

GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADLER

BOOK II

CHAPTER XVII

THE CLOSE OF A REGIME

But for those events which shall presently be related, there is little doubt that new troubles would have been in store for Evelyn de Lacey through the unremitting and unrelenting activities of Prosser Williams and that infatuation of his which had cost her so dear. His rival, Captain Ferrers, was kept in close imprisonment, though, through the intervention of Lady Bellomont and His Excellency's own partiality for his favorite officer, there had been a considerable mitigation of the first severity of his confinement. It was permitted to occupy a room in the Fort, and, but for the influence of his fellow-officer, would probably have been liberated. Pieter Schuyler was still debarré from returning to Manhattan, and was therefore powerless to do anything in the girl's interests.

Meanwhile the peace of the colony continued to be disturbed by intestine feuds, and by an active persecution of what was called the aristocratic party, the members of which kept alive their portion of the struggle and were prepared to do battle with all and sundry. The anti-Popery laws were more stringent than ever, both there, in Massachusetts, and the other New England colonies, while Maryland was being made notorious by all manner of oppressive acts against Catholics and a war against the Jesuits, who in the first councils of the nation were the earliest and amongst the best of the Calverts, had established religious liberty and made that colony the true "land of sanctuary." Never in the world's history had been chronicled a more flagrant case of injustice than the treatment which was meted out to Catholics in that corner of the New World, where they and they alone had given unrestricted freedom to all.

Richard, Earl of Bellomont, had during his whole administration done his worst in that direction, and had, as he believed, been largely successful in weeding out Popery and dealing harshly with all who presumed to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. He had also dealt sternly with the illicit traders, especially after the ignominious failure of his amateur navy, wherein the notorious Captain Kidd had figured. He had made the most vexatious restrictions upon trade so as to drive the larger merchants to desperation. A gloom seemed to have fallen over Manhattan. All those brilliant parties which My Lady had given at the Fort, with negro minstrels playing on the balcony, were suspended. Social amusements, even amongst the pleasure-loving Dutch, were almost at a standstill. Irritation, anxiety, mutual ill-will prevailed everywhere.

In the midst of it all came the news from Whitehall that My Lord Bellomont was seriously ill. Consternation was general, especially amongst those who had approved of his policy and supported his strong measures. At *Day Heile* men talked in subdued whispers of the crisis that might be at hand. Even Greatbatch was impressed, and reduced to something like silence, though of late he had been more snarling than ever since the failure of his late attempt, the damage to the "Hesperia," and the refusal of Captain Prosser Williams to pay him the large sum he had promised for the capture of Evelyn de Lacey. Greatbatch was furious against him, and kept up a sullen and ominous growling, which he dared not raise above a whisper, or circulate further than his group of worthies, since he knew that whatever immunity he enjoyed was owing to the young officer's protection.

Mynheer de Vries strolled in and on restlessly, seeking for news. He had not been the same man since he played the part of Plinto and had suffered the innocent to go unwarned. His narrow eyes seemed smaller and closer together than ever. His very figure seemed to have dwindled, and he had lost something of his suave complacency, though no one except Captain Prosser Williams was aware of his transgressions. The death of Mr. de Lacey affected him unpleasantly, and, as he smoked his pipe of an evening on the gallery, the sight of the deserted house and garden weighed upon his spirits. He recalled how pleasant it had been to see Mistress Evelyn amongst the flowers or passing up and down the street. He was shorter and more exacting with his wife, who was inwardly exultant, though she dared not give it outward expression, and the much-praised Evelyn was at a distance, and was being speedily forgotten, as she hoped, in the press of other affairs. Besides, since the girl had made herself amenable to the law, the topic was an unsafe one, and there were few who cared to expatiate upon the offender's beauty and charms or accomplishments. Even her warmest friends, it seemed, must now be content to remember her as one who had passed out of their lives.

