

***Janice Meredith***

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**1900**

**By**

***Paul Leicester Ford***

Wallack's  
Theatre  
100th Performance

Mary Mannering  
as  
Janice Meredith

February 15th  
1901

*Janice Meredith*  
Volume I.

Books by Mr. Ford

The Honorable Peter Stirling  
The Great K & A Train Robbery  
The Story of an Untold Love  
The True George Washington  
Tattle-Tales of Cupid  
The Many-Sided Franklin

The New England Primer

[Illustration: Janice Meredith (Miniature  
in color)]

Janice Meredith

A Story of the  
American Revolution

*by*

Paul Leicester Ford

*Author of "The Honorable Peter Stirling"*

*With a Miniature by* Lillie V. O'Ryan  
and numerous Scenes from the Play

Mary Mannering Edition

To George W. Vanderbilt

My dear George:

Into the warp and woof of every book an author weaves much that even the subtlest readers cannot suspect, far less discern. To them it is but a cross and pile of threads interlaced to form a pattern which may please or displease their taste. But to the writer every filament has its own association: How each bit of silk or wool, flax or tow, was laboriously gathered, or was blown to him; when each was spun by the wheel of his fancy into yarns; the colour and tint his imagination gave to each skein; and where each was finally woven into the fabric by the shuttle of his pen. No thread ever quite detaches itself from its growth and spinning, dyeing and weaving, and each draws him back to hours and places seemingly unrelated to the work.

And so, as I have read the proofs of this

book I have found more than once that the pages have faded out of sight and in their stead I have seen Mount Pisgah and the French Broad River, or the ramp and terrace of Biltmore House, just as I saw them when writing the words which served to recall them to me. With the visions, too, has come a recurrence to our long talks, our work among the books, our games of chess, our cups of tea, our walks, our rides, and our drives. It is therefore a pleasure to me that the book so naturally gravitates to you, and that I may make it a remembrance of those past weeks of companionship, and an earnest of the present affection of

PAUL LEICESTER FORD

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## Volume I.

Janice Meredith (Miniature in color)

"'T is sunrise at Greenwood"

"Nay, give me the churn"

"The British ran"

"It flatters thee"

"You set me free"

"The prisoner is gone"

"Here's to the prettiest damsel"

"I'm the prisoner"

"Trenton is unguarded. Advance"

"He'd make a proper husband"

"Stay and take his place, Colonel"

"Thou art my soldier"

"'T is to rescue thee, Janice"

## Volume II.

George Washington (In color)

"There's no safety for thee"

"The despatch!"

"Who are you?"

"Art comfotable, Janice?"

“Where is that paper?”

“Victory”

“Washington has crossed the Delaware!”

“I love you for your honesty, Janice”

“Don’t move!”

“Have I won?”

“Where are you going?”

**JANICE MEREDITH**

**A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION**

**VOLUME I**

**A HEROINE OF MANY POSSIBILITIES**

*"Alonzo now once more found himself upon an element that had twice proved destructive to his happiness, but Neptune was propitious, and with gentle breezes wafted him toward his haven of bliss, toward Amaryllis. Alas, when but one day from happiness, a Moorish zebec—"*

*"Janice!" called a voice.*

The effect on the reader and her listener, both of whom were sitting on the floor, was instantaneous. Each started and sat rigidly intent for a moment; then, as the sound of approaching footsteps became audible, one girl hastily slipped a little volume under the counterpane of the bed, while the other sprang to her feet, and in a

hurried, flustered way pretended to be getting something out of a tall wardrobe.

Before the one who hid the book had time to rise, a woman of fifty entered the room, and after a glance, cried—

“Janice Meredith! How often have I told thee that it is ungenteel for a female to repose on the floor?”

“Very often, mommy,” said Janice, rising meekly, meantime casting a quick glance at the bed, to see how far its smoothness had been disturbed.

“And still thee continues such unbecoming and vastly indelicate behaviour.”

“Oh, mommy, but it is so nice!” cried the girl. “Did n’t you like to sit on the floor when you were fifteen?”

“Janice, thou ’t more careless every day in bed-making,” ejaculated Mrs. Meredith, making a sudden dive toward the bed, as if she desired to escape the question. She smoothed the gay

patchwork quilt, seemed to feel something underneath, and the next moment pulled out the hidden volume, which was bound, as the bookseller's advertisements phrased it, in "half calf, neat, marbled sides." One stern glance she gave the two red-faced culprits, and, opening the book, read out in a voice that was in itself an impeachment, "The Adventures of Alonzo and Amaryllis!"

There was an instant's silence, full of omen to the culprits, and then Mrs. Meredith's wrath found vent.

"Janice Meredith!" she cried. "On a Sabbath morning, when thee shouldst be setting thy thoughts in a fit order for church! And thou, Tabitha Drinker!"

"It 's all my fault, Mrs. Meredith," hurriedly asserted Tabitha. "I brought the book with me from Trenton, and 't was I suggested that we go on reading this morning."

"Six hours of spinet practice thou shalt

have to-morrow, miss," announced Mrs. Meredith to her daughter, "and this afternoon thou shalt say over the whole catechism. As for thee, Tabitha, I shall feel it my duty to write thy father of his daughter's conduct. Now hurry and make ready for church." And Mrs. Meredith started to leave the room.

"Oh, mommy," cried Janice, springing forward and laying a detaining hand on her mother's arm in an imploring manner, "punish me as much as you please,—I know 't was very, very wicked,—but don't take the book away! He and Amaryllis were just—"

"Not another sight shalt thou have of it, miss. My daughter reading novels, indeed!" and Mrs. Meredith departed, holding the evil book gingerly between her fingers, much as one might carry something that was liable to soil one's hands.

The two girls looked at each other,

Tabitha with a woebegone expression, and Janice with an odd one, which might mean many things. The flushed cheeks were perhaps due to guilt, but the tightly clinched little fists were certainly due to anger, and, noting these two only, one would have safely affirmed that Janice Meredith, meekly as she had taken her mother's scolding, had a quick and hot temper. But the eyes were fairly starry with some emotion, certainly not anger, and though the lips were pressed tightly together, the feeling that had set them so rigidly was but a passing one, for suddenly the corners twitched, the straight lines bent into curves, and flinging herself upon the tall four-poster bedstead, Miss Meredith laughed as only fifteen can laugh.

"Oh, Tibbie, Tibbie," she presently managed to articulate, "if you look like that I shall die," and as the god of Momus once more seized her, she

dragged the quilt into a rumpled pile, and buried her face in it, as if indeed attempting to suffocate herself.

“But, Janice, to think that we shall never know how it ended! I could n’t sleep last night for hours, because I was so afraid that Amaryllis would n’t have the opportunity to vindicate herself to—and ‘t would have been finished in another day.”

“And a proper punishment for naughty Tibbie Drinker it is,” declared Miss Meredith, sitting up and assuming a judicially severe manner. “What do you mean, miss, by tempting good little Janice Meredith into reading a wicked romance on Sunday?”

““Good little Janice!”” cried Tibbie, contemptuously. “I could slap thee for that.” But instead she threw her arms about Janice’s neck and kissed her with such rapture and energy as to overbalance the judge from an upright

position, and the two roiled over upon the bed laughing with anything but discretion, considering the nearness of their mentor. As a result a voice from a distance called sharply—

“Janice!”

“O gemini!” cried the owner of that name, springing off the bed and beginning to unfasten her gown,—an example promptly followed by her roommate.

“Art thou dressing, child?” called the voice, after a pause.

“Yes, mommy,” answered Janice. Then she turned to her friend and asked, “Shall I wear my light chintz and kenton kerchief, or my purple and white striped Persian?”

“Sufficiently smart for a country lass, Jan,” cried her friend.

“Don’t call me country bred, Tibbie Drinker, just because you are a modish city girl.”

“And why not thy blue shalloon?”

“’T is vastly unbecoming.”

“Janice Meredith! Can’t thee let the men alone?”

“I will when they will,” airily laughed the girl.

“Do unto others—” quoted Tabitha.

“Then I will when thee sets me an example,” retorted Janice, making a deep curtsey, the absence of drapery and bodice revealing the straightness and suppleness of the slender rounded figure, which still had as much of the child as of the woman in its lines.

“Little thought they get from me,” cried Tabitha, with a toss of her head.

“Tell me where is fancy bred,  
In the heart or in the head?”

hummed Janice. “Of course, one does n’t think about men, Mistress Tabitha. One feels.” Which remark showed perception of a feminine truth far in advance of Miss Meredith’s years.

“Unfeeling Janice!”

“‘T is a good thing for the oafs and ploughboys of Brunswick. For there are none better.”

“Philemon Hennion?”

““Your servant, marms,”” mimicked Janice, catching up a hair brush and taking it from her head as if it were a hat, while making a bow with her feet widely spread. ““Having nothing better ter do, I’ve made bold ter come over ter drink a dish of tea with you.”” The girl put the brush under her arm, still further spread her feet, put her hands behind some pretended coat-tails, let the brush slip from under her arms, so that it fell to the floor with a racket, stooped with an affectation of clumsiness which seemed impossible to the lithe figure, while mumbling something inarticulate in an apparent paroxysm of embarrassment,—which quickly became a genuine inability to speak from laughter.

“Janice, thee should turn actress.”

“Oh, Tibbie, lace my bodice quickly, or I shall burst of laughing,” breathlessly begged the girl.

“Janice,” said her mother, entering, “how often must I tell thee that giggling is missish? Stop, this moment.”

“Yes, mommy,” gasped Janice. Then she added, after a shriek and a wriggle, “Don’t, Tabitha!”

“What ails thee now, child? Art going to have an attack of the megrims?”

“When Tibbie laces me up she always tickles me, because she knows I’m dreadfully ticklish.”

“I can’t ever make the edges of the bodice meet, so I tickle to make her squirm,” explained Miss Drinker.

“Go on with thy own dressing, Tabitha,” ordered Mrs. Meredith, taking the strings from her hand. “Now breathe out, Janice.”

Miss Meredith drew a long breath, and

then expelled it, instant advantage being taken by her mother to strain the strings. "Again," she said, holding all that had been gained, and the operation was repeated, this time the edges of the frock meeting across the back.

"It hurts," complained the owner of the waist, panting, while the upper part of her bust rose and fell rapidly in an attempt to make up for the crushing of the lower lungs.

"I lose all patience with thee, Janice," cried her mother. "Here when thou hast been given by Providence a waist that would be the envy of any York woman, that thou shouldst object to clothes made to set it off to a proper advantage."

"It hurts all the same," reiterated Janice; "and last year I could beat Jacky Whitehead, but now when I try to run in my new frocks I come nigh to dying of breathlessness."

"I should hope so!" exclaimed her

mother. "A female of fifteen run with a boy, indeed! The very idea is indelicate. Now, as soon as thou hast put on thy slippers and goloe-shoes, go to thy father, who has been told of thy misbehaviour, and who will reprove thee for it." And with this last damper on the "lightness of young people," as Mrs. Meredith phrased it, she once more left the room. It is a regrettable fact that Miss Janice, who had looked the picture of submission as her mother spoke, made a mouth, which was far from respectful, at the departing figure.

"Oh, Janice," said Tabitha, "will he be very severe?"

"Severe?" laughed Janice. "If dear dadda is really angry, I'll let tears come into my eyes, and then he'll say he's sorry he hurt my feelings, and kiss me; but if he's only doing it to please mommy, I'll let my eyes shine, and then he'll laugh and tell me to kiss him. Oh, Tibbie, what a nice

time we could have if women were only as easy to manage as men!" With this parting regret, Miss Meredith sallied forth to receive the expected reproof.

The lecture or kiss received,—and a sight of Miss Meredith would have led the casual observer to opine that the latter was the form of punishment adopted,—the two girls mounted into the big, lumbering coach along with their elders, and were jolted and shaken over the four miles of ill-made road that separated Greenwood, the "seat," as the "New York Gazette" termed it, of the Honourable Lambert Meredith, from the village of Brunswick, New Jersey. Either this shaking, or something else, put the two maidens in a mood quite unbecoming the day, for in the moment they tarried outside the church while the coach was being placed in the shed, Miss Drinker's face was frowning, and once again Miss Meredith's nails were dug deep into the

little palms of her hands.

“Yes,” Janice whispered. “She put it in the fire. Dadda saw her.”

“And we’ll never know if Amaryllis explained that she had ever loved him,” groaned Tabitha.

“If ever I get the chance!” remarked Janice, suggestively.

“Oh, Jan!” cried Tabitha, ecstatically. “Would n’t it be delightful to be loved by a peasant, and to find he was a prince and that he had disguised himself to test thy love?”

“’T would be better fun to know he was a prince and torture him by pretending you did n’t care for him,” replied Janice. “Men are so teasable.”

“There’s Philemon Hennion doffing his hat to us, Jan.”

“The great big gawk!” exclaimed Janice. “Does he want another dish of tea?” A question which set both girls laughing.

“Janice! Tabitha!” rebuked Mrs.

Meredith. "Don't be flippant on the Sabbath."

The two faces assumed demureness, and, filing into the Presbyterian meeting-house, their owners apparently gave strict heed to a sermon of the Rev. Alexander McClave, which was later issued from the press of Isaac Collins, at Burlington, under the title of:—

"The Doleful State of the Damned, Especially such as go to Hell from under the Gospel."

## **II**

### **THE PRINCE FROM OVER THE SEAS**

Across the water sounded the bells of Christ Church as the anchor of the brig "Boscawen," ninety days out from Cork Harbour, fell with a splash into the Delaware River in the fifteenth year of the reign of George III., and of grace, 1774. To those on board, the chimes brought the first intimation that it was Sunday, for three months at sea with nothing to mark one day from another deranges the calendar of all but the most heedful. Among the uncouth and ill-garbed crowd that pressed against the waist-boards of the brig, looking with curious eyes toward Philadelphia, several, as the sound of the bells was heard, might have been observed to cross themselves, while one or two of the women began to tell their beads, praying perhaps that the breadth of the just-crossed Atlantic lay between them and

the privation and want which had forced emigration upon them, but more likely giving thanks that the dangers and suffering of the voyage were over.

Scarcely had the anchor splashed, and before the circling ripples it started had spread a hundred feet, when a small boat put off from one of the wharfs lining the water front of the city, with the newly arrived ship as an evident destination; and the brig had barely swung to the current when the hoarse voice of the mate was heard ordering the ladder over the side. The preparation to receive the boat drew the attention of the crowd, and they stared at its occupants with an intentness which implied some deeper interest than mere curiosity; low words were exchanged, and some of the poor frightened creatures seemed to take on a greater cringe.

[Illustration: "'T is sunrise at Greenwood."]

Seated in the sternsheets of the approaching boat was a plainly dressed man, whose appearance so bespoke the mercantile class that it hardly needed the doffing of the captain's cap and his obsequious "your servant, Mr. Cauldwell, and good health to you," as the man clambered on board, to announce the owner of the ship. To the emigrants this sudden deference was a revelation concerning the cruel and oath-using tyrant at whose mercy they had been during the weary weeks at sea.

