

have a *salutary permanency in magistracy and stability in the laws.*" Indeed, this is the most prominent fact in his life, — a great and beneficent pur-

pose, early conceived, steadfastly pursued, and ultimately accomplished. That purpose was the establishment of republican liberty in the United States.

Frank Gaylord Cook.

THE BEGUM'S DAUGHTER.

XVI.

ONE evening, several weeks after her son's escape, Madam Van Cortlandt received a visit. Going into the parlor, she found there a small woman, closely veiled.

"I am Gertrud Van Cortlandt."

The stranger saluted with a deep reverence.

"What is your business?" inquired madam bluntly.

"It is only for your own ears."

"There is no other here," said the lady of the house, standing erect before her visitor, with no very hospitable aspect.

"You are the mother of the tall junker?"

"And if I be?"

"He is driven from home by" — looking around with an air of caution — "yonder ruffian."

"So is his father, so are his friends, and to-morrow it may be my own turn," burst forth madam bitterly.

"I hear it all, — I see it all. 'Tis a great wickedness."

"You know more of me than I of you," said madam, not without a touch of suspicion.

"Look, now!" exclaimed the stranger, throwing off her veil.

"The wife of Dr. Staats?"

"Yes."

"Your husband is in league with those yonder."

"Yes. The madness seized upon him. He would not heed me. He is drawn

on by that babbler. They go to their ruin. But," with an impatient gesture, "we will not talk of them; 'tis the junker."

"And what of him?"

"He is in danger," lowering her voice, and laying her hand on the mother's arm.

"How know you that?" asked the lady of the house, drawing back with increased distrust.

"I know it; 'tis enough. I have not time to talk. I must not be missed at home. The junker saved my life."

"I never heard of it."

"No, he makes no account of it, but *I* keep it always here," tapping her forehead, "and it is a good time now to remember."

"So?" exclaimed madam guardedly, her eyes darkening with interest.

"They hunt for him. They hunt for them all, — this way, that way, days, nights, always."

"What then?"

"There comes to-day a — a" — halting for a word — "a noise that they are near."

"Ahem!" Some recreant muscle gives way, and a tell-tale flush creeps slowly over the listener's face.

"Hereabouts?"

"I cannot say."

"No, no," nodded the begum, as approving the caution, "you know nothing, but," uplifting her dusky face, and whispering with dilated eyes, "bid some bird go find them out and tell them, 'Lie close to-night.'"

"What are the devils at now?" burst out the startled matron.

A noise of footsteps and a murmur of voices in the street interrupted them. The begum looked nervously around, and dropped her veil. Directly the sound died away she rose to take leave.

"What is this you tell me?" asked the anxious mother. "What is on foot? Give me something to act upon."

"There is danger,—danger all about, like a tiger in the jungle. Now it crouches to spring. You are warned,—it is enough. Go speed your bird. Bid him spread his wings *to the north*," with a significant look. "Every minute lost is sorrow."

With a quick obeisance, half salaam, half courtesy, the speaker turned to go. Madam followed to the door, fruitlessly protesting. In the shadow of the stoop outside she saw a slave waiting.

"Stay, you have no lantern."

"No, no. The darkness is a friend," and, slipping out, the little figure was directly lost in the gloom.

That night a supper-party was assembled in the Philipse manor. The cloth had been removed; a huge punch-bowl, flanked by a tray of glasses, stood in the midst of the heavy oaken table. The guests sat about, smoking pipes and talking, but plainly in no convivial mood.

Outside not a ray of light broke the darkness. The wind held high carnival. Shutters, doors, window-casements, hay-ricks, fences, dead limbs, and withered leaves, each and all played some creaking, shrieking, rattling, banging part in the great wind-symphony, while the cavernous chimneys, like huge bassoons, softened the discord with perpetual roar.

The host and one of his guests had stepped out on the stoop for a weather prognosis. They came in talking.

"Not yet, not yet; the time is not ripe," said Philipse, expostulating against some suggestion. "Let him run his course."

"What, stand and look on while he lays waste our estates and murders our families?"

"It will never come to that, colonel, never fear. He is at the end of his rope already. The people will not bear it much longer."

Bayard turned; it was the ex-mayor who had joined the pair.

"Bear it!" he said. "Will they not? They are a flock of sheep without a bell-wether. They dare not stir while the dog stands over them with his band of cut-throats."

"They will stir in due time; have patience," said Philipse calmly. "Wait. The evil will work its own cure."

"'Wait'!" The tone was frankly contemptuous. "Wait until the brutal boor has scourged, imprisoned, or driven away every honest man from the place,—until he has destroyed the city and laid waste the province!"

"What would *you*, then, advise?" It was a fourth who chimed in, as they resumed their seats about the table.

"Well put, French. What would *you* do, colonel? Let us have everybody's voice. 'Tis that we are here for."

"I would get together a hundred stout fellows, meet outside the walls on the first dark night, overpower the guard, make a rush on the fort, and seize the hog in his sty. One bold dash and the day is ours."

Steenie, sitting at the foot of the board, leaned forward, with glistening eyes. His blood was stirred by these bold words.

