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A Wife Proved the Perfidy of Her Husband's Friend

By EDITH V. ROSS

**************** During that period in America when the colonies were struggling for their independence, when the "Swamp Fox," as General Francis Marion was called was contesting the possession of South Carolina with Colonel Tarleton, commander of a British cavalry force something like that led by the Confed erate Colonel Mosby during the war be tween the states, there lived in Berke ley county of that colony one Edward Athol and his wife.

Athol, though he had not been long in America, was not, as might have been expected of a newcomer from England, a Tory. He was disposed to be neutral in his sympathies. He had married the daughter of one who had been born in America, and his bride was in sympathy with the colonists, but since her husband took sides with neither she desired to live peacefully on their plantation without being disturbed by the king's men or those of the Continental congress.

This required tact, for one day along would come riders wearing the blue and the buff and the next those wear-ing the red. Both sides expected sympathy if not aid from the people of the country they traversed and were in-clined to be severe with those from whom they did not get it. This placed the Athols in an unpleasant position, for if they treated both sides as friends they would please neither. But Mrs. Athol was equal to the occasion, being a woman of rare diplomatic ability.

There was a man living on a neighboring plantation whom she feared. He was a bachelor, and his sympathies were with the redcoats. He and Ed-ward Athol were bosom friends, and Mrs. Athol feared that the Tory might get her husband into trouble. One day she said to Athol:

"Edward, I wish you would be careful of what you say to Henry Pinckton. You know he is a Tory and may at any time consider it his duty to sacrifice his friend to his king."

"That is just like a woman," replied the husband. "Your sex cannot rely on each other's friendship; consequently you do not realize that men will be to each other."

Had Athol known what his wife knew he would have realized the injustice of this thrust. Pinckton had was courting her. Moreover, a wom-BAKER AMD CARGILL WINDMILLS an's perceptive faculties are, when uninfluenced, more delicate than a man's. The wife knew instinctively that Pinckton bad never forgiven her busband for succeeding where he had bimself falled. Moreover, she was not sure but that the unsuccessful lover would be glad of an opportunity to get rid of his friend, hoping that if she were free be might persuade her to marry him. Oue day some British troopers camp ed in the vicinity of the Athol plantation. Pinckton went to the commander and told him that there was a man in the neighborhood who was furnishing information of the movements of the British troops to General Marion. The commander asked if the man could be taken with documents on him to prove that he was a spy. Pinckton said that he would keep a watch on the rebel's movements, and if he found an opportunity to capture him carrying information he would let the officer know. Pinckton went away and concocted a plan to entrap Athol. He wrote Athol a forged letter from a man in Charleston asking Athel to meet him in that town immediately since he had important news for him. Pinckton went to see Athol just as he was setting out on his journey and pretended to be much surprised at his going. Athel

> to Charleston till they came to the branch road leading to Pinckton's plan-Every Woman

bid his wife goodby, and the two men rode away together. Mrs. Athol had

noticed that Pinckton acted strangely.

When Athol had said that he doubted

if the trip were worth while Pinckton

urged bim to go. With woman's quick insight for danger to one she loves,

Mrs. Athol suspected that her hus-hand's pretended friend had laid a plan

to get him out of the way. The two men were to ride together on the road

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tation when they would part, Pinckton going home and Athol continuing his

Mrs. Athol saddled a borse and folwed them, intending to overtake her usband after he had left Pinckton od persuade him to give up his journey. She kept at a distance behind them, and when they were about to part she saw Pinckton drop a little behind her husband and drop something into his coat pocket. This confirmed her in her opinion that some wrong was intended. Nevertheless she could not at once follow her husband without running the risk of being seen by Pinckton, who left the Charleston road at an angle. Having waited till he had passed into a wood, she started again. She was nearing her busband when she saw some redcoats spring from a thicket beside the

Without wasting any time the soldlers took Athol to the British camp. Mrs. Athol followed and saw her husband led within the British lines, then reined to to think what she had better do. She had heard a man say that very morning that there was a troop of Continental cavalry at a little town not far from her home, and she re-

road and make him a prisoner.

solved to ride there in the hope of finding them and inducing them to attack the British force and possibly rescue her husband Athol, having been taken before the

officer commanding the British troops, was searched, and a bit of paper crumpled into a hard ball was taken from his pocket. It was opened and found to be a statement of the British forces in South Carolina. It was of course more of a surprise to Athol than the British officer, who had been informed by Pinckton that if he would conceal his men on the Charleston road that day he would be likely to intercept a man passing with information for General Marion.