There was a gathering at the house of Madam Van Cortlandt on one of those evenings shortly after the news concerning His Excellency had

been made public. On that occasion there were no Leislerians present, so intense had grown the feeling between the parties, save of course Henricus Laurens, whom the grand mother would not consent to exclude. But he found himself isolated. Cold looks, chilling civilities, and curt nods of recognition, from those who had once been intimate friends, filled him with resentment. He sulked and glowered, laughed spitefully, and let fall many a bitter jibe. His mind was busy with the thought of how through the influence of Captain Williams, Nanfan, and the rest, he could work injury to those arrogant factionists who dared to slight him. He was glad when he won their money at lansquet, and furious when he lost.

In the midst of it all, Mynheer de Vries entered the room and stood scrutinizing the card-tables, where the wax lights cast furious shadows on the faces of the players, each with his pile of fishes beside him to mark the golden guilders he was winning or losing. The newcomer was wondering, as he looked about the handsome room, how that which he had to tell would affect the various persons present. He waited for a fitting pause in the game and, advancing to the hostess, bowed low over her hand. The various players at the tables glanced up curiously. Those near gave him greeting, but all were plainly anxious to resume their game. Mynheer de Vries said to Madam Van Cortlandt, in a voice which was heard all over the room:

"His Excellency, My Lord Bellomont, died half an hour ago."

The cards dropped from the players' hands simultaneously at all the tables, as if a magic wand had touched them. Men sprang to their feet and women sat back in their chairs. There was little regret in that assemblage, but excitement, emotion, and conjecture on every face. Henricus Laurens sat staring stupidly at the cards before him, as though he had received a stunning blow. People crowded about Mynheer to learn the latest details. Throwing open the window, he cried:

"Listen to the bells announcing his demise."

There they were, sounding out through the streets of Manhattan with their ominous tolling. And as the guests, in confused groups, talked and surmised and wondered, the rattling staves of the Watch were heard without on the pavement, and presently their voices declaring the state of the weather and the death of His Excellency, Richard, Earl of Bellomont, Baron of Cooloney, Governor of New York and Massachusetts, Captain General, etc. That in the year 1701, memorable to some of those with whom this narrative is concerned, Awestricken and full of a vague expectation and unrest, Madam Van Cortlandt's guests, breaking up the gathering very early, went away to their homes to await the happenings of the morrow.

On the fifth day of March took place a pompous funeral at which the magnificence of the Colonies of New York and Massachusetts was exhausted. The flags on the public and many private buildings, as well as on the ships in the harbor, were at half mast. The bells from every steeple tolled out like the voices of deep sorrow. There was, however, little sorrow for the passing of My Lord Bellomont, save in those whose fortunes were directly affected by his death. Stern and unlovable, his qualities for good or evil were not such as to attract popular affection. If he were honest and sincere in his efforts at reform, as so many averred and as was probably true, he awakened stormy passions, stirred contending factions into bitter hatred of each other, and had cultivated by every means in his power that ill crop of persecution against Catholics which it took all the years till the American Revolution to exhaust. A strong man, wielding a considerable power for evil, whether intentionally or not, a choleric and a masterful man, he lay still now within the coffin under the massive silver plate which recorded the dates of birth and death. The reins of power fallen from his hands, only the iniquitous laws he had passed accompanied him as accusing spirits to the Throne of the All-seeing God. It was a strange and terrible thing to think of the man who had played the part of Plinto and had suffered the innocent to go unwarned. His narrow eyes seemed smaller and closer together than ever. His very figure seemed to have dwindled, and he had lost something of his suave complacency, though no one except Captain Prosser Williams was aware of his transgressions. The death of Mr. de Lacey affected him unpleasantly, and, as he smoked his pipe of an evening on the gallery, the sight of the deserted house and garden weighed upon his spirits. He recalled how pleasant it had been to see Mistress Evelyn amongst the flowers or passing up and down the street. He was shorter and more exacting with his wife, who was inwardly exultant, though she dared not give it outward expression, and the much-praised Evelyn was at a distance, and was being speedily forgotten, as she hoped, in the press of other affairs. Besides, since the girl had made herself amenable to the law, the topic was an unsafe one, and there were few who cared to expatiate upon the offender's beauty and charms or accomplishments. Even her warmest friends, it seemed, must now be content to remember her as one who had passed out of their lives.