Philipse shook his head, and puffed his pipe with an air of forbearance. It was Van Cortlandt who spoke:—

"'Tis not so easy. The fellow knows his danger. Day and night he is on the alert. Every approach is doubly guarded. A surprise is impossible."

"March down, then, in open daylight, with banners flying, and fight it out to the death," said the colonel recklessly.

"Let us talk sense, and act like men," returned the mayor coldly. "I have come latest from town. I made a study of things there, as I had good cause to do. I know the rascal's strength and the hold he has on the people. Bear this in mind, — 't is better not to move at all than to fail. It is our failures thus far that have put him where he is."

"And is it your voice, too, that we should wait, that we should lie skulking in holes while this madman runs his course?" asked Bayard, with a sneer.

"We need not skulk. There is plenty to do. We may help on the work. 'T is our part to set in train every influence which may avail to bring him down."

"And where, pray, be these mysterious influences? What but knock-down blows can bring this rascal to reason?"

"Seeing the province fall away from him; seeing his power crumble to pieces; finding himself without money to pay his train-bands; hearing that the other colonies are finding him out, that the king knows the truth, and that a new governor has been appointed."

"Vastly fine; but before a tithe of this is done, will he not, think ye, have the whole province under his heel? Will he not have money enough by the sale of our estates? Will he not have increased his following by enlisting every idle fellow in the province, while we and our friends, every man who has the wit to see through him and the will to withstand him, must choose betwixt submission and the dungeon?"

"Poh! Poh! The work is already half done to our hands."

"What is done but talk? Not an honest blow has been struck."

"And if he work his own ruin, what need for blows? Set a hog swimming, — 't is an old saw, — and he will cut his own throat."

The colonel made a gesture of impatience.

"Bethink you, Bayard, of the Canadian expedition. What is thought of him in Connecticut and the Massachusetts after that?"

"What matters it what's thought of him there?"

"Much! He will look in vain for aid and countenance in those quarters."

"Think, too, how he must tremble at every ship sighted from London."

"Poh! he laughs at any danger from that source, and well he may."

"Why, then, did he post that fool of an ensign off to England in such haste? He knew Nicholson had the king's ear."

"Little good 't will do Nicholson or us. The king is too unsteady in his seat and has too much to do near at hand to bother his head about the colonies. He will leave us to ourselves."

"What more do we want?" asked French.

"Can you not see, colonel, the discontent is deepening every day?"

"No, that can I not."

"Why, sir, the farmers of Long Island are already in open revolt. Did he not have to send his bullies to Hempstead only yesterday, to put down a riot over gathering the tax?"

"Yes, and another troop went the day before to Jamaica on the same business."

"And another still to Flushing."

The suggestions came pouring in from all around the board.

"I tell you the fire is spreading," summed up the ex-mayor, with an air of authority.

"How spreading, when he stamps it at the first puff of smoke?"

"He does not stamp it out; he cannot. 'T is getting beyond his control; he gives signs of panic already."

"And well he may: keeping all those hulking loafers at his heels is costly business; he must feed and pay them."

"And for that he must have money."

"Which he has not; he is at his wits' end already."

"And goes any length to come by a stuyver."

The colonel answered the temporizing chorus only by a look of disdain.

"Did you hear his new laws?"

"Ay, now there is a case in point."

"Was there ever heard the like?"

"You know them, colonel?"

"No," answered Bayard, with indifference.

"Listen, then!" said Van Cortlandt, taking a paper from his pocket and reading. "First and foremost he levies a direct tax for the support of the garrison."

"'T is that raised all the pother among the farmers."

"And no wonder: what need have they for a garrison?"

"Next," went on the ex-mayor, "he commands all persons who have left the province to return within three weeks, under pains and penalties."

"That is leveled at us."

"And if we come not back" —

"He seizes our estates."

"Dog!"

"Beast!"

"Thief!"

"Wait! Patience, gentlemen, if you would hear what trick this new Hampden, this second Cromwell, this prophet and deliverer of his country, is at! Wait, I say!" continued the reader, going on with his paper. "Any one refusing a civil or military commission under him shall be fined seventy-five pounds."

"'T is to get more money."

"How is that?"

"He will appoint *us* to offices: Philipse shall be master of the whipping-post, Bayard the hog-reeve, and I — 't is doubtful if he has anything for me, unless the place of hangman's varlet be haply vacant; then if we delay to accept these favors, mark ye!"

"He collects the fines out of our estates."

"See you?"

"Any one leaving Albany or New Utrecht," went on Van Cortlandt from his paper, "'without permission, to be fined one hundred pounds.'"

"'T is easy to see the drift of that."

"Easy indeed; 't is to provide other fields when the crop of rich men here fails him."

"And all persons," resumed the reader, "'who have left those counties must return within fourteen days, at their utmost peril.'"

"Yes," said Philipse, knocking the ashes from his pipe, "'t is a scheme to plunder us in cold blood. These laws are aimed at the men of substance amongst us. Every man with an estate tempts his greed, and he will have it, by hook or crook."

