

made his first dash from the coach, that the soldiers would attribute his conduct to cowardice (much as he would have disliked the imputation), and so permit him to escape with the precious packet that had been entrusted to his keeping.

What it contained he was not certain; he had but a general idea that a number of letters were enclosed in it, which were meant only for the eyes of staunch and loyal Tories, and he feared that disastrous results might follow if they fell into the hands of any of the opposite party.

He soon saw that he was followed too closely to have any hope of ultimate escape, but he still strained every nerve to reach the pool, into which he intended to throw the packet, for he thought that he might thus render its contents illegible, even if by any chance it was recovered.

His object was almost gained. He drew the packet from its hiding place, ready to throw, but, at the last moment, he slipped in the treacherous mud. Before he could regain his feet, his pursuers were upon him; the precious packet was wrested from his grasp, and he was marched slowly back to meet the coach, between two strong men—a prisoner!

When they reached the carriage, they bade him get in; and he was not sorry to obey, for he knew his sister must feel frightened and lonely. His dress was covered with mud from his fall, but Sybil forgot her finery, and flinging her arms around his neck, kissed him again and again, as she exclaimed, "Oh, Dick, I am so glad that you are safe!"

But Dick answered sadly, "It was of no use, Syb—they have got the packet after all. I wouldn't have left you all alone but for that."

"I know, Dick. I wish they would let us go home. They might just as well—*now!*"

"I wonder what those letters were!" said Dick. "I have no idea. Mr. Maynard didn't tell me," he added in a whisper.

"Oh dear, what will they do with us? sighed Sybil." Why didn't we stay at home as mother advised?"

"They won't hurt *you* at any rate, Sybil. You had nothing to do with the

letters at all!" said Dick, with an air of resolution.

The coach rolled on through the heavy mud, guarded on either side by well armed men, till it reached a little wayside inn, (lately named the "George," but now the "Patriot,") where the prisoners were made to alight, and were locked in separate little chambers till the morning dawned.

At daybreak, Dick was taken before Colonel Farnham, who sat at a small table in the rough inn kitchen, where the grey light fell clearly on his cold stern face. Behind him stood a younger man, so much in the shadow that Dick scarcely noticed him. The Colonel had the opened packet before him, and frowned most forbiddingly as he read.

He asked Dick many questions, in a rough, disagreeable voice, and Dick, with boyish resentment at the tone he took, defiantly refused to answer, denying his right to question him, and daring him to do his worst.

As it happened, the letters were so cautiously worded, that, though it was evident that a large number of the Tories of Boston and the neighbouring places were forming schemes for the restoration of the king's authority, it was difficult to discover anything definite. Colonel Farnham had received information that led him to suspect that Dick Warren might occasionally be employed by his party to carry messages and papers to the disaffected Tories who were accustomed to meet at the Lanes' house, but he was mistaken in supposing that the boy knew anything of importance concerning their schemes, though Dick's persistent refusal to answer "a rebel," confirmed him in his impression that he knew more than he would tell.

He threatened him with imprisonment and even *death* on the one hand, and promised him magnificent rewards on the other, but Dick was obstinate and immovable, and at last the Colonel bade them take away the lad and bring his sister, saying "perhaps she would be more reasonable."

At that, Dick's fortitude gave way, and he condescended to entreat the old man "not to hurt or frighten Sybil."