GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADLIER

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

PERSECUTION REVIVED

It may be that the strife of faction, which marked the Earl of Bellomont's term of office from its first inception in April, 1698, together with those troubles resulting in the death of Captain Kidd and culminating in the extreme severity with which he thenceforward pursued all illicit traders, so embittered him that he was eager to wreak vengeance upon someone. Or it may have been the hereditary hostility of his family—and particularly of his father, Charles Coote—towards his Catholic fellow-countrymen in Ireland, which broke out with still greater venom here in the New World, where abitrary power was placed in his hands. But it is certain that, about two years after his arrival, he yielded to the anti-Catholic influence of John Nanfan and others, or perhaps himself outstripped them in the race, and invoked the rigors of the law against the Catholic clergy, and the Jesuits in particular.

The law which he saw fit to pass at a session of the Council on August 9, 1700, came with the force of a stunning blow to the few scattered Catholics, who had gone their way in peace and obscurity, and had not taken any part in the troubles between the contending parties. Its injustice was manifest to the majority of right-minded citizens, including a large proportion of the Dutch settlers who, until the evil days of Jacob Leisler, had been averse to active persecution. It is true that there were laws for the regulation of public worship and the like, which had told against the Catholic clergy and made it necessary to hold Catholic services in secret places and without the cognizance of the authorities. But still there had been no overt acts, and the presence of Catholics, if suspected, was winked at by the easy-going officials.

In the time of the Catholic Governor, Dongan, and with a Catholic sovereign reigning in England, Catholics had been enabled to assemble for public worship in a chapel at the Fort and were ministered to by the Jesuit Fathers whom Dongan had brought over in his train. The time came when that Governor, who had striven so hard to procure for others the freedom of worship which his co-religionists for that brief interval enjoyed, was "hunted like a wolf" by the vindictive Leisler, and Catholic priests were banished from the colony. Since the English Protestant Governors following Dongan had taken no active steps against the missionaries or other priests, it had been hoped that Lord Bellomont might pursue the same policy, despite the unsavory reputation of his family for religious intolerance of the most envenomed kind. But those hopes were doomed to come to a peremptory end.

It was a sultry midsummer evening, when the Dog Star was reigning over the town. The city lay languid and enervated, expecting relief only from the sea-breeze that at night blew up from the Bay. All day Manhattan had sweltered under the fierce sun, the reflection of which from the glassy surface of the water seemed to intensify the heat. Not a breath stirred the leaves, which drooped listlessly downwards. The sun set like a ball of fire, crimsoning all the West; the stars, as they came forth, were obscured by a heat mist; while the young moon, rising white and clear, likewise took on a ruddy tint as it left the cool shadows gathered on the horizon.

Gerald de Lacey had been feeling all that day an unwonted depression, for the trend of events, which he closely followed with the mind of one trained to think upon such matters, and his considerable inner knowledge of the workings of governments had caused him to fear that some stroke was imminent. He had had some letters from Father Harvey, a Jesuit now of the Maryland Mission, who had been closely associated with New York in Dongan's time, and always yearned after the Dutch capital. As he had been Mr. de Lacey's particular friend and confessor in those days, which now seemed dream-like in the peace and security that they offered to men of all faiths and especially to the previously sorely-tried Catholics, there was a peculiarly intimate and affectionate bond between them, almost that of father and son. The good priest had been preparing de Lacey for what he felt certain would happen. Gerald knew now that, behind all his fears and misgivings, there always had been hope. And this hope had grown stronger, since Lord Bellomont had been over two years in the colony and must have been well aware that the Catholics, even if they were such as the fanatics affected to believe them, could have no power to do harm to a living soul. But, no doubt, the doughty Earl was anxious to make a great show of loyalty to the Protestant Succession, and to retrieve what he had lost in public opinion by the ill-success of his privateering scheme. He wanted the King to know that there was a safe man at the head of affairs in New York, and so took the lead in a new outbreak of intolerance, which was presently spread to the neighboring colonies.

