CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

FOR LOVE OF COUNTRY

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A Story of Land and Sea in the Days of the Revolution

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PREFACE

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Since the action of this story falls during the periods, and the book deals with personages and incidents, which are usually treated of in the more serious pages of history, it is proper that some brief word of explanation should be written by which I might confirm some of the romantic happenings hereafter related, which to the casual reader may appear to draw too heavily upon his credulity for acceptance.

The action between the Randolph and the Yarmouth really happened, the smaller ship did engage the greater for the indicated purpose, much as I have told it; and if I have ventured to substitute another name for that of the gallant sailor and daring hero, Captain Nicholas Biddle, who commanded the little Randolph, and lost his life, on that occasion, I trust this paragraph may be considered as making ample amends. The remarkable fight between those two ships is worthy of more extended notice than has hitherto been given it, in any but the larger tones (and not even in some of those) of the time. As far as my information permits me to say, there never was a more heroic battle on the seas.

Again, it is evident to students of history that the character of Washington has not been properly understood hitherto, by the very people who revere his name, though

the excellent books of Messrs. Ford, Wilson, Lodge, Fiske, and others are doing much to destroy the popular canonization which made of the man a saint; in defence of my characterization of him I am able to say that the incidents and anecdotes and most of the conversations in which he appears are absolutely historical.

If I have dwelt too long and too circumstantially upon the Trenton and Princeton campaigns for a book so light in character as is this one, it may be set down to an ardent admiration for Washington as man and soldier, and a design again to exhibit him as he was at one of the most critical and brilliant points of his career. Furthermore, I find that the school and other histories commonly accessible to ordinary people are not sufficiently awake to the importance and brilliancy of the campaign, and I cherish the hope that this book may serve, in some measure, to establish its value.

I have freely used all the histories and narratives to which I had access, without hesitation; and if I have anticipated a distinguished arrival, or hastened the departure of a ship, or altered the date of a naval battle, or changed its scene, I plead the example of the distinguished masters of fiction, to warrant me.

In closing I cannot refrain from thanking those who have so kindly assisted me with advice and correction during the writing of this story and the reading of the proof, especially the Rev. A. J. P. McClure.

C. T. B.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNA., *November*, 1897.

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For Love of Country

CHAPTER I

Katharine Yields her Independence

If Seymour could have voiced his thought, he would have said that the earth itself did not afford a fairer picture than that which lay within the level radius of his vision, and which had imprinted itself so powerfully upon his impressionable and youthful heart. It was not the scenery of Virginia either, the landscape on the Potomac, of which he would have spoken so enthusiastically, though even that were a thing not to be disdained by such a lover of the beautiful as Seymour had shown himself to be,—the dry brown hills rising in swelling slopes from the edge of the wide quiet river; the bare and leafless trees upon their crests, now scarce veiling the comfortable old white house, which in the summer they quite concealed beneath their masses of foliage; and all the world lying dreamy and calm and still, in the motionless haze of one of those rare seasons in November which so suggests departed days that men name

it summer again. For all that he then saw in nature was but a setting for a woman; even the sun itself, low in the west, robbed of its glory, and faded into a dull red ball seeking to hide its head, but served to throw into high relief the noble and beautiful face of the girl upon whom he gazed,—the girl who was sun and life and light and world for him.

The most confirmed misogynist would have found it difficult to challenge her claim to beauty; and yet it would require a more severe critic or a sterner analyst than a lover would be likely to prove, to say in just what point could be found that which would justify the claim. Was it in the mass of light wavy brown hair, springing from a low point on her forehead and gently rippling back, which she wore plaited and tied with a ribbon and destitute of powder? How sweetly simple it looked to him after the bepowdered and betowered misses of the town with whom he was most acquainted! Was it in the broad low brow, or the brown, almost black eyes which laughed beneath it; or the very fair complexion, which seemed to him a strangely delightful and unusual combination? Or was it in the perfection of a faultless, if somewhat slender and still undeveloped figure, half concealed by the vivid "Cardinal" cloak she wore, which one little hand held loosely together about her, while the other dabbled in the water by her side?

