

A favorite aid-de-camp, Colonel Samuel B. Webb, who had been wounded in the battles of Bunker's Hill and White Plains, was captured in December, 1777, when commanding a Connecticut regiment, and accompanying General Parsons in a descent upon Long Island. He was then but twenty-four years of age, and the youngest colonel in the army. Presuming upon the favor of General Washington, who had pronounced him one of the most accomplished gentlemen in the service, he wrote to him, reporting his capture, and begging most strenuously for an immediate exchange. He received a prompt, but disappointing reply. Washington lamented his unfortunate condition. "It would give me pleasure," said he, "to render you any services in my power, but it is impossible for me to comply with your request, without violating the principles of justice, and incurring a charge of partiality."

In fact, several officers of Colonel Webb's rank had been a long time in durance, and it was a rule with Washington that those first captured should be first released. To this rule he inflexibly adhered, however his feelings might plead for its infringement. Colonel Webb, in consequence, was not exchanged until the present year; when Washington, still on principles of justice, gave him the brevet rank of brigadier-general and the command of the light-infantry.

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## CHAPTER THIRTY

Washington continues his Precautions—Sir Guy Carleton brings Pacific News—Discontents of the Army—Extraordinary Letter from Colonel Nicola—Indignant Reply of Washington—Joint Letter of Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby—Junction of the Allied Armies on the Hudson—Contemplated Reduction of the Army

IN disposing of the case of Captain Asgill, we have anticipated dates, and must revert to the time when Washington again established his headquarters at Newburg on the Hud-