

Douglas Amanda M.

A Little Girl in Old Philadelphia



Amanda Douglas

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Amanda Minnie Douglas

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TO MR. AND MRS. HENRY HORTON LAWRENCE

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

With sincere regard,
AMANDA M. DOUGLAS.

Newark, N.J., 1899.

CHAPTER I. HERE AND THERE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were two doors opening from this kitchen to a small hall, from thence to the ordinary living room, and a smaller one adjoining, used for a sort of parlor, as we should call it now, a kind of state room where the Friends often held meetings. It was very plain indeed. There were straight white curtains at the windows, without a bit of fringe or netting. Women used to make these adornments

as a kind of fancy work, but the rigid rules of the Friends discountenanced all such employments, even if it was to improve odd moments. There was no carpet on the floor, which was scrubbed to spotlessness; chairs of oaken frame, bent, and polished by the busy housewife until they shone, with seats of broad splint or rushes painted yellow. A large set of drawers with several shelves on top stood between the windows, and a wooden settle was ranged along the wall. A table with a great Bible and two or three religious books, and a high mantel with two enormous pitchers that glittered in a brilliant color which was called British luster, with a brass snuffers and tray and candlesticks, were the only concession to the spirit of worldliness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They were tanned, but dimpled, with tapering fingers and rosy nails, and the skin fine and soft. "Hands are for use and not ornament. Thou art to do with thy might whatsoever comes in thy way."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Primrose!" called her aunt.

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

"Come to the table," said Aunt Lois.

The four heads were bowed reverently. There was not much talking at meal time. Aunt Lois was ever afraid of idle words and vain babbling. Uncle James had a good, hearty appetite, as became his size and strength, and generally occupied himself in ministering to it. Children in Quaker households – indeed, in nearly all others – had the wise old adage dinned into their ears that they were to be seen and not heard, and they also understood that they were to be seen as little as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

He glanced at her in a slow, irresolute fashion.

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

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

"But why must I go?" impatiently.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This little girl, whom they had seen occasionally in her mother's life, had crept into his heart during her six months' stay and he hated to let her go. He was so fond of all young and helpless things. The lambs, the tiny chickens, and the calves appealed to him strongly as they looked out of asking eyes, it seemed to him. He was beginning to chafe under the colorless, repressed life about him, and the little girl had been a great outlet for his affection, though much of it had been nursed in secret.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II. BESSY WARDOUR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Philemon Henry was disappointed that it should be a girl.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Bessy!" in a horror-stricken tone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"But I am very angry at thy disobedience."

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

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

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

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

She had been a sweet, thoughtful wife, he could not deny that. But he had been weak to yield to so much happiness. And when the brethren heard of this outrage put upon their usages there would

be hard times for her. Suddenly his whole soul protested against having her haled before the meeting. Oh, what had her spirit of willfulness led her into!

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

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

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

The christening had been very quiet. Madam Wetherill had been godmother, and the godfather was a distant relative who resided in New York. Good Parson Duché had been asked to keep the matter private. And so, if the meeting came to know, Philemon Henry must be the accuser. It was his duty, of course, but he put it off month after month. The babe grew sweet and winsome, and there were many things beside family cares to distract men's minds: The friction between the mother country and grave questions coming to the fore; the following out of Mr. Penn's plans for the improvement of the city, the bridging of creeks and the filling up of streets, for there was much marsh land; the building of docks for the trade that was rapidly enlarging, and the public spirit that was beginning to animate the staid citizens.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III. IN A NEW WORLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But she was fond of gayety and pleasure as well, and having no children to place in the world and no really near kindred but first and second cousins she saw no need of being penurious, and lived with a free hand. She was very fond of young people also, and it seemed a great pity she had not been mother of a family. Her city house was a great rendezvous, and her farmhouse was the stopping place of many a gay party, and often a crowd to supper with a good deal of impromptu dancing afterward.

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

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

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

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

She slipped her hand within that of the woman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She gave a sigh and her bosom swelled.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The lady rose with a high dignity.

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

"Yes, I will order the chaise."

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER IV. OF MANY THINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"So he was."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What is piquet?"

