

JANICE  
MEREDITH



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# *Janice Meredith*

A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By

PAUL LEICESTER FORD

*Author of "The Honorable Peter Stirling," "The Story of an Untold Love," "The Many-Sided Franklin," "The True George Washington," etc.*



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1969

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To  
GEORGE W. VANDERBILT

My dear George,

*Into the warp and woof of every book an author weaves much that even the subtlest readers cannot suspect, far less discern. To them it is but a cross and pile of threads interlaced to form a pattern which may please or displease their taste. But to the writer every filament has its own association: How each bit of silk or wool, flax or tow, was laboriously gathered, or was blown to him; when each was spun by the wheel of his fancy into yarns; the colour and tint his imagination gave to each skein; and where each was finally woven into the fabric by the shuttle of his pen. No thread ever quite detaches itself from its growth and spinning, dyeing and weaving, and each draws him back to hours and places seemingly unrelated to the work.*

*And so, as I have read the proofs of this book I have found more than once that the pages have faded out of sight and in their stead I have seen Mount Pisgah and the French Broad River, or the ramp and terrace of Biltmore House, just as I saw them when writing the words which served to recall them to me. With the visions, too, has come a recurrence to our long talks, our work among the books, our games of chess, our cups of tea, our walks, our rides, and our drives. It is therefore a pleasure to me that the book so naturally gravitates to you, and that I may make it a remembrance of those past weeks of companionship, and an earnest of the present affection of*

PAUL LEICESTER FORD

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# JANICE MEREDITH

## *A Story of the Revolution*

\* \* \*

### CHAPTER I

#### A HEROINE OF MANY POSSIBILITIES

**A**LONZO now once more found himself upon an element that had twice proved destructive to his happiness, but Neptune was propitious, and with gentle breezes wafted him toward his haven of bliss, toward Amaryllis. Alas, when but one day from happiness, a Moorish zebec—

"Janice!" called a voice.

The effect on the reader and her listener, both of whom were sitting on the floor, was instantaneous. Each started and sat rigidly intent for a moment; then, as the sound of approaching footsteps became audible, one girl hastily slipped a little volume under the counterpane of the bed, while the other sprang to her feet, and in a hurried, flustered way pretended to be getting something out of a tall wardrobe.

Before the one who hid the book had time to rise, a woman of fifty entered the room, and after a glance, cried:—

"Janice Meredith! How often have I told thee that it is ungentle for a female to repose on the floor?"

"Very often, mommy," said Janice, rising meekly, meantime casting a quick glance at the bed, to see how far its smoothness had been disturbed.

"And still thee continues such unbecoming and vastly indelicate behaviour."

"Oh, mommy, but it is so nice!" cried the girl. "Didn't you like to sit on the floor when you were fifteen?"

"Janice, thou't more careless every day in bed-making," ejac-



ulated Mrs. Meredith, making a sudden dive toward the bed, as if she desired to escape the question. She smoothed the gay patchwork quilt, seemed to feel something underneath, and the next moment pulled out the hidden volume, which was bound, as the bookseller's advertisement phrased it, in "half calf, neat, marbled sides." One stern glance she gave the two red-faced culprits, and, opening the book, read out in a voice that was in itself an impeachment, "The Adventures of Alonzo and Amaryllis!"

There was an instant's silence, full of omen to the culprits, and then Mrs. Meredith's wrath found vent.

"Janice Meredith!" she cried. "On a Sabbath morning, when thee shouldst be setting thy thoughts in a fit order for church! And thou, Tabitha Drinker!"

"It's all my fault, Mrs. Meredith," hurriedly asserted Tabitha. "I brought the book with me from Trenton, and 'twas I suggested that we go on reading this morning."

"Six hours of spinet practice thou shalt have to-morrow, miss," announced Mrs. Meredith to her daughter, "and this afternoon thou shalt say over the whole catechism. As for thee, Tabitha, I shall feel it my duty to write to thy father of his daughter's conduct. Now hurry and make ready for church." And Mrs. Meredith started to leave the room.

