

Roy Lillian Elizabeth

The Little Washington's Relatives



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CHAPTER I – THE CITY COUSINS

“I heard the automobile horn, Martha!” shouted George Parke, jumping from the newel post of the front veranda steps, where he had perched himself to await the Philadelphia cousins who were expected that morning.

“I didn’t hear anything but Jim squealing ’cause his mammy won’t let him peek around the corner of the house,” scorned Martha Parke, his sister, a year and a half younger than George.

“Well, it’s time for them to be here, anyway,” argued George, with the usual finality of a boy past ten years of age.

“I wonder what they look like. Can you remember either one when we visited Philadelphia five years ago?” ventured Martha.

“All I can remember is Anne having yellow hair and her pinafore always twisted in her hands, and Jack going around with that little paper mat that he wove in kindergarten school his first day. Don’t you remember how he took it to bed with him, and all the red paper came off on his pillow during the night when he breathed on it, and his mother thought he was bleeding at the nose and mouth?” and George laughed at the dim recollections of five years ago.

“Oh, yes, I remember that! Wasn’t it funny when his nurse scrubbed and scrubbed to get the red dye from his face, and all the soap-suds got in his mouth so’s he yelled and fought!” laughed Martha also.

“And don’t you remember the day we were left alone to play while aunty took mother to the opera – we couldn’t go out ’cause it rained so hard, and we began sliding down the marble end of the bath tub? That was fun – just like winter when the snow is on the ground,” reminded Martha.

“Yes, and then two of us tried to slide down at the same time and got stuck in the bottom of the tub. Jack was bigger, so he pulled himself out, and in doing so managed to turn on the faucet. My, but wasn’t I wet that day!” roared George, slapping his knee.

“Oo-oh, but do you remember how Uncle Fred scolded when he saw the scratches our shoes had made in the porcelain tub?” breathed Martha, still fearful of that escapade.

“Ha, ha! Martha, do you remember the day we went to the zoo and fed peanuts to the monkeys? Wasn’t that funny when the chimpanzee caught Anne’s little straw hat and carried it to the top of the cage and put it on his own head? I’ll never forget how we all screamed to him to bring it back – as if the monkey understood us.”

“Even the animal trainer couldn’t make him give it back, and Aunt Ally begged him to leave it, as she would not take it again, anyway,” chuckled Martha, picturing the scene again.

“That was a fine visit, Martha – eh?” said George, looking at his sister for smiling approval.

“Yes, and I’ve been thinking, George, we ought to give our cousins just as good a time while they visit us here,” said the little girl.

“Oh, I’ve got it all planned out – you wait and see!” declared George.

“You have? Oh, you never said a word to me about it! Do tell me what it is.”

“Well, in the first place, we have to take them all over and introduce them to John Graham and his place,” said George, counting off the plan on his fingers.

“Uh-huh – and don’t forget Jim. We must introduce Jim, you know,” reminded Martha.

“Da’s right! Yo’ all jus’ cough when yo’ want’s me an’ Ah’ll pop right out. I’s hidin’ heah now whar mammy can’t see me,” came a hoarse whisper from the Virginia creeper vine at the side of the porch.

“Oo-oh, you there, Jim – come out and let’s plan things,” called George, running over to drag out a seven-year-old pickaninny who was their constant shadow and general factotum, – especially so when there was mischief brewing, for Jim always was the scapegoat.

Jim resisted for a few moments, as he feared his mammy’s large, flat hand; but George assured him that as he was invited to be present at the reception of the city cousins it was all right with mammy.

“As I was telling Martha – we must plan some great fun for our cousins’ visit here, ’cause they gave us such a good time when we were little children,” explained George, now an *old man* past the age of ten.

“First we’re going to show them all over the place – take them over to John’s and everywhere,” added Martha, explaining.

“An’ show dem whar we-all had th’ homestead fire at th’ back uv th’ lot,” reminded Jim, feeling tenderly of his now fuzzy new crop of hair grown since his other locks had been sizzled off.

