

DEVEREUX MARY

FROM KINGDOM
TO COLONY

Mary Devereux
From Kingdom to Colony

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24548148

From Kingdom to Colony:

Содержание

PROLOGUE	4
CHAPTER I	29
CHAPTER II	34
CHAPTER III	41
CHAPTER IV	47
CHAPTER V	54
CHAPTER VI	60
CHAPTER VII	68
CHAPTER VIII	75
CHAPTER IX	81
CHAPTER X	89
CHAPTER XI	96
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	98

Mary Devereux

From Kingdom to Colony

PROLOGUE

When William, Duke of Normandy, invaded England in 1066, and achieved for himself the title of "Conqueror," one of those who accompanied him was Robert D'Evreux, younger son of Walter, Earl of Rosmar, feudal owner and ruler of the town of his name in Normandy.

After the battle of Hastings, in which William won so great a victory, he, wishing to honor the memory of the noblemen and knights by whose aid it had been accomplished, placed their names upon a roll which was suspended in a stately pile, called "Battle Abbey," erected by him upon the field of battle.

In the several exemplifications of "Battle Abbey Roll," as it was termed, the name of Robert D'Evreux is variously expressed as "Daveros," "Deverous," "Conte Devreux," and "Counte Devereux."

It was the close of an early May day in 1639. Charles I. was reigning monarch of England, and the Scotch Covenanters were disturbing his kingdom's peace.

Against these malcontents Charles had sent his army, and Robert Devereux, only son of the beheaded favorite of Elizabeth,

and now third Earl of Essex, had been made Lieutenant-General, he having already, by his resolution and activity no less than by his personal courage, done good service to the King and won much honor for himself.

On this May day, in Warwick, far from all scenes of war or rumors from court, Bromwich Castle, the home of Sir Walter Devereux, Baronet – cousin and present heir of the King's unmarried Lieutenant-General – lifted its turrets, about whose clinging ivy the late afternoon sunshine played golden and warm.

It was a huge pile, massively irregular in architecture, and its thick walls bore traces of those times when a Baron of England was a power in the land, – monarch of his domain, and chief of his own people.

A rugged old tower was its keep, flanked by four symmetrical turrets, and crowned by a battlement overlooking the whole country around. About these clung ivy in a thousand thick wreaths; and here and there, where it was not, the centuries had woven a fantastic tracery of moss, green as the ivy itself, and delicate as frost-work.

What had been the moat was now but a pleasant grassy hollow, carpeted thickly with golden cowslips and fragrant violets, their growing lipped by a tiny stream of purest water.

The castle was surrounded almost to its walls by the forest of ancient oaks, spreading in all directions, and becoming denser and more wild as it stretched miles away. And here were the deer, numerous and fat, that well supplied the larder for Sir Walter's

board, or cooled their sides amid the rankly growing brake and ferns, where naught troubled the intense silence of the dusky aisles save the whirl of the pheasant, or the foot of the hare, light as the leaf dropping from the green arch overhead.

Sir Walter was in the forest this day, and with him were his three goodly sons, besides several retainers. The notes of the horn had come faintly to the castle now and again, as they pursued the chase; and up in her apartments Anne, the seventeen-year-old wife of Sir Walter's youngest son, sat watching for a first glimpse of the returning huntsmen.

Upon her knees lay an open volume, bound in white vellum, and with clasps of pearl. It was richly illuminated, every page presenting a picture gorgeous with color, and it was a carefully narrated story of travel and adventure in that far-away country across the ocean for which she and her young husband were soon to set sail.

She paused over one of the illustrations, and gazed at it long and earnestly, while her agate-gray eyes grew wide, and became filled with consternation. It was the picture of an Indian chief, in all the formidable toggery of war dress and paint; and his fierceness of mien brought to her young heart a hitherto unknown dread and terror.

The golden of the sun was turning to rose, when a clatter of hoofs and the sound of men's voices drew her eyes toward the courtyard below.

Resting her dimpled arms upon the rough stone of the

window-ledge, she leaned over and smiled down into the upturned face of her twenty-two-year-old husband, whose dark eyes sought her casement ere he dismounted from his tired horse, which the esquire at its head had now little need to hold. He waved his hand to her, while a bright smile illumined his grave face, and she responded by blowing him a kiss from the tips of her taper fingers.

The old Baronet, who had been the first to dismount, looked up as well, and shook his hunting spear at her.

"Ah, rogue!" he called out. "Wait till I catch thee! With never a kiss to spare thy old father!"

Her fresh young laugh rang out gayly as she retorted, "But I have many an one, if you choose, good sir, as surely you wot right well."

"'T is a dear child, – a sweet lass, Jack," the old man said to his youngest son as the two entered the castle side by side. "My heart misgives me at thought of her going to the far-off heathen country, amongst savages and wild beasts; for, alack, who can tell what may befall there?"

Behind them followed Leicester, Sir Walter's eldest son, and beside him was young Will, – in his boyhood a page, and now the heir's special esquire. Walter, the next son, came after them, and then the retainers.

These latter bore the deer slain that afternoon, – a famous buck, with great spreading antlers; and the hounds were close by, sniffing about the carcass with repressed excitement.

The three sons of Sir Walter Devereux were much alike in coloring and stature, being tall and stalwart, with broad shoulders, deep chests, and martial bearing. Their faces were dark, with regular features and full rounded foreheads, and the narrow, strongly marked eyebrows arched over unusually large dark eyes.

But the eyes of these three young men were totally different in expression. Those of Leicester were apt to glow with overhaughtiness; for albeit proof was not lacking to show that he had done kind deeds and was a loyal friend and subject as well as a valiant soldier, he was feared, rather than liked, by his subordinates.

Walter's eyes bespoke his true nature, – a rollicking one. Indeed an enemy of "Wat" Devereux were a hard matter to find.

But, favorite though he was, his younger brother, John, went far beyond him in this respect. His was a quiet nature, much given to contemplation; one that drew the best from all hearts about him. He had been his mother's idol; and his face was the last her dying eyes sought three years before, as he sat, pale and silent, by her bedside, calmly and prayerfully awaiting her end. He it was to whom the old Baronet always opened his heart, when the elder son's haughty reserve perplexed or hurt him, or Walter's recklessness brought trouble.

Up in the dusking turret room, on the cushions by the open casement, John Devereux now sat, dressed for the evening meal.

Putting his strong arm about Anne, he drew her head to his

shoulder, and laughed when she showed him the picture that had so affrighted her, while she confided to him her fears lest some such demon should work evil upon him in that strange land in which they were about to find a new home.

"Nay, sweetheart," he said earnestly, "never would I think to take thee to such perils. There be few, if any, such Indians in the country where we shall abide. These writings treat of long-ago days, when goodly English hearts were few on that shore. 'T is changed now; and albeit somewhat rougher than here in our father's castle, 't is every whit as safe. And think, sweetheart," he added proudly, "we shall be the head of our name in this new land, – the same as our brother Leicester here, in old England."

She clung to him silently, while he stroked her soft hair and bent his handsome head to see her face, now smiling, and looking more reassured.

"Art thou still fearful, little one?" he asked presently.

She lifted her face to look into his eyes, and clasped her arms about his neck.

"Fearful?" she repeated. "Nay, not I, so long as thou art with me."

He drew her head against his breast, and a brooding peace fell upon them, broken only by the cawing of the rooks circling about the tower, or the melancholy notes of the ringdoves ensconced amid the ivy on the ancient turrets.

Across the broad Atlantic, on the rocky shore of Marblehead, the May sun had been shining as golden and warm as in old

England; and the new home, although lacking the renown which age and legend had brought to every stone of Bromwich Castle, was enveloped by the glory that comes from the love of pure, brave hearts and God-fearing lives.

Facing the open sea along a portion of the shore of what is now known as Devereux and Clifton, lay the acres – forest and meadow land – of which John Devereux was owner. The house – a low, rambling stone building, of somewhat pretentious size for those days, and fitted with stout oaken doors and shutters – stood in a small clearing.

Only a few yards away were the sheds for cattle, placed thus near for greater protection against thieving Indians, as well as the pilfering pirates who at rare intervals swept along the coast and descended upon the unwary settler, in quest of food or booty.

The virgin forest rose all about, save to the southwest, where the fields were planted to the extent of several acres; and beyond these the forest came again, stretching away to the site of the present town of Marblehead, more than a mile off.

In front of the house was a small open space where the trees had been cut away and the undergrowth removed, that a glimpse might be obtained of the sea; and the land, sloping to the sands, ended in a noble sweep of beach.

A mile or more to the south and southwest, by Forest River, dwelt the Indians, their wigwams not so many as a few years before; for want and pestilence had sadly weakened the once proud Naumkegs.

Their chief, the renowned Nanepashemet, was now dead; and the present ruler, his widow, the "Squaw Sachem," was, like her tribe, too greatly broken by the vicissitudes of fate to resist the encroachments of the whites. And her only surviving son, Weenepauweekin, or, as the settlers called him, "George," was either indifferent, or else too wise to risk incurring further trouble for his tribe by assuming other than an amicable attitude toward his white neighbors.

And thus it was that between the settlers and the Naumkegs all was at peace.

The wife of Weenepauweekin, Ahawayet by name, was well known to Anne Devereux and her husband; and both she and her daughter, a girl of seventeen, were frequent visitors at the house of the "English Chief," as John Devereux was called by the Indians.

In her own gentle, coaxing way, Anne had undertaken to instruct Ahawayet in the Christian faith, and hoped to impress also the wayward, wild-eyed daughter, Joane, who would sometimes come from her dignified playing with the children of the "English Chief" to crouch by her mother, and listen to these teachings.

When the news of Sir Walter's death had come across the sea, tears gathered in Anne's eyes as she raised them to those of her sad-faced husband.

"I cannot but think," she said, "on Sir Walter's face, as we saw it fade away while we stood on the ship's deck that morn, with

the tears streaming down his cheeks like I never saw them come from a man's eyes before."

"Aye," her husband added, "he was a dear, good father, and a friend as well. God grant that we and them that come after us do naught to bring reproach or sorrow to the name he hath worn, as have so many before him, with pride, and right good dignity."

The sun was sinking fast, and the odor of the forest growths was beginning to mingle with the tang of the sea.

The voices of men and women busy about the cattle and milking were making a cheerful sound of life and bustle from the sheds and outhouses; and on the low-roofed porch in front of the house door, overhung with drooping vines, John Devereux's three sons, Humphrey, John, and Robert, were busy at play.

But they were not too busy to pause now and then to send searching glances into the forest in quest of their father, whom they all united in adoring as the wisest and greatest of created beings.

Humphrey, the eldest, was looking forward proudly to his ninth birthday, now almost at hand, when he was to have the promise fulfilled of being permitted to go along with his father to hunt in the forest, or out on the sea, to fish.

Near them sat their mother, stouter and more matronly than the slender Anne of ten years ago. The aforetime dainty hands were not guiltless of toil stains, and the dark hair was now gathered beneath a snowy mobcap, with only here and there a short, wayward curl stealing out to trail across her brow or touch

her pretty ears.

A sudden shout from the boys announced their father's appearance, as he came out of the woods and across the clearing, and with him Noah, the darkey servant, well loaded with game.

"Thou hast had a most successful hunt!" exclaimed Anne, smiling a bright welcome into her husband's fond eyes, while the children's small hands clung to him, and tiny brown fingers were poked into the mouths of dead rabbits, or tweaked their whiskers to see if they were really dead, or tried to pull open the beaks and eyes of slain birds.

"Aye," was his laughing reply, as he gently freed himself from the little clinging hands; "and I have found more in the forest than game alone, in that I have a most ferocious appetite, – one I trust thou wilt have a plenty to satisfy."

"Give the game to David," said Anne, as a younger and smaller edition of Noah approached, "and come thou within and see, for the supper hath been ready this half hour."

An hour later the children were all safely in Nodland, and husband and wife were sitting either side the fireplace, where the burning wood was pleasant to feel, for a chill had crept into the air. But the outer door was open, and through it came the hoarse notes of the frogs down in the swampy lands, mingled with the roar of the surf along the near-by shore.

They sat in silence, each content with the other's nearness, as they watched the leaping flames, which made the only light in the room. And this was reflected in a thousand scintillating

sparks from the brass fire-dogs that upheld the logs, and in the handles of the shovels and tongs, scrubbed and polished with all the power of arm possessed by Shubar, the Indian wife of old Noah.

Suddenly a lithe, girlish form slipped through the half-open door, coming with a tread as noiseless as the leaping shadows about the far corners of the room, and Joane, the Squaw Sachem's granddaughter, glided to the hearth and stood between John Devereux and his wife.

So accustomed were they to such things that neither of them was startled, but kindly bade her welcome.

Crouching on the hearth, she turned her dusky face and glittering eyes toward John Devereux, and said quietly and in a low voice, "Strange boat – big boat in harbor, English Chief."

He looked troubled, and Anne glanced at him apprehensively, while Joane continued, now speaking more rapidly, "Gran'mudder sent me tell better keep door shut – better get gun."

