

## GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADLER  
BOOK II  
CHAPTER XVI.—CONTINUED

She tried to pray as she hurried forward, but her lips faltered and she felt it impossible to utter that trustful prayer of an hour or two before, when she had lain concealed in the bed, and when she had felt so strongly the almost visible protection of her Mother in heaven and of the God for whom she was suffering this persecution. Only once or twice a passing footstep appalled her with the recollection of Greatbatch, or with the possibility of encountering someone who might, like Myr-heer, recognize her. Yet the sound cheered her and caused her heart to leap with a great throb of relief, when she learned there was someone besides herself awake in Manhattan. She once dared covering into the shade of a clump of trees, when a belated wayfarer passed close by, whistling the tune of "Money Musk." Then she hurried on, striving to cover as much of her way as possible while that cheery sound was still in her ears. And thus she, who had never been out in the darkness alone before, amazed at her own cowardice and her actual shrinking from shadows, reached at last her long-familiar destination, the Indian encampment near the Collect Pond, and in the shadow of the Catimuted

## CHAPTER XVII

SAFE WITH THE WILDEN

Evelyn breathed a long, deep breath of relief when she came forth at last from the clusters of long-linden and oak trees which bordered the Indian encampment. She made her way with the practised step of long familiarity to the tent of the old squaw, whom she called by her Christian name of Monica, for she had been baptized by Father Harvey on the festival of that saint. Monica was awake in an instant, and to her Evelyn told her story, in so far at least as she could make her understand. The eyes of the old woman flashed fire, and, drawing her aged form to its full height, she poured forth in her native tongue a voluble stream of invective against the enemy, only portions of which Evelyn could understand, despite her acquaintance with the Indian dialects. Turning to the girl, the squaw assured her that Evelyn would be as one in defending her, that the tomahawk would be brandished in her defence, and the swift arrow winged its flight to the heart of her enemies. She was a child of the tribe, which was bound to her by the Silver Covenant of friendship. Hence no one should molest her there, nor in any other stronghold of the tribe.

With a mournful shake of the head and some of those expressive gestures which she had adapted from her red brothers and sisters, Evelyn made her old friend understand that there must be no violence undertaken on her account, no warrior scalped, no tomahawk brandished, no arrow winged, and no torch applied. What she asked of them was concealment for a few days, until she could leave the colony and go to seek her father. Then Monica pointed with dramatic gesture to the wooded island in the centre of the stream.

"There," she said, "have the squaws and the papooses remained hidden when the braves of the tribe have painted their faces and gone upon the war path, when our enemies have threatened, coming towards us as the black cloud of night to put out the daylight."

Evelyn's eyes brightened and her cheeks glowed at this happy thought. There, in the days of her childhood, she had played at hide-and-seek with a band of comrades. She knew the tall grasses, the weeds and the bushes. She might be concealed for days, with the young Indians on guard, until it was possible for her friends—Madam Van Cortlandt, Captain Ferrers and the rest—to devise some means by which she might leave the city. Nor did Monica delay in placing her in that place of refuge. Calling two young braves, she rapidly explained to them as much as she thought necessary of their guest's story, impressing upon them above all the necessity for concealment on her part and secrecy upon theirs. She ordered them to paddle the fugitive straight to the island, taking such food as might be necessary in case that a watch should be placed upon the encampment by the morning. The food consisted of fruit, nuts, and cakes made from maize, and was stowed in great, flat stones and baked in the cinders. The old woman knew that the meats they ordinarily used, the stews cooked in their great caldrons and the like, would be too strong for the girl.

The young Indians quickly detached a canoe from the shadow of the bank, where a number of them lay in waiting and prepared to paddle over to the island Evelyn and a young girl (one of her nieces, whom Monica was thoughtfully sending to bear her company. For the blackness of night covered the island, which was so thickly wooded that even the light of the stars could scarcely penetrate thither. Very deftly the Indian girl, a true child of the forest, arranged for her white sister a couch of moss

and leaves, with an extemporized pillow filled with the fragrant pine needles which Monica had given her. This couch, with a thick blanket for coverlet, was arranged in the very depth of the woodland thicket so that, in case of alarm, discovery would be almost impossible. Wearied out, Evelyn lay down at once with the Indian girl stretched out at her feet and one of the young braves standing sentry. The other, as instructed, took back the canoe to its place, lest a clue might be thus given in the event of pursuit.