"Right," chimed in Nichols, "and what escapes the colander will stop at the sieve."

"Yet in the face of all this," cried Bayard, jumping from his seat and striding up and down the room, "ye say wait! In the face of all this ye would stand here like a flock of bleating lambs and wait, — wait for the coming of the wolf! I say," he went on, striking the table with his clenched fist, "we've had waiting enough. I say the man is a fool or a coward who waits another hour. We are driven from our homes. We are hiding in holes like wolves. We come together in fear and trembling, under cover of night, to take counsel, and all your cry is 'Wait!' I say," he concluded in stentorian tones, "begin to act, to do something! I say, let our watchword be war, — war to the death! I say, let us take an oath here and now to stand up and give blow for blow!"

A look of conscious shame showed itself in the faces of the little group at these accusing words. The host and the ex-mayor, the natural leaders of the party, shifted uneasily in their seats, but did not speak.

The awkward silence was broken at last by Steenie, who, sitting in the back-

ground, started suddenly from his seat with an exclamation.

"Hark!"

"Eh?"

"What was that?"

All listened, but nothing could be heard save the creaking framework of the house and the roaring wind in the vast chimneys.

Presently Philipse, with his usual air of deliberation, broke silence:—

"I quite agree with the colonel."

Naturally everybody looked astonished.

"This rascal should be put down. This robbery should be stopped. I have a vital interest in the matter. I want to see it done. The only question is how to do it. Cut off from our homes, — I am left this retreat as yet, but to-morrow may see me driven forth, — cut off from our friends and supplies, what chance have we to work? Let the colonel tell us, as plain, practical men, what there is we can do!"

"That I will," returned Bayard promptly. "You shall have it in a nutshell. Get together a force of men able to put down this fellow and crush out his following!"

"And how is such an army to be come by?"

"Not by sitting here sucking thumbs. By bestirring ourselves; by going about through the whole province, wherever discontent has appeared, and winning the people over. Once set the ball going and it will roll of itself. Then call on Albany and Connecticut to join!"

"It sounds fair," observed Philipse thoughtfully, "but more promising schemes have come to naught. Bethink you, colonel, if we fail, we are in a worse plight than before."

"We shall not fail, for come the worst to the worst," muttered the colonel, "there are the French and the savages!"

A murmur ran around the circle at this dark innuendo.

"Why not? Can we be worse off? On the one side there is sure ruin; on the other there is a chance."

"But why think of failure?" asked French of the chief objector.

"And so I would not, could I but see any good prospect of success," answered Van Cortlandt, walking away to bask before the open fire.

"Listen, gentlemen," said Bayard, drawing his chair up to the table, and emphasizing his words by sharp taps of his gold snuff-box upon the polished oak; "hearken to me a minute! I ask no great matters of you. I will undertake the brunt of the work. Only pledge me your support. Hold yourselves bound to pay all needful charges and draw your swords for the final fray, and I will answer for the result."

"No, colonel, you shall not hold me so lukewarm in the matter," spoke up Philipse, his ice of caution melting before Bayard's enthusiasm. "I am willing to take my share both of toil and danger."

"And count upon me to do and dare anything in the cause!" cried Van Cortlandt, yielding to the impulse which fired the little group.

"And me!"

"And me!"

"And I, Colonel Bayard, will go with you to raise the army!" exclaimed Steenie, starting up.

"You shall, boy!" said the colonel, laying his hand affectionately on the junker's shoulder.

"So! the tide is turned. Fill up, — fill up, gentlemen! Here's victory to our cause! That dog has had his day. Before a month has passed — I ask but thirty days, mind ye — I will sweep the province clear of him and his pack. Again! fill again, and let it be a bumper!"

Amidst this pledging of healths and clinking of glasses a servant in the doorway strove in vain to make himself heard.

"The troopers!"

"Eh?"

"Run! run! they're upon us!"

To confirm the man's words the heavy tramp of horses' feet was heard outside upon the lawn.

There was a scramble for the door. The host, through real or affected contempt of the danger, stood by his post; the guests stayed not upon the order of their going. Seizing their hats and cloaks as they rushed through the hall, they made the best of their way by the back stairs to the kitchen door, whence, guided by a servant, they slipped away through the thick shrubbery towards the river, where a boat was in waiting.

Half-way down-stairs, Bayard, thinking of some forgotten detail of his scheme, turned back for a last word with his host.

The front door resounded with blows from halberds and sabres, as the colonel whispered his hurried charge to Philipse. Familiar with the house, however, he took his time, and coolly groped his way to the back entrance. Here, smiling at thought of the futile rage of his pursuers on missing their prey, he folded his heavy cloak about him and stepped forth into the pitchy darkness.

Directly he was seized by two stout men-at-arms, and despite a vigorous resistance he was quickly disarmed, bound, and led away in triumph.

XVII.