"Thou dost mean that the Squaw Sachem sent thee to tell there be danger?" John Devereux asked, half rising from his chair, and looking toward the door. "She thinks they mean evil?"

"Don't know how answer. English Chief talk too fast – ask too many questions all same time. Go slow – then Joane hear right – tell him right." And she smiled up into his face while she touched the slender forefinger of her left hand with the fingers of the right, as if waiting to enumerate his questions.

"Thy grandmother sent thee?"

The girl nodded, and touched a second finger.

"She thinks the men on the ship may do us harm?"

"Say don't like looks – got bad black faces," replied Joane, scowling as though to illustrate her meaning.

"Have any of them come ashore yet?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes – so many," holding up seven brown fingers, "come 'shore. Get water to drink – then go back to ship when sun shines. But no go 'way yet – no mean to go. Tell gran'mudder want somethin' eat. Take our corn, and pay no money."

"Pirates!" John Devereux exclaimed, now starting to his feet, while he looked at his wife, whose face paled.

He hurried across the room, bolted and barred the stout door, and examined the window fastenings, the Indian girl still crouching by the hearth and watching him placidly, as if a pirate raid were a matter of small moment.

But her sparkling eyes, and the heaving bosom agitating the many bead necklaces hanging from throat to waist, betrayed her.

"See thou to the children, sweetheart, and warn the maids," John Devereux said to his wife, as he took down his gun and examined it carefully, "while I go to the men and see that the cattle be safe, and the back of the house made secure."

"Good!" exclaimed Joane, with quick approval. "English Chief no sleep – heap good. Give Joane gun, too."

"Had thou not best return to the wigwam, Joane, and to the Squaw Sachem?" inquired Anne, pausing as she was about to

leave the room.

"What go for?" the girl demanded, while her eyes flashed with fierce intensity. "No good go – can fight here – fight good, too. Joane stay and fight by English Chief and his 'Singing Bird,'" – this being the name given by the Naumkegs to Anne, on account of her musical voice.

Knowing that nothing would turn Joane when once her ideas were fixed, and knowing too that her skill with the bow and gun was equal to that of any warrior, Anne was silent, – grateful indeed for any addition to the slender force at hand for defence.

There were in all but nine men, servants and laborers, – two of them white, and the others either Africans or Indians; but they were all, saving old Noah, young, stalwart, and fearless.

John Devereux posted these men in the outbuildings and sheds, as cattle were generally the spoil sought by the marauders when they visited the coast. And when assigning them their positions, he warned them, should they find themselves in danger of being overpowered, to give a signal and retreat to the house, where a side-door would be opened for their entrance. Then, having left with them a plentiful supply of ammunition, he went within to mount guard over his wife and babies.

He had five guns wherewith to arm his household, without counting his own piece, and every woman in his service was acquainted with their use. Even Anne herself had, under his own tuition, become no mean markswoman.

Within doors he found the women greatly excited, and

fluttering about aimlessly; but a few quiet words soon brought order amongst them, and with it a return of their courage. Then, having accomplished this, he went once more through the house, from the rooms downstairs to the low-ceilinged sleeping apartments above, and satisfied himself that all was secure.

In the nursery he found his wife looking at the little boys, who were lying on two great bags of ticking, stuffed with the feathers of wild geese, and placed on the floor, in lieu of bedsteads.

They were sleeping soundly, oblivious of the alarm about the house; and standing beside his wife, his arm around her waist, John Devereux looked down at them.

On one of the pallets lay Humphrey, his strong young arms outstretched, and his chest – broad for his years, and finely developed – showing white as alabaster where the simple linen garment was rarely buttoned by his impatient fingers.

On the other were the two younger boys; and Robert, the gentlest of the three, with his father's own winsome nature, lay with his head half pillowed against his brother John's shoulder.

"What a blessed thing is childhood, and ignorance of danger!" murmured Anne, looking at her husband.

"Aye," he said softly, as they turned away. "So may we know no fear of dangers that threaten, sweet wife, while we trust to Him who watcheth us, – who 'slumbers not, nor sleeps.'"

And as she had answered him ten years before, so she said to him now, "So long as we be together, I have no fear."

A long and shrill sound now broke the silence. It was the

blowing of the conch shell suspended in front of the outer door; and it announced a visitor seeking admission.

Surprised at this, and alarmed as well, husband and wife hurried to the front room below stairs, where they found Joane still crouched upon the hearth. Her bow, now unslung, lay close at hand, and she was examining with pleased curiosity the clumsy blunderbuss resting across her knees, – one that John, at her earnest request, had intrusted to her.

"No enemy – make heap too much noise," was her sententious remark, as she looked up from her inspection of the weapon.

"Mayhap they but do that to disarm us," John replied, as he went cautiously toward the door.

He knew there was no way, except from the beach, for any one to approach the house unseen by his faithful outposts. And he had reckoned upon no attack coming from that quarter, as there was no sailing breeze. Then, again, the pirates would be more likely to come from the direction of the forest, hoping to effect a greater surprise than if they came from the water.

The wailing cry of the conch shell pierced the air for the second time, to echo again in falling cadences that died away in the woods and over the sea.

Placing his lips to the loophole near the door, John Devereux now demanded to know who was outside.

A nasal, whining voice replied; and although the words were indistinguishable, their sound caused the Indian girl to laugh scornfully.

She said nothing, however, but springing quickly to her feet, sped to the small opening. Then, before her purpose could be understood, she thrust the muzzle of the blunderbuss through the aperture.

"Hold, Joane!" commanded John, as he caught her arm. "What is't thou wouldst do, – kill, perchance, an innocent man? Put the gun down, child, until I challenge again, and know for a surety who it be. Methinks the voice hath a familiar sound."

Joane obeyed him, still smiling maliciously as she said: "Only want give him heap big scare. Him big 'fraid – him coward."

"'T is Parson Legg!" exclaimed Anne, now recalling the piping voice, and enlightened by Joane's contemptuous words.

Her husband opened the door, and a slim, weazen-faced, bandy-legged little man stepped hastily within, his eyes, small and keen as those of a ferret, blinking from the sudden passing out of darkness into light.

"Good e'en to thee, Parson Legg; thou art late abroad," said Anne, coming forward. She did not smile, nor was there aught of welcome in her voice or manner.

But this lack of cordiality was not felt by the unexpected visitor, for he doffed his steeple-crowned hat, which, like the rest of his apparel, was much the worse for wear, and responded briskly, "Good e'en, Mistress Anne, an' the same to you, neighbor John; I hope the Lord's blessin' is upon all within this abode. Ah, who have ye here?" and he peered down at Joane, who had resumed her place before the fire, her back turned squarely

toward Parson Legg as he stood in the centre of the room.

He came closer to her, but for all the notice she vouchsafed of his words or presence she might have been one of the brass fire-dogs upholding the blazing logs.

"'T is the Squaw Sachem's granddaughter, Joane," replied John Devereux, turning from the door, which he had refastened.

"Aye, so it be," said the little man; "one o' the unregenerate heathen, upon whom, if they turn not from their idolatrous ways, shall descend smitings sore from the Lord. Hip an' thigh shall they be smitten, and their places shall know them no more."

"Joane hath no idols, good sir, that I know on," said his host, as he came forward and offered the visitor a seat, and then took one himself by the door. "She seemeth ever ready to heed the words of my good wife, and our babes could not have a more gentle playfellow."

Anne had seated herself near Joane, by the fire; and she looked with no very friendly eyes at the Parson, as she said, "Think you not, good sir, it were better to chide the 'unregenerate heathen,' as you call them, with more gentleness?"

His little eyes narrowed into yet meaner lines as he fixed them upon her face. Then leaning forward to lay a finger upon the gun that again lay across Joane's knees, he answered, "It would seem but poor excuse to prate o' gentleness to one who at unseemly hours and seasons goeth about with death-dealin' weapons, seekin' whom she may devour."

The Indian girl still sat immovable; a statue could not have

appeared more bereft of hearing or speech. But to Anne's face there came a look of fine scorn, which softened however into almost a smile as she glanced at her husband.

"Joane came to warn us of danger," John said quietly. "She tells us there is a strange ship in harbor, and we be now armed to guard against pirates, – for such they promise to be."

Parson Legg sprang to his feet as though stung by a passing insect.

"Pirates!" he repeated, in a shrill cry of alarm. "Pirates, – say ye so? I heard naught o' such matter. I was in the woods hereabout all the afternoon, readin' the psalmody, an' makin' joyful melody unto the Lord, till darkness o'ertook me, an' I bethought myself to make my way to this abode, neighbor John, as peradventure thou an' Mistress Anne, thy wife, would give me food an' shelter in the Lord's name till mornin'."

Parson Legg was only an itinerant preacher, having long striven, but without avail, to be accepted by the colonists as successor to their late beloved pastor, the Reverend Hugh Peters, who had gone to England some years before to act as their agent, and was likely to remain there for some time to come, being now a chaplain in the army of Cromwell.

But Legg was entirely unfitted, both by birth and education, for the position to which he aspired. He was selfish and irritable, with a grasping, worldly nature, despite his outward show of humility and sanctity, and was regarded by the colonists with suspicion and illy concealed dislike, while the Indians held him

in positive hatred.

Since the summer day, two years before, when he had come upon Joane in the forest, attired in the manly habiliments of her tribe, – this being only for greater convenience while hunting – and had hurled at her young head anathemas such as fairly smelled of brimstone, it had been open war between the two; and the very sight of one to the other was like that of a plump kitten to a lively terrier.

Anne had by this time set forth a meal upon the table, and notwithstanding his recent fright, Parson Legg's little eyes glistened voraciously as he drew up his chair, while he smacked his thin lips more as would a sturdy yeoman, than like a meek and lowly follower of the creed which crucifies the flesh and its appetites.

John still kept his seat by the door, his keen ears listening intently for any unusual sound without, while Parson Legg crunched away at the venison and corn bread, – doing this with more gusto than was pleasant for either eye or ear.

Anne had left the room, motioning to Joane to follow her, and an intense silence seemed to lie about the house, save as it was broken by the sputtering of the fire upon the hearth and the sound of Parson Legg's gastronomic vocalism, and now and then the subdued murmur of women's voices from one of the rooms in the rear.

A sudden roar of firearms, followed by wild yells and cries without, shattered the peaceful brooding of the place, and caused

Parson Legg to spring wildly from his chair.

"The heathen are upon us!" he gasped, his articulation being somewhat impeded by the presence of a huge piece of venison in his mouth. "The heathen are come upon us with riotin' an' slaughter! John – John Devereux, hide me, I beseech thee, – hide me from their vengeance. I am a man o' peace, an' the sight o' bloodshed is somethin' I could ne'er abide."

John paid no attention to the terrified little man, but springing up with an impetuosity that sent his chair flying across the room, stood erect and scowling, his face turned toward the sounds of strife, and his strong fingers gripping his gun.

"Anne – wife – where art thou?" he cried, as the din increased, and more shots were fired.

"Here." And she quietly entered the room, her face pale, but perfectly calm. "The noise hath awakened the little boys, but I have left Shubar with them, and promised to return shortly."

"Where is Joane?" her husband asked quickly.

"With Shubar and the boys."

"Good; for then there be one gun near, to assure the little ones."

He had been nervously fingering the hammer of his own piece, and while speaking he crossed the room and took a position near that side of the house from whence came the sound of firearms.

Anne remained by the hearth, watching him closely, her tightly clenched hands being all that told of the agitation within.

"Are the little ones much affrighted?" he asked.

"No," she said, still in her calm, sweet fashion; "they do not seem to be – that is, not much. Humphrey begged that he might have a gun, and Robert sat quiet, looking at me with eyes so like your own as he asked, 'Art fearful, mother? Father will ne'er let them hurt us.'"

John Devereux smiled proudly, for the moment forgetting the din about them.

"And John," he asked, – "what said our second son?"

"He seemeth most affrighted of all," she replied. "He wept at first, and hid his face in my gown; but he was calm when I came away. Thou knowest, John, that the lad hath not been well since the fever, last fall."

"Aye, true, – poor little Jack!" the father said. And he now wondered what might have happened outside, for there was a ceasing of the uproar.

He listened intently a moment. "Methinks, sweetheart, I'd best go outside and see what this silence doth mean. Thou'lt not be fearful if I leave the house awhile?"

She grew still paler, but only shook her head. Then she asked suddenly, "Where be Parson Legg?"

Husband and wife looked about the room, and then at one another.

"He was here when the firing began," said John, finding it difficult not to smile as he recalled the scene.

"But wherever can he have gone?" persisted Anne.

"Hiding somewhere, I warrant me," was her husband's reply.

"He is an arrant – "

His words were drowned by the roar of a blunderbuss, coming apparently from just over their heads, and this was followed a moment later by a wild yell of triumph from outside.

It was from John's men, and he started to open the door. But before he could do this there arose such a clamor in the nursery above that he and Anne, forgetful of all else, sped up the stairway.

Old Shubar's voice came to them raised in shrill cries, echoed by those of the boys, – only that Humphrey and Robert seemed to speak more from indignation than fright.

Wondering what it could all mean, they hurried into the room, where an absurd sight met their alarmed eyes.