For some time the fugitive lay awake, oppressed by the strangeness of her surroundings. The tall trees overhead made an almost impenetrable curtain, through which she could catch but faint glimpses of the sky. The aromatic scents of the woods, stronger in the coolness of midnight, came pungently to her nostrils, and only the unearthly hooting of an owl, or the scream of some other night bird, broke the stillness. Her mind rapidly reviewed the events of that evening, starting from the moment when she had last seen him, the note of warning from Captain Ferrers arrived. The thought of him rushed back upon her: the slight, alert figure, with its eagerness of movement and a strength that was expressed in every line of the clear-cut face with its well-defined chin and the steel-grey eyes, she remembered the look in those eyes when she had last seen him, the tone of his voice and his words, so few and yet so charged with an emotion which told its own story. Here he was; and her heart throbbed with a gladness that all the miseries now crowding fast upon her could not suppress. That man of the world (the term being here employed in a favorable sense) who had come so far and seen so much, and given himself, as he told her, entirely and completely and with a full devotion into her hands. But her heart sank again as she realized that that knowledge must only add to her suffering, since a single step forward on his part would be ruinous to them both. Also, she had now to go where she might see his face no more. That thought seemed intolerable here in the darkness, the darkness which, in its chill desolation, typified her life.

There was but one gleam of light, and this was that she should soon, if all went well, see her father, hear his dear voice again, and resume that companionship which she had missed. That at least was something to warm and cheer her. She recalled his description of the place in which he had made his abode, told in the one or two letters he had ventured to write. That description, couched in his half-whimsical style, did not sound alluring. But, after all, he was there, and his presence constituted home. If only there were not the pain of parting with that other, and leaving behind, perhaps forever, all the dear and happy associations of her beloved Manhattan.

Her thoughts, likewise strayed to Madam Van Cortlandt, who had been as a mother to her, and to her dear, warm-hearted Polly, who had striven to show in every way the same affection, but in whose manner and bearing of late there had been a certain constraint. And this she knew to have been engendered by the coming between them of an alien and inimical personality. So very few days ago, when Evelyn fell into a deep sleep from which she woke only as the first pale light of dawn whitened the landscape. It took her some moments to realize that she was neither in the luxurious sleeping apartment at Madam Van Cortlandt's, nor yet in her own room at the cottage, but here in the camp of the Wilden, a fugitive and under the ban of the law. It was the strangest awakening in her life, and it remained long fixed in her memory.

CHAPTER XVIII  
PLOTING AHEAD

During the next day the search was continued vigorously, though, by the direction of Prosser Williams, also with secrecy. It was not at all his purpose to give widespread publicity to the arrest of Evelyn, and that for a variety of reasons. But inquiries were made at every place where there seemed the remotest possibility that the girl might have taken refuge. Full of baffled rage and spite at the failures of the well-laid plans by which he had hoped to take Evelyn unawares, and mystified by her complete disappearance, he knew not what further step to take. It indeed occurred to him that she might have fled to the camp of the Wilden, though that seemed improbable in view of her presumed ignorance of his intentions and the difficulty of reaching there on such short notice. But he did not care to send thither any search party. The few to whom he suggested such action very strongly dissuaded him therefrom, because of the danger of stirring up trouble with the savages, who would resent the presence of armed men in their camp, whether the girl were there or not.

His only resort was to proceed thither himself in the most casual manner. Making purchases more freely than was his wont, he wandered about amongst the Indians, with eyes and ears keenly on the alert. He even made futile attempts to enter into conversation with old Monica, but, since she was totally unacquainted with English, and the inquisitor had not even the most fragmentary knowledge of Indian dialects, those efforts proved futile. Despite the closest scrutiny, he could find nothing

to indicate the presence of the fugitive at the encampment. In the manner of those with whom he strove to converse, or to bargain for fish or trinkets, there was the same grim impassivity and imperturbable gravity as ever. Even the old squaw, Monica, whom he knew to be the trusted friend of Evelyn, gave not the slightest hint of hostility towards himself, nor yet of uneasiness. Even when he mentioned Mistress de Lacey's name with a view to taking her by surprise, there was not so much as the quiver of an eyelid to betray anything like guilty knowledge of Evelyn or her whereabouts. She spoke a few words, which he was absolutely at a loss to understand, but which seemed to be in praise of the white maiden. He turned away impatiently and returned from that fruitless quest in a greater rage than ever.