The first impulse of the officer was to hang Athol without even a trial by drumbead court martial. Then it occurred to him that the man should have some time to make preparation for death, and he concluded to go through the form of a trial and leave the time of his execution to the court. The command was a small one, and there were but half a dozen officers connected with it. These were all convened to a court, and Athol was brought before them. There was no doubt that he had been caught carry-ing information, the penalty for which was death, but he was permitted to make an explanation. He said that he was on his way to Charleston when arrested in answer to a summons he had received from there; that he was neither Tory nor rebel; that he had no idea how the communication had come into his pocket. He asked to see it and was permitted to inspect it. The handwriting was very like his own, which added to his astonishment. Not suspicion that his friend Pinckton

had put it there entered his head.

Of course the case was plain to the court that tried him, though since they were convened to convict him this made little difference. They brought in a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to be hanged the next morning.

Meantime Mrs. Athol was riding to
the camp of the Continental troopers'
she had heard of. Reaching the place
where they had been, she found that they had moved. No one knew where.

tomed to tell where they are going. But the direction they had taken was known, and Mrs. Athol started after

While riding she thought of the trap that it was evident her former suito had laid for her husband and wonder-ed what it was that had been dropped in the latter's pocket. This she could not divine. She had no idea of the depth of degradation into which Pinckton had sunk, the treachery to one who trusted him implicitly and considered him a bosom friend. Tears came into her eyes as she thought of her husband's unjust speech to her when she had warned him.

Along the route she took she made inquiries from time to time of the troopers she was chasing and learned that she was gradually drawing nearer to them. Then they were but a few miles ahead, then a mile, and at last she came upon them as they were about going into bivouac for the night She sought the officer in command and told him of his proximity to the British troops.

The officer knew of this force and, having superior numbers, was after them to attack and capture them, but he had been misinformed as to their whereabouts and was moving in the wrong direction. Mrs. Athol offered to pilot him to their camp, but begged him to send a few men to Pinckton's plantation to arrest him. To this the officer assented, and it was agreed that after supper and a rest the command would saddle up with a view to surrounding the Britishers before day.

It was 10 o'clock when they started, lighted by a half moon and piloted by Mrs. Athol. She described the loca tion of the enemy so that the American force might be divided and ap proach from different directions. Be ore they reached the vicinity of the British camp it was near moonset, and the night had become dark from clouds. On reaching the place where her husband had been captured Mrs. Athol described three different routes by which they might come upon the Brit ish. The separate bodies started and were each given an hour to get into position. The signal for attack was to be two shots in quick succession from the troops accompanied by the commanding officer.

When those two shots rang out on the still night the British sentries gave an alarm, and the redcoats sprang to arms-too late! They were hemmed in, and it did not require a long time for their commanding officers to realize the fact. He was called on to surrender and did so without firing a shot. Athol not only found himself liberated, but by his wife's instrumentality She said nothing of Pinckton's treachery, but in the morning the latter was brought into camp, and Mrs. Athol

made a charge against bim and re quested the American commander to convene a court martial to try him. The officer was not slow in granting the request of one who had given him a victory and the court was conve Ad By this time all knew that a forged document had been placed in Athol's pocket, and Pinckton was charged with having placed it there. He broke down under Mrs. Athol's testimony and confessed his crime.

The court would have inflicted any

punishment Mrs. Athol named, but as long as her husband was convinced of his supposed friend's perfidy she requested that he be allowed to go free. The incident, which had really bebeing neutral in his sympathies to an H. Hume R. Sec., J. E. Collier, F. Sec. come a tragedy, changed Athol from ardent patriot, and he enlisted in the American army.

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