

GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADDLER

CHAPTER XI—CONTINUED

Evelyn, meanwhile, was discouraging quite simply and unaffectedly with the Indians. They crowded about her affectionately, and at her bidding showed all their wares to the wife of the "Great Captain." Some of these treasures they had brought from the shores of the Atlantic, whence the sea rolled outward till there was no land between there and the coast of Ireland; some of them were brought from the fastnesses of the Jersey heights or from the salt marshes of Long Island. They included bead-work, dyes, berries, fresh and dried fish, native tobacco, willow witses, oak knots, cat's-tails or bulrushes, and baskets of numberless colors. Not for years had Captain Williams seen Her Ladyship more charmed or interested. Her boredom vanished as if by magic, and she seemed to regard Evelyn as the priestess of all these mysteries of Nature and Nature's children, as having arranged the whole varied show for her entertainment.

Meanwhile, failing Evelyn, Prosser Williams had been making his life agreeable to Polly, who he angrily declared was worth half a dozen of such frigid unapproachable beings as that pale girl beside his Lady Bellomont. Yet he knew in his heart that he would have given all that other's attractions, and indeed the combined attractions of all the women whom he had hitherto known, for one such friendly smile as he had seen Evelyn bestow upon Captain Ferrers. Even with the Indians, he saw that her frigidity had disappeared. Her face alight with interest, she talked to them brightly and naturally and with an unaffected friendliness.

"I perceive," he said to Polly, in his sneering voice, "that Mistress de Lacey has a genius for subduing the aborigines."

"Yes," agreed Polly, who was bravely struggling with a sense of pique at the indifference to her of my Lady Bellomont, and was therefore less careful than usual of her words. "And she is their teacher and something of a missionary as well."

"Missionary?" echoed the young man, starting back in affected astonishment. "Has the young lady performed in that direction too? And I pray you, what kind of a missionary?"

The expression on the inquirer's face caused a vague alarm in Polly's mind. "She remembered too late that the subject of Evelyn's religion was altogether taboo in their circle. It was practically ignored, for, since the stormy days of Leisler and recent enmities in Maryland and elsewhere, it was decidedly dangerous to be suspected of Popish leanings and unpleasant to have any sort of intimacy with those of the proscribed faith. In fact, the prejudice that had been more or less passive in Dutch New York, save in the days of Leisler, had sprung into life since the accession of the Protestant champion, William of Orange, and was now likely to change into active hostility. Polly would therefore, have been only too willing to change the subject, but the curiosity of her companion, once aroused, was not easily set at rest; in so far as Evelyn was concerned, it was fairly consuming.

"So this all-perfect lady," the officer remarked, "is then of a religious turn?"

"Oh, yes, in truth," said Polly, "she is of a religious turn." And she added apologetically, as though she had said something disparaging: "But not unduly so."

Prosser Williams laughed at the qualification and then asked: "Is it your Dutch church which claims her allegiance?"

Polly shook her head and laughed, for all of a sudden it seemed to her supremely ludicrous that Evelyn de Lacey should "sit under," as the phrase went, good Dominie Selyns.

"It is Trinity Church, then, that she attends?" persisted Williams. "And yet, if my memory serves me right, on the numerous occasions when officially I have been obliged to go to church, I caught no glimpse of Mistress Evelyn."

"No," said Polly, beginning to flounder in deep water. "She is religious, I opine, without much of church-going."

And she knew that she spoke the truth since there was no church for Evelyn to attend. As for the occasional Masses in private houses which Catholics surreptitiously attended, they were guarded with the utmost secrecy and had never come to the knowledge of Mistress Polly.

"That is a mode of worship," said Captain Williams, "which I do infinitely prefer myself, but it is not one which usually finds favor with the devout."

Though, to Polly's relief, he changed the subject, the train of thought he laid in his mind led him to entertain some half-formulated suspicions.

