

GERALD DE LACEY'S DAUGHTER AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS

BY ANNA T. SADDLER BOOK II CHAPTER XII—CONTINUED

"I, and I alone," he went on, "with my influence here and in England, can always protect you and save your father."

"In spite of your loyalty and patriotism, your duty to your King and country?" sneered Evelyn.

"He bit his lips. 'A truce to your irony!' he said darkly. 'I care nothing for it. I offer you the alternative of a highly advantageous marriage with me or death and disgrace.'"

"There cannot be a moment's choice," returned Evelyn with convincing sincerity. "I would infinitely prefer the latter."

As she spoke, she made another effort to rise, but, grasping her by the hand, he strove to draw her towards him, pointing out in wild incoherent language the mad passion which at the moment possessed him more than ever.

"Will you give me your arm, Captain Ferrers? I would fain return to my friends."

The glance exchanged between the two men was full of deadly enmity. Open and undisguised aversion and contempt were in Captain Ferrers' look, as well as a deadly anger.

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At Madame Van Cortlandt's door he left her, with a few hurried words of warning. He implored her to be on her guard, to stir but little abroad and never unattended, until he should have discovered something at least of his fellow-soldier's plans.

For many a day afterwards Captain Ferrers preserved the image of Evelyn as she stood in the open doorway, the scarlet cardinal falling back to reveal the soft white frock beneath.

CHAPTER XIII A BLOW THREATENS

Meanwhile events in the colony had been such as to spread consternation, not only among the few and scattered Catholics, but also among all who, having ranged themselves against Leisler, were counted without a particle of foundation as enemies of the Protestant cause.

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women will, of the betrothals that were impending, and of couples that had been seen much together during the course of the week, of a sadness that was imprinted like a mask on the once sparkling face of Cornelia de Poyster, whose lover had been killed by Indians; of how charming the Schuyler girls and Marije and Annetje Provost had looked in their modish new gowns; how the fat and sluggish wife of Mynebeer de Vries had roused herself to come in a sedan chair to the *Kermesse*, and had visited every store.

Sometimes little silences would intervene as the elder lady studied with admiration the fine and delicate profile of her young guest, the lashes of whose eyes rested on smooth, skinned cheeks, while her fingers drew the thread in and out of the bit of tapestry on her lap.

Madam, speaking at length, reverted once more to the crucial matter of Nicholas Bayard, which they in common with all the town had discussed so often.

"Much grieved I am," she said, "for himself and for his wife, Judith, whom I remember as so beautiful a bride, when she came here from Boston Town. Should aught befall her husband, I verily believe the woman's heart would break."

Evelyn considered the suggestion but she did not dispute it. To her it seemed that hearts were not brittle, but stretched and expanded under the pressure that was put upon them until they could endure all things.

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ness that could not be roused to enthusiasm even by recognition on the part of this woman, whom she knew to be both wise and discerning, of a love that was but half expressed. If it were true that Captain Ferrers loved her—as by many tokens he had led her to believe, so that she herself was all too sensible of his devotion—it only made the prospect before her the more unappealingly difficult.

"May I venture a question?" said Madam. "Has he spoken of his feelings?"

"Only indirectly," Evelyn answered. "I have sought to avoid the subject."

"As was most wise," commented Madam, "at least until—"

But she could not speak the words of hope that her heart suggested. The ending of that sentence must be indefinite. She was filled with a great pity and sorrow. If circumstances had been different, this would have made an ideal match. She had read the young man's character with her keen, discriminating glance, and she knew him to be worthy—a brave and honest gentleman, of a charming disposition too, such as she might have selected for Polly, had the choice been hers.

"No one can know better than I," she said, "that such an attachment must be hopeless. When I have gone to join my father it will perhaps die a natural death."

Madam was very doubtful whether any attachment inspired by such a girl would be so fleeting; but she did not express any further opinion, and indeed at that very moment the two were suddenly and rudely interrupted. There was the sound of footsteps coming hurriedly along the broad walk outside; the latch of the garden gate clicked, and in another instant Jumbo, the foot-boy, tapped at the open door of the room where the two ladies sat.

His eyes were rolling with excitement, as he breathlessly informed them that Mynebeer Ferrers, the Captain, had given him a note and bidden him take it as speedily as he could to the ladies of the house.

Evelyn, to whom the note was addressed, opened it and read that at any moment a force would be sent out to arrest her. Lord Bellomont had spoken plainly of the matter, describing the accused as "an insolent and pernicious Papist, who broke all laws and consorted openly with the enemies of the King's Government."

TO BE CONTINUED

THE OLD PORTAGER

I first met the old portager "somewhere in France," behind the lines of the Canadians. It was a cold, dark night, and a thick fog had settled down over everything; not a light could be seen from hut or house, as every window was darkened from the ever baleful eye of the Zepplins.