On that inauspicious day, Mr. de Lacey had gone out for a walk, and, sitting down to taste some new cider under the trees of *Der Halle*, had suddenly heard the news. He had given no sign as he listened to the talk concerning it, though his heart was beating fast and his pulses leaping. The spirits that, according to local tradition, held back the storm winds behind the pile of great rocks, must have been keeping them very close that day, for scarce a ripple stirred the languid bosom of the river, and the sails of the boat hung listlessly in a great calm. As de Lacey finished deliberately his drink with mine host, the latter shook his head over the startling news of that day, but drew forth no expression of opinion from his customer, whose religious opinions of course were unknown to him. Holding his head very high and with some new animation stirring all through his frame, that loyal member of the proscribed faith walked quickly home. On the way he encountered Captain Ferrers and exchanged salutes with him, though their acquaintance, through deliberate caution on the part of Evelyn's father, had been of the slightest. He fancied that the young officer looked hard at him, but perhaps it was only fancy. For it was highly improbable that Ferrers could know what was only dimly remembered by some older people here in Manhattan—that, when de Lacey had been attached to the Household of the Catholic Governor, he had practised the Catholic faith in the chapel at the Fort. Most of those who remembered must have believed that he simply attended these services out of courtesy to his chief, and inquired no further. As to his subsequent persecution by Jacob Leisler, and his expulsion from the colony, it was something which had been suffered by many of the leading citizens, especially those of the Bavard party. Hence the term "Papist" was often applied indifferently to members of this party and those who were really Catholics, and it was probably taken for granted that Gerald de Lacey was only one of the former. For some time after the coming of the new Governor, Gerald had had another fear in his mind, and this was that either or both of the two officers who were so prominently connected with my Lord Bellomont, might have an inconvenient memory of certain events in England which had been the immediate cause of his leaving that country. But the time had passed, and he had long since persuaded himself that they had failed to recognize him, and it was most improbable that they would do so now.

When he reached home Evelyn had not yet returned. She had gone to take dinner with her friend Polly Van Cortlandt, after which it had been her intention to spend an hour or so as usual with the *Wilden* at their camping ground. This intention, however, she relinquished on hearing the ominous news at the Van Cortlandts', and hurried home, reaching there but a few moments after her father. She found him walking about in the garden, in evident agitation. Catching sight of Evelyn's pale, troubled face, he came towards her with both hands outstretched. In that sultry, storm-laden atmosphere, some presage of future trouble seemed to weigh upon the minds of both. The heavy scent of many flowers smote upon their senses. They were the late flowers which Evelyn had tended, and which had replaced with their richer coloring the narcissi, pea blossoms, and the various pale blooms of the spring and early summer. Heliotropes, poppies, nasturtiums, pink, crimson and white roses, pansies and marigold filled the beds and spread in luxuriant profusion over every available corner.

"Well, little daughter," said Mr. de Lacey, a light from within illumining his face, which nevertheless appeared unwantonly lined and careworn to the anxious eyes that scanned it, "so a blow has fallen at last, which, as I fear me much, is but the precursor of many another."

"O father dearest," cried Evelyn, "it is dreadful, and it may have such consequences."

"There is but small doubt that it will," said Mr. de Lacey. "The clergy, and especially the Jesuits, are always the first to suffer, and then it is our turn."

He was furthermore convinced, though he did not say so to Evelyn, that his own position would soon become, if it were not already, extremely perilous. In all the talk that was sure to follow upon this measure of the Governor, the fact would surely be brought to light that he was a Catholic, having been intimately associated with Dongan in whatever efforts were made for the welfare of his co-religionists. Also, it was quite among the possibilities that the memory of one or both of those members of Lord Bellomont's Household might suddenly awaken to what had been his record in England and to the causes of his leaving that country.

"But," he said at last, rousing himself as if from a deep reverie, "if persecution comes our way, we can meet it as did our ancestors in our faith. You know well, little daughter, that our family can boast of more than one martyr for the Faith, and indeed the Irish people of those days were all confessors, even when they did not reach the higher plane of martyrdom."

"We will meet whatever comes, my father and I together," said Evelyn.