"Oh, mommy," cried Janice, springing forward and laying a detaining hand on her mother's arm in an imploring manner, "punish me as much as you please,—I know 'twas very, very wicked,—but don't take the book away! He and Amaryllis were just—"

"Not another sight shalt thou have of it, miss. My daughter reading novels, indeed!" and Mrs. Meredith departed, holding the evil book gingerly between her fingers, much as one might carry something that was liable to soil one's hands.

The two girls looked at each other, Tabitha with a woe-begone expression, and Janice with an odd one, which might mean many things. The flushed cheeks were perhaps due to guilt, but the tightly clinched little fists were certainly due to anger, and, noting these two only, one would have safely affirmed that Janice Meredith, meekly as she had taken her mother's scolding, had a quick and hot temper. But the eyes were fairly starry with some emotion, certainly not anger, and though the lips were pressed tightly together, the feeling that

had set them rigidly was but a passing one, for suddenly the corners twitched, the straight lines bent into curves, and flinging herself upon the tall four-poster bedstead, Miss Meredith laughed as only fifteen can laugh.

"Oh, Tibbie, Tibbie," she presently managed to articulate, "if you look like that I shall die," and as the god of Momus once more seized her, she dragged the quilt into a rumpled pile, and buried her face in it, as if indeed attempting to suffocate herself.

"But, Janice, to think that we shall never know how it ended! I couldn't sleep last night for hours, because I was so afraid that Amaryllis wouldn't have the opportunity to vindicate herself to—and 'twould have been finished in another day."

"And a proper punishment for naughty Tibbie Drinker it is," declared Miss Meredith, sitting up and assuming a judicially severe manner. "What do you mean, miss, by tempting good little Janice Meredith into reading a wicked romance on Sunday?"

"'Good little Janice!'" cried Tibbie, contemptuously. "I could slap thee for that." But instead she threw her arms about Janice's neck and kissed her with such rapture and energy as to overbalance the judge from an upright position, and the two rolled over upon the bed laughing with anything but discretion, considering the nearness of their mentor. As a result a voice from a distance called sharply:—

"Janice!"

"O gemini!" cried the owner of that name, springing off the bed and beginning to unfasten her gown,—an example promptly followed by her room-mate.

"Art thou dressing, child?" called the voice, after a pause.

"Yes, mommy," answered Janice. Then she turned to her friend and asked, "Shall I wear my light chintz and kenton kerchief, or my purple and white striped Persian?"

"Sufficiently smart for a country lass, Jan," cried her friend.

"Don't call me country bred, Tibbie Drinker, just because you are a modish city girl."

"And why not thy blue shalloon?"

"'Tis vastly unbecoming."

"Janice Meredith! Can't thee let the men alone?"

"I will when they will," airily laughed the girl.

"Do unto others—" quoted Tabitha.

"Then I will when thee sets me an example," retorted Janice,

making a deep curtsy, the absence of drapery and bodice revealing the straightness and suppleness of the slender rounded figure, which still had as much of the child as of the woman in its lines.

"Little thought they get from me," cried Tabitha, with a toss of her head.

"Tell me where is fancy bred,  
In the heart or in the head?"

hummed Janice. "Of course, one doesn't think about men, Mistress Tabitha. One feels." Which remark showed perception of a feminine truth far in advance of Miss Meredith's years.

"Unfeeling Janice!"

"'Tis a good thing for the oafs and ploughboys of Brunswick. For there are none better."

"Philemon Hennion?"

"Your servant, marm," mimicked Janice, catching up a hair brush and taking it from her head as if it were a hat, while making a bow with her feet widely spread. "'Having nothing better to do, I've made bold ter come over ter drink a dish of tea with you.'" The girl put the brush under her arm, still further spread her feet, put her hands behind some pretended coat-tails, let the brush slip from under her arms, so that it fell to the floor with a racket, stooped with an affectation of clumsiness which seemed impossible to the lithe figure, while mumbling something inarticulate in an apparent paroxysm of embarrassment,—which quickly became a genuine inability to speak from laughter.