Before my Lady Bellomont took her leave after exhaustive purchases, which delighted the *Widow*, and the distribution of sundry trifling gifts, she gave a hint to both the girls of the series of entertainments which she was planning at the Fort. These were designed to bring together the various social elements of the colony that had been sadly split up and divided by the internecine strife

which had been raging ever since the régime of the usurping Leisler, and which his execution had caused to break forth with renewed fury. For though Lord Bellomont had chosen to range himself upon the Leislerian side of the controversy, he had been unable as yet to effect anything like a peaceful understanding between the contending parties. With Evelyn, Her Ladyship had had but little opportunity for private conversation, but she said:

"You add discretion to all your other charms. For I have not heard so much as a whisper of that little adventure of mine."

"I have not mentioned it," said Evelyn simply, and Her Ladyship felt that in that simple assertion there was truth. But Evelyn, bethinking herself added: "Save to my father. I tell him everything."

"Then he, too, is discreet," replied Evelyn, "and he himself advised me to make no mention of what was a trifling incident, which would merely excite the idle curiosity of the gossips."

"He spoke the truth," said Lady Bellomont, "for you cannot know how trifles have been sometimes magnified to my grievous harm. And I will tell you that it is not permitted me to go forth unattended, nor to do those things for which the meanest woman in the town has liberty."

From that time forth Evelyn's sympathies were always keenly aroused in favor of the Countess Bellomont, who she could perceive had so much to contend against in her domestic circumstances. She was disposed to regard my Lord in the light of a tyrant, and did not give sufficient consideration to the fact that perhaps the stern and arbitrary measures restricting his wife's freedom were the result of the lady's folly.

The two girls were very much elated by the promise the Countess had made of successive gaieties at the Fort and the gubernatorial residence. They took their homeward way by Queen Street, in which Madam Van Cortlandt lived, and where they were sure to meet a goodly sprinkling of the fashionable world and many of their acquaintances, to whom they might impart Her Excellency's good tidings and at the same time make known the honor that they had enjoyed in being admitted so familiarly to Her Ladyship's company. The two fell into dispute as they walked on the subject of Prosser Williams. Evelyn declared him to be "an odious man," whose outward civility concealed an insolently suspicious attitude toward the Colonials. Polly defended him with some heat, declaring that she had found his manner agreeable and his speech full of witty sayings and pretty compliments.

"And I speak without prejudice," said Polly frankly, "for all his interest in Evelyn, in you, though he strives to make the same by petty sneers and innuendoes. You would have but to raise your finger to have him at your feet."

"Where he might stay, in so far as I am concerned," said Evelyn. "Even if you were right, which is absurd, since I have scarce exchanged a dozen words with him, and he has been meanwhile in better company, his is an admiration which I freely declare I do not want."

"Your favors are all for the other," said Polly, with a touch of malice.

"Polly," cried Evelyn, and this time there was a hint of real annoyance in her manner, "you are in a provoking mood today."

"The truth is not always palatable, my Evelyn," said Polly, laughing. "But if you have cast your arrows at Captain Ferrers, where is the harm, and which of us would not do the same? Especially, my dear, since they have found sure lodgment."

"Your imagination runs away with you, my pretty Polly," laughed Evelyn.

It must be owned, however, that this assertion of her observant friend was gratifying in the extreme. It was something to have even been supposed to have made such a conquest, in however limited a sense that term might be understood. For she could not conceal from herself that the young officer under discussion occupied already a considerable share of her thoughts and imagination. This latter had been excited to a still greater degree by an account given her by a young subaltern with whom she had lately danced, of Captain Ferrers' prowess and gallantry. He described in detail how, in the late war, Captain Ferrers had led a charge, bareheaded, his face pale as his eyes glowing, cheering and encouraging his men until he had fallen with a wound which was believed, at first, to be mortal. Evelyn's informant, full of boyish enthusiasm, had added other details as to his superior officer's general character, his popularity with the men and his upright and honorable demeanor, all of which had fitted in with her own impressions.

"I marvel oftentimes," rattled on Polly, "that your conceit does not become inordinate with all your conquests. But no, you take them calmly, and seem to find it of no moment that you have laid by the heels these two sprigs of nobility and Governor's men."

"Who but Polly could prattle on with such absurdities?" cried Evelyn, laughing again and more heartily.

"All the while knowing that it is sober truth," returned Polly, "and that you were like to set the new-

comers distracted? Were it any other but yourself, I should be with color of the leaves with envy and wild disposed to hate you."

