

a saddle, and I'm not honing to wear a shroud."

Joscelyn leaned down, and, catching the handle, lifted the basket to the pommel of her saddle. "I will not see you make yourself ill in this way. Were there no other servants to spare you this exertion? You are all out of breath."

A curious light came into the old lady's eyes as she saw the girl steady the basket in front of her; but she checked the words that had sprung to her lips, and trudged slowly along, the riders holding back their horses to keep beside her.

"What have you two been plotting together this afternoon?" she asked, looking from one to the other with the pleasure age often finds in contemplating youth and beauty.

"Have we the appearance of dark conspirators?" laughed Joscelyn.

"Nay, you both look sweet and innocent enough; but somehow I'm always giving that Bible verse a twist and reading it: 'Where two or three Tories are gathered together, there is the devil in their midst.'"

"You should not twist your Scripture, Mistress Strudwick."

"Mayhap not, but sometimes it makes an uncommon good hit."

"Well, you have been wrong to-day. Two Loyalists have been congregated together; but Cupid, rather than the devil, has been our co-conspirator."

"So! It was sweethearts you were discussing? Tell me now, was it your match or Mary's you were arranging? There is nothing pleases me like a wedding."

"I thought you took no interest in matters concerning King George's subjects."

"King George has naught to do with the wooing of our maids, and love is love whether it be Redcoat or Continental," replied the old matchmaker.

Joscelyn laughed. "I verily believe you'd like to know the courtship of Satan himself, provided he had one."

"Mayhap, mayhap," puffed the old lady. "I haven't much of a prophet's eye; but I see things of to-day plain

enough, and I know that you are a pair of uncommon pretty girls, and are like to have many a beau on your string; but when marrying time comes take an old woman's advice and choose a man who is hale and hearty, for as sure as you are born love flies out of the heart when indigestion enters the stomach."

"Truly, Mistress Strudwick, you are better than 'Poor Richard's Almanac,'" laughed Joscelyn.

"Oh, my dear, I've seen it tried. Courtship is the finest thing in the world, but after the wedding love is largely a question of good cooking; and although you two are rank Tories, and so deserve any punishment the fates might send you, still I'd be glad, because of your comely looks, to see you escape your deserts. But here we are at my gate. I wonder what the town will say, Joscelyn, when they hear that you, Tory that you call yourself, brought a basket of wool for Continental socks from Amanda Bryce's to my door."

The girl's face flamed with a sudden heat. Then she said with that beautiful courtesy that older folks found so charming:

"It was not for the Continentals, but for my good neighbor that I brought the basket. I am not minded to see her kill herself in so bad a cause; rather do I want her to live and repent of her mistakes, that she herself may not be the first to solve that riddle of the devil's wooing." And, kissing their hands jauntily to the old woman, the two girls rode away into the purple twilight.

"Bless her bonny face and quick tongue!" the old woman cried, waving her hand after them.

That night Mary cried herself to sleep over her shattered hopes, and in the privacy of a white-curtained room Joscelyn read aloud the letter to her whom Eustace had in mind when he thought of the welcome of shy eyes and clinging white hands. And Betty fell asleep with the letter under her cheek, and all the soft June night was filled with flitting cadences and starry dreams.