In one corner, beside Humphrey's pallet, stood Shubar, still uttering the wild shrieks they had heard, and huddling about her were the three boys, – John clinging to her gown, while Humphrey and Robert, both facing about, were shouting at a strange figure that burrowed frantically into the pallet occupying the opposite corner of the chamber.

"Shubar says 't is a witch," cried Robert. "Take thy gun and slay her before she bring evil upon us."

"Be quiet, my son," said his father, scarcely able to repress his laughter, for at the sound of his voice Parson Legg's weazened face, all blanched by fear, was lifted from out the pillows, and a pair of terror-stricken eyes peered over his shoulder.

He had been lying face downward, partially covered by the bedclothes, under which he was still trying to conceal himself;

and his steeple-crowned hat, now a shapeless wreck, was pulled down over his ears, as if to shut out more effectually the sounds of strife that had well-nigh bereft him of reason.

"It would seem thou canst preach far better, Parson Legg, than defend thyself from the enemy," John Devereux said rather grimly, looking down with unconcealed contempt upon the little coward, while Anne busied herself in reassuring the children and quieting Shubar's angry mutterings.

"Even so, neighbor John, even so," answered the Parson, in no wise disconcerted at the sarcasm of the other's words and tone, and making no movement to emerge from his retreat. "As I told thee below, I am a man o' peace, an' I like not the sound o' war an' the sight o' bloodshed. But what doth this silence portend? – are the enemy routed, – are they vanquished, an' put down, smitten hip an' thigh, an' put to flight by thy brave followers?"

His anxious queries met with no reply, for John Devereux, who was standing upon the threshold of the room, had become conscious of a sharp current of air blowing upon his cheek. It told him that the scuttle was open overhead, and turning about, he darted swiftly up the ladder.

He was soon upon the roof, and here he stood a few moments and looked keenly about.

The voices of his men came to him from the ground below. They had left their concealment, and the lightness of their tones told him that all danger was past.

As his eyes became more accustomed to the gloom, the dim

starlight revealed to him the outlines of a form crouching behind the great chimney not far away.

"Joane!" he called softly, suspecting who it might be.

She arose and came to him, and he heard her laughing to herself.

"What camest thou up here for?" he demanded, speaking quite sharply.

"Joane shoot pirate captain," she answered, still laughing. "Heap scare 'em – no know where shot come from – all run away to ship."

And so it proved. The marauders, having received a very different reception from the one they had expected, were utterly discomfited when an unseen enemy – in the person of Joane and her blunderbuss – scattered a mighty charge of slugs and bullets in their midst. Their leader was struck in the arm, and fearing they had fallen into an ambushade from which it would be difficult to escape, he shouted to his men that he was wounded, and bade them fly to the ship.

This was the last of the raids that had so annoyed the colonists, and thenceforth they were free from such molestation.

John Devereux's days passed on, full of peace and pleasantness, until he died at a ripe old age, respected and loved by all his fellow-townsmen, and mourned deeply by the faithful wife who did not long survive him.

The boys lived to man's estate, were married, and had children of their own. But Humphrey and John died in their father's

lifetime; and so it was that Robert, the second son, became the heir.

CHAPTER I

Marblehead, and July, in the year of our Lord 1774.

In the harbor (now known as Great Bay) the water lay, a smooth, glistening floor of amethystine hue, shut in protectively by the "Neck," thrust out like a strong arm between it and the rougher sea beyond, stretching, purple and endless, to the rim of the cloudless horizon.

To the north and northwest lay the islands, the nearer ones sharply outlined in trees and verdure, but showing here and there a grayness of beach or boulder, like the bald spot among some good man's otherwise plentiful locks.

Looking eastward, Cat Island was closest of all to the mainland, the charred ruins upon it showing sharply in the brilliant afternoon sunshine; and here, amid the desolation, a few of the blackened timbers still remained upright, like arms lifted in protest against the vengeance visited upon the hospital a short time before by the well-meant zeal of the infuriated townsfolk.

In August of the previous year, during an epidemic of smallpox, a meeting was called in the townhouse, and Elbridge Gerry, John Glover, Azor Orne, and Jonathan Glover petitioned that a hospital be built on Cat Island, for the treatment of smallpox patients, or else that the town permit certain individuals to do this at their own expense.

The town refused to build the hospital, but gave permission to

the individuals to construct one, provided the adjoining town of Salem gave its consent; it being also stipulated that the hospital should be so regulated as to shield the inhabitants of Marblehead from any "danger of infection" therefrom.

The necessary approval having been obtained from Salem, preparations were made in September for erecting the hospital.

By this time some of the people of Marblehead had become impressed with the fear that by the establishing of the hospital the dread disease would become a prevailing pest amongst them. Their terror made them unreasonable, and they now fiercely opposed the scheme to which they had once given their consent, and demanded that the work be abandoned; but the proprietors, filled with indignation at what they considered rank injustice, persisted in carrying out their worthy project to completion.

In October the hospital was finished, and placed in charge of an eminent physician from Portsmouth, who had attained a wide reputation for his success in the treatment of smallpox. Several hundred patients came under his care, with gratifying results. But a few had died, and this fact brought about bitter and active hostility from the malcontents. They demanded that the place be abandoned at once; and threats of violence began to be made.

The feeling gained in strength and intensity, until at length the proprietors gave up the contest. And then, to assure themselves that the hospital should not be reopened, a party of the townspeople, closely disguised, crossed to Cat Island one night in the following January, and left the buildings in flames.

But now these summer weeks found the town excited and tumultuous over still graver matters. The British government had found it impracticable to enforce the duty upon tea, and resorting to subterfuge, adopted a compromise whereby the East India Company, hitherto the greatest losers by the diminution of its exports from Great Britain, was authorized to send its goods to all places free of duty.

Although the tea would now become cheaper for the colonists, they were not deceived by this new ministerial plan. And when the news was received that the East India Company had freighted ships with tea consigned to its colonial agents, meetings were held to devise measures to prevent the sale or unloading of the tea within the province.

The agents, when waited upon by the committee chosen for that purpose in Boston, refused flatly to promise that the tea should not be unloaded or sold by them; and they were forthwith publicly stigmatized as enemies to their country, and resolutions were adopted providing that they, and all such, should be dealt with accordingly.

In December, 1773, the historical "Tea Party" took place in Boston harbor; and in the following spring Governor Hutchinson resigned, and General Thomas Gage was appointed in his stead.

Bill after bill was passed in Parliament and sanctioned by the King, having in view but the single object of bringing the people of Massachusetts to terms. The quartering of English troops in Boston was made legal. Town meetings were prohibited

except by special permission from the Governor. And finally the infamous "Port Bill" was passed, which removed the seat of government to Salem, and closed the port of Boston to commerce.

In July subscriptions were being solicited by order of the town of Marblehead for the relief of the poor of Boston, who were suffering from the operation of the "Port Bill," and all the buildings which could be utilized, even to the town-house, were placed at the disposal of the merchants, for the storage of their goods.

In defiance of Parliament, whose act had practically suppressed all town meetings, the people of Marblehead continued to assemble and express their views, and discuss the grave questions then agitating the entire country. The very air of the sea seemed to murmur of war and the rumors of war; and the hearts of thinking men and women were heavy with forebodings of the struggle they felt to be imminent.

But the little town was lying brooding and peaceful this July afternoon. Its wooded hills to the west sent shadows across the grassy meadows and slopes, rising and falling to meet the sand-beaches, or ending in the headlands of granite that made sightly outlooks from which to scan the sea for threatening ships.

Under the pines that made shadows along the way, a horseman was going leisurely along the road leading to the Fountain Inn.

To his left lay level meadow lands, rising into hills as they neared the inn, the old Burial Hill – the town's God's Acre – being

highest of all. To his right, the green fields and marshes stretched unbroken to the sea, save for here and there a clump of bushes and tangled vines, or a thicket of wild roses. The road before him ended in two branches, one leading to the rising ground on the right, where stood the Fountain Inn, while to the left it terminated in a sandy beach, before which stretched the peaceful waters of Little Harbor, now whitened with the sails of East Indian commerce, and the craft belonging to the fishing fleets that plied their yearly trade to the "Banks" and to Boston.

No large ship could come nigh the shore in Little Harbor; whereas in the deep bay lying between the Neck and the town, the enemy's vessels might anchor by the land itself. And here the townsfolk kept a most active lookout, which left the hills and beaches of Little Harbor almost deserted.

CHAPTER II

The bridle was lying slack upon the neck of the horse, who picked his way carefully along the road, his hoofs now clicking over the stony highway, now falling noiselessly upon the brown pine needles. And the occasional clatter of his shoes, or the busy chatter of a squirrel high up in a tree, were the only sounds to interrupt the musings of the stalwart rider, whose head was bowed, and whose eyes strayed moodily about.

He was dark and tall, well knit, and of powerful build, yet lithe and graceful. The wandering breeze whipped out stray curling locks about his ears and temples from the mass of dark hair done up in a queue. The broad-brimmed riding-hat was pulled well down over his strongly marked brows, and the smooth-shaven face betrayed the compressed lips of the large but finely formed mouth.

A flash of something white speeding across the road a few yards in front of him caused the dark eyes to open wide, and brought his musings to a sudden end.

Across the marshes to the left he caught a glimpse of twinkling feet, encased in low steel-buckled shoes that seemed to be bearing away from him a fleeting cloud of white drapery.

It was a female, with her so-called "cut" (a dress-skirt so narrow and straight as to make rapid movement very difficult) thrown up over her head and shoulders, as she went over the grass

toward the beach at the side of the road facing the Neck.

Recognizing her at once, the horseman called out, "Dorothy!" and spurred his horse out of the road and across the marsh.

As though hearing him, she paused, and without lowering the "cut," turned to look over her shoulder.

The wind, catching her dress, blew the white folds aside, showing a roguish face, and one bearing a strong family resemblance to the man in pursuit. But her features were small and delicate, while his, although not lacking in refinement, were far bolder in strength of outline.

She had the same dark eyes, set far apart under delicate but firmly marked brows, – the same swart curling lashes, and riotous locks.

But here the likeness ceased; for while his face was grave, and full of a set purpose and resolution, hers was almost babyish, and full of witchery, with a peachy bloom coming and going in the rounded cheeks.

She was panting a little from her running, and now stood, waiting for him to speak, her red lips parted in a mocking smile that showed two rows of little teeth, white as the meat of a hazelnut.

"What mischief have you been up to, you little rogue, and why are you running away from me?" he asked. He spoke with quiet good nature, but looked down at her with an elder brother's reproof showing in his face.

She did not answer, but only glanced up at him from the

sheltering folds of the skirt, billowing about her face like a cloud, while the horse, recognizing a loved playmate, whinnied, and bowed his head to her shoulder as if mutely begging a caress.

"You have been to see Moll Pitcher again," the young man asserted; "and you know our father would be angry that you should do it. And 't is very wrong, Dorothy, in these times, that you should be over in this part of the town alone."

Her brother called her so rarely by her full name that a change from the caressing "Dot" to the solemn-sounding "Dorothy" was a sure mark of his displeasure.

The smile died from her face, and her eyes fell. But she looked mutinous, as she raised a small hand to stroke the horse's nose.

"I did not come alone, Jack," she explained. "Leet rowed me over, and Pashar came with us; and I had little 'Bitha, too."

"An old darkey, who sits dozing in the boat, half a mile away from you, with his twelve-year-old grandson, and little Tabitha! These make a fine protection, truly, had you met with soldiers or other troublesome people," he said with some sarcasm. "Do you not know there was a new vessel, filled with British soldiers, went into Salem harbor yesterday – and belike they are roaming about the country to-day?" He switched his riding-boot as he spoke, scowling as though the mention of the matter had awakened vengeful thoughts.

"Hugh Knollys has but just ridden over from Salem; and he said they were all housed there, along with the Governor," the girl said eagerly, glad to find something to say in her defence, as

well as to turn the current of her brother's thoughts.

"Hugh Knollys!" he repeated. "Has he been at our house this day?"

"No-o," she answered hesitatingly. "We met him just now as we came out of Moll's. He is at the Fountain Inn."

"We," he said, a smile showing about the corners of his lips. "Are you His Gracious Majesty, Dot, that you speak of yourself as 'We'?"

At the sound of her baby name, all the brightness returned to her face, and glancing up at him, she whispered mischievously, "Look in the thicket behind you."

He turned to send a keen glance into the clump of bushes and vines growing some dozen yards closer to the road he had just left; and there he caught a glimpse of pale blue – like female raiment – showing amid the foliage.

Wheeling his horse quickly, he rode toward it; and what he now saw was a tall, blonde girl of eighteen or thereabouts, who arose slowly from where she had been hiding, and came forward with a dignity that savored of defiance, although there seemed to be a smile lurking in the corners of her mouth.

Her gypsy hat hung by its blue ribbons on one white rounded arm, bared to the elbow, as the fashion of her sleeve left it. The neck of her pale blue gown was low cut; but a small cape of the same material was over it, – crossed, fichu-wise, on her bosom, and then carried under the arms, to be knotted at the back.