"You can afford to be generous, with half the town at your feet," retorted Evelyn. "And as for hating me—oh, never, never do that, Polly, whatever may betide." Her eyes filled with tears as she added: "For victories won at that price would be dearly purchased."

An affectionate squeeze of her arm and an affectionate word or two exchanged between them cemented their pact of friendship more strongly than ever.

CHAPTER XII. DANGEROUS DAYS

The government of my Lord Bellomont was marked in the first place by a return to the courtly elegance, pomp and state that had fallen into desuetude at the mansion in the Fort since the days of Sir Edmund Andros. Once more the state carriages went forth into the town with positions and outriders; pomp and ceremony were the order of the day; the rich costumes of my Lady Bellomont, worn with grace and distinction, were the cynosure of all feminine eyes. Entertainments, mostly formal in character, were given frequently, though there were not wanting the gay dances which had been announced to Evelyn and her friend by Her Excellency. These were chiefly of her contrivance, assisted by the ever-pliable Prosser Williams, the other men of the Household and the naval and military officers. Enlivened by the strains of an orchestra of negro minstrels, who played on the battlement of the Fort, these assemblies brought together all the young people of the Dutch metropolis and were keenly enjoyed by the hostess herself. For it was her opportunity to escape the jealous vigilance of my Lord Bellomont and to mingle freely with the youth of both sexes, whose society she found an agreeable change from the elderly magnates whom the Governor entertained at dinner.

But, even during the course of these festivities, the sharp-eyed husband never entirely relaxed his scrutiny of his wife's movements. He was quick to observe any special marks of friendliness on her part towards any of the Colonials. And his jealousy extended not only to those of the male sex, but even to women. Thus he noticed, at one of the first dances, the favor which Her Ladyship extended to Evelyn de Lacey, who was looking her very best, and was also quick of monopolizing, in so far as his duties permitted him that busy evening, my Lord's favorite side-de-camp. Hence it was that after a few curt words of greeting, altogether at variance with the courteous manner which he usually displays, he turned his back upon Evelyn, with frowning brows and pursed lips. This circumstance was seen by Prosser Williams with keen pleasure, and mentally noted for future use. Also, when next he addressed Evelyn, he lent to his manner a certain undercurrent of insolence, which not only the girl herself, but Egbert Ferrers, saw and resented.

However, there were graver matters claiming the public attention just then, and the attitude of the Governor gave cause for anxiety to more than one class of the citizens. Thus at the suggestion of a certain clique, who had managed to secure his ear, and who described themselves as "the people's party" and the champions of Protestantism, the Governor was induced to condemn the action of one of his predecessors, Colonel Slaughter, by whom Jacob Leisler and his son-in-law, Milborne, were put to death. He exerted all his influence with the King, who had reversed the attainder pronounced on him by the deposed sovereign, King James, and had made him Earl of Bellomont, to procure an Act of Parliament removing the attainder from Leisler and Milborne.

This action, which was highly unpopular with a large and very prominent section of the community, and another succeeding action of Bellomont's were discussed with some warmth at one of Madam Van Cortlandt's assemblies, at which were present a particularly large gathering of the aristocratic and "big coats" party. The allusion in this title was to the short coats worn by the tradesmen and laboring classes. Leisler was the self-constituted champion of the people, but his whole régime appears to have been a series of lawless, tyrannical and arbitrary acts against everyone who opposed him. Amongst the representatives of the leading Dutch families assembled, with a fair intermingling of English or Huguenot colonists who sided with them, there was great indignation, and, as they met around Madam Van Cortlandt's card tables, they talked of little else but this or that move on the part of the Governor, who had apparently declared war upon their faction. As they sipped the spiced wine and ate of the *olye kochts*, or doughnuts and pound cakes, with which they were regaled, they demoted in more or less courteous tones the policy of the government, and resolved as far as possible to oppose it. It was Myneer de Vries who had brought the latest piece of intelligence, and, as it was passed around amongst the various groups, the faces of those who heard it were a study in themselves.

"At midnight," he announced, "on the fourteenth day of this month, the body of Leisler and his son-in-law, Jacob Milborne, are to be exhumed and buried again

with honor under the Dutch church."