"A long voyage ye've made of it, Captain Caine," said the merchant.

"Ay, sir," answered the captain. "Another ten days would have put us short of water, and—"

"But not of rum? Eh?" interrupted Cauldwell.

"As for that," replied the captain, "there's a bottle or two that's rolled itself till 't is cruelty not to drink it, and if you'll test

a noggin in the cabin while taking a look at the manifests—

“Well answered,” cried the merchant, adding, “I see ye set deep.”

“Ay,” said the captain as they went toward the companion-way; “too deep for speed or safety, but the factors care little for sailors’ lives.”

“And a deep ship makes a deep purse.”

“Or a deep grave.”

“Wouldst die ashore, man?”

“God forbid!” ejaculated the mariner, in a frightened voice. “I’ve had my share of ill-luck without lying in the cold ground. The very thought goes through me like a dash of spray in a winter v’y’ge.” He stamped with his foot and roared out, “Forrard there: Two glasses and a dipper from the rundlet,” at the same time opening a locker and taking therefrom a squat bottle. “’T is enough to make a man bowse himself kissing black Betty to think of being under ground.” He held the

black bottle firmly, as if it were in fact a sailor's life preserver from such a fate, and hastened, so soon as the cabin-boy appeared with the glasses and dipper, to mix two glasses of rum and water. Setting these on the table, he took from the locker a bundle of papers, and handed it to the merchant.

Twenty minutes were spent on the clearances and manifests, and then Mr. Cauldwell opened yet another paper.

"Sixty-two in all," he said, with a certain satisfaction in his voice.

"Sixty-three," corrected the captain.

"Not by the list," denied the merchant.

"Sixty-two from Cork Harbour, but we took one aboard ship at Bristol," explained the captain.

"Ye must pack them close between decks."

"Ay. The shoats in the long boat had more room. Mr. Bull-dog would none of it, but slept on deck the whole v'y'ge."

“Mr. Bull-dog?” queried Cauldwell.

“The one your factor shipped at Bristol,” explained Caine, and running over the bundle, he spread before the merchant the following paper:—

*This Indenture, Made the Tenth Day of March in the fifteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third King of Great Britain, etc. And in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and seventy-four, Between Charles Fownes of Bath in the County of Somerset Labourer of the one Part, and Frederick Caine of Bristol Mariner of the other part Witnesseth That the said Charles Fownes for the Consideration hereinafter mentioned, hath, and by these Presents doth Covenant, Grant and Agree to, and with the said Frederick Caine, his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, That the said Charles Fownes shall and will, as a Faithful Covenant Servant well and truly serve said*

*Frederick Caine his Executors,  
Administrators or Assigns, in the  
Plantations of Pennsylvania and New  
Jersey beyond the Seas, for the space of  
five years next ensuing the Arrival in the  
said Plantation, in the Employment of a  
servant. And the said Charles Fownes  
doth hereby Covenant and declare  
himself, now to be of the age of Twenty-  
one Years and no Covenant or Contract  
Servant to any Person or Persons. And  
the said Frederick Caine for himself his  
Executors, and Assigns, in Consideration  
thereof do hereby Covenant, Promise and  
Agree to and with the said Charles  
Fownes his Executors and  
Administrators, that he the said Frederick  
Caine his Executors, Administrators or  
Assigns, shall and will at his or their own  
proper Cost and Charges, with what  
Convenient Speed they may, carry and  
convey or cause to be carried and  
conveyed over unto the said Plantations,*

*the said Charles Fownes and also during the said Term, shall and will at the like Cost and Charges, provide and allow the said Charles Fownes all necessary Cloaths, Meat, Drink, Washing, and Lodging, and Fitting and Convenient for him as Covenant Servants in such Cases are usually provided for and allowed. And for the true Performance of the Premises, the said Parties to these Presents, bind themselves their Executors and Administrators, the either to the other, in the Penal Sum of Thirty Pounds Sterling, by these Presents. In Witness whereof they have hereunto interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year above written.*

*The mark of  
Charles X Fownes [Seal].*

*Sealed and delivered in  
the presence of  
J. Pattison, C. Capon.*

*These are to certify that the above-*

*named Charles Fownes came before me Thomas Pattison Deputy to the Patentee at Bristol the Day and Year above written, and declared himself to be no Covenant nor Contracted Servant to any Person or Persons, to be of the Age of Twenty-one Years, not kidnapped nor enticed but desirous to serve the above-named or his assigns five Years, according to the Tenor of his Indenture above written All of which is Registered in the office for that Purpose appointed by the Letters Patents. In witness whereof I have affixed the common Seal of the said office.*

*Thomas Pattison, D. P.*

“And why Mr. Bull-dog?” asked Cauldwell, after a glance at the paper.

“By the airs he takes. Odd’s life! if we’d had the Duke of Cumberland aboard, he’d not have carried himself the stiffer. From the day we shipped him, not so much as a word has he passed with one

of us, save to threat Mr. Higgins' life, when he knocked him down with a belaying pin for his da—for his impertinence. And he nothing but an indentured servant not able to write his name and like as not with a sheriff at his heels." The captain's sudden volubility could mean either dislike or mere curiosity.

"Dost think he's of the wrong colour?" asked the merchant, looking with more interest at the covenant.

"'T is the dev—'t is beyond me to say what he is. A good man at the ropes, but a da—a Dutchman for company. 'Twixt he and the bog-trotters we shipped at Cork Harbour 't was the dev—'t was the scuttiest lot I ever took aboard ship." The rum was getting into the captain's tongue, and making his usual vocabulary difficult to keep under.

"Have ye no artisans among the Irish?"

"Not so much as one who knows the

differ between his two hands.”

“’T is too bad of Gorman not to pick better,” growled the merchant. “There’s a great demand for Western settlers, and Mr. Lambert Meredith writes me to pick him up a good man at horses and gardening, without stinting the price. ’T would be something to me to oblige him.”

’T is a parcel of raw teagues except for the Bristol man.”

“And ye think he’s of the light-fingered gentry?”

“As for that,” said the captain, “I know nothing about him. But he came to your factor and wanted to take the first ship that cleared, and seemed in such a mortal pother that Mr. Horsley suspicioned something, and gave me a slant to look out for him. And all the time we lay off Bristol, my fine fellow kept himself well out of sight.”

“Come,” said the merchant, rising, “we’ll

have a look at him. Mr. Meredith is not a man to be disappointed if it can be avoided."

Once on deck the captain led the way to the forepart of the ship, where, standing by himself, and, like the other emigrants, looking over the rail, but, unlike them, looking not at the city, but at the water, stood a fellow of a little over medium height, with broad shoulders and a well-shaped back, despite the ill form his ragged coat tried to give it. At a slap on the shoulder he turned about, showing to the merchant a ruddy, sea-tanned skin, light brown hair, gray eyes, and a chin and mouth hidden by a two months' beard, still too bristly to give him other than an unkempt, boorish look.

"Here 's the rogue," announced the captain, with a suggestion of challenge in the speech, as if he would like to have the epithet resented. But the man only regarded the officer with steady,

inexpressive eyes.

“Now, my good fellow,” asked the merchant, “to what kind of work have ye been bred?”

The steady gray eyes were turned deliberately from the captain until the questioner was within their vision. Then, after a moment’s scrutiny of his face, they were slowly dropped so as to take in the merchant from head to foot. Finally they came back to the face again, and once more studied it with intentness, though apparently without the slightest interest.

“Come,” said the merchant a little heatedly, and flushing at the man’s coolness. “Answer me. Are ye used to horses and gardening?”

As if he had not heard the question, the man turned, and resumed his staring at the water.

“None of your damned impertinence!” roared the captain, catching up the free

part of a halyard coiled on the deck, "or I'll give you a taste of the rope's end."

The young fellow faced about in sudden passion, which strangely altered him.

"Strike me at your peril!" he challenged, his arm drawn back, and fist clinched for a blow.

"None but a jail-bird would be so afraid of telling about himself," cried the captain, though ceasing to threaten. "The best thing you can do will be to turn the cursed son of a sea cook over to the authorities, Mr. Cauldwell."

"Look ye, my man," warned the merchant, "ye only bring suspicion on yourself by such conduct, and ye know best how far ye want to have your past searched into—"

The man interrupted the merchant.

"Ar bain't much usen to gardening, but ar knows—" he hesitated for a moment and then went on, "but ar bai willin' to work."

“Ay,” bawled the captain. “Fear of the courts has made him find his tongue.”

“Well,” remarked the merchant, “’t is not for my interest to look too closely at a man I have for sale.” Then, as he walked away with the captain, he continued:

“Many a convict or fugitive has come to the straightabout out here, but hang me if I like his looks or his manner. However, Mr. Meredith knows the pot-luck of redemptioners as well as I, and he can say nay if he chooses.” He stopped and eyed the group of emigrants sourly, saying, “I’ll let Gorman hear what I think of his shipment. He knows I don’t want mere bog cattle.”

“’T is a poor consignment that can’t be bettered in the advertisement,” comforted the captain, and apparently he spoke truly, for in the “Pennsylvania Gazette” of September 7th appeared the following:—

*“Just arrived on board the brig*

*'Boscawen,' Alexander Caine, Master from Ireland, a number of likely, healthy, men and women Servants; among whom are Taylors, Barbers, Foiners, Weavers, Shoemakers, Sewers, Labourers, etc., etc., whose indentures are to be disposed of by Cauldwell & Wilson, or the master on board the Vessel off Market Street Wharff— Said Cauldwall & Wilson will give the highest prices for good Pot-Ashes and Bees-Wax."*

### **III**

## **MISS MEREDITH DISCOVERS A VILLAIN**

Breakfast at Greenwood was a pleasant meal at a pleasant hour. For some time previous to it, the family were up and doing, Mr. Meredith riding over his farm directing his labourers, Mrs. Meredith giving a like supervision to her housekeeping, and Janice, attired in a wash dress well covered by a vast apron, with the aid of her guest, making the beds, tidying the parlour, and not unlikely mixing cake or some dessert in the kitchen. Before the meal, Mr. Meredith replaced his rough riding coat by one of broadcloth, with lace ruffles, while the working gowns of the ladies were discarded for others of silk, made, in the parlance of the time, "sack fashion, or without waist, and termed "an elegant *négligée*,"— this word being applied to

any frock without lacing strings.

Thus clothed, they gathered at seven o'clock in the pleasant, low-ceiled dining-room whose French windows, facing westward, gave glimpses of the Raritan, over fields of stubble and corn-stacks, broken by patches of timber and orchard. On the table stood a tea service of silver, slender in outline, and curiously light in weight, though generous in capacity. Otherwise, a silver tankard for beer, standing at Mr. Meredith's place beside a stone jug filled with home brew, balanced by another jug filled with buttermilk, was all that tended to decoration, the knives and forks being of steel, and the china simplicity itself. For the edibles, a couple of smoked herring, a comb of honey, and a bunch of water-cress, re-enforced after the family had taken their seals by a form of smoking cornbread, was the simple fare set forth. But the early rising, and two hours of work, brought hunger

to the table which required nothing more elaborate as a fillip to tempt the appetite.

While the family still lingered over the meal one warm September morning, as if loth to make further exertion in the growing heat, the Sound of a knocker was heard, and a moment later the coloured maid returned and announced:

—

“Marse Hennion want see Marse Meredith.”

“Bring him in here, Peg,” said Mr. Meredith. “Like as not the lad ’s not breakfasted.”

Janice hunched her shoulders and remarked, “Never fear that Master Hennion is not hungry. He is like the roaring lion, who ‘walketh about seeking whom he may devour.’”

“Black shame on thee, Janice Meredith, for applying the Holy Word to carnal things,” cried her mother.

“Then let me read novels,” muttered

Miss Meredith, but so indistinctly as not to be understood.

“Be still, child!” commanded her mother.

“And listen to Philemon glub-glub-bing over his victuals?”

“Philemon is no pig,” declared Mrs. Meredith.

“No,” assented Janice. “He ’s too old for that,”—a remark which set Mr. Meredith off into an uproarious haw-haw.

“Lambert,” protested his wife, “I lose patience with thee for encouraging this stiff-necked and wayward girl, when she should be thankful that Providence has made one man who wants so saucy a Miss Prat-a-pace for a wife.”

Miss Meredith, evidently encouraged by her father’s humour, made a mouth, and droned in a sing-song voice: ““What doth every sin deserve? Every sin deserveth God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.”” Such a desecration of the Westminster Assembly

of Divines' "Shorter Catechism" would doubtless have produced further and severer reproof from Mrs. Meredith, but the censure was prevented by the clump of heavy boots, followed by the entrance of an over-tall, loosely-built fellow of about eighteen years, whose clothes rather hung about than fitted him.

"Your servant, marms," was his greeting, as he struggled to make a bow. "Your servant, squire. Mr. Hitchins, down ter Trenton, where I went yestere'en with a bale of shearings, asked me ter come araound your way with a letter an' a bond-servant that come ter him on a hay-sloop from Philadelphia. So—"

"Having nothing better to do, you came?" interrupted Janice, with a gravely courteous manner.

"That 's it, Miss Janice; I'm obleeged ter you for sayin' it better nor I could," said the young fellow, gratefully, while manifestly straining to get a letter from

his pocket.

“Hast breakfasted, Phil?” asked the squire.

Producing the letter with terrible effort, and handing it to Mr. Meredith, Hennion began, “As for that—”

Here Janice interrupted by saying, “You breakfasted in Trenton—what a pity!”

“Janice!” snapped her mother, warningly. “Cease thy clack and set a chair for Philemon this instant.”

That individual tried to help the girl, but he was not quick enough, except to get awkwardly in the way, and bring his shins in sharp contact with the edge of the chair. Uttering an exclamation of pain, he dropped his hat,—a proceeding which set the two girls off into ill-suppressed giggles. But finally, relieved of his tormenting head-gear, he was safely seated, and Janice set the dishes in front of him, from all of which he helped himself liberally. Meanwhile, the squire

broke the seal of the letter and began to read it.

“Wilt have tea or home brew?” asked Mrs. Meredith.

“Beer for me, marm, thank you. An’ I think it only kindly ter say I've hearn talk concernin’ your tea drinkin’.”

“Let ‘em talk,” muttered the squire, angrily, looking up from the letter. “‘T is nothing to me.”

“But Joe Bagby says there ‘s a scheme ter git the committee of Brunswick township ter take it up.”

“Not they,” fumed Mr. Meredith. “‘T is one thing to write anonymous letters, but quite another matter to stand up and be counted. As for that scamp Joe—”

“Anonymous letters?” questioned Philemon.