Her round white throat rose out of the sheer blue drapery in

fine, strong lines, to support a regal head, crowned with a glory of pale brown hair, now bared to the sun, and glinting as though golden sparkles were caught in its silky meshes.

As she approached, the rider held up his horse, and sat motionless, staring at her, while a merry peal of laughter, silvery as chiming bells, broke from sixteen-year-old Dorothy.

"Mary Broughton!" the young man exclaimed at length, as he looked wonderingly at the fair-haired girl.

She paused a yard away and swept him a mocking courtesy as she said, – and her musical voice was of the quality we are told is "good in woman," – "Aye; at your service, Master John Devereux."

"Then you have been with our madcap here?" he asked, now finding his tongue more readily.

"All the afternoon – an it please you, sir," she replied in the same tone of playful irony.

"It does please me," he said, now with a smile, "for it was much better than had Dot been alone, as I supposed at first. But think you it is safe for you two girls to come wandering over here by yourselves?" And in the look of his dark eyes, in the very tone of his voice, there was something different, – more caressing than had been found even for his small sister, who had now drawn close to them.

Mary Broughton slipped her arm through Dorothy's, and the mockery left her face.

"I suppose not," she answered frankly. "But, to tell the truth,

I had not thought of such a thing until you mentioned it. We've not met a soul, save Hugh Knollys, who was riding into the inn yard as we came from Moll Pitcher's."

"And so you have been to consult Moll's oracle?" the young man said banteringly.

The white lids fell over the honest blue eyes that had been looking straight up into his own. The girl seemed greatly embarrassed, and her color deepened, while Dorothy only giggled, and slyly pinched the arm upon which her slender fingers were resting.

Mary gave her a quick glance of reproof. Then she raised her eyes and said hesitatingly, "We heard she was down from Lynn, on a visit to her father."

"You girls are bewitched with Moll Pitcher and her prophecies," he exclaimed with a laugh.

"Ah – but she tells such wonderful things," began Dorothy, impetuously. But Mary Broughton laid a small white hand over the red lips and glanced warningly at her companion.

"What did she tell?" the young man asked. But now Dorothy only smiled, and shook her head.

"Come, Dorothy," Mary said, "we had best get back to the boat." And she turned to go; but the younger girl hung back.

"Are you going to a meeting at the inn, Jack?" she inquired, looking at her brother.

"Little girls must not ask questions," he answered, yet smiling at her lovingly. "But do you hasten to the boat, and get home,

Dot, you and Mary. It troubles me that you should be about here. Hurry home, now, – there's a good little girl." But he looked at both of them as he spoke.

"Shall you be home by evening?" his sister asked, keeping her face toward him as she backed away, obliged to move in the direction of the beach; for Mary, still holding her arm, was walking along.

He nodded and smiled; then riding back to the highway, wheeled his horse and stopped to watch the two figures making their hurried way across the marsh. But his eyes rested longest upon one of them, tall and regal, her blonde head showing golden in the waning light, the vivid green of the marshes and the deep purple of the sea making a defining background for the beauty of the woman to whom John Devereux had given his lifelong love.

CHAPTER III

"Oh, Mary, there is Johnnie Strings!" exclaimed Dorothy, as they drew near shore, where lay the rowboat, beached on the sand, with Leet, the faithful old darkey, sitting close by, awaiting the pleasure of his adored young mistress.

Near him a little girl of seven was gathering pebbles, her heavy blonde braids touching the tawny sand whenever she stooped in her search. And crouched by his grandfather Leet was the boy Pashar, looking like an animated inkspot upon the brightness all about. His white eyeballs and teeth showed sharply by contrast with their onyx-like settings, as he sat with his thick lips agape, literally drinking in the words of the redoubtable Johnnie Strings, a wiry, sharp-faced little man, whose garments resembled the dry, faded tints of the autumn woods.

Johnnie, with his pedler's pack, stored with a seemingly unlimited variety of wares, was a well-known and welcome visitor to every housewife in town. He lived when at home (which was rarely) in a hut-like abode up among the rocks of Skinner's Head; and the highway between Boston and Gloucester was tramped by him many times during the year.

He owned a raw-boned nag of milk-white hue, and rejoicing in the name of Lavinia Amelia; and these two, with a yellow cur, constituted the entire *ménage* of the Strings household.

Johnnie, like Topsy, must have "just growed," for aught

anyone ever knew of a parent Strings. The one item of information possessed by his acquaintances was that his name was not Johnnie Strings at all, but "Stand-fast-on-high Stringer," – an indication that he must have received his baptism at Puritanical hands.

Either "Stand-fast-on-high" became more unregenerate as his infancy was left behind, or else his associates had no great taste for Biblical terms as applied to every-day use; for his real name had long since become vulgarized to the common earthiness of "Johnnie," and "Stringer" had been reduced to "Strings."

He now sat upon his pack – a smaller one than he usually carried – and was saying to Leet, "Now that there be so cantankerous a lot o' them pesky King's soldiers 'bout us, there's no sayin' what day or night they won't overrun the hull country, from the Governor's house at Salem, clean over here to the sea; an' every man will be wise, that owns cattle, to sleep with one eye an' ear open, an' a gun within reach."

"What are you saying, Johnnie Strings?" called out Dorothy, as she and Mary came up. "Are you trying to frighten old Leet into fits?"

The little pedler sprang to his feet and snatched off his battered wreck of a hat, showing a scant lot of carrotty hair, gathered tightly into a rusty black ribbon at the nape of his weather-beaten neck.

"Only sayin' God's truth, sweet mistress," he answered, bowing and scraping with elaborate politeness. "I've just come

from over Salem way; an' yesterday evenin' ye could scarcely see the ground for the red spots that covered it. There were three ship-loads came in yesterday, to add to the ungodly lot o' soldiers already there."

Mary looked troubled, but Dorothy only laughed. And little 'Bitha, abandoning her search for shells and pebbles, pressed closely against her cousin, looking up out of a pair of frightened eyes, blue as forget-me-nots, as she asked, "Does Johnnie say the soldiers are coming after us, Dot?"

Dorothy checked herself in what she was about to say, and bent to reassure the little one, putting an arm about her neck to draw the golden head still closer to her.

"What are they come down from Boston for, Johnnie?" Mary asked; "do you know?"

He cocked his head aslant, and resumed his hat, screwing up one eye in a fashion most impudent in any man but himself, as he looked at her with a cunning leer. Then he said: "There's no harm to come from 'em yet. But soldiers be a lawless lot, if they get turned loose to look after we folk 'bout the coast here, as is like to be the case now. An' so I was just meanin' to hint to ye that 'twould be as well to stop nigher home, after this day."

Old Leet, who had listened with a stolid face to all this, was now pushing the boat into the water, while Pashar stood gaping at the pedler, until ordered gruffly by his grandsire to stand ready to hold the craft.

"Have you knowledge that they are coming down here?"

inquired Mary, speaking more insistently than before.

"We-l-l, yes, I have," he admitted with a drawl, and was about to add something more, when Dorothy, who had deposited 'Bitha in the boat, and was now getting in to take her own place in the stern, said to him, "Come with us, Johnnie, and we'll take you home, as we pass quite close to your" – hesitating a second – "your house."

"No, thank ye, mistress," he replied, grinning proudly at the dignity she had bestowed upon his humble abode. "I've that will take me up to Dame Chine, at the Fountain Inn, an' I should be there this very minute, an' not chatterin' here. But I was tired, an' when I came along an' saw old Leet, sat down to rest a bit."

"When are you intending to fetch that pink ribbon you promised me weeks ago, and the lace for Aunt Lettice?" demanded Dorothy, as Mary Broughton stepped over the intervening seats, past Leet, at the oars, with small 'Bitha alongside him, and took her place beside her friend.

"I've both in my pack, up at the hut; I'll bring 'em to the house this week, ye may depend on it," answered Johnnie, as Pashar pushed off the boat, springing nimbly in as the keel left the sand.

"If you do not, I'll never buy another thing from you so long as I live," the girl called back, with a wilful toss of her head, as Leet pulled away with strong, rapid strokes.

"'T is all wrong for two pretty ones like them to be roamin' 'round in such fashion," said Johnnie to himself, as he stooped to take up his pack. Then suddenly, as if remembering something,

he turned to the shore and called out, "Shall ye find Master John at home, think ye, Mistress Dorothy?"

Her voice came back silvery clear over the distance of water lying between them. "No; he is up at the Fountain Inn."

"Ah, as I thought," the pedler muttered, with a meaning smile. "I'll just be in the nick o' time."

"What think you it all means, Mary?" Dorothy asked, the two sitting close together in the boat.

"What *all* means?" echoed Mary, in an absent-minded way, her head turned toward the shore they were leaving, where on the higher land the far-away windows of the Fountain Inn were showing like glimmering stars in the light of the setting sun.

"Why," Dorothy explained, smiling at Mary's abstraction, "all these soldiers coming down here? And Johnnie acts and talks as if he could tell something important, if he chose."

"You know, Dot, we are like to have serious trouble, – perhaps a war with the mother country."

"And all because of a parcel of old tea!" exclaimed Dorothy, with great scorn.

Mary now turned her face in the direction the boat was going, and smiled faintly. "The tea is really what has brought matters to a head," she said. "But there is more in it than that alone, from what I've heard my father say. And there is much about it that we girls cannot rightly understand, or talk about very wisely. Only, I hope there will be no war. War is such a terrible thing," she added with a shudder, "and you know what Moll told us. I almost

wish we had not gone to see her to-day."

"I am not a bit sorry we went," said Dorothy, stoutly. "I am glad. What did she say, – something about a big black cloud full of lightnings and muttering thunder, coming from across the sea, to spread over the land and darken it? Was n't that it?"

"Yes, and much more. Do you think she was asleep as she talked to us, Dot? She looked so strangely, and yet her eyes were wide open all the time."

"Tyntie does the same thing at times. She says it's 'trance.' But Aunt Penine always puts me out of the kitchen when Tyntie gets that way, and so I don't know whether she talks or not. I mean to try and find out, if I can, the next time Tyntie gets into such a state."

"Nothing seems strange for Indians to do or to be," Mary said musingly; "but I never heard of such things amongst white people."

"Oh, yes, you did," Dorothy answered quickly. "Whatever are you thinking of, not to remember about the witches? 'T is said they could foretell to a certainty of future happenings. I wish I'd lived in those days, although it could not have been pleasant to see folks hanged for such knowledge. As for Moll Pitcher, – I guess she might have been treated as was old Mammie Redd."

CHAPTER IV

There was a long silence, broken at last by Mary saying, "Perhaps what some folk say of Moll is true, – that it is an evil gift she has. And yet she has a sweet face and gentle manner."

"I wonder if 't is truth, what they say of old Dimond, her father," said Dorothy, her chin supported in one soft palm, while her eyes looked off over the water, motionless almost as the seaweed growing on the scarred rocks along the shore, left bare by the low tide.

"What is that?" Mary asked.

"Why, that whenever there was a dark, stormy night, with a gale threatening the ships at sea, he would go up on Burial Hill, and beat about amongst the grass, to save the crews from shipwreck."

Mary laughed. "What an idea!" she exclaimed. "How could beating the ground about the dead benefit or protect the living, who are surely in the keeping of Him who makes the tempests?"

"I don't know," was Dorothy's simple answer. "Only that is what I've heard, ever since I was a child. And such talk always took my fancy."

"Well, old Dimond doesn't look now as if he could have strength to beat the ground, or anything else. Poor old man, he is very feeble, and I should say 't is a happy thing for him that Moll can come down from Lynn now and then, to attend him."

"Yes," Dorothy assented. Then, with a lively change of tone and manner, "'T was odd, Mary, for her to say that when you left her door you were to see your true-love riding to meet you on horseback."

Mary started, and without answering, turned her head away, while the blood rushed to her lovely face.

"Which was he, sweetheart?" Dorothy persisted teasingly, bending her head so as to bring her smiling face directly under the down-dropped blue eyes, and then laughing outright at the confusion she saw there.

"Which one was it?" she repeated. "You know Hugh Knollys rode down the road directly toward you, and then –"

But Mary's white hand was over the laughing lips and silenced them.

"If your father should hear you talking in such fashion, Dot, I feel sure he would be displeased with me for having gone with you to see Moll." Mary made an effort to look and speak naturally, but her eyes were very bright and her face was still deeply flushed.

Dorothy smiled, and shook her curly head wilfully. "Not he," she said with decision; "leastway, not for long. He is stern enough, at times, to others; but he can never be severe with me."

"Ah, Dot, but you are surely a spoiled child," said Mary, with a fond glance at the winsome face.

Dorothy shrugged her small shoulders. "So Aunt Penine is always saying; but all the aunts in the world could never come

'twixt my father and me."

Little 'Bitha, who had been crooning softly to herself, and improvising, after a fashion of her own, —

"The sea is blue, blue, blue,
The sea is blue, and I love the sea,"

suddenly cried out, "Oh, Dot, look, look! What an ugly fish!"

They all looked, and saw a dead dogfish, its cruel teeth showing in the gaping jaws, go bobbing by, entangled in a mesh of floating seaweed.