“And don’t forget to tell them all about the battle we had with John and his cousins at Fort Duquesne that day. Of course they will see the broken-down hedge and wonder at it – then we can tell them all about the fun without bragging,” giggled Martha.

“We’re not through with that affair yet, either,” added George. “I read in our history this morning that Braddock was *not* killed that same day, but Washington pulled him out of the fight and tried to save his life, and for that great deed, General Braddock bequeathed his wonderful charger and also his body-servant, Bishop, to Washington. After that Washington always rode that favorite horse and Bishop went everywhere the general went.”

“I’se kin be Bishop, Marser Garge! Cain’t we borry John’s pony for th’ charger some day when we-all play tha’ battle agin?” asked Jim eagerly.

“Sure! That’s what I planned,” quickly added George, to cover any delighted surprise he felt at Jim’s novel idea.

“Then, when we get all through with showing our cousins how we fought that ambush of Indians, when Jim hit John on the stiff beaver with the hatchet, we can finish the play. There’s lots to be played out in that battle. For instance, we buried Braddock right off, you see, and we ought to have dragged him away while the Indians tried to scalp him. We can let him die after we get him to a settlement, and bury him decently with a fine funeral. Think of all the fun we can have putting John down in a real hole and throwing flowers on top of him!” planned George zealously.

“No, George, that won’t be nice! We mustn’t play things like that at all! I hate to see funerals and hear people cry, and I never want to make-believe any such thing!” objected Martha.

“Sides, Garge, yo’ mommer’ll punish yo’ agin ef we put John in the groun’ and play he’s daid!” warned Jim ominously.

“And we can kill John by just pretending we did and jump that grave scene,” quickly suggested Martha.

“We-el, you two are too young for such play, I s’pose, but it would have been great to creep out to the back hedge some dark night and do that Braddock death-bed scene with John! I’d be reading the service from a book, and the rest of you could be weeping and wringing your hands while Jim dropped John in the grave. Then we’d cover him with bushes and things so’s the Indians couldn’t find him – they wanted his scalp, you know,” sighed George, as he reluctantly sacrificed the impressive scene at the urgent request of his two companions.

“Then what? When we finish Braddock what shall we play?” asked Martha.

“Then it will be time for us to use those old-fashioned costumes we found in the attic the day Jim came down the rope and thought he was killed. We must have George getting married now – ’cause he must begin the American Revolution and do lots of things that he did after he was married. Of course, I could play all he did without getting married, but as long as you’re here and will want to play with us, I’ll marry you, and then leave you at Mount Vernon while I go and have a good time fighting with the boys,” generously said George to Martha.

“She didn’t! Martha Custis didn’t stay at home! She followed the general when he camped in the winters, and did lots of fine things for the soldiers in the army. I’m going to play the same thing, and if you won’t let me I won’t marry you at all. I’ll get Jack to play husband instead, and I’ll marry him, so there!”

“But, Martha, you can’t! Don’t you see no one but Washington would do for Martha Custis? – and besides, Jack must act another part, so he couldn’t marry you even if I’d let him!” argued George, anxious over a possible refusal of his suit to Martha.

“Ah don’ see dat dat’s any fun – jes’ gettin’ dressed up in dat finery in de attic an’ gettin’ married. It’s heaps moh fun playin’ war and bein’ Injuns!” sneered Jim, who always was the Indian in these wars.

“Oh, Jim! It will be lots of fun! You’ll be the cook to fix the fine party dinner, and Jack can play minister. John and Anne will be my children and Washington’s step-children, you know,” explained Martha.

“Kin we-all git some cookies an’ watermelyon fer de party?” asked Jim with sudden interest.

“Sure! I’ll get mother to ask mammy for some, and besides I’ll find some more good things to eat. John can bring some, too, and we can have a make-believe stove and cook lots of fine things that they had at that wedding supper,” replied George.

“Den Ah’ll play cook!” agreed Jim.