It occurred to him several times that Captain Ferrers might be in some way responsible for the girl's disappearance, or at least cognizant of her flight. But he dared not question him upon the subject, since it was not his policy to make known his own share in the matter. Nor did there seem anything in the aspect or bearing of the other to suggest the unusual. He busied himself with the work he had to do, and was closeted with Lord Bellomont and certain members of the Council for the discussion of matters of importance. It seemed to the mind of Prosser Williams, who he fancied was so astute, that his associate must be in complete ignorance of all that had transpired concerning Evelyn.

But Captain Ferrers had meanwhile been active in taking such measures as were possible for the young girl's escape from the Colony, and her safe journey to that New England town where her father had found a temporary asylum. There she would have at least a breathing space, until it might be possible to make other and better arrangements. He contrived to see Madam Van Cortlandt after nightfall on the day following Evelyn's flight. He entered the house through the garden at the back and with every possible secrecy, for he felt sure that the dwelling would be carefully watched. On that occasion he was alone, and he declared that it would have been his dearest wish to marry Evelyn and, resigning his position, cross the seas with her to England or, still better, to the Continent. But, apart from the fact that the girl herself would not for an instant entertain such a proposal he was aware that it would draw upon her a still more malignant hatred on the part of Prosser Williams, who through his influential relatives, was powerful both in England and in the Colony. Such a hue and cry would be raised as would make their safe departure extremely problematical. In her pique at the defection of the household staff, even Lady Bellomont, who at present seemed well disposed towards the girl, might act in a fashion directly contrary to what might be expected. Nor would he be partial to the girl, even if it could be relied upon, count altogether in her favor with the Governor himself. Since it had been his policy to frown upon any intimacy between his wife and the Colonials, he had already, as Captain Ferrers well knew, shown a marked coldness towards the girl, because my Lady had noticed her.

Madam Van Cortlandt was quite of his opinion that, even if Evelyn had been willing to forsake her father in these troublous times, and if the other obstacles could be removed, a marriage at that particular juncture would probably prove disastrous for them both. It was far better, as she believed, to await the course of events. Changes had occurred here both in policy and administration, and changes were certain to occur again. Her suggestion as to the present crisis, which Captain Ferrers accepted with a certain reluctance, was that he should seek out the only one whom in his opinion it would be absolutely safe to trust, namely, Pieter Schuyler. She could answer for him that he would be quite capable of putting aside his own personal prejudices or desires to serve Evelyn honestly and single-mindedly. She was certain that he would go to any lengths to save the girl from trouble, much less from danger. Somewhat pointedly, and as Captain Ferrers remarked to himself quite needlessly, the old lady had further declared that Pieter Schuyler had been devotedly attached to Evelyn from boyhood upwards, and had entertained hopes of finally winning her affection in return. But what progress he had made in that laudable enterprise, with which the hearer could so fully sympathize, Madam did not state. The hope which Ferrers had laid up in his bosom since his last interview with the girl, vague and indefinite as it had been, somehow contradicted the presumption that the patience of this persistent suitor would be rewarded. Still, the very suggestion of such a thing had occasioned his reluctance to apply for any help from that quarter.

Captain Ferrers recognized, however, that it was necessary to have as auxiliary one who knew both the town and the people, who could procure whatever might be required, and select the subordinates to play the minor parts in the perilous drama which involved the safety of their dearly prized friend. Recent events had made him cautious, and it was only such a motive as love that could be counted upon absolutely. Moreover, the Captain's own personal impression of the young Colonial confirmed the recommendation which Madam Van Cortlandt's sagacity and keen discrimination

