

GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADDLER
BOOK II
CHAPTER XX
HAPPINESS

The wedding of Captain Ferrers and Evelyn, which offered such a contrast to that of Polly Van Cortlandt and Henricus Laurens, was, however, a memorable event in the Van Cortlandt household, and marveled at the lowly and solemn. For early in the morning the family coach had been ordered out, with the pompous coachman on the box and Juncie up behind, to accommodate the bridal party, consisting of the bride and groom elect, of Madam Van Cortlandt and Polly, and of Pieter Schuyler, who had nerved himself for the ordeal and had declared that, as he had been with Evelyn and her future husband in sorrow, he desired to be with them in joy. The coach jolted along the stony road down to the ferry of Van Borsum, where it was taken on board the scow and thus conveyed across the North River to the Jersey shore. A short drive led to the house of Mr. Douglas, and in the oratory there the ceremony was performed and was followed by a Nuptial Mass, at which the bride and groom received Holy Communion for the first time together. Then they were entertained at an elaborate breakfast by the master of the house and his wife. Father Harvey renewed his acquaintance with Madam Van Cortlandt, and reminded Polly, who regarded him at first with undisguised coldness and distrust, how she had come as a merry child to show him her first pair of hobnail shoes. He exchanged many pleasant words with the two young men, and especially with his new spiritual son, Captain Ferrers, and made many jesting references to Evelyn's Salem adventures and his own experience with joy.

"She dressed me with herbs in the attic," he said, "but it turned out afterwards to be no laughing matter when she served me up as a familiar spirit to the witch during the trial at the courthouse."

He drew Evelyn apart for a moment, and conversed with deep feeling of her father's death, telling her how well he had loved him and what a grievous blow had been dealt him by Gerald be Lacey's tragic end. "Yet we cannot doubt," he concluded, "that, in the gathering of the elect, he is looking down on the happiness of this day."

The good priest then took his leave, for he was sorely needed in one of the neighboring missions.

"As an outlaw and a hunted man," he said merrily, "I must take time by the forelock, and come and go as best I can."

When Madam Van Cortlandt expressed her indignation at such a state of affairs, the missionary said gravely:

"It is marvellously good for us, dear lady. And after all the servant is not greater than the Master. Who had not whereon to lay his head."

He gave a special blessing to the wedded pair as they knelt before him, the soldier-like figure of Captain Ferrers and Evelyn like some exquisite flower in her white bridal gown and bonnet. With this blessing of the holy missionary upon them, and the prayers of Mother Church, they began their wedded life together.

Shortly after their marriage they took up their abode in the cottage, as it had been Evelyn's dearest wish to do. Though Captain Ferrers, having resigned from the army, had declined the advantageous post which he had been offered by Lord Cornbury, he had determined to settle for the time being at least in the colony, and to engage in business with one of the leading firms.

Hence it was that Myhner de Vries, smoking on his gallery of an evening or strolling by the cottage on fine mornings, had the undeserved satisfaction of seeing his fair neighbor once more at work in the garden, though his manner with her, when they frequently met in drawing-rooms, lost little of its constraint. The knowledge of his wrongdoing kept him at arm's length more effectively than any coldness on her part would have done. As for his wife, her bitterness and chagrin at the failure of all her plans, the downfall of the chief of her fellow-conspirators, and the prosperous marriage and other blessings which had come to the detested Evelyn, were so great that they nearly brought her to death's door with an attack resembling apoplexy. Her mind, after that brief spurt in which she had striven to emulate her husband by the pulling of social and political wires, became duller than ever. She never again attempted to go beyond the range of domestic affairs, and indeed remained more than ever a prisoner in her chair, apathetic to the last degree and ever adding to her weight.

From the Great Spirit many moons of happiness for the young couple. Also, on the part of the tribe, she presented them with rich gifts of beadwork and useful baskets and mats for their house. She offered a wampum belt to wipe away all tears, another to bring joy to the dwelling, and a third to smooth the path of life. The young couple were not outdone in generosity, bringing with them a variety of such gifts as the savages most prized.

Another visit which the newly-wedded pair made was to Lady Bellomont, who having at last settled her affairs, was on the eve of departure from the colony. She expressed herself as much gratified with the attentions and together the three reviewed many of those events which had marked the brief and stormy regime of her late husband.

"Do not judge my poor Richard too harshly," she said. "He had the faults of his upbringing and his environment, and he fell into the hands of evil counselors, notably Captain Prosser Williams. As for you, Egbert," she added, with one of her most winning smiles, "despite his harsh treatment, instigated by your arch-enemy, he entertained for you a real regard."