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others by which he hoped to retrieve his fortunes. Above all, he was still eager for the possession of Mistress Evelyn de Lacey, and he cursed the evil fortune which had brought about the death of Lord Bellomont just as he was about to reach out the long arm of arbitrary power to secure the person of the girl. Madam Van Cortlandt was with Polly in the family carriage, driven by the pompous coachman and with Jumbo hanging on by the straps. The minds of the two were turning reminiscently to the April morning when, with Evelyn de Lacey, they had watched the arrival of that very Governor in all the pride of place and power.

Looking out upon the funeral pageant from the room in the Fort, where he was now imprisoned, Captain Ferrers, pale and haggard from his long confinement, met the glance of Prosser Williams, who was glancing upwards. It was a strange, long look which the two men exchanged, a look replete with many emotions. They too, like Madam Van Cortlandt and Polly, suddenly bethought themselves of that morning just three years before, when the whole town was in jubilation at the arrival of Richard, Earl of Bellomont. Both were possessed by the thought of Evelyn as she had then first appeared to them, and her image still seemed to dominate the scene, as though she were really present.

There was a memorial service for the dead, solemn hymns and canticles being sung and prayers offered, though not for him. It was a solemn but ineffectual service, and at its close the body of the late Governor was lowered into its grave under the chapel of the Fort, although it was later buried in St. Paul's churchyard. A few years more and the plate from his coffin was sold to relic-hunters for a museum.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RETURNED EXILE

The weeks and months of anxiety and suspense amongst the various elements of Manhattan had subsided into a calm, when the new Governor, one of the weakest and most worthless of Colonial rulers, Lord Cornbury, assumed the reins of government. It is needless to dwell upon the wild tales that were told of his administration, and of the idle and vicious habits of a man in whom an arbitrary will was co-existent with feebleness and incompetence. Of such high rank as to be connected even with royalty, he disregarded every convention and trampled at his pleasure upon all rights.

However, on his arrival, he espoused the cause of the anti-Leislerians and reversed in almost every particular the policy of his predecessor, thus giving relief to a large and influential class of the population. He frowned upon the fanatical proceedings of the Leislerians and their leaders, while releasing from bonds such men as Nicholas Bayard and Stephen Van Cortlandt. It only concerns this narrative to show how his attitude affected the fortunes of those who are immediately connected therewith.

It was June, when the city was gay for the Pinxter festival. The cottage where the de Lacey had lived showed doors and windows open once more. Mistress Evelyn, garbed now in simple black, was in the garden, busy with the flowers that their dyes had revived. It was her mission to restore them once more to order.

As Mynheer de Vries passed by, he saw that graceful figure, half hidden by the vines, the rambling roses and the peonies. Evelyn's face, when she turned it towards him, had lost little of its beauty, though the traces were plainly perceptible there of all that saddest and most grievous experience by which she had been deprived of her father. At first he felt a constraint, a certain reluctance in approaching her, remembering his part in that last tragic occurrence. Then he remembered that only one man could charge him with complicity in that affair, and it was most unlikely that he would ever have the opportunity of revealing the secret to Mistress de Lacey. It was accordingly with his smoothest and most plausible manner that Mynheer approached the gate to express his delight at the return of so delightful a neighbor. Evelyn returned his salutations gravely, indeed, but with the friendliness that she manifested towards all who were connected with the old, happy life of that town, whose every sick and stone was dear to her. She extended her hand with a gracious invitation to enter. This Mynheer declined, but he hastened to impart to her a piece of news which he hoped would be singularly agreeable to her.

"You had some acquaintance," he began, "with Captain Prosser Williams, who was a member of His late Excellency's household?" It was with a look of intense interest that Evelyn turned away her face to conceal the emotions excited by the mention of that name. But, apparently busied with her flowers, she answered quietly:

"Yes, I had some acquaintance with him."

"I fear that I am awakening associations of a painful nature," Mynheer went on, "but some facts concerning that young gentleman may be of interest."

"No fact concerning him can interest me either now or at any future time," Evelyn burst forth impetuously.

