

whisper of admiration ran around the room as they beheld her so attractive. The color of her cheeks was brighter than usual, and she studiously kept her eyes fixed upon the floor. The minister, in the usual form, called upon all persons who had objections to the marriage to stand forth and declare them. There was no response, but as he looked at the bride, he saw a shudder pass over her frame, and thought he detected a single roll of her chest. Therefore he repeated the warning.

A look of impatience crossed the bridegroom's features, but he said naught. Deep stillness pervaded the room, partially caused by wonder at the unusual course of the minister making the repetition. The silence of the place was strangely broken by a voice from the entry, crying loudly,

"In the name of honor and truth I forbid the banns."

Every eye turned toward the door. A man in a cloak forced his way through, regardless of ladies' skirts and gentlemen's elbows, and as he violently thrust his cloak and hat to the door, he again cried out, "I forbid the banns."

A dozen voices exclaimed in tones of surprise, "Captain McPherson!" and to check the hubbub of the door, he stepped up as the beheld the British officer appear in his midst in full uniform, for since his escape from the jail he had in some way changed his name, and stood before them with his glittering epaulettes on his shoulders, and arrayed in scarlet and gold.

Arrest him, he said, shouted the bridegroom, coming furiously forward. "Take him away from here."

Several colonial officers moved toward McPherson, but quicker than they Charles sprang to his side, and stretching out her arms, cried,

"No, no, do not touch him! He is no spy; he came from New York to see me."

"Hold, gentlemen, hold!" said a magistrate; "violence is unnecessary. He is safe enough here and cannot escape. Let us see what he has to say."

"I thank you, Mr. Grainger," was McPherson's courteous response to the magistrate. "Know you any one, that I love this fair lady? All my old friends of two years since are certainly aware of the fact. Hearing that she was to be wedded and deploring the danger of being arrested and hung as a spy, I have come to save her. I see around me officers in the continental service. Gentlemen, brave and honorable soldiers, I respect as acquaintances, whom I honor as foes, I tell you, as I tell all, that Henry Norton is unfit to mate with this fair woman. He is a traitor, doubly-dyed, he has sold out his country again and again for gold. I have been my general's deputy in gaining information from him, and I have bought and sold him like dirt. 'It is false, infernal liar!' shouted Norton, rushing upon him. 'You vile spy, you will not succeed in your plot to tear from me my bride. You shall assist your lies upon the gallows.' 'Save him, gentlemen."

But Charlotte impulsively interposed and checked the progress of Norton, and said to the magistrate,

"Oh, George," she said, turning to McPherson: "why did you come here? They will hang you, I know they will. There were tears in her eyes, and they were noticed by more than one by-stander, who heard her words."

"Fear not for me, dear Charlotte," was the smiling response of the daring captain, putting his arm around her trembling form a moment. "I am safe, only this day, Norton, is in danger."

"Alas, Captain McPherson," cried the captain, from the open window, "well done, by my faith. You shall have a good time for this when we get back to New York. Come and let us out, for I am precious. I thought you had deserted me."

"Deserted, is it? By St. Patrick, but you'll never see that day. When I rescued you from the hands of the British, I was not a deserter, but a hero. I have more than a dozen names of men who were more numerous than I was myself. Have any, captain, you'll soon be in the blessed air."

The captain was specially set free, and the village, unharmed but gagged, was laid on the straw in the cell and looked up. As Andy and the captain left the cell, the latter asked,

"And where are they, Andy? Did you let them know?"

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Mac. Sure if I had gone for them I would not have been here."

"All right by brave fellow. But should we not hurry to the wharves, and you shall take a boat and get the boys. No more another word till I tell you to speak, for there is danger yet."

Not a living being did they meet as they went along in the darkness, the shadow, deserted wharves. They reached them, but there were no vessels to be seen, save one which lay out in the stream, and which had arrived at the wharves. Only a dim outline was visible on the water in the distance. She was professedly laden with merchandise, but the colonists really known what some of her huge packages in her hold contained, there would before then have been a lively time on foot.

The captain and Andy paused before a warehouse, on the front of which was the sign, "Henry Norton, shipper and trader." While the captain sat in the shadow of the warehouse, and Henry Norton really Andy took a boat and rowed away toward the vessel in the stream.

At Norton Hall, meantime, the preparations for the wedding had been completed. The parlors were crowded with as brilliant an assembly as had ever been convened there. Officers of the colonial forces, visiting, and those who were magistrates and dignitaries of the county, gentlemen of wealth and leisure, and industrious yeomen had gathered to the place with their relatives and lady friends. The music was the sweetest and best to be had in the town, and all was as gay as a dream of fairy land. The minister stood up and waited for the bride and groom. "Come," said Henry Norton, entering the little side room where Charlotte was seated. "They are all ready for us."

At the same time he held out his hand to her.

She rose as he spoke and stood with folded arms looking down, as if she had not noticed his outstretched hand. He looked suspiciously at her.

"Can she really be thinking of this?" McPherson he said to himself. "I cannot be, for I know she treated him like a dog a year or two ago when he stayed among us. No matter, he will be dead before this time to-morrow night."

"It is too late," said Charlotte to herself, "it is too late."

Then she extended her hand to the minister, and he took it.

Charlotte Milwood's Wedding.

BY EDGAR W. DAVIES.

(Continued.)