There was a horrified pause among those who heard the announcement, for this was an open defiance of that powerful coalition which had professed—and, as it seemed, for just and reasonable causes—their execution as "lawless tyrants" and for a series of tyrannical acts against the person and property of their opponents. Amongst others, Evelyn de Lacey was dismayed by the intelligence, for she had learned from her father of Leisler's unrelenting hostility to the Catholic Church and its adherents, and how he had conspired with the infamous Coode of Maryland and others to destroy that religious toleration which Maryland had at first openly proclaimed, and which New York under its Catholic Governor, Dongan, had obtained from a Catholic King. If my Lord Bellomont had given his official sanction to the glorification of such men, it was but too easy to guess what her co-religionists had to expect. As in a dream, she followed the further course of the conversation, in which the cool, even tones of Myneer de Vries seemed to dominate.

"Regarding the good Vrow Leisler," he said, "her affection for that tyrant must have grown since his death. For was it not common knowledge that he treated her most harshly? And as for poor Mary Leisler," he paused, with an expressive smile and movement of the hand, "we do not know that she was coerced, pretty as she was, into a vulgar boor and tool of her father, Jacob Milborne?"

"Yes, yes," agreed several voices, "and he was old enough to have been her father."

Madam Van Cortlandt, in her calm judicial manner, took up the subject:

"It must be owned," she declared, "that there seemed to have been but a little love lost between those women and their respective husbands during life, and poor Mary had but a short married life. But they cannot be held blameworthy in striving to have the attainder removed from a father's and a husband's name."

"Justice and common sense were so obviously on the side of this impartial view that no one present was bold enough to offer a protest. Evelyn de Lacey, sick at heart, could not help thinking that these were mere banalities in presence of those who had their own private and indignant denunciation of all concerned, for the Leislerians meant relentless war upon them, though utterly without reason, since there was neither church nor resident priest in New York, and the Catholics were besides mostly poor and obscure and so entirely devoid of influence of any kind that they could not be considered dangerous, even by those most bitterly prejudiced against them. Yet she could not sympathize with Polly's attitude and indignation denunciation of all concerned, for she was aware at least of its futility. Of far more importance was the look of determination she could detect upon the faces of such men as Killian Van Rensselaer, Nicholas Bayard and Stephanus Van Cortlandt. The two latter had suffered in their person and property at the hands of the Leislerians; indeed the last had had to endure the wanton destruction of his furniture and valuables and to witness insults aimed at his wife while he himself was thrown into prison. He had been denounced in scurrilous language as a "devil of a Papist," and subjected to virulent abuse. These were not men to submit tamely to such acts of aggression as they had already shown in the summary justice which had been meted out to the aggressors through the instrumentality of their powerful faction. Nor would they without a vigorous protest, permit this new Governor to cast a slur upon the lawfulness of that execution. Nevertheless, amongst them all was visible a note of anxiety, for the gauntlet had been thrown down, and there was danger for all who would pick it up against a ruler who had such influence with the King. Evelyn, reflecting upon it all and noting their anxiety, was aware that her own and that of her father must be keenest of all. For through these respective factions, which had been changing once peaceable New York into a battle-ground, might war fiercely for rights that each one held most sacred, there were none powerful enough, or perhaps broad-minded enough, to espouse the Catholic cause or to provide, as those same Catholics of Maryland had done in the days of their predominance, an asylum for the oppressed of every faith. Evelyn was eager to get home and discuss this new phase of affairs with her father, who was so fully informed in all the details of that contest from its very beginning. She remembered how often he had said, speaking with full knowledge and deliberation:

"If all these colonies had been settled, as was Maryland, by the Catholics, there would never have been persecution on this side of the broad ocean." But he had added: "No sooner did the Protestants grow powerful on in Maryland than they began to legislate against freedom of worship for others and especially those of that faith which had given them liberty to grow and flourish. And that despite the protests of the Quakers who were themselves bitterly persecuted, and others of liberal minds."