Steenie gone, there was no longer any restraint upon Hester's movements; she could come and go at her will within the bounds of the city walls. This limit to her wanderings would seem to have cut off all communication with the *bouwerie*; but notwithstanding the vigilance of the sentinels at the gates and the severe experience of the ducking-stool, there is not wanting evidence that *Vrouw Van Dorn* knew more than she chose to tell of certain messages and letters which

had much to do with keeping up Hester's hope and spirits.

Save for this trial of separation, life in the Strand had latterly been more tolerable. Her father and his lieutenant had been too much taken up with public matters to heed things at home. Often they went away at daybreak, and only came back at nightfall, when, worn out by cares of state, they ate heavily at supper, and directly afterward fell asleep over their pipes on either side the chimney.

After a time, however, there came, as it seemed, a lull in public business. Directly the saturnine suitor bethought him of his long-interrupted nuptials. He spoke to *Leisler*, who at once took up the matter with his wonted energy and pushed on the preparations.

Accustomed now for some months to the thought which had at first been so shocking, and overcome by the masterful will of her father, *Mary* resigned herself to the inevitable. Without further tears or murmurs she gave the implied assent of silence, unconsciously adding a last element of pathos to the occasion by taking a chief part in decking herself for the sacrifice.

The simple preparations were soon made. The day came, and a gloomful day enough. Not a gleam of sunshine pierced the leaden sky. A puffy wind filled the narrow street with clouds of dust, and drove the melting snow — when at last it came — in dank masses against the window-panes.

Indoors things were no better. *Vrouw Leisler* had much ado to keep a brave front. Not to have *Dominie Selyns* marry the pair was the first blow and a cruel disappointment. Again, certain of their old friends and neighbors whom she had ventured to bid to the feast had coldly declined. In despair, the poor *vrouw* went weeping to her husband for advice. He supplied her with a haphazard list of guests from his coadjutors at the fort.

Vainly the fond mother strove to give a touch of gladness and cheer to the festival despite all these depressing circumstances. Well and faithfully she had done her part. The house shone with cleanliness; the family, slaves included, were in holiday dress. Her own harrowed face, however, looked grotesquely incongruous with her wedding finery. Small comfort she took in her quilted puce silken petticoat embroidered in silver filigree, her crape samare, her ponderous rings and necklace, and the heavy gold chatelaine still carefully preserved by her descendants.

At the last minute Leisler came stalking home from the fort, with dress more than usually disordered, and a bevy of guests at his heels in much the same guise.

Five o'clock sounded, and the little company were at last assembled in the best room. Huge logs blazed in the open fireplace and long candles burned in the sconces, for the short winter's day was already at an end.

The bride was presently led in by her mother. She was a thought pale, but showed none of the nervousness proper to the moment. On the contrary, she gazed about on the company with an apathetic look, as if not quite clear why they were gathered. Dressed in a blue jacket over a scarlet petticoat of fine cloth, with her fair hair brushed back under a close cap, a massive gold necklace wound twice about her throat, and an embroidered purse garnished with silver ornaments hanging at her side, she presented the spectacle at once of a typical Dutch bride and a most fair and winsome young creature.

So, plainly enough, thought the waiting groom, as he regarded her from under his shaggy eyebrows, and for a moment a gnarled smile unsettled his severe features.

The hour had come and all was ready, but where was the dominie? Another bad omen. Vrouw Leisler glanced anx-

iously at her husband, who muttered curses under his breath.

"Give him time," said the groom patiently; "'t is a long ferriage, and both wind and tide are against him."

Leisler chafed, and the guests glanced dubiously at each other. It was an awkward moment, but happily not a long one. The dominie soon arrived, cold, wet, and bedraggled. No time was lost in explanations and apologies. He was given a glass of grog and reminded of the hour. At an impatient nod from Leisler, the waiting pair came forward and the family gathered about.

At the first word of the service, Hester clutched her sister by the hand, as if to drag her away; but Mary, with a stony, unmoved look, quietly released herself, and turned back to the dominie.

Solemnly the good man droned through his formulas, his prayer, and his long admonition, and at last with fitting unction pronounced the fateful words "man and wife."

To the dismay of the gratified groom, Hester broke into loud sobs when she went up to kiss the bride. Vrouw Leisler's overstrained nerves could bear no more, and she straightway followed suit in a flood of tears. Leisler sternly thrust them both aside, and made room for the guests to offer their congratulations.

Happily the call to supper was not delayed. It was a merciful relief. Here, at least, was abundant material for good cheer. The hospitable dame had set forth a plentiful and tempting repast. Here were huge roasts of beef, pork, and venison. Here were boiled fowls and oysters. Here were bowls of smoking suppen. Here were heaped plates of olykoecken, pannekoecken, and sweetmeats. Here were heavy glittering glass decanters filled with Antigua rum, Fiall passado, sack, and old madeira. Here was a huge china bowl of fragrant brandy-punch. In short, no delicacy known to the time and proper to her

state was wanting to the good vrouw's wedding feast, and all had been prepared under her own eye and direction.

