

"They say the soil is wondrous good, and the Weldons and Johnsons are here, so that it may almost seem like the old home." He sighed, and added—"that is if my cousins were there." With an impulsive movement, he started from his seat, and stood by his friend who leant against the piazza railing.

"My God!" he said in a husky voice. "It is hard on a man to be kicking his heels here in idleness, not even knowing if those girls and old folks are safe away from the rebels; and my uncle such a marked man! Not a word would he leave out of the prayer for King George, though Washington marched his men into the aisle with bayonets fixed. 'Tis all very fine to talk of settling down, but many a night I vow to myself to go back to that God-forsaken land, even though they string me up for it, to seek those who have been parents and sisters to me. I were a coward else."

De La Tour spoke more calmly, though his face had darkened responsively.

"They would hang you for certain, whereas they can scarcely harm an old man and feeble woman, but," with sudden energy, "If you go, Parker, I go."

"God bless you, De La Tour, for a brave man. But if I, a simple soldier, ran a risk in returning, what would you do, whose name was a terror to every rebel in the Carolinas, and whom Lord Cornwallis had to save from their vengeance by smuggling you off in the *Bomba*. No, while they keep their present bloodthirsty humour, you cannot see that old country again, though 'twas like you to offer it. But what's all this?" as a movement spread around them.

Turning, they saw that all eyes were fixed on a small schooner from which a boat had put out. A crowd was gathering on the shore, and the magic words, "more refugees," sent the Americans hurrying down with the speed of those who think to see home faces in a strange land. The two young men followed the crowd, who stood almost in silence, with here and there among them one whose pale face and trembling lips told what was half feared, half hoped.

"There are women in the boat," said an onlooker.

"And an old man," said another.

But the silence was startled by a shout from Parker, as he rushed down to where the ripples splashed around his feet.

"It is them," he shouted. "It is my uncle and cousins." And as he stood waving his shabby beaver towards the boat, not a smile was raised by the impulsiveness of his action. Nay, there were some eyes that were no dryer than those of the honest fellow himself. Even the group of British officers only jested in a careful undertone. "Faith and I might get my feet wet, and wear out my best beaver, to welcome such pretty cousins," said one of them, as the boat drew near. For now the passengers who were exchanging joyous signals with Harry Parker could be plainly seen by all. They were four in number. One old man whose stately bearing and noble face were obscured, but not hidden, by the ragged blue surcoat, torn and stained with sea-water, and by the uncurled tow-coloured wig and limp beaver which he wore.

The clothing of the pale matron at his side, and of the two girls opposite, was not more elegant than his own. Ragged petticoats, shabby baize nightgowns, hats battered out of all form, hid alike the faded grace of the mother and the fresh charms of her daughters; but what mattered that when, their feet once more on solid land, they stood together, cousin Harry talking and embracing them in turn, the women weeping tears of joy at the sight of a home face, while the old parson's voice was very tremulous as, holding his nephew's hand, he repeated, "My boy, my boy!" Weary and stained, standing there shelterless, in their uncouth ragged clothing, these simple, kindly hearts yet knew one of those blessed moments of life when love makes all things bearable.

The women folk were pale and worn with the privations of the voyage, and yet pale as they might be, surely a rich color rose in the cheeks of Rachel, the eldest daughter, as De La Tour, the young southerner, stepped up to his friend's side, and bowed low.

"What, Paul De La Tour, as well as my honest Harry," said the worthy divine. "Nay, but the Lord nath been gracious to raise us up friends in a strange land. My children, rejoice with me in this."

And it certainly looked as though his wish were obeyed by his daughter Rachel, as she stood with her hand in De La Tour's, her shining grey eyes raised to his. The young man's voice and manner were deferential and warm almost to tenderness.

"My kind and gentle nurse," he said. "To think that we meet again thus, after two years of battle and misfortune, exiles in this strange land."

"This welcome makes up for it all." Rachel said softly, then, as fearing she had said too much, her colour deepening, "I mean," she stammered; "when we expected to see only strange faces, to find you and my cousin awaiting us. It was a welcome indeed," and her eyes shone softer through tears.

As they spoke, her sister Esther was leaning against her, her arm drawn through hers. There were no tears in her eyes, but she stood looking at De La Tour with a smile that had in it a touch of mischief. The smile, the fixed gaze, drew his gaze to hers. The sight of the girl seemed to bewilder him.

"Why," he said perplexedly, "it cannot be that this is my little play-fellow, Esther, and yet,"—"and yet," she said, "I was waiting to see when you would recognize me, but you were altogether taken up with Rachel. And yet I think that for old acquaintance sake, you might deign me a word."

