the Governor to Marjorie who at that moment stood with her eyes fixed on the Captain. "I am sure he will be pleased to learn the identity of his fair partner," he added facetiously.

"Oh! do," agreed Peggy. "It would afford pleasure to all of us to meet him."

The General whispered a word to an attendant who immediately set off in the direction of the unconcerned Captain. As the latter received the message he turned, looked in the direction of the dais and gazed steadily at the Governor and his company. His eyes met Marjorie's and she was sure that he saw her alone. The thought thrilled her through and through. He excused himself from the company of his circle, and as he directed his footsteps towards her, she noted his neat and close fitting buff waistcoat, and his immaculate linen revealing itself at the throat and ruffled wrists. Nor did she fail to observe that he wore a buff cockade on his left breast and gilt epaulets upon his shoulders.

"Captain Meagher," announced General Arnold. "I have the honor of presenting you to your partner for the evening, Mistress Allison."

Marjorie courtesied gracefully to his courtly acknowledgment.

"And the Misses Shippen, the belles of the Mischienza!"

Stephen bowed profoundly.

"I was just remarking, Captain, that General Washington has honored you with a special mission, and that you have run away from your duties tonight to mingle with the social life of the city."

"Or rather, Your Excellency, to acquaint myself with their society," Stephen replied good-naturedly.

"Then you do not relax, even for an evening," inquired Peggy, with a coquettish turn of the head.

"It is the duty of a soldier never to relax." Stephen's reply was more naïve than usual.

"And yet one's hours are shortened by pleasure and action," continued Peggy.

"As a recreation it is far sweeter than as a business. It soon exhausts us, however, and it is the greatest incentive to evil."

"But you dance?" interrupted the General.

"Oh, yes! Your Excellency," replied Stephen, "after a fashion."

"Well, your partner is longing for the music. Come, let ye assemble."

And as the dance was announced, the first one being dedicated to "The Success of the Campaign," Stephen and Marjorie moved off and took their places. Peggy and her sisters were soon attended and followed. They were soon lost in the swirl of excitement among the throng.

II

"And you live alone with your father and mother?"

Marjorie and her partner were sitting in a distant corner whither they had wandered at the conclusion of the dance. Stephen began to find himself taking an unusual interest in this girl and was inquiring concernedly about her home life.

"Yes, Father's time is much consumed with his attention to the shop. Mother and I find plenty to occupy us about the house. Then I relieve Father at times, and so divide my hours between them," quietly answered Marjorie.

"You have not as yet told me your name," Stephen reminded her.

"Marjorie," was the timid reply.

"Marjorie!" Then, taking advantage of her averted look, he stole secret glances at her small round face, her lips, firmly set but curving upwards, her rose-pink cheeks. Presently, his eye rested on her finger-ring, a cameo with what looked like an ectypal miniature of the "Ecce Homo." Was this girl of his faith?

"Marjorie Allison," he repeated again. "Do you know that sounds like a Catholic name?"

"It is," Marjorie replied proudly. "Our family have been Catholics for generations."

"Mine have, too," Stephen gladly volunteered the information. "Irish Catholics with a history behind them."

"Is your home here?" asked Marjorie.

"Here in this country, yes," admitted her escort. "But I live in New York and it was there I volunteered at the outbreak of the war, and saw my first service in the New York campaign."

"And are your parents there, too?" inquired the girl.

And then he told her that his father and mother and only sister lived there and that when the war broke out he determined to enlist in company with a number of his friends, the younger men of the neighborhood. How he took part in the campaign about New York and his "contribution to our defeat," as he styled it. Of the severe winter at Valley Forge and his appointment by Washington to his staff. She listened with keen interest but remained silent until the end.

"And now you are in the city on detailed duty?"

"Yes. Work of a private nature for the Commander-in-chief."

"It must be a source of satisfaction to be responsive to duty," observed Marjorie.

"It is God's medicine to detach us from the things of this world. For, after all has been said and done, it is love alone which elevates one's service above the domain of abject slavery. In such a manner do the commands of heaven afford the richest consolations to the soul."

"And still, a certain routine must manifest itself at times."

"Not when the habit is turned to pleasure."

"You are a philosopher, then?"

"No. Just a mere observer of men and their destinies."

"Have you included the duration of the war in your legitimate conclusions?"

"It is not over yet, and it will not terminate, I think, without an improvement in the present condition of affairs. The proposed help from France must become a reality of no ordinary proportion, else the discordant factions will achieve dire results. Tell me," he said, suddenly changing the topic of conversation, "were you in attendance at the Mischienza?"

"No, I did not care to attend."

"I would I had been present."

"You would have been expelled in your present capacity."

"Ah, yes! But I would have affected a disguise."

"You would expect to obtain important information?" She fingered her gown of pink satin as she spoke, oblivious of everything save the interest of the conversation.

"I might possibly have stumbled across some items of value."

"None were there save the British Officers and their Tory friends, you know."

"A still greater reason for my desire to be present. And why did you not dance attendance?" This question was frank.

"Do you really want to know my sole reason?" She looked at him somewhat suspicious, somewhat reliant, awaiting her womanly instinct to reveal to her the rectitude of her judgment.

"I should not have asked, otherwise," Stephen gravely replied.

"Well, it was for the simple reason that my soul would burn within me if I permitted myself to indulge in such extravagance and gayety the while our own poor boys were bleeding to death at Valley Forge."

Stephen grasped her hand and pressed it warmly. "You are a true patriot," was all he could say.

Whether it was his emotion for the cause of his country or the supreme satisfaction afforded him by the knowledge that this girl was loyal to the cause, Stephen did not know, nor did he try to discover. He knew that he was thrilled with genuine gratification and that he was joyously happy over the thought which now relieved his mind. Somehow or other he earnestly desired to find this girl an ardent patriot, yet he had dared not ask her too bluntly. From the moment she had entered the hall in company with the other girls, he had singled her alone in the midst of the company. And, when the summons came to him from the Governor, he had seen her standing at the side of the dais, and her alone. Little did he suspect, however, that she bore his billet, nor did he presume to wish for the pleasure of her exclusive company for the evening.

She danced with grace and was wholly without affectation. How sweet she looked; pink gown, pink flowers, pink ribbon, pink cheeks! How interesting her conversation, yet so reserved and dignified! But she lived in the city and the city he knew teemed with Loyalists. Was she one of these! He dared not ask her. To have her so declare herself enraptured him. She was one of his own after all.

Moreover she was one with him in religious belief – that was a distinct comfort. Catholics were not numerous, and to preserve the faith was no slight struggle. He was thoroughly conversant with the state of affairs in the province of New York where Catholics could not, because of the iniquitous law and the prescribed oath of office, become naturalized as citizens of the state. He knew how New

Jersey had excluded Roman Catholics from office, and how North and South Carolina had adopted the same iniquitous measure. Pennsylvania was one of the few colonies wherein all penal laws directed against the Catholics had been absolutely swept away. To meet with a member of his own persecuted Church, especially one so engaging and so interesting as Marjorie, was a source of keen joy and an unlooked-for happiness.

"You will not deny me the pleasure of paying my respects to your father and mother?" Stephen asked.

She murmured something as he let go her hand. Stephen thought she had said, "I had hoped that you would come."

"Tomorrow?" he ventured.

"I shall be pleased to have you sup with us," she smiled as she made the soft reply.

"Tomorrow then it shall be."

They rose to take their part in the next dance.

III

As the evening wore on Peggy, wearied of the dance, sought a secluded corner of the great room to compose herself. She had been disappointed in her lottery, for she detested the thought of being a favor for a French officer and had taken care to so express herself at home long before. She could not rejoice at Marjorie's good fortune as she thought it, and found little of interest and less of pleasure in the evening's doings.

She was aroused from her solitude and made radiant on the instant at sight of the Military Governor, limping his way across the hall in her direction. He had seen her seated alone, and his heart urged him to her side. With the lowest bow of which he was then capable, he sought the pleasure of her company. Her color heightened, she smiled graciously with her gray-blue eyes, and accepted his hand. He led the way to the banquet room and thence to the balcony, where they might hear the music and view the dancing, for his lameness made dancing impossible.

"I hesitate to condemn a young lady to a prison seat, when the stately minuet sends a summons," he said as he led her to a chair a little to one side of the balcony.

"You should have thought of that before you made us cast lots," she replied quickly. "I was wearying of the rounds of pleasure."

"Is the company, then, all too gay?"

"No, rather extravagant."