“S-sh! I know I heard a horn that time!” cried Martha.

“So’d I! And see – down by the road that runs over the bridge of the creek – there comes the car!” shouted George, forgetting his wedding arrangements and wars in the imminent joy of seeing his cousins who were coming to have a long visit at the Parkes’ home.

As you remember, George and Martha Parke were the two children who played the youthful life of George Washington, in the first book called “Little Washingtons.”

Their home was situated in the beautiful country suburbs of Washington, D. C., and being descended in one line of the illustrious Parke family of Washington fame, naturally these children loved to hear all about the great American general’s life. In September of that year Mrs. Parke began reading the history of George Washington’s life – beginning with his introduction when he chopped down the cherry tree.

In the first book George and Martha Parke had heard read, and then applied to their play, the destruction of the homestead where George was born, the boy’s education, his surveying trips and camp, and finally the battle under General Braddock, when the latter was killed at Fort Duquesne.

Then, just as the two children found the old-fashioned costumes (while being shut in the attic for punishment for ruining the hedge at that momentous battle) and Jim crept out of the attic window and found himself on the ground, the story ended. But it starts again in this book with the Parke children watching for their cousins’ arrival.

John Graham, the next-door neighbor of the Parke children, had not been heard from or seen that morning, but Jim, the only child of mammy, the cook in the Parkes’ household, was on hand to welcome the expected visitors; then, just as the machine turned in at the stone gateway to roll up the driveway, John Graham rushed breathlessly up from the side lawn.

“Aren’t they here yet?” called John eagerly.

“Just comin’!” cried George, never taking his eyes from the fast-approaching automobile.

“Heigh – hello there!” shouted a boy’s voice, as a smiling face showed beaming over the side of the limousine.

“Hello, Jack! We’re glad to see you!” cried George, jumping down the steps to reach the terrace where the car stopped.

Martha followed after her brother, but Jim and John stood in the background, watching and wondering at the two strangers. The four cousins found they were not shy at all, and in fact, as they still retained the looks of former times, they soon felt very much at home with one another. Jack was a year the senior of George, and Anne was about a year older than Martha.

The Philadelphia children had lost none of their fun-loving dispositions, although Mrs. Parke had hoped they had developed into models of perfection. So this visit promised to be of great importance to the “Little Washingtons” in many ways. Hence the warm welcome bestowed by George and Martha, and later by John Graham and the factotum, Jim.

Mrs. Davis greeted her little niece and nephew affectionately, then she followed Mrs. Parke up the veranda steps and into the house.

“Have you got to change your clothes before we do anything?” asked George, who wore his second-best suit and clean blouse-shirt.

“Oh, I guess not. We’re all dusty from travelling anyway, so a little more dust won’t hurt any,” laughed Jack.

“And mother said my dress had to go straight in the tub, ’cause I upset a glass of chocolate soda all down the front,” added Anne, spreading out the dimity ruffled dress to show her companions.

“Come on then and see the place. Jim’s got a rabbit hutch at the barns, and John’s going to lend us his pony when we want to use it in our play,” explained George, leading the group over the lawn by walking backward in front of them.

Martha skipped on one side of the two new arrivals, and John Graham on the other side, while Jim, the dark shadow, followed closely at their heels.

“Say, you’ve got a dandy place for fun, haven’t you?” admired Jack, gazing around at the wide expanse of lawns and gardens at the rear of the estate.

“Yes, but they always find us out just when we’re having the finest time!” sighed John dolefully.

Jack laughed. “I’m sure they wouldn’t find me if I lived here! But Anne and I only have a yard in a city block. The front steps from the door go right down to the sidewalk, and there’s a little patch of grass in front of the basement windows, with an area-way going to the back kitchen. We have only as much open space on each side of our house as from here to there.” As he explained, Jack showed a distance of five feet in front of him.

“But you have the loveliest park only a few blocks away – and the museums, and zoo, and lots of things we haven’t!” said George enviously.