So strong was the feeling in that assemblage that cards and all other amusements were very soon eschewed and for once Madam Van Cortlandt's

excellent viands suffered considerable neglect. It was decided amongst the elders that they themselves, and as many as they could influence, should refrain from all participation in the function of the following Wednesday night, leaving it altogether to that faction which, with some notable exceptions, were the more obscure and less important members of the commonwealth. The younger people, however, were resolved if possible, without of course participating in the demonstration, to see what was likely to be a strange, weird sight. Pieter Schuyler organized a party to consist of his cousin Polly, Evelyn de Lacey, a married sister of his own, Vrow Van Brugh, with her husband, and one or two others. The young men made every arrangement to enable the ladies to see the spectacle without being themselves observed, and to provide for their safety in the event of any disturbance.

When Evelyn went home and mentioned the matter to her father he looked grave at first. But when he heard of whom the party was to consist, and that it was to be headed by Pieter Schuyler, of whom he had a high opinion, he made no objection. For he, who had been in his youth of a disposition to see all and adventure all, felt that he could not refuse to allow his daughter whatever privileges were consistent with her age and sex.

"The ashes of Jacob Leisler," he said thoughtfully, "thus resurrected, may prove an evil influence, and sow again the seeds of discord which grew and flourished during his stormy career."

"You have a vivid recollection of this Leisler?" Evelyn inquired.

TO BE CONTINUED

"THE ROSE OF YESTERDAY"

No wonder that Brenda's heart was stirred as she walked along the path to the beach. This was the most delightful holiday she had ever had, and this village clustered on the steep of land between the mountains and the ocean seemed to her the fairest place on earth.

"There's that lady again," she said, half aloud, "I wonder who she is, always by herself she seems so sad and lonely; but perhaps that is only my imagination. Surely no one could be sad long in such a place as this. It seems more beautiful every day."

Coming to the beach she made her way to her usual seat beneath the cliff, and remained some time in watching the rollers come in. The grandeur, the majesty of the scene lifted her heart to higher things, from the creature to the Creator, who holds the seas in the hollow of His Hand. Then almost involuntarily she began to sing the "Salve Regina," softly at first, then, responding to the beauty of the words poured forth her love to the dear Mother whose heart years over her banished children. As the last trembling note died away, she started up in surprise, for the lady who had so roused her curiosity was standing close beside her, and the sadness of the beautiful dark eyes went to her heart.

"You have a beautiful and sympathetic voice, but is it right, think you, to sing in the open air and so close to the sea?" The voice was low and pleasant, and the smile she gave robbed the question of any abruptness.

"I never thought of that; perhaps I should not, but I felt it all so, the beauty and the grandeur, that I could not keep silence."

The other sighed. "Once I was the same, all emotion had to find expression in song, and now—" she broke off abruptly, and turned as if to go, but after taking a few steps, returned and sat down beside Brenda.

"I have noticed you on the beach every day for a week. Are you making a long stay?"

"Only a month; I wish it could be longer; but I must get back to work. I suppose we wouldn't enjoy holidays if we always had them, though, would we?"

"Certainly not, and nothing is more wearisome than a perpetual vacation, nothing more hard to bear than an enforced idleness. I ought to know that. May I ask what your work is?"

"Nothing very important, I fear. I am only a musical student, and since I had rather overtaxed my strength, I am sent down to recruit in this delightful place."

"Yes, it is beautiful, but one wearies of everything. I have been here two years now, so that it is almost like home. But tell me of yourself; are you a vocalist?"

"I hope to be, though I am not very sanguine about it, but I love music above all—don't you?"

"Forgive me," she murmured, and laid her strong, cool hand on the frail ones that were locked so tightly together. There was silence for a while, and then Brenda began to speak of the mountains, of all the beauty spots she had explored, and all she meant to explore in the coming weeks.

That was the first of many meetings, and Brenda grew to love Rosemary Fortescue with a love she had felt for no one since her mother had died five years before. That there was some mystery about her she could not fail to note, but made no effort to force her confidence. Often it seemed that the wall of reserve would be broken down, but by a supreme effort she would regain her self-control.

It was the hour of sunset, the mountain ridge was like a line of gold, and overhead the soft rose hues

still lingered in the cloud-masses, but on the mountain side the mists were gathering, veiling in their folds alike bleak rock and living green. On a fallen tree by the wayside sat Brenda, but not now were eyes or mind on the scene before her; earth had no share in the thoughts that clustered round the holy words as the beads slipped through her fingers; the mysteries passed before her winning, wounding, gladdening. Even when she had finished the Rosary she still sat motionless, heart and mind full of joy in the glory of Mary in heaven, and she started as a hand was laid on hers.