"You insisted on the Mischienza ladies being present."

"And can you not distinguish them? Do they not appear to better advantage than the others? Their gowns are superior, they give evidence of more usage in society, their head-dress is higher and of the latest fashion."

"And their hearts, their hopes, their sympathies! Where are they?"

"You know where mine lay," she adroitly replied.

"True, you did wear a French cockade," he laughed.

"Please do not call it 'French.' I scorn all things 'French.'"

"They are our allies now, you must know."

"For which I am most sorry. I expect no mercy from that scheming Papist country," she replied bitterly.

"But they have lent us much money at a time when our paper currency is practically worthless, and the assistance of their fleet is now momentarily expected," the General went on to explain.

"And to what purpose? Lord North has proposed to meet our demands most liberally and with our constitutional liberties secured, I fail to see why further strife is necessary."

"But our independence is not yet secure."

"It was secure after your brilliant victory at Saratoga. With the collapse of Burgoyne, England saw that further campaigning in a country so far removed from home was disastrous. It only remained to formulate some mutual agreement. We have triumphed. Why not be magnanimous? Why subject the country to a terrible strain for years for a result neither adequate nor secure?"

She talked rapidly, passionately. It was evident from the manner of her address that the subject was no new one to her.

"You can be court-martialed for treason?" he remarked with a slight smile playing about the heavy lines of his mouth.

"Is it treason to talk of the welfare of the country? I look upon the alliance with this Catholic and despotic power as more of an act of treason than the total surrender of our armies to King George. To lose our independence is one thing; but to subject our fair land to the tyranny of the Pope and his emissary, the King of France, is a total collapse. Our hopes lie in England alone."

The Governor was struck by this strange reasoning. Why had this mere child dared to express the very thoughts which were of late intruding themselves upon his mind, but which he dared not permit to cross the seal of his lips? She was correct, he thought, in her reasoning, but bold in her denunciation. No one else had dared to address such sentiments to him. And now he was confronted with a young lady of quick wit and ready repartee who spoke passionately the identical reflections of his more mature mind. Clearly her reasoning was not without some consistency and method.

"I am afraid that you are a little Tory." He could not allow this girl to think that she had impressed him in the least.

"Because I am frank in the expression of my views?" She turned and with arched eyebrows surveyed him. "Pardon me, if you will, but I would have taken no such liberty with any other person. You gave me that privilege when you forbade my alluding to your former brilliant exploits."

"But I did not want you to become a Tory."

He spoke with emphasis.

"I am not a Tory I tell you."

"But you are not a Whig?"

"What, an ordinary shop maid!"

"They are true patriots."

"But of no social standing."

"Tell me why all the Mischienza ladies courtesied to me after so courtly a fashion," he asked.

"They like it. It is part of their life. You must know that nothing pleases a woman of fashion more than to bow and courtesy before every person of royalty, and to count those who precede her out of a room."

"Surely, Margaret, you are no such menial?" He compressed his lips as he glanced at her sharply. He had never before called her by her first name nor presumed to take this liberty. It was more a slip of the tongue than an act of deliberate choice, yet he would not have recalled the word. His concern lay in her manner of action.

"And why not a menial?" Evidently she took no notice of his presumption, or at least pretended not to do so. "Piety is by no means the only motive which brings women to church. Position in life is precisely what one makes it."

"Does social prestige appeal to you then?"

"I love it." She did not talk to him directly for her attention was being centered upon the activities on the floor. "I think that a woman who can dress with taste and distinction possesses riches above all computation. See Mrs. Reed, there. How I envy her!"

"The wife of the President of the Council?" he asked apprehensively, bending forward in the direction of the floor.

"The same. She enjoys a position of social eminence. How I hate her for it." She tapped the floor with her foot as she spoke.

"You mean that you dislike her less than you envy her position?"

Just then her young squire came up and she gave him her hand for a minuet, excusing herself to the Governor as graciously as possible.

Scarcely had she disappeared when he began to muse. What a fitting companion she would make for a man of his rank and dignity! That she was socially ambitious and obsessed with a passion for display he well knew. She was not yet twenty but the disparity in their ages, – he was about thirty-seven and a widower with three sons, – would be offset by the disparity of their stations. No one in the city kept a finer stable of horses nor gave more costly dinners than he. Everybody treated him with deference, for no one presumed to question his social preëminence. The Whigs admired him as their dashing and perhaps their most successful General. The Tories liked him because of his aristocratic display and his position in regard to the Declaration of Independence. Why not make her his bride?

She possessed physical charms and graces in a singular degree. She dressed with taste; her wardrobe was of the finest. Aristocratic in her bearing, she would be well fitted to assume the position of the first lady of the town. Peggy, moreover, possessed a will of her own. This was revealed to him more than once during their few meetings, and if proof had been wanting, the lack was now abundantly supplied. She would make an ideal wife, and he resolved to enter the lists against all suitors.

Her mind was more mature than her years, he thought. This he gleaned from her animated discussion of the alliance. And there was, after all, more than an ounce of wisdom in her point of view. Mischief brewed in the proposed help from a despotic power. His own signal victory ended the war if only the Colonists would enter into negotiations or give an attentive ear to the liberal proposals of Lord North. The people did not desire complete independence and he, for one, had never fully endorsed the Declaration. Her point of view was right. Better to accept the overtures of our kinsmen than to cast our lot with that Catholic and despotic power.

His musings were arrested by the arrival of an aide, who announced that he was needed at headquarters. He arose at once to obey.

CHAPTER IV

I

Stephen awoke late the next morning. As he lay with eyes closed, half asleep, half awake, the image of his partner of the evening sweetly drifted into his dreamy brain, and called up a wealth of associations on which he continued to dwell with rare pleasure. But the ominous suggestion that her heart could not possibly be free, that perhaps some gay officer, or brilliant member of Howe's staff, or a gallant French official, many of whom had now infested the town, was a favored contestant in the field, filled his mind with the thoughts of dread possibilities, and chased away the golden vision that was taking shape. He sat upright and, pulling aside the curtains of the little window that flanked his bed, he peered into the garden behind the house. The birds were singing, but not with the volume or rapture which is their wont in the early morning. The sun was high in the heavens and flung its reflecting rays from the trees and foliage; whence he concluded that the morning was already far advanced and that it was well past the hour for him to be astir.

And what a day it was! One of those rare July days when the tints of the earth and the hues of the sky though varied in color, seem to blend in one beautiful and harmonious whole. The cypress and the myrtle, emblems of deeds of virtue and renown, had already donned their summer dress. The many flowers bowed gently under the weight of the flitful butterfly, or the industrious bee, or tossed to and fro lightly in the arms of the morning breeze. Overhead maples, resplendent in their fabric of soft and delicate green, arched themselves like fine-spun cobwebs, through which filigree the sun projected his rays at irregular and frequent intervals, lending only an occasional patch of sunlight here and there to the more exposed portions of the garden.

But nature had no power to drive Marjorie's image from his mind. Try as he would, he could not distract his attention to the many problems which ordinarily would have engaged thoughts. What mattered it to him that the French fleet was momentarily expected, or that the Continental Congress was again meeting in the city, or that he had met with certain suspicious looking individuals during the course of the day! There was yet one who looked peculiarly suspicious and who was enveloped, as far as his knowledge was concerned, in a veil of mystery of the strangest depth. She, indeed, was a flower too fair to blush unseen or unattached. His own unworthiness confounded him.

Nevertheless he was determined to call on her that very day, in response to her generous invitation of last night, and in accordance too with the custom of the time. He would there, perchance, learn more of her, of her home, of her life, of her friends. But would he excite in her the interest she was exciting in him? The thought of his possible remoteness from her, pained him and made his heart sink. The noblest characters experience strange sensations of desolation and wretchedness at the thought of disapproval and rejection. Esteem, the testimony of our neighbor's appreciation, the approval of those worth while, these are the things for which we yearn with fondest hopes. To know that we have done well is satisfaction, but to know that our efforts and our work are valued by others is one of the noblest of pleasures. Stephen longed to know how he stood in the lady's esteem, and so her little world was his universe.

Dispatching the day's business as best he could, the expectant knight set out to storm the castle of his lady. Eager as he was, he did not fail to note the imposing majesty of the great trees which lined each side of the wide road and arched themselves into a perfect canopy overhead. An air of abundance pervaded the whole scene and made him quite oblivious of the extreme warmth of the afternoon.