Be this as it may, the whole impression she produced was one which charmed and fascinated to the last degree, and Mistress Katharine Wilton's sway among the young men of the colony was-well-nigh undisputed. A toast and a belle in half Virginia, Seymour was not the first, nor was he destined to be the last, of her adorers.

The strong, steady, practised stroke, denoting the accomplished oarsman, with which he had urged the little boat through the water, had given way to an idle and purposeless drift. He longed to cast himself down before the little feet, in their smart high-heeled buckled shoes and clocked stockings, which peeped out at him from under her embroidered camlet petticoat in such a maliciously coquettish manner; he longed to kneel down there in the skiff, at the imminent risk of spoiling his own gay attire, and declare the passion which consumed him; but something—he did not know what it was, and she did not tell him—constrained him, and he sat still, and felt himself as far away as if she had been in the stars.

In his way he was quite as good to look at as the young maiden; tall, blond, stalwart, blue-eyed, pleasant-featured, with the frank engaging air which seems to belong to those who go down to the sea in ships, Lieutenant John Seymour Seymour was an excellent specimen of that hardy, daring, gallant class of men who in this war and in the next were to shed such imperishable lustre upon American arms by their exploits in the naval service. Born of an old and distinguished Philadelphia family, so proud of its name that in his instance they had doubled it, the usual bluntness and roughness of the sea were tempered by this gentle birth and breeding, and by frequent attrition with men and women of the politest society of the largest and most important city of the colonies. Offering his services as soon as the news of Lexington precipitated the conflict with the mother country, he had already made his name known among that gallant

band of seamen among whom Jones, Biddle, Dale, and Conyngham were pre-eminent.

The delicious silence which he had been unwilling to break, since it permitted him to gaze undisturbed upon his fair shipmate, was terminated at last by that lady herself.

She looked up from the water with which she had been playing, and then appearing to notice for the first time his steady ardent gaze, she laughed lightly and said,—

"Well, sir, it grows late. When you have finished contemplating the scenery, perhaps you will turn the boat, and take me home; then you can feast your eyes upon something more attractive."

"And what is that, pray?" he asked.

"Your supper, sir. You must be very anxious for it by this time, and really you know you look quite hungry. We have been out so long; but I will have pity on you, and detain you no longer here. Turn the boat around, Lieutenant Seymour, and put me on shore at once. I will stand between no man and his dinner."

"Hungry? Yes, I am, but not for dinner,—for you, Mistress Katharine," he replied.

"Oh, what a horrid appetite! I don't feel safe in the boat with you.
Are you very hungry?"

"Really, Miss Wilton, I am not jesting at all," he said with immense dignity.

"Oh! oh! He is in earnest. Shall I scream? No use; we are a mile from the house, at least."

"Oh, Miss Wilton—Katharine," he replied desperately, "I am devoured by my—"

"Lieutenant Seymour!" She drew herself up with great hauteur, letting the cloak drop about her waist.

"Madam!"

"Only my friends call me Katharine."

"And am I not, may I not be, one of your friends?"

"Well, yes—I suppose so; but you are so young."

"I am just twenty-seven, madam, and you, I suppose, are —"

"Never be ungallant enough to suppose a young lady's age. You may do those things in Philadelphia, if you like, but 't is not the custom here. Besides, I mean too young a friend; you have not known me long enough, that is."

"Long enough! I have known you ever since Tuesday of last week."

"And this is Friday,—just ten days, ten long days!" she replied triumphantly.

"Long days!" he cried. "Very short ones, for me."

"Long or short, sir, do you think you can know me in that period? Is it possible I am so easily fathomed?" she went on, smiling.

Now it is ill making love in a rowboat at best, and when one is in earnest and the other jests it is well-nigh impossible; so to these remarks Lieutenant Seymour made no further answer, save viciously to ply the oars and drive the boat rapidly toward the landing.

Miss Katharine gazed vacantly about the familiar river upon whose banks she had been born and bred, and, finally noticing the sun had gone down, closing the short day, she once more drew her cloak closely about her and resumed the neglected conversation.

"Won't you please stop looking at me in that manner, and won't you please row harder, or is your strength all centred in your gaze?"