However much a relief, the supper added little of real cheer to the occasion. The guests, although restrained by their simple notions of decency from falling upon the food with latter-day voracity, yet gave their thoughts wholly to their trenchers. Not a smile, not a jest, not a strain of music, lightened the gloom. The host, unconscious of what he ate, brooded over all with a severe aspect; and presently, when a slave appeared with a brass chafing-dish filled with live coals, he lighted his pipe as a signal for his guests, and drew away the groom to talk over a packet which had just come to hand from the Massachusetts.

"What make ye of that?" he asked, pointing to a clause in the letter.

Milborne read aloud:—

"And well you know what good reason we have to wish well to your cause, but beg you to have a care not to carry matters with too high a hand, but to *temper justice with moderation and mercy, since the king's own settlement of the matter is so near at hand.*"

"Fudge!" said Milborne, handing back the letter. "Whence got they news of the king's own settlement of the matter? He settled it long ago by leaving you in charge; when any other settlement is made, be sure 'twill not come to us by way of Boston."

Leisler nodded, and his brows relaxed.

"As for the rest of their sermon,—be you content with justice, and leave mercy to the Lord. What you have got by the strong hand, hold fast, and let these cavaliers prate!"

While Leisler was considering this advice, a slave came groping his way through the thick clouds of tobacco-smoke, to say that a child was at the outer door, demanding to see him.

"Go fetch him in. And ye," he

continued, turning to Milborne as the slave disappeared, "get back to your bride and your festivities."

The groom, nothing loath, obeyed; while his father-in-law, draining a neglected glass of punch in his hand, sat down in the broad window-seat to refill his pipe.

In a few moments the slave reappeared with a dripping little figure, looking like a half-drowned rat.

"What want ye with me, my lad?" asked the captain gruffly, as he puffed at his kindling pipe.

Directly the child burst into a violent fit of weeping.

"How now? What's here? Ei, 't is Stoll's brat! What's the matter, young one?" continued the questioner, not unkindly.

"Little Joost is dy-ying, and mother bids you come to her."

"So! so!" A look of concern softened the man's harsh features, and taking the sobbing child in his arms he tenderly kissed him. "Stay you here, my boy, with my good vrouw! She will give you some cakes and sweetmeats, and I will go to the mother. Come, now! Come now, little man, I say, cry no more; here is Vrouw Leisler."

Giving the child over to his wife with some hurried directions, Leisler threw on his cloak and hat, and strode away through the storm to Joost Stoll's humble dwelling.

He found Vrouw Stoll, her face haggard with anxiety, her eyes swollen with weeping, bending over her sick child.

"How is it with him, Annetje?"

"'T is bad enough with him," said the woman sullenly.

"Tut! tut! take heart, woman, there's a chance yet!"

"There's no chance! He'll be taken from me—he's going now!" returned the mother, with choking voice.

"He has the fever?" asked the visitor, bending over the bed and clasping the burning little palm in his own.

"He has death on him — and 'tis ye did it!" cried the woman, with a flash of indignation. "Ye sent away his father, and I had nobody to help me. Ye sent away my Joost; he will never come back — the husband, and now the child. I have nothing left!"

"Sh — sh! Where is your sense, woman? Joost will soon be home, and the babe here well, and all happy."

"Well," say ye? Look at that!" sobbed the poor mother, pointing to the bed and covering her face.

Leisler turned, and saw the child writhing in convulsions.

When the paroxysm was over, he lifted the tiny sufferer in his arms, and walked up and down in the little chamber, where the light of the single dip-candle threw his shadow in grotesque proportions on the wall.

"When had ye the doctor?" he asked, as the child grew quieter.

"Oh, the doctor — the doctor! I'll have no more of 'm! What good is he? He shakes his head, and does nothing!"

"Poor Annetje!"

"'Tis ye have done it!" cried the woman, irritated by this unavailing sympathy. "But for ye I had now both husband and child!"

"I did but my duty, woman," said the captain humbly. "Had it been my own to suffer, I must have done the same."

"Husband and child — husband and child — both gone — lost and gone — never to come back!" repeated the woman in despairing tones, as she rocked back and forth in her chair.

"Pray ye to the Lord, good Annetje. Go to Him with your sorrow, and He will send ye comfort," said the captain devoutly. "But give not up all hope yet. I will go myself and fetch the doctor."

"Fetch him no more! I'll have him no more! He was here at sundown. He does nothing but shake his head,

and say, 'Ye must lose yer babe — 'tis the Lord's will.' Fetch him no more. I'll not believe him."

"I'll go, then, and call the neighbors to help ye."

"That shall ye not. I sent them home. I'll have him to myself. Little Joost! Sweet one! The best of the brood, and named for his father, too. 'T was but last Monday, a week ago, he was running all about, and laughing till ye might hear him in the street. Oh-h-h! 'T is well his father is gone! Well — well — well for me! What could I say to him, coming back? Gone — gone! Big Joost and little Joost — man and child both angels in glory. 'T is ye have done it! And ye shall answer for it, too, if a widow's prayers be heard!"

To and fro, to and fro, in the little room, the rough soldier walked with the dying child. Worn out by grief and care, the hapless mother slept from sheer exhaustion; waking by fits and starts to renew her laments and reproaches, ringing with wearying monotony the changes upon the few phrases afforded by her scant vocabulary.

