

he made answer, 'you are forgetting that we would be exposing to cruel hardships helpless women and young children.'

"I pass over in silent contempt many accusations that were made against me by men that sat comfortably at home while I fought for the freedom they so-wisely prated about, and I come to the day at Monmouth.

"The heat was intense that morning; not a breath of air seemed stirring.

"I was in advance, leading five thousand men, when suddenly the enemy appeared and then—I know not how or why—panic reigned; the men turned EN MASSE and ran back, like deer, to cover.

"With might and main we officers exerted our powers to rally the troupes, and it was at this juncture that Washington rode up, shouting so that all the world might hear:

"'In the name of God, General Lee, what is the cause of this ill-timed prudence?'

"We won the battle, and any truthful man that was on the field that day will tell you that I did my part bravely, faithfully and insistently.

"The court martial that followed could only find 'that I was disrespectful to my commander-in-chief'—disrespectful to such a small extent that they did not order me shot. No, I was simply retired for a certain time and allowed to return to the life of a civilian.

"And I was glad to be excused from the army. I am beginning to believe that in learning to hoe tobacco I am enrolled in the best school to form what is known to be the American gentleman."

About the time of father's retirement I went back to Virginia, taking Eunice and Annis with me, and leaving Nathan quite alone, for at the period of which I speak Madam Birdsey and Richard Saltoon had both died—probably the shock of Nathan's trial hastening their end, as they were far advanced in years, and so less able to bear unusual excitement.

I was shocked at the change that had taken place in father, for he had lost all his dash and sparkle, and he was given to much boastfulness concerning himself.

He took great comfort in the belief that he was "JUNIOUS"—and I doubt not but that he was!!

I can see him now, standing before his assembled family, all flushed with pride and saying:

"You need never be ashamed of your father, my children, for he is connected with the governmental history of the England of his day! Listen and remember. Under the *soubriquet* of Junious I waged war with George the Third, before ever the Thirteen Colonies did! This alone gives me claim to their undying consideration, and in spite of my many detractors I shall yet live honorably in America's history. I presented to English Literature some of its most elegant and masterly periods! Children, when in after years posterity thrusts forward the claims of others for that which is mine, preserve in the family annals this question and let some of my blood speak it: Who was it that during the years 1769, 1770 and 1771 wrote in the Public Advertiser under the signature of Junious Americanus? Who wrote the preamble to the Bill of Rights for the citizens of London? And did not Wilkes call me 'Nominus Umbra' that Yankee!"

While on a visit to Philadelphia father died, and his own mourned for him, for in spite of his vagaries he was a brave soldier and a gallant gentleman.

In the midst of our sorrow came Nathan. I shall never forget that day—Annis and Eunice were still with us—for some reason (who shall say what?) Annis and I clung the one to the other.

My heart and hands were full, and I was perplexed as to what was best to do—our boys being still too young to manage the estate—and I would not for a moment consider taking the helm, for the

thought of plantation life stifled me! I would far rather have been placed as Governor of a great prison—for I could have endured to see human beings in bondage because of their crimes—but the sight of these innocent black men and women, toiling all day in my fields and guided to their tasks by the snap of an overseer's whip, I turned away from in horror.

I knew that Nathan loved me, so when he came walking in—on a certain twilight time—I was not surprised to see him go up to mother, and—as he bent down to kiss her hand—to hear him say:

"I am your oldest son, Nathan, and I have come to bring you and the children home."

We sold the estate, gave the slaves their freedom, and when all was accomplished, as a closing chapter to my Virginia life, Nathan and I clasped hands—most truly feeling that "what God hath joined together no man shall put asunder."

One night many years afterwards, in the study at Sharon, when the house was still, Nathan and I spoke of that other night, when in this same room I had knelt at his feet and pleaded for Annis and William Leytown.

Nathan was holding me in his arms, and my head was on his breast, and it was then I made so bold as to ask him whether he, Nathan, supposed that if William had lived I should have gone on loving him? "For," said I, winding my arms about Nathan's neck lest with my avowal he might strive to thrust me away, "I did love him, Nathan, and what is more, a tender feeling for him has never gone away! It is not the mad, unreasoning passion of youth; but I am not yet sorry—wife and mother though I be—that he held me in his arms and called me beautiful! And sometimes, when I wake in the night (by your side, dear) and think of him in his lonely grave in this New England Valley, a grave so far removed from all his kith and kin, I wish that he might know that I love him yet; not in the old way, dear; but as truly and as purely as I love the memory of my babes, that nestled in my arms for a little while and then went back to be with God."

Nathan did not reply and I wondered had I done wrong in opening my whole heart to him. I questioned, could he not spare one tender thought, when he had me and our precious children to keep him company along the road of life?

He held me close and in silence for a while, and at last he said:

"Sweetheart, I do not grudge the white flower of your love, that you lay upon this empty shrine. No man, who won to himself the affection of two such women as Dorothy and Annis, could have been all unworthy in God's sight and in that Better Land, where there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, we shall be reconciled once more, my boyhood's chosen friend and I!"

Then it was (still holding me close) that Nathan told me of that far away morning, and oh! it sends a quick flutter to my feeble pulse to write it down—Nathan believed that in a moment of madness I had done the deed! And his only thought as he looked up and saw me standing, pinched and horror-stricken by the window, was to be my shield, to shelter me, if the rope and the gallows was the price that he had to pay! For he never dreamed that it was possible for Richard Saltoon to escape from his chains. He had never heard of an egress from the madman's chamber save through the closet off his study. So when he looked up and saw me standing there, he laid his pure life on the altar of his love.

Fifty years ago I was singing lullabys to my earliest nestlings. Long since they have gone out into life, and the children's children are with us. Eunice married one of my brothers, and they live over Saulsbury way. Eunice is a sober, stately woman, and has little patience with the inquisitive-

ness of youth. Nathan is still the rector of the Sharon Church. His people will not let him go till God calls him.

It is Nathan's eighty-sixth birthday, and I have decided to tell him that I took his advice and (in a fragmentary way) kept a journal. I asked Annis, would she confess and show it to Nathan? and she said, "No birthday gift could be finer, or would please Nathan more!" and she suggested my making a sampler cover to put over the outer page. It looks extremely genteel. We waited until after our noontide dinner was over and then, hand in hand, Annis and I walked into the study and laid the book on the table before him.

And he would insist upon reading it all aloud to Annis and to me!

So we had our armchairs put on either side of the bright fire, and Nathan sat in his armchair between us, and as Annis knitted a mitten for her grandnephew's little hand and I pieced a silken quilt for a granddaughter's wedding chest, Nathan read all the journal out to us.

And oh, how merrily we laughed; And oh, the bitter tears we shed, as back upon us swept the flood tides of our long ago.

And when it was all finished save these closing lines of mine, Nathan bent forward and took my hand and pressed it to his lips, and then he said:

"Mother, will you add two words upon the cover?"

And I said, "Yes, father, and what shall they be?" and he said, "Put on the cover 'Sweet-Brier, Or Dorothy Lee's Journal.'"

THE END

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