Something white was coming along the road towards us; it seemed like a small white cloud rising from the ground as it advanced. It was an eerie thing there in the cold darkness, and a strange fear came over me as I thought of gas. But the chaplain who was more experienced than I in the ways of gas, dispelled my fears.

As we drew nearer two mules yoked to a large transport wagon emerged from the white cloud. The driver was Jim Murray, known among the Canadians as the portager. I could not see him very well as he sat on his load of provisions, but the priest introduced us. Then we let the mules pass and continued on our way.

A few days later I met the old portager again; he was a medium-sized man with iron gray hair and a pair of merry gray eyes that twinkled when he spoke. I liked him immediately and began to chat with him.

"Why do they call you the portager?" I asked.

His eyes twinkled and then he explained that in Canada all the supplies for the lumber camps are brought from the nearest railway station or depot camp on large sleds drawn by a team of horses. The driver of one of these teams is called a portager.

"I've portaged for over thirty years," he said, "and I've had some pretty long portages in my time. There've been times when I'd leave the camp early in the morning, before the sun had risen, and only stopping long enough to feed the side of the road where the snow would not be deep, and we would reach the depot camp late in the afternoon. We would load up there, pass the night, and then start early in the morning on the return trip, arriving late in the evening at the lumber camp when the cookee would be setting the table."

"I've made many portages in the woods of Canada. Often they were wet, nearly always they were cold, but always there was that great silence of the forest, and the sweet breath of the woods. I've traveled often for twenty miles and have seen nothing but the great tall trees on either side of the road, with now and then a deer gliding across the portage, or a rabbit hopping along the snow. In the evening the stars would come out in the dark blue far above, and often the moon lit up the white road through the interlacing shadows of the trees."

"Blame me," cried Madam, "if that is not already half past eight. The exclamation roused Evelyn from the reverie into which she had fallen, a reverie in which Prosser Williams and his highly distasteful wooing played a part, and the figure of Captain Ferrers seemed thrown thereby into high relief. In happier times and under more fortunate circumstances, she could not conceal from herself the latter might have played an important part in her life. It might have been that the old lady, who still watched her intently, divined her thoughts, for she said suddenly:

"A man to be marked amongst many is that Captain Ferrers. He is one whom I do sincerely like and esteem."

to be seen, set forth as in a model all those things which you should learn—that to correct, what to flee from, and what to hold fast.—Sacred Heart Review.

"The cut that year was very small—the smallest that Dan ever had—though there were many other camps whose crews were as large as ours that did not cut as much as we did. All the camps lost men that winter."

"I often have a chance to do other work," he said, "sometimes in the morning after I come back, sometimes in the evening before I leave." He did not say what the other work was, but I surmised. After this war is over there will be Jim Murray and his mules.

Some time after this I met the old portager coming from the stable where he had been to feed the mules. It was late in the afternoon and I knew that soon he would be starting out with his team. We walked along together, and as we passed the huts where some of his battalion were billeted, I noticed little groups of Canadian lads standing along the road. Some were talking and laughing, others were quiet or low-toned, while others were tightening straps of an equipment which did not seem to need tightening. These were lads of a new draft who had lately come to the battalion and they were "going in" that night for the first time.

I did not sleep much that night, for the air was filled with the noise of the bombardment. It was a beautiful night—the stars were clear; the heavens seemed intensely peaceful. And as I walked up and down the little path, behind the little village church, I thought of the old portager and his Canadian lads, and I thought especially of the boys who were in the trenches for the first time.

Early the following morning, when the transport work was over and the old portager and his mules should have gone to rest, I saw a strange procession coming towards me. It was Jim Murray's mules and transport wagon. There was nobody on the driver's seat, but two Canadian privates were kneeling down in the wagon and the old driver was running along by the side, holding the reins. As they drew nearer I noticed a wounded officer lying on straw on the floor of the wagon. The portager was looking up from time to time, and I could hear him speaking to the officer:

"There now me lad—sir, we'll have you there in no time and then you'll be all right."

Then he spoke to the mules: "Go easy there now, and keep to the road!"

The old portager continued to bring down the lightly wounded, but I was called away and it was some weeks before I saw him again. Now and then, however, I heard good reports of the work he was doing after hours. One day he had picked up, along the way, eight lightly wounded men. He brought them into the little village where he was billeted. One or two had bandaged heads, others were wounded in the legs or arms, but they were all singing "On the Rocky Road to Dublin," and those who had two sound feet or one sound foot were beating time on the bottom of Jim Murray's transport wagon.

It was on Holy Saturday that we met again and I found him looking somewhat worn and tired. But he had good news, at least he told it as such—and his tired eyes twinkled as he spoke: "They are going to pull off a pretty big stunt in a day or two, and I think our lads are going to have a go at old Vimy Ridge."

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