“Ay,” sputtered the squire, taking from his pocket a paper which he at once crushed into a ball, and then as promptly smoothed out again as a preliminary to

handing it to the youth. With difficulty, for the writing was bad, and the paper old and dirty, Philemon read out the following:—

*Mister Muridith,—*

*Noing that agenst the centymments of younited Amurika you still kontiyou to youse tea, thairfor, this is to worn you that we konsider you as an enemy of our kuntry, and if the same praktises are kontinyoud, you will shortly receeve a visit from the kommitty of*

*Tar And Fethers,  
Brunswick Township.*

“The villains!” cried Janice, flushing.

“Who can have dared to send it?”

“One of my tenants, like as not,” snapped the squire.

“They ’d never dare,” asserted Janice.

“Dare!” cried the squire. “What daring does it take to write unsigned threats and nail ’em at night on a door? They get more lawless every day, with their

committees and town meetings and mobs. 'T is next to impossible to make 'em pay their rents now, and to hear 'em talk ye'd conclude that they owned their farms and could not be turned off. A pretty state of things when a man with twenty thousand acres under leaseholds has to beg for his rentals, and then does n't get 'em."

"You 'd find it easier ter git your rents, squire, if you only sided more with folks, an' wa'n't so stiff," suggested the youth. "A little yieldin' now an' then—"

"Never!" roared Mr. Meredith. "I'll have no Committee of Correspondence, nor Sons of Liberty, nor Town Meeting telling me what I may do or not do at Greenwood, any more than I let the ragtag and bobtail tell me what I was to buy in '69. Till I say nay, tea is drunk at Greenwood," and the squire's fist came down on the table with a bang.

"Folks say that Congress will shut up the

ports," said the young man.

"Ay. And British frigates will open 'em. The people are mad, sir, Bedlam mad, with the idea of liberty, as they call it. Liberty, indeed! when they try to say what a man shall do in his own house; what he shall eat; what he shall wear. And this Congress! We, A and B, elect C to say what the rest of the alphabet shall do, under penalty of tar and feathers, burned ricks, or—don't talk to me, sir, of a Congress. 'T is but an attempt of the mobility to override the nobility of this land, sir. Once again the plates rattled on the table from the squire's fist, and it became evident that if Miss Meredith had a temper it came by inheritance.

"Now, Lambert," interposed his wife, "stop banging the table and getting hot about nothing. Remember how thee hadst the colonies ruined in Stamp Act times, and again during the Association, and it all went over, just as this will. Pour

thy father another tankard of small beer, Janice."

Clearly, what the Committee of Correspondence, and even the approaching Congress could not do, Mrs. Meredith could, for the squire settled back quietly into his chair, took a long swallow of beer, and resumed his letter.

"What does Mr. Cauldwell say, dadda?" inquired the daughter.

"Hmm," said Mr. Meredith. "That he sends me the likeliest one from his last shipment. What sort of fellow is he, Phil?"

Hennion paused to swallow an over-large mouthful, which almost produced a choking fit, before he could reply. "He han't a civil word about him, squire—a regular sullen dog."

"Cauldwell writes guardedly, saying it was the best he could do. Where d' ye leave him, lad?"

"Outside, in my waggon."

“Peg, bid him to come in. We’ll have a look at—” Mr. Meredith consulted the covenant enclosed and read, “Charles Fownes heigh?”

A moment later, preceded by the maid, Fownes entered. He took a quick, almost furtive, survey of the room, then glanced in succession at each of those seated about the table, till his eyes rested on Janice. There they fixed themselves in a bold, unconcealed scrutiny, to the no small embarrassment of the maiden, though the man himself stood in an easy, unconstrained attitude, quite unheeding the five pairs of eyes staring at him, or, if conscious, entirely unembarrassed by them.

“Well, Charles, Mr. Cauldwell writes me that ye don’t know much about horses or gardening, but he thinks ye have parts and can pick it up quickly.”

Still keeping his eyes on Miss Meredith, Fownes nodded his head, with a short,

quick jerk, far from respectful.

"But he also says ye are a surly, hot-tempered fellow, who may need a touch of a whip now and again."

Without turning his head, a second time the man gave a jerk of it, conveying an idea of assent, but it was the assent of contempt far more than of accord.

"Come, come," ordered the squire, testily. "Let 's have a sound of your tongue. Is Mr. Cauldwell right?"

Still looking at Miss Meredith, the man shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "Bain't vor the bikes of ar to zay Mister Cauldwell bai a liar." Yet the voice and manner left little doubt in the hearers as to the speaker's private opinion, and Janice laughed, partly at the implication, but more in nervousness.

"What kind of work are ye used to?" asked Mr. Meredith.

The man hesitated for a moment and then muttered crossly, "Ar indentured vor

to work, not to bai questioned."

"Then work ye shall have," cried the squire, hotly. "Peg, show him the stable, and tell Tom—"

"One moment, Lambert," interjected his wife, and then she asked, "Hast thou had breakfast, Charles?"

Fownes shook his head sullenly.

"Take him to the kitchen and give him some at once, Peg," ordered Mrs. Meredith.

For the first time the fellow looked away from Janice, fixing his eyes on Mrs. Meredith. Then he bowed easily and gracefully, saying, "Thank you."

Apparently unconscious that for a moment he had left the Somerset burr off his tongue and the rustic pretence from his manner, he followed Peg to the kitchen.

If he were unconscious of the slip, it was more than were his auditors, and for a moment they all exchanged glances in

silent bewilderment.

“Humph!” finally growled the squire. “I like the look of him still less.”

“He holds himself like a gentleman,” asserted Tabitha.

“This fellow will need close watching,” predicted Mr. Meredith. “He ’s no yokel. He moves like a gentleman or a house-servant. Yet he had to make his mark on the covenant.”

“I think, dadda,” said Miss Meredith, in her most calmly judicial manner, “that the new man is a born villain, and has committed some terrible crime. He has a horrid, wicked face, and he stares just as—as—so that one wants to shiver.”

Mrs. Meredith rose. “Janice,” she chided, “thou ’t too young to make thy opinions of the slightest value. Go to thy spinet, child, and don’t let me hear any more such foolish babble. Charles has a good face, and will make a good servant.”

“I don’t care what mommy thinks,” Miss

Meredith confided to Tabitha in the parlour, as the one took her seat at an embroidery frame and the other at the spinet. "I know he's a bad man, and will end by killing one of us and stealing the silver and a horse, just as Mr. Vreeland's bond-servant did. He makes me think of the villain in 'The Tragic History of Sir Watkins Stokes and Lady Betty Artless.'"

## **IV**

### **AN APPLE OF DISCORD**

In the week following his advent the new servant was the cause of considerable discussion, and, regrettably, of not a little controversy, among the members of the household of Greenwood. The squire maintained that "the fellow is a bad-tempered, lazy, deceitful rogue, in need of much watching." Mrs. Meredith, on the contrary, invariably praised the man, and promptly suppressed her husband whenever he began to rail against him. To Janice, with the violent prejudices of youth still unmodified by experience and reason, Charles was almost a special deputy of the individual she heard so unmercifully thrashed to tatters each Sunday by the Rev. Mr. McClave. And again, to the contrary, Tabitha insisted with growing fervour that the servant

was a gentleman, possessed of all the qualities that word implied, plus the most desirable attribute of all others to eighteenth-century maidens, a romantic possibility.

As a matter of fact, these diverse and contradictory views had a crossing-point, and accepting this as their mean, Charles proved himself to be a knowing man with horses, an entirely ignorant and by no means eager labourer in the little farm work there was to do, a silent though easily angered being with every one save Mrs. Meredith, and so clearly above his station that he was viewed with disfavour, tinged by not a little fear, by house-servants, by field hands, and even by Mr. Meredith's overseer.

[Illustration: "Nay, give me the churn."]

For the most part, Fownes spoke in the West of England dialect; but whenever he became interested, this instantly slipped from him, as did his still more ineffective

attempt to move and act the rustic. Indeed, the ease of his movements and the straightness of his carriage, with a certain indefinable precision of manner, led to a common agreement among his fellow-labourers that he had earlier in life accepted the king's shilling. Granting him to be but one and twenty years of age, as his covenant stated, and as in fact he looked, his service must have been shorter than the act of Parliament allowed, and this seeming bar to their hypothesis caused many winks and shrugs over the tankards of ale consumed of an evening at the King George tavern in the village of Brunswick. Furthermore, for some months the deserter columns of such stray numbers of the "London Gazette" as occasionally drifted to the ordinary were eagerly scanned by the loungers, on the possibility that they might contain some advertisement of a fellow standing

five feet ten, with broad shoulders, light brown hair, straight nose, and gray eyes, whose whereabouts was of interest to His Majesty's War Office, Whitehall. Neither from this source, however, nor from any other, did they gain the slightest clue to the past history of the bond-servant, spy upon the fellow who would.

Nor was talk of the man limited to farm hands and tavern idlers, for dearth of new topics in the little community made him a subject of converse to the two girls during the hours of spinet practice, embroidery, and sewing, which were their daily occupations between breakfast and dinner, and, even extended into the afternoon, if the stint was not completed. Yet all their discussion brought them no nearer to agreement, Janice maintaining that Fownes was a villain *in posse*, if not *in esse*, while Tabitha contended that Charles had been disappointed in a love which he still, none the less, cherished,

and which to her mind accounted in every particular for his conduct. As such a theory allowed considerable scope to the imagination, she promptly created several romances about him, in all of which he was of noble birth, with such other desirable factors as made him a true hero; and having thus endowed him with a halo of romance, she could not find words strong enough to express her thorough-going contempt for the woman whose disregard and cruelty had driven him across the seas.

“Thee knows, Janice,” she argued, when the latter expressed scepticism, “that the Earl of Anglesey was kidnapped, and sold in Maryland, so it ’s perfectly possible for a nobleman to be a bond-servant.”

“That ’s the one case,” answered Janice, sagely.

“But things like it are very common in novels,” insisted Tabitha. “And what is more likely for a man disappointed in

love than, in desperation, to indenture himself?"

"I can easily credit a female of taste—yes, any female—refusing the ill-mannered, bold-staring rogue," said Janice, giving the coarse osnaburg shirt she was working upon a fretted jerk; "but to suppose him to be capable of a grand, devoted passion is as bad as expecting—expecting faithfulness in a dog like Clarion."

"Clarion?" questioned Tabitha.

"Yes. Have n't you seen how—how—that he—the man, has taken possession of him? Thomas says the two sneak off together every chance they get, and sometimes are n't back till eleven or twelve. I wish dadda would put a stop to it. Like as not, 't is for pilfering they are bound." Miss Meredith began anew on the buttonhole, and had she been thrusting her needle into either man or dog, she could not have sewed with a

more vicious vigour.

“That must be the way he got those rabbits for thy mother.”

“I should know he had been a poacher,” asserted Janice, as she contemptuously held up and surveyed at arms-length the completed shirt. Then she laid it aside with another, and sighed a weary, “Heigh-ho, those are done. Here I have to work my fingers to the bone making shirts for him, just because mommy says he has n’t enough clothes,”—a sentence which perhaps partly accounted for the maiden’s somewhat jaundiced view of Charles.

“Are those for him?” cried Tabitha. “Why didst thou not tell me? I would have helped thee with them.”

“You ’d have been welcome to the whole job. As it is, I’ve done them so carelessly that I know mommy will scold me. But I wasn’t going to work myself to death for him!”

“I should have loved—I like shirt-making,” fibbed Tabitha.

“And I hate it! Forty-two have I made this year, and mommy has six more cut out.”

There was a moment’s silence, and then Tabitha said, “Janice.” For some reason the name seemed to embarrass her, for the moment it was spoken she coloured.

“What?”

“Dost thee not think—perhaps—if we steal out and take the shirts to the stable, thy mother will never—?”

“Tibbie Drinker! Go out of the house in a sack? I’d as soon go out in my night-rail.”

“Thee breakfasts in a *négligée*, even when Philemon is here,” retorted Miss Drinker. “Wouldst as lief breakfast in thy shift?”

“No,” said Miss Janice, with a wicked sparkle in her eyes, “because if I did Philemon would come oftener than ever.”

“Fie upon thee, Janice Meredith!” cried

her friend, "for a forward, indelicate female."

"And why more indelicate than the men who'd come?" demanded Janice.

"Immodest words admit of no defence, For want of modesty is want of sense," quoted Miss Drinker.

"Rubbish!" scoffed Janice, but whether she was referring to the stanza of the reigning poet of the eighteenth century, or simply to Miss Tabitha's application of it, cannot be definitely known. "You know as well as I, Tibbie, that I'd rather have Philemon, or any other man, see me in my shroud than in my rail. Come, we'll change our frocks and take a walk."

A half hour later, newly clothed in light dainty gowns, cut short for walking, and which, in combination with slippers, then the invariable footgear of ladies of quality, served to display the "neatly turned ankles" that the beaux of the period so greatly admired, the girls

sallied forth. First a visit was paid to the stable, to smuggle the shirts from the criticism of Mrs. Meredith, as well as to entice Clarion's companionship for the walk. But Thomas, with a grumble, told them that Fownes had stolen away from the job that had been set for him after dinner, and that the hound had gone with him.

Their rambling walk brought the girls presently to the river, but just as they were about to force their way through the fringe of willows and underbrush which hid the water from view, a sudden loud splashing, telling of some one in swimming, gave them pause. Yelps of excitement from Clarion a moment later served to tell the two who it probably was, and the probability was instantly confirmed by the voice of Charles, saying:

“'T is sport, old man, is 't not? To get the dirt and transpiration off one! 'S

death! What a climate! 'Twixt the sun and osnaburg and fustian my skin feels as if I'd been triced up and had a round hundred."

Exchanging glances, the girls stole softly away from the bank, neither venturing to speak till out of hearing. As they retired they came upon a heap of coarse garments, and Tabitha, catching the arm of her friend, exclaimed:—

"Oh, Jan, look!"

What had caught her eye was the end of a light gold chain that appeared among the clothes, and both girls halted and gazed at it as if it possessed some quality of fascination. Then Tabitha tip-toed forward, with but too obvious a purpose.

"Tibbie!" rebuked Janice, "you shouldn't!"

"Oh, but Jan!" protested Eve, junior. "'T is such a chance!"

"Not for me," asserted Miss Meredith,

proudly virtuous, as she walked on.

If Miss Drinker had searched for a twelve-month she could scarce have found a more provoking remark than her spontaneous exclamation, "Oh! how beautiful she is!"

Janice halted, though she had the moral stamina not to turn.

"What? The chain?" she asked.

"No! The miniature," responded her interlocutor, in a tone expressing the most unbounded admiration and delight. "Such an elegant creature, Jan, and such —"

Her speech ended there, as a crashing in the bushes alarmed her, and she darted past Janice, who, infected by the guilt of her companion, likewise broke into a run, which neither ceased till they had covered a goodly distance. Then Tabitha, for want of breath, came to a stop, and allowed her friend to overtake her.

She held up the chain and miniature in

her hand. "What shall I do?" she panted.