"You will pardon me, however, a last reference to him and his affairs,"

the inveterate news monger insisted. "It is merely to make known to you that he has become amenable to the laws of this province, and that through the contrivance of those whom his insolent manner has offended, or whom like myself were aware of his more serious misdemeanors, he has been at last brought to book."

Mynheer hoped for some expression of the girl's satisfaction at this intelligence. But the young girl's face gave no clue to her thoughts, and she remained silent. He proceeded to inform her that the young man by his wild extravagance, profligacy and losses at the gaming table had accumulated debts which had caused his arrest. Mynheer did not precisely state, though he allowed it to be inferred, that it was through his agency that wires had been pulled to procure his imprisonment and the consequences that followed. The merchant had never forgiven him for his demeanor on that memorable evening at *Day Heile*, and for the loss of self-respect which, in so far as he himself was concerned, had been the result.

Hence he had seized a favorable opportunity to bring the various debts down on their prey like vultures, and to ensure other and more serious charges being brought against the culprit. On being promised immunity, Greatbatch, who had many a score of his own to settle, was ready to give every evidence in his power against the accused and to prove conclusively that he had been deeply involved in illicit traffic. Lord Cornbury, who was little likely to proceed to any great lengths against smugglers or any other class of malefactors, so long as they did not interfere with his schemes for personal advantage, was nevertheless delighted to press any charge against one who had been so intimately connected with the last administration.

"I know too well," ventured Mynheer after a pause, "what a beneficial influence he has exerted over your fortunes. He was your enemy from first to last, while I humbly pray you to forgive the allusion—aspiring to be more than a friend. Such pretensions might be readily understood and would have been pardonable had he pursued a legitimate path to attain so enviable an end."

A wave of color, similar to that which dyed the roses on the vine beside her, crept into Evelyn's cheeks but, when she spoke, it was with a haughtiness which caused Mynheer to feel that he had been indiscreet.

"Such purely personal matters," she said, "are not fit subjects for discussion, and certainly cannot be of any interest now."

Mynheer was disappointed, for he had been really anxious to get further information as to the exact extent of Prosser Williams' interest in this girl. He began again more slowly and impressively, because of the rebuff that had been contained in Evelyn's words, though they were softened by that smile which to men and women alike could be so winning.

"Since he was arrested for debt," he resumed, "other offences have been alleged against him, and this day sailed from the Port of New York the good ship, 'Victory,' having on board Captain Prosser Williams, who is to be tried in England for offences against the laws of these colonies; and, if his powerful relatives do not intervene, his punishment will be severe."

Triumph and exultation were in the speaker's tone. The day of his vengeance had arrived, and he looked for corresponding sentiments in his listener. But despite the joyful relief which she could not help feeling, since she had been sorely afraid of new persecutions set on foot by that unrelenting enemy, the girl was conscious of an emotion of pity for the downfall of that once brilliant young officer. For she had the rare generosity of character which refuses to take pleasure in the misfortunes of a fallen enemy.

"These colonies," Mynheer said, "are happily rid of him. And," he piously added, "as the Good Book declares, 'the way of the transgressor is hard.'"

"As for transgressions," said Evelyn, "which of us are free from them?"

"Now this remark, as well as the young man's derisive attitude, greatly perturbed Mynheer. For he feared that through her late father, or in some other way, she had become cognizant of his own transactions with Greatbatch, as well as with that secret compact which he had made with Prosser Williams, also, being ignorant of the state of affairs between Mistress Evelyn and Captain Ferrers, it occurred to him that the assurance he might have been caught after all by the brilliant plume of that bird of folly, who had now fallen into the fowler's snare. In which case he would have shown a most lamentable want of tact in coming to her with such disastrous information. Perhaps she was less disposed to rejoice than to mourn for Prosser Williams, who had been her consistent admirer ever since his arrival in the colony.

"Women," Mynheer reflected, "are strange beings, and who could tell?"

Being anxious to solve his own doubts, however, he ventured further:

"He was your dangerous enemy," he observed, "as I had some occasion to know."

For a fallen enemy, since the best of us, Mynheer, are weak and worthless."