rendered valuable. Having once made up his mind, Ferrers acted with his accustomed promptitude and sought out the young man at his father's mansion in Pearl Street. That was a strange meeting. The two men were perfectly well aware of each other's aims and hopes, although, in Pieter's case, Evelyn had never encouraged them. Pieter told himself frankly, whenever he reviewed the situation, that Evelyn had already made it plain that the tie between them was purely one of friendship and old association. But her efforts to impress that fact upon him, and the absence of anything like equality, had only urged him on to a deeper fervor of devotion. The cordial friendship which she accorded him kept alive the hope that, where he had gained so much from a girl notoriously chary of her favors, he might with time and patience win still more, or she might even marry him on the strength of their very friendship. Lately he had realized that the coming of Captain Ferrers and his marked preference for Evelyn's society had rendered very unlikely the fulfilment of such a hope. He feared that the newcomer, whose virile qualities were coupled with a singularly winning personality, had captivated her fancy, if not actually won her heart. Nor could he conceal from himself that her preference was well bestowed. Hence it was that, though Pieter's jealousy burned fiercely at times, he had been able to control it, and acknowledged that it was a fair fight in which the better man must win. Therefore, he took cordially the hand which Captain Ferrers extended and accepted his invitation to come to the paternal dwelling and walk down by the Water Gate, as if on their way to the Ferry.

"What I have to say, Myrheer Schuyler," explained Ferrers, "can best be said, I think, under the open sky. And I opine that it is due to your father and the other members of the family that it be not said under their roof."

Pieter, guessing instinctively that Evelyn must be concerned, followed him without delay. Without losing an instant Captain Ferrers talked all the way, placing before his companion the imminent danger in which Evelyn stood of imprudence, which he perhaps worse. He informed him of her temporary place of refuge with the Wilden, and the necessity for her immediate departure from Manhattan. He never so much as enjoined secrecy on his hearer, nor appealed to his love or loyalty. He simply put unreservedly in his hands himself, his position and his future prospects, together with Evelyn's safety. It was the action of one chivalrous man towards another, and Pieter felt the appeal and responded to it with all the generosity of his nature. Evelyn must be saved, even if she were saved for this stranger and by his own help. Ferrers was risking far more for her than he himself could do, though that mattered nothing. In truth, it was a proof of the reality of his love for the girl that he thought first of her, troubled at the danger which threatened her, and deplored the hardships and discomforts which she was now enduring. He would have flown to her side at once, if that could have availed anything.

As Captain Ferrers could not spare much time lest his absence should be noticed, it was hastily decided between them that horses must be procured and held in readiness at a given place, and a suitable escort provided for the girl. Evelyn's own negro maid, Elsa, seemed to Pieter the most desirable companion, since she was trustworthy and absolutely devoted to her young mistress, and since ladies often travelled thus attended. He also deemed it advisable that the horses be placed in charge of Madam Van Cortlandt's foot-boy, who, with discretion and prudence, and who had a remarkable resourcefulness. He could accompany the travellers for as much of the way as Evelyn might desire, but he and the girl Elsa were to return separately, lest their appearance together might be noted. It was agreed that the three should take horse at a given point soon after sunset on the following day, at a given place, and a suitable distance along the Boston Post Road. Striking off after a time into the country, while keeping a parallel direction, they would then follow by paths with which Evelyn was familiar—for, as Pieter remembered with a sigh, they had often ridden over them together—until they were well clear of the city. The maid, Elsa, was a girl of fearless nerve, and, under Jumbo's guidance, it would be impossible for them to miss the way. Before resuming their journey, they were to take some hours' rest at the house of a spinster cousin of Pieter's, who lived at some distance from Manhattan. On receipt of a letter from Pieter, she could be trusted to receive the travellers kindly, to ask no questions and to observe the needed reticence in the event of pursuit or of vexatious inquiries. And, in her turn, this cousin would suggest other places of rest along the way. So were the details of the journey settled.

Meanwhile, Captain Ferrers was to despatch by a trusty messenger a letter containing all necessary instructions to Evelyn at the camp of the Wilden. While ostensibly engaged in the purchase of fish for the household, the messenger would leave the epistle in old Monica's hands to be delivered at once to her young guest.

TO BE CONTINUED

## THE CURE AND LITTLE JEAN

The Cure inspected his garden ruefully. The season had been backward, the drought severe, and the bits of vegetables made but a poor showing.

