

# IN THE DAYS OF THE LOYALISTS

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THE town itself is small and quiet and quaint; a relic of the Past. Over one hundred years ago the streets were filled with United Empire Loyalists who had come in enthusiasm and loyalty, with their slaves, their pride, and their visions that this was the New Jerusalem. No railroad has come with its modern improvements to disturb the romance lingering over the place; in the streets are the old town pumps, on many doors the ancient brass knockers, and among the houses themselves are to be seen, well preserved, fine specimens of Colonial architecture.

These are the streets which once resounded with gay military music as the troops marched by, to the old English church now standing sentinel over the quiet resting-place of many a brave man and grand dame of the Long Ago. A quiet resting place! Here meet a man's Past and his Future; here he who runs may read, may see his own epitaph in that of his ancestors, "Dust to Dust," the living sum of a man's life. The pride of life, desire of the eyes, longing of the heart lie resting under the sunlight, unheeding, while quiet mosses wipe out loyal name and proud record from crude crumbling stones.

The November sunlight falls on snow-covered briar, on bramble and on thorn, on the grey weather-beaten walls, and lies in gay coloured patches over the dusty floor and stained interior of the church, fetching into relief a small brass tablet and bringing to remembrance a tale of life—one that promised most fair, that was most pitiful. This is the memorial to the famous beauty, Catherine Ogden, daughter to Colonel Peter Ogden; and as the tablet states, the betrothed of an officer in his Majesty's Imperial Army. A small portrait of Catherine Ogden still hangs in the old Marshall house on Proctor Street; and despite the primness of the artist and the stiffness of the setting, grace and beauty shine forth from the pictured face, dauntless courage from the large dark eyes—and yet a sadness, it may be that Shadow which some maintain the Future has power to forecast.

Colonel Ogden was an upright man, staunch Churchman and Royalist, proud of his record as one who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not; a familiar figure in the annals of those early days. He builded the house on the corner near the Big Willows,

bringing the stout oak frame from Boston in New England, fashioning it with huge fireplaces, and the quaint doors with crescent peep-holes of thick coarse glass: much for the comfort and all for the pleasure of his only daughter in honour of whose betrothal was given that Ball of 1786 long sung by local bards. Revel and Feasting! All the town knew that Catherine Ogden's heart was breaking, knew of the long weeks made dreary by her father's prayers and pleadings, of her forced obedience to his command that she renounce her rebel lover and become the wife of Colonel Peel, all the town murmuring bitterly against this betrothal of Sweet May and Grim December.

The old story comes so vividly as our footsteps echo through the wide dim hall, up the stairway into the ballroom. Here too had walked the fair women and brave men that November night so long ago. Downstairs, in the little south room, Catherine Ogden had come for a moment's freedom, standing by the huge old fireplace with the flames leaping high among the logs.

From the ballroom upstairs came a faint stream of music—a snatch of gay laughter. The firelight fell lovingly on the tall graceful figure as she stood dreaming of her lover, that Rich'd John Cottman, from whom she had been parted; him who had been a traitor to King and Country and who must, she knew, be forever a stranger to her father's home. So earnestly had she thought of him that she was not startled when she saw him by her side. Eager explanation, hurried pleading, loving words of wooing, while the snatches of music seemed so faint, so far away!

The door had opened, had closed. The firelight gleamed on a scarlet coat, an order and a cross; on an angry face and on an uplifted sword; Colonel Ogden had entered. So long ago—and now it sounds as a far away melody—the words of bitter quarrel, of gentle pleading, of manly love; all the discord softened by time. And while the lover of Catherine Ogden lay wounded at her feet in this little south room, fair women and brave men danced lightly in the old ballroom upstairs, chatted gaily in the wide dim hall.

The story comes to us in fragments only, from tales that had been told in the Merchants' Coffee House, and items culled from faded and crumbling Gazeteers. In a New England Journal of 1786 is recorded the death of Rich'd John Cottman from "wounds contracted while engaged in private enterprise and not in these New England States." The record goes on: "He held a respectable and amiable character, and was distinguished for his activity and devotion to the Colonists' Cause during the late War for Independence."