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

"Have we any court?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And here were Oriental rugs on the polished floor; furniture carved and padded in brocade, tables with massive claw feet, and others in thin spindles that seemed hardly stout enough to hold up the top. There was a great carved chimney-piece with some tiles let in, and some curious iridescent

bulbs not unlike the "bullseyes" over the wide hall door, but in different phases of light they gave out varied colors. There were queer, beautiful, and grotesque ornaments, some ugly Chinese gods that had been brought hither by sea captains, but if to convert the new continent, the scheme certainly would prove a failure. Primrose always looked at them with a shudder, and instinctively thought of the Friends' meeting with the soft gray gowns and shawls with fine fringes, or in summer just a plain white kerchief crossed over the bosom. Then there was a great blue-and-white Chinese pagoda, ornamented with numerous bells, every story growing smaller. It stood on a solid clawfoot table, and beside it, also in china, a mandarin with flowing sleeves and a long pigtail in dark-blue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A hint of perplexity crossed her brow.

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

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

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

Primrose sighed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He laughed at that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER V. A BOULEVERSEMENT

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

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

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

A sentiment was given afterward:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There was something not quite a smile crossed Lois' face, so tired now that a few of the placid lines had lost their sweetness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then he held her off a bit. No, Faith could not compare with her. Yet Faith had blue eyes, a fair skin, and light hair, straight and rather stringy and cut short in her neck. But these eyes were like

a glint of heaven on a most radiant day, these curving red lips were full of smiles and sweetness, and this lovely hair, this becoming and graceful attire —

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

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

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

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

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

"What has happened, cousin?"

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

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

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

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

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

Andrew laughed, stirred by a sweet joy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Should I like her?"

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

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

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

"We are commanded to love everyone, chiefly those of the household of faith."

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

"One can praise in the heart."

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER VI. TO THE RESCUE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And I am sorry for thy misfortune."

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

"It is the Lord's will. We are not allowed our choice of times. Though I must say I have been prospered heretofore, and give thanks for it. I hear there are other troubles abroad and that those pestilent Puritans, who were never able to live in peace for any length of time, have rebelled against the King. I am sorry it hath come to open blows. But they will soon have the punishment they deserve. We are enjoined to live at peace with all men."

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

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

"True – true! We shall need much wisdom. But I must not weary thee talking of uncertainties. There is another matter that concerns us both, our little ward. As affairs stand I think she had better

remain with me through the summer. She will be on a farm and have plenty of air and take up some of the arts of country life. She is in good health and is, I think, a very easily governed child."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She paused a moment for a word with Rachel, a nice, wholesome-looking girl with the freshness of youth, and who responded quietly but made no effort for conversation. Faith was still chatting

with the grandmother. Madam Wetherill stepped on the block and mounted her horse as deftly as a young person might.

"The youth Andrew is not so straitlaced," she ruminated. "And he seemed much interested in the talk of war. If it comes to that, what will the Quakers do, I wonder? They can hardly go among the Indians to escape the strife, and if home and country is worth anything they ought to take their share in defending it. As Mr. Adams says, it would come sooner or later. The colonists are of English blood and cannot stand so much oppression. It is queer they cannot think of us as their own children. And we of the more southern lands have felt tenderly toward the mother country, especially we of the church."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Then you may have to emigrate again presently," suggested portly John Logan. "The storm has been long gathering. Little by little we have seen our rights abridged, while we have been growing up to the full size of manhood. We have tried our wit and ability. To-day we could enter the lists of trade with foreign nations, but our ports have been closed. England dictates how much and how little

we shall do. We are not a nation of slaves, but brethren with them over the seas. We are not to be kept in the swaddling clothes of infancy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Quakers do not fight."

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

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

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

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

"For the King?"

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

"And you, Patty?"

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

CHAPTER VII. AT SOME CROSSROADS

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

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

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

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

But the quiet, romantic stream was to witness many a tragedy and many an act of heroism that no one dreamed of that summer. The real alarms of war scarcely penetrated it. Young people went sailing and rowing and had picnics and teas along its banks, and the air was gay with jests and laughter.

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

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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