"Tibbie, how could you?" ejaculated her horrified friend.

"His coming frightened me so that—oh, I didn't drop it!"

"You must take it back!"

"I'd never dare!"

"Black shame on—!"

"A nice creature, thou, Jan!" interrupted Miss Drinker, with a sudden carrying of the war into the enemy's camp. "To tell me to go back when he's sure to be dressing! No wonder thee makes indelicate speeches."

Miss Meredith, without deigning to reply to this shameful implication, walked away toward the house.

That Tibbie intended to shirk the consequences of her misdemeanour was only too clearly proved to Janice, when later she went to her room to prink for supper, for lying on her dressing stand was the miniature. Shocked as Miss

Meredith was at the sight, she lifted and examined the trinket.

Bred in colonial simplicity, it seemed to the maid that she had never seen anything quite so exquisite. A gold case, richly set with brilliants, encompassed the portrait of a girl of very positive beauty. After a rapt dwelling on the portrait for some minutes, further examination revealed the letters W. H. J. B. interlaced on the back.

Taking the miniature when her toilet had been perfected, Janice descended to the parlour. As she entered, Tabitha, already there, jumped up from a chair, in which, a moment previous she had been carrying on a brown study that apparently was not enjoyable, and tripped nonchalantly across the room to the spinet. Seating herself, she struck the keys, and broke out into a song entitled, "Taste Life's Glad Moments as They Glide."

Not in the least deflected from her intention, Miss Meredith marched up to the culprit, the bondsman's property in her hand, and demanded, "Dost intend to turn thief?"

"Prithee, who 's curious now?" evaded Tibbie. "I knew thee 'd look at it, for all thy airs."

"Very well, miss," threatened Janice, with much dignity. "Then I shall take it to him, and narrate to him all the circumstances."

"Tattle-tale, tattle-tale!" retorted Tabitha, scornfully.

With even greater scorn her friend turned her back, and leaving the house, walked toward the stable. This took her through the old-fashioned, hedge-begirt kitchen garden, in which flowers were grown as if they were vegetables, and vegetables were grown as if they were flowers. The moment Janice had passed within the tall row of box, her expression

of mingled haughtiness and determination ended; she came to a sudden halt, said "Oh!" and then pretended to be greatly interested in a butterfly. The bravest army can be stampeded by a surprise, and after having screwed up her spirit to the point of facing Fownes in his fortress, the stable, Miss Meredith's courage deserted her on almost stumbling over him a hundred yards nearer than she expected. So taken aback was she that all the glib explanation she had planned was forgotten, and she held out the miniature to him without a single word.

Charles had been walking to the house, and only paused at meeting Miss Meredith. He glanced at the outstretched hand, and then let his eyes come back to the girl's face, without making the slightest motion to take his property.

Tongue-tied and doubly embarrassed by his calm scrutiny, the young lady stood

with flushed cheeks, and with long black lashes dropped to hide a pair of very shamed eyes, the personification, in appearance, of guilt.

Whether the girl would have found her tongue, or would have ended the incident as she was longing to do by taking to her heels, it is impossible to say. Ere she had time to do either, the angry voice of the squire broke in upon them.

“Ho, there ye are! Twice have I looked for ye this afternoon, and I warn ye I’m not the man to take such conduct from any one, least of all from one of my own servants,” he said as he came toward the pair, the emphasis of his walking stick and his heels both telling the story of his anger. “What mean ye, fellow,” he continued, “by neglecting the work I set ye?”

Absolutely unmoved by the reproof, Charles stood as heedless of it as he had been of the outstretched hand of the

daughter, a hand which had promptly disappeared in the folds of Miss Meredith's skirt at the first sound of her father's voice.

"A taste of my walking stick ye should have if ye had your deserts!" went on the squire, now face to face with the servant.

Without taking his eyes from the girl, Charles laughed. "Is it fear of me," he challenged, "or fear of the law that prevents you?"

"What know ye of the law, sirrah?" demanded Mr. Meredith.

"Nothing, when I was fool enough to indenture myself," snapped the servant; "but Bagby tells me that 't is forbidden, under penalty of fine, for a master to strike a servant."

"Joe Bagby!" roared the squire, more angry than ever. "And how come ye to have anything to do with that scampy lawyer! Hast been up to some mischief already?"

Again the man laughed. "That is for His Majesty's Justices of the Peace to discover. Till they do, I shall maintain that I consulted him concerning the laws governing bond-servants."

"A pretty state the country 's come to!" raged the squire. "No wonder there is no governing the land, when even servants think to have the law against their masters. But, harkee, my fine fellow. If I may not punish ye myself, the Justices may order ye whipped, and unless ye change your manners I will have ye up before their next sitting. Meantime, saddle Joggles as soon as supper is done, and take this paper over to Brunswick, and post it on the proclamation board of the Town Hall. And no tarrying, and consulting of tricky lawyers, understand. If ye are not back by nine, ye shall hear from me."

Striking a sunflower with his cane as a slight vent to his anger, the master

strode away to the house.

His back turned. Janice once again held out the miniature. "Won't you please take it?" she begged.

"Art tired of it already?" jeered the man.

"I did not take it, Charles," she stammered, "but I knew of its taking and so brought it back to you."

The man shrugged his shoulders. "'T is not mine, nor is it aught to me," he said, and passing the girl, walked to the house.

# **V**

## **THE VALUE OF HAIR**

At the evening meal the farm hands and negro house-servants remarked in Fownes not merely his customary unsocial silence, but an abstraction more obvious than usual. A gird or two from the rougher of his fellow-labourers was wholly unnoted by him, and though he ate heartily, it was with such entire unconsciousness of what he was eating as to make the cook, Sukey, who was inclined to favour him, question if after all he deserved special consideration at her hands.

The meal despatched, Charles took his way to the stable, but some motive caused him to stop at the horse trough, lean over it, and examine the reflection of his face. Evidently what he saw was not gratifying, for he vainly tried to smooth down his short hair, and then

passed his hand over the scrub of his beard. "'T is said clothes make the gentleman," he muttered, "but methinks 't is really the barber. How many of the belles of the Pump Room and the Crescent would take me for other than a clodhopper? 'T was not Charles Lor— Charles what? —to whom they curtesied and ogled and smirked, 't was to a becoming wig and a smooth chin." Snapping his fingers contemptuously, he went in and began to saddle the horse.

A half-hour later, the man rode up the village street of Brunswick. Hitching Joggles to a post in front of the King George tavern, he walked to the board on the side of the Town Hall and Court House. Here, over a three months' old proclamation, he posted the anonymous note recently received by the squire, which had been wafered to a sheet of *pro patria* paper, and below which the squire had written:—

*This is to give notice that I despise too much the cowardly villain who wrote and nailed this on my door to pay any attention to him. A Reward of two pounds will be given for any information leading to the discovery of said cowardly villain.*

*Lambert Meredith.*

For a moment the servant stood with a slight smile on his face at the contradiction; then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he entered the public room of the tavern. Within the air was so thick with pipes in full blast, and the light of the two dips was so feeble, that he halted in order to distinguish the dozen figures of the occupants, all of whom gave him instant attention.

“Ar want landlord,” he said, after a pause.

“Here I be,” responded a man sitting at a small table in the corner, with two half-emptied glasses and a bowl of arrack

punch before him. Opposite to mine host was a thick-set man of about forty, attired in a brown suit and heavy top-boots, both of which bore the signs of recent travel.

The servant skirted the group at the large table in the centre of the room, and taking from his pocket a guinea, laid it on the table. "Canst 'e give change for thiccy?" he asked.

"I vum!" cried the landlord, as he picked up the coin and rang it on the table. "'T ain't often we git sight o' goold here. How much do yer want fer it?"

"Why, twenty-one shillings," replied the servant, with some surprise in his voice.

"I'll givit you dirty-two," spoke up a Jewish-looking man at the big table, hurriedly pulling out his pouch and counting down a batch of very soiled money from it, which he held out to the servant just as the landlord, too, tendered him some equally ragged bills.

“Trust Opper to give a shilling less than its worth,” jeered one of the drinkers.

“Bai thiccy money, Bagby?” questioned Charles, looking suspiciously at both tenders.

“Not much,” answered Bagby from the group about the large table, not one of whom had missed a word of the foregoing conversation. “’T is shaved beef,”—a joke which called forth not a little laughter from his companions.

“Will it buy a razor?” asked Fownes, quickly, turning to the lawyer with a smile.

“Keep it a week and ’t will shave you itself,” retorted the joker, and this allusion to the steady depreciation of the colony paper money called forth another laugh.

“Then ’t is not blunt?” responded Charles, but no one save the traveller at the small table caught the play on words, the Cockney cant term for money being

unfamiliar to American ears. He smiled, and then studied the bond-servant with more interest than he had hitherto shown.

Meanwhile, at the first mention of razor, the Jew had left the room, and he now returned, carrying a great pack, which he placed upon the table.

"Sir," he said, in an accent which proved his appearance did not belie his race, while beginning to unstrap the bundle, "I haf von be-utiful razor, uf der besd—" but here his speech was interrupted by a roar of laughter.

"You've a sharper to deal with now," laughed the joker, and another called, "Now ye'll need no razor ter be shaved."

"Chentlemen, chentlemen," protested the peddler, "haf n't I always dealt fair mit you?" He fumbled in his half-opened pack, and shoving three razors out of sight, he produced a fourth, which he held out to the servant. "Dot iss only

dree shillings, und it iss der besd of steel."

"You can trust Opper to know pretty much everything 'bout steals," sneered Bagby, who was clearly the local wit. "It 's been his business for twenty years."

"I want a sharp razor, not a razor sharp," said Charles, good-naturedly, while taking the instrument and trying its edge with his finger.

"What business hez a bond-servant tew spend money fer a razor?" demanded the tavern-keeper, for nothing then so marked the distinction between the well-bred and the unbred as the smooth faces of the one and the hairy faces of the other.

"Hasn't he a throat to cut?" demanded one of the group, "an' hasn't a covenant man reason to cut it?"

"More likes he's goin' a sparkin'," suggested one of the idlers. "The gal up ter the squire's holds herself pooty high

an' mighty, but like as not she's as plaguey fond of bundling with a good-looking man on the sly as most wenches."

"If she 's set on that, I'm her man," remarked Bagby.

"Bundling?" questioned the covenant servant. "What 's that?"

The question only produced a roar of laughter at his ignorance, during which the traveller turned to the publican and asked:—

"Who is this hind?"

"'T is a new bond-servant o' Squire Meredith's, who I hearn is no smouch on horses. Folks think he's a bloody-back who 's took French leave."

"A deserter, heigh?" said the traveller, once more looking at the man, who was now exchanging with the peddler the three-shilling note for the razor. He waited till the trade had been consummated, and then suddenly said

aloud, in a sharp, decisive way,  
“Attention! To the left—dress!

Fownes’ body suddenly stiffened itself, his hands dropped to his sides, and his head turned quickly to the left. For a second he held this position, then as suddenly relaxing himself, he turned and eyed the giver of the order.

“So ho! my man. It seems ye have carried Brown Bess,” said the traveller, giving the slang term for the musket.

Flushed in face, Fownes wheeled on the man hotly, while the whole room waited his reply in silence. “Thou liest!” he asserted.

“Thou varlet!” cried the man so insulted, flushing in turn, as he sprang to his feet and caught up from the table a heavy riding-whip.

As he did so, the bond-servant’s right hand went to his hip, as if instinctively seeking something there. The traveller’s eyes followed the impulsive gesture,

even while he, too, made a motion more instinctive than conscious, by stepping backward, as if to avoid something. This motion he checked, and said—

“No. Bond-servants don’t wear bayonets.”

Again the colour sprang to Fownes’ face, and his lips parted as if an angry retort were ready. But instead of uttering it, he turned and started to leave the room.

“Ay,” cried the traveller, “run, while there ’s time, deserter.”

Fownes faced about in the doorway, with a smile on his face not pleasant to see, it was at once so contemptuous and so lowering. Yet when he spoke there was an amused, almost merry note in his voice, as if he were enjoying something.

“Ar bain’t no more deserter than thou baist spy,” he retorted, as he left the tavern and went to where his horse was tethered. Unfastening him, he stood for a moment stroking the animal’s nose.

“Joggles,” he confided, “I fear, despite the praise the fair ones gave of my impersonation of ‘The Fashionable Lover,’ that I am not so good an actor as either Garrick or Barry. I forget, and I lose my temper. So, a bond-servant should cut his throat,” he continued, as he swung lightly into the saddle. “I fear ‘t is the only way I can go undiscovered. Fool that I was to do it in a moment of passion. Five years of slavery!” Then he laughed. “But then I’d never have seen her! Egad, if she could be painted as she looked to-day by Reynolds or Gainsborough, ‘twould set more than my blood glowing! There’s a prize, Joggles! Beauty, wealth, and freedom, all in one. She’d be worth a tilt, too, if for nothing but the sport of it. We’ll shave, make a dandy of ourselves, old man—” Then the servant paused —“and, like a fool, be recognised by some fellow like Clowes—what does he here?—but for my beard, and that he’d

scarce expect to meet Charles—" Fownes checked himself, scowling. "Charles Nothing, a poor son of a gun of a bond-servant. Have done with such idiot schemes, man," he admonished. "For what did you run, if 't was not to bury yourself? And now you 'd risk all for a petticoat." Taking from his pocket the razor, he threw it into the bushes that lined the road, saying as he did so, "Good-by, gentility."

## **VI**

### **MEN ARE DECEIVERS EVER**

The departure of the bond-servant, leaving the sting of innuendo behind him, had turned all eyes toward the traveller, and Bagby but voiced the curiosity of the roomful when he inquired, "What did Fownes call you spy for?"

"Nay, man, he called me not that," denied the stranger, "unless he meant to call himself a deserter as well. Landlord, a bowl of swizzle for the company! Gentlemen, I am Lincolnshire born and bred. My name is John Evatt, and I am travelling through the country to find a likely settling place for six solid farmers, of whom I am one. Whom did you say was yon rogue's master?"

"Squire Meredith," informed mine host, now occupied in combining the rum, spruce beer, and sugar at the large table.

“And what sort of man is he?” asked Evatt, bringing his glass from the small table and taking his seat among the rest.

“He ’s as hot-tempered an’ high an’ mighty as King George hisself,” cried one of the drinkers. “But I guess his stinkin’ pride will come down a little afore the committee of Brunswick ’s through with him.”

“Let thy teeth keep better guard over thy red rag, Zerubbabel,” rebuked Joe Bagby, warningly. “We want no rattlepates to tell us—or others—what ’s needed or doing.”

“This Meredith ’s a man of property, eh?” asked Evatt.

“He ’s been so since he married Patty Byllynge,” replied the publican. “Afore then he war n’t nothin’ but a poor young lawyer over tew Trenton.”

“And who was Patty Byllynge?”