"I am rowing as fast as I can, Miss Wilton, especially with this—"

"Oh, I forgot your wounded shoulder! Does it hurt? Does it pain you?
I am so sorry. Let me row."

"Thank you, no. I think I can manage it myself. The only pain I have is when you are unkind to me."

At that moment, to his great annoyance, his oar stuck fast in the oar-lock, and he straightway did that very unsailorly thing known as catching a crab.

Katharine Wilton laughed. There was music in her voice, but this time it did not awaken a responsive chord in the young man. Extricating his oar violently, he silently resumed his work.

"Do you like crabs, Mr. Seymour?" she said with apparent irrelevance.

"I don't like catching them, Miss Wilton," he admitted ruefully.

"Oh, I mean eating them! We were talking about your appetite, were we not? Well, Dinah devils them deliciously. I 'll have some done for you," she continued with suspicious innocence.

Seymour groaned in spirit at her perversity, and for the first time in his life felt an intense sympathy with devilled crabs; but he continued his labor in silence and with great dignity.

"What am I to infer from your silence on this important subject, sir? The subject of edibles, which everybody says is of the first importance—to men—does not appear to interest you at all!"

He made no further reply.

The young girl gazed at his pale face at first in much amusement; but the laughter gradually died away, and finally her glance fell to the water by her side. A few strong strokes, strong enough, in spite of a wounded shoulder, to indicate wrathful purpose and sudden determination to the astute maiden, and the little boat swung in beside the wharf. Throwing the oars inboard with easy skill, Seymour sat motionless while the boat glided swiftly down toward the landing-steps, and the silence was broken only by the soft, delicious lip, lip, lip of the water, which seemed to cling to and caress the bow of the skiff until it finally came to rest. The man waited until the girl looked up at him. She saw in his resolute mien the outward and visible sign of his inward determination, and she realized that the game so bravely and piquantly played since she met him was lost. They had nearly arrived at the foregone conclusion.

"Well, Mr. Seymour," she said finally, "we are here at last; for what are you waiting?"

"Waiting for you."

"For me?"

"Ay, only for you."

"I—I—do not understand you."

"You understand nothing apparently, but I will explain." He stepped out on the landing-stage, and after taking a turn

or two with the painter to secure the boat, he turned toward his captive with a ceremonious bow.

"Permit me to help you ashore."

"Oh, thank you, Lieutenant Seymour; if I only could, in this little boat, I would courtesy in return for that effort," she answered with tremulous and transparent bravery. But when the little palm met his own brown one, it seemed to steal away some of the bitterness of the moment. After he had assisted her upon the shore and up the steps into the boathouse, he held her hand tight within his own, and with that promptitude which characterized him he made the plunge.

"Oh, Miss Wilton—Katharine—it is true I have known you only a little while, but all that time—ever since I saw you, in fact, and even before, when your father showed me your picture—I have loved you. Nay, hear me out." There was an unusual sternness in his voice. My lord appeared to be in the imperative mood,—something to which she had not been accustomed. He meant to be heard, and with beating heart perforce she listened. "Quiet that spirit of mockery but a moment, and attend my words, I pray you. No, I will not release you until I have spoken. These are troublous times. I may leave at any moment—must leave when my orders come, and I expect them every day, and before I go I must tell you this."

Her downcast eyes could still see him blush and then pale a little under the sunburn and windburn of his face, as he went on speaking.

"I have no one; never had I a sister, I can remember no mother; believe me, I entreat you, when I tell you that to no

woman have I ever said what I have just said to you. We sailors think and speak and act quickly, it is a part of our profession; but if I should wait for years I should think no differently and act in no other way. I love you! Oh, Katharine, I love you as my soul."

There was a note of passion in his voice which thrilled her heart with ecstasy; the others had not made love this way.

"You seem to me like that star I have often watched in the long hours of the night, which has shown me the way on many a trackless sea. I know I am as far beneath you as I am beneath that star. But though the distance is great, my love can bridge it, if you will let me try. Katharine—won't you answer me, Katharine? Is there nothing you can say to me? 'Dost thou love me, Kate?'" he quoted softly, taking her other hand. How very fair, but how very far away she looked! The color came and went in her cheek. He could see her breast rise and fall under the mad beating of a heart which had escaped her control, though hitherto she had found no difficulty in keeping it well in hand. There was a novelty, a difference, in the situation this time, a new and unexpected element in the event. She hesitated. Why was it no merry quip came to the lips usually so ready with repartee? Alas, she must answer.