In parting she held Evelyn's hand in a close pressure, and bending forward kissed her affectionately.

"Think kindly," she said, "of the bird who, out of the cage of idle pomp and state, finds herself after all very lonely."

One more event in the history of the hero and heroine, who have passed across these pages to illustrate the history of their time and the troubles which attended the colony of New York, remains to be told. This event was a reception given at the mansion of Madam Van Cortlandt, which for so many years had been a second home to Evelyn. It was given in honor of the young couple, who already were established as favorites in the colony. It had been postponed till the autumn of the year, and the first period of Evelyn's mourning might be over. All the notables of the town were present, including many of the more moderate Leislerians, who had welcomed the new era of peace—the Van Rensselaers and Van Cortlandt, Van Schicks and Van Dams, the Livingstons and de Peysters, Laurenses and de Riemers, men and women alike arrayed in those rich and costly garments for which the burghers and matrons of New York were noted. The large rooms were thrown wide open and lighted with numberless wax candles. A negro orchestra enlivened the occasion with appropriate strains, and the refreshments served on a more extended and rich and varied scale than ever.

The anti-Leislerians present were now joyous and exultant. Anxiety, if any were felt, had shifted its base. Myhner de Vries, with that secret still locked in his breast, was moving about as freely as ever amongst the guests, and dropping here and there such fragments of gossip concerning the new administration as had reached his ears. There was an air throughout all those spacious apartments as though an iron grip had been relaxed. True, those present were disposed to ostracize Lord Cornbury, and to condemn the proceedings both of himself and his erratic wife, but they felt themselves to be then and thereforward masters of their own fate. There was an air, too, of expectancy. All were awaiting the arrival—a sign and symbol of that new freedom, since both were known to be Papists—of those for whom that particular reception had been given, Captain Egbert Ferrers, late of the staff of Lord Bellomont, and his young wife, who was popularly reported to be even more beautiful than had been Mistress De Lacey.

And beautiful she was as she entered upon her husband's arm, though under all the radiant happiness of her exterior was the deep sadness that no after-joy could entirely eradicate. In her hair were a thread or two of silver; in her manner the indefinable mark of one that has suffered. For, in all her present happiness, she could not forget the tragic death of a father who had been also her friend and companion.

When Polly, who was overflowing with delight at the recent turn of affairs and could never rejoice enough at having her friend once more at her side, drew Evelyn apart for a few minutes of confidential talk, the two minutes of conversation touched lightly upon Lord Bellomont, whose coming and whose stormy years of government had marked for Evelyn an era of tribulation.

"May the Lord show him mercy," said Evelyn, "and so I pray every day."

"But he was your cruel enemy," said Polly in amazement.

"The more reason that I should pray for him," said Evelyn with a smile, "though he has caused me bitter grief. Oh, could I have foreseen all that was to befall, when we set forth that day to witness his arrival!"

Then she added more lightly: "But after all he brought me, too—"

"Your paragon of a husband," said Polly with a sigh, glancing over to where Henricus Laurens stood, morose and frowning as ever. Evelyn then displayed to her a ring, a priceless ruby set in diamonds and with a rare and ancient setting. "From Lady Bellomont," Evelyn explained, "with a note sending her love to us both and her regrets that it is but little likely we shall meet again."

"And so we might write *finis*," the bride added, to the administration of Lord Bellomont, and to the

sojourn of My Lady in these colonies. "Finis to all the past, my love," said Captain Ferrers, who had drawn near.

"Except my friendship and memorials," said Evelyn.

"And so our best greetings to the future," cried her husband, his eyes upon his wife's radiant face, while Polly with tears in her eyes warmly echoed the sentiments and Evelyn smiled upon them both with a smile that spoke volumes.

THE GAIN OF LOSING

BY MARION AMES TAGGART

"There can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose." Young David Copperfield repeated this bit of wisdom over and over, returning to his home and to the unsuitability of his child wife's mind and purpose. Like all generalizations it needs qualifying, yet its indefinite scope makes it almost perfectly true as it stands. Time cruelly reveals these unsuitabilities, their very existence unsuspected by young lovers.

The Staffords had come, a bride and groom, to Crescendo, with their success or failure in life before them. To no one had the young wife ever acknowledged what it had cost her to adjust herself to the actual facts of her life after her illusions had worn off.

Lucy Singleton had met Luke Stafford when she was eighteen years old and he was a big fellow of twenty-two, glowing with vigor and manly beauty.