“You don’t know much ’bout West Jersey, or I guess you ’d have heard of

her," surmised Bagby. "'T is n't every girl brings her husband a pot of money and nigh thirty thousand acres of land. Folks tell that before the squire got her, the men was about her like—" the speaker used a simile too coarse for repetition.

"So ho!" said the traveller. "Byllynge, heigh? Now I begin to understand. A daughter—or granddaughter—of one of the patentees?"

"Just so. In the old man's day they held the lands all along this side of the Raritan, nigh up to Baskinridge, but they sold a lot in the forties."

"Then perhaps this is the place to bargain about a bit? The land looked rich and warm as I rode along this afternoon."

"'T ain't no use tryin' ter buy of the new squire," remarked one man. "He won't do nothin' but lease. He don't want no freemen 'bout here."

"Yer might buy o' Squire Hennion. He

sells now an' agin," suggested the innkeeper."

"Who's he?" demanded Evatt.

"Another of the monopolisers who got a grant in the early days, before the land was good for anything," explained Bagby. "His property is further down."

"Ye 'd better bargain quick, if ye want any," spoke up an oldster. "Looks like squar's son was a-coortin' squar's daughter, an' mayhaps her money'll make old Squar Hennion less put tew it fer cash."

"So Squire Meredith is n't popular?"

"He'll find out suthin' next time he offers fer Assembly," asserted one of the group.

"He 's a member of Assembly, is he?" questioned Evatt. "Then he's all right on—he belongs to the popular party?"

"Not he!" cried several.

"He was agin the Association, tried tew prevent our sendin' deputies tew Congress, an' boasts that tea 's drunk at

his table," said the landlord.

"'T won't be for long," growled Bagby.

"Then how comes it that ye elect him Assemblyman?"

"'T is his tenants do it," spoke up the lawyer. "They don't have the pluck to vote against him for fear of their leaseholds. And so 't is with the rest. The only way we can get our way is by conventions and committees. But get it we will, let the gentry try as they please."

"Well, gentlemen," said Evatt, "here 's the swizzle. Glasses around, and I'll give ye a toast ye can all drink: May your freedom never be lessened by either Parliament or Congress!"

Two hours of drinking and talking followed, and when the last of the tipplers had staggered through the door, and Evatt, assisted by the publican, had reeled rather than walked upstairs to his room, if he was not fully informed as to

the locality of which the tavern was the centre, it was because his brain was too fuddled by the mixed drink, and not because tongues had been guarded.

Eighteenth-century heads made light of drinking bouts, and Evatt ate a hearty breakfast the next morning. Thus fortified, he called for his horse, and announced his intention of seeing Squire Meredith "about that damned impertinent varlet."

Arrived at Greenwood, it was to find that the master of the house was away, having ridden to Bound Brook to see some of his more distant tenants; but in colonial times visitors were such infrequent occurrences that he was made welcome by the hostess, and urged to stay to dinner. "Mr. Meredith will be back ere nightfall," she assured him, "and will deeply regret having missed thee if thou rides away."

"Madam," responded Evatt, "American

hospitality is only exceeded by American beauty.”

It was impossible not to like the stranger, for he was a capital talker, having much of the chat of London, tasty beyond all else to colonial palates, at his tongue's tip. With a succession of descriptions or anecdotes of the frequenters of the Park and Mall, of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, he entertained them at table, the two girls sitting almost open-mouthed in their eagerness and delight.

The meal concluded, the ladies regretfully withdrew, leaving Evatt to enjoy what he chose of a decanter of the squire's best Madeira, which had been served to him, visitors of education being rare treats indeed. Like all young peoples, Americans ducked very low to transatlantic travellers, and, truly colonial, could not help but think an Englishman of necessity a superior kind

of being.

The guest filled his glass, unbuttoned the three lower buttons of his waistcoat, and slouched back in his chair. Then he put the wine to his lips, and holding the swallow in his mouth to prolong the enjoyment, a look of extreme contentment came over his visage. And if he had put his thoughts into words, he would have said:—

“By Heavens! What wine and what women! The one they smuggle, but where get they the other? In a rough new country who’d think to encounter greater beauty and delicacy than can be seen skirting the Serpentine? Such eyes, such a waist, and such a wrist! And those cheeks—how the colour comes and goes, telling everything that she would hide! And to think that some bumpkin will enjoy lips fit for a duke. Burn it! If ’t were not for my task, I’d have a try for Miss Innocence and—” The man glanced

out of the window and let his eyes wander over the landscape, while he drained his glass— “Thirty thousand acres of land!” he said aloud, with a smack of pleasure.

His eyes left off studying the fields to fix themselves on Janice, who passed the window, with the garden as an evident destination, and they followed her until she disappeared within the opening of the hedge. “There’s a foot and ankle,” he exclaimed with an expression on his face akin to that it had worn as he tasted the Madeira. “’T would fire enough sparks in London to set the Thames all aflame!” He reached for the Madeira once more, but after removing the stopper, he hesitated a moment, then replacing it, he rose, buttoned his waistcoat, and taking his hat from the hall, he slipped through the window and walked toward the garden.

Finding that Janice was not within the hedge-row, Evatt passed across the

garden quickly and discovered the young lady standing outside the stable, engaged in the extremely undignified occupation of whistling. Her reason for the action was quickly revealed by the appearance of Clarion; and still unconscious that she was watched, after a word with the dog, they both started toward the river.

A few hasty strides brought the man up with the maiden, and as she slightly turned to see who had joined her, he said, "May I walk with you, Miss Meredith? I intended a stroll about the farm, and it will be all the pleasanter for so fair a guide."

Shyly but eagerly the girl assented, and richly rewarded was she in her own estimate by what the visitor had to tell. More gossip of court, of the lesser world of fashion, and of the theatre, he retailed: how the king walked and looked, of the rivalry between Mrs. Barry

and Mrs. Baddeley, of Charles Fox's debts and eloquence, of the vogue of Cecilia Davis, or "L'Inglesina." To Janice, hungry with the true appetite of provincialism, it was all the most delicious of comfits. To talk to a man who could imitate the way the Duke of Gloucester limped at a levee when suffering from the gout, and who was able to introduce a story by saying, "As Lady Rochford once said to me at one of her routs—" was almost like meeting those distinguished beings themselves. Janice not merely failed to note that the man paid no heed whatever to the land they strolled over, but herself ceased to give time or direction the slightest thought.

"Oh!" she broke out finally, in her delight, "won't Tibbie be sorry when she knows what she's missed? And, forsooth, a proper pay out for her wrong-doing it is!"

"What mean ye by that?" questioned

Evatt.

“She deserves to have it known, but though she called me tattle-tale, I’m no such thing,” replied Janice, who in truth was still hot with indignation at Miss Drinker, and wellnigh bursting to confide her grievance against her whilom friend to this most delightful of men.

“Doubtless, you observed that we are not on terms. That was why I came off without her.”

Evatt, though not till this moment aware of the fact, nodded his head gravely.

“’T is all her doings, though she’d be glad enough to make it up if I would let her. A fine frenzy her ladyship would be in, too, if she dreamt he’d given me the miniature.”

“A miniature!” marvelled the visitor, encouragingly. “Of whom?”

“’T is just what—Oh, I think I’ll tell thee the whole tale and get thy advice. I dare not go to mommy, for I know she’d make

me give it up, and dadda being away, and Tibbie in a snip-snap, I have no one to—and perhaps—I'd never tell thee to shame Tibbie, but because I need advice and—”

“A man with half an eye would know you were no tale-bearer, Miss Janice,” her companion assured her.

Thus prompted and enticed, the girl poured out the whole story. “I wish I could show you the picture,” she ended. “She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw.”

“Hast never looked in a mirror, Miss Janice?”

“Now thou 't just teasing.”

“I' faith, 't is the last thought in my mind,” said Evatt, heartily.

“You really think me pretty?” questioned the girl, with evident delight if uncertainty.

Evatt studied the eager, guileless face questioningly turned to him, and had

much ado to keep from smiling.

“’T is impossible not to think it,” he replied.

“Even after seeing the court beauties?” demanded Janice, half doubtful and half joyous.

“Not one but would have to give the *pas* to ye, Miss Janice,” protested Evatt, “could ye but be presented at St. James’s.”

“How lovely!” cried Janice, ecstatically, and then in sudden abasement asserted, “Oh, I know you are—you are only making fun of me!”

“Now, burn me, if I am!” insisted the man, with such undoubted admiration in his manner as to confirm his words to the girl. “By Heaven!” he marvelled to himself. “Who ’d have believed such innocence possible? ’T is Mother Eve before the fall! She knows nothing.” A view of woman likely to get Mr. Evatt into trouble. There is very little information

concerning the ante-prandial Eve, but from later examples of her sex, it is safe to affirm that the mother of the race knew several things before partaking of the tree of knowledge. Man only is born so stupid as to need education.

“Why canst thou not let me have sight of this wondrous female?” he went on aloud. “Surely thou art not really fearsome to brave comparison.”

“’T is not that, indeed,” denied Janice, colouring, “but— well—in a moment.” The girl turned her back to Mr. Evatt, and in a moment faced him once more, the miniature in her hand. “Is n’t she beautiful?”

Evatt looked at the miniature. “That she is,” he assented. “And strike me dumb, but she reminds me of some woman I’ve once seen in London.”

“Oh, how interesting!” exclaimed the girl. “What was her name?”

“’T is exactly that I am asking myself.”

“He must be well-born,” argued Janice, “to have her miniature; look at the jewels in her hair.”

“Ah, my child, there ’s more than the well-born wear—” the man stopped short. “How know ye,” he went on, “that the bondsman comes by it rightly? The frame is one of price.”

“I don’t,” the girl replied, “and the initials on the back are n’t his.”

““W. H. J. B.,”” read Evatt.

“He may have changed his name,” suggested Janice.

“True,” assented the man, with a slight laugh; “that ’s a mighty clever thought and gives us a clue to his real one.”

“Perhaps you’ve heard of a man in London with a name to fit W. H. J. B.?” said the maid, inquiringly.

Evatt turned away to conceal an unsuppressable smile, while thinking, “The innocent imagines London but another Brunswick!”

“Dost think I should make him take it back?” asked Janice.

“Certainly not,” replied her advise; responding to the only too manifest wish of the girl.

“Then dost think I should speak to mommy or dadda?”

“’T is surely needless! The fellow refuses it, and so ’t is yours till he demands it.”

“How lovely! Oh, I’d like to be home this instant, to see how ’t would appear about my neck. Last night I crept out of bed to have a look, but Tibbie turned over, and I thought me she was waking. I think I’ll go at once and—”

“And end our walk?” broke in Evatt, reproachfully.

“’T is nearly tea-time,” replied Janice, pointing to the sun. “How the afternoon has flown!”

“Thanks to my charming companion,” responded the man, bowing low.

“Now you are teasing again,” cried

Janice. "I don't like to be made fun—" "T is my last thought," cried Evatt, with unquestionable earnestness, and possessing himself of Janice's hand, he stooped and kissed it impetuously and hotly.

The colour flooded up into the maiden's face and neck at the action, but still more embarrassing to her was the awkward pause which ensued, as they set out on their return. She could think of nothing to say, and the stranger would not help her. "Let her blush and falter and stammer," was his thought. "Every minute of embarrassment is putting me deeper in her thoughts."

## **VII**

### **SPIDER AND FLY**

Fortunately for the girl, the distance to the house was not great, and the rapid pace she set in her stress quickly brought them to the doorway, which she entered with a sigh of relief. The guest was at once absorbed by her father, and Janice sought her room.

As she primped, the miniature lay before her, and occasionally she paused for a moment to look at it. Finally, when properly robed, she picked it up and held it for a moment. "I wonder if she broke his heart?" she soliloquised. "I don't see how he could help loving her; I know I should." Janice hesitated for a moment, and then tucked the miniature into her bosom. "If only Tibbie wasn't—if—we could talk about it," she sighed, as she pinned on her little cap of lace above the hair dressed high *à la Pompadour*. "Why

did she have to be—just as so many important things were to happen!” Miss Meredith looked at her double in the mirror, and sighed again. “Mr. Evatt must have been laughing at me,” she said, “for she is so much prettier. But I should like to know why Charles always stares so at me.”

In the meantime, Evatt, without so much as an allusion to the bond-servant, had presented a letter from a New Yorker, introducing him to the squire, and by the confidence thus established he proceeded to question Mr. Meredith long and carefully, not about farming lands and profits, but concerning the feeling of the country toward the questions then at issue between Great Britain and America. He made as they talked an occasional note, and the interview ended only with Peg’s announcement of supper. Nor was this allowed to terminate the inquiry, for the squire, as Mrs. Meredith had

foreseen, insisted on Evatt's spending the night, and Charles was accordingly ordered to ride over to the inn for the traveller's saddlebags. After the ladies had left the two men at the table, the questioning was resumed over the spirits and pipes, and not till ten o'clock was passed did Evatt finally rise. Clearly he must have pleased the squire as well as he had the dames, for Mr. Meredith, with the hospitality of the time, pressed him heartily to stay for more than the morrow, assuring him of a welcome at Greenwood for as long as he would make it his abiding spot.

"Nothing, sir, would give me greater pleasure," responded Evatt, warmly, "but in confidence to ye, as a friend of government, I dare to say that my search for a farm is only the ostensible reason for my travels. I am executing an important and delicate mission for our government, and having already

journeyed through the colonies to the northward, I must still travel through those of the south. 'T is therefore quite impossible for me to tarry more than the night. I should, in fact, not have dared to linger thus long were it not that your name was on the list given me by Lord Dartmouth of those to be trusted and consulted. And the information ye have furnished me concerning this region has proved that his Lordship did not err in his opinion as to your knowledge, disposition, and ability."

[Illustration: "The British ran!"]

This sent the squire to his pillow with a delightful sense of his own importance, and led him to confide to the nightcap on the pillow beside him that "Mr. Evatt is a man of vast insight and discrimination." Regrettable as it is to record, the visitor, before seeking his own pillow, mixed some ink powder in a mug with a little water and proceeded to add to a letter

already begun the following paragraph:—

*"From thence I rode to Brunswick, a small Town on the Raritan. Here I find the same division of Sentiment I have already dwelt upon to your Lordship. The Gentry, consisting hereabouts of but two, are sharply opposed to the small Farmers and Labourers, and cannot even rely upon their own Tenantry for more than a nominal support. Neither of the great Proprietors seem to be Men of sound Judgment or natural Popularity, and Mr. Lambert Meredith—a name quite unknown to your Lordship, but of some consequence in this Colony through a fortunate Marriage with a descendant of one of the original Patentees—at the last Election barely succeeded in carrying the Poll, and is represented to be a Man of much impracticality, hot-tempered, a stickler over trivial points, at odds with his Neighbours, and not even Master of his own Household. To such Men, my*

*Lord, has fallen the Contest, on behalf of Government, while opposed to them are self-made Leaders, of Eloquence, of Force, and, most of all, of Dishonesty. Issues of Paper Money, escape from all Taxation, free Lands, suspensions of Debts—such and an hundred other tempting Promises they ply the People with, while the Gentry sit helpless, save those who, seeing how the Tide sets, throw Principles to the Wind, and plunge in with the popular Leaders. Believe me, my Lord, as I have urged already, a radical change of Government, and a plentiful sprinkling of Regiments, will alone prevent the Disorders from rising to a height that threatens Anarchy.”*

Though the visitor was the last of the household abed, he was early astir the next morning, and while Charles was beginning his labours of the day, by leading each horse to the trough in the barnyard, Evatt joined him.