Returning no answer, save now and then a brief word of consolation, the conscience-stricken watcher kept his march.

Quicker and sharper grew the attacks of the little sufferer, as its life ebbed with the waning night. The candle burnt out and guttered in its socket, leaving the room in darkness. The storm filled the night with tumult, the waves lashed the neighboring rocks with thunderous roar, while high up above the little roof, on the Verlettenberg, the old windmill creaked and groaned in the furious blast.

In the gray of the morning all was over; the flickering life-light had gone out at last. With softened look, Leisler laid the tiny wasted form on the bed, beside its sleeping mother; then, with uplifted reverent face, muttering

over the unconscious pair a hurried prayer, he went away to rouse the neighbors.

Wading home in the early dawn through the slumping, half-melted snow, the chastened commander was met at the turning of the dock by one of his slaves, guiding a breathless messenger with a packet. It contained but a few lines from his correspondent in Boston:

"News is come that Nicholson is made lieutenant-governor of Virginia, and that Colonel Henry Sloughter is appointed governor of New York."

To the amazement of the gaping messenger, the grave, sad-looking, middle-aged man to whom he had handed the letter tore it into strips, stamped it under foot, and filled the cool, still morning air with hot-mouthed curses.

XVIII.

Barent Rhynders was the son of a well-to-do blacksmith of Albany. Sent to New York on some business by his father, he caught the martial fever, and offered his services at the fort.

Leisler, only too glad to get such a strapping recruit, speedily discovered in him metal of worth. That lumbering body, as it turned out, was topped by a good head. A matter of moment accidentally entrusted to him was managed with a judgment surprising in a tyro. Other commissions followed, with the same result; everything given him to do was done with quietness and dispatch. At last, for want of a more experienced envoy, he was sent up to his native town on some delicate mission, in which he showed such steadiness and good sense that on his return he found himself in high favor.

Going back and forth on frequent errands from the fort to the house in the Strand, he of necessity fell in with Jacob junior, and as the two were nearly of an age they soon became boon companions.

Thus, although not a member of the household, he was a constant visitor. The commander always gave him a grunt of welcome, Vrouw Leisler took a motherly interest in his health, and the younger fry made him one in all their plans and pastimes.

Hester was too much preoccupied, these days, to take careful note of the new-comer. His silence, his stolidity, his homeliness of mind and person, were qualities not of a sort to draw attention.

It was not very clear how the junker produced his social effects, for he had little to say, and seemed always furnishing a background of neutrality to the more loquacious and forth-putting. Yet plainly enough he had a value for his associates, a very positive value, which, while as inscrutable in its working as the dark rays of the sun, was as marked in its effect. It may have been, after all, only a sound-metal ring of genuineness in him; for in time one found out that he only spoke when he had something to say, he only laughed when he was pleased, he told the truth so far as practicable, and for the rest kept his own counsel as to things not needful to be mentioned.

So far as Hester was concerned, it was not at all in the stranger's favor that he was Cobus's bosom friend, for she rebelled at her brother's lordly and patronizing ways since he had been employed in the public business. Thus, vexed by Cobus's contemptuous air and weary of her mother's eternal house-keeping prattle, Hester came little by little to find a solace in the ungainly junker's society. Whether it was that he did not dispute with her, that he was always attentive, that he seemed to carry about an atmosphere of kindness and sympathy, it is impossible now to say. Each and all of these considerations doubtless served as determining influences in making her gradually turn to him for her only real companionship.

It will presently more clearly appear

how unconscious she was of this tendency in herself. In passing, it may be instanced as significant that she seemed often to forget him in her preoccupation, and to go on as if thinking aloud, and with as little restraint in feeling or action as if in presence of a chair or bureau.

In this self-absorption, naturally enough it had never occurred to her to consider what his feelings might be in the matter, or whether he had any. Quite blind to the look of pleasure which twinkled in his small eyes and overspread his broad face at her approach, she was equally insensible of his many little devices for ministering to her comfort, accomplished as they were for the most part by stealth. So, too, when Cobus burst in upon their communings and rudely dragged Barent off on some junker sport or quest, she failed, in her own vexation, to remark her companion's chagrin.

From this happy unconsciousness she was roughly awakened. Catalina came one morning to visit her. Such an event was of rare occurrence nowadays for divers reasons, none of which were very clear to Hester. In the first place, Catalina had been slow in recovering from her resentment at her friend's engagement; again, no sooner was the obnoxious sweetheart gone, and that stumbling-block removed, than the begum began mysteriously to bristle with so many objections to any social intercourse with the Strand that the old intimacy was well-nigh broken up.

Whether reconciled at last to a divided affection, or whether hoping that in this long separation Hester's heart would become estranged from the absent junker, Catalina had latterly shown an inclination to take her friend back into favor, and this morning, on coming together, they flew into each other's arms with old-time fervor.