“You can’t have fun in the zoo or a museum as you can in the open like this place; but we’ll make up here for not having the place in Philadelphia, won’t we, Anne?” laughed Jack.

“Yes, if George and Martha won’t have to spend all the time at lessons,” said Anne anxiously.

“Oh, no, we were going to have a private teacher at home because the only school is so far away from us in winter, but the house-teacher mother engaged was taken sick and couldn’t come as soon as expected, so mother has been hearing our lessons and reading history to us. Now that your mother is visiting here, mother won’t have as much time to hear our lessons, see?” explained Martha eagerly.

“And we can have all the more time for fun,” added George.

“How about you, John?” asked Jack, turning to the little neighbor boy.

“Oh, I was going to join George and Martha at their house for lessons this year – my mother and their mother arranged it, you see, ’cause we are distantly related, too, but now I don’t have to study, either!” said John with satisfaction.

“Then we’re all free for a fine time! You see, it just happened that the same week our school opened, the measles broke out so bad that they had to close again for a short time; and as every one we knew got the measles, mother hurried us off for a visit until the thing is over again,” laughed Jack, feeling very happy over the consequences of the epidemic.

“Fine!” declared George, turning to lead the way to the last scene of battle – the broken-down hedge between the Grahams’ and Parkes’ country estates.

CHAPTER II – THE CUSTIS WEDDING PARTY

“Now that we’ve been all over the place, come up to the attic and let us show you the old trunk full of costumes,” urged Martha, as the five children returned from the inspection of the grounds.

“Maybe the folks’ll be looking for us to change our clothes,” ventured Anne, looking carefully at the windows of the house, as they came into view from the path where the children skipped or ran.

“How long will it take you?” questioned Martha.

“Oh, we’ll have to take a bath, and my curls will have to be done over fresh, and a clean dress put on – dear me, we can’t have a speck of fun all starched up, you know!” complained Anne.

“Let’s get in without any one seeing us!” whispered George.

“How?” chorused the others.

“Mother and Aunt Ally will be on the front piazza or in the library. We’ll climb up on the balcony under the dining-room windows and get through that room to the pantry. There’s a back stairs in the butler’s pantry for the help to use. We can get to the third floor that way without being seen or having to go to the front at all,” explained George.

“Good! You scout about first while we wait under the lilac bushes,” whispered John, pushing George into the open.

Soon the anxious watchers saw George scramble over the railing of the low balcony and carefully open the outside shutters that were generally kept closed when the dining-room was unoccupied. Then he disappeared through the open window, and shortly after reappeared to beckon his friends to follow him.

One at a time, Indian fashion, they rushed over the grass and climbed the balcony. When all but Jim were inside the room, they breathed easier, but Jim’s bowed legs could not scramble up and over the rail as agilely as the others had and they had to venture out again to haul him up and over by his arms.

Once safely sheltered by the darkened dining-room, they tiptoed toward the pantry. The swing door was hardly still upon the five figures that passed through, when ladies’ voices were heard as Mrs. Parke and Mrs. Davis came from the library to go out on the veranda and see where the children were.

In the pantry, on the table, stood a plate filled with iced cookies for afternoon tea. Chopped walnuts were thickly sprinkled on the icing and most tempting did the cakes smell. Naturally the children could not pass by without a sniff and that was their undoing.

“My, but I’m hungry after that trip from Washington!” sighed Jack, eyeing the cakes.

“We all are, I reckon! May as well carry these cookies with us as to wait to eat them later,” suggested George, looking to Martha for approval of the plan.

“May as well! Carry dish and all to the attic – it will save Mary the work of washing extra plates,” came from thoughtful Martha, but had Mary been present she would have scorned the helpful suggestion.

Quick as a flash, therefore, George and the dish disappeared up the back stairway followed by his four devoted friends.

Safely harbored in the large attic room, the hungry children sat and ate the delicious cakes, till but two – the very smallest and scorched ones – remained on the plate for the two ladies.