Lucy was a pale, dainty girl, swaying as she walked, living still on the borderland of childhood, her brain filled with the best of literature and the dreams which the poets infused into her of heroic knight-hood. She endowed him with the qualities of Ivanhoe, Richard Coeur de Lion, Bayard and Dante. He had splendid qualities of his own, but these she did not discern as they were. She attributed to him her own love of the poets because when she read poetry to him he listened with kindling eyes and happy smiles.

She did not know that it rolled over him like an agreeable bath of sound, and that all that Luke got out of the reading was, "What a nice little thing she is!" They timidly made much of the important fact that Luke and Lucy were names that sounded marvelously alike.

Lucy loved Lucy for precisely what she was, but Lucy loved Lucy for what she imagined him to be and what no mortal man ever was—luckily for the world!

When the young people announced that they loved each other there was no one who understood Lucy's mental attitude toward the upright young man, whom she might, with perfect reason, have loved for his stalwart, prosaic honest self.

The girl's widowed mother consented to her marriage, grateful to feel sure that her flower-like Lucy would be safe in Luke's hands, in which faith she was more than justified.

The first year in Crescendo Luke had employment in the one large business concern of the place. It did not allow Lucy opportunity for awakening. She still saw Luke by her imagination's light; she had wifehood, housekeeping, new surroundings to learn, and deeper joy to expect. The miracle held the youthful mother expectant, breathless, unable to dwell on much else, and, as she struck, Luke was kind as few young men of his years would have been.

The baby proved to be two babies—two little sons. If it were a boy Luke and Lucy had decided to name him Sebastian, so Sebastian's brother, for whose advent no provision had been made, was christened Fabian.

"He's St. Sebastian's twin in the lilyan," Lucy said, "so I guess it goes in the Stafford family."

When Fabian and Sebastian were beginning to discover that the stomachs which had hitherto engrossed their attention were not all that there was of them, but that they ended in feet highly interesting to play with, and exciting to use, elevating them considerably above their sitting altitude, their girl-mother was also, figuratively, discovering her feet—that she trod upon clay, and did not wing her way through down pink clouds as she had imagined.

knowledge, into what might easily become a tragic longing for the companionship for which her mind was formed, into longing for the beauty without which, to such as she, life is desolate, indeed.

Only her confessor read her secret, and he could only pray for her, guiding her gently into peace to come.

Little Lucy was conscientious, profoundly good, faithful to the training which she had received. It never would have occurred to her to make her dissatisfaction a plea for the omission of duty. Silently she assumed her burden and tried to conquer the smouldering pain, praying that it might never break into a conflagration that should consume her own and Luke's life.

What Luke guessed no one ever knew. He did his duty, also, and kept his counsel. The tragedy of this mistaking was that both Luke and Lucy did their best, that neither was to blame, that the missed joy was lost through the fairy-tale that a young girl had told herself, which, though less beautiful than the fact of Luke's life, spoiled for her the true man, because she was denied the character of fiction. Other children were born to Lucy named after the Litany of the Saints, since the twins had set the fashion. There was Agatha, then Cecily, lame little Stephen and Magdalen, who lived but long enough to teach Lucy that, after all, Luke's great heart was a refuge in sorrow, especially when the sorrow was one shared.

As her years flowed on, filled with the sorrows, joys, anxieties and regrets which must come to a woman who has five living children and one buried deep in her heart, Lucy adjusted her life and grew content.

Her twin sons were all that any mother could ask her boys to be, her daughters were comely, sweet and good; the lame boy was an angel. Lucy knew that God had crowned her with His best gifts.

It was impossible not to be fond of the children's father, not to appreciate the fact that in every way he was to them a good father, as he was to her a good husband. As years brought experience, Lucy did justice to Luke's merits. But the sad truth did not cease to be true that though she respected her husband, it was with the sort of respect that does not preclude lack of pride. And there are sharply defined limitations to the love that does not glory in the object beloved.

One day when the twins were making visible preparations in weight and height for their solemn entry into their teens, Luke came home electric with suppressed excitement.

"Has anything happened? Bad?" cried Lucy with a woman's natural apprehensive second thought.

"Not bad for us; there's no telling what harm it may do to Phillips and Garrett. I've been taken into the firm," said Luke.

"You! Oh, Luke, really?" cried Lucy clasping her hands in a girlish way that clung to her when she was excited.

"I certainly have been," Luke affirmed. "It gave me considerable of a jolt, too, when they broke it to me. They were most complimentary about me. It will boost our little brand—was a live wire, a straight chap—all that kind of talk." Luke broke off with a blush; self-praise was not in his line.