What a day of delight it proved to the joyous maiden! How lover-like she followed Hester about in her household

tasks, from the cold stone-flagged pantry, where she chopped, seasoned, and pressed the savory hoof-kaas, to the big lumber-strewn garret, where, seated near a southern window at the old-fashioned hand-loom brought from Holland by Vrouw Leisler's grandam, Hester skillfully sped back and forth the flying shuttle, weaving her mother's good homespun thread into a coarse blue linsay-woolsey stuff against the time new petticoats should be needed.

At dinner there was the strange junker brought home by Cobus. Having neither seen nor heard of him, Catalina at first bestowed scant notice upon him. By and by, as it chanced, he spoke to Hester. It was a quite commonplace speech, not at all worth repeating, but none the less the watchful visitor's eye instantly sought out the speaker; none the less she studied him narrowly for the rest of the meal, noting how steadily his eyes were fixed in one direction, how intently his ears listened for the sound of one voice.

Neither did she fail to remark, as they rose from the table, that he speedily drew Hester aside, nor with what a true wizard touch he held fast to his victim by bringing forth things from his pocket, — a pair of Hester's scissors which he had taken down on the sly to be sharpened by the armorer at the fort, and a curious little talisman he had bought of a sailor in the dock.

The things were trifles; they did not count. It was the looks and manners of the two, the comfortable air of intimacy between them, which fixed the watcher's attention. And herein, as it seemed, she found some alarming significance, as well as in the further fact that their parting at the door was prolonged until interrupted by the peremptory whistle of Cobus, who stood waiting in the street for his friend.

Turning back into the house, Hester found her friend putting on her hood with an air of precipitation.

"Going?"

"'T is time, I think."

"What, now?" wonderingly.

"You have no need of me."

"So?"

"I leave you to your junkers."

The listener gazed with innocent, wide-opened eyes.

"You comfort yourself while the old one is gone. What becomes of the new when the old comes back? You think, mayhap, he will never come. So! you waste no time, you cannot wait, you fill his place at once," with an ironical laugh. "How seems it, then, to have two at a time? Poor number one, if he could see who fills his place! Poor junker, he had at least a fair face; he did not look like a devil-fish."

A look of growing intelligence succeeded the wonder in the listener's eyes. Her cheeks were burning red; she stood like one in a stupor, while her jealous little guest, with a scornful courtesy, marched quickly to the door, sending back as a parting shaft, —

"I wish you joy of your junkers, — a fresh one every month. You have no need of friends, not you!"

Hester made no move to stop her angry friend. She was for the moment too much stunned. Like a somnambulist waking in a place wild and strange, she had a feeling of unsettled equilibrium. Was this the truth she had heard? If not, why had it such an appearance of truth? With swift retrospect she went over the few months covering her acquaintance with Barent. A new wave of color surged slowly over her face. She walked to the window, and looked out; she turned, and went mechanically up to her own room, threw herself down in a chair, and passed her hand vaguely over her forehead.

After a while, by a fresh effort of will, she forced herself slowly and carefully to review the whole matter again. Her face gradually cleared.

It was nothing, after all. She had

talked with this big, kindly hearted junker, to be sure, because — because he was there, because she had nothing else to do. She had never thought of him a moment after he was out of sight. Besides, he was Cobus's friend; he came to see Cobus; he cared nothing for her. Catalina was absurd, as usual; she was always imagining things.

By such sound reflections she gradually won back her self-composure. With absolute innocence of intent there could be no deep sense of wrong-doing. Nevertheless, as appeared, she felt far from easy about the matter, and awaited with evident anxiety her next meeting with Barent. When he came, she studied him curiously, critically, from a new and different standpoint. Now for the first time and clearly enough she saw his face kindle at her approach, she noted his little kindnesses. It had an odd effect upon her. She flamed up with indignation, as though he had taken an unwarrantable liberty, and replied sharply to his friendly overtures.

Barent naturally looked greatly discomfited, and cast an inquiring glance at the capricious maiden out of the corner of his eye. But he was blessed with a temperament to deal with caprices. As a strong man treats the foibles of a child, he let them pass, and waited for the return of reason, — a method equally admirable whether due to thickness of skin or largeness of mind.

But here was no case of caprice, as the junker was soon to learn to his cost. This young woman, who for months had been so kind, so hospitable, so companionable, and even confidential, now suddenly turned about, and began to treat him in a most distant manner, to avoid meeting him or holding with him any but the most formal communication. All this without explanation or apparent cause.

As suddenly on his side the junker began to realize how prized this companionship had been by him, what an

important part it had formed of his daily life, how insensibly it had colored all his plans for the future, and what a grievous affliction its abrupt cessation now proved.

Conscious of no offense committed, of no shortcoming in manner or intent, nor of any neglect of duty towards his young hostess, he was at first puzzled, and then greatly disturbed, by this singular change of deportment. After a long and fruitless pondering upon the matter, he resolved to seek an explanation of Hester herself. This, however, he found no easy matter, so persistently did she avoid him, and so lacking was he in the boldness needed to make opportunities.