"Him look like dead nigger," said Pashar, as he flung a pebble at it.

Old Leet scowled over his shoulder at his lively descendant.

"Dere'll be anudder, an' real true, dead nigger ter keep him company, ef ye don't sit still, an' quit grampussin' 'bout de boat," he growled; and. Pashar became very quiet.

They were now drawing in nearer to the shore, where the strip of sand-beach lay down below the rocky headland, upon the highest point of which stood Spray House, the home of Nicholson Broughton and his daughter Mary.

The house — a low, rambling building, with gabled roof — was perched upon the highest of a series of greenstone and syenite ledges, whose natural jaggedness had no need to be strengthened by art to render them a safe bulwark against the encroaching seas, when the storms flashed blinding mists and glittering spray about

the diamond-paned windows.

These looked off over the open water, and past the point of land intervening between Great Bay and Marblehead Rock. Upon the latter was an odd beacon, — being a discarded pulpit from one of the Boston churches, whence, after hearing much of the noise and commotion of men, it had been transferred to this barren rock, there to listen to the ceaseless tumult of the battling sea.

Inland from Spray House stood the many great warehouses; and back of these stretched the pasture-lands, breaking here and there into rough hills, showing fields of golden splendor, where the wood-wax, or "dyer's weed," was growing in luxuriant wildness.

Several small boats were drawn up on the beach; and anchored a little way out, and directly opposite the front windows of Spray House, were two goodly-sized schooners, and a brig, their topmasts now touched by the fiery gold of sunset.

"I wish you were coming home with me, Mary," said Dorothy, as Leet ran the boat's nose into the shingle, and Pashar leaped out to hold the stern.

"I wish so, too. But you know it will not be many days before father goes up to Boston, and he said I should abide with you until he returned."

"That will be fine," said Dorothy, her face aglow with pleasure, as Mary, after dropping a light kiss upon her cheek, arose to leave the boat. "Only, if I were you, I should coax him

to let me go to Boston."

"I did ask him; but he goes on public matters, he said, and was like to have a quick and a rough trip." Mary was now standing upon the beach.

"Well, be he gone a long or a short time, we shall all be very happy to have you with us. That you know, surely." And Dorothy kissed her hand to her friend, as Leet pulled out again into the water and rowed toward the upper end of the bay, while Mary took her way across the beach to the thread-like path leading up to the plateau that formed the back dooryard of Spray House.

In the yard was Joe, the darkey serving-man, busy cutting more wood to increase the already generous pile stored in the building near by, while Agnes, his niece, was in the kitchen, preparing the evening meal.

In the long, low, oak-panelled "living-room" of the house, its windows facing the water, Mary found her father. He was standing – a tall, finely built man, nearly fifty – gazing through an open window. His sturdy legs were well apart, as with hands in his trousers' pockets he was jingling his keys and loose coin in a restless sort of way, while he hummed to himself.

Mary entered so softly, or else his thoughts were so absorbing, that he did not notice her until she stood close beside him and slipped a hand within his arm. Then he started, and the scowl left his brow as he turned the frank, blue-gray eyes, so like her own, down upon her upturned, smiling face.

"Ha, Pigsney!" he exclaimed, now smiling himself. "And

have you had a pleasant water-trip?" He looked at her lovingly, while he caressed the blonde head that just reached to his broad shoulder.

"Yes," she replied hurriedly. "And I met Johnnie Strings, who has but just come from over Salem way. He says there are quantities of soldiers there, and that they are like to come this way and spread all over the town."

"You speak of them, sweetheart, as if they might be another epidemic of smallpox," he said grimly, "And so they are, so they are, if not indeed something worse." And the scowl came back to his face as he looked off over the water at his brig and schooners.

"But what does it all mean, father?" Mary asked anxiously. "Think you they will meet with opposition should they actually come down here? Oh, it would be dreadful to have any fighting right here in our streets and before our very doors." The girl trembled, and her cheeks paled.

"Nay, nay, lass," and he patted her shoulder reassuringly; "cross no bridges until you come to them." Then he added rather impatiently, "What does Johnnie Strings mean by telling such tales to affright women-folk?"

"We – Dorothy Devereux and I – met him, and we made him talk. But he did not seem to want to tell us all he knew about it."

"And quite right," said her father, smiling again. "Lord pity the man who is fool enough to tell women – and girls, at that – all he knows of such matters, in days like these."

Mary looked up at him a little reproachfully, but he only bent

and kissed her, as he said, now quite gravely: "I've much on my mind this night, my child, and I have to ask if you can be ready soon after supper to drive with me to the house of neighbor Devereux, and to stop there a few days with Dorothy. I have certain matters to talk over with him, and will pass the night there; and before daylight I must be on my way to Boston."

CHAPTER V

On Riverhead Beach, at the extreme southwest end, the Devereux family kept sundry boats, for greater convenience in reaching the town proper, without going around the Neck, by the open seaway; and some distance from the boat-house was their home, the way being along the shore and across the thriftily planted acres and through the woodland.

The same low stone house it was that had withstood the pirates' raid over one hundred years before. But the forests were now gone, although a noble wood still partially environed it. And beyond this were sloping hills and grassy meadows, through which ran a stream of pure, sweet water, wandering on through the dusk of the woods until it found the sea.

Here fed the flocks and herds of Joseph Devereux, the grandson of John and Anne.

There had been some additions to the original building, but these were low and rambling, like the older portion. And before it, broader of expanse and to the vision than in the early days, stretched the sea, a far-reaching floor of glass or foam, to melt away in the pearly dimness of the horizon.

The hush of lingering twilight was over the place, and now and then the note of a thrush or robin thrilled sweet on the golden-tissued air. But from the vine-draped door of the low stone dairy came sounds less inviting, uttered by Aunt Penine, the widowed

sister-in-law and housekeeper of Joseph Devereux, as she goaded her maids at their evening work.

In sharp contrast with her, both as to person and manner, was her invalid sister Lettice, who was sitting on the porch before the open door, with little 'Bitha, her orphaned grandchild, hanging lovingly about her.

Opposite these sat Joseph Devereux, smoking his evening pipe; and crouched on the stone step, her curly head resting against his knee, was Dorothy, now gentle and subdued.

There was an irresistible charm about the girl's wilfulness that blended perfectly with the sacred innocence of her childish nature. She was impetuous, laughter-loving, and somewhat spoiled; but she was possessed of a high spirit, strong courage, and a pure, tender heart.

Her father's idol and chief companion she had always been since, in his sixtieth-odd year, she was laid in his strong arms, – vigorous as those of a man half his own age. And he was looking into her baby face, so like his own, when he heard that she was all he had left of his faithful wife.

He had lost many children; and such sorrow, softening still more a never hard heart, had made him dotingly fond of those left to him, – his twenty-seven-year-old son John and the wilful Dot.

The girl's education had been beyond that of most maids in those times, as had also that of her only friend, Mary Broughton; and for much the same reason. Both girls had been carefully trained by their fathers; and Aunt Penine, at Nicholson

Broughton's request, had taught Mary housewifery in all its branches, at the same time she was undertaking the like portion of her niece's education.

But this was an art in which Mary far exceeded Dot; and Aunt Penine lectured her niece unceasingly, while seeming to find nothing but praise for Mary's efforts.

It was pretty sure to be something of this sort: "Dorothy, Dorothy! Ye'll ne'er be a good butter-maker; ye beat it so, the grain will be broke. Why cannot ye take it this way?" and Aunt Penine would show her. "See how fine Mary does it! Ye have too hot a hand."

Dot would give her head a toss, and remind her aunt that it was not she herself who had the fashioning of her small hand, nor the regulating of its temperature. And then Aunt Penine would be very sure to go to her brother-in-law with complainings of his daughter's disrespectful tongue, and it would end in Dot being persuaded by her father to beg Aunt Penine's pardon, which she would do in a meek tone, but with a suspicious sparkle in her eyes. And after that she was very likely to be found at the stables, saddling her own mare, Brown Bess, for a wild gallop off over the country.

Aunt Penine was one who never seemed to remember that she had ever been young herself; and this made her all the more unbending in her disapproval of Dorothy's flow of spirits, and of the indulgence shown her by her father.

She was now coming across the grass from the dairy, – a tall,

lithe figure, from which all the roundness of youth (had she ever possessed anything so weak) had given way to the spareness of middle age. Her hair, still plentiful, was of a dull, lustreless black; her complexion sallow, with paler cheeks, somewhat fallen in; and she had a pair of small gray eyes that seemed like twinkling lights set either side a very long, sharp nose.

Her gown was now pinned up around her like that of a fishwife; a white cap surmounted her severe head, and her brown arms were bare above the elbows, where she had rolled her sleeves. She well knew that her brother-in-law in no wise approved of her going about in such a fashion; but this was only an added reason for her doing so.

There was a silken rustling of doves' wings, as the flock scattered from in front of her on the grass, where, obedient to Dorothy's call, they had come like a cloud from the dove-cote perched high on a pole near by.

"Joseph," she cried, sending her shrill voice ahead of her as she walked along, "do you know that the last two new Devonshires have either strayed or been stolen?"

"So Trent told me." He spoke very calmly, letting several seconds intervene between question and answer, puffing his pipe meanwhile, while the fingers of one hand rested amongst the curly, fragrant locks lying against his knee.

"Told you! Then why, under the canopy, did n't ye tell *me*?" she demanded, as she now stood on the stone flagging in front of the veranda, her arms akimbo, while she peered at him with

her little twinkling eyes.

He looked at her gravely, and as if thinking, but made no reply.

Her eyes fell, and she seemed embarrassed, for she said in a lower tone, and by way of explanation: "Because, you see, Joseph, I cannot look after the pans o' milk properly, if I know not how many cows there be to draw from. There was less milk by twenty pans, this e'en; and I was suspecting the new maid we've taken from over Oakum Bay way of making off with it for her own folk, when Pashar came in and said he was to go with Trent, to hunt for the missing Devonshires. And that was the first I'd heard of any strayed cattle."

"And even had they not been missing, Penine, you had no right to think such evil o' the stranger," Joseph Devereux said reprovingly. "'T is a queer fashion, it seems to me, for a Christian woman to be so ready as you ever seem to be for thinking harsh things o' folk you may happen not to know well. Strangers are no more like to do evil than friends, say I."

He now handed his pipe to Dot, who rapped the ashes out on the ground and returned it to him. He thanked the girl with the same courtesy he would have shown an utter stranger, while Aunt Penine, looking very much subdued, turned about and went back to the dairy.

Joseph Devereux was still a handsome man, with a dark, intellectual face, framed in a halo of silvery hair, worn long, as was the fashion, and confined by a black ribbon. About his throat was wrapped snowy linen lawn, fine as a cobweb, and woven

on his own hand-loom by the women of his house, as was also that of the much ruffled shirt showing from the front of a buff waistcoat, gold-buttoned.

The same color was repeated in his top-boots, that came up to meet the breeches of dark cloth, fastened at the knee with steel buckles.

His tall figure was but slightly bowed; and there was a mixture of haughtiness and softness in his manner, very far removed from provincial brusqueness, and belonging rather to the days and surrounding of his ancestors than to the time in which he lived.

John, his son, was a more youthful picture of the father, but with a freer display of temper, – this due, perhaps, to his fewer years. But father and son were known alike for kindly and generous deeds, and as possessing a high ideal of truth and justice.

CHAPTER VI

"Do you suppose, Joseph, that Jack will have had his supper?"

Aunt Lettice asked the question a little anxiously, as she drew about her shoulders the soft shawl that little 'Bitha's impetuous clasping had somewhat disarranged.

"Aye; I think the lad is sure to have taken it at the inn." His voice was very gentle, as it always was when he addressed her.

"There he is!" shouted 'Bitha. And she darted down the steps to wave frantic arms at two horsemen coming up the wooded way to the house, while Dot lifted her head from her father's knee, as he now sat more erect in his chair.

"Have a care, 'Bitha, or we may run you down," called out John Devereux, laughingly. And at this the little maiden made haste to speed back to the porch.

It was Hugh Knollys who accompanied him, – a stalwart, broad-chested young fellow of twenty-five or six, with blunt features and a not over-handsome face. But for all this he had an irresistible magnetism for those who knew him; and no one could ever associate evil or untruth with his frank, keen-glancing gray eyes and clean-cut, smiling lips.

"Good-evening, Hugh, and welcome," said Joseph Devereux, rising to extend a friendly hand as the young man came up the steps.

Hugh removed his hat and nodded to Dorothy, glancing at her

askance as she arose and with a demure greeting passed him and went to her brother, who was now giving some orders to old Leet.

"Jack," she whispered imploringly, under cover of the talk going on in the porch, – "Jack, tell me, please, that you will not speak to father of Mary and me seeing Moll Pitcher this afternoon."

He looked at her smilingly, and then took her chin in his fingers and gave her head a gentle shake, in a way he had of doing.

"If I do as you ask, will you promise not to go over to that part of the town again without telling me first, and then not to go unless I say you may?"

"Yes, yes," she answered eagerly.

"Well, then, 't is a bargain." With this he put an arm around her, and they turned toward the house.