"Luke, it is splendid, perfectly splendid!" said Lucy solemnly. "I am so glad dear! And it's a comfort to know that you are straighter than they can know you to be, and, I've no doubt, just as good a business man as they say, though that I cannot gauge. I do know that you deserve their trust."

"Say, Lucy, has the doctor prescribed sugar-plums for my diet today?" asked embarrassed Luke. "Of course any white man is straight; it's nothing to a man's credit to deal square. If he didn't he—wouldn't be a man. However, I'm glad my employers think I am a man, and I'm still more glad if my wife isn't ashamed of me. It will boost our income good bit. You can move up on the hill, if you want to, Mrs. Luke Stafford! Mr. Garrett said he expected to put most of the big contracts into my hands, with a commission over and above my share as a partner, if I make them go well. There's a large-sized pavement deal under negotiation now. If we land it, it will be a spread eagle for us. Note the partnership 'us,' little girl! Phillips, Garrett & Stafford are to figure and hand in a bid in competition for the paving of Main, River and Market Streets, and the drive road. I'm not to fret, because I'm not up on the cost of things. But I'm supposed to go around the city fathers and look pleasant a lot, and try to get the Catholic influence—you know, the Board is two-thirds Catholic. They hinted I might interest Father in it. In case there was any question between choice of one or another contractor, why, they think I might tip the scale, on account of being a Catholic."

"I don't like anything of that sort," said Lucy decidedly. "No more would I, if it meant undue influence. But you know, Lucy, I wouldn't stand for a deal that wasn't straight, so our firm wouldn't bring discredit on the Church; and as long as the contract was all right, if the city fathers wanted to stand by a Catholic, why not? Goodness knows there's enough hanging together and unjust discrimination against us among some kinds in the other camp!" Luke smiled down on his wife as one who knew her world.

that to you," Lucy said sincerely, for in business matters her ignorance equaled her faith in Luke's integrity.

"Luke, we shall be rich—or almost rich! Then we shall send the children to college, even Stephen, if he will go? It would be a crime not to send Fabian. And—Luke, I'll confess! It would be pleasant to be rich, and to have you one of the influential men of the city!"

An inscrutable look passed over Luke's face, his happy eyes clouded, he turned away from his wife, then said slowly:

"You will be able to do what you want to, Lucy, I guess. Your children ought to go to college, especially clever Fabian. All right. And I'll do what lies in me to be influential, but I'm afraid it can't be much more than comes out of living a decent sort of life, in my dull way."

It was the first time in all their married years that Luke had ever betrayed the least perception of Lucy's dissatisfied ambitions.

The first half-year of the expanded firm's existence passed triumphantly. The paving contract was secured by it, largely, the elder members of it said, because when the expected happened, and competition in estimate was virtually tied between Phillips, Garrett & Stafford and another firm, Luke Stafford's personal connection with his co-religionists on the Board brought the contract over to him.

This contract was to yield a handsome profit to the contractors, closely figured though Luke understood that it had been. He was amazed to learn that his share, plus a commission for overseeing its execution, was to be so large. He was not a suspicious man, being himself utterly incapable of dishonesty. He accepted the result gratefully, uncritically, and went about in a glow of satisfaction that, at last, he could gratify many of Lucy's desires, and that his sons would be educated. They would supply to her mind the intellectual companionship which he, patient, good soul, had long known that her husband failed to give her.

One day, early in the seventh month of his membership in the firm, Luke Stafford came into the yards into which the firm's switch track ran from the railway, upon which stood two open freight cars laden with paving blocks, pending unloading. It was his duty to superintend the execution of the contract; the work would not begin until many such freight cars had deposited their contents in these yards; it would require an enormous number of blocks to carry out the work, and it was not to be begun till the material was all assembled.

Idly Luke paused beside one of the cars to speak to a workman. His eye fell on the blocks in the car beside him, without noting them. Suddenly he consciously saw them, frowned, looked again, scowled heavily and took one in his hand.

"What's this?" he demanded. "The paving-blocks—what else?" said Tim Regan, wondering. "The numbskulls! They've sent the wrong kind. Or are they trying to do us? These are inferior ones. They've got to go back," said Luke angrily.

"So you're wrong kind about it, Mr. Stafford," insisted Regan. "I saw the order myself. They sent it on ahead, before the first lot come; this is the second lot. And it's this kind you ordered, Mr. Stafford."

"You saw an order for this sort of paving block sent from our office?" demanded Luke slowly. "Tim, man, you're crazy! I know what our contract calls for—an altogether better grade of block."