In moments of deep excitement she did not talk much, as though her thoughts were too deep for speech. But there was a glow in her eyes that made it seem as though a lamp had been suddenly lighted behind them, and the light seemed to shine out from her eyes and communicate itself to others. Her head was held higher, and every fiber of her body seemed to express courage and resolution. She could perceive too the exaltation in her father's bearing. This new call-to-arms had roused him, as of old the sound of the trumpet, when he had taken up material arms for king and country. Evelyn now felt ashamed of the depression and the fear that had overmastered her, when first she had heard the news at the Van Cortlandts'. The soul within her seemed to take fire from that pure spirit which, in patient endurance, had already undergone a martyrdom, and was now ready once more for the combat.

Out of the blackness that had settled upon the town, as they still lingered in the perfumed stillness of the garden, they heard the Watch coming with rattling staves and hoarse voices, proclaiming as usual the hour, the state of the weather, and lastly the Act of His Most Worshipful Richard, Earl of Bellomont, Baron of Coolony, Governor of the Province of New York, Captain General of the Forces, etc., against all Jesuits and Popish priests, forbidding under grievous penalties all exercise of their ministry, with dire penalties likewise for those who should harbor or consort with them. The two stood listening with blanched faces, for this solemn proclamation appeared to bring the new departure home to them. To Evelyn, whose heart beat high with indignation, it seemed absurd and outrageous to suppose that such measures should be taken here in this peaceful town, resting between its swift flowing rivers and with its harbor that, but for the presence of the warship, appeared a peaceful haven where it might have been supposed that the oppressed of all nations would seek and find shelter. Father and daughter heard with a new sensation the gates of the town being shut, simultaneously with the announcement by the Watch of the hour of nine and the firing of the gun from the Fort. That simple act somehow suggested a restriction of freedom—bars which shut them and their fellow-Catholics off from the free exercise of their religion. Henceforth, they felt convinced, the slightest turn of events might involve them in material ruin, if not place them in actual peril, since the temper of the Governor and of his advisers of the Protestant party was thus shown. The law, which for the moment chiefly concerned the clergy, might presently be extended to the faithful laity, if indeed they were not already touched by one of its clauses. Experience everywhere had shown that intolerance, once let loose, had but whetted the appetite with the clergy as first victims.

To Evelyn that hour seemed a momentous one, marking an epoch in her life, which now seemed to have been idle and frivolous up to this moment. She reproached herself that she had ever left her father alone in his solitude, even though it had been at his express wish and almost command. Her love of dress, the solicitude she had shown for her clothes, came out of the darkness to reproach her. She was keyed up to a pitch of enthusiasm which only youth can know, and which made it seem as if no sacrifice would be too great that might help the cause or give her a share in the trials that were gathering about it like storm-clouds around a point of light.

"It would be after all so fine a thing, father," she said, "if we should be called upon to suffer for the Faith."

He reached out his hand and stroked her hair as he had often done when she was a child.

"That is my own brave girl," he said. "But for the moment we must be merely prudent, changing nothing in our ordinary mode of life lest suspicion should be thereby excited. There are but few, I think, who know to any certainty what religion we profess, and these few can be trusted."

He stopped and paced up and down the garden walk for a brief interval, as if to recover command of himself. Some flowers that had fallen from the bushes in a heavy shower of the night previous, gave forth a sweet odor as he crushed them under his feet, as a heart crushed by pain gives forth its sweetest fragrance of charity and faith.

"After that," he said at last, for in Evelyn's silence he felt only the strong support of her sympathy and the assurance of her strength, "after that we must do as God directs. I have been reading with all care the Act, which is now made public and which I shall read to you presently—or such portions thereof as may be pertinent. We must not conceal from ourselves that, once it is put in force, it gives a broad scope for oppressive acts, even toward the laity."

Though he did not say so to her, he knew that her teaching of the Indian catechumens might very easily bring Evelyn under the Act, while he himself might—and, as he admitted, with some justice—be prosecuted, even on an accusation of high treason, for his open profession there of the Catholic faith, as well as for services rendered in England to the late King and against that other whom he had considered as a usurper.

"They will be able to indict me," he said to himself, "if such should seem good to them, on a charge of 'consorting and conspiring with Jesuits,' though in truth my connection with those sainty priests and missionaries, either here or overseas, has been altogether of a spiritual nature, and politics was scarcely so much as mentioned between us. But who will convince them of that, since their desire is to exterminate Catholics and make these colonies wholly Protestant?"