"Did Mary go home?" he asked, as they walked slowly along.

"Yes; but she is coming soon to stop with us, as her father is to go to Boston on business of some sort."

"He is like to go this very night," the young man said.

"This very night!" Dorothy echoed. "Why, then, Mary might have come home with me, as I wished. But how do you know that, Jack?"

"Never mind now," was his evasive answer. "You will hear all about it later."

They were now at the porch, and his father, who had been conversing earnestly with young Knollys, said: "Hugh tells me

that ye both had supper at the inn. So come within, Jack, – come, both o' ye, and let us talk over certain matters of importance. Hugh will stop with us for the night; and, Dot, do you go and tell your Aunt Penine, so that his room may be prepared." And leading the way, the old gentleman went inside, followed by his son and their guest.

"Grandame," asked 'Bitha, as Dorothy arose and went in quest of Aunt Penine, "what did Hugh Knollys mean by his talk to Uncle Joseph just now, of the King's soldiers at Salem?" The child spoke in an awed voice, drawing closer to the old lady, and looking up at her with startled eyes.

Aunt Lettice tried to give her delicate features a properly severe cast as she answered, "Hush, 'Bitha! you should not listen to matters not meant for your hearing."

"But I've heard it before, grandame," 'Bitha persisted. "Johnnie Strings said the same thing, this afternoon, to Dot and Mary Broughton. He said the soldiers were coming all over here, clear to the shore, and that we best have guns ready to shoot them."

Aunt Lettice's expression had now become really severe, for she still had the old-time reverence for King and Parliament dwelling in her heart.

"Johnnie Strings is seditious and rebellious, to speak so of His Gracious Majesty's army," she said with marked disapproval; "and he shall sell no more of his wares to me, if he goes about the country talking in such fashion. But you must have mistaken

his meaning, child."

But 'Bitha shook her small head wilfully, in a way to remind one of her cousin Dorothy, and took herself off to the charms of the kitchen regions, where old Tyntie was ever ready to listen to her prattle, and tell her charming tales when work was out of the way.

And this is how 'Bitha came to know that the bright green spots showing here and there in the meadows were the rings made by the dancing feet of the Star-sisters, when they came down in a great ball of light from their home in the sky, striking the ball about as they danced, and causing it to give forth most ravishing music.

And Tyntie told her, also, that the flitting will-o'-the-wisp lights that showed on dark nights over the farthest away marsh-lands were the wandering souls of Indian warriors, watching to keep little children from getting lost or frightened; that the cry of the whippoorwill was the lament of Munomene-Keesis, the Spirit of the Moon, over dead-and-gone warriors vanquished by the white men; that the wild winds coming from the sea were Pawatchecanawas, breathing threatenings for bad men and their ships; and that the frogs hopping about in the cool dusk were all little liche, with a magic jewel in their ugly heads.

All this was imparted as they sat out on the great stumps of hewn-down trees, while the twilight gathered and the stars came out in the vault overhead, and the two were at a safe distance from Aunt Penine's practical bustling and sharp tongue.

For Aunt Penine ruled the household with a veritable "rod of iron;" and her courtly and calm-voiced brother-in-law was the only mortal to whom she had ever been known to show deference of manner or speech.

She had gone within, and the maids with her. The dairy was closed for the night, and Dorothy had returned to the porch, where she was now seated in her father's favorite chair.

"Aunt Lettice," she said presently, "what think you all these queer things mean? Mary Broughton said we might have a war; and there seems a great lot for the men folk to be having meetings over, and secret talk about."

"I know no more than you, Dorothy, but I wish it was all over, and that I might have my tea once more; I miss it sadly."

"Why," exclaimed Dorothy, looking greatly surprised, "there is tea in the house, Aunt Lettice! I thought it was not made for you because you did not care for it."

"Indeed I do care for it very much," said the little old lady; and she sighed wistfully. "But Penine said there was to be no more tea, as your father had forbidden it."

"Well, some one is drinking it," Dorothy asserted with positiveness, "for I found a small potful of tea in the store-closet this very morning."

"Are you sure, my dear?" Aunt Lettice asked wonderingly.

"Of course I am sure, for I smelled it; and as I detest the odor, I looked to see what it came from. And I know as well that there is a big canful of tea there, for I caught the lace of my sleeve on

the lid last Sabbath day, as I reached to get the sugar to put on 'Bitha's bread. Aunt Penine must know it is there."

"Penine is very fond of her tea." Aunt Lettice sighed again, and this time rather suggestively.

"Well," said Dorothy, her fiery spirit all aglow, "if she be such a pig as to make it for herself when she lets you have none, I shall find out, and tell my father of her doings."

"My dear, my dear, you should not speak so," the gentle old lady protested, but with only feeble remonstrance. It was evident that Dorothy's words had put the matter in a new light.

"Now, Aunt Lettice," continued Dorothy, as she straightened her small figure in the chair, "you know that Aunt Penine often treats you with hard-hearted selfishness, and then next minute she will be reading her good books and trying to look pious. I never want to be her sort of good, – never! And while I live, she shall not treat you so any more. I shall tell father to ask her about the tea, I warrant you."

Before Aunt Lettice could reply to this impetuous speech, a coach drove up, its lamps showing like glow-worms in the gathering dusk. In it were Nicholson Broughton and Mary; and Dorothy rushed down the steps to welcome her friend as though they had been parted for weeks.

While the new-comers were alighting, Leet came up to show the coachman the way to the stables; and then the two girls went directly to the porch, while Broughton himself tarried to give some low-spoken orders to his servant.

The sound of the carriage wheels had brought John Devereux quickly to the porch, while his father and Hugh Knollys followed after, the younger man walking slowly, in deference to the slight lameness of his host.

"Ah, neighbor Broughton, you are just the man we were wishing for. Heartily welcome!" And Joseph Devereux clasped the other man's hand, while John turned away with his sister and Mary Broughton.

They were joined a moment later by Hugh Knollys; and John Devereux, as though suspecting a possible rival, watched keenly his blunt, honest face as he took the small hand Mary extended. But there was naught in Hugh's look to alarm him, nor in the quiet greeting Mary gave his friend.

Dorothy now drew his attention. "Jack," she asked earnestly, "did you warn Hugh not to speak aught of this afternoon?" But Hugh answered her question by a slight laugh, accompanied by a comprehending nod.

"Oh, Dot," said Mary, with gentle reproach, "you should not deceive your father in this way."

Dorothy raised her head as though she had been struck, and drew herself up to the full limit of her small stature.

"Indeed, Mary, I intend to do no such thing," she replied almost aggressively. "'T is only that I wish to tell him all about it myself, and in my own fashion."

Here her father's voice broke in. "Come, John, – come, Hugh, – come inside, with neighbor Broughton and me. We will

get our matters settled as soon as may be, while the girls visit with Aunt Lettice. But ye must all come within; 't is getting much too damp and cold to stop longer out o' the house."

He drove them in before him and closed the door, shutting out the roar of the surf along the shore, as it mingled with the shrilling of the dry-voiced insects in the grasses and woods.

CHAPTER VII

It was the dining-room of the house wherein the four men sat in earnest consultation; and now that they were alone, their faces were grave to solemnity.

The oak-ceiled and wainscoted room was filled with lurking shadows in the far corners, where the light from the candles did not penetrate; and the inside shutters of stout oak were closed and bolted over the one great window, along which ran a deep cushioned seat.

Joseph Devereux sat by the mahogany table, whose black polish reflected the lights, mirror-like, and – but more dully – the yellow brass of the candlesticks. His elbow was resting upon the smooth wood, his hand supporting his head; and in the light of the candle burning near, his face looked unusually stern.

His son sat opposite, his face mostly in shadow, as he lay back in his chair and thrummed the table with his slender brown fingers.

At either side sat Nicholson Broughton and Hugh Knollys, the former looking stern and troubled as he smoked his long pipe, while the younger man's face held but little of its usual light-hearted expression. His hands were thrust deep in his breeches' pockets, and he whistled softly now and then in an absent-minded way.

"Aye, 't is a grave state of affairs, Broughton," Joseph

Devereux was saying. "I love not oppression, nor tyrannical dealing. And yet, think you that ever was a petty tyrant overthrown, and the instruments of his punishment could always escape a pricking o' the conscience, that made it not easy for them to look back upon their own share in his downfall? Shall the time come, I wonder, when we must question the truth o' this inspiration we are now acting under as a town and as a country?"

"Nay, say I, – never!" exclaimed Broughton, with fiery ardor. "Being human, we must all feel sympathy for suffering, be it in enemy or friend. But our land is lost, and we nothing better than slaves, did we longer submit to the tyranny of the mother country. As God bade Moses of old lead the children of Israel from the bondage and cruel injustice of Pharaoh, so we should feel that He now bids us, as men with a country, and as fathers with families to cherish and protect, to rise up and assert our manhood, and to assure our freedom, even though it be by as fierce a war as ever was waged."

"And war there's bound to be!" It was Hugh Knollys who said this, and he seemed to look more cheery at the thought.

Joseph Devereux glanced at him sharply, and then turned to his son.

"You say, Jack," he asked, "that Strings said the Governor was to order a body o' soldiers down to the Neck?"

"Yes, sir – and that right away."

At this, Nicholson Broughton spoke up, looking at his host.

"As I was saying to you awhile back, neighbor Devereux, the

committee ordered to Boston, to decide upon delegates, must get a start from town before the redcoats get into quarters upon the Neck, or there may be trouble which it were as well to avoid. This was decided upon when we met at the Fountain Inn, this afternoon; and 't was agreed that all who go from here should take the road to Boston before to-morrow's dawn. John and Hugh, here, reckon on going along with us, to meet Brattle in Boston, for he has sent word that he is to sail the day after to-morrow with a shipload of supplies ordered down by the Governor for the soldiery at Salem. This will be a fine opportunity for smuggling down the firearms and powder which have been hid so long in Boston, waiting the chance for safe conveyance here."

Before Joseph Devereux could speak, his son broke in eagerly: "Hugh and I will come down with Brattle, and we'll lie off at anchor, as near our own shore as may be. Some one must be ready to give us the signal from the land; and if all is safe, we can put the guns and powder ashore and hide them. This will be the safest plan, for about Great Bay the soldiers will be on the lookout for anything unwonted; and in Little Harbor it will be as bad, for they will have their eyes wide open to keep a sharp watch upon the Fountain Inn, and all about it – be it on land or water."

"You say truly, Jack," his father assented, "But whom can we trust to give the signal? Ah," with a sigh, "if only I had back a few of my own lost years, or was not so lame!"

"Brains can serve one's land, friend Devereux, as well, oftentimes better, than arms," said Broughton, looking at his

host's massive head and intelligent features. "We all have our appointed work to do, and no man is more capable than you of doing his share."

"I pray it maybe so," was the reply. "But, be it much or little, all I have and am are at the service of our cause."

"Why not let Dorothy be the one to give the signal?" asked Hugh Knollys, as from a sudden inspiration.

"Just the one," said John Devereux, looking over at his father. "She fears nothing, and can be relied upon in such a matter."

The old gentleman seemed a bit reluctant, and sat silent for a few moments. Then speaking to his son, he said: "Call the child in. This is no time to hold back one's hand from the doing of aught that be needful to help the cause of our land."

It was not many minutes before Dorothy came into the room behind her brother; and her eyes opened wider than ever as their quick glance took in the solemn conclave about the table.

Her father stretched out an inviting hand. "Come here, Dot," he said smilingly. "Do not look so frightened, my baby." And he patted her small hand in a loving way as he drew her close beside him.

"No," added Hugh mischievously, his face having now regained its usual jollity, "we are not going to eat you, Dorothy."

She deigned him no reply, not even a glance, but stood silently beside her father, while she looked questioningly into her brother's face.

He explained in a few words the matter in hand; and the flash

of her eyes, together with the smile that touched the upturned corners of her mouth, told how greatly to her liking was the duty to which she had been assigned.

Jack had scarce finished speaking, when there was an interruption, in the person of Aunt Penine, who entered bearing a tray, upon which were tumblers and a bowl of steaming punch.

She shot a glance of marked disapproval at Dorothy; then, as she placed the tray upon the table in front of her brother-in-law, she said in a tone of acidity, "Were it not better, think you, Joseph, that the girl went into the other room and stopped with Lettice and Mary Broughton?"

Dorothy turned her eyes defiantly upon the elder woman, her soft brows suggesting the frown that came to her father's face as he said with grave severity: "The child is here, Penine, because I sent for her. Let the punch be as it is – and leave us, please."

She tossed her head belligerently, and without speaking took her departure, casting a far from friendly look at the others.

"I strongly suspect, father," said John, as he rose and crossed the room to close the door his aunt, either by accident or intent, had left ajar, "that we'd best have a care how we let Aunt Penine hear aught of our affairs. Her sympathies are very sure to be with the other side, if the struggle comes to blows."

"I will see to Penine," his father answered quietly. "Do you go on instructing Dot as to what she is to do."

His son bowed, and turned once more to the girl.