"As to the contract, Mr. Stafford, that wasn't what I was sayin'. What I said was the order—the order, Mr. Stafford—and 'tis this kind it calls for. When once they're laid nobody'll know the difference; I misdoubt anybody'll know it before they're laid, for the matter of that." Tim Regan eyed Luke sharply as he spoke.

"What do you take me for?" Luke cried. They'll never be laid. They'd wear out in half the time the right ones would last. As to not being noticed—good heavens, Tim Regan, if that's your honesty, I don't want you around here!"

"Tim laughed. 'Sure, I never said 'twas, Mr. Stafford,' he said. 'Wouldn't I be knowin', same as yourself, that God Almighty can see pavings as well as hearts, and would be hangin' the whole lot of 'em around the neck of the one that cheated on 'em? It's not me wrote that order, but 'twas me seen it, and then stones is what was ordered.' 'Tim, you're implying something pretty bad. I'm going to see about it,' said Luke, turning sharply away. 'And 'twill be no good at all, but trouble ahead for you, I'm thinkin'.' 'I said Tim to himself, watching Luke swiftly stride out of the yards. 'All the same, I'm proud to know you're the Catholic member of this firm, which is not new to these ways, did you not know it.' 'See here, Mr. Garrett, they've sent us the wrong paving stones,' said Luke, bursting into the office. 'Five carloads have come.' Mr. Garrett was taken aback by the unexpected onslaught. He swung around in his pivot chair, coughed, flushed, caught his breath, then said: 'I think not, Stafford, I think not. The stones are all right—all right, you know.' 'See them?' demanded Luke. 'The first lot, yes—I saw them, yes. They're all right, what was ordered,' said Mr. Garrett suavely. 'According to the contract?' cried Luke fiercely.

"See here, my young partner—my younger partner, for I assure you I do not feel old—" smiled Mr. Garrett, "don't make a fool of yourself. Learn to adjust—to adjust. Take the world as you find it—"

"And hail for my next world? No, thanks," interrupted Luke. Mr. Garrett flushed indignantly. "I demand courtesy," he said stiffly. "That's truth, all right," retorted Luke.

Mr. Garrett waved his hand as if dismissing an unpleasant mosquito. "You will, of course, keep to yourself what you have, apparently, just suspected. No one will know that we have shaded the quality of the blocks a little mite. Is it possible that you thought the handsome profit that was your share could get out of the higher grade pavement?"

"I never thought about it at all," said Luke. "Our contract specified the better quality. Assuming that we were all men of at least common honesty, it did not occur to me to suspect that the contract was drawn up with an intent to steal."

"How dare you call me a thief?" cried his partner, starting up. "How dare you be one?" retorted Luke. "How dare you assume I'd stand for it?"

"If you betray us in this matter, you are a cowardly fool. You are bound to us, and to hold your tongue. Settle down, like a man of sense, and go on supervising the work. You are free to do it as well as you know how. You are playing Don Quixote, also an idiot. These things are done daily in all business. Hold your tongue and know when your well off."

Mr. Garrett ended with an air of triumph.

"I do know when I'm well off—when I'm not afraid to meet any man's eye, nor my own conscience. It's not true that these things are done in all business; men aren't all thieves and liars. As to what I'll do about it—I'll let you know!"

Lucy went out of the office as fast as he had entered it, leaving his senior partner to digest his rage as best he could. He was powerless to defend himself. He could not demand Luke's withdrawal from the firm, for Luke had this knowledge and proof to use against him. He turned pale as he considered the ugly position into which this stupidity of Luke's forced him.

Ah, well, he consoled himself later on, Luke would undoubtedly quiet down, for what would be the use in his wrecking himself when, after all, the paving blocks would serve their purpose, though not for too long a time?

Lucy rushed blindly along the street, seeing nothing outside his mental pictures of disaster. Gradually his speed slackened as the personal side of this disaster began to impress itself upon him; at first the thought of the effect upon himself had been submerged in righteous indignation. Now it was borne in upon him that it meant a great deal to him—a great deal that would be hard to endure. His pace grew slower and slower; his purpose did not flag, but he allowed himself to contemplate the difference it would have made to him not to have been called upon to stand up for his principles.

He turned a corner sharply, as if with a sudden determination, and went rapidly to the presbytery and rang the bell.

"There's no one else in whom I can confide, Father Doran, and I had to talk to some one," Luke plunged straight into the matter when the priest came into the room.

"Dubious compliment, Luke; I'd like to be chosen as a confidant on merit, but never mind. What's wrong?" asked Father Doran with his quiet smile.

Lucy poured out his story in a few words, condensing it from sheer force of feeling.

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