“They’ll want some with their tea,” suggested Martha generously, picking a large piece of walnut from the one she determined for her mother.

“But they are not fond of sweets like we are,” hinted Anne, wistfully smacking her lips.

“We’ve each had four – all but Jim; he had that broken half and three!” declared John manfully.

“And we must not overeat cakes – there will be bread and jam with tea, you know,” cautioned George.

“Set the dish outside the door and that will end the thing!” said Anne sensibly, as she picked up the plate and did as she suggested.

The door was closed and locked to insure safety to the two cakes, in case any one of the five friends felt like venturing forth and taking a look at them.

“Here’s the chest of clothes,” now called Martha, lifting the lid to display the strange-fashioned garments.

“Try on the flowered silk – and the powdered wig,” cried Anne eagerly, as she lifted the articles from the folds of paper.

While the girls dressed in the quaint garments, the two boys, George and Jack, arrayed themselves in clothes worn at the time of the Civil War. John and Jim assisted enthusiastically and the laughter sounding from the attic drew the attention of old mammy the nurse, as she was passing down the second-floor hallway. She smiled and looked up the stairway, wondering what the youngsters were doing to make such a noise.

“Ah rickon Ah’ll jes’ creep up an’ see ef der all right,” murmured mammy, dropping her mending on a chair and going up.

Outside the room door she spied the dish with the two small cakes in it. She picked this up with a surprised expression on her face, for she knew her daughter had baked delicious cakes for tea.

“Ah wonner! Rickon Ah’ll tek dis right down in de kitchen an’ fin’ out ef them cakes is all safe an’ soun’ befoh Ah do anudder thing.”

Old mammy followed her own suggestion, and the cook was shocked.

“What! Dem fine cakes gone an’ nuttin for tea – an’ dat fine comp’ny heah, too!”

“Now, Ah’m tellin’ yoh! Jes’ fix dem rapsclions fo’ onct! Tek dat ice cream yo fixed foh dinnah an’ serve it fer affernoon tea ’stead uv dose cakes. Tell Missus Parke why an’ den leave nuff ice cream fer de grown-ups fer dinner to-night!” advised old mammy.

The cook pondered this suggestion, and as a smile gradually spread over her wide face, she clapped her hands on the table.

“Jus’ what Ah’ll do. You jus’ wait an’ see!”

“Now, don’ go an’ deprive dem chilluns uv nuff to eat – Ah means some goodies,” warned old mammy.

“See heah, mammy! Dis end uv de wuk am mine – an’ yoh’s is takin’ care uv de baby. Dem little limbs ain’ goin’ t’ eat up all de fancy eatin’s Ah bake, an’ mek de missus b’live Ah forgot t’ prepare fer her comp’ny!”

So old mammy ascended the kitchen stairs again, fearing she had made a great mistake by warning her daughter in time that the cakes were gone and there was nothing for tea! As she shook her gray head over the conflicts between the cook and the children, she reached the second floor where the mending had been left.

A voice calling from the library changed her current of despondency, and she leaned over the balustrade to reply.

“Ah hear’n dem chilluns up in de attick, Mis Parke. Shall Ah tell ’em yoh wants ’em?”

“Oh, please, mammy! And see if they are all dressed and ready for tea. I wish to ring for the tray,” replied Mrs. Parke.

Mammy climbed the stairs once more and opened the door of the room whence sounds of merriment came. She stood in the doorway, taking in at a glance the extraordinary scene that met her eyes.

John was robed in a long black cloth draped over his shoulders. He had on a maid’s white bib and shoulder straps cut from an old apron. The black material was the remnant of a felt table cover, very popular a score of years before; but most of the wool embroidery had been eaten off by moths, so the gay colors could easily be hidden by the folds.

He stood by the window with the great book on “Life of George Washington” in his hands, reading aloud from it.

Right before him stood Jack Davis and Martha – one robed in old-fashioned clothes worn by Parke ancestors before the Civil War, and the other dressed in the lavender flowered Watteau silk gown of her great-great-grandmother.