"Did I frighten you? I did not mean to. I am sorry. But you were so lost in thought that you did not notice my coming. Oh, are you a Catholic?"

"I am, thanks be to God," replied Brenda, rising, for there was no mistaking the dismay in the other's tone, even if she failed to note how quickly the hand had been drawn back at the touch of the rosary.

"Do not be offended," pleaded Miss Fortescue. "I have felt so drawn to you in these days, and desirous of your friendship. I have never had much to do with Catholics, but I always had an idea they were ignorant and superstitious. Now, I know you are not the first; have we not talked on books for many days and, young as you are, you are well read. But it seems to me this," and she touched the rosary, "is certainly superstitious. What can you want with a string of beads to say prayers on; surely the heart can go out to God without that?"

Then Brenda, seeing that the other was in earnest, sat down again, and explained clearly and simply the mysteries, joyful, sorrowful and glorious, and how the recital of the rosary blends vocal and mental prayer. Then, gathering courage, she spoke of the Blessed Mother of God, given to us as Mother also, by those dear words on Calvary; of the love that falls not when earthly affections fail, making childhood purer and more blessed, strengthening the heart when temptations gather, giving courage and help when the fight is hard and bitter, and throwing its gentle light on the valley of the shadow.

She ceased; and in the silence came the everlasting thunder of the ocean, and nearer at hand the mournful cry of the night bird, and the rustling of the leaves overhead. Then Rosemary Fortescue spoke, slowly, dreamily:

"I never thought of anything as beautiful as that. I have rather shunned religion as something dark and gloomy that robs life of its sweetness, but as you speak of it it would be the light of life. Mysteries! I like that word, for are we not surrounded by mysteries; do we not walk begirt with them; and pass from one to another until the last great one of all enfolds us? Yes, yours is a living faith, no cold collection of hard dogmas and crude superstitions as I once thought. Ah!" and the note of passion thrilled in her tone, "had I but a faith like that to lean on, in the hour of darkness and despair, even this bitterness might have been sweet, and a ray of hope might have shone where all is now darkness. You are young, you do not realize how cruel life can be, how bitter the cup that must be drunk to the very dregs; it steals upon us and blots out our hopes and aspirations as yonder mists had blotted out the hills."

"Look higher," cried Brenda, her voice vibrant with emotion, "over the earth the shadows may rest, but see the glory of the stars," and she pointed to where in the horizon the evening star gleamed in fitful splendor. A long, low cry broke from the other's lips, and ere Brenda could stop her she had gone.

Day after day passed, and she had made no sign, and in a short time now all opportunity would be gone. In vain Brenda haunted the beach; the slender, black-robed figure never appeared, and it was with a sinking heart she turned homeward on her last evening. Tomorrow she would be back in the city, and she longed to see her friend once more before leaving, yet she could not bring herself to break the silence first. When she entered the cottage where she was staying, a note was handed to her, and her heart bounded with joy, for, though she had never seen it before, she felt sure the delicate characteristic writing must be that of Miss Fortescue. She was not mistaken, and though it was but a short note asking her to call at "Rose Cottage" that evening, she felt that all would come right. As she paused at the gate, she noted the fragrance of the roses, whose abundance gave the tiny cottage its name, and she lingered along the path, her hostess came to greet her.

"I fear I behaved very badly that evening, and since but you must pardon me, dear; I was more moved than I care to confess, and though I have been trying to shut my heart against what you said I find I cannot. Let us sit here on the veranda, I want to tell you about myself, and I prefer the friendly darkness."

"If you would rather not—" began Brenda.

"Ah, but I must, only very briefly though. I have eaten out my heart in silence too long. The profession you aspire to was mine. My voice was marvelous, so everyone said, and a golden future lay before me. I loved; I was loved; all life was fair; then the mists fell, and all was blotted out. I listened to the malicious gossip of one I deemed a friend, listened and believed, and quarrelled with Leonard. He left in anger, and I never saw him again, for he went

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