"'Twas a face from which most men would welcome a smile or glance."

If the oval and modeling were a shade less perfect than her sister's, the hazel eyes had in them a fire which Rachel's soft grey ones never had. Esther's smile had in it witchery, instead of tenderness; her manner was that of one who carelessly takes men's hearts as her right, to play with as a toy, or to guard as a treasure according to her sovereign will.

De La Tour was enough man of the world to see at a glance that his child friend was now one of those queens against whose rule there is no rebellion, and he bowed low.

"The deigning is not for me. 'Tis for beauty to speak and to deign," he said in the flowing fashion of the day in which he yet felt an admiring touch of earnest. "Though I think I may well be pardoned when the change which the two years has wrought is so wondrous. The resemblance, though, should have told me, that always remains."

Esther laughed again. "I knew it was so," she said, "and Rachel will have it that we are not alike now."

The beautiful glow had faded from Rachel's face. "Oh, no," she was beginning, when Harry broke in.

"Was it not strange, cousin Rachel, that just as you were casting anchor, De La Tour and I were debating how to obtain tidings of you; and when I said that I must go back to that country of rebellion to bring you off, what must he say but that he would risk his neck as well for your sakes. So you see that you fair damsels had two knights in your service."

Grey eyes and hazel spoke their thanks eloquently; but it was Rachel's lips that were tremulous, while Esther said smiling, "Our knights must have our colors."

But while the young folks talked, Madam Emslie, spent with fatigue, leant on the arm of her husband, who, good man, stood staring about him with the bewildered air natural in one sitting foot on a strange shore without the prospect of a home, or of money to procure one.

It was Rachel, who, catching sight of her mother's face, said with a pang of self-reproach—

"Oh, Harry, we stand and talk while my mother is ready to drop, and yet I know not where she can rest. My father hopes for assistance from an old friend, the Rector of St. Paul's, but we cannot go to him thus. Is it not so, father?"

"Yes indeed," answered the old man sadly. "We might go up to that inn, but indeed there is but one of our scanty supply of guineas left. So, nephew, use thy wits to help us in our plight, though I grieve to burden thy youth with our distress."

"Nay, but uncle, my one poor room is at your service"—Harry began, but De La Tour interrupted him:

"There are two vacant rooms in Harry's and my lodgings, and if he will guide you thither, I will hurry on and prepare them for you."

And it was only Rachel who understood that while both were equally willing to give up what shelter they had to them, De La Tour's quicker wit had interposed to prevent their knowing of the sacrifice. For herself, she would not have accepted it, but one glance at her mother's tired face made her silently follow the little procession townwards.

The rooms where the Emslie family found refuge were small and bare enough, for the young men had not reached Halifax in much better plight than themselves; but, simple as they were, they seemed a blessed shelter to those worn out with the hardships of travel, and safe at last from hostility and insult.

In doors there was no dread of the intrusion of hostile soldiery—abroad they had not to face angry and cruel words from those once friends and neighbors. Instead, they had kindly help and sympathy from all. From the first De La Tour and Harry saw that they wanted for nothing, and outside help came speedily. First appeared Dr. Breynton, the worthy rector of St. Paul's, with aid for his brother clergyman, and he soon despatched his womenfolk to supply the need of feminine belongings.

Rachel first saw her mother smile again when she could smooth the folds of a clean chintz bedgown, for she was one of those dainty souls with whom cleanliness is next to godliness, and both are essentials of life.

She herself breathed a sigh of relief, looking at the heap of rags at her feet, and Esther fluttered wild with joy before the glass, arranging her kerchief with coquettish care.

"Rachel! hurry and put this pin in? I must show myself to Cousin Harry and Captain De La Tour. They will hardly know me without those hateful rags," and off she swept, a dainty picture in her quilted petticoat and a calico bedgown, her elbow sleeves and muslin neckerchief showing the whitest, roundest arms in the world.

Thus help came to them in their need, and in a week or so the House of Assembly voted fifty pounds to relieve their wants; while the worthy Doctor received, as assistant to his friend the rector, a salary sufficient to supply their simple needs.

All this would have been less likely to happen had it been a few months later, and October instead of June, for by that time the arrival of destitute families was so familiar a thing to the Halifax citizens, that perforce, their assistance must grow less effectual, but to do them justice they at all times did what was in their power for the suffering Loyalists, though unable to do for hundreds all that they had done for twenties. But in these spring days the stately divine and his pretty daughters became the pets of the town fashionables, and the fine ladies came in their chaise to visit Madam Emslie and bid the girls to feast, where the British officers soon found them out and formed a court around them, so that "the sisters" became a fashionable toast; Esther, however, by the power of her gay ways and