George was “best man” in a black swallow-tail coat with velvet cuffs, collar and pocket lapels. The buttons were gold-embroidered on black velvet. A high stock collar and a pot-shaped beaver hat gave him quite a Colonial appearance.

Jim took the left-overs, and to make the best of the assorted items, donned as many of them as he could keep on. The effect was very funny, and caused the principals in the scene to burst out in laughter every time they took notice of his raiment.

The rehearsal of the Washington wedding scene was taking place when old mammy quietly opened the door and stood watching.

“You didn’t come up right that time, Martha; try it again. And, Anne, don’t stumble over her dress when you carry the train!” ordered George, waving back the two girls to try again.

“How can I carry her train and drop flowers on the path at the same time? And if we’re to do it again, you’d better pick up the flowers,” complained Anne.

“Here, Jim – Hercules, I mean! You’re the servant now and you must do the chores,” ordered George, pointing to some faded artificial flowers sprinkled on the floor before the black-gowned minister.

Martha backed away, catching her satin high-heeled shoe in the very long Watteau pleats as she did so, and frantically catching at Anne to keep from falling.

“Now, then, begin again,” said George, looking for Jack, the groom, to march slowly out from behind the high bookcase. As both bride and groom appeared, George played on a mouth-organ to delude the actors into a belief that it was a wedding-march.

Martha, with bowed head covered with a piece of heavy lace window-curtain, marched across the floor, and Anne followed, holding the train with one hand and scattering the stiff old hat-trimmings with the other. Jim had to walk beside her and carry the basket.

Old mammy couldn’t contain herself – she chuckled at the sight, but quickly dodged out of the door the moment she realized that she would be discovered.

Sharp ears had heard the amused giggle, however, and Anne turned quickly to see who was at the door. As she did so, she stepped on Martha’s skirt, thus bringing the bride suddenly to a halt. Jim and Anne collided with Martha and the rehearsal almost ended disastrously for that day, as George was disgusted, and Jack threw himself on a near-by lounge to laugh.

But the lounge had both back legs broken off, unseen or unknown to the children, and when Jack’s weight came against the upholstered back, the whole piece toppled over backward, rolling the occupant over with it.

Jack yelled, George laughed, John dropped the heavy history book on his toe and cried, and the others stood in surprise waiting for Jack to crawl out from under the lounge and appear again, this time with cobwebs and dust covering him.

Old mammy ran in at the clamor and helped the groom to his feet. Then all stood and laughed at the outcome of the first rehearsal of the great Washington-Custis wedding.

“Yoh mama says to come t’ tea! Mammy-cook baked some fine choklate cakes fer yo’ all,” said mammy seriously.

The wedding party exchanged looks with each other and it was seen that Jim appeared to be most uncomfortable. He looked back of him and then at his granny, then at his companions-in-disgrace, but they seemed not to feel the same dismay at a possible punishment such as Jim had reasons to anticipate.

Old mammy helped the wedding party free itself of the many and entangling articles of dress, and then they all hurried down to tea, regardless of mammy's pleading to wash and brush up.

In the library, both mothers were waiting and chatting when the juvenile party rushed in. They never entered a room – it was either a mad rush from the hallway or a stealthy entrance through a window.

“Why, children! Haven't you been up in the bathroom washing and dressing after the journey, and preparing to come down to tea?” asked Mrs. Davis in surprise.

“Oh, we prepared somewhat for tea, aunty, but not with soap and water,” replied Martha.

“What have you been doing all this time? – and here is John, too. How do you do, John? Come here and meet George and Martha's aunt from Philadelphia,” said Mrs. Parke sweetly.

As John shuffled over to shake hands with Mrs. Davis, a woolly head peeped from between the folds of the velour portières, where a lean little body was completely hidden. Jim felt that, as Hercules the man-servant, he had a right to watch the toothsome refreshments disappear even if he couldn't partake of the same.