"And so, Dot, as I've said already, you must reckon surely

upon the vessel lying off the beach in a straight line with the Sachem's Cave, on Friday night, at about eleven o'clock. And this being Monday, will give four days, which will be time enough to allow for all that's to be done. But you must watch, child, even if it prove later in the night, or even in the morning, before we arrive. And when you see a light showing, then disappearing, then two lights, and then three, you must answer from the shore if all be well, and 't is safe to land, by showing two lights, and then letting them burn for us to steer by. Mount as high as you can to the uppermost level above the cave, so that we may get a good view of your signal. Can you keep all this in that small head of yours?" And he smiled at her, as though some happy outing were being planned.

She nodded quickly, but with a grave face; then, after a moment's hesitation, she asked, "May I tell Mary?"

Her brother's eyes dropped, as Hugh Knollys flashed a laughing glance upon him. But her father replied at once: "Aye, it were best to do so. And if neighbor Broughton has no objections, it were more prudent that she should be your companion."

"Not I!" responded Broughton heartily, raising to his lips the glass of punch his host had been dispensing from the bowl in front of him. "But be over-careful, Dorothy, as to who may be about to overhear what you say to her. And" – his voice growing very grave – "may God keep you both, for two brave, right-hearted girls."

"Amen!" said Joseph Devereux. And he lifted his glass to the

others, as though pledging them and the great cause they all had so devoutly at heart.

CHAPTER VIII

When Dorothy left the dining-room, it was by a door opposite that by which Aunt Penine had made her angry exit, – one leading to the storerooms and kitchen.

The one through which Dorothy went opened directly upon a small platform, whose flight of three steps descended into the main hall, which was part of the original building, and was now lighted dimly by a ship's lantern swinging from the low dark-wood ceiling, or "planchement."

A pair of handsome antlers were fixed against the wall about midway down the passage, and underneath these was a long mahogany table, piled with a miscellaneous collection of whips, hats, and riding-gloves.

Directly opposite hung the family arms, placed there more than a hundred years before by the hands of John Devereux, the "Emigrant," as he was called. They were: Arg., a fesse, gu., in chief three torteaux. Crest; – out of a ducal coronet, or, a talbots head, arg., eared, gu. And the motto was "Basis Virtutum Constantia."

Other than this the long, wide hall was bare of furnishing.

Dorothy came out with her usual impetuous rush, and closing the door quickly behind her, was startled by seeing a form rise, as it seemed, from the platform, and then, as if retreating hastily, stumble and fall down the steps.

The girl looked with astonishment, and saw Aunt Penine prostrate upon the floor of the hall, her upturned face pale and distorted, as with pain.

It was quite evident that she had been eavesdropping; and Dorothy remained at the head of the steps regarding her scornfully for a moment, before asking if she were hurt.

"Yes, I have done somewhat to my ankle, drat it!" gasped the sufferer, but in a low voice, as if fearful of attracting the attention of those on the other side of the door.

"Shall I call Jack?" Dorothy inquired, a faint smile of sarcasm touching her lips; and she made a movement as though to reopen the door.

"No, no, – oh no!" exclaimed Aunt Penine in great alarm, as she endeavored to regain her feet.

This she at length succeeded in doing, and stood with one hand against the wall, while she groaned, but in a suppressed way.

Just then Mary Broughton came from a room farther down the hall, where she had been delighting Aunt Lettice with soft melodies drawn from the spinet, upon which both she and Dorothy were skilful performers.

"What is it – is anything amiss?" she asked quickly, coming up to Aunt Penine, and laying a hand on her trembling shoulder.

But Aunt Penine only continued to groan dismally, while her niece, with a laugh she did not try to hide, now came down the steps.

"Aunt Penine was evidently anxious to be of my father's

council," she said to Mary; "and I chanced to open the door too quickly for her, so that she slipped down the steps and has twisted her ankle."

Her aunt straightened herself and glanced angrily at the girl, who only laughed again, while Mary Broughton stood regarding her with a puzzled look.

"Shall I help you to your room, Aunt Penine?" Dorothy asked with elaborate politeness, holding out her arm.

"No," snapped her aunt. "I wish no assistance from you, whose sharp tongue seems ever ready with insult for your elders. Mary will help me; and ye may find Tyntie, and send her to my room." With this she hobbled away, leaning heavily upon Mary, who looked back reproachfully at Dorothy.

But Dot only laughed again, as she turned and went to a door at the end of the hall which communicated with a side passage leading to the servants' quarters; then, having summoned Tyntie, she came back and seated herself upon a lower step of the main staircase to await Mary's coming.

Her friend's first words were full of reproof. "Oh, Dot, how could you seem so heartless?" she said. "You should see Aunt Penine's foot; 't is swollen fearfully, and her ankle is discolored."

"If you but knew how it came about, Mary, perhaps you'd be less ready to scold me," Dorothy replied, making room on the step. "There are weighty matters being talked of in the dining-room yonder, and I was to tell you what Jack took me in for. Aunt Penine came in with the punch while I was there, and she

tried to have me sent away. She was angry that father would not do this, but bade her mind her business and let me alone. When I opened the door just now, she was trying to listen to what they were saying, and I came out so suddenly as to frighten her, so that she stumbled and hurt herself. I am sorry she is hurt; but if it had befallen me, she'd have been ready enough to say I'd but received my just deserts."

"Why should she try to listen at the door?" asked Mary with surprise, as she twisted one of Dorothy's short curls about her slender fingers. But Dorothy gave her head an unruly toss, to release the curl, as she had ever a dislike for being fondled or touched in any way, unless it were by her father or brother.

"There is really to be a war, and that soon," she replied. "The soldiers, they say, are coming down to the Neck in a few days – perhaps even to-morrow; and the people propose – and rightly, too – to fight them, if needs be, should they try to interfere with our doings. Aunt Penine sides with the English, I take it from what I've heard her say; and I know for a surety she has been slyly making tea to drink, for all that father has forbidden it. He and Aunt Lettice miss their tea as much as ever she does herself, and yet they have never touched a drop. I intend to tell him to-morrow that I know of a canful of tea in the store-closet. I was talking with Aunt Lettice about it when you came this evening. She supposed there was not a grain of it in the house, and I am sure father has been thinking the same. Aunt Penine is deceitful and disloyal to him – and so I shall tell him, if I live, to-morrow

morning."

"Whatever did she expect to hear, that she did so mean and dishonorable a thing as to listen at the keyhole?" Mary spoke musingly, a fine scorn now touching her lips, and it was clear that her sympathy for the afflicted one was greatly dampened.

"Perhaps she intends to play spy, as she disapproves so entirely of the feeling the townsfolk all have. Spies are well paid, so I've heard; and Aunt Penine would do anything for money." Dorothy's eyes flashed, and she stared straight ahead, pulling at her front locks in an absent-minded way, as though she were speculating over all the mischief her aunt might have in view.

"She may mean nothing, after all, Dot," Mary said, after a moment's thought. "It may be that she was only curious to know why you were admitted to the room, while she and all the rest of us were kept out. Still, if I were you, I'd tell my father of her listening."

"Indeed I shall," was the emphatic reply, "and of the tea as well. I have a notion she got it all from Robert Jameson. You know what they tell of him; and he and Aunt Penine seem to have a deal to say to one another these days. She has sent Pashar to him with notes ever so many times, as I know; and Pashar seems to have more silver nowadays than father gives him, for he has, more than once, brought 'Bitha sweets from the store."

Mary nodded significantly at the mention of Robert Jameson's name. He was the nearest neighbor of Joseph Devereux, and had come to be regarded with distrust – enmity, indeed – by most of

his former associates.

He was a widower of some wealth, and had no family; and Aunt Penine had long been suspected of cherishing a desire to entrap him into a second matrimony.

A few months before, an exceedingly complimentary, almost fulsome, address to Hutchinson, the recent Governor, had appeared in the columns of a newspaper known as the "Essex Gazette," to which were attached the names of some residents of the town, Jameson's amongst them. It endorsed all that had been said in praise of his administration, and of his aiming only at the public good; and it asserted that such was the opinion of all thinking and dispassionate citizens.

This manifest untruth had raised a storm of indignation. A town meeting was held, and a committee appointed, with instructions to inform the signers of this false and malicious statement that they would be exonerated only by making a public retraction of all sentiments contained therein; and that upon refusing to do this, they would be denounced as enemies of the province, desiring to insult both branches of the legislature, and to affront the town.

Jameson had been one of the few who refused to comply with the committee's demand; and he had since been shunned as an enemy to the cause, and looked upon with suspicion and distrust.

CHAPTER IX

The household was astir early the next morning to set the travellers on their road with a warm meal and a parting word; and despite the absence of Aunt Penine, all the domestic machinery moved as smoothly as usual.

There could still be seen a few stars, not yet blotted out by the pearly haze, shot with palest blue, that the dawn was putting in front of them.

Over the sea hung a curtain-like gathering of fog, and the air was heavy with the odors from the wood and fern, brought forth by the damp.

Nicholson Broughton, having borrowed a saddle from his host, had decided to pursue the remainder of his journey on horseback; and he, with his two younger companions, was now about to set forth.

Mary stood near her father's horse, while he gave her some parting words of encouragement.

"Now bear in mind, Pigsney, all I have said, and never fail to keep a watchful eye and stout heart. All at the house will go well until my return; and do you abide here, safe and close, with our good friends. Be sure to keep away from the town, and whether the Britishers come to the Neck or no, you will be safe."

She promised all this, and turned away as he rode off, waving a farewell to his host, who stood within the porch, with Aunt

Lettice and little 'Bitha alongside him.

Hugh Knollys followed, with a gay good-by to all, while John Devereux, who had been talking with Dorothy, now vaulted into his saddle.

As he was about to start, Mary Broughton passed along in her slow walk to the house. She turned, and their eyes met in a look that told of a mutual understanding. But she flushed a little, while he only smiled, doffing his hat as he rode slowly past her down the driveway.

Dorothy was waiting, close to her father, on the porch.

"Don't you wish you were a man, Mary," she said, as her friend came up the steps, "so that you could ride away to do battle for our rights, instead of being only a woman, to stop at home and wonder and worry over matters, while the baking and churning must be done day after day?"

Her father smiled at this, and pinched Dorothy's cheek; then a sadness came to his face as he looked at her.

"To be a woman does not always mean the doing of over-much baking or housework," said Mary, with a meaning smile, her cheeks fresher and her blue eyes brighter, like the flowers, from the pure morning air.

Joseph Devereux nodded an assent. "If you and Mary," he said to Dorothy, "were to ride to Boston this day, who would there be to do what you are entrusted with the doing on? Mark ye, my daughter," and he bent a grave look upon her bright face, "women, as well as men, have high and holy duties to perform, –

aye, indeed, some of them even higher. Where would come the nerve and hope for the proper ambition o' men's minds, were there no mothers and wives and – sweethearts, to make their lives worth the living, and their homes worth fighting for, – yes, and their country so much more worth saving from oppression. Nay, my baby, what would become o' your old father, if he had not a little maid to console him, when his only son must needs face risks and dangers?"

Dorothy did not answer, but her face softened, and her arm stole up about his neck.

"Dot," said Mary, presently, "do not forget the matter we talked of last evening, – that your father was to know."

"And pray, what is that?" the old gentleman asked briskly.

"Come into the library, father, with Mary and me, and we will tell you." And slipping her hand around his arm, she started to lead him in. Mary was about to follow, when he turned to her and held out his other arm. With an answering smile she placed her hand within it, and all three went inside.

Aunt Lettice had gone off to her own apartments, taking 'Bitha for her usual morning instructing, and so they were not likely to be disturbed.

As soon as her father was seated, Dorothy, standing by the window, burst forth with her accustomed vehemence.

"I want to tell you, father," she exclaimed, "that I am sure Aunt Penine is a loyalist!"

"Chut, chut!" he replied reprovingly. But he smiled, used as

he was to the differences betwixt his daughter and her exacting relative.

"I have good reason for what I say," Dorothy insisted; "and Mary can tell you so, as well."

"Well, child, first tell me all about it, and do not begin by misnaming any one," her father said gently.

She told him in a few rapid words, – first, what had happened the evening before, and ending by a detailed account of finding the tea in the store-closet.

Her father was scowling ominously by the time the story was finished; and he sat in silence for a few moments, his head bent, as though considering what she had told him. Then he said: "I thank you, my child, for what you have told me. I must speak with Penine o' these matters, and that right away. Do you go, Dot, and tell her I wish to talk with her, and must do so as soon as she can see me in her room."

"Why not let Mary go?" Dorothy suggested. "Aunt Penine likes Mary, and she does not like me – nor I her." And she looked quite belligerent.

"I will be glad to go, if you say so," Mary offered, rising from her chair.

"Well, well," he said, "it matters little to me who goes; only I must see her at once. And thank you, Mary, child, if you will kindly tell her so."

As soon as Mary left the room, Dorothy came over to her father's chair and perched herself upon one of its oaken arms.

"And now there is another thing I wish to tell you," she said, "and I'd best do it now."

He put an arm about her and smiled up into her troubled face.