"I—I—oh, Mr. Seymour," she said softly and slowly, with a downcast face she fain would hide, he fain would see. "I—yes," she murmured with great reluctance; "that is—I think so. You see, when you defended father, in the fight with the brig, you know, and got that bullet in your shoulder you earned a title to my gratitude, my—"

"I don't want a title to your gratitude," he interrupted. "I want your love, I want you to love me for myself alone."

"And do you think you are worthy that I should?" she replied with a shadow of her former archness.

He gravely bent his head and kissed her hand. "No, Katharine, I do not. I can lay no claim to your hand, if it is to be a reward of merit, but I love you so—that is the substance of my hope."

"Oh, Mr. Seymour, Mr. Seymour, you overvalue me. If you do that with all your possessions, you will be— Oh, what have I said?" she cried in sudden alarm, as he took her in his arms.

"My possessions! Katharine, may I then count you so? Oh, Kate, my lovely Kate—" It was over, and over as she would have it; why struggle any longer? The landing was a lonely little spot under the summer-house, at the end of the wharf; no one could see what happened. This time it was not her hand he kissed. The day died away in twilight, but for those two a new day began.

The army might starve and die, battles be lost or won, dynasties rise and fall, kingdoms wax and wane, causes tremble in the balances,—what of that? They looked at each other and forgot the world.

CHAPTER II

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The Country First of All

"Oh, what is the hour, Mr.—John? Shall I call you Seymour? That is your second name, is it not? But what would people say? I— No, no, not again; we really must go in. See! I am not dressed for the evening yet. Supper will be ready. Now, Lieutenant Seymour, you must let me go. What will my father think of us? Come, then. Your hand, sir."

The hill from the boat-landing was steep, but Mistress Kate had often run like a young deer to the top of it without appreciating its difficulties as she did that evening. On every stepping-stone, each steep ascent, she lingered, in spite of her expressed desire for haste, and each time his strong and steady arm was at her service. She tasted to the full and for the first time the sweets of loving dependence.

As for him, an admiral of the fleet after a victory could not have been prouder and happier. As any other man would have done, he embraced or improved the opportunity afforded him by their journey up the hill, to urge the old commonplace that he would so assist her up the hill of life! And so on. The iterations of love never grow stale to a lover, and the saying was not so trite to her that it failed to give her the little thrill of loving joy which seemed, for the moment at least, to tame her restless spirit, that spirit of subtle yet merry mockery which charmed yet drove him

mad. She was so unwontedly quiet and subdued that he stopped at the brow of the hill, and said, half in alarm, "Katharine, why so silent?"

She looked at him gravely; a new light, not of laughter, in her brown eyes, saying in answer to his unspoken thought: "I was thinking of what you said about your orders. Oh, if they should come to-day, and you should go away on your ship and be shot at again and perhaps wounded, what should I do?"

"Nonsense, Katharine dear, I am not going to be wounded any more. I 've something to live for now, you see," he replied, smiling, taking both of her hands in his own.

"You always had something to live for, even before—you had me."

"And what was that, pray?"

"Your country."

"Yes," he replied proudly, taking off his laced hat, "and liberty; but you go together in my heart now, Kate,—you and country."

"Don't say that, John—well, Seymour, then—say 'country and you.' I would give you up for that, but only for that."

"You would do well, Katharine; our country first. Since we have engaged in this war, we must succeed. I fancy that more depends, and I only agree with your father there, upon the issue of this war than men dream of, and that the battle of liberty for the future man is being fought right here and now. Unless our people are willing to sacrifice everything, we cannot maintain that glorious independence which has been so brilliantly declared." He said this with all the

boldness of the Declaration itself; but she, being yet a woman, asked him wistfully,—

"Would you give me up, sacrifice me for country, then?"

"Not for the whole wide—" She laid a finger upon his lips.