Mynheer's enthusiasm was thoroughly chilled. His attitude was one which he could in no wise understand, and he was haunted by the suspicion that she was far more fully informed than he had believed possible as to his own transgressions. He presently bade her a ceremonious good-morning, and left her to resume her work in the neglected garden with a deep sadness in her heart. For the information that he had been at such pains to give, while relieving her of a cruel anxiety, had brought back a host of memories. She recalled how the malice of her unscrupulous foe, now severely punished, had brought about the death of her dear father, and, as trifles will recur to the mind even in the gravest moments, she was reminded of the day when she had first noticed Captain Prosser Williams upon the Bowling Green, and the other occasion when with characteristic insolence he had appeared at the gate of this very garden and had been so sternly rebuked by her father. She seemed to see the noble figure of the latter, as he stood at the library window, and her tears fell silently amongst the flowers for him and for that past in which they had been so happy.

TO BE CONTINUED

FATHER LADDEN'S VENTURE

It was 10 o'clock in the morning and already the day seemed old, for Father Ladden had been up since five, and that meant that he had done a multitude of things. First there was meditation, then Mass, thanksgiving, breakfast, two sick calls and a funeral, all of which had been capped by a visit from a lady bent on uplifting his down-trodden people by means of a settlement house which was to distribute hot coffee and cold meat sandwiches.

Michael had announced the visitor with a scorn he did not try to conceal.

"Here's a lady to convert yer parishioners," he said, giving her a glance intended to settle her. It didn't, however.

Father Ladden talked to the social worker the greater part of an hour; or rather, he listened. She was very frank in her statements. She was going to open a social settlement—and she hoped that if she could not gain his co-operation, she at least would not win his antagonism. The settlement was to be principally for the uplift of his people, for, with the exception of a few Swedes, the district was really inhabited by Catholics. The institution was to be non-sectarian; all religious beliefs were to be tolerated, any one would be welcomed. The poor would be visited and the sick helped. Incidentally the whole district would have the "gospel" preached to them—as a reward, Father Ladden supposed, for eating the cold meat sandwiches and drinking the hot coffee.

"I am afraid that my people will not come to your settlement, Miss Summers," Father Ladden told her when at last the whole plan had been laid before him. "I am afraid they will not patronize it. In fact, I am going to tell them of it next Sunday and say that it is my wish that they await the settlement I am planning for them."

"You!" gasped Miss Summers. "Why, I did not know Catholics did so much social work. I understood that they were ages behind the times in regard to it."

"Well, so they are," responded the priest; "and ages ahead of the time as well; for long before Henry VIII. ever thought of having so many love affairs that he had to found a new church, and long before Martin Luther became lax in his prayers, Catholics were doing social service—that is serving Christ in the person of his neighbor. Father Ladden told her Miss Summers, that it is no exaggeration to say that Catholics will be doing social service long after the various forms of Protestantism have committed suicide."

Miss Summers flushed. Far from her mind was the intention of arguing religion with the priest. If she must argue it, it would be better and wiser, she considered, to do so with the least educated of the parishioners. She could enlighten them. The priest, she felt, was buried in his own darkness; she was not even sure that he wanted her light.

"And so you think that the settlement house will be a failure?" she asked, half defiantly and half nervously.

"Was it my blessing you wanted for my success?" questioned Father Ladden humorously, yet with a tinge of sadness.

"No, not exactly," laughed Miss Summers, "but blessing was what I meant the money that the members of our church have pledged for the support of the mission."

After a few commonplaces she was gone, and the pastor of St. Bernardine of Siena sat down to think it over.

"So she's gone," remarked Michael as he returned from escorting the visitor to the door. "It's a settlement she's going to start, is it?"

Father Ladden nodded. He was buried in his "aisy" chair.

"I'll tell you what you are to do, Michael," he said. "Go down town; on the corner of La Salle and Illinois streets you'll find a lot of men working on a new skyscraper. I want one of them. His name is Bob Leonard and he's a bricklayer. Tell him to come to see me tonight. Tell him I need him, Michael."

"Faith, you'll have him if I have to carry him in a corpse to ye."