But patience such as Barent's rarely goes unrewarded. One Sunday afternoon, while idly pacing the ramparts of the fort, he saw the familiar figure just turning into the old burying-ground which formerly stretched between the western side of Broadway and the North River. Here at last was his chance. He paused a moment to summon resolution, and then made the best of his way to the spot.

Passing through the gate, he looked about for several minutes before discovering the object of his search. After no long time, however, he saw her half-way down to the river, wandering among the graves and studying the epitaphs.

He stopped; his courage flew away now when he most needed it. He loitered, watching her movements, accommodating his pace to hers. Muttering to himself in a distraught way, he read aloud scraps of the inscriptions on the simple head-stones, as he sauntered on :

"*'Hier rust het lighaem von Peter Suydam'* — now she stops — *'geboren den 20^{te} February'* — she does not hear me — *'overleden'* — she goes on again. *'In den Heere ontslapen'* — in a minute more I shall come up with her — *'Hendrick Amermore'* — how will she look ! *'Tot gedachtenis von Jacob Mindert overleden'* — she will be an-

gered — *'oude zynde 75 jaaren'* — yet will I not go without speech with her. *'Hier leydt het stoffelyck deel von Wouter Van Dyke.'*"

Hester, too, it seemed, was busy with mortuary lore, for, turning back by chance to read again an epitaph she had passed, she came full upon her abashed follower. With a dismayed look, he stammered, —

"I saw you from the fort — I — I came here to get speech with you !"

"With me ?" she began, with a flushed and guilty look, but directly rallied, and ended in a freezing tone, "What can you have of such moment to say to me ?"

"I — we — of late you have not treated me with the old good-will."

"So ?"

He did not wince at the exasperating monosyllable, but went on simply, —

"I beg to be told in what I have given you offense."

Staggered a little by this directness, Hester labored over her answer.

"I — you cannot — my good-will is not a matter that comes at bidding," she answered at last, evasively.

"I see well — I know all. I am a big bungler. I have done something : I have made a mistake, I have hurt your feelings. 'T is always so : I drive them away I would draw to me. What shall I do ? I think only of pleasing you, and here see how it turns out. Tell me now what it is, that I may do it no more."

The petitioner was plainly stirred up. This was a long speech for him, and it was blurted out in a spasmodic, half-surlly tone, as though in resentment at Providence for having made him after so faulty a pattern.

Hester looked at him attentively, as she said in a tone somewhat softer, —

"You have done nothing ; there is nothing to tell."

"But why, then, do you speak after that fashion ? Why do you look at me in such a way ? 'T would scare an enemy, that look ! Why do you not give me

your hand when we meet? Why do we not sit and talk as we did? Why do you never come upon the stoop nowadays? Why do you not ask me to do things? Tell me that, — tell me that, if there is nothing!”

This downright way of conducting the interview was very confusing. Hester blushed, quite at a loss for an answer. Recovering herself presently, she replied, —

“I do not choose to talk upon the matter.”

“You will be friends no longer?” cried the junker, with a great burst.

Hester hesitated; for a moment a look

of irresolution disturbed her face; then stepping forward with outstretched hand, she said, —

“I thank you for all your good offices. You have my good-will, but,” she concluded firmly, “we can never be friends in the way you would wish.”

And turning about she walked away, leaving him staring at the grave-stones, and muttering vaguely, —

“*Hier leydt het lighaem . . . ‘never be friends’ . . . von Hester, huysvrouw von Barent Rhynders . . . ‘never be friends in the way you would wish’ . . . overleden den . . . ‘never — never in the way you would wish’!*”

Edwin Lassetter Bynner.

LA NOUVELLE FRANCE.

TEN years before Jacques Cartier set sail from St. Malo, the French Crown had appropriated to itself the American coast from Florida to Cape Breton, under the name of La Nouvelle France. A decade afterward Cartier opened up to French occupation the northernmost parts of then known America, and the colonists that settled the shores of the St. Lawrence were Frenchmen, who had no other notion of their work than that of making a new France out of these wilds. This object would be accomplished when they had created in the New World a France which was a reproduction of the France of the Old World. They never dreamed of changing their nationality, or even of suffering their new environment to qualify it in the least; nor did they ever do so; their enemy did it for them. They were Frenchmen-in-Canada, Canadian-French, down to 1759; then their hereditary foe took a hand in the matter, and when, as a result, the new oath of allegiance had severed the ties of blood they became French-Canadians.

What transformed the Canadian-French into French-Canadians, then, was not their own ploughs, but the sword of their enemy. If ever a blessing fell upon a people in the shape of a calamity, it was when the French were forced from the Plains of Abraham by the British. Men are slow to recognize blessings, and it is no wonder that despair settled upon these people when the fall of Louisburg was followed by that of Quebec. God had turned his face from them. Nevertheless, out of the carcass came forth honey; not in a day, it is true, but in a period of such short duration that, in the life of a people, is as a day. Heretofore the French-in-Canada had not been a people, they had not been even a colony: they had “occupied” the land; they had been but garrisons, mere warders of the north gate of French America. It is true that the change of flag altered this characteristic no more than to make them warders of the north gate of British America, but a stupendous change was awaiting them. They were to be