"Hush, hush! Do not even speak treason to the creed. I am a daughter of Virginia. My father, my brother, my friends, my people, and, yes, I will say it, my lover are perilling their lives and have engaged their honor in this contest for the independence of these colonies, for the cause of this people, and the safeguarding of their liberties; and if I stood in the pathway of liberty for a single instant, I should despise the man who would not sweep me aside without a moment's hesitation." She spoke with a pride and spirit which equalled his own, her head high in the air, and her eyes flashing.

She had released her hands and had suited the gesture to the word, throwing out her hand and arm with a movement of splendid freedom and defiance. She was a woman of many moods and "infinite variety." Each moment showed him something new to love. He caught the outstretched hand,—the loose sleeve had fallen back from the wrist,—he pressed his lips to the white arm, and said with all his soul in his voice,—

"May God prevent me from ever facing the necessity of a choice like that, Katharine! But indeed it is spirit like yours which makes men believe the cause is not wholly desperate. When our women can so speak and feel, we may confidently expect the blessing of God upon our efforts."

"Father says that it is because General Washington knows the spirit of the people, because he feels that even

the youths and maidens, the little children, cherish this feeling, he takes heart, and is confident of ultimate success. I heard him say that no king could stand against a united people."

"Would that you could have been in Paris with your father when he pleaded with King Louis and his ministers for aid and recognition! We might have returned with a better answer than paltry money and a few thousand stand of arms, which are only promised, after all."

"Would that I were a man instead of being a weak, feeble woman!" she exclaimed vehemently.

"Ah, but I very much prefer you as you are, Katharine, and 't is not little that you can do. You can inspire men with your own patriotism, if you will. There, for instance, is your friend Talbot. If you could persuade him, with his wealth and position and influence in this country, to join the army in New Jersey—" As she shook her head, he continued:

"I am sure if he thought as I do of you, you could persuade him to anything but treachery or dishonor." His calm smile of superiority vanished in an expression of dismay at her reply,—

"Talbot! Hilary Talbot! Why, John, do you know that he is —well, they say that he is in love with me. Everybody expects that we shall marry some day. Do you see? These old estates join, and—"

"Kate, it is n't true, is it? You don't care for him, do you?" he interrupted in sudden alarm.

"Care for him? Why, of course I care for him. I have known him ever since I was a child; but I don't love him. Besides, he stays at home while others are in the field. Silly

boy, would I have let you kiss me in the summer-house if it were so? No, sir! We are not such fine ladies as your friends in the city of Philadelphia, perhaps, we Virginia country girls upon whom your misses look with scorn, but no man kisses us, and no man kisses me, upon the lips except the one I—that I must—let me see—is the word 'obey'? Shall you make me obey you all the time, John?"

"Pshaw, Katharine, you never obey anybody,—so your father says, at least,—and if you will only love me, that will be sufficient."

"Love you!"—the night had fallen and no one was near—"love you, John!" She kissed him bravely upon the lips. "Once, that's for me, my own; twice, that's for my country; there is all my heart. Come, sir, we must go in. There are lights in the house."

"Ah, Katharine, and there is light in my heart too."

As they came up the steps of the high pillared porch which completely covered the face of the building, they were met, at the great door which gave entrance to the spacious hallway extending through the house, by a stately and gracious, if somewhat elderly gentleman.

There was a striking similarity, if not in facial appearance, at least in the erect carriage and free air, between him and the young girl who, disregarding his outstretched hand and totally disorganizing his ceremonious bow, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him with unwonted warmth, much to his dismay and yet not altogether to his displeasure. Perhaps he suspected something from the bright and happy faces of the two young people; but if so, he made no comment, merely

telling them that supper had been waiting this long time, and bidding them hasten their preparation for the meal.

Katharine, followed by Chloe, her black maid, who had been waiting for her, hastily ran up the stairs to her own apartments, upon this signal, but turned upon the topmost stair and waved a kiss to the two gentlemen who were watching her,—one with the dim eyes of an old father, the other with the bright eyes of a young lover.

"Colonel Wilton," exclaimed Seymour, impulsively, "I have something to say to you,—something I must say."