To Evelyn, however, he merely said that she must be careful in her future relations with the *Wilden*, and must bind them to the closest secrecy, which they above all people were capable of maintaining. The warning given, he fell back into something more than his customary cheerfulness, and laughed and jested so that Evelyn wondered at his lightheartedness, as he took her arm to lead her into the study, where she was anxious to hear the wording of the Act against Popish ministers. At the Van Cortlandts' they had been chary of repeating all its phrases. Gerald de Lacey threw his hat boyishly into the air with a laugh that was reminiscent of his youth, crying out:

"And meantime, three cheers for the Jesuits and all other Popish priests."

Though he had not raised his voice, the echoes seemed to catch the sound and repeat it, and Evelyn laid her hand on his arm with a new terror. By the light of the wax tapers their heads were presently bent together over the printed formula of that Act, while moths, coming in from the garden like messengers from the outside darkness, hovered about their heads, and the cry of a night-bird might be heard sounding hoarsely through the gloom. The father's clear, decided voice read, while Evelyn rested her arm on his shoulder, with a gesture of confidence and affection:

"Whereas divers Jesuits, priests and Popish missionaries, have of late come and for some time have had their residence in the remote parts of the Province and others of His Majesty's adjacent colonies, who by their wicked, subtle insinuations, industriously labor to debauch, seduce and withdraw the Indians from their due obedience to His Sacred Majesty and to excite and stir them up to sedition, rebellion and open hostility to His Majesty's Government.

"Be it enacted that all and every Jesuit and seminary priest, missionary or other spiritual and ecclesiastical person made or ordained by any authority, power or jurisdiction, derived, challenged, or pretended from the Pope or See of Rome, now residing within this Province or any part thereof, shall depart from it before the 1st day of November, 1700.

"And be it farther enacted by the authority aforesaid.

"That all and every Jesuit, seminary priest, missionary and other spiritual or ecclesiastical person, etc., that shall profess himself or otherwise appear to be such by preaching, teaching of others to say any Popish prayers, by celebrating Masses or granting absolutions or using any other of the Romish ceremonies or religious worship, by what name, title or degree soever such person shall be called or known, who shall continue, abide, remain or come into the Province, or any part thereof, after the 1st day of November, shall be deemed and accounted an incendiary and disturber of the public peace and safety and an enemy to the true Christian religion and shall be judged to suffer perpetual imprisonment, and if any such person being perpetually imprisoned shall break prison and make his escape, he shall suffer the pains of death, with penalties and forfeitures as in case of felony.

"And it is farther enacted by the authority aforesaid that every person who shall wittingly and believingly receive, harbor, conceal, aid, succor or relieve any Jesuit, priest, missionary or other ecclesiastical person of the Romish clergy, knowing him to be such and being lawfully convicted before any of His Majesty's Courts of Record within this Province, shall forfeit 200 pounds of current money of this Province; and such persons shall be farther punished by being set in the pillory upon several days and also be bound to the good pleasure of the Court."

"And," cried Mr. de Lacey, striking the paper sharply with his hand to emphasize his words, "every charge against the Catholic priests and missionaries, as I from my former close connections with affairs do fully realize, is false as hell. The missionaries ever labor to keep the Indians under their control loyal to the Government under which they live. That they have done much in this respect for the government in these colonies I am well aware. And at the present moment no priests or missionaries are resident in these colonies, for they come but occasionally to exercise their ministry."

Evelyn's eyes filled with tears, and she could not trust herself to speak, as she remembered the saintly, all-enduring and indefatigably devoted men who, by carrying the Gospel to the Indians, had done so much to civilize them, and, by keeping them under control, had prevented many a ferocious act.

"It has ever been the darling project of my Lord Bellomont," her father continued, "to place Protestant ministers amongst the savages, and he and all his advisers now lament that, as a matter of policy, such was not done before. Though," he added, with a laugh, "one of the chief obstacles to that scheme, as he and others declare, is the difficulty of inducing men of the cloth to take up their abode amongst the redskins. But, nevertheless, he would drive away and hunt to death the only men who are willing to give their lives for the Gospel. He has offered rewards for their apprehension, which even the Iroquois have scorned. He has striven, as he declares, to cause 'implacable hatred' between them and the Indians, and has denounced them to the latter as liars and impostors."