"This is a dangerous situation," he thought, "and if I stay here I may reasonably expect to be hanged to-morrow as a spy. If that fellow Andy had been attentive to his duty I should have had help ere this. Ah, if the boys could only know my situation, I would not long be in this dilemma. Their good bayonets would bring me clear if nothing else could."

Soon the sound of music was borne on the breezes of the summer evening, and came in at the window. He paused in his walk and listened. There was no mistaking it, and with a more rapid and troubled pace he resumed his walk.

"Great Heaven!" he cried, "why am I kept here like a caged bird while the fearful music is going on? That music comes from the home of Norton, and beguiles the gathering guests till the hour for the ceremony. Oh, if only I could see this impudent fellow, and I shall not care for freedom or for life, for Charlotte will have immolated herself on the altar of Mammon, and he lost to me for ever. Andy, Andy, if you fail now I am a ruined man." So at one moment thinking of Charlotte, at another the gross insult which he had received from Norton, and again of the ignominious death which awaited him unless deliverance speedily arrived, he walked over the stone floor as he was tired.

He sat down at the window and looked out. The village who had been left to guard the prisoner, was sitting on a mill not far off, with his back to the building. Captain McPherson thought he saw something on the ground between himself and the village, which appeared to move. A closer inspection revealed to him the fact that it was a man, crouching on hands and knees.

"Andy, as I live, thought the captain, grasping the bars and pressing his face close in his eagerness to see.

The unsuspecting village suddenly received a stunning blow from behind, and as he recoiled from his seat was caught in the arms of the new comer, and bound and gagged before his senses were fairly restored to him.

"Ah, by the powers, I have you now!" was the exclamation of the daring captain, not hurt yet at all, but he can lay there a bit till Captain Mac is out of your dirty jail."

"Good boy, Andy," cried the captain, from the open window, "well done, by my faith. You shall have a good time for this when we get back to New York. Come and let us out, for I am precious. I thought you had deserted me."

"Deserted, is it? By St. Patrick, but you'll never see that day. When I rescued you from the hands of the British, I was not a deserter, but a hero. I have more than a dozen names of men who were more numerous than I was myself. Have any, captain, you'll soon be in the blessed air."

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belt, before any one of the surprised American officers could interpose. "The British! The British!" he now shouted outside the house. "Forward, my men!" came a hoarse command borne in to the hearing of the assembled guests. There was a rush of feet upon the piazza and in the entries, and with a wild yell there poured in at every casement and at every door of the splendid parlors, scores of British soldiers, with their scarlet coats and bearskin caps, and bayonets glittering in the light of the numerous lamps. Half a dozen epauletted British officers gathered around Captain McPherson.

The ladies screamed in dismay and huddled together in the centre of the parlors. The gentlemen appeared angry and knit their brows, and the American officers looked at each other as if they had a partial idea of resistance. Such thoughts were vain, for every gentleman in the room clad in holiday dress was more than matched by a bayonet with a scarlet uniform behind it.

"Order, men!" was the command of McPherson, and all was still. The encircling lines of British soldiers stood like statues, and the guests awaited in silence the next step of Captain McPherson.

"Arrest that man!" he said, pointing to Norton and the latter with two pistols at his head was forced to surrender at discretion, and suffer himself to be bound; he was then forced out into the street, and now, ladies and gentlemen, my duty is done. I have shielded my sweet Charlotte from the evil which threatened her, and I do not doubt that if you signal search this house and its place of refuge, you will find abundant proofs of the treason of Norton. That should not have been revealed had he not also been a traitor to the king, and before you saw me, treacherously caused my arrest. Take notice, one and all, that I have come hither in no warlike spirit, that not a soul has been injured by my men, and my piece of property taken except those papers which we broke into Norton's storehouse to secure. There is a law in your books, which you will need to release me, unless you attack us on our way, for which, however, we are fully prepared. Allow me to bid you all farewell. I have turned to Charlotte and whispered, taking her hand. "Dear Charlotte, are you not willing now to confess your love for me?"

"And will you promise to be mine?" "Yours, George, and no others, if you can forgive my heinous conduct toward you."

"I accept the condition, and forgive you a thousandfold," was the reply. "Let us seal the compact with a single kiss, and then I must go, for unless I haste your countrymen will gather by my track, and on this joyful evening I wish no blood shed."

So the bold soldier, in the presence of his lieutenants, and the ladies, and left her blushing but happier than for many a month.

"Withdraw the men," said he to his lieutenants, "we must not be seen."

The soldiers filed out. Captain McPherson was the last to leave, and he turned in the door and said, "Gentlemen, you thought me a traitor, but I am a soldier, and I hope an honorable man."

At quick step the corps sought the wharf, they rowed to their vessel and then sailed out of the harbor, leaving a long trail of blazing on the hills, but within a hour they were in safety on the deck of a British brig-of-war which had been beating about the coast for the last few days.

That night the traitor Norton eluded the vigilance of his captors, sprang overboard from the British brig, and under cover of the darkness, he can be seen.

He did not dare to return to the village, where his villany had been so strangely revealed, for fear of a traitor's death. He joined and took command of a boatful of his followers, and they sailed away.

The magistrate took the papers which were taken from him, and he was in an attack which he made on the town in the hope of gaining possession of the person of Charlotte.

One year more and the brave Captain McPherson came back to the town, under a flag of truce, and he was met by the American officers who had been present on that eventful evening, had obtained for him. He wedded the fair and virtuous Charlotte, and they lived happily ever after.

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