"Not now, my young friend," replied the colonel, genially. "Supper will be served, nay, is served already, and only awaits you and Katharine; afterward we shall have the whole evening, and you may say what you will."

"Oh, but, colonel—"

"Nay, sir, do not lay upon me the unpleasant duty of commanding a guest, when it is my privilege as host to entreat. Go, Mr. Seymour, and make you ready. Katharine will return in a moment, and it does not beseem gentlemen, much less officers, to keep a lady waiting, you know. Philip and Bentley have gone fishing, and I am informed they will not return until late. We will not wait for them."

"As you wish, sir, but I must have some private conversation with you as soon as possible."

"After supper, my boy, after supper."

CHAPTER III

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Colonel Wilton.

Left to himself for a moment, the colonel heaved a deep sigh; he had a premonition of what was coming, and then paced slowly up and down the long hall.

He was attired, with all the splendor of an age in which the subject of dress engrossed the attention of the wisest and best, in the height of the prevailing mode, which his recent arrival from Paris, then as now the mould of fashion, permitted him to determine. The soft light from the wax candles in their sconces in the hall fell upon his thickly powdered wig, ran in little ripples up and down the length of his polished dress-sword, and sparkled in the brilliants in the buckles of his shoes. His face was the grave face of a man accustomed from of old not only to command, but to assume the responsibility of his orders; when they were carried out, his manner was a happy mixture of the haughty sternness of a soldier and the complacent suavity of the courtier, tempered both by the spirit of frankness and geniality born of the free life of a Virginia planter in colonial times.

In his early youth he had been a soldier under Admiral Vernon, with his old and long-deceased friend Lawrence Washington at Cartagena; later on, he had served under Wolfe at Quebec. A visitor, and a welcome one too, at half

the courts of Europe, he looked the man of affairs he was; in spite of his advanced age, he held himself as erect, and carried himself as proudly as he had done on the Heights of Abraham or in the court of St. Germain.

Too old to incur the hardships of the field, Colonel Wilton had yet offered his services, with the ardor of the youngest patriot, to his country, and pledged his fortune, by no means inconsiderable, in its support. The Congress, glad to avail themselves of the services of so distinguished a man, had sent him, in company with Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin, as an embassy to the court of King Louis, bearing proposals for an alliance and with a request for assistance during the deadly struggle of the colonies with the hereditary foe of France. They had been reasonably successful in a portion of their attempt, at least; as the French government had agreed, though secretly, to furnish arms and other munitions of war through a pseudo-mercantile firm which was represented by M. de Beaumarchais, the gifted author of the comedy "Le Mariage de Figaro." The French had also agreed to furnish a limited amount of money; but, more important than all these, there were hints and indications that if the American army could win any decisive battle or maintain the unequal conflict for any length of time, an open and closer alliance would be made. The envoys had despatched Colonel Wilton, from their number, back to America to make a report of the progress of their negotiations to Congress. This had been done, and General Washington had been informed of the situation.

The little ship, one of the gallant vessels of the nascent American navy, in which Colonel Wilton had returned from France, had attacked and captured a British brig of war during the return passage, and young Seymour, who was the first lieutenant of the ship, was severely wounded. The wound had been received through his efforts to protect Colonel Wilton, who had incautiously joined the boarding-party which had captured the brig. After the interview with Congress, Colonel Wilton was requested to await further instructions before returning to France, and, pending the result of the deliberations of Congress, after a brief visit to the headquarters of his old friend and neighbor General Washington, he had retired to his estate. As a special favor, he was permitted to bring with him the wounded lieutenant, in order that he might recuperate and recover from his wound in the pleasant valleys of Virginia. That Seymour was willing to leave his own friends in Philadelphia, with all their care and attention, was due entirely to his desire to meet Miss Katharine Wilton, of whose beauty he had heard, and whose portrait indeed, in her father's possession, which he had seen before on the voyage, had borne out her reputation. Seymour had been informed since his stay at the Wiltons' that he had been detached from the brig Argus, and notified that he was to receive orders shortly to report to the ship Ranger, commanded by a certain Captain John Paul Jones; and he knew that he might expect his sailing orders at any moment. He had improved, as has been seen, the days of his brief stay to recover from one wound and receive another, and, as might have been expected, he had fallen violently in love with Katharine Wilton.