"Janice, thee should turn actress."

"Oh, Tibbie, lace my bodice quickly, or I shall burst of laughing," breathlessly begged the girl.

"Janice," said her mother, entering, "how often must I tell thee that giggling is, missish? Stop, this moment."

"Yes, mommy," gasped Janice. Then she added, after a shriek and a wriggle, "Don't, Tabitha!"

"What ails thee now, child? Art going to have an attack of the megrims?"

"When Tibbie laces me up she always tickles me, because she knows I'm dreadfully ticklish."

"I can't ever make the edges of the bodice meet, so I tickle to make her squirm," explained Miss Drinker.

"Go on with thy own dressing, Tabitha," ordered Mrs. Meredith, taking the strings from her hand. "Now breathe out, Janice."

Miss Meredith drew a long breath, and then expelled it, instant advantage being taken by her mother to strain the strings. "Again," she said, holding all that had been gained, and the operation was repeated, this time the edges of the frock meeting across the back.

"It hurts," complained the owner of the waist, panting, while the upper part of her bust rose and fell rapidly in an attempt to make up for the crushing of the lower lungs.

"I lose all patience with thee, Janice," cried her mother. "Here when thou hast been given by Providence a waist that would be the envy of any York woman, that thou shouldst object to clothes made to set it off to a proper advantage."

"It hurts all the same," reiterated Janice; "and last year I could beat Jacky Whitehead, but now when I try to run in my new frocks I come nigh to dying of breathlessness."

"I should hope so!" exclaimed her mother. "A female of fifteen run with a boy, indeed! The very idea is indelicate. Now, as soon as thou hast put on thy slippers and goloe-shoes, go to thy father, who has been told of thy misbehaviour, and who will reprove thee for it." And with this last damper on the "lightness of young people," as Mrs. Meredith phrased it, she once more left the room. It is a regrettable fact that Miss Janice, who had looked the picture of submission as her mother spoke, made a mouth, which was far from respectful, at the departing figure.

"Oh, Janice," said Tabitha, "will he be very severe?"

"Severe?" laughed Janice. "If dear dad is really angry, I'll let tears come into my eyes, and then he'll say he's sorry he hurt my feelings, and kiss me; but if he's only doing it to please mommy, I'll let my eyes shine, and he'll laugh and tell me to kiss him. Oh, Tibbie, what a nice time we could have if women were only as easy to manage as men!" With this parting regret, Miss Meredith sallied forth to receive the expected reproof.

The lecture or kiss received,—and a sight of Miss Meredith would have led the casual observer to opine that the latter was the form of punishment adopted,—the two girls mounted into the big, lumbering coach along with their elders, and were jolted and shaken over the four miles of ill-made road that separated

Greenwood, the "seat," as the "New York Gazette" termed it, of the Honourable Lambert Meredith, from the village of Brunswick, New Jersey. Either this shaking, or something else, put the two maidens in a mood quite unbefitting the day, for in the moment they tarried outside the church while the coach was being placed in the shed, Miss Drinker's face was frowning, and once again Miss Meredith's nails were dug deep into the little palms of her hands.

"Yes," Janice whispered. "She put it in the fire. Dadda saw her."

"And we'll never know if Amaryllis explained that she had ever loved him," groaned Tabitha.

"If ever I get the chance!" remarked Janice, suggestively.

"Oh, Jan!" cried Tabitha, ecstatically. "Wouldn't it be delightful to be loved by a peasant, and to find he was a prince and that he had disguised himself to test thy love?"

"'Twould be better fun to know he was a prince and torture him by pretending you didn't care for him," replied Janice. "Men are so teasing."

