

and received his news with much emotion, for he had hoped to strike a telling blow on some of the outposts, and maybe cut off a foraging party, whose members would be valuable prisoners for exchange. Now there was nothing but to turn back. But even as he was giving orders for a retreat over the road by which they had come, his scouts came flying into camp with the news that Grant was close upon them in the rear, having made a circuitous march in order to get between them and their camp. La Fayette set his teeth as he said:

"Then 'tis fight, though that means death to every brave man here."

But Dunn told of Matson's ford still unguarded, and the commander was quick to seize the one chance left to save his men, and before midnight the little band was safely over the river with their faces toward Valley Forge. There they were received with cheers by their comrades, who, having heard some wild rumors brought by two countrymen from beyond the Schuylkill, had feared the worst for them.

That night, long after Richard was sleeping the sleep of healthy but exhausted youth, Dunn sat in the officers' quarters and told how, with a military rain-coat over his workman's blouse, Richard Clevring had played the gallant to the beauty of Philadelphia and the *fiancée* of Howe's chief-of-staff.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MAID'S DREAM AND THE DEVIL'S WOOING.

"A pleasing land of drowsyhead it was:
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer sky."

—THOMPSON.

It was June-time in the beautiful hill country along the Eno. Down the long road that sloped to the bridge from the west two horses took their leisurely way, while their riders talked or were silent at will. Below them, in the curve of the

river, lay the town in a green summer dream; the roadside was lined with nodding blossom heads, and the thickets were a-rustle now and then with the subdued whir of wings, for the song season of their feathered tenants was done, and sparrow and wren and bluebird were busy with family cares.

"Joscelyn, you are not listening to a word I am saying," complained Mary Singleton petulantly, after repeating a question a second time and getting no answer.

"I beg your pardon, Mary; I believe you are right."

"Of what were you thinking so intently?"

"I was not thinking. It is too delicious this afternoon to do anything, even think. I am just resting my mind."

"Well, I find you very dull under such a process."

"A friend should bear a friend's infirmity," quoted Joscelyn.

"Dulness is not an infirmity; it is a crime."

"Then methinks the world must be full of criminals."

"And those who are so intentionally and voluntarily should be punished like other wrong-doers."

Joscelyn laughed. "Well, pass sentence upon me, most wise judge, if you think I was not born that way and that the sin is intentional. Am I to hang for it, or will you be merciful and make it a prison offence?"

"Oh, you'll get the hanging soon enough if you go on wearing that red bodice and stringing pictures of King George on your balcony!"

"So mother says. And hanging is not a becoming way to die; one has no opportunity to say that 'prunes, prisms, and preserves' sentence that leaves the mouth in such a charming pucker. Well, since my lips are to be awry, I trust they will give me time to put on my new silver-buckled shoes. It would be a comfort to know that at least my feet looked their best."

"Joscelyn! You are perfectly horrid."