His voice choked with emotion, and he rose and walked to the window, whence he presently returned, saying!

"Ah, little he imagines the manner of men with whom he has to deal, when he seeks to terrify them with threats of imprisonment or death. Are they not braving death daily in the strongholds of the pagan Indians, or following them through trackless forests?"

"Oh, why was this odious Earl of Bellomont sent to rule us," cried Evelyn, indignantly, "and suffered to make such laws!"

"He is but invoking against us, or placing on the statute book, laws which already prevail over yonder, and which Dutch William most gladly will put in force. So you see, my Evelyn, what prudence will be required on your part."

"Boldness would consort better with my present mood," exclaimed the girl.

"Prudence is nevertheless the true courage, and what will be most helpful to all concerned," said Mr. de Lacey. "For, as to your relations with the *Wilden*, Lord Bellomont will not lightly pardon any action upon your part, which puts in peril his favorite plan of detaching the savages from the Catholic faith. He will hold you almost as a missionary if he should but discover that you are continuing at the camp the teachings of the good Fathers." He drew a long breath and then said, smilingly: "However, he has but sounded the tocsin, and we have a breathing space."

While father and daughter thus conversed, and during the days that followed, that law of my Lord Bellomont offered food for conversation in every dwelling and in all the taverns of Manhattan, as well as throughout the country, since, in almost identical language, it was promulgated in Massachusetts through the influence of that fanatical scion of the Coote family.

TO BE CONTINUED

WHERE ADVERSITY LED

Father Durkin looked sharply at the young man as he entered.

"So you're a Catholic, eh?" he asked.

"Yes, Father," was the low reply.

"What are you in for?" not unkindly.

A flush rose in the pale cheeks. "Embezzlement," the convict said, after a brief hesitation.

"What's your name? Treahey? Oh, that bank affair," Father Durkin said. "You've been here five or six months then?"

"Five and a half," dully.

"And you've never been to church or near me in all that time. I wonder why?" The question was gently put, but the priest scanned the downcast face closely. He was used to pallor, to sullen, lowering, sad, and to pitiful faces, but anything like the despair that looked out of the young convict's eyes, as he raised them, Father Durkin thought he had not seen in a long time. It started him for a moment, that hollow stare of misery. Then the convict spoke.

"I couldn't," he muttered. "I thought I couldn't—I thought God had deserted me—"

"Why did you think so?" gently.

"Because I am innocent, Father—because I am innocent, and here I am—in the penitentiary! Oh," as he saw what he thought was a look of incredulity in the priest's eyes, "you've got to believe me!—some one's got to believe me or I'll just die! I've stood all I can. . ." A half sob rose in his throat.

"Softly, my boy, softly," the priest soothed. "I will believe you—if you are really innocent."

"I came in here desperate," the young fellow went on. "They all think I'm guilty — why, even my lawyer to whom I paid all I had—nobody would believe me when I said I had nothing to do with the stealing. Why wouldn't they—why?" his voice rising passionately. "Isn't there any thing about truth—isn't there any way you can tell when people are telling the truth with their whole heart and soul? I can't understand," hopelessly, "but they wouldn't believe me—"

"Tell me about it," the priest interrupted quietly. "Unburden your mind—it will relieve you."

The young fellow—he was little more than a boy — drew a deep breath.

"Relief? That's what I want," he said. "I can't go on like this—"

Three years before, he said, he had come from Grahamville with a letter of introduction to the president of the First National Bank, who had at once put him to work. He had been advanced every year and at the time of the embezzlement was one of the chief bookkeepers with a salary of $100 a month. He had always gone to church regularly, went out very little at night, being a great reader, though the last year he had been running about some with a rather gay crowd.

"Ah!" Father Durkin said, "what do you mean by gay?"