“We made a bad start at our first meeting, my man,” he said in a friendly manner, “and I have only myself to blame for ‘t. One should keep his own secrets.”

“‘T is a sorry calling yours would be if many kept to that,” replied Fownes, with a suggestion of contempt.

Evatt bit his lip, and then forced a smile. “The old saying runs that three could keep a secret if two were but dead.”

Charles smiled. “My two will never trouble me,” he said meaningly, “so save your time and breath.”

“Hadst best not be so sure,” retorted Evatt, in evident irritation. “‘Twixt thine army service, the ship that fetched thee on, and that miniature, I have more clues than have served to ferret many a secret.”

“And entirely lack the important one. Till you have that, I don’t fear you. What is more, I’ll tell you what ‘t is.”

“What?” asked the man.

“A reward,” sneered Fownes.

“I see I’ve a sly tyke to deal with,” said the man. “But if ye choose not—” The speaker checked himself as Janice came through the opening in the hedge, and the two stood silently watching her as she approached.

“Charles,” she said, when within speaking distance, while holding out the miniature, “I’ve decided you must take this.”

Charles smiled pleasantly. “Then ‘t is your duty to make me, Miss Meredith,” he replied, folding his arms.

“Won’t you please take it?” begged Janice, not a little non-plussed by her position, and that Evatt should be a witness of it. “We know it belongs to you, and ‘t is too valuable for me to—”

“How know you that?” questioned the man, still smiling pleasantly.

“Because ‘t was with your clothes when

you went in swimming," said Janice, frankly.

"Miss Meredith," replied Charles, "the word of a poor devil of a bond-servant can have little value, but I swear to you that that never belonged to me, and that I therefore have no right to it. If it gives you any pleasure, keep it."

"That is as good as saying ye stole it," asserted Evatt.

Charles smiled contemptuously. "All are not thieves whom dogs bark at," he retorted. "Nor are all of us sneaks and spies," he added, as, turning, he led away the horse toward the stable.

"Yon fellow does n't stickle at calling ye names, Miss Meredith," said Evatt.

"He has no right to call me a spy," cried the girl, indignantly.

"His words deserve no more heed than what he said t'other night at the tavern of ye."

"What said he at the tavern?" demanded

Janice.

“’T is best left unspoken.”

“I want to know what he said of me,” insisted Miss Meredith.

“’T would only shame ye.”

“He—he told of—he did n’t tell them I took the miniature?” faltered Janice.

Again Evatt bit his lip, but this time to keep from smiling. “Worse than that, my child,” he replied.

“Why should he insult me?” protested Janice, proudly, but still colouring at the possibility.

“Ye do right to suppose it unlikely. Yet ’t is so, and while I can hardly hope that my word will be taken for it, his lies to us a moment since prove that he is capable of any untruth.”

Evatt spoke with such honesty of manner, and with such an apparent lack of motive for inventing a tale, that Janice became doubtful. “He could n’t insult me,” she said, “for I—I have n’t done

anything.”

“’T is certain that he did. Had I but known ye at the time, Miss Janice, he should have been made to swallow his coarse insult. ’T was for that I sought him this morning. Had ye not interrupted us, ’t would have fared badly for him.”

“You were very kind,” said Janice, dolefully, beginning, more from his manner than his words, to believe Evatt. “I did n’t know there were such bad men in the world. And for him to say it at the tavern, where ’t will be all over the county in no time! Was it very bad?”

“No one would believe a redemptioner,” replied Evatt. “Yet had I the right—”

“Marse Meredith send me to tell youse come to breakfast,” interrupted Peg from the gateway in the box.

“Why!” exclaimed the girl. “It can’t be seven.”

“The squire ordered it early, that I might be in the saddle betimes,” explained

Evatt, and then as the girl started toward the house, he checked the movement by taking her hand. "Miss Janice," he said, "in a half-hour I shall ride away—not because 't is my wish, but because I'm engaged in an important and perilous mission—a mission—can ye keep a secret—even from—from your father and mother?"

Janice was too young and inexperienced to know that a secret is of all things the most to be avoided, and though her little hand, in her woman's intuition that all was not right, tried feebly to free itself, she none the less answered eagerly if half-doubtfully, "Yes."

"I am sent here under an assumed name—by His Majesty. Ye—I was indiscreet enough with ye, to tell—to show that I was other than what I pretend to be, but I felt then and now that I could trust ye. Ye will keep secret all I say?"

Again Janice, with her eyes on the ground, said, "Yes."

"I must do the king's work, and when 't is done I return to England and resume my true position, and ye will never again hear of me—unless—" The man paused, with his eyes fixed on the downcast face of the girl.

"Unless?" asked Janice, when the silence became more embarrassing than to speak.

"Unless ye—unless ye give me the hope that by first returning here—as your father has asked me to do—that I may—may perhaps carry ye away with me. Ah, Miss Janice, 't is an outrage to keep such beauty hidden in the wilds of America, when it might be the glory of the court and the toast of the town."

Again a silence ensued, fairly agonising to the bewildered and embarrassed girl, which lengthened, it seemed to her, into hours, as she vainly sought for some

words that she might speak.

“Please let go my hand,” she begged finally.

“Not till you give me a yea or nay.

“But I can’t—I don’t—” began Janice, and then as footsteps were heard, she cried, “Oh, let me go! Here comes Charles.”

“May I come back?” demanded Evatt.

“Yes,” assented the girl, desperately.

“And ye promise to be secret?”

“I promise,” cried Janice, and to her relief recovered her hand, just as Charles entered the garden.

Like many another of her sex, however, she found that to gain physical and temporary freedom she had only enslaved herself the more, for after breakfast Evatt availed himself of a moment’s interest of Mrs. Meredith’s in the ordering down of his saddle-bags, and of the squire’s in the horse, to say to Janice, aside:—

“I gave ye back your hand, Janice, but remember ‘t is mine,” and before the girl could frame a denial, he was beside Mr. Meredith at the stirrup, and, ere many minutes, had ridden away, leaving behind him a very much flattered, puzzled, and miserable demoiselle.

## **VIII**

### **SEVERAL BURNING QUESTIONS**

The twenty-four hours of Evatt's visit troubled Janice in recollection for many a day, and marked the beginning of the most distinct change that had come to her. The experience was in fact that which befalls every one somewhere between the ages of twelve and thirty, by which youth first learns to recognise that life is not mere living, but is rather the working out of a strange problem compounded of volition and necessity, accident and fatality. The pledge of secrecy preyed upon her, the stranger's assumption that she had bound herself distressed her, and the thought that she had been the subject of tavern talk made her furious. Yet she had promised concealment, she was powerless to write to Evatt denying his pretension, and she could not counteract a slander the

purport of which was unknown to her. Had she and Tibbie but been on terms, she might have gained some relief by confiding her woes to her, but that young lady's visit came to an end so promptly after the departure of Evatt that restoration of good feeling was only obtained in the parting kiss. For the first time in her life, Janice's head would keep on thinking after it was resting on its pillow, and many a time that enviable repository was called upon to dry her tears and cool her burning cheeks. Never, it seemed to her, had man or woman borne so great a burden of trouble.

The change in the girl was too great not to be noticed by the household of Greenwood. Mrs. Meredith joyfully confided to the Rev. Mr. McClave that she thought an "effectual calling" had come to her daughter, and that Janice was in a most promising condition of unhappiness. Thus encouraged, the divine, who was a

widower of forty-two, with five children sadly needing a woman's care, only too gladly made morning calls on the daughter of his wealthiest parishioner, and in place of the discussions with Tibbie over romance in general, and the bond-servant in particular, as they sewed or knitted, Janice was forced to attend to long monologues specially prepared for her benefit, on what to the presbyter were the truly burning questions of justification, adoption, and sanctification. What is more, she not only listened dutifully, but once or twice was even moved to tears, to the enormous encouragement of Mr. McClave. The squire, who highly resented the lost vivacity and the new seriousness, insisted that the "girl sha'n't be made into a long-faced, psalm-singing hypocrite;" but not daring to oppose what his wife approved, he merely expressed his irritation to Janice herself,

teasing and fretting her scarcely less than did Mr. McClave.

Not the least of her difficulties was her bearing toward the bondsman.

Conditions were still so primitive that the relations between master and servant were yet on a basis that made the distinctions between them ones of convenience rather than convention, and thus Janice was forced to mark out a new line of conduct. At first she adopted that of avoidance and proud disregard of him, but his manner toward her continued to convey such deference that the girl found her attitude hard to maintain, and presently began to doubt if he could be guilty of the imputation. Nor could she be wholly blind to the fact that the groom had come to take a marked interest in her. She noted that he made occasion for frequent interviews, and that he dropped all pretence of speaking to her in his affected Somerset dialect. When now she

ventured out of doors, she was almost certain to encounter him, and rarely escaped without his speaking to her; while he often came into the kitchen on frivolous pretexts when she was working there, and seemed in no particular haste to depart.

Several times he was detected by Mrs. Meredith thus idling within doors, and was sharply reproved for it. Neither to this, nor to the squire's orders that he should put an end to his "night-walking" and to his trips to the village, did he pay the slightest heed.

Fownes entered the kitchen one morning in November while Janice and Sukey were deep in the making of some grape jelly, carrying an armful of wood; for the bond-servant for once had willingly assumed a task that had hitherto been Tom's. Putting the logs down in the wood-box, he stood with back to the fire, studying Miss Meredith, as, well covered

with a big apron, with rolled up sleeves, flyaway locks, and flushed cheeks, she pounded away in a mortar, reducing loaf sugar to usable shape.

“Now youse clar right out of yar,” said Sukey, who, though the one servant who was fond of Charles, like all good cooks, was subject to much ferment of mind when preserving was to the fore. “We uns doan want no men folks clutterin’ de fire.”

“Ah, Sukey,” besought Charles, appealingly, “there ’s a white frost this morning, and ’t is bitter outside. Let me just warm my fingers?”

Sukey promptly relented, but the chill in Fownes’ fingers was clearly not unendurable, for in a moment he came to the table, and putting his hand over that of Janice, which held the pestle, he said:—

“Let me do the crushing. ’T is too hard work for you.”

“I wish you would,” Miss Meredith somewhat breathlessly replied. “My arms are almost ready to drop off.”

“’T would set the quidnuncs discussing to which of the Greek goddesses they belonged,” remarked Fownes. Then he was sorry he had said it, for Miss Meredith promptly unrolled her sleeves; not because in her secret heart she did not like the speech, but because of a consciousness that Charles was noticing what the Greek goddesses generally lack. A low-cut frock was almost the unvarying dress of the ladies, there was nothing wrong in the display of an ankle, and elbow sleeves were very much the vogue, but to bare the arms any higher was an immodesty not permitted to those who were then commonly termed the “bon ton.”

This addition to the working staff promptly produced an order from Sukey for Janice to assume the duty of stirring

a pot just placed over the fire, "while I 'se goes down cellar an' cars a shelf for them jellies to set on. Keep a stirrin', honey, so 's it won't burn," was her parting injunction.

No sooner was the cook out of hearing than Charles spoke: "For two days," he said in a low voice, "I have tried to get word with you. Won't you come to the stable when I am there?"

"Are you going to crush that sugar?" asked Miss Meredith.

"Art going to come to the stable?" calmly questioned Charles.

"Give me the pestle!" said Janice, severely.

"Because if you won't," continued the groom, "I shall have to say what I want now."

"I prefer not to hear it," Janice announced, moving from the fire.

"You must keep on stirring, or 't will burn, Miss Janice," the man reminded

her, taking a mean advantage of the situation.

Janice came back and resumed her task, but she said, "I don't choose to listen."

'T is for thy father's sake I ask it."

"How?" demanded the girl, looking up with sudden interest.

"I went to the village t' other night," replied the man, "to drill—" Then he checked himself in evident disconcertion.

"Drill?" asked Janice. "What drill?"

"Let us call it quadrille, since that is not the material part," said Charles. "What is to the point is that after—after doing what took me, I stayed to help in Guy Fawkes' fun on the green."

"Well?" questioned the girl, encouragingly.

"The frolickers had some empty tar barrels and an effigy of the Pope, and they gave him and a copy of the Boston Port Bill each a coat of tar and leaves, and then burned them."

“What fun!” cried Janice, ceasing to stir in her interest. “I wish mommy would let me go. She says ‘t is unbecoming in the gentility, but I don’t see why being well born should be a reason for not having as good a time as—”

“As servants?” interrupted Fownes, hotly, as if her words stung him.

“I’m afraid, Charles,” reproved Janice, assuming again a severe manner, “that you have a very bad temper.”

Perhaps the man might have retorted, but instead he let the anger die from his face, as he fixed his eyes on the floor. “I have, Miss Janice,” he acknowledged sadly, after a moment’s pause, “and ‘t is the curse of my life.”

“You should discipline it,” advised Miss Meredith, sagely. “When I lose my temper, I always read a chapter in the Bible,” she added, with a decidedly “holier than thou” in her manner.

“How many times hast thou read the

good book through, Miss Janice?" asked Fownes, smiling, and Miss Meredith's virtuous pose became suddenly an uncomfortable one to the young lady.

"You were to tell me something about Mr. Meredith," she said stiffly.

"After burning the Pope and the bill, 't was suggested by some to empty the pot of tar on the fire. But objection was made, because

"Because?" questioned Janice.

"Someone said 't would be needed shortly to properly season *green wood*, and therefore must not be wasted."

"You don't think they—?" cried Janice, in alarm.

The servant nodded his head. "The feeling against the squire is far deeper than you suspect. 'T will find vent in some violence, I fear, unless he yield to public sentiment."

"He'll never truckle to the country licks and clouted shoons of Brunswick,"

asserted Janice, proudly.

“’T will fare the worse for him. ’T is as sensible to run counter to public opinion as ’t is to cut roads over mountains.”

“’T is worse still to be a coward,” cried Janice, contemptuously. “I fear, Charles, you are very mean-spirited.”

Fownes shrugged his shoulders. “As a servant should be,” he muttered bitterly.

“Even a servant can do what is right,” answered the girl.

“’T is not a question of right, ’t is one of expediency,” replied the bondsman. “A year at court, Miss Janice, would teach you that in this world ’t is of monstrous importance to know when to bow.”