"There's no necessity for any 'rough stuff,' Michael—all you need to do is to give him my message. He'll do the rest."

Father Ladden got his own noon-day meal which consisted of burnt potatoes, bacon and eggs and some weak tea, for Michael was off in search of Bob Leonard. The pastor also opened the door to the second visitor of the day, one of a population who consider that a priest, whether he is known to them or not, is their special property in time of sorrow, and the depository of confidences.

Father Ladden had often met the young man before, and once he had had quite an altercation with his father, the "boss of the ward," when the priest first came to oversee the spiritual welfare of the people of St. Bernardine of Siena's.

"Hello, Joe Fogarty—but the luck of the Irish! Here I am just at my mid-day repast, and here you are just in time to have an elegant scorched potato all to yourself as well as an egg, some bacon, a bun and a cup of tea. At what an opportune time you call—sharp noon."

Fogarty laughed. "Well, truth to tell, Father, I did not consider the time, but if you insist—and please do—I'll let you watch me eat."

Father Ladden cracked two more eggs into the black spider, threw in a slice of bacon, and soon Fogarty was eating.

"This is the first bit I've eaten today," he said between mouthfuls. "I got up this morning feeling so out of sorts that I had no desire for food."

Father Ladden laughed. "What's the matter? Are you in love?"

Fogarty laid down his knife and fork and took another gulp of tea. "You've said it," he admitted. "I'm in love."

Father Ladden laughed again. "Permanently?" he asked. "But Fogarty was in earnest. 'Say,' he replied. 'If you took the love of Romeo and Juliet and that of Antony and Cleopatra and of a few other of the lads and dames I used to get low marks on in college because of the multitude of things I didn't know about them—well, as I was saying before you interrupted me—if you took their love and multiplied it by six and rolled it all up together, it would compare like an anti-bill to a mountain with the love I have for a certain girl not a thousand miles from Chicago.'"

Father Ladden appeared interested. "If that's the case—and I'm glad to hear it—why not get married?"

Fogarty put his cup down with a bang. "It was lucky for him that Michael was not there." "Because—because—some one's read her low my pedigree. Some one's told her low my father was a political boss here in Chicago and how he made his money by taking the bread out of the mouths of widows, and she says that she wouldn't marry a man who came by his money that way."

Father Ladden looked serious. "Why not give up the money you had left you? I agree with the girl there's no luck in booze money, and the best thing you can do with it is to get rid of it and go to work at something with better pay than curses."

Fogarty jumped up with a whoop. "Well, I must have gone clean mad—I've never once entered my head to give up the money—never once!"

That afternoon two telegrams passed between a man in Chicago and a girl in Illinois. Wired the man in Chicago:

"You object to me because of my money which you say is not mine, that it belongs to orphans and widows. Your brother suggests I get rid of it, says 'the girl' will marry me then. If I do will you make his word good? Will you marry me?—Joe."

And the girl in Peoria wired back:

"It's a regular scheme. Bob is always right. Glad he thinks so well of you. Get rid of the tainted stuff and I will marry you.—Vera."

When Fogarty received the wire at the nearest Western Union station he exultantly placed it in his note book and put it near his heart. Then he went back to Father Ladden.

"I've wired her," he explained, "and told her the scheme and she says that when I get rid of the tainted stuff I can have her."

"Good for her!" returned the priest. "I'll help you."

Father Ladden and Fogarty made many calls that afternoon on former customers of the older Fogarty's. Some were sick; some idle; all poor. It was Father Ladden who made the arrangements. Some of the mothers who had to go out washing and leave their children to the tender mercy of neighbors were to be pensioned for at least \$30 a month, more if they needed it. And, too, there were other settlements to be made. It seemed like a visitation from above to many of the poor families whose fortunes, or hopes of fortunes, had been ruined by the old "boss of the ward."

"Now the only thing I have left besides the blessings of the poor and my mother's house," said Fogarty at last, "is the building I told some dame from up on the North Shore I would let her church rent for some kind of a social settlement club."

"Social settlement club!" exclaimed Father Ladden. "Why, I myself am looking for just such a building, but owing to scarcity of

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