There were also staying at the house, besides the servants and slaves, young Philip Wilton, Katharine's brother, a lad of sixteen, who had just received a midshipman's warrant, and was to accompany Seymour when he joined the Ranger, then outfitting at Philadelphia; and Bentley, an old and veteran sailor, a boatswain's mate, who had accompanied Seymour from ship to ship ever since the lieutenant was a midshipman,—a man who had but one home, the sea; one hate, the English; one love, his country; and one attachment, Seymour.

Colonel Wilton was a widower. As Katharine came down the stairway, clad in all the finery her father had brought back for her from Paris, her hair rolled high and powdered, the old family diamonds with their quaint setting of silver sparkling upon her snowy neck, her fan languidly waving in her hand, she looked strikingly like a pictured woman smiling down at them from over the mantel; but to the sweetness and archness of her mother's laughing face were added some of the colonel's pride, determination, and courage. He stepped to meet her, and then bent and kissed the hand she extended toward him, with all the grace of the old régime; and Seymour coming upon them was entranced with the picture.

He too had changed his attire, and now was clad in the becoming dress of a naval lieutenant of the period. He wore a sword, of course, and a dark blue uniform coat relieved with red facings, with a single epaulet on his shoulder which denoted his official rank; his blond hair was lightly touched with powder, and tied, after the fashion of active service, in a queue with a black ribbon.

"Now, Seymour, since you two truants have come at last, will you do me the honor to hand Miss Wilton to the dining-room?" remarked the colonel, straightening up.

With a low bow, Seymour approached the object of his adoration, who, after a sweeping courtesy, gave him her hand. With much state and ceremony, preceded by one of the servants, who had been waiting in attention in the hall, and followed by the colonel, and lastly by the colonel's man, a stiff old campaigner who had been with him many years, they entered the dining-room, which opened from the rear of the hall.

The table was a mass of splendid plate, which sparkled under the soft light of the wax candles in candelabra about the room or on the table, and the simple meal was served with all the elegance and precision which were habitual with the gentleman of as fine a school as Colonel Wilton.

At the table, instead of the light and airy talk which might have been expected in the situation, the conversation assumed that grave and serious tone which denoted the imminence of the emergency.

The American troops had been severely defeated at Long Island in the summer, and since that time had suffered a series of reverses, being forced steadily back out of New York, after losing Fort Washington, and down through the Jerseys, relentlessly pursued by Howe and Cornwallis. Washington was now making his way slowly to the west bank of the Delaware. He was losing men at every step, some by desertion, more by the expiration of the terms of their enlistment. The news which Colonel Wilton had brought threw a frail hope over the situation, but ruin stared

them in the face, and unless something decisive was soon accomplished, the game would be lost.

"Did you have a pleasant ride up the river, Katharine?" asked her father.

"Very, sir," she answered, blushing violently and looking involuntarily at Seymour, who matched her blush with his own.

There was a painful pause, which Seymour broke, coming to the rescue with a counter question.

"Did you notice that small sloop creeping up under the west bank of the river, colonel, this evening? I should think she must be opposite the house now, if the wind has held."

"Why, when did you see her, Mr. Seymour? I thought you were looking at—at—" She broke off in confusion, under her father's searching gaze. He smiled, and said,—

"Ah, Katharine, trained eyes see all things unusual about them, although they are apparently bent persistently upon one spot. Yes, Seymour, I did notice it; if we were farther down the river, we might suspect it of being an enemy, but up here I fancy even Dunmore's malevolence would scarcely dare to follow."

Katharine looked up in alarm. "Oh, father, do you think it is quite safe? Chloe told me that Phoebus told her that the raiders had visited Major Lithcomb's plantation, and you know that is not more than fifty miles down the river from us. Would it not be well to take some precaution?"

"Tut, tut, child! gossip of the negro servants!" The colonel waved it aside carelessly. "I hardly think we have anything to fear at present; though what his lordship may do in the end, unless he is checked, I hardly like to imagine."