“What do you know of court?” exclaimed Janice.

“Very little,” confessed the man. “But I know it teaches one good lesson in life,—that of submission,—and an important thing ’t is to learn.”

“I only bow to those whom I know to be

my superiors," said Janice, with her head held very erect.

"'T is an easy way for you to avoid bowing," asserted the groom, smiling.

Again Janice sought a change of subject by saying, "Think you that is why we are being spied upon?"

"Spied?" questioned the bondsman.

"Last week dadda thought he saw a face one evening at the parlour window, and two nights ago I looked up suddenly and saw—Well, mommy said 't was only vapours, but I know I saw something."

The servant turned his face away from Janice, and coughed. Then he replied, "Perhaps 't was some one watching you. Didst make no attempt to find him?"

"Dadda went to the window both times, but could see nothing."

"He probably had time to hide behind the shrubs," surmised Charles. "I shall set myself to watching, and I'll warrant to catch the villain at it if he tries it

again." From the savageness with which he spoke, one would have inferred that he was bitterly enraged at any one spying through the parlour window on Miss Meredith's evening hours.

"I wish you would," solicited Janice. "For if it happened again, I don't know what I should do. Mommy insisted it was n't a ghost, and scolded me for screaming; but all the same, it gave me a dreadful turn. I did n't go to sleep for hours."

"I am sorry it frightened you," said the servant, and then after a moment's hesitation he continued, "'T was I, and if I had thought for a moment to scare you —"

"You!" cried Janice. "What were you doing there?"

The man looked her in the eyes while he replied in a low voice, "Looking at paradise, Miss Janice."

"Janice Meredith," said her mother's voice, sternly, "thou good-for-nothing!

Thou'st let the syrup burn, and the smell is all over the house. Charles, what dost thou mean by loafing indoors at this hour of the day? Go about thy work."

And paradise dissolved into a pot of burnt syrup.

# **IX**

## **PARADISE AND ELSEWHERE**

While Charles was within hearing, Mrs. Meredith continued to scold Janice about the burnt syrup, but this subject was ended with his exit. "I'm ashamed that a daughter of mine should allow a servant to be so familiar," Mrs. Meredith began anew. "'T is a shame on us all, Janice. Hast thou no idea of what is decent and befitting to a girl of thy station?"

"He was n't familiar," cried Janice, angrily and proudly, "and you should know that if he had been I—he was telling me—"

"Yes," cried her mother, "tell me what he was saying about paradise? Dost think me a nizey, child, not to know what men mean when they talk about paradise?"

Janice's cheeks reddened, and she replied hotly, "If men talked to you about

paradise, why should n't they talk to me? I'm sure 't is a pleasant change after the parson's everlasting and eternal talk of an everlasting and eternal—"

"Don't thee dare say it!" interrupted Mrs. Meredith. "Thou fallen, sin-eaten child! Go to thy room and stay there for the rest of the day. 'T is all of a piece that thou shouldst disgrace us by unseemly conduct with a stable-boy. Fine talk 't will make for the tavern."

The injustice and yet possible truth in this speech was too much for Janice to hear, and without an attempt at reply, she burst into a storm of tears and fled to her room.

Deprived of a listener, Mrs. Meredith sought the squire, and very much astonished him by a prediction that, "Thy daughter, Mr. Meredith, is going to bring disgrace on the family."

"What's to do now?" cried the parent.

"A pretty to do, indeed," his wife assured

him. "Dost want her running off some fine night with thy groom?"

"Tush, Matilda!" responded Mr. Meredith. "'T is impossible."

"Just what my parents said when thou camest a-courting."

"I was no redemptioner."

"'T was none the less a step-down for me," replied Mrs. Meredith, calmly. "And I had far less levity than—"

"Nay, Matilda, she often reminds me very—"

"Lambert, I never was light! Or at least never after I sat under Dr. Edwards and had a call. The quicker we marry Janice to Mr. McClave, the better 't will be for her."

"Now, pox me!" cried the squire, "if I'll give my lass to be made the drudge of another woman's children."

"'T is the very discipline she needs," retorted the wife. "But for my checking her a moment ago I believe she'd have

spoken disrespectfully of hell!"

"Small wonder!" muttered her husband. "Is 't not enough to ye Presbyterians to doom one to everlasting torment in the future life without making this life as bad?"

"'T is the way to be saved," replied Mrs. Meredith. "As Mr. McClave said to Janice shortly since, 'Be assured that doing the unpleasant thing is the surest road to salvation, for tho' it should not find grace in the eyes of a righteously angry God, yet having been done from no carnal and sinful craving of the flesh, it cannot increase his anger towards you.' Ah, Lambert, that man has the true gift."

"Since he's so damned set on being uncarnal," snapped the squire, "let him go without Janice."

"And have her running off with an indentured servant, as Anne Loughton did?"

"She'll do nothing of the kind. If ye want

a husband for the lass, let her take Phil."

"A bankrupt."

"Tush! There are acres enough to pay the old squire's debts three times over. She'd bring Phil enough ready money to clear it all, and 't is rich mellow land that will double in value, give it time."

"I tell thee her head 's full of this bond-servant. The two were in the kitchen just now, talking about paradise, and I know not what other foolishness."

"That" said Mr. Meredith, with a grin of enjoyment, "sounds like true Presbyterian doctrine. The Westminster Assembly seem to have left paradise out of the creation."

"Such flippancy is shameful in one of thy years, Mr. Meredith," said his wife, sternly, "and canst have but one ending."

"That is all any of us can have, Patty," replied the squire, genially.

Mrs. Meredith went to the door, but before leaving the room, she said, still

with a stern, set face, though with a break in her voice, "Is 't not enough that my four babies are enduring everlasting torment, but my husband and daughter must go the same way?"

"There, there, Matilda!" cried the husband. "'T was said in jest only and was nothing more than lip music. Come back—" the speech ended there as a door at a distance banged. "Now she'll have a cry all by herself," groaned the squire. "'T is a strange thing she took it so bravely when the road was rough, yet now, when 't is easy pulling, she lets it fret and gall her."

Then Mr. Meredith looked into his fire, and saw another young girl, a little more serious than Janice, perhaps, but still gay-hearted and loved by many. He saw her making a stolen match with himself; passed in review the long years of alienation from her family, the struggle with poverty, and, saddest of all, the row

of little gravestones which told of the burial of the best of her youth. He saw the day finally when, a worn, saddened woman, she at last was in the possession of wealth, to find in it no pleasure, yet to turn eagerly, and apparently with comfort, to the teachings of that strange combination of fire and logic, Jonathan Edwards. He recalled the two sermons during Edwards's brief term as president of Nassau Hall, which moved him so little, yet which had convinced Mrs. Meredith that her dead babies had been doomed to eternal punishment and had made her the stern, unyielding woman she was. The squire was too hearty an animal, and lived too much in the open air, to be given to introspective thought, but he shook his head. "A strange warp and woof we weave of the skein," he sighed, "that sorrow for the dead should harden us to the living." Mr. Meredith rose, went upstairs, and rapped at a

door. Getting no reply, after a repetition of the knock, he went in.

A glance revealed what at first sight looked like a crumpled heap of clothes upon the bed, but after more careful scrutiny the mass was found to have a head, very much buried between two pillows, and the due quantity of arms and legs. Walking to the bed, the squire put his hand on the bundle.

“There, lass,” he said, “’t is nought to make such a pother about.”

“Oh, dadda,” moaned Janice, “I am the most unhappy girl that ever lived.”

It is needless to say after this remark that Miss Meredith’s knowledge of the world was not of the largest, and the squire, with no very great range of experience, smiled a little as he said:—

“Then ’t will not make you more miserable to wed the parson?”

“Dadda!” exclaimed the girl, rolling over quickly, to get a sight of his countenance.

When she found him smiling, the anxious look on the still red and tear-stained face melted away, and she laughed merrily.

“Think of the life I’d give the good man! How I would wherit him! He ’d have to give up his church to have time enough to preach to me.” Apparently the deep woe alluded to the moment before was forgotten.

“I’ve no manner of doubt he’d enjoy the task,” declared the father, with evident pride. “Ah, Jan, many a man would enter the ministry, if he might be ordained parson of ye.”

“The only parson I want is a father confessor,” said Janice, sitting up and giving him a kiss.

“Then what ’s this maggot your mother has got in her head about ye and Charles and paradise?” laughed her father.

“Indeed, dadda,” protested the girl, eagerly, “mommy was most unjust. I was to stir some syrup, and Charles came

into the kitchen and would talk to me, and as I could n't leave the pot, I had to listen, and then—well

“I thought as much!” cried the squire, heartily, when Janice paused. “Where the syrup is, there'll find ye the flies. But we'll have no horse-fly buzzing about ye. My fine gentleman shall be taught where he belongs, if it takes the whip to do it.”

“No, dadda,” exclaimed Janice. “He spoke but to warn me of danger to you. He says there 's preparation to tar and feather you unless you—you do something.”

“Foo!” sniffed the squire. “Let them snarl. I'll show them I'm not a man to be driven by tag, long tail, and bobby.”

“But Charles—” began the girl.

“Ay, Charles,” interrupted Mr. Meredith. “I've no doubt he's one of 'em. 'T is always the latest importations take the hottest part against the gentry.”

“Nay, dadda, I think he—”

“Mark me, that’s what takes the tyke to the village so often.”

“He said ‘t was to drill he went.”

“To drill?” questioned the squire. “What meant he by that?”

“I asked him, and he said ‘t was quadrille. Dost think he meant dancing or cards?”

“‘T is in keeping that he should be a dancing master or a card-sharper,” asserted Mr. Meredith. “No wonder ‘t is a disordered land when ‘t is used as a catchall for every man not wanted in England. We’ll soon put a finish to his night-walking.”

“I don’t think he’s a villain, dad, and he certainly meant kindly in warning us.”

“To make favour by tale-bearing, no doubt.”

“I’m sure he’d not a thought of it,” declared Janice, with an unconscious eagerness which made the squire knit his brows.

“Ye speak warmly, child,” he said. “I trust your mother be not justified in her suspicion.”

The girl, who meanwhile had sprung off the bed, drew herself up proudly.

“Mommy is altogether wrong,” she replied. “I’d never descend so low.”

“I said as much,” responded the squire, gleefully.

“A likely idea, indeed!” exclaimed Janice. “As if I’d have aught to do with a groom! No, I never could shame the family by that.”

“Wilt give me your word to that, Jan?” asked the squire.

“Yes,” cried the girl, and then roguishly added, “Why, dadda, I’d as soon, yes, sooner, marry old Belza, who at least is a prince in his own country, than see a Byllynge marry a bond-servant.”

# X

## A COLONIAL CHRISTMAS

For some weeks following the pledge of Janice, the life at Greenwood became as healthily monotonous as of yore. Both Mr. and Mrs. Meredith spoke so sharply to both Sukey and Charles of his loitering about the kitchen that his visits, save at meal times, entirely ceased. The squire went further and ordered him to put an end to his trips to the village, but the man took this command in sullen silence, and was often absent.

One circumstance, however, very materially lessened the possible encounters between the bond-servant and the maiden. This was no less than the setting in of the winter snows, which put a termination to all the girl's outdoor life, excepting the attendance at the double church services on Sundays, which Mrs. Meredith never permitted to

be neglected. From the window Janice sometimes saw the groom playing in the drifts with Clarion, but that was almost the extent of her knowledge of his doings. It is to be confessed that she eagerly longed to join them or, at least, to have a like sport with the dog. Eighteenth-century etiquette, however, neither countenanced such conduct in the quality, nor, in fact, clothed them for it.

A point worth noting at this time was connected with one window of the parlour. Each afternoon as night shut down, it was Peg's duty to close all the blinds, for colonial windows not being of the tightest, every additional barricade to Boreas was welcome, and this the servant did with exemplary care. But every evening after tea, Janice always walked to a particular window and, opening the shutter, looked out for a moment, as if to see what the night

promised, before she took her seat at her tambour frame or sewing. Sometimes one of her parents called attention to the fact that she had not quite closed the shutters again, and she always remedied the oversight at once. Otherwise she never looked at the window during the whole evening, glance where she might. Presumably she still remembered the fright her putative ghost had occasioned her, and chose not to run the chance of another sight of him. Almost invariably, however, in the morning she blew on the frost upon the window of her own room and having rubbed clear a spot, looked below, much as if she suspected ghosts could leave tracks in the snow. In her behalf it is only fair to say that the girls of that generation were so shut in as far as regarded society or knowledge of men that they let their imaginations question and wander in a manner difficult now to conceive. At certain ages the two sexes

are very much interested in each other, and if this interest is not satisfied objectively, it will be subjectively.

Snow, if a jailer, was likewise a defence, and apparently cooled for a time the heat of the little community against the squire. Even the Rev. Mr. McClave's flame of love and love of flame were modified by the depth of the drifts he must struggle through, in order to discourse on eternal torment while gazing at earthly paradise. Janice became convinced that the powers of darkness no longer had singled her out as their particular prey, and in the peaceful isolation of the winter her woes, when she thought of them, underwent a change of grammatical tense which suggested that they had become things of the past.

One of her tormenting factors was not to be so treated. Philemon alone made nothing of the change of season, riding

the nine miles between his home and Greenwood by daylight or by moonlight, as if his feeling for the girl not merely warmed but lighted the devious path between the drifts. Yet it was not to make love he came; for he sat a silent, awkward figure when once within doors, speaking readily enough in response to the elders, but practically inarticulate whenever called upon to reply to Janice. Her bland unconsciousness was a barrier far worse than the snow; and never dreaming that he was momentarily declaring his love for her in a manner far stronger than words, he believed her wholly ignorant of what he felt, and stayed for hours at a time, longing helplessly for a turn of events which should make it possible for him to speak.

Philemon was thus engaged or disengaged one December morning when Peg entered the parlour where the family were sitting as close to the fire as the

intense glow of the hickory embers would allow, and handing Janice a letter with an air of some importance, remarked, "Charles he ask me give you dat." Then, colonial servants being prone to familiarity, and negro slaves doubly so, Peg rested her weight on one foot, and waited to learn what this unusual event might portend. All present instantly fixed their eyes upon Janice, but had they not done so it is probable that she would have coloured much as she did, for the girl was enough interested and enough frightened to be quite unconscious of the eyes upon her.

"A letter for thee, lass!" exclaimed the squire. "Let 's have the bowels of it."

The necessity for that very thing was what made the occurrence so alarming to Janice, for her woman's intuition had at once suggested, the moment she had seen the bold hand-writing of the superscription, that it could be from none

other than Evatt, and she had as quickly surmised that her father and mother would insist upon sight of the missive. Unaware of what it might contain, she sat with red cheeks, not daring to break the seal.

“Hast got the jingle brains, child?” asked her mother, sharply, “that thou dost nothing but stare at it?”

Janice laid the letter in her lap, saying, “’T will wait till I finish this row.” It was certainly a hard fate which forced her to delay the opening of the first letter she had ever received.

