

Philipse," he read aloud, "and Captain Merton! What is this, sir?"

I was on the point of replying, when Debby plucked him by the sleeve and made a sign with her head to signify that he was to send the picket out of the room. He seemed to understand; and when we were alone she spoke before I could get in a word.

"Captain Hazeltine goes frequently under assumed names, sir, by special orders."

"Oh," said the officer, somewhat doubtfully, still fingering the papers. Then I bethought me, and took out the pass given me by the Commander-in-Chief.

"Here's the old one, Captain, if it be of any use to you."

"Quite right, Captain! Quite right! Pardon my hesitation. But, to be frank with you, several men escaped — prisoners, you understand — but a day or so ago on stolen passports, and I had a reprimand from General Patterson that will last me for a good long life to come."

And so we hurried forth and northward.

"Debby," said I, shortly, "Debby, upon my soul you have fifty times the wit that I have."

"It does not need for you to tell me that, sir!" said she. "Another instant and you would have said: 'Sir Officer, I am Merton Balfort, American, fighting against his Majesty the King! Hang me if you like, but remember that I am none of your British soldier, nor yet a spy of that great monarch.'"

"Your pardon, mistress, 'his Majesty the King'?"

"Ah, dear sir," said she, bowing low in her saddle.