"There's Philemon Hennion doffing his hat to us, Jan."

"The great big gawk!" exclaimed Janice. "Does he want another dish of tea?" A question which set both girls laughing.

"Janice! Tabitha!" rebuked Mrs. Meredith. "Don't be flippant on the Sabbath."

The two faces assumed demureness, and, filing into the Presbyterian meeting-house, their owners apparently gave strict heed to a sermon of the Rev. Alexander McClave, which was later issued from the press of Isaac Collins, at Burlington, under the title of:—

"The Doleful State of the Damned, Especially such as go to Hell from under the Gospel."

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRINCE FROM OVER THE SEAS

**A**CROSS the water sounded the bells of Christ Church as the anchor of the brig "Boscawen" ninety days out from Cork Harbour, fell with a splash into the Delaware River in the fifteenth year of the reign of George III., and of grace, 1774. To those on board, the chimes brought the first intimation that it was Sunday, for three months at sea with nothing to mark one day from another deranges the calendar of all but the most heedful. Among the uncouth and ill-garbed crowd that pressed against the waist-boards of the brig, looking with curious eyes toward Philadelphia, several, as the sound of the bells was heard, might have been observed to cross themselves, while one or two of the women began to tell their beads, praying perhaps that the breadth of the just-crossed Atlantic lay between them and the privation and want which had forced emigration upon them, but more likely giving thanks that the dangers and suffering of the voyage were over.

Scarcely had the anchor splashed, and before the circling ripples it started had spread a hundred feet, when a small boat put off from one of the wharfs lining the water front of the city, with the newly arrived ship as an evident destination; and the brig had barely swung to the current when the hoarse voice of the mate was heard ordering the ladder over the side. The preparation to receive the boat drew the attention of the crowd, and they stared at its occupants with an intentness which implied some deeper interest than mere curiosity; low words were exchanged, and some of the poor frightened creatures seemed to take on a greater cringe.

Seated in the sternsheets of the approaching boat was a plainly dressed man, whose appearance so bespoke the mercantile class that it hardly needed the doffing of the captain's cap and his obsequious "your servant, Mr. Cauldwell, and good health to you," as the man clambered on board, to announce

the owner of the ship. To the emigrants this sudden deference was a revelation concerning the cruel and oath-using tyrant at whose mercy they had been during the weary weeks at sea.

"A long voyage ye've made of it, Captain Caine," said the merchant.

"Ay, sir," answered the captain. "Another ten days would have put us short of water, and—"

"But not of rum? Eh?" interrupted Cauldwell.

"As for that," replied the captain, "there's a bottle or two that's rolled itself till 'tis cruelty not to drink it, and if you'll test a noggin in the cabin while taking a look at the manifests—"

"Well answered," cried the merchant, adding, "I see ye set deep."

"Ay," said the captain as they went toward the companion-way; "too deep for speed or safety, but the factors care little for sailors' lives."

"And a deep ship makes a deep purse."

"Or a deep grave."

"Wouldst die ashore, man?"

"God forbid!" ejaculated the mariner, in a frightened voice. "I've had my share of ill-luck without lying in the cold ground. The very thought goes through me like a dash of spray in a winter v'y'ge." He stamped with his foot and roared out, "Forrard there: Two glasses and a dipper from the rundlet," at the same time opening a locker and taking therefrom a squat bottle. "'Tis enough to make a man bowse himself kissing black Betty to think of being under ground." He held the black bottle firmly, as if it were in fact a sailor's life preserver from such a fate, and hastened, so soon as the cabin-boy appeared with the glasses and dipper, to mix two glasses of rum and water. Setting these on the table, he took from the locker a bundle of papers, and handed it to the merchant.

Twenty minutes were spent on the clearances and manifests, and then Mr. Cauldwell opened yet another paper.

"Sixty-two in all," he said, with a certain satisfaction in his voice.

"Sixty-three," corrected the captain.

"Not by the list," denied the merchant.