“Well, mother, we really hadn't a moment's time in which to wash and dress. We've visited the whole place, met John and Jim, and rehearsed for the wedding. So, you see, we have been a bit crowded for time in which to brush up,” explained Jack.

“Wedding? What wedding?” asked Mrs. Davis, in surprise.

Mrs. Parke thought she saw light, however, and turned to George. “Is the Custis wedding coming off soon?”

“Yes, but Martha says she won't marry me as Washington. She thinks Jack looks better in the cocked hat,” grumbled George.

“But looks never make the general!” laughed Mrs. Parke.

Then, turning to the still amazed guest, she explained.

“I have lately been reading the life of George Washington to the children and they have a great deal of fun playing the chapters as I read them. Only they sometimes have very realistic fun – for instance when they burned down the old homestead, and again when they went on a survey trip. Last week they had the dreadful battle between the French and British at Fort Duquesne, and as a result, our entire hedge is broken down for more than thirty feet in length.”

“Thank goodness, then, that history has reached the point where Martha Custis subdues the fighting inclination of George,” laughed Mrs. Davis.

The maid appeared with tea just then, and in the deep dish where so many tempting cakes had reposed in the early afternoon, there now were two lonely scorched cookies. Thin slices of buttered bread *without jam*, and hot waffles sugared but with *no honey*, caused consternation in all present.

“Katy, is there any jam?” asked Martha.

“Mammy say dat jam's goin' t' stay locked up fer anudder day!”

“Katy!” gasped Mrs. Parke. “What are these scorched cakes doing here?”

“Cook say ast Marse George an' Martha. Dey knows better'n we-all.”

“Oh, yes, I remember, mother. When our cousins arrived they felt very weak and hungry, so I suggested a little bite, to keep them up till tea was served. I found the dish of cookies the most convenient, and, not wishing to disturb the cook, who was busy, I insisted upon their having a few,” explained George.

And Martha hastily added: “Naturally, not wishing to make our visitors feel that they were giving us any trouble, we ate some cakes, too, to make them feel at home.”

“Well, the cakes felt very much at home, I'm sure!” laughed Mrs. Davis, who was accustomed to these escapades, as well as Mrs. Parke.

“But that need not deprive you ladies of the jam, you know!” hinted Jack.

“Nor uv dis ice cream dat cook sent up fer de two ladies t' tek de place uv dem cakes!” added Katy significantly, placing a deep dish of French cream before each one of the ladies.

The children stared aghast at such partiality, and then looked at each other, wondering if they would have had ice cream, had they not eaten the cakes.

At the discovery that no cakes or jam were to be served at that tea, Jim silently disappeared from the friendly portières, and soon after appeared in the culinary department, watching for an opportunity to snatch a slice of bread and butter when his mammy's back was turned. And, oh joy! An apple was right there by the homely chunk of bread. In another moment Jim and the apple were gone, and when mammy turned to put the apple in the barrel, the place knew it no more!

CHAPTER III – MARTHA CUSTIS' STORY

Many eager eyes opened the following morning to a dismal sight. Rain fell as if it meant to wash away everything on top of the earth. It continued to rain all morning, and it thus behooved the ladies to provide amusement indoors for the active children.

“I think I will read another chapter of Washington’s life,” suggested Mrs. Parke.

“Read a quiet, uneventful chapter,” hinted Mrs. Davis.

“Read about the battle of Bunker Hill!” cried George.

“On a dreary day like this we ought to read about the dying of the first child of Martha Custis and then later, the death-bed scene of Colonel Custis. Then we can fill in time with reading of Mrs. Custis’ life with her two remaining children after she was widowed,” ventured Mrs. Parke.

But the objections violently raised against such mournful readings, soon quieted both ladies and led them to see the wisdom of a more active tale for that day.

“If you do not care to hear me read of Martha Custis’ bereavement perhaps you will like to hear of her second marriage?” said Mrs. Parke, turning over the pages of the book slowly.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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