

So, with the midsummer brightness came joyful times at last. We were all together one afternoon in the assembly hall at the fort. It was a room filled with memories to me. There the Earl had tasted salt when I visited him on my first day in New York; there I had seen the patroon bailed to his fall, which he had withstood with quiet dignity; I had seen it full of light and of the sound of merry music on the night when I brought the dreadful news of Sir Evelin's escape and of the danger which threatened to fall upon the city from the sea. But now all was changed and well in keeping with the brightness of the day without.

Sir Evelin and I were in one corner of the room listening with considerable amusement to a debate which was going on in the center by the great carved table. Lady Marmaduke and the Earl were striving with as much heat as good nature would allow; and Miriam, the cause of their dispute, stood beside them.

"I tell you," cried Lady Marmaduke hotly, "I tell you it is all nonsense. She shall be married at Marmaduke Hall."

Miriam looked at me and smiled as the Earl replied: "Nay, nay, I have a greater claim. She shall be married in the fort, with all the pomp of martial music, and my guard drawn up in line, and all that."

"Bah, what is your claim?" cried Lady Marmaduke, stamping her foot upon the floor. "I will not