"Sixty-two from Cork Harbour, but we took one aboard ship at Bristol," explained the captain.

"Ye must pack them close between the decks."

"Ay. The shoats in the long boat had more room. Mr. Bull-dog would none of it, but slept on the deck the whole v'y'ge."

"Mr. Bull-dog?" queried Cauldwell.

"The one your factor shipped at Bristol," explained Caine, and running over the bundle, he spread before the merchant the following paper:—

*This Indenture, Made the Tenth Day of March in the fifteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third King of Great Britain, etc. And in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and seventy-four, Between Charles Fownes of Bath in the County of Somerset Labourer of the one Part, and Frederick Caine of Bristol Mariner of the other part Witnesseth That the said Charles Fownes for the Consideration hereinafter mentioned, hath, and by these Presents doth Covenant, Grant and Agree to, and with the said Frederick Caine, his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, That the said Charles Fownes shall and will, as a Faithful Covenant Servant well and truly serve said Frederick Caine his Executors, Administrators or Assigns, in the Plantations of Pennsylvania and New Jersey beyond the Seas, for the space of five years next ensuing the Arrival in the Plantation, in the Employment of a servant. And the said Charles Fownes doth hereby Covenant and declare himself, now to be of the age of Twenty-one Years and no Covenant or Contract Servant to any Person or Persons. And the said Frederick Caine for himself his Executors, and Assigns, in Consideration thereof do hereby Covenant, Promise and Agree to and with the said Charles Fownes his Executors and Administrators, that he the said Frederick Caine his Executors, Administrators or Assigns, shall and will at his or their own proper Cost and Charges, with what Convenient Speed they may, carry and convey or cause to be carried and conveyed over unto the said Plantations, the said Charles Fownes and also during the said Term, shall and will at the like Cost and Charges, provide and allow the said Charles Fownes all necessary Cloaths, Meat, Drink, Washing, and Lodging, Fitting and Convenient for him as Covenant Servants in such Cases are usually provided for and allowed. And for the true Performance of Premises, the said Parties to these Presents, bind themselves their Executors and Administrators, the either to the other, in the Penal Sum of Thirty*



*Pounds Sterling, by these Presents. In Witness whereof they have hereunto interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year above written.*

*The mark of*  
CHARLES X FOWNES [Seal]

*Sealed and delivered in  
the presence of*  
J. PATTISON, C. CAPON.

*These are to certify that the above-named Charles Fownes came before me Thomas Pattison Deputy to the Patentee at Bristol the Day and Year above written, and declared himself to be no Covenant nor Contracted Servant to any Person or Persons, to be of the Age of Twenty-one Years, not kidnapped nor enticed, but desirous to serve the above-named or his assigns five Years, according to the Tenor of his Indenture above written All of which is Registered in the office for that Purpose appointed by the Letters Patents. In witness whereof I have affixed the common Seal of the said office.*

THOMAS PATTISON, D. P.

"And why Mr. Bull-dog?" asked Cauldwell, after a glance at the paper.

"By the airs he takes. Odd's life! if we'd had the Duke of Cumberland aboard, he'd not have carried himself the stiffer. From the day we shipped him, not so much as a word has he passed with one of us, save to threat Mr. Higgins' life, when he knocked him down with a belaying pin for his da—for his impertinence. And he nothing but an indentured servant not able to write his name and like as not with a sheriff at his heels." The captain's sudden volubility could mean either dislike or mere curiosity.

"Dost think he's of the wrong colour?" asked the merchant, looking with more interest at the covenant.

"'Tis the dev—'tis beyond me to say what he is. A good man at the ropes, but a da—a Dutchman for company. 'Twixt he and the bog-trotters we shipped at Cork Harbour 'twas the dev—'twas the scuttiest lot I ever took aboard ship." The rum was getting into the captain's tongue, and making his usual vocabulary difficult to keep under.

"Have ye no artisans among the Irish?"