## CHAPTER III.

The struggle for freedom waxed hotter. The Colonies were in need of every strong arm and brave heart within their boundaries. Winter was coming on, and five years of war had already told on the limited resources of the rebels.

Dudley Pool had left Williamsborough after announcing his intention to join Washington's forces. But no one in the village had heard of him since his departure, and none of the wounded soldiers who had returned home had seen him in the ranks.

When the news of the battle of Guilford Court House reached the village, intense excitement prevailed, for the weary and wounded messenger said that Capt. Norwood's company had borne a conspicuous part in it, and that when the young officer was last seen, he was several yards in front of his troops with the ensign in one hand and his sword in the other, fighting furiously, as he cheered his men onward.

Mary Easterling received this news

with emotions of mingled pride and anxiety. During the long day she waited, fearing every moment to hear of her lover's death, and hoping as often to hear that he was alive and victorious. As the evening shades approached she quietly stole from the house and went to the church porch where he had kept guard the night before they had parted. -She sat near the pillar that had shielded her that night from the wind as she held his masket,-and leaning her head upon her hands, she prayed earnestly for his safety. The shadows grew longer, the bats whirled around the cross-crowned belfry and the autumn wind blew colder and wilder as night approached, but she still sat motionless. Now and then, a tear drop would trickle down her clasped hands and the prayer had brought but little peace, as vet, to her.

She was suddenly startled by hearing a stealthy step near her, and looking up she saw Dudley Pool standing beside her. He said, in low, cautious · Do not let me frighten you, Mary.

I have come to know if you have heard the news." She answered eagerly:

"I have heard. Were you there? Did you help to fight the battle?"

"I was not in the battle, but I can tell you what you may not wish to hear. Do you remember that I told you John Norwood would be killed-and"-he écontinued speaking more loudly-"that you would yet become my wife? Do you remember, my pretty one?"

With a paleness she could not control she coldly replied :

"If you are really in the army-as you wish me to believe-though many people doubt it-you may also be killed before the conflict is ended. I do not credit the report of John's probable death, but if he was indeed shot down at the head of his troops I will be true to him. You would never speak to me again, if your unaided arm should win my country's cause-or see me -until I died-! Her voice was hard and cold, and the

anguish she felt betrayed itself in her every tone. "Suppose you could not prevent it!"

he said quietly.

"I could prevent it" she answered haughtily, rising to leave the porch. "I propose to cut this interview short, now, and I will go and tell your acquaintances in the village that they can find you in the vicinity of St. John's.'

cried out fiercely. She sprang toward the gate but paused when she noticed that he did not go beyond the side of the building that hid him from the street.

"Listen to me, Mary Easterling" he

"What would you say? she asked turning around and looking at him. composedly.

"If you dare to tell any one that you saw me here. I will come in the night and murder you. There are only a few old men left to protect the village and I could defy them," he said in a hoarse whisper."

She quietly replied; "I do not fear you, Dudley Pool. John would avenge my death if you should dare to carry out your threat. You know your own life would be worth nothing when he should return."

"He will never return," answered the man with a triumphant laugh. "He was killed at Guilford Court House. I'll grant he died like a hero—but you will never be his wife, my fair lady. I will claim you yet! There is time enough for that, however. Promise you will mention my visit here to no

"I do not make promises rashly, and when I make them, I keep them," said Mary, significantly.

it, and, as I am a spy, it might do the cause of Liberty harm, if you say that you saw me here," he said, in a concilia-

Mary answered evasively, "But they say you are a deserter, and no patriot!"

They lie, I assure you. For the good of your country, promise!" he exclaimed, crouching closer into the shadow of the protecting wall, as be

Mary regarded him silently a moment and said,

"I do not believe one word you utter. You acted dishonestly in addressing me when you knew I was engaged to John. I am almost convinced that you are

either a coward or a Tory!"
"I do not feel that John is killed,"
she continued, more hurriedly. "I shall hope to see him until some one in whom I have great confidence tells me he is dead." As she finished speaking she turned and walked slowly home-

ward. His face was white with rage, and without attempting to follow her, he kept in the shadow of the Church as long as he could, and then ran until he reached a neighboring clump of trees, when his form was lost in the

darkness. When he again emerged from the gloom of the forest into which the scattering trees led, he was New Hulled on the borders of the Pool's Rock field, and stooping down, rubbed something he carried in a dark bottle, and walked unmolested into the yawning mouth of the reptile-haunted rock. With his powerful arm he rolled a stone before the opening through which he had entered, and found himself alone and shut up in an immense cave. No ray of morn or star-light penetrated it, and the only sound that disturbed the awful stillness was the rush of the streamlet over the pebbles that surrounded the Rock. Pool soon kindled a fire and its glare disclosed a bed of straw in one corner, a pile of books

was a heap of provisions. Was he a coward, or a Tory-or did his passionate love for the beautiful village maiden cause him to live in that isolated spot, until the danger of war was over, encouraged, by the hope that her betrothed husband would be killed PATAPSCO FAMILY FLOUR! in the fury of the conflict?

in another, on which was carefully

thrown a guitar, and in another corner

The hundred years that have passed answer to these questions. Perhaps the mould of a century covers the only papers of importance pertaining to Pool's history in the dismal cavern, where, too, perhaps the quaint books of Of all kinds, Roasted and Ground Daily are slowly decaying and the broken strings of the sweet-toned instrument are touched only by the slimy skin of creeping reptiles.

When the American cause was won, Pool returned to the village occasionally, and then mysteriously disappeared. When he died-a few years afterward -his will was found and he bequeathed to "Mary, the true wife of John Norwood, the sum of five hundred dollars in gold" and left a letter for her, in which he told her of his lonely life in Pool's Rock, and added, that if she had known his reasons of refuzing to join the colonial forces, she night not have utterly despised him. He never made these reasons known, however, and Pool's name has no pleasanter associations connected with it among the honest villagers, than the fearful Rock in which he found a temporary refuge.

It may be, that sometimes during the long winter evenings, when John and Mary sat together around the glowing hearth, they recalled the coming of the handsome stranger into their midst, and remembered with feelings akin to cial and Moral Community. Preparatory, admiration the songs he would sing, and the stories of wild adventure he would relate.

And, when Mary would tell of her last interview with Pool on the porch of St. John's, she would forget to mention the man's fierce manner and words, so great was her delighs in dwelling on the glad surprise that awaited her when she reached her mother's house, on that eventful evening.

For a note from her lover, in which he told her of his safety and her country's victory was handed to her, and Dudley Pool's threats and strange words were not thought of, long after-

Three generations of the descendants of John and Mary Norwood have worshiped in St. John's Church, and they have seldom passed its sacred portal without bestowing a thought on the brave and true man and woman who watched for the enemies of Liberty by the light of the moon and stars that shone down upon them a hundred years

THE END.

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