"Well—they gambled—quietly, you know; not for large stakes, around at the fellows' houses. I—they asked me to go a few times—one of the crowd boarded where I did—and I went. I didn't have very many friends or acquaintances, and I got a little dull sometimes. I like to play cards, and I didn't think there was much harm in it. But they used to drink a good deal, too — and run around places. I did try to drop out a couple of times—"

"Why didn't you?" the priest asked sternly.

"Well, it was this way," lookingly frankly at Father Durkin; "I was pretty lucky. I hardly ever lost, and when I'd talk about not playing any more the fellows would say; 'Come on. Don't be a piker and quit when you're ahead of the game'—and you see I wanted to be square—"

The priest nodded. "I see."

Then the blow had fallen. The embezzlement had been discovered, and his—Walter Treahey's—books had been found to contain false entries. His arrest and conviction followed quickly, though he protested his innocence passionately from first to last. No one believed him in the face of the evidence, least of all his gaming friends, who were particularly indignant at having their names connected in any way with that of an embezzler; while his known association with them helped to forge an important link in the chain of evidence.

So Walter Treahey went to prison.

"Where are your parents?" the priest asked.

"Dead, since I was about fifteen. I was an only child, and if I have any other relatives I don't know where they are. Perhaps it's just as well," bitterly. "They wouldn't believe me either."

In spite of his inclinations to take a good many prison statements with a grain of salt, Father Durkin felt himself considerably impressed by the young convict's story.

"Could any one else have had access to your books?"

The boy shook his head. "Not that I know of. The books were all put in the safe at night. Some of the men worked at night occasionally, but I never had to—I was a rapid worker. I liked my work —" He stopped abruptly and a deeper shade fell over his face.

"Is there any one you would suspect yourself?"

"No one," Walter said emphatically. "They seemed a fine set of fellows. Honest, I mean," he added gloomily. "They weren't very nice to me—afterward. But, of course, they thought I did it."

"Still, some one falsified the books — some one in the bank got the money," Father Durkin said thoughtfully. "Can't you think of any one who might be likely to do it?"

Another hopeless shake of the head. "I've tried that—all these awful months—and I couldn't seem to fasten it on any one. As I knew them, I didn't think that any of them would do a thing like that; but of course I didn't see much of them outside working hours. No," his head sank despairingly, I couldn't accuse any one—but they," he looked up quickly while an angry spark glowed in his dull eyes, "they could believe me guilty—"

"It was the crowd you went with that queered you, I'm afraid," the priest remarked. "It was unfortunate that you got in with them."

"I know that now," Walter admitted readily enough. "But they weren't bad at that. And what's a fellow to do? He can't stay in the house all the time."

The old question and the old problem. Father Durkin pursed up his lips and shook his head. That was the trouble with these young fellows; eager for life and a good time, and then how frightfully easy to find the downward path, or at least one sure to lead there by some turn or other.

After some further talk and a few probing questions on the priest's part, he said slowly: "Well, I don't know but that I believe you, Walter," rising as he spoke.

A gasping cry came from the young convict's lips, then he covered his face with his hands and burst into unrestrained weeping.

"Oh, Father," he sobbed brokenly, as soon as he could speak, "you don't know what it means—to hear you say that. It gives me something to live for—something to live for! I've been like a soul in hell all these months—"

"You should have come to me long ago," Father Durkin said sternly. "A Catholic boy—to deny his religion—"

"Father," the boy interrupted, raising his tear-stained pale face to the priest and speaking earnestly, "do you know why I did that? I—I didn't want my disgrace to reflect on the Church. Even as a boy it used to make me furious when I'd read of a Catholic doing anything disgraceful. I used to say I'd die before I'd bring disgrace on my Church like that. And so when I—when this came—I said—that I had no religion. And sometimes, Father," his voice sinking a little, "sometimes in the last few months I began to think that I didn't have very much—I was so full of despair—"

Father Durkin's heart stirred strangely at the ingenuous statement. Who would expect to find here that delicate lady, Chivalry, walking, white-souled and radiant, hand in hand with a convicted felon? What had been before but a mere impression of the young man's innocence now became clarified with a certainty.

"Put away that despair now, my boy," he said kindly. "Come to church, to your duties, and you'll find consolation there. And," he added, I'll see what I can do. "Oh," as a look of joy flashed into the boy's eyes, "don't expect anything—maybe

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