“’T will nothing of the sort,” said her mother, reaching out for the paper. “Art minded to read it on the sly, miss? There shall be no letters read by stealth. Give it me.”

“Oh, mommy,” begged the girl, desperately, “I’ll show it to you, but—oh—let me read it first, oh, please!”

“I think ’t is best not,” replied her

mother. "Thy anxiety has an ill look to it, Janice."

The girl handed the letter dutifully, and with an anxious attention watched her mother break it open, all pleasure in the novelty of the occurrence quite overtopped by dread of what was to come.

"What nonsense is this?" was Mrs. Meredith's anything but encouraging exclamation. Then she read out:—

*"'T is unworthy of you, and of your acceptance, but 't is the fairest gift I could think of, and the best that I could do. If you will but put it in the frame you have, it may seem more befitting a token of the feelings that inspired it."*

Janice, unable to restrain her curiosity, rose and peered over her mother's shoulder. From that vantage point she ejaculated, "Oh, how beautiful she is!"

What she looked at was an unset miniature of a young girl, with a wealth

of darkest brown hair, powdered to a gray, and a little straight nose with just a suggestion of a tilt to it, giving the mignon face an expression of pride that the rest of the countenance by no means aided. For the remaining features, the mouth was still that of a child, the short upper lip projecting markedly over the nether one, producing not so much a pouty look as one of innocence; the eyes were brilliant black, or at least were shadowed to look it by the long lashes, and the black eyebrows were slender and delicately arched upon a low forehead.

“Art a nizey, Janice,” cried her mother, “not to know thine own face?”

“Mommy!” exclaimed the girl. “Is—am I as pretty as that?”

“’T is vastly flattered,” said her mother, quickly. “I should scarce know it.”

“Nay, Matilda,” dissented the squire, who was now also gazing at the miniature. “’T is a good phiz of our lass, and but does

her justice. Who ever sent it ye, Jan?"

"I suppose 't was Mr. Evatt," confessed Janice.

"Let's have sight of the wrapper," said the father. "Nay, Jan. This has been in no post-rider's bag or 't would bear the marks."

"Peg, tell Charles to come here," ordered Mrs. Meredith, and after a five minutes spent by the group in various surmises, the bond-servant, followed by the still attentive Peg, entered the room.

"Didst find this letter at the tavern?" demanded the squire.

The groom looked at the wrapper held out to him, and replied, "Mayhaps."

"And what took ye there against my orders?"

Charles shrugged his shoulders, and then smiled. "Ask Hennion," he said.

"What means he, Phil?" questioned the squire.

“Now you’ve been an’ told the whole thing,” exclaimed Philemon, looking very much alarmed.

“Not I,” replied the servant. “’T is for you to tell it, man, if ’t is to be told.”

“Have done with such mingle-mangle talk,” ordered Mr. Meredith, fretfully. “Is ’t not enough to have French gibberish in the world, without—”

“Charles,” interrupted Mrs. Meredith, “who gave thee this letter?”

“Ask Miss Meredith,” Fownes responded, again smiling.

“It must be Mr. Evatt,” said Janice. Then as the bond-servant turned sharply and looked at her, she became conscious that she was colouring. “I wish there was no such thing as a blush,” she moaned to herself,—a wish in which no one seeing Miss Meredith would have joined.

“’T was not from Mr. Evatt,” denied the servant.

Without time for thought, Janice blurted

out, "Then 't is from you?" and the groom nodded his head.

"What nonsense is this?" cried Mr. Meredith. "Dost mean to say 't is from ye? Whence came the picture?"

"I was the limner," replied Charles.

"What clanker have we here?" exclaimed the squire.

"'T is no lie, Mr. Meredith," answered the servant. "In England I've drawn many a face, and 't was even said in jest that I might be a poor devil of an artist if ever I quitted the ser—quitted service."

"And where got ye the colours?"

"When I went to Princeton with the shoats I found Mr. Peale painting Dr. Witherspoon, and he gave me the paints and the ivory."

"Ye'll say I suppose too that ye wrote this," demanded the squire, indicating the letter.

"I'll not deny it."

“Though ye could not sign the covenant?”

Fownes once more shrugged his shoulders. “’T is a fool would sign a bond,” he asserted.

“Better a fool than a knave,” retorted Mr. Meredith, angered by Charles’ manner. “Janice, give the rogue back the letter and picture. No daughter of Lambert Meredith accepts gifts from her father’s bond-servants.”

The man flushed, while evidently struggling to control his temper, and Janice, both in pity for him, as well as in desire for possession of the picture, for gifts were rare indeed in those days, begged—

“Oh, dadda, mayn’t I keep it?”

“Mr. Meredith,” said Charles, speaking with evident repression, “the present was given only with the respect—” he hesitated as if for words and then continued—“the respect a slave might

owe his—his better. Surely on this day it should be accepted in the same spirit.”

“What day mean ye?” asked Mr. Meredith.

The servant glanced at each face with surprise on his own. When he read a question in all, he asked in turn, “Hast forgotten ‘t is Christmas?”

Mrs. Meredith, who was still holding the portrait, dropped it on the floor, as if it were in some manner dangerous.

“Christmas!” she cried. “Janice, don’t thee dare touch the—”

“Oh, mommy, please,” beseeched the girl.

“Take it away, Charles,” ordered Mrs. Meredith. “And never let me hear of thy being the devil’s deputy again. We’ll have no papish mummary at Greenwood.”

The servant sullenly stooped, picked up the slip of ivory without a word, and turned to leave the room. But as he reached the door, Philemon found

tongue.

“I’ll trade that ‘ere for the fowlin’-piece you set such store by,” he offered.

The bondsman turned in the doorway and spoke bitterly. “This is to be got for no mess of pottage, if it is scorned,” he said.

“I don’t scorn—” began Janice, but her father broke in there.

“Give it me, fellow!” ordered the squire. “No bond-servant shall have my daughter’s portrait.”

An angry look came into the man’s eyes as he faced his master. “Come and take it, then,” he challenged savagely, moving a step forward,—an action which for some reason impelled the squire to take a step backward.

“Oh, dadda, don’t,” cried Janice, anxiously. “Charles, you would n’t!”

Fownes turned to her, with the threat gone from his face and attitude. “There’s my devil’s temper again, Miss Janice,”

said he, in explanation and apology.

“Please go away,” implored the girl, and the man went to the door. As he turned to close it, Janice said, “’T was very pretty, and—and—thank you, just the same.”

The formalism of bygone generations was no doubt conducive to respectful manners, but not to confidential relations, and her parents knew so little of their daughter’s nature as never to dream that they had occasioned the first suggestion of tenderness for the opposite sex the young girl’s heart had ever felt. And love’s flame is superior to physical law in that, the less ventilation it has, the more fiercely it burns.

## **XI**

### **“‘T IS AN ILL WIND THAT BLOWS NOBODY GOOD”**

The next ripple in the Greenwood life was due to more material circumstances, being inaugurated by the receipt of the Governor's writ, convening the Assembly of New Jersey. A trivial movement of a petty pawn on the chess-board of general politics, it nevertheless was of distinct importance in several respects to the Meredith family. Apparently the call meant only a few weeks' attendance of the squire's at Burlington, in the performance of legislative duties, and Janice's going with him to make a return visit to the Drinkers at Trenton. These, however, were the simplest aspects of the summons, and action by the citizens of Middlesex County quickly injected a more serious element into the programme.

The earliest evidence of this was the summoning by the Committee of Observation and Correspondence of a gathering to "instruct" the county representatives how they should vote on the question as to indorsing or disapproving the measures of the recent Congress. The notice of the meeting was read aloud by the Rev. Mr. McClave before his morning sermon one Sunday, and then he preached long and warmly from 2 Timothy, ii. 25,—“Instructing those that oppose themselves,” —the purport of his argument being the duty of the whole community to join hands in resisting the enemies of the land. The preacher knew he was directly antagonising the views of his wealthiest parishioner and the father of his would-be wife, but that fact only served to make him speak the more forcefully and fervently. However hard and stern the old Presbyterian faith was, its upholders had

the merit of knowing what they believed, and of stating that belief without flinch or waver.

[Illustration: "It flatters thee."]

As he sat and listened, not a little of the squire's old Madeira found its way into his face, and no sooner were the family seated in the sleigh than the wine seemed to find expression in his tongue as well.

"'T is the last time I set foot in your church, Mrs. Meredith," he declared, loudly enough to make it evident that he desired those filing out of the doors to hear. "Never before have I—"

"Hold thy tongue, Lambert!" interrupted Mrs. Meredith, in a low voice. "Dost think to make a scene on the Sabbath?"

"Then let your parson hold his," retorted Mr. Meredith, but like a well-trained husband, in so low a voice as to be inaudible to all but the occupants of the sleigh. "Ge wug, Joggles! What is the

land coming to, when such doctrines are preached in the pulpits; when those in authority are told 't is their duty to do what the riff-raff think best? As well let their brats and bunters tell us what to do. They'll not force me to attend their meeting, nor to yield a jot."

In fulfilment of his assertion, the squire sat quietly at home on the afternoon that the popular opinion of the county sought to voice itself, nodding his head over a volume of "Hale's Compleat Body of Husbandry." But as night drew near he was roused from his nap by the riding up of Squire Hennion and Philemon. Let it be confessed that, despite Mr. Meredith's contempt for what he styled the "mobocracy," his first question concerned the meeting.

"A pooty mess yer've made of it, Meredith," growled Mr. Hennion.

"I!" cried the squire, indignantly. "'T is naught I had to do with it."

“An’ ‘t is thet ‘ere keepin’ away dun the harm,” scolded the elder Hennion.

“Swamp it, yer let the hotheads control! Had all like yer but attended, they ‘d never hev bin able to carry some of them ‘ere resolushuns. On mor’n one resolve a single vote would hev bin a negative.”

“Pooh!” sneered the squire. “Sit down and warm thy feet while thee cools thy head, man. Ye’ll not get me to believe that one vote only was needed to prevent ‘em indorsing the Congress association.”

“Sartin they approved the Congress doins, *nemine contradicente*, as they wuz baound ter do since all against kep away, but—”

“Dost mean to say ye voted for it?” demanded Mr. Meredith.

Squire Hennion’s long, shrewd face slightly broadened as he smiled. “I wuz jest stepped over ter the ordinary ter git a nipperkin of ale when thet ere vote wuz

took."

"Who let the hotheads control, then?"  
jerked out Mr. Meredith.

"'T ain't no sort of use ter hev my  
neebours set agin me."

"And ye'll vote at Burlington as they tell  
ye?" fumed the squire.

"I'm rayther fearsome my rheumatiz will  
keep me ter hum this winter weather.  
I've had some mortal bad twinges naow  
an' agin."

"Now damn me!" swore the squire,  
rising and pacing the room with angry  
strides. "And ye come here to blame me  
for neglecting a chance to check 'em."

"I duz," responded Hennion. "If I go ter  
Assembly, 't won't prevent theer votin'  
fer what they wants. But if yer had  
attended that 'ere meetin', we could hev  
stopped them from votin' ter git up a  
militia company an' ter buy twenty  
barrels—"

"Dost mean to say they voted

rebellion?" roared Mr. Meredith, halting in his angry stride.

"It duz hev a squint toward it, theer ain't no denyin'. But I reckon it wuz baound ter come, vote ay or vote nay. Fer nigh three months all the young fellers hev been drillin' pooty reg'lar."

"Oh!" spoke up Janice. "Then that 's what Charles meant when he said 't was drill took him to the village."

"What?" demanded the squire. "My bond-servant?"

"Ay. 'T is he duz the trainin', so Phil tells me."

Mr. Meredith opened the door into the hall, and bawled, "Peg!" Without waiting to give the maid time to answer the summons he roared the name again, and continued to fairly bellow it until the appearance of the girl, whom he then ordered to "find Charles and send him here." Slightly relieved, he stamped back to the fire, muttering to himself in his ire.

A pause for a moment ensued, and then the elder Hennion spoke: "Waal, Meredith, hev yer rumpus with yer servant, but fust off let me say the say ez me and Phil come fer."

"And what 's that?"

"I rayther guess yer know areddy," continued the father, while the son's face became of the colour of the hickory embers. "My boy 's in a mighty stew about yer gal, but he can't git the pluck ter tell her; so seem' he needed some help an since I'd come ez far ez Brunswick, says I we'll make one ride of it, an' over we comes ter tell yer fair an' open what he's hangin' araound fer."

Another red face was hurriedly concealed by its owner stooping over her tambour-frame, and Janice stitched away as if nothing else were worth a second thought. It may be noted, however, that, as a preliminary to further work the next morning, a number of stitches had to be

removed.

“Ho, ho!” laughed the squire, heartily, and slapping Phil on the shoulder. “A shy bird, but a sly bird, eh? Oh, no! Mr. Fox thought the old dogs did n ’t know that he wanted little Miss Duck.”

Already in an agony of embarrassment, this speech reduced Phil to still more desperate straits. He could look at his father only in a kind of dumb appeal, and that individual, seeing his son ’s helplessness, spoke again.

“I’d hev left the youngsters ter snook araound till they wuz able ter fix things by themselves,” Mr. Hennion explained. “But the times is gittin’ so troublous thet I want ter see Phil sottled, an’ not rampin’ araound as young fellers will when they hain’t got nuthin’ ter keep them hum nights. An’ so I reckon thet if it ever is ter be, the sooner the better. Yer gal won’t be the wus off, hevin’ three men ter look aout fer her, if it duz come

on ter blow.”

“Well said!” answered the squire. “What say ye, Matilda?”

“Oh, dadda,” came an appeal from the tambour-frame, “I don’t want to marry. I want to stay at home with—”

“Be quiet, child,” spoke up her mother, “and keep thine opinion to thyself till asked. We know best what is for thy good.”

“He, he, he!” snickered the elder Hennion. “Gals hain’t changed much since I wuz a-courtin’. They allus make aout ter be desprit set agin the fellers an’ mortal daown on marryin’, but, lordy me! if the men held off the hussies ’ud do the chasm’.”

“Thee knows, Lambert,” remarked his better half, “that I think Janice would get more discipline and greater godliness in —”

“I tell ye he sha’n’t have her,” broke in the squire. “No man who preaches

against me shall have my daughter; no, not if 't were Saint Paul himself."

"For her eventual good I—"

"Damn her eventual—"

"I fear 't will come to that."

"Well, well, Patty, perhaps it will," acceded the squire. "But since 't is settled already by foreordination, let the lass have a good time before it comes. Wouldst rather marry the parson than Phil, Janice?"

"I don 't want to marry any one," cried the girl, beginning to sob.

"A stiff-necked child thou art," said her mother, sternly. "Dost hear me?"

"Yes, mommy," responded a woful voice.

"And dost intend to be obedient?"

"Yes, mommy," sobbed the girl.

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