"Well, well," he said playfully, while he smoothed her curls, "what a wise little head it has grown to be all on a sudden! We shall be hearing soon that Mistress Dorothy Devereux has been invited by the great men o' the town – Lee and Orne and Gerry, and the rest o' them – to be present at their next meeting, and instruct them on matters they wot not on, despite their age and wisdom."

She would not smile at his badinage, but went on soberly to warn him of what she suspected between her Aunt Penine and their ostracized neighbor, Jameson, – telling him also of the unusual amount of coin being spent by the boy, Pashar, whom she had seen carrying notes for her aunt.

The smile left her father's face as he listened to this, and he shook his head gravely. And when she finished, he said, as though to himself, "'T is the enemies in one's own household that are ever the most dangerous." Then rising, he added, "Come with me, Dot, while I speak first to Tyntie."

The old Indian woman had been devoted to the interests of the family since forty years before, when Joseph Devereux found her – a beaten, half-starved child of ten – living with her drunken father in a wretched hut on the outskirts of the town, and brought her to his own house for his wife to rear and instruct. And because of her idolatrous love for her benefactor and his family,

she had endured patiently the exacting tyranny of Aunt Penine, whom she detested.

Her tall, spare figure was now moving about her domain with a curious dignity inseparable from her Indian birth; but she paused in what she was doing the moment her master and his daughter appeared at the door, and remained facing them in respectful silence.

She was alone, the men having gone off to their duties about the farm, and the maids to the dairy, or to the housework above stairs.

"I desire to ask you, Tyntie," her master began, addressing her with the same grave courtesy he would have used in speaking to the best-born lady in the land, "if, since I forbade the making or using o' tea in my house, any has been brewed?"

"Yes, master," she answered without any hesitancy; and a sly look, as of revenge, crept into her black eyes.

"How dared ye do such a thing?" he demanded, his face severe with indignation.

"I never did it," was her laconic reply.

"Then who did? I command ye to make a clean breast o' the matter." And he struck his stick peremptorily upon the floor, while Dorothy, awed by the unusual anger showing in his voice and bearing, drew a little away from him.

"It was Mistress Penine brewed the tea, for her own drinking." And Tyntie showed actual pleasure in being thus enabled to expose her oppressor.

"And how often hath this happened since I gave strict orders that none should be had or drunk in this house o' mine?"

"Most every day; and sometimes more than once in the day."

"And how were you guarding your master's interests, to permit such secret goings on under his roof, without giving him warning?"

The tears rose to Tyntie's eyes and stood sparkling there; but her voice was firm as she replied, "It was not for me to know that Mistress Penine was doing anything wrongful, nor for me, a servant, to come to you, my master, with evil reports o' your own kinsfolk."

She spoke slowly and with calm dignity, and her words softened the white wrath from the old man's face.

He bent his head for a moment, as though pondering deeply; then he looked at her and said in a very different tone: "You are a right-minded, faithful servant, Tyntie, and I must tell you I am sorry to have spoken as I did a moment ago. But from this day henceforth, bear in mind that should you ever see aught being done under my roof that you've heard me forbid, 't is your bounden duty to come and inform me freely o' such matter."

"Yes, master." Tyntie now wiped her eyes, and looked very much comforted.

"Now," he asked, his voice growing stern once more, "know you where aught o' the forbidden stuff be kept, or if there still be any in the house?"

Tyntie went silently to the store-closet and fetched a sizable

can of burnished copper. This she opened and held toward her master and young mistress, who saw that it was nearly half filled with the prohibited tea.

Joseph Devereux scowled fiercely as he beheld this tangible evidence of Penine's bad faith and selfishness.

"Do you take that in your own hands, Tyntie, as soon as may be," he said; "or no – take it this instant, down to the beach, and throw it, can and all, into the water. And see to it that you make mention o' this matter to no one."

Then turning slowly, he took his way again to the front of the house, Dorothy following in silence, and feeling unwontedly awed by the apprehension of the storm she felt was about to break; for it was a rare matter indeed for Aunt Penine to be the one entirely at fault in anything.

CHAPTER X

Dorothy saw Mary Broughton on the porch outside and was about to join her, when Mary turned and called out, "Aunt Penine is waiting to see your father."

At this Dorothy retraced her steps to the library, where she had left her father sitting in moody silence, tracing with his stick invisible writings upon the floor, the iron ferule making angry clickings against the oaken polish.

He made no reply to the message she gave him; so, after pausing a moment, she said again that her aunt was awaiting him.

"Yes, yes, child; I hear ye," he replied almost impatiently, and as though not wishing to be disturbed.

Dorothy said nothing more, but went out and joined Mary, who was waiting on the porch; and, arm in arm, they strolled out into the sunshiny morning.

They had gone but a little way when Dorothy's sharp eyes spied Pashar coming from a side door of the house. His black hand held something white, which he was thrusting into the pocket of his jacket.

She called to him sharply, and he turned his head in her direction, while his eyes rolled restlessly. But he made no movement to come to her, and stood motionless, as though awaiting her orders.

"Come here!" she called peremptorily; but still he hesitated.

"Do you come here this instant, Pashar, as I bid you," she commanded, now taking a few steps toward him.

At this he came forward, but in a halting way, and at length stood before her, looking very ill at ease.

"Give me that letter," Dorothy demanded, extending her hand for it.

"Mist'ess Penine done say – " he began in a hesitating, remonstrative fashion; but Dorothy cut him short.

"Give me that letter," she repeated, stamping her small foot, "or you'll be sorry!"

Trained like a dumb beast to obedience, the negro boy fumbled in his pocket and took out a folded paper which he handed to his imperious young mistress.

"What'll I say ter Massa Jameson when I sees him?" he asked tremblingly, as Dorothy's little white fingers closed over the letter. "He'll lay his ridin'-whip 'bout my shoulders, if I goes ter him now."

"My father will surely lay *his* riding-whip about your shoulders, if you go near Jameson again. I'll see to it myself that you get whipped, if you dare do such a thing," exclaimed Dorothy; and the angry flashing of her dark eyes bore witness to her sincerity.

"Now," she added, "go about your work, – whatever you have to do. And mind, don't you dare stir a step – no matter who bids you – to Jameson's place; else you will get into trouble that will make you wish you had obeyed me."

With this she turned back with Mary in the direction of the house.

"Ye won't have me whipped, will ye, mist'ess?" Pashar whimpered, as he looked after her. "Mist'ess Penine – she tole me I was ter go. An', 'sides, I gets money from Massa Jameson for ev'ry letter I fetches him."

"I'll see presently about your getting whipped," was Dorothy's uncomfortable reply, as she glanced over her shoulder at the trembling boy.

The two girls walked quickly toward the house, while Pashar betook himself off with a very downcast air, digging his black fists into his eyes as if he felt only too certain of being punished for his wrongdoing.

Joseph Devereux was ascending the stairway, bound for his sister-in-law's room, when the two girls came in from outside. Dorothy called quickly, and speeding after him, placed the letter in his hand, as he paused and turned to face her.

In a low voice she acquainted him with what she had taken upon herself to do, adding, "I was fearful of what she might have told him, if perchance she overheard anything last night of the gunpowder and arms."

"Wise, trusty little maid," he said, a slow smile touching the gloom of his set face. "You have acted rightly and with great discretion, Dot. And now I will see what Penine has to say o' the matters that look so grave, as we see them."

Pausing at her closed door, on the left-hand side of the upper

passage, he knocked, and then entered, as her querulous voice, now somewhat subdued, bade him.

Penine was lying back on a settle, a bright-hued patchwork of silk thrown over her spare form; and her eyes showed traces of recent tears.

Her brother-in-law seated himself in an arm-chair near her, his face grave to sternness, as he bent a piercing look upon her troubled face.

She cast a furtive glance at the paper he still held in his hand; then her eyes fell, and she began to pluck nervously at the edge of the covering, while her face became filled with an expression of guilty embarrassment.

"Penine," he began, in a voice quite low, but full of severity, "these be times when, as you well know, it behooves a householder to look most carefully to the doings of those about him. He must see to it that all appearance, as well as doing, o' wrong be most strictly avoided. And so I have come to ask you, as one o' my own household, how is it that you have been brewing tea for yourself, after all that's been done and said; and how 't is that you have such a supply of the stuff in my house?"

Penine flushed angrily, and tried to look him in the eyes, while her lips half parted, as though to make some retort. Then she seemed to alter her mind, for she remained silent, her eyes falling guiltily before his stern, searching gaze.

"Do not seek to hide your fault by another one – o' falsehood," he warned her, more sternly than before. "I know what I am

accusing you of to be the truth, – more's the pity. And it surprises and grieves me that a woman o' such years as you should set a pernicious example to those who, younger and inferior in station to yourself, look to you for a proper code of action for their following."

"What harm is it, I would like to know," she burst out, but weakly, "that I should drink my tea, if I like?"

"The harm you do is to defy your country's law, and make me seem disloyal and false to my word of honor," he replied with increasing sternness. "And this you have no right to do, while you abide under my roof."

"My country's law is the law of His Gracious Majesty," she answered, plucking up a little spirit, but yet unable to meet his dark, angry eyes, "and I have never heard that he forbade his loyal subjects all the tea they could pay for and drink."

"Do ye mean me to understand that ye set yourself up as the enemy o' your townsfolk and kindred?" he demanded, his voice rising. "I've suspected as much since I had knowledge o' the fact o' your sending notes to Robert Jameson."

"You have no right to talk to me so, Joseph," she said, with a whimper, terrified at the angry lighting of his face, now ablaze with wrath.

"And ye have no right to act in a manner that makes it possible for me to presume to. If things be not so black against ye as they surely look, take this note that ye sent my servant with just now, to be delivered to our country's avowed enemy, and read every

word aloud to me."

He held the letter toward her; but she made such an eager clutch for it that a sudden impulse led him to change his mind, and he drew back his hand.

"No," he said, "on second thought, 't is best that ye give me permit to read it myself, aloud."

"No, no!" she exclaimed almost breathlessly; and the unmistakable terror in her voice and eyes confirmed him in his determination to see for himself the contents of the letter.

"I have to beg your pardon, Penine," he said with formal courtesy, "for seeming to do a most ungallant act; but your manner only proves to me what is my duty."

With this he deliberately broke the seal and ran his eyes over the paper, while Penine cast one terrified glance at him, and then fell back, silent and cowering, her ashy face covered by her trembling hands.

She had written Jameson of the intended landing of the arms and powder. And Joseph Devereux knew she had done so with a view to having him send word of the matter to the Governor, hoping in this way to win honor and reward for the man she expected to lure into speedy wedlock.

He read the letter once more, and then sat silent, as though pondering over all her selfish treachery and disloyalty. And while he was thus musing, the clock on the mantel ticked with painful loudness, and some flies crawling about the panes of the closed windows buzzed angrily.

When at length he spoke, his wrath seemed to have given place to pity, mingled with utter contempt.

"I can scarce credit, Penine," he said slowly, all trace of anger gone from his voice, "that you should have realized to the full all you were doing when you took such a step, — that you were bringing the British guns down to slay my son, an' like as not my innocent little maid; a fate which now, thank God, has been kept from them."

His voice had become husky, and he paused to clear his throat. Then he resumed, speaking in the same deliberate manner: "Because o' their deliverance from death I will try and forgive what you have tried to do; but I must not forget it, lest another such thing befall. And now, until you be able to travel, you shall be made comfortable here. But so soon as your ankle can be used, then you shall go to your brother, in Lynn, for no roof o' mine shall harbor secret enemies to my country. And," now with more sternness, "I warn you, that should you seek to hold converse or communication of any sort with this man Jameson while you are in my house, I shall report the matter to the town committee, and leave them to settle with you."

He arose from his chair, and without another glance in her direction went out of the room, leaving Penine in tears.

CHAPTER XI

The days intervening until Friday passed without event, and the household affairs went on much as before, Tyntie proving herself fully capable of replacing Aunt Penine as head of the domestic régime.

That lady kept her room, seeing no one except Tyntie and one of the younger maids. She had refused all overtures extended by her niece and Mary Broughton; and so, by the advice of the head of the house, they left her to herself.

Even Aunt Lettice was refused admittance by her sister, and refrained from seeking it a second time after being informed by Joseph Devereux of the recent occurrences.

The gentle old lady now went about the house in a sad, subdued fashion, secretly debating as to whether she would decide against King or Colony, but carefully keeping her thoughts from being known to others.

Johnnie Strings had kept his word to Dorothy, and brought the ribbon and lace. Aunt Lettice had paid him for the goods she purchased, making no response when he said, as he strapped his pack, "The Britishers be quartered on the Neck, ma'am, – landed there this very mornin'. The reg'lars, – they came down by ships from Salem; an' a troop o' dragoons be ridin' over to join 'em."

It was Mary Broughton who asked, "What are they come there for, Johnnie, – do you know?"

"Any one can guess, mistress, I take it," he replied significantly, busying himself with the buckles.

"And what do you guess, Johnnie?" asked Dorothy, who was examining a sampler 'Bitha was working, which was to announce,
—

"Tabitha Hollis is my name,
New England is my nation,
Marblehead is my dwelling-place,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.