"Nothing for the present, much less for the winter," he sighed, "and the good Julie—she is so provident. Ah well, the cherries—" he looked up into the solitary fruit tree his domain could boast and regarded with pride the luscious fruit glistening rosy among the leaves. "We shall not lack for conserve, at least."

The cherry conserve of Julie, the Cure's housekeeper, was celebrated throughout the community. It was concocted of cherries and other seasonable fruits, the secret of which she jealously guarded; and it was the one thing in her fruit closet which she refused to share with the sick of the parish. Other jellies she would yield up at the Cure's request, proffered humbly enough, but the cherry conserve was sacred.

"Is not the Cure to have anything, then?" she would query crossly. "Eh bien, I empty my shelves for the miserable people; and the Cure—what then shall he eat?"

"What?" the Cure would remonstrate gently. "Is the good soup nothing? And who can make such nourishing soup as Julie? To think the Cure should want sweetmeats besides—"

An impatient exclamation from the housekeeper. "Here then," ungraciously, "a glass of plum jelly for the widow Benoit. It will have to do. Voila!" And the Cure was forced to be content.

This evening a smile came into his eyes as he noticed the abundance of fruit. The faithful tree had done nobly," he murmured. "Who knows, there may be a few extra glasses—"

"See, Julie," he called, as the housekeeper came around the corner of the house with her basket on her arm, "what a wealth of cherries! No lack of conserve this year," slyly.

Julie, who was stout and stolid, drew her basket to wipe her brow. "Yes, I see," she made answer. "More work for Julie, in a grumbling tone. 'Everything—it makes more work for Julie.'"

"Well, well, we must not complain. Work—the good God sends it to keep us contented—and out of mischief," smiling gently.

"I wish then I had a little time for mischief," Julie murmured as she picked up her basket. "It was plain she was out of humor. 'As much time as those idle soldiers I saw marching off today, singing—'"

The Cure turned a startled look on the old woman.

"Soldiers? Where? What do you mean?"

"What I say," tartly. "Did you not know they are off to war? The Cure was pale as he hurried around the house and made his way quickly toward the town hall. There indeed all was confusion and excitement, and the gendarme soon confirmed the housekeeper's incredible statement. It was the guerre of a truth! The news had come but a short while ago and the village's one contingent of soldiers had already gone, made ready in such haste as was never heard of before.

"All while you were gone back in the hills to see Maitre Villette," the gendarme said. "That they had to go without your blessing—it was a grief to many," he added as he noted the Cure's downcast face.

After a few moments the Cure turned away with a strange heaviness at his heart. Suddenly he stopped and caught his breath sharply, then with a slow step he sought the gendarme again.

"And Little Jean?" he asked hesitatingly. "Did he—"

The gendarme laughed, not unkindly. "Little Jean? Oh yes, mon Pere, Little Jean went—he was obliged to, you know, but not singing like the rest; no, no!"

The Cure shook his head. "It is too bad that he had to go," he said gravely. "It is not that he is a coward, but his nerves—they have never been good. He is high-strung, and will weak after his long illness."

"Oh, he'll be all right," consoling. "After all, they will probably be back in three weeks, or less."

Little Jean Picard, so-called to distinguish him from his uncle, big Jean Picard of the hill vineyard, was an orphan who since his infancy had been the special charge of the Cure of Palmy, a small village set back in the hills away from the main traveled road. His mother, a young woman of weak constitution, had died in giving him birth, and the father, following shortly after, had commended the child to the care of the Cure who had been a schoolmate and boyhood friend. Little Jean grew up delicate and nervous with no liking for the hearty pursuits of his cousins and, as he grew older, with little strength for the heavy work of the vineyard. The uncle, who had never had a day's illness in his life, and his equally strong sons, regarded Jean with a sort of god-natural tolerance not unmixed with contempt and confided to him all the petty tasks of the farm and household.

"Give that to Little Jean," came to be the slighting comment on something easy. Or, "La, la, don't ask Little Jean to do that! It would scare him to death!"

And as they all regarded him, so in time the boy came to regard himself—a state of mind which had been aggravated the previous spring by a long spell of sickness, a low fever

which had clung to him for months and from which he was only now convalescent.