Ere long the little white house of her describing rose before him. He had seen it many times in other days, but now it was invested with a new and absorbing interest. There it stood, plain yet stately, with a great pointed and shingled roof, its front and side walls unbroken save for a gentle

projection supported by two uniform Doric pillars which served as a sort of a portal before the main entrance. Numerous windows with small panes of glass, and with trim green shutters thrown full open revealing neatly arranged curtains, glinted and glistened in the beams of the afternoon sun. The nearer of the two great chimneys which ran up the sides, like two great buttresses of an old English abbey, gave indications of generous and well-fed fireplaces recessed in the walls of the inner rooms. The lawns and walks were uncommonly well kept, and the whole atmosphere of the little home was one of comfort and simplicity and neatness, suggesting the sweet and serene happiness reigning within.

Stephen closed the gate behind him. A moment later he had seized the brass knocker and delivered three moderate blows.

II

"Captain Meagher!" gasped a soft voice. "I am so pleased you have come."

"Mistress Allison, the pleasure is indeed mine, I assure you," replied Stephen as he grasped her hand, releasing it with a gentle pressure.

She led the way into the narrow hall.

"Mother!" she addressed a sweetly smiling middle-aged woman who now stood at her side, "I have the honor of presenting to you, Captain Meagher, of the staff of General Washington, my partner of last evening." And she betrayed a sense of pride in that bit of history.

Stephen took the matron's hand, for among the Americans the custom prevailed of shaking hands, albeit the French visitors of the time maintained that it was a "comic custom." Stephen thought it democratic, and in keeping with the spirit of the country.

The parlor opened immediately to the right and thither Stephen was conducted without further ceremony. Mr. Allison would be in shortly; he was as yet busied with the trade at the shop. The old clock at the corner of the room, with its quaint figure of Time adorning the top, and its slowly moving pendulum, proclaimed the hour of five, the hour when the duties of the day came to a close and social life began. The old fireplace, black in this season of desuetude, but brilliant in its huge brass andirons like two pilasters of gold, caught the eye at the extreme end of the room, while in the corner near the window a round mahogany tea-table, stood upright like an expanded fan or palm leaf.

Stephen seated himself in a great chair that lay to one side of the room.

"I had the good fortune of being your daughter's partner for the evening, and I am happy to be enabled to pay my respects to you." Stephen addressed Mrs. Allison who was nearer to him on his left.

"Marjorie told me, Captain, of your extreme kindness to her. We appreciate it very much. Did she conduct herself becomingly? She is a stranger to such brilliant affairs."

"Splendidly!" answered Stephen. "And she danced charmingly," and he slyly looked at her as he spoke and thought he detected a faint blush.

"I did not attend on account of its extravagance," remarked Mrs. Allison. "I had duties at home, and Marjorie was well attended."

"Indeed!" pronounced Marjorie.

"It was magnificent, to be sure," went on Stephen, "but it will excite no uncertain comment. Republican simplicity last night was lost from sight."

"Which I scarce approve of," declared Marjorie.

"You did not suit your action to your thought," smiled her mother.

"True," replied the girl, "yet I told you that I was anxious to attend simply to behold the novelty of it all. Now that it is over, I disapprove of the splendor and extravagance especially in these times of need."

"Yes," volunteered Stephen, "she did voice similar sentiments to me last evening. Nevertheless she is not alone in her criticism. The *Gazette* today publishes a leading article excoriating the Military Governor for his use of the teams, which he had commanded under pretense of revictualing of the

army, for the transportation of his private effects to and from the City Tavern. It spells dissatisfaction at best."

"There has been dissatisfaction from the first day on which he took up residence at the Slate Roof House," said Mrs. Allison.

The figure of Mr. Allison appeared in the room to the rear. Stephen made haste to stand to greet him, expressing his extreme pleasure.

It was a great day for a tradesman when an officer of the Continental Army supped at his table. The house was in a mild uproar since Marjorie announced the coming distinction on her return from the ball. From the kitchen chimney went up a pillar of smoke. Mrs. Allison and two of her neighbors who were proud to lend assistance on such an important occasion could be seen passing in and out continually. A large roast lay simmering and burnished in the pan diffusing savory and provoking fumes throughout the house. And it was with distinct pride that Mrs. Allison announced to the company that they might take their places about the festive board.

The discourse bore on various matters, prominence being given to politics and the affairs of the army. Mr. Allison took care to ask no question that might give rise to embarrassment on the part of Stephen. The complaints of the tradesmen, the charges of the Whigs, the murmurings of the Tories and the annoying articles in the morning *Gazette*, all, were touched upon in the course of the meal. Stephen volunteered the information that Conway and Gates were in hiding and that Clinton was driven to New York where Washington was watching his every move, like a hawk, from the heights of Morristown.

"General Washington holds General Arnold in the highest esteem," remarked Mr. Allison.

"As the bravest general in the Continental Army," quietly replied Stephen.

"He would make a poor statesman," went on the host.

"He is a soldier first and last."

"Should a soldier be wanting in tact and diplomacy?"

"A good soldier should possess both."

"Then General Arnold is not a good soldier," declared Mr. Allison.

"A criticism he hardly deserves," was the simple reply.

"You saw the *Gazette*?"

"Yes. I read that article to which you undoubtedly refer."

"And you agree with it?"

"No. I do not."

"I am sorry about it all. Yet I am inclined to hold the Governor responsible to a great extent. He would be an aristocrat, and it is the society of such that he covets."

"Perhaps jealousy might inspire criticism. Envy, you know, is the antagonist of the fortunate."

"But it is not his deeds alone that cause the unrest among our citizens. It is not what he does but what he says. It helps matters not in the least to express dissatisfaction with the manner of conducting the war, neither by criticizing the enactments of the Congress, nor vehemently opposing the new foreign alliance. This does not sound well from the lips of one of our foremost leaders and we do not like it."

"I was not aware that he voiced any opposition to the furtherance of the alliance with France," declared Stephen.

"He might not have spoken in formal protest, but he has spoken in an informal manner times without number," replied Mr. Allison.

"I am sorry to hear that. I did not expect such from General Arnold," muttered Stephen.

Marjorie had as yet taken no part in the conversation. She was interested and alive, however, to every word, anxious, if possible, to learn Stephen's attitude in respect to the common talk. She took delight in his defense of his General, notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence against him and was proud of the trait of loyalty her guest disclosed in the face of her father's opposition.

Mrs. Allison and Marjorie participated in the conversation when the topics bore, for the most part, on current events, uninteresting to Mr. Allison, who munched in silence until some incomplete sentence called for a remark or two from him by way of a conclusion. Stephen's animated interest in the more common topics of the day led Mrs. Allison and Marjorie to the conclusion that he was a more practical and a more versatile man than the head of their own house.

All in all he made a profound impression on the family, and when the repast was finished and the table had been cleared, they sat over the fruit and the nuts, before retiring to the living room for the evening.

III

"You are not in the habit of frequenting brilliant functions?" Stephen asked of Marjorie when they were quite alone. It was customary for the older folks to retire from the company of the younger set shortly after the dinner grace had been said. Of course grace had to be said; Mr. Allison would permit no bread to be broken at his house without first imploring benedictions from Heaven, and, when the formalities of the meal had been concluded, of returning thanks for the good things enjoyed.

"I never have attended before," answered Marjorie, smoothing out a side of her apron with her hand.

"You are quite friendly with the Shippen family, I understand."

"Oh, yes! For several years we have been united. I am invited to all their functions. Still I am not fond of society."

"And you spend your time alone?" Stephen was persistent in his questions as he sat opposite to her and studied her expression.

"Between here and the store, and perhaps with Peggy. That is about all for I seldom visit. I am hopelessly old-fashioned in some things, mother tells me, and I suppose you will say the same if I tell you more," and she looked at him slyly, with her head half-raised, her lips parted somewhat in a quizzical smile.

"Not at all! You are what I rather hoped to find you, although I did not dare to give expression to it. You can, possibly, be of some assistance to me."

"Gladly would I perform any service, however humble, for the cause of our country," Marjorie sat upright, all attention at the thought.

"You remember I told you that I was detailed in the city on special work," Stephen went on.

"I do."

"Well, it is a special work but it also is a very indefinite work. There is a movement afoot, but of its nature, and purpose, I at this moment am entirely ignorant. I am here to discover clews."

"And have you no material to work on except that? It is very vague, to say the least."

"That and suspicion. Howe found the city a nest of Tories; but he also found it swarmed with patriots, whose enthusiasm, and vigor, and patience, and determination must have impressed him profoundly, and portended disaster for the British cause. With the morale of the people so high, and renewed hope and confidence swelling their bosoms, a complete military victory must have appeared hopeless to the British General. What was left? Dissension, or rebellion, or treason, or anything that will play havoc with the united determination of the Colonists."

She breathed heavily as she rested her chin on her hand absorbed in the vision that he was calling up.

"Arnold's victory at Saratoga has convinced Britain that the war over here cannot be won," he continued. "Already has Lord North thrown a bomb into the ranks of the proud Tories by his liberal proposals. Of course they will be entirely rejected by us and the war will continue until complete independence is acknowledged. True, we had no such idea in mind when we entered this conflict, but now we are convinced that victory is on our side and that a free and independent form of government

is the most suitable for us. We have enunciated certain principles which are possible of realization only under a democratic form of government, where the people rule and where the rulers are responsible to the people. Such a system is possible only in a great republic, and that is what England must now recognize. Otherwise the war must go on."

"Have our aims taken such definite form. I know – "

"No! They have not," interrupted Stephen, "they have not and that is where trouble is to be expected. Such is the state of mind, however, of many of the more experienced leaders, but their opinion will lose weight. It is because all are not united in this, that there is room for treason under the motive of misguided patriotism. And it is to scent every possible form of that disloyalty that I have been sent here; sent to the very place where the Tories most abound and where such a plot is most liable to take root."

"And you expect me to be of assistance to you?" asked Marjorie, proud of the confidence which she so readily gained.

"I expect much. But perhaps nothing will eventuate. I can rely on you, however. For the present, naught is to be done. When the time comes, I shall tell you."

"But what can I do? I am but a mere girl."

"Did I think you to be ordinary, I might not have asked you," quickly exchanged Stephen.

Marjorie dropped her head and began studying the stitches in her gown. But only for a second, for she as quickly raised her head and asked:

"Wherein, then, can I be of service to you?"

"Listen!" He brought his chair to a point nearly opposite hers. She was seated on the settee, yet he made no attempt to share it with her.

"You are friendly with the Shippen family," he went on. "Now, do not misinterpret me. I shall require no betrayal of confidence. But it is generally known that the Shippens are Tories, not avowedly so, yet in heart and in thought. It is also generally known that their house was the center of society during the days of the British occupation, at which all manner of men assembled. The walls of that house, could they but speak, would be able to relate many momentous conversations held over the teacups, or in quiet corners. The family themselves must know many things which might be invaluable to us."

"And you want me to learn that for you?" inquired Marjorie in alarm as the horrible thought forced itself upon her.

"I want you to do nothing of the kind," quickly answered Stephen. "Far be it from me to require you to barter your benevolence. I should deplore any such method as most dishonorable and unworthy of the noble cause in which we are engaged. No! I ask this, simply, that through you I might be permitted the honor of visiting the home of Miss Shippen and that by being acquainted with the family I might acquire a general entrée to the Tory social circle. In this way I might effect my purpose and perchance stumble across information of vital importance. Thus can you be of great assistance to me."

"I shall be delighted to do this, and I shall tell you more – perhaps you may ask me to do something more noble – sometime – " She hesitated to express the wish which was father to her thought.

"Sometime I expect you to be of real service to me and to our country – sometime – "

Marjorie did not answer. She knew what she would like to say, but dared not. Why should he unfold his mission to her at this, almost their first meeting? And why should he expect her to be of such assistance to him, to him, first, and then to the country? And then, why should she feel so responsive, so ready to spend herself, her energy, her whole being at the mere suggestion of this young man, whom until last evening, she had never thought to exist. She felt that she was as wax in the hands of this soldier; she knew it and enjoyed it and only awaited the moment when his seal would come down upon her and stamp her more to his liking. She was slightly younger than he, and happily his

contrary in nearly all respects. He was fair, she was dark; his eyes were blue, hers brown; he was lusty and showed promise of broadness, she was slender.

Twice she opened her mouth as if to speak to him, and each time she dropped again her head in reflective silence. She did not talk to this young man as she might to any number of her more intimate acquaintances. Even the very silence was magnetic. Further utterance would dispel the charm. That she would enlist in his service she knew as well as she knew her own existence, but that he should arouse so keen an interest in her, so buoyant an attitude, so secure an assurance, amazed her and filled her with awe. She had never before experienced quite the same sensation that now dismayed her nor had any one ever brought home to her her worth as did this young soldier. Yes she would help him, but in what way?

And so they sat and considered and talked. They soon forgot to talk about His Excellency, or the Army, or the Shippens. Neither did they resolve the doubts that might have been entertained concerning the manner of men who frequented the home of Peggy and her sisters; nor the Alliance which had just been established, nor the vital signification of the event. They just talked over a field of affairs none of which bore any special relation to any one save their own selves. At length the old clock felt constrained to speak up and frown at them for their unusual delay and their profligate waste of tallow and dips.

Stephen rose at once. Marjorie saw him to the door, where she gave him her hand in parting.

"We have indeed been honored this day, Captain, and I trust that the near future will see a return of the same. I am entirely at your service," whispered Marjorie, wondering why the words did not come to her more readily.

"On the contrary, Miss Allison, it is I who have been privileged. My humble respects to your parents. Adieu!"

He bowed gracefully, wheeled, and went out the door.

CHAPTER V

I

The Corner of Market and Front Streets was brisk with life and activity at twelve, the change hour, every day. Here assembled the merchants of the city, members of the upper class who cared enough about the rest of the world to make an inquiry into its progress; men of leisure about town whose vocation in life was to do nothing and who had the entire day in which to do it. All conditions, all varieties of character joined the ranks. Soldiers, restless from the monotony of army life and desirous of the license usually associated with leave of absence; civilians eager in the pursuit of truth or of scandal; patriots impatient with the yoke of foreign rule; Tories exasperated with the turn of the war and its accompanying privations; – all gathered together at the Old London Coffee House day after day.

It stood, an imposing three-storied, square structure, with a great wing extending far in the rear. Its huge roof, fashioned for all the world after a truncated pyramid with immense gables projecting from its sides, gave every indication of having sheltered many a guest from the snows and rains of winter. A great chimney ran up the side and continually belched forth smoke and sparks, volumes of them, during the days and nights of the cold winter season. A portico of no particular style of architecture ran around two sides of the ancient building and afforded a meeting place for the majority of the guests. It was furnished with many chairs, faithfully tenanted when the season was propitious.

Thither Stephen and Mr. Allison were directing their steps more than a week after they had last met at the home of the latter. It was by the merest chance they encountered. Stephen was seeking a healthful reaction from a vigorous walk through the less-frequented part of the city; Mr. Allison was making his daily visit to the Coffee House. Stephen had often heard of the tavern, but had never been there. Still he was resolved to seek an introduction to its clientèle at the first propitious moment. That moment had now come.

Upon entering, their attention was at once arrested by the animated discussion in progress at a table in the nearest corner of the room. An officer of the Governor's Guard, in full regimentals, booted and spurred, in company with a gentleman, finely dressed, was talking loudly to Jim Cadwalader, who was seated before them holding a half-opened newspaper in his hand. It was plain to be seen that the soldier was somewhat under the influence of liquor, yet one could not call him intoxicated.

"Gi' me that an' I'll show y'," exclaimed the soldier as he grabbed the paper from Cadwalader's hand.

"Y' were told," he went on to read from it, "that it was t' avoid the 'stabl'shment 'r count'nancin'," he half mumbled the words, "of Pop'ry; an that Pop'ry was 'stabl'shed in Canada (where 't was only tol'rated). And is not Pop'ry now as much 'stabl'shed by law in your state 's any other rel'gion?" "Just what I was sayin'," he interpolated. "So that your Gov'nor and all your rulers may be Papists, and you may have a Mass-House in ev'ry corner o' your country (as some places already 'xper'ence)."

"There!" he snarled as he threw back the paper. "Isn't that what I wuz tryin' t' tell y'."

"You can't tell me nothin', Forrest," retorted Jim.

"Course I can't. Nobody kin. Y' know 't all."

"I can mind my own bus'ness."

"There y' are agin," shouted Forrest, "y' know 't all, ye do."

"Don't say that again," Jim flared back at him. "I'll – I'll – I'll – . Don't say it again, that's all."

"'Cause y' know 'ts true."

"It's a lie," Jim interrupted him. "Ye know it's a lie. But I don't 'spect much of ye, 'r of the Gov'nor either. None of ye 'll ever be Papists."

"Now you're talkin' sens'ble; first sens'ble thing you've said t'day. No Papists here if we kin help it."

Stephen and Mr. Allison, keenly interested in this remark, moved nearer to the table. Cadwalader was well known to Mr. Allison. The others were total strangers.

"What's he goin' t' do about the help from France? Refuse it 'cause it's from a Catholic country?" asked Jim.

"He don't like it and never did."

"Is he fool 'nough t' think we can win this war without help?"

"He won it once."

"When?"

"Saratoga."

"That's his story. We didn't have it won and it won't be won without troops and with somethin' besides shin-plasters." He turned sideways, crossed one leg over the other and began to drum upon the table.

"We must hev help," he went on. "We must hev it and it must come from France 'r Spain."

"They y' are agin," repeated Forrest, "as if one wuzn't as much under th' Pope as th' other."

"Forrest!" he turned toward him and shook his finger at him in a menacing sort of way. "Don't say that agin. Mind what I tell ye. Don't say it again – that's all. When I'm mad, I'm not myself."

"Is that so? I s'pose I'm wrong agin, an' you're right. Tell me this. What did yer fool leg'slature in Vi'ginya do th' other day?"

"I don't know," murmured Jim. "What did they do?"

"There y' are agin. I thought y' knew it all. Think y' know ev'rythin' an' y' know nothin'. Passed a resolution fur a Papist priest, didn't they?"

"And why?" pronounced Jim, flushed with anger, his lower lip quivering with emotion. "'Cause he did more fur his country, than you or I'll ever do. Father Gibault! And if it wazn't fur him, Colonel Clark'd never hev op'nd th' Northwest."

"That's just what I say. The Papists'll soon own the whole damn country."

Stephen and Mr. Allison moved as if to join the discussion, which had at this juncture become loud enough to lose the character of intimacy. Jim was well known to the guests of the house. The man who was known as Forrest, was, it was plain from his uniform, a Colonel in the army. The other man was a stranger. Much younger than his companion, tall, manly, clad in a suit of black, with his hair in full dress, well-powdered and gathered behind in a large silken bag, he gave every appearance of culture and refinement. He wore a black cocked hat, whose edges were adorned with a black feather about an inch in depth, his knees as well as his shoes adorned with silver buckles.

"If they did own th' country," was Jim's grave reply, "we'd hev a healthier place to live in than we now hev."

"An' whose doin' it?" shouted Forrest. "The Papists."

"Thou liest!" interrupted Mr. Allison, intruding himself into their midst, "a confounded lie. Remember, the Catholics have given their all to this war – their goods, their money, their sons."

"Heigh-ho! who're you?" asked the soldier. "What d' you know 'bout the army? Hardly 'nough 'f them to go aroun'."

"A malicious untruth. Why, half the rebel army itself is reported to have come from Ireland."

"How do you know?"

"From the testimony of General Robertson in the House of Lords. And if these soldiers are Irishmen, you can wager they're Catholics. And why should we pass laws 'gainst these crowds of Irish Papists and convicts who are yearly poured upon us, unless they were Catholic convicts fleeing from the laws of persecution?"

"What ails ye, Forrest," rejoined Jim, "can't be cured."

"Take care 'f yourself," angrily retorted the Colonel, "an' I'll take care o' myself."

"If ye did, and yer likes did the same, we'd git along better and the war'd be over. I s'pose ye know that yer friend Jay lost Canada to us."

"What if he did. Wazn't he right?"

And then he explained to him.

II

Canada had been surrendered to England by France in a clause of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, with a stipulation, however, that the people of the territory in question would be permitted the free use of the French language, the prescriptions of the French code of laws, and the practice of the Catholic religion.

South of this region and west of the English colonies between the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, stretched a vast expanse of territory known as the Northwest Territory, where dwelt a large population without laws, with no organized form of government save the mere caprices of petty military tyrants, placed over them by the various seaboard colonies who severally laid claim to the district. At the request of the people of Canada it was voted by the English Parliament to reannex the territory northwest of the Ohio to Canada and to permit the settlers to share in the rights and privileges of the Canadian province. This was effected by the Quebec Act in 1774.

It was truly a remarkable concession. The inhabitants of this vast stretch of territory were freed for all time from the tyranny of military despots, their lands and churches secured to them and their priests given a legal title to their tithes. It was the freest exercise of the Catholic religion under the laws of the English Government.

But what a storm of abuse and protestation was raised by the fanatical portion of the Protestant population! The newspapers of the day abounded with articles, with songs and squibs against the King and His Parliament. The mother country witnessed no less virulent a campaign than the colonies themselves. "We may live to see our churches," writes one writer to the *Pennsylvania Packet*, "converted into mass-houses, and our lands plundered of tithes for the support of a Popish clergy. The Inquisition may erect her standard in Pennsylvania and the city of Philadelphia may yet experience the carnage of St. Bartholomew's day." Processions were formed about the country and in some places the bust of George III, adorned with miter, beads and a pectoral cross, was carried in triumphal march.

The forms of protest found their way ultimately into the halls of the First American Congress which convened in Philadelphia in 1774. The recent legislation was enumerated among the wrongs done the colonies by the mother country. Feeling became so bitter that an address was issued by the Congress on the fifth of September, 1774, "to the people of Great Britain" saying: "We think the Legislature of Great Britain is not authorized by the Constitution to establish a religion, fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets, or to erect an arbitrary form of government in any quarter of the globe." "By another act the Dominion of Canada is to be extended, modeled and governed, as that being disunited from us, detached from our interests by civil as well as religious prejudices, that by their numbers daily swelling with Catholic emigrants from Europe, and by their devotion to administration so friendly to their religion, they might become formidable to us, and on occasion be fit instruments in the hands of power to reduce the ancient free Protestant colonies to the same state of slavery with themselves." Little did they think that the breach they were attempting to heal was widened by their procedure. The author of the address was John Jay, a lawyer from New York, with whom Papaphobia was a mania.

Nor did the failure of this method of diplomacy become apparent until several years later. The measure of appreciation and the expression of sentiment of the Canadian people in regard to this ill-timed and unchristian address, conceived in a fit of passion and by no means representative of the sentiments of the saner portion of the population, took expression at a more critical time. When, in 1776, the members of the same Congress, viewing with alarm the magnitude of the struggle

upon which they had entered and to whose success they had pledged their honor, their fortunes and their lives, sought to enlist the resources of their neighbors in Canada, they met with a sudden and calamitous disappointment. To effect an alliance with the border brethren, three commissioners were appointed – Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Father John Carroll, a Jesuit priest, was invited by the Congress to accompany the party.

Arriving in Canada, it soon became evident to the committee, that their mission was to be unproductive of results. The government did not take kindly to them, nor would the Bishop of Quebec and his clergy trust the vague expressions of the United Colonies, whose statute books, they pointed out, still bore the most bitter and unchristian sentiments against all priests and adherents of the ancient church. Bigotry had apparently defeated their purpose. How it had done this was still quite obscure, until it was discovered that the British Government had taken John Jay's address, translated it into French and spread it broadcast throughout Canada. "Behold the spirit of the Colonists," it went on to remind the people, "and if you join forces with them, they will turn on you and extirpate your religion, in the same manner as they did in the Catholic colony of Maryland."

The effect is historical. The commissioners were compelled to return; the brave Montgomery was killed before the walls of the city; Canada was lost to the Colonies and forever forfeited as an integral part of the United States; all of which was due to the narrowness and intolerance of those who in the supreme hour could not refrain from the fanaticism of bigotry.

It must be said, however, out of justice to the colonists that they did not persist in their spirit of antagonism towards the Catholics. The commencement of the struggle against the common foe, together with the sympathetic and magnanimous concurrence of the Catholics with the patriots in all things, soon changed their prejudice in favor of a more united and vigorous effort in behalf of their joint claims. The despised Papists now became ardent and impetuous patriots. The leaders in the great struggle soon began to reflect an added luster to the nation that gave them birth and to the Church which taught them devotion to their land. The rank and file began to swarm with men of the Catholic faith, so many, indeed, that their great Archbishop, John Carroll, could write of them that "their blood flowed as freely (in proportion to their numbers) to cement the fabric of independence, as that of any of their fellow citizens. They concurred with perhaps greater unanimity than any other body of men in recommending and promoting that government from whose influence America anticipates all the blessings of justice, peace, plenty, good order, and civil and religious liberty."

Only among the few was the spirit of intolerance still rampant, and among these might be numbered Colonel Forrest.

III

"See now who's t' blame, don't ye? The likes o' ye an' that poltroon, Jay, up there in New York. See who started this affair, don't ye?"

"That's what you say. Egad, I could say all that an' save half the breath. I've got my 'pinion, though, and that'll do fur me."

"Ye're so narrow, Forrest, ye've only one side."

"Is that so? Well, so is the Governor."

"Is that his opinion, too?" impatiently asked Mr. Allison.

"What?"

"Does he view matters in that light?"

"Did I say he did."

"Yes."

There was no further response.

Stephen had, by this time, become thoroughly exasperated with this man, and was about to eject him forcibly from the room. His better judgment, however, bade him restrain himself. A tilt in a public drinking house would only noise his name abroad and perhaps give rise to much unpleasantness.

"How can a man consistently be subject to any civil ruler when he already has pledged his allegiance, both in soul and in body, to another potentate?"

This from the man in black, the fourth member of the party, who heretofore had maintained an impartial and respectful silence, not so much from choice perhaps as through necessity. His name proved to be John Anderson.

"You mean an alien?" Stephen inquired.

"If you are pleased so to term it. The Pope is a temporal lord, you understand, and as such is due allegiance from every one of his subjects."

And then Stephen took pains to explain, clearly and concisely, the great difference between the two authorities – the civil and the religious. The Prince of Peace had said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," which declaration admitted of an interpretation at once comprehensive and exclusive. He explained how the Catholic found himself a member of two distinct and perfect societies, each independent and absolute within its own sphere, the one deriving its charter from the natural law, the other directly from God. He then pointed out how these societies lived in perfect harmony, although armed with two swords, the one spiritual, the other temporal, weapons which were intended never to clash but to fight side by side for the promotion of man's happiness, temporal and eternal.

"But it is inconceivable how a clash can be avoided," Mr. Anderson reminded him.

"Not when it is remembered that each authority is independent of the other. The Church has no power over civil legislation in matters purely secular, nor has the state a right to interfere in ecclesiastical legislation, in matters purely spiritual, nor over spiritual persons considered strictly as such. In every Catholic country the King, as well as the humblest peasant, is subject to the laws of his country in secular matters, and to the laws of his church in matters spiritual."

"Yet at the same time he cannot fail to recognize that the one is superior to the other."

"Only in so far as the spiritual order is superior to the secular."

"Not in temporal affairs as well?"

"Not in the least. Only in the recognition of the fact that the salvation of the soul is of more importance than the welfare of the body. In this is the mission of the state considered inferior to that of the Church."

"If this be true, how can a Catholic pay allegiance to a society which he believes to be a subordinate one?"

"He does not consider it subordinate. It is supreme within its own sphere. Theoretically it is subordinate in this: that the care of the soul comes first; then that of the body. The state is the greatest institution in matters secular, and in this respect superior to the Church. The Church makes no pretense of infallibility in statesmanship. Hence, a Catholic who is true to his Church and her teachings makes the best citizen."

"Why?"

"Because, to him, patriotism is inculcated by religion. Throughout his whole life his soul has been nurtured by his Church on a twofold pabulum, – love of God and love of country."

"The Catholic Church expressly teaches that? I thought – "

"Exactly," agreed Stephen, interrupting him. "The Catholic has been taught that the civil authority, to which he owes and pays allegiance, is something divine; for him it is the authority of God vested in His creatures and he gives ear to its voice and yields to it a sweet and humble submission as befits a child of God, doing His Will in all things. For he recognizes therein the sound of the Divine Voice."

"I see."

"He remembers the teaching of his Church, derived from the words of St. Paul writing on this subject to the citizens of Rome, 'Let every man be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God,' and the letter of St. Peter, the first Pope, 'Be ye subject, therefore, to every human creature for God's sake; whether it be to the king as excelling; or to governors as sent by him – for so is the will of God.'"

"You must have been reading the Bible," interrupted Mr. Allison with a smile.

"I have," answered Stephen, as he continued with little or no attention to the interruption.

"The Catholic obeys the voice of his rightly constituted authority because he feels that he is obeying the voice of his God, and when he yields obedience to the law of his land, he feels that he is yielding obedience to God Himself. His ruler is the mouthpiece of God; the Constitution of his state a most sacred thing because it is the embodiment of the authority of God and he would rather die than commit any untoward or unlawful deed which might undermine or destroy it, precisely because it is from God."

There was no response. All had listened with attention to Stephen as he emphasized point after point. All, save Colonel Forrest, who wore a sardonic smile throughout it all.

"You should 've talked like that on Guy Fawkes' Day," he muttered, "if you wanted t' hev some fun. We'd hev some hot tar fur you."

"Thank God!" replied Stephen. "We shall witness no more such outbreaks of fanaticism. They have long enough disgraced our country. They are, I trust, forever ended."

"The Pope Day Celebration ended?" asked Anderson in surprise.

"I hope so. Since General Washington issued the order soon after taking command of the army, abolishing the celebration, the practice has never been resumed."

"Wash'ton thinks he owns th' country," mumbled Forrest in a half articulate manner. "Likes th' Papists, he does. No more Pope Day! Cath'lic gen'rals! French al-lies! P'rhaps 'll send fur th' Pope next. Give 'm 'is house, p'rhaps. Give 'im th' whole coun'ry. No damn good to us, he ain't. No damn good – "

The next moment Stephen was upon him with his hands about his throat, his face flaming with rage and passion.

"You hound! No more of that; or your treason will end forever."

He shook his head violently, tightening his fingers about his throat. As he did, Forrest writhing in the chair under his attack, began to fumble with his hand at his hip as if instinctively seeking something there. Stephen's eyes followed the movement, even while he, too, relaxed his hold to seize with his free hand the arm of his adversary. Only for a moment, however; for he immediately felt himself seized from behind by the shoulders and dragged backwards from his man and completely overpowered.

The man who was known as Anderson took charge of the Colonel, helping him to his feet, and without further words led him to one side of the room, talking softly but deliberately to him as he did so.

A moment later they had passed through the door and vanished down the street in the direction of the Square.

CHAPTER VI

I

The morrow was one of those rare days when all nature seems to invite one to go forth and enjoy the good things within her keeping. The sunrise was menacing; unless the wind shifted before noon it would be uncomfortably warm. Still, the air was bracing and fragrant with the soft perfume distilled by the pines.

Stephen felt in tune with nature as he made his early morning toilet. He gazed the while into the garden from his widely opened window, and responded instinctively to the call of the countryside. The disagreeable episode of the preceding day had left unpleasant recollections in his mind which disconcerted him not a little during his waking hours, the time when the stream of consciousness begins to flow with an unrestrained rapidity, starting with the more impressive memories of the night before. He did not repent his action; he might have repeated the performance under similar circumstances, yet he chided himself for his lack of reserve and composure and his great want of respect to a superior officer.

He was early mounted and on his way, striking off in the direction of the Germantown Road. He had left word with his landlady of his intended destination, with the added remark that he would be back in a short time, a couple of hours at the most, and that he would attend to the business of the day upon his return. What that might amount to he had no idea at all, being preoccupied entirely with what he had to do in the immediate present, for he made it a point never to permit the more serious affairs of life to intrude upon his moments of relaxation.

He was a pleasant figure to look upon; smooth-faced and athletic, well mounted and dressed with great preciseness. On his well shaped hands he wore leathern gauntlets; he was in his uniform of buff and blue; beneath his coat he had his steel-buckled belt with his holster and pistol in it; he wore his cocked hat with a buff cockade affixed, the insignia of his rank in the service.

The road lay in the direction of Marjorie's house. Perhaps he chose to ride along this way in order that he might be obliged to pass her door, and then again, perhaps, that was but of secondary import. This was no time for analysis, and so he refused to study his motives. He did know that he had not seen her for a long time, the longest time it seemed, and that he had had no word from her since their last meeting, save the intelligence received from her father yesterday in response to his repeated inquiries concerning her welfare and that of her mother.

"Let us turn up here, Dolly, old girl." He leaned forward a little to pat the mare's neck affectionately as he spoke; while at the same time he pulled the right rein slightly, turning her head in the direction indicated. "And, if we are fortunate, we shall catch a glimpse of her."

Dolly raised her ears very erect and opened full her nostrils as if to catch some possible scent of her, of whom he spoke. She pierced the distance with her eyes, but saw no one and so settled herself into an easy canter, for she knew it to be more to her rider's advantage to proceed at a slowing pace until they had passed the house in question.

"You are an intelligent old girl, Dolly, but I must not let you too far into the secrets of my mind. Still, you have shared my delights and woes alike and have been my one faithful friend. Why should I not tell you?"

And yet they had been friends for no great length of time. It was at Valley Forge they had met, shortly after Stephen's appointment to General Washington's staff. As an aide he was required to be mounted and it was by a piece of good fortune that he had been allowed to choose from several the chestnut mare that now bore him. He had given her the best of care and affection and she reciprocated in as intelligent a manner as she knew how.

"You have served well, but I feel that there is much greater work before us, much greater than our quest of the present."

They were nearing the house. For some reason or other, Dolly whinnied as he spoke, probably in acquiescence to his thought, probably in recognition of the presence of her rival. She might have seen, had she cared to turn her head, a trim, lithe form passing to the rear of the house. Stephen took pains to see her, however, and, as she turned her head, doffed his hat in salute. The next moment Dolly felt the reins tighten, and, whether she desired it or not, found her head turned in that direction. Her rider was soon dismounted and was leading her to the side of the road.

"You are early astir, Mistress Marjorie. I had anticipated no such pleasure this morning."

"It is indeed mutual," replied Marjorie, smiling as she offered him her hand. "How came you so early? No new turn of events, I hope!"

"Not in the least. I desired a few hours in the saddle before the heat of the day set in, and my guardian angel must have directed me along this path."

Dolly raised both her ears and turned towards him, while she noisily brought her hoof down upon the sod.

"What a rascal!" she thought to herself.

The girl dropped her eyes demurely and then asked hurriedly:

"There are no new developments?"

"None that I know of."

"Nothing came of the trouble at the Inn?"

"Then you know?"

"All. Father told me."

"He should not have told you."

"It was my doing. I gave him no peace until I had learned all."

Dolly grew weary of this pleasantry and wandered away to gladden her lips on the choice morsels of the tender grass.

"I deeply regret my indiscretion, though it was for his sake."

"You mean – ?"

"His Excellency."

"I might have done likewise, were I able. Colonel Forrest is most disagreeable."

"He was not wholly culpable and so I forgave his insulting remarks against us, but I forgot myself entirely when General Washington's name was besmirched."

"I fear further trouble," she sighed.

"From him?"

She nodded her head.

"Nonsense! There will be naught said about the whole affair and it will end where it began. Forrest is no fool."

"I have other news for you, Captain," announced Marjorie, her eyes beaming at the prospect.

"And how long have you been preserving it for me?" asked Stephen.

"But a few days."

"And you made no attempt to see me?"

"Had I not met you now, I would have done so this day," answered Marjorie.

"You would have written?"

"Perhaps."

"It is my forfeiture to your reserve."

"And made gallantly."

"Come now! What had you to tell?"

"This. Peggy desires the honor of your company. You will receive the invitation in a day or two. Just an informal affair, yet I sensed the possibility of your pleasure."

"You did right. I am pleased as I am honored, but neither so much as I am elated at the hopes for the future. Of course, I shall accept, but you will have to promise to denote my path for me in the tangled maze of society, in whose company I am as yet merely a novice."

"Lud! I ne'er heard one so illiberal of his graces."

"Nor one more candid," Stephen rejoined as quickly. If he were good at repartee he had met with one who was equally as apt.

"You know the Governor will be in attendance," she declared in a matter-of-fact manner.

"How should I know that? Is it unusual for him to frequent the company of the gay?"

"Not of late, the more especially where the presence of Peggy is concerned," added the little tale-bearer with a keen though reckless wit.

"And why Peggy?" He was innocent enough in his question.

"Have you not heard of His Excellency's courting? Mr. Shippen has already made public the rumor that a certain great General is laying close siege to the heart of Peggy. And I have Peggy's own word for it."

"To Peggy?" He asked with evident surprise. "Why, she but halves his age, and he is already a widower."

"With three sons," Marjorie gayly added. "No matter. Peggy will meet the disparity of ages by the disparity of stations. She has avowed to me that no one dares to question the social preëminence of the Military Governor, nor the fact that he is the most dashing and perhaps most successful general of the Continental Army. Position in life is of prime importance to her."

"Is that so? I had not so judged her," was the comment.

"She admits that herself, and makes no secret of it before any one. Did you not observe her sullen silence at the Ball upon learning of the identity of her inferior partner? And that she sat out the major portion of the dance in company with the Military Governor?"

"It escaped my attention, for I was too deeply concerned with another matter which distracted me for the entire evening," he answered with a smile.

She pretended to take no notice, however, and continued.

"Well, he has been calling regularly since that evening, and this quiet and informal function has been arranged primarily in his honor, although it will not be announced as such. You will go?" she asked.

"I shall be pleased to accept her invitation. May I accompany you?"

"Thank you. I almost hoped you would say that. Men folks are so sadly wanting in intuition."

"Friday, then? Adieu! The pleasure that awaits me is immeasurable."

"Until Friday."

She extended to him her hand, which he pressed. A moment later he was mounted.

"My kindest to your mother. She will understand." Dolly broke into a gallop.

II

Marjorie stood at the gate post until he was quite lost from view around the turn of the road. He did not look back, yet she thought that he might have. She slowly turned and as slowly began to walk towards the house, there to resume the duties which had suffered a pleasant interruption.

Meanwhile, she tried to analyze this young man. He was rather deep, of few words on any given subject, but wholly non-communicative as regards himself. He perhaps was possessed of more intuition than his manner would reveal, although he gave every appearance of arriving at his conclusions by the sheer force of logic. His words and deeds never betrayed his whole mind, of that she was certain, yet he could assert himself rather forcibly when put to the test, as in the painful incident at the Coffee House. He would never suffer from soul-paralysis, thought she, for want of decision or resolution, for both were written full upon him.

That she was strangely attracted to him she knew very well, but why and how she was unable to discover. This was but their third meeting, yet she felt as if she had known him all her life, so frank, so unreserved, so open, so secure did she feel in his presence. It seemed the most natural thing in the world for her to have waved her hand in salute to him that morning as he passed; she did it with the same unconcern as if she had known him all her life. She felt it within her, that was all, and could give no other possible interpretation to her action.

There was something prepossessing about him. Perhaps it was his faculty for doing the unexpected. Most women desire to meet a man who is possessed of a distinctive individuality, who lends continual interest to them by his departure from the trite and commonplace. What Stephen might say or do was an entirely unknown quantity until it had actually taken place, and this attracted her on the instant, whether she was conscious of it or not. His manner, too, was affable, and gave him an air at once pleasing and good-natured. He never flattered, yet said most agreeable things, putting one perfectly at ease and inspiring sympathy and courage. He bore himself well; erect, manly, dignified, without ostentation or display. His seriousness, his evenness, his gravity, his constancy and his decision stamped him with a certain authority, a man of marked personality and character.

So she mused as she entered the door, her thoughts in a lofty hegira to the far off land of make believe – her better self striving to marshal them to the cold realities of duty that lay before her. She had been cleaning the little addition at the rear of the dwelling proper, used as a kitchen, and her work took her into the yard. Dolly's whinny had caused her to turn her head, and the next moment cares and responsibilities and all else were forgotten. Now she wondered what she had been about! Seizing a cloth she began to dust industriously. The crash of one of the dishes on the kitchen floor brought her to her senses. Her mother heard the noise from the adjoining room.

"What ails thee, child? Hast thou lost thy reason?"

"I believe so, mommy. I must have been thinking of other things." And she stooped to gather the fragments.

"Was it Captain Meagher? I saw you two at the gate."

A guilty smile stole over the corners of her mouth.

"He was passing while I was in the yard, and he stopped only to wish me the greetings of the day. I was right glad that he did, for I had an opportunity of extending to him the invitation from Peggy."

"He will go, I suppose?" she queried, knowing well what the answer might be. She did not spare the time to stop for conversation, but continued with her duties.

"He is quite pleased. And, mommy, he will call for me."

"Be careful, now, to break no more dishes."

"Lud! I have not lost my head yet. That was purely an accident which will not happen again."

"That poor unfortunate Spangler made a better defense."

"He deserved what he got. So did Lieutenant Lyons and the other officers of the Ranger who deserted to the enemy. But my sympathies go out to the old man who kept the gates under the city. These court-martials are becoming too common and I don't like them."

"That is the horrible side of war, my dear. And until our people learn the value of patriotism, the need of abolishing all foreign ties and strongly adhering to the land that has offered them a home and a living, the necessity of these dreadful measures will never cease."

"A little power is a dangerous weapon to thrust into a man's hand, unless he be great enough to wield it."

"Now you are going to say that General Arnold is to blame for these tragedies."

"No, I am not. But I do think that a great deal more of clemency could be exercised. Many of those poor tradesmen who were convicted and sentenced to be hanged could have been pardoned with equal security."

"That is the law, my dear, and the law is God's will. Leave all to Him."

Mrs. Allison was one of those good souls who saw no harm in the vilest of creatures; faults were hidden by her veil of sympathy. When distressing reverses or abject despair visited any one, Mrs. Allison's affability and indescribable tenderness smoothed over the troubled situation and brought forth a gleam of gladness. Quiet, kindly, magnanimous, tolerant, she could touch hearts to the depths in a manner both winning and lasting. Whether the fault entailed a punishment undeserved or inevitable, her feeling of pity was excited. She always sympathized without accusing or probing the source of the evil. She stretched forth a helping hand merely to aid. No nature, however hard, could be impervious to the sympathy and the sweetness of her affectionate disposition.

Motherly was the quality written full upon Mrs. Allison's face. Her thoughts, her schemes, her purposes, her ambitions of life, were all colored by this maternal attribute. In her daily homage and obeisance to God, Whom she worshiped with the most childlike faith and simplicity; in the execution of the manifold duties of her home, Marjorie was to her ever a treasure of great price. She was sustained in her aims and purposes by an enduring power of will, – a power clothed with the soft, warm, living flesh of a kindly heart.

Her marriage with Matthew Allison had been happy, a happiness intensified and concretely embodied in Marjorie, the only child vouchsafed to them by the Creator. How often, at the time when the deepening shadows moved their way across the dimming landscape, announcing to the work worn world the close of another day, would she sit for a brief while in silence and take complacence in the object of her hopes and aspirations! It was Marjorie for whom she lived and toiled and purposed. And it was Marjorie who embodied the sum-total of her fancies and ambitions and aspirations, and translated them into definite forms and realities.

III

A beautiful landscape unrolled itself before Stephen as he leisurely rode along the Germantown road. The midsummer sun was now high in the heavens, with just a little stir in the air to temper its warmth and oppressiveness. Fragments of clouds, which seemed to have torn themselves loose from some great heap massed beyond the ridge of low hills to the westward, drifted lazily across the waste of blue sky, wholly unconcerned as to their ultimate lot or destination. Breaths of sweet odor, from freshly cut hay or the hidden foliage bounding the road, were wafted along in the embraces of the gentle breeze. Away to the left and before him, as his horse cantered along, swelled the countryside in gentle undulations of green and brown, disfigured now and again by irregular patches of field and orchard yielding to cultivation; while to the side a stone wall humped itself along the winding road into the distance, its uniformity of contour broken here and there by a trellis work of yellow jasmine or crimson rambler, alternately reflecting lights and shadows from the passing clouds and sunshine. It was a day when all nature was in perfect tune, its harmony sweetly blending with the notes of gladness that throbbed in Stephen's heart. Yet he was scarce aware of it all, so completely absorbed was he in the confusion of his own thought.

Stephen had a very clear idea of what he was to do in the immediate present, but he had no idea at all of what was to be done in the immediate future. First of all he would attend Mistress Marjorie at this informal affair, where, perhaps, he might learn more about the Military Governor. He half surmised that His Excellency was not kindly disposed towards Catholics in general, although he could not remember any concrete case in particular to substantiate his claim. Still he knew that he was avowedly opposed to the French Alliance, as were many illustrious citizens; and he presumed his feelings were due in part at least to the fact that France was a recognized Catholic country. There was a negative argument, too: no Catholic name was ever found among his appointments. These were but surmises, not evidence upon which to base even a suspicion. Nevertheless, they were worthy of some consideration until a conclusion of a more definite nature was warranted.

That the Governor was becoming decidedly more unpopular every day and that this unpopularity was quite consequential, more consequential if anything than preconceived, – for it cannot be gainsaid that many had frowned upon his appointment from the very beginning, – Meagher knew very well. Unfavorable comparisons already had been drawn between the gayety of life under a free country and that of a colonial government. The fact that Arnold possessed the finest stable of horses in the city, and entertained at the most costly of dinners, at a time when the manner of living was extremely frugal, not so much from choice as from necessity, and at a time when the value of the Continental currency had depreciated to almost nothing, occasioned a host of acrid criticisms not only in the minds of the displeased populace, but also in the less friendly columns of the daily press.

Censures of the harshest nature were continually uttered against the Governor's conduct of the affairs of the city government together with his earlier order closing the shops. Now, the use that he began to make of the government wagons in moving the stores excited further complaints of a more public nature, the more so that no particular distinction was being made as to whether the stores belonged to the Whigs or the offending Tories. It was no idle gossip that he curried favor with the upper Tory class of the city, now particular mention was made of his infatuation with the daughter of Edward Shippen. It was whispered, too, that the misuse of his authority in the grant of safe passes to and from New York had led to the present act of the Congress in recalling all passes. Stephen knew all this and he logically surmised more; so he longed for the opportunity to study intimately this man now occupying the highest military post in the city and the state.

For the present he would return home and bide his time until Friday evening when he would have the happiness of escorting Marjorie to the home of Peggy Shippen.

"I wonder, Dolly, old girl, if I can make myself bold enough to call her 'Marjorie.' 'Marjorie,' Margaret,'" he repeated them over to himself. "I don't know which is the prettier. She would be a pearl among women, and she is, isn't she, Dolly?"

He would ask her at any rate. He would be her partner for the evening, would dance with her, and would sit by her side. Peggy would be there, too, and the General. He would observe them closely, and perchance, converse with them. Colonel Forrest and the General's active aide-de-camp, Major Franks, a Philadelphian, and a Jew would also be present. Altogether the evening promised to be interesting as well as happy.

He was musing in this manner when he heard the hoof beats of a horse, heavily ridden, gaining upon him in the rear. He drew up and half turned instinctively at the strange yet familiar sound. Suddenly there hove into view at the bend of the road an officer of the Continental Army, in full uniform, booted and spurred, whose appearance caused him to turn full about to await him. It was not long before he recognized the familiar figure of the aide, Major Franks, and he lifted his arm to salute.

"Captain Meagher, I have orders for your arrest."

"Sir?" answered Stephen in alarm.

"On charges preferred by Colonel Forrest. You are to come with me at once."

An embarrassing silence ensued.

Stephen then saluted, and handed over his side arms. He wheeled his horse and set off in the direction indicated, his thoughts in a turmoil.

The Major fell in at the rear.

CHAPTER VII

I

"For still my mem'ry lingers on the scenes
And pleasures of the days beyond recall."

Peggy's voice, timid, soft though pretty, died away into an enraptured silence which seemed to endure for the longest while before the room burst into a generous measure of applause. She was very well accompanied on the clavichord by Miss Rutteledge and on the harp by Monsieur Ottow, Secretary to the French Minister. The evening had been delightful; the assembly brilliant in quality, and unaffectedly congenial and diverting. The music had contributed much to the pleasures of the function, for the Shippens' was one of the few homes in the city where such a resource was at all possible.

"Major! Major Franks! What do you think of my little girl? Do you think 'twould be well for her to cultivate such a voice?"

Mrs. Shippen turned sideways. There was gratification, genuine, complacent gratification, visible in every line of her smiling face.

"Splendid! Splendid! Of course. Madame, she sings very prettily," replied the Major, gathering himself from the state of partial repose into which he had fallen.

He sat up.

"And do you know, Major," went on the fond mother, "she never had a tutor, except some of our dear friends who made this their home during the winter."

"You mean the British?"

"Of course they did not make so free with everybody in the city, with only a few, you know. It was for General Howe himself that Margaret first made bold enough to sing."

"She does very well, I am sure," was the reply.

The little group again lapsed into silence as Peggy responded with an encore, this selection being a patriotic air of a lighter vein. The Major again lapsed into an easy attitude, but Mrs. Shippen was visibly intent upon every motion of the singer and followed her every syllable.

"How much does music contribute to one's pleasure!" she remarked when the conversation began to stir.

"It is charming," Mr. Anderson observed.

"And do you know that we inherited that clavichord? It is one of the oldest in the country."

"It appears to be of rare design," remarked Mr. Anderson, as his eyes pierced the distance in a steady observance of it.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.