"He is not fit for any exertion, much less for the rigors of camp life or war," the Cure ruminated sadly as he went home to his frugal supper. Julie, noting his depression, served up the last remaining jar of cherry conserve; for, "Tomorrow," she announced cheerfully, "I start again to fill my empty jars."

The Cure nodded absently. His troubled thoughts were far away with Little Jean on the march—Little Jean, six feet, 'tis true, "but flat, even as this knife," he thought, holding up that useful implement with a shake of the head. "How shall he stand the marching, and the hard roads, and the rain, and—eh bien!" He shook himself free from the disturbing reflections. "I must leave him, like the rest, in the hands of the good God!"

But the days passed, and the months, and the news that filtered back showed that Little Jean was at least holding his own, but from himself there came never a line, even to the Cure. Autumn succeeded summer, and then the winter's frost, but no word from Jean. The Cure's heart was heavy.

It was Christmas night. The Cure had spent a busy day, for the children must be made happy and the sick and lonely visited. It was the birthday of Little Jean, a day he had always spent with the Cure, accompanying him on his visits and helping him in all that he had to do. How valuable his help had been the Cure did not realize until he was gone, for Jean had a way with the children and the old people loved him, too, for his gentle and respectful ways. So the old priest had missed him sadly, and at night, disturbed and restless, for he could not sleep, his thoughts were with the boy.

Where was he—how had he stood the strain—what was he doing? Bored with an overwhelming sadness the Cure took his heavy cape and slipped out into the quiet, frosty garden. There was no moon, and through the dense darkness sounds that he knew meant cannonading came clearer and more distinct as the moments passed.

The Cure's hands slipped through his fingers as he walked back and forth. Several times he thought he heard a noise as of a stealthy step, but he gave no heed until there was a louder rustling and on its heels the sound as of a body falling. He started, listened; then, his heart beating heavily, began to make his way cautiously in the direction of the sound, calling softly as he neared the end of the garden. "Who is there? What is it? Speak! It is I, the Cure!"

A long drawn out moan was the only answer; and straining his eyes through the darkness the Cure described the outlines of a recumbent figure beyond the cherry tree.

"Speak!" he repeated as he bent over the figure. "Who is it—? But even as he spoke he knew! It was Little Jean whose clear-like hands were grasping his and from whose parched and blackened lips began to issue the most heartrending gasps and moans and tearless sobs, every one of which seemed to threaten the remnant of life in the emaciated body.

"Jean!" It was a horrified whisper. Little Jean! What is it—what is the matter?" Then as he struck him, "What are you doing here? It is I, the Cure!"

The tense horror in the sibilant whisper checked the boy's sob for a moment.

"I know," he made answer gaspingly, "it is—terrible; you will hate me, mon Pere—but I could not stand it—it was so awful! The killing—the noise—the blood—the fearful dead—Ah!" He raised his head to a staring posture and took his head in his hands. "You do not know the awfulness of it. Kill me if you will—I deserve it—" and he began to sob hopelessly again.

"Why should I kill you?" was the Cure's cold comment. "It is death you have run away from."

"No—no, not death—the horrors—the sights—"

"It was death you feared—why deny it?" still coldly. Then as the boy sobbed on heartbrokenly, the Cure softened. "Ah, Little Jean, was it for this I trained and loved you, to flee ignobly from your country's flag?"

"Don't!" huskily. He looked up at the priest, his face showing deadly white through the darkness. Listen! War—it is not for weaklings such as I. Oh, I know what you would say! It is for every one to defend his country; but what could I—beaten, buffeted, and trampled on by my own in their mad rush—what could I do to the enemy? Nothing. I was worse than useless—in the way, cursed, abused, reviled at."

"Do you think I did not try?" passionately. "I tried every day—very minute. I was forcing myself to go on despite the misery. I was ill—I could not eat. See, my shoes are gone. I lost my extra pair. My feet are cut and bleeding in the filthy rags I found to wrap around them."

"You were not wounded?"

"No," humbly.

"I did fight," sullenness creeping into the tone. "I—I bore all I could. I know you blame me—" The voice fell away into a tremulous sigh.

Silence, for a long and agonizing moment.

"Well," it was the Cure that spoke in a curiously expressionless voice, "you have come home. You have borne all you